Becoming a Woman of excellence

CHAPTER EIGHT

excellence

MADE PRECIOUS BY A GENTLE AND QUIET SPIRIT

“Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.”

1 Peter 3:3-4 (KJV)

A woman with a gentle and quiet spirit is not only precious to God, but she is attractive to others also. Certainly a hallmark quality of a woman of excellence is a gentle and quiet spirit. A woman with this quality is not someone who never says anything or who never laughs and enjoys life. Instead, someone with the unfading loveliness of a gentle and quiet spirit speaks appropriately and wisely. She enjoys life because she is secure and at rest in her spirit. She is gracious, content, and free to give to others.

Defining a Gentle and Quiet Spirit

1. To begin developing an understanding of a gentle and quiet spirit, define the following words (use a dictionary to help you do it accurately):

   gentle –

   quiet –

   meek – (The Greek word prays [meek] and praytes [meekness] are words that consistently convey gentleness, humility, and consideration for others)

   calm –

   spirit –

   From your study of these words, write your own definition of a gentle and quiet spirit.

2. In 1 Timothy 6:11, Paul mentions gentleness as a quality to be pursued. Why do you think gentleness is included in this list?

3. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:5-9. How does Paul characterize his gentleness in these verses?
4. How does each of the following passages present the quality of quietness?

Psalm 131

Proverbs 17:1

Isaiah 30:15

**Acquiring a Gentle and Quiet Spirit**

5. Read Matthew 11:28-30. What does Jesus promise us in this passage?

What does Christ mean when He asks us to . . .

“Come”?

“Take My yoke”?

“Learn from Me”?

A quiet time is a time set aside to deepen your knowledge of the Lord, to enrich your own personal relationship with Him, to fellowship with Him, to love Him, to worship Him, on a very personal basis. . . . How much of a calm and gentle spirit you achieve, then, will depend on how regularly and consistently, persistently and obediently you partake of the Word of God, your spiritual food.

*Shirley Rice*

6. How can the following verses about God’s care for us help us in acquiring a gentle and quiet spirit?

Psalm 18:30-35

Romans 8:28

1 Corinthians 10:13

Our Lord could die with the same calm in which He had lived. He had known all along how things would turn out. He knew His apparent defeat would eventuate in universal glory for the human race. *A. W. Tozer*

7. Being secure in God’s loving sovereignty is important for having a gentle and quiet spirit. Read Ruth 1 – 2:13.
What in Ruth’s life demonstrated that she was placing herself in God’s care?

How did God guide and protect her?

How did Boaz describe Ruth in Ruth 3:11?

Rest is not a hallowed feeling that comes over us in church; it is the repose of a heart set deep in God.  

*Henry Drummond*

**Keeping a Gentle and Quiet Spirit**

8. Below is a list of hindrances that keep me from being calm and gentle. You may want to add to the list. Look up the Scriptures and write out key thoughts from each passage in your own words. Then use this part of the study to check yourself when you sense your spirit becoming restless and irritated.

   a. Unconfessed sin – Psalm 32:3-5

   b. Anger – Ephesians 4:26

   c. An unforgiving spirit – Ephesians 4:32

   d. Self-centeredness – Philippians 2:3-4

   e. Anxiety – Philippians 4:6-7

   f. Neglecting responsibilities – Proverbs 31:27

   g. Fatigue – Psalm 127:1-2

   h. Physical disorders – 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

There is a perfect passivity which is not indolence. It is a living stillness born of trust. Quiet tension is not trust. It is simply compressed anxiety.  

*Mrs. Charles E. Cowman*
AUTHOR’S REFLECTION – I visited the beautiful home of a friend one day and that afternoon I was irritable. As I examined my heart to try to find the cause of my frustration, I realized that I was envious, jealous, and discontent with my own home. All of these responses are real enemies of a gentle and quiet spirit!

I find anxiety creeping up on me when I get in a hurry or I have over-committed myself and I cannot get everything done. When I neglect to do the wash, clean the house, or write letters as I should, then I start to become frustrated. When I stay up late and don’t get enough rest, it is very hard for me to be kind and gentle. When I become harsh and critical, I ask the Lord to show me why I’m that way. Most of the time the source of my irritability is one of the hindrances mentioned above. Sometimes He has gently reminded me that I have not been spending enough time with Him and His Word, for it is in abiding in Christ that the Holy Spirit is able to produce gentleness in my life. I think that Proverbs 31:25 is a good summation of a gentle and quiet spirit: “Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she smiles at the future.”

9. Look back over this chapter and write your thoughts concerning your goal of acquiring and keeping a gentle and quiet spirit. Include specific ways that you can begin to incorporate into your life that equanimity of spirit which is so precious to God.

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURE MEMORY: 1 Peter 3:3-4

I have noticed that wherever there has been a faithful following of the Lord in a consecrated soul, several things have, sooner or later, inevitably followed. Meekness and quietness of spirit become in time the characteristics of the daily life. A submissive acceptance of the will of God, as it comes in the hourly events of each day, is manifested; pliability in the hands of God to do or to suffer all the good pleasure of His will; sweetness under provocation; calmness in the midst of turmoil and bustle; a yielding to the wishes of others, and an insensibility to slights and affronts; absence of worry or anxiety; deliverance from care and fear, – all these, and many other similar graces, are invariably found to be the natural outward development of that inward life which is hid with Christ in God.

Hannah Whitall Smith