

Gentleness & Faithfulness

Fruit of the Spirit | Jordan Biel & David Brock

Again Welcome to Rock of Grace!

I'm pastor Jordan and I pastor this campus as well as being the Lead Pastor over our other campuses and we are so glad you're with us today! We're in week 4 of our series on the Fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5. I collaborated with Pastor Dave our Executive Pastor on this sermon so this is co-written message and we really hope this speaks to your heart, challenges you today and equips you for godly living - a life that pleases Jesus!

So gentleness...

Gentleness

It's been said that gentleness is an expression of compassion, seen in God's dealings with the frail and weak, *and* gentleness is expected of believers in how they treat others, especially the unbelievers.

Gentleness as a mark of Christian character

Colossians 3:12 (CSB) — 12 Therefore, as God's chosen ones, holy and dearly loved, put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience,

Galatians 5:22–23 (CSB) — 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. The law is not against such things.

Ephesians 4:1–2 (CSB) — 1 Therefore I, the prisoner in the Lord, urge you to walk worthy of the calling you have received, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,

1 Timothy 6:11 (CSB) — 11 But you, man of God, flee from these things, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness.

So when we are “bearing with one another in love” we are understanding of different opinions. **Gentleness means we don't major on the minor things & we don't put people in boxes. 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love...**

For example, If we hear someone is patriotic - they love their country, we don't assume they're in a box of people who are “worshiping their country” As it turns out, you can love your country and love God more. This one I know is touchy and it is touchy because

so many Christians lost their ability to be Gentle in 2020 - during the election - during the pandemic - this time period exposed what was in the heart of so many Christians - gentleness or pride. Gentleness comes from a root of humility. To be *excited* to put someone in a box - a box of people who believe wrong, live wrong because they see a few things differently than you is the opposite of gentleness.

One more example.

Christians putting people in a box who do or do not worship like *they* worship. In John 4, Jesus said that one day it won't matter where you worship - on this hill or that hill - in a barn or in a theater - in a home or in a stadium but that you worship "in spirit and in truth" But some Christians will put a stake in the ground and say "THIS is how you worship correctly - this style of music - this style of building - this often you must take communion - this is the way you — — fill in the blank.

What's best in terms of displaying gentleness is rather to focus your energy and speech on what God is doing in the life of people - are they growing closer to Christ? Are they submitting their conveniences to Christ? Are they beginning to sacrifice their time and energy to care for the marginalized? If yes, let's discuss those things? Are people being saved through an outreach? YES. Celebrate the salvation instead of focusing on whether the Christians "did it right" or not.

Church, can I talk to you today?

Ok-an example of how to be gentle

...

So Christians, be gentle.

We're to be gentle in dealing with the lost - those who don't know Jesus yet.

Isaiah 40:1–2 (CSB) — 1 “Comfort, comfort my people,” says your God. 2 “Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and announce to her that her time of hard service is over, her iniquity has been pardoned, and she has received from the Lord’s hand double for all her sins.”

Danielle and I have ben reading Jeremiah this month.

Did you know he preached and offered repentance for 23 YEARS before God decided to teach them the hard way by enabling Nebuchadnezar to take them into captivity in Babylon? 23 years they were warned to stop worshipping idols. 23 years God gave them chance after chance after chance.

This is why when someone will ask me “Why does God seem so harsh in the OT? Why all the violence?”

Well, when you notice that in the OT also take note of the opportunities God gave to repent.

God always gives multiple chances to repent of our sin and turn to Him before we face some form of punishment / the “sowing” of our actions. Why? He is gentle. He is “Slow to anger” the Bible says repeatedly. We can display His gentleness to the lost and follow His example.

Keep in mind in cases like the Babylonian captivity - that if God didn't intervene, new generations would come who don't know Him - the idol worship would only continue and grow and their children and Childrens children would be lost. God cares deeply. Because God cares deeply and loves deeply, He sometimes allows us to face something that will bring us to a level low enough to seek Him for help. (*Let that sink in - pause*)

Gentleness is a fruit displayed in caring for the weak

You know, worship services are important - making them excellent for God because all things should be done with excellence if it's for God. BUT some churches fall into the trap of only caring about the worship service - the “Sunday experience” and accidnely forget about the orphan the widow and the poor - and really, anyone who is going through something difficult. It's Monday through Saturday that the church shines the brightest - in acts of kindness, generosity, compassion and gentleness - the foster child, the lonely and those struggling financially.

Isaiah 40:11 (CSB) — 11 He protects his flock like a shepherd; he gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them in the fold of his garment. He gently leads those that are nursing.

