

## Word Studies: Gentleness and Meekness

*Bible versions studied were the KJV, NKJV, NAS, NIV and ESV.*

- A. Tapeinos – This word and its various forms are normally translated humble. The only time this word is translated “meek” is in 2 Corinthians 10:1 in the NAS. The ESV correctly translates it “humble.” The KJV uses the word “base”, the NIV uses the word “timid” and the NKJV uses the word “lowly.”
- B. Epios – defined – careful not to needlessly injure or damage. The concept, not the word itself is best taught in Matthew 12:19-20.
1. 1 Thessalonians 2:7 – All the studied versions translate this word “gentle.” The idea in this context is illustrated by a nursing mother who gently and carefully works to care for and nurture her offspring. In the same way we need to carefully attend to and help new believers.
  2. 2 Timothy 2:24 – Of the studied versions, the KJV and NKJV translate the word “gentle” while the NAS, NIV and ESV translate the word “kind.” The concept is that the one who is working to correct someone in doctrinal or practical error needs to be very careful not to needlessly damage or harm the one being corrected.
- C. Praute, praupathia, praus – defined – sensitive to the feelings views, concerns and rights of others. It is primarily translated by the word forms of “gentle” and “meek.”
1. Galatians 5:23 cp. 5:16 – It is produced by walking or living our lives in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is translated by the word “gentleness” in all the studied versions except the KJV which uses the word “meekness.”
  2. 1 Timothy 6:11 – This is to be pursued along with righteousness, godliness, faith, love and perseverance coupled with fleeing or avoiding situations which promote the love of money. It is translated by the word “gentleness” in all the studied versions except the KJV which uses the word “meekness.”
  3. It is a needed quality to bring about correction and restoration.
    - a. 2 Corinthians 10:1 – by spiritual leaders when their followers are letting themselves be led astray. All the studied versions translate this word “meekness.”
    - b. Galatians 6:1 – by spiritual-minded believers when trying to restore believers, who are trapped in sin. It is translated by the word “gentleness” in all the studied versions except the KJV which uses the word “meekness.”
    - c. 2 Timothy 2:25 – By those using instruction from God’s word to correct those who have allowed Satan to lead them in opposition to sound doctrine.
  4. 1 Corinthians 4:21 – When dealing with division in the church, leaders sometimes have to offer those who are straying the choice of being confronted with decisive disciplinary action or by love accompanied by gentleness. It is translated by the word “gentleness” or its word forms in all the studied versions except the KJV which uses the word “meekness.”

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5. 1 Peter 3:15 – To explain or defend what we are looking forward to, we must put Christ in charge of our thought life or hearts. We must be sure that our defense shows sensitivity and respect to people. The NAS, NIV and ESV translate this word “gentleness” while the KJV and NKJV translated it “meekness.”
6. 1 Peter 3:4 – Married women, especially those married to an unsaved husband, need to learn to develop and demonstrate gentleness or sensitivity toward their husbands along with not being argumentative or protesting. More time should be spent on developing these qualities than on trying to be outwardly attractive. It is translated by the word “gentleness” or its word forms in all the studied versions except the KJV which uses the word “meek.”
7. Ephesians 4:2 – In our efforts to preserve spiritual unity, we need to show this sensitivity in being forbearing toward other believers. It is translated by the word “gentleness” in all the studied versions except the KJV which uses the word “meekness.”
8. Colossians 3:12 – We are to be motivated by God’s choice of us, His setting us apart for His purposes and His making us special objects of His love. Using these motivations, we are to develop this sensitivity in our very thinking. The NAS and NIV translate this word “gentleness.” The KJV, NKJV and the ESV translate this word “meekness.”
9. James 3:13 – Good deeds flowing out of knowing and obeying God’s word will be characterized as gentle or sensitive toward others. Of all the studied versions, the NAS translates this word “gentleness” while the NIV translates it “humility.” The KJV, NKJV and the ESV translate this word “meekness.”
10. Titus 3:2 – Other believers need to be reminded to demonstrate this quality of sensitivity. Of all the studied versions, the NAS uses the word “consideration”, the ESV uses the word “courtesy”, the NIV and NKJV use the word “humility”, and the KJV translates it “meekness”
11. James 1:21 – We are to show this sensitivity in receiving God’s word. This word is translated “humility” in the NAS and NIV; and “meekness” in the KJV, NKJV and ESV.
12. Matthew 11:29 – As we take Christ’s yoke upon us (i.e. His commandments – Acts 15:10 cp. 1 John 5:3) we learn from Him as one who is both sensitive and humble. The word “gentle” is used by all translations except the KJV which translates the word as “meek.”
13. Matthew 21:5 – The character quality of gentleness was used to identify Jesus Christ to identify Him as the prophesied king.
14. Matthew 5:5 – Being gentle (NAS) or meek (KJV, NKJV, NIV) gives us God’s promise of blessing in this life and reward in having authority over the earth during Christ’s 1000 year kingdom. The ESV translates this word as “humble.”

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- D. Epieikein, epieikes – defined as flexible, accommodating and yielding as opposed to controlling and self-willed. This person is committed to a level playing field. It is primarily translated by the word forms of “gentle” and “meek.”
1. Philippians 4:5 – Our ability to behave in this manner should be obvious to everyone. It would be vital to resolving such conflicts as mentioned in 4:2, 3. This word is translated as follows: KJV – “moderation”, NAS – “forbearing spirit”, NIV and NKJV – “gentleness”, and ESV – “reasonableness.”
  2. 2 Corinthians 10:1 - It is a needed quality to bring about correction and restoration by spiritual leaders when their followers are letting themselves be led astray. This word is translated by all versions above as “gentleness.”
  3. 1 Peter 2:18 – This is an important quality for the boss in the workplace and the kind of boss Christians hope to have. This word is translated as “gentle” by all versions except the NIV which translates it as “considerate.”
  4. 1 Timothy 3:3 – This is a definite qualification for any candidate for elder. This is the opposite of someone who is lording as in 1 Peter 5:3 and stands in contrast to being violent in 1 Timothy 3:3 in the NAS, NIV and ESV. The word is translated by the word “gentle” in all translations except the KJV which translates it as “patient.”
  5. James 3:17 – If we are drawing our wisdom from God rather than from the world, the flesh or the Devil, this will be one quality that will show itself. This word is translated as “gentle” by all versions except the NIV which translates it as “considerate.”
  6. Titus 3:2 - Other believers need to be reminded to demonstrate this quality. This word is translated as “gentle” by all versions except the NIV which translates it as “considerate.”
  7. Acts 24:4 – It is sometimes ascribed to people in authority who in reality do not show this quality. The purpose of those who do this is to flatter and manipulate those in authority for their own ends. It is translated as “kindness”, by the NAS and ESV, “kind” by the NIV, “courtesy” by the NKJV, and “clemency” by the KJV.