

Podcast Episode 93: Meekness & Humility, Part 1

This is the first part of a series on “Meekness and Humility,” which is intended to go deeper than mere words and definitions. The hope is to give you the chance to get a feel for the underlying state-of-being associated with meekness and humility, so you can resonate with these attributes and bring them into your life. We encourage you to pause and ponder on any examples of meekness and humility that come to mind as you listen, including nature, scriptures, and/or examples from your own life. We hope these episodes are meaningful and relevant to everyone’s hope and desire for Zion.

DENVER: Meekness is a difficult attribute to recognize. It’s found in the relationship between man and God, not between man and man. To be meek is to follow the Lord’s will, even when one doesn’t want to do so, even when it brings one into conflict with friends, family, or community. Meekness is measured as between the servant and the Lord, not as between the servant and his critics. Meekness, among other things, involves a conscious effort to avoid harming or offending others. It requires an absence of pride or self-will. It is *not* insistent upon being recognized or applauded. It denotes a willingness to suffer without complaint.

Others may never recognize the meek because meekness does not vaunt itself nor demand notice. There’s great freedom in meekness; it relieves the meek from the burden of seeking their acclaim. It gives them the security of feeling God’s approval for the course of their living. It’s private.

Meekness means a person voluntarily restrains himself and uses the absolute minimum control or authority over others. It is related to humility. Humility is voluntarily submitting to the control or power of God—in other words, obedience. Meekness affects a person’s relationship with his fellow man. There’s nothing showy or attention-grabbing about the meek; instead, they are content to know they have a relationship and power with God. Unless God requires something to be done or revealed, the meek do not voluntarily put this authority on display.

Our Lord was, and is meek. When He said, “I am more intelligent than them all” (see Abraham 3:19; see also T&C 145, Abraham 5:4 RE), when He said, I am “the greatest of all” (see D&C 50:25-27; see also T&C 36:5 RE), there wasn’t one whit of arrogance in His announcement of that. What He was saying is, “*Please*, have confidence in me. *Please*, trust what I say to be true. *Please*, recognize I’ve paid a price in order to be able to minister.”

Christ— In Luke chapter 9, beginning at verse 27, Christ prophesies: *But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God* (Luke 9:27; see also Luke 7:4 RE). That’s the latter-day kingdom. That’s the one that Christ said was not of this world, but He’s going to come and inherit at the end. So, He says, “Some of you who are alive today will not die until you see Zion.” The gymnastics that have gone

into trying to explain that, by both Christian—both Catholic and even Mormon commentators—is rather amusing. Keep reading though:

And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and [glistening]. And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. (Luke 9:28-31; see also Luke 7:5 RE)

So, He says some are living; they're not going to die until they see the Kingdom of Heaven. And then He takes those three up on the Mount and they see some things. Turn to Doctrine and Covenants section 63, beginning—and He's talking about Zion—beginning at verse 20 of section 63:

Nevertheless, he that endureth in faith and doeth my will, the same shall overcome, and shall receive an inheritance upon the earth when the day of transfiguration shall come; When the earth shall be transfigured, even according to the pattern which was shown unto mine apostles upon the mount; of which account the fulness ye have not yet received. (D&C 63:20-21; see also T&C 50:5 RE)

He promised them that they would get to see the latter-day triumph. He took three of them up on the mount and then He showed them the latter-day triumph. Therefore, there were those that were standing in that generation who did not die until they had seen the latter-day triumph of the Kingdom of God. He fulfilled His own word, and it was put into the gospel in that fashion for that reason.

It will happen! But it requires an awakening, and it requires an arising. It does not require a leader—a servant maybe, *not* a leader. It does *not* require a president. It requires your common consent *by your deeds*, not only to say, but to do. It will *not* be achieved by control. It will *not* be achieved by coercion. It will *not* be achieved by force. It will *not* be achieved because there is some big 'strongman' among you. It *will* only happen if each of you are strengthened in *your* faith and *know the Lord*. It *will* be achieved by humility. It *will* be achieved through meekness. It *will* be achieved by love, which is unfeigned—the real thing.