1 Kings 19:12 (CSB) — 12 After the earthquake there was a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire there was a voice, a soft whisper.

The gentleness of Jesus Christ. As always, Jesus is our example.

Matthew 11:29 (CSB) — 29 Take up my yoke and learn from me, because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Zechariah 9:9 (CSB) — 9 Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout in triumph, Daughter Jerusalem! Look, your King is coming to you; he is righteous and victorious, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Matthew 21:4–5 (CSB) — 4 This took place so that what was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled: **5** Tell Daughter Zion, “See, your King is coming to you, gentle, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

Matthew 12:18–21 (CSB) — 18 Here is my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. **19** He will not

argue or shout, and no one will hear his voice in the streets. **20** He will not break a bruised reed, and he will not put out a smoldering wick, until he has led justice to victory. **21** The nations will put their hope in his name.

We are to follow Jesus' example just like Paul did. In other words, it's a choice to be gentle. It's a choice to let God's Spirit transform us into a gentle person.

2 Corinthians 10:1 (CSB) — 1 Now I, Paul, myself, appeal to you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—I who am humble among you in person but bold toward you when absent.

Humility is a choice that becomes an attribute. Choose to be humble and gentle over and over and over and it will simply become who you are. This is allowing the Spirit to do His work of sanctification.

Philippians 2:1 (CSB) — 1 If, then, there is any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any affection and mercy,

Example of Jesus Christ's gentleness

John 8:3–11 (CSB) — 3 Then the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery, making her stand in the center. **4** “Teacher,” they said to him, “this woman was caught in the act of committing adultery. **5** In the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?” **6** They asked this to trap him, in order that they might have evidence to accuse him. Jesus stooped down and started writing on the ground with his finger. **7** When they persisted in questioning him, he stood up and said to them, “The one without sin among you should be the first to throw a stone at her.” **8** Then he stooped down again and continued writing on the ground. **9** When they heard this, they left one by one, starting with the older men. Only he was left, with the woman in the center. **10** When Jesus stood up, he said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” **11** “No one, Lord,” she answered. “Neither do I condemn you,” said Jesus. “Go, and from now on do not sin anymore.”]

Believers are to reflect God's gentleness in their dealings with people

In correcting the wayward

Galatians 6:1 (CSB) — 1 Brothers and sisters, if someone is overtaken in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual, restore such a person with a gentle spirit, watching out for yourselves so that you also won't be tempted.

The Bible also says we are to be gentle in how we disagree. Turns out you can disagree and still be kind and still be friends AND brothers and sisters in God's family.

2 Timothy 2:24–25 (CSB) — 24 The Lord’s servant must not quarrel, but must be gentle to everyone, able to teach, and patient, **25** instructing his opponents with gentleness. Perhaps God will grant them repentance leading them to the knowledge of the truth.

To me, the ability to kindly disagree is one of the greatest marks of a mature Christian.

In reasoning with unbelievers

1 Peter 3:15–16 (CSB) — 15 but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, ready at any time to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. **16** Yet do this with gentleness and reverence, keeping a clear conscience, so that when you are accused, those who disparage your good conduct in Christ will be put to shame.

In nurturing new believers

1 Thessalonians 2:7 (CSB) — 7 Although we could have been a burden as Christ’s apostles, instead we were gentle among you, as a nurse nurtures her own children.

In showing consideration to all

Titus 3:1–2 (CSB) — 1 Remind them to submit to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good

work, **2** to slander no one, to avoid fighting, and to be kind, always showing gentleness to all people. **Ephesians 4:32 (CSB) — 32** And be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as

God also forgave you in Christ.

Philippians 4:5 (CSB) — 5 Let your graciousness be known to everyone. The Lord is near.

Recap on Gentleness

- **In correcting the wayward**
- **In reasoning with unbelievers**
- **In nurturing new believers**
- **In showing consideration to all**
- **Follow Jesus’ example as His Spirit does the inner transformation**

Faithfulness

Faithfulness is being reliably excellent what with God has given you to do.

When I think of faithfulness, I think of Paul. Here he was put in jail over and over, accused by both religious crowd and the agnostics. He was shipwrecked and forced to go to islands he didn't intend to many times and yet all the while, he remained faithful to do the work of ministry God had place in His heart.

Acts 18

Paul was doing his best to convince the locals about the truth of Jesus. He was kicked out of Rome and there was definitely alot of uncertainty.

I guess I want to ask you "How do you remain faithful when it feels like God is leaving you out to dry?"

Faithfulness is being reliably excellent what with God has given you to do.

Sabbath Attendance / Worship with God's People

Attendance twice a month is "normal" for American Christians. Attendance weekly is faithfulness. Giving once a month is "normal" according to studies by Generis & Barna. Giving weekly is faithfulness.

