

INTRO

- Who are you supporting in the FIFA World Cup?

In our Fall teaching series, we are looking at the way of life and values Jesus calls us to cultivate, and how countercultural they are. Today we look at the virtue of gentleness over harshness.

READ

Gal 5:22-23 and Matt 11:28-30

REFLECT & RESPOND

Today, we can often over-value characteristics like strength, toughness and self-confidence, and see gentleness as weakness or timidity. This is what makes gentleness so countercultural.

Biblically, gentleness is:

- 1) a posture of **meekness** and **humility**;
- 2) an action of **restraint** (of strength/power for the benefit of another), and **consideration** in dealing with others.

Qu: when you think of gentleness what comes to mind? How is it similar or dissimilar to the above description?

JESUS AND GENTLENESS

In Mt 11, Jesus describes the core of who he is —*gentle and humble*—despite his obvious power and status. We see this in his life & ministry interacting with the people of his day, especially the vulnerable and marginalized.

The posture most natural to him is not a pointed finger but open arms. — Dane Ortlund

Qu: What's your reaction to Jesus describing himself as gentle and humble? Would you prefer he describe himself in more powerful terms?

US AND GENTLENESS

Jesus invites us to come to him and learn from him; to experience his gentleness so that we can extend his gentleness towards others. He is our model for gentleness: humble, restrained and empathetically considerate. And through his Spirit, we can embody his gentleness in a harsh world.

Here are some practical examples from scripture where gentleness can be practiced in our lives and relationships:

- **Consideration** for one another (bear with one another; attentiveness & thoughtfulness)
- **Confrontation** with one another (confronting difficult issues or behaviours in a way that allows it to be received as a restorative expression of love and care)
- **Communication** especially with outsiders (disarming; considering best & most loving way to communicate grace & truth)
- **Restraint** in exercise of leadership and authority (keep under control, measured)
- Being **Approachable & Teachable** (receiving feedback, challenge or correction)
- **Care & Concern** for the most vulnerable and marginalized in society

Qu: in what ways can you practice gentleness in your home/work/school/church relationships?

RESPOND & PRAY

- For those weary, pray for the rest Christ offers.
- Pray for opportunities to practice gentleness in your home, work, school and church community this week.