I don't need or want, or even welcome, your admiration or your praise. You're probably more admirable than am I. I'm not telling you these things because I can *do* these things. I'm telling you these things because *this* is what the Lord would have *us* do. He's told us what was on His mind, and here it is; it's laid out for us. The question is not, "Who's great and noble and going to stroll in there?" The question is, "Who's meek; who's humble; who's appreciative of their inadequacies?" Who's willing to say, "When I count up all my foibles and failings, and I look at them, I don't think I have any ground upon which to criticize anyone else."

King Benjamin had something to say about the character of a child, and he gives this in his big talk, beginning in Mosiah where they're all together for his farewell address. This is Mosiah chapter 3, verse 19:

The natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam...will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child (Mosiah 3:19; see also Mosiah 1:16 RE).

Then he elaborates what it is about the child that is so useful in yielding to the enticings of the Holy Spirit: putting off the natural man, becoming a saint through the atonement of Christ. All of those are driven by these kinds of characteristics, which are childlike:

Submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father (Ibid).

Those are the characteristics of a child that manages to change their mind, or to facilitate their development.

Well, there was a time— There was a time, and it was back here in your life—there was a time when you did not need to go down to the firing range and have a skeet machine firing off a clay pigeon, and a 12-gauge loaded with birdshot in it, to be able to enjoy yourself. If you had a stick— If you had a stick, it was enough because your mind was alive with the kinds of things that allowed you to have just as much (if not more) joy pretending as does the adult with the gun, and the ammunition, and the skeet range, and the machine, and the clay pigeon, and the thing blowing up in the air— And, “Oooo, isn’t that fun?” And, “Don’t you wish there was more of that from Hollywood?!” Too bad we can’t load blood in clay pigeons; then we’d all be at the firing range.

The idea of submissiveness is another way of reckoning into the idea of openness—the same with meekness, the same with humility and being humble, the same with patience. And we ought to clarify the point about the child and patience because at first blush, you look at a child and you say there is nothing less patient than a child: “Can we...?! Can we...?! Are we there yet?! Are we there yet?! Can I, can I, can I...?! Please! Please! Please! Are you sure?! Aaaahhhh!!!! Crap, how does this work?! Can I?! Can I?! Can I...?! Okay, what if I give *this*, can I get *that*?!”

See, they go through all of the tantrum stuff until they begin to negotiate, and sometimes that negotiation thing works—particularly if the kids are bright. And we’ve been playing with really bright kids, so they tend to go and negotiate *everything*. They are not patient in *that* sense. They are— Children are patient in the sense that relentlessly, endlessly, they are studying to learn more. They *want* to know more.

I write a blog, and on it I ask more questions than I give answers because what people need are not a bunch of answers; and answers end the discussion. Once you’ve got the answer,

that's the end of that. What you need is a question, and you need a question so that you'll open your mind. And you need to open your mind so you can become like a child. And you need to become like a child so that you're a suitable environment in which revelation can take place. And you need to have revelation take place in order for you to reconnect with Heaven. And you need to reconnect with Heaven so that you get to know who God is. And you need to get to know who God is so that He can, in turn, make you a member of His own household, and redeem you from this current plight in which you find yourself in darkness and distrust. And what people want from me are answers—and I can hand you an answer and cripple you *or* I can teach you to ask and turn you into, potentially, someone that can make this trek backwards, that can make this climb.

Look, strip yourselves of jealousies and fears, humble yourselves before Me. You're not sufficiently humble! Let's learn from their failure! Let's not repeat it! Why do we need to keep plowing the same line over and over, through the same rocky soil, when no fruit has *ever* yielded from that particular furrow? Strip yourselves! Don't envy those who sit in the chief seats; they are, rather, to be pitied. Gain your own grace with God as Moroni asked you to do. God alone decides when, where, and how He will reveal Himself to you.

Look at D&C 88, verse 68: *Therefore, sanctify yourselves...* You have to rise up to accomplish that. *Sanctify yourselves...* by your stripping of jealousies and envies, by your humility before Him. *That* sanctifies yourself because you become disconnected from *this* place. *That your minds become single to God...* (D&C 88:68; see also T&C 86:12). *Single to God*—meaning that He occupies a place of priority in which He is central to you. Not that you neglect your family, you can't do that; not that you neglect your labors, you cannot do that.

But I have to tell you, some of the people that are driven in desperation try and improve their circumstances—that are sitting downstairs. If ministered to in a kindly way, some of those people have a heart that is better prepared for receiving the truth, more tender and poignant because of the circumstances of their life, than are the hearts of many of us who, in our plenty and in our conceit about our own goodness, think ourselves better than them. When the truth of the matter is, more than anything else, it is our humility that qualifies us. More than anything else, it is our sincere apprehension of just how weak, how vulnerable, how easily distracted we are.

Think about what it means to have the *power of God*. Think about what it means for God to be able to do *all* things, including sustaining you from moment to moment by lending you breath. And then for God to say, "You are free to choose to do (with what He's lending to you) whatever it is that *you* choose to do." Think of the patience of our God. Think of the meekness of our God. And think about the test that you are presently taking to prove who and what you are, and whether or not in the circumstances of this test, *you* are proving that *you* can be trusted—to have the meekness, to have the patience, to endure in humility what will be done—to endure the abuses that God allows to take place in order to permit His children to gain experience, so that in the long run they can ultimately know the difference

between good and evil; and on their own *choose* to love the good and to stay away from the evil.

You, generally, hail from a tradition that assures you that you're in the right way. You, generally, come from a tradition that says you're better than others. You are able to look down your nose at other people, who stumble about in the dark because they don't have all the great truths that you have. The fact of the matter is you, generally—not specifically because there are some to whom this absolutely does not apply—your hearts are right before God; but there aren't many.

You've been handed this tradition, *and [the] wicked one cometh and [he takes] away light and truth* (D&C 93:39; see also T&C 93:11 RE), and he does it because of the false traditions you have been handed. The greatest among us is *wholly* inadequate. The greatest among us can't be trusted with the power of God—not yet, anyway. The greatest among us is *still* in need of repentance. *Every one* of us should walk fearfully before God, not because God isn't generous but because what He offers can turn you into a devil. The only way to be prepared and not fall is to realize the enormous peril that *you* present, potentially, to the universe.

Before you get in a position to enjoy the status that God offers to us all, you need to work out your salvation—with fear and trembling, exactly like Paul said. You need to purge, remove, reprove. *This* attitude we see in *this* man, in *this* account (the brother of Jared)—*this is* the man of God! Christ may be the prototype of the saved man, but I know of no record anywhere in scripture that exposes the heart of the real disciple of Christ as well as does this chapter expose the heart of this man. *This* is what *we* should become. This is why the Lord could open up to him. This is why this man *became*, in the history of the world, coming up to this moment—despite the fact the Lord came to Adam-ondi-Ahman and administered comfort to Adam in the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman. *Here*, He came and showed Himself, as He truly was—as a pre-existent spirit possessing a soul as tangible as man's—and ministered to him in a way which, if you understood what it takes for a quickened being to condescend into the presence and make Himself known as He does here, was an enormous sacrifice by our Lord. Verse 18:

He ministered unto him even as he ministered unto the Nephites; and all this, that this man might know that he was God, because of the many great works which the Lord had shown unto him. (Ether 3:18; see also Ether 1:14 RE)

This is how God is known—by His works! It's not the lightning show, it's not the shaking on the mountain; it's the great works that proceed forth from Him. Think about what He did when He appeared unto the Nephites: God introduces Him *three times* before the people who were there were finally able to listen with their ears and hear the introduction. And then after the introduction is given, they still see Him descend, and He descends dressed in white and stands before them. Despite the introduction, despite the descent, despite Him standing in front of them, what the people think is "This must be an angel."

Clearly, He has arrived in a way that is extra-human. He's manifested Himself, being able to use the law of gravity in a way that we can't. He descends, He stands there; but none of them are overwhelmed. None of them fall down and worship Him. None of them do anything but look at Him! He's so plain, so ordinary, so commonplace in the appearance that He makes, that when they see Him, they stand there and they look rather like tourists at this man dressed in white who has now appeared to them. And He says, "Here's who I am." He introduces Himself (in 3 Nephi chapter 