3 or 4 more examples

How do we remain faithful?

A few thoughts

Sometimes when things don't go as planned, it's actually God on the move - God is enacting HIS plan. The question is "will we be faithful to continue doing the right thing and doing the best we can despite what we don't understand?"

Modern Day Story before I talk about apostle Paul

Vs

"Paul was able to give all his time to preaching and teaching (no longer needed to make and sell tents as an entrepreneur)"

It's important to note that Paul was willing to remain faithful as a tent-maker - as a business owner, an entrepreneur, until he hit a short season where the funds where there for him to simply preach and minister non-stop.

- **Faithfulness is doing the best you have with what God's given you.**

MY STORY Apply it to myself

Early in Bible College, I remember wanting to lead worship and feeling the call toward worship ministry. I went to Seminary knowing that I was called into ministry at the age of fourteen. The first time I auditioned to lead worship for one of the four worship

teams, I heard “No, we need you on lead guitar.” I thought, *Ok, they need me.* The second semester I heard “No, we need you on lead guitar.” I thought, *Well, this stinks. I want to sing. I want to lead worship.* This was repeated for 7 semesters. I would audition and get rejected (in love) but nonetheless, a “no” means “no” and I felt that rejection. I had to learn a few things. First, I had to learn to sing better. I had to practice. I had to do *my* part. Some “obstacles” are there to make you stronger, so don’t mistake some obstacles for being “the devil.” Sometimes God just wants you to do your part and sharpen your skills. He brings the increase but you need to work the soil and plant the seed.

Simply because God has called me into a certain ministry or vocation, it doesn’t mean that He’ll prepare me without my effort. Our effort and submission to Him is involved in the preparation. Your faithfulness plus God’s power equals miracles!

You know what’s cool about being faithful? You can ALWAYS be faithful no matter WHAT the circumstance is!

You and I can always be faithful to do what we’re asked to do to the best of our ability. My faithfulness is my success. Obedience *is* success to God. After all, why was the anointing for Kingship removed from Saul? It was removed because he deliberately ignored the instruction—the word of the Lord. By simply aiming to be faithful to the word the Lord gave you, you are showing your “success” in the eyes of God! I had to learn what it means to persevere through obstacles and wait on the promise. On my seventh audition, they finally said “yes” and let me colead and lead on a few trips. To this day I’m not sure if I actually got any better at leading worship or if I simply wore them down.

- Paul

Paul could’ve said “I’m the APOSTLE Paul. I don’t need to make and sell tents! But he kept doing that small business until the Lord gave him the peace about not doing it and the funds needed to step away from that business.” Paul was faithful.

- David

When you heard the words “David” and “Faithful” you may instantly go to when he was unfaithful to his wife, late in his 30years, well into his tenure as King and slept with the famed Bathsheeba. But, that’s not what were’ going to discuss today. I want you to consider how difficult it must’ve been for David to remain faithful while Saul was trying to kill him! Here he is a young man, leading the military after his defeat of Goliath and Saul, instead of thanking young David for his leadership, he was envious and jealous and this envy became rage that drove him to a maddening murder chase! All the while David remained faithful! Twice, David was given an opportunity to kill Saul. David’s men even advised him to do so saying “Go ahead and kill him! This is God giving you the chance to kill him and finally take the throne!” But David knew that “vengeance was the Lords” David knew that Forgiveness and treating the wicked with gentleness was what God wanted from him.

Which is remarkable when you consider that David hadn’t met or heard of Jesus. David had a revelation of the character of God - one of grace, gentleness and love - that was remarkable being this is before Jesus came to the earth.

But let's back up - way up to when David was just a boy.

After David was anointed, he continued to serve his father Jesse by going back into the fields to care for the sheep. Why? He valued faithfulness over fame. He knew his current assignment hadn't fully come to a close yet. He wanted to end well. And so should you. After his heroic act with Goliath, he was called upon to lead the army. He didn't say, "Well God promised me I'd be king. I'm not risking my life on the battlefield!" He was faithful to serve wherever God had appointed him in the moment.

I wish every believer understood this truth! God is more interested in you being faithful to do the assignments well that you currently have, than He is in hearing what you'll do for Him in the future. *Be faithful where you are and God will take you to where He wants you to be next.* Don't ever think "I'll be able to do so much more for the Lord when... I'll be able to make an impact when..." You can make an impact NOW! Look around you. What church are you in now? Rock of Grace it would seem. LOL

What talents do you already have? What resources do you already have? What skill can you learn and teach yourself online at home? Who can you impact for Christ now? **So many miss their God-designed promotion, because they gave up on their devotion.**

They're so excited for what God is going to "GIVE THEM" in the future that they miss what God gave them to DO and who God called them to SERVE in the present.

Be devoted to your pastor where you are now. Be devoted to your boss at work now. Let God handle when, where, and if you're to be promoted. Be more concerned about being faithful than being famous. Be more concerned with being faithful than being "right"

Faithfulness is linked to character. When a Christian is letting the character of Christ be formed in them, they want to be faithful - to have character. What is character? Character is underpromising and overdelivering. Too many Christians make big promises then underdeliver. That breaks trust, the bedrock of every relationship. Instead, when you are given an opportunity to commit, give it your all and overdeliver on what you've committed to do. This can be at work or a simple serve team role at church. This can be doing something for your spouse. Faithfulness is about having character. Character is showing up on time or early. Character is doing the right thing, just because it's the right thing. Character is choosing to go the extra mile to do your part, even if others are being lazy. Character gives 110 percent and makes no excuses. Character means you say what you mean and mean what you say without being mean. You follow through and can be counted on. Character is a defining characteristic of every great leader. Without it, you simply will not last. People will only follow someone they know they can trust—someone who is reliable and truly has their best interest in mind. Let's be honest. We live in a broken world and we are still broken. There are times when we aren't faithful. When we drop the ball. When we lose our cool. This isn't about being perfect; it's about being sincere. Don't try to disguise your character flaw or cover it with charisma. Admit it when you could've done something better or missed the mark or not been faithful. Your spouse or coworkers or boss or whoever is involved will value that honesty and that moment will ironically, build more trust and deepen your relationship. Be thankful for their grace and get back to being faithful.

- Jesus

None more faithful than Jesus!

Jesus literally has the words “Faithful & True” written on His thigh/engraved on this robe on His thigh Revelation says!

Jesus is the most faithful person there ever was and ever will be.

Jesus will be faithful to you and Jesus will send His Spirit to enable YOU to be faithful to Him.

God displayed His faithfulness through the odd story of a prophet named ...

whom He asked to marry a prostitute *knowing* she would betray him. God said that He wanted His people, Israel, to see a visual sign - a representation of *His* faithfulness to an *unfaithful* people. WOW

Expound more ...

But Pastor, what do we do when we know we have NOT been faithful? Can God forgive us and give us another chance? Glad you asked! YES!

James 4:6 says “The Lord gives grace to the humble and resists the proud...”

Because God is gentle, He will forgive you and give you another chance to be faithful.

In commenting on this scripture K.A. Richardson says:

“Quoting Pro. 3:34, James recalled for his audience that God is determined to resist the proud. Those who wrap up their selfishness and self-sufficiency in arrogance will receive the full measure of divine rejection. Such is the universal announcement throughout Scripture and the extra-biblical writings. Pride is frequently listed among the human vices and is closely associated with the sin of envy. Earlier in James’s Letter the story of the proud rich and the envious church leaders and their followers (2:2–4) shows both God’s opposition to the self-promoting rich and their self-serving welcomers as well as God’s preference for the humble poor. Pride stirs up the desires of all those who have succumbed to various temptations of the heart. Pride leads to boasting. The sin of haughtiness not only tends to boast in what it has and in its own life but even boasts in what it does not have and takes credit for someone else’s accomplishments. Arrogance totally obscures the faith that trusts in things unseen, hidden in God.

On the other hand, God shows favor to those who humble themselves. All of James’s hearers were invited to join the ranks of the humble who trust in God. The term here for the ‘humble’ is rooted in the condition of lowliness and poverty. Biblically, God is particularly interested in reversing the hierarchies of status in the world. This is why God has ‘chosen those who are poor ... to be rich in faith’ (2:5). The close connection between the condition of lowliness and the virtue of poverty is reflected in the story of Saul wishing to make David his son-in-law in 1 Sam 18:23. David’s simple response was, ‘I’m only a poor man and little known.’ But precisely this attitude, which he maintained in spite of gross sin throughout his life, made David a man after God’s own heart, that is, favored, graced. David exemplifies what the proverb is intended to teach: God is always ready to accept

those who accept him and to give them more grace. Should we sin that grace might increase? No! But grace does more than meet the challenge of our sinful desires.”
Richardson, K. A. (1997). James (vol. 36, pp. 181–182). Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers.

Confess your sins and failures to God today and let Him forgive you and give you another chance. He will teach you what it means to be faithful!

John 17, Jesus says that He will send His Spirit to teach you what to do and how to follow Him! Simply ask for that Holy Spirit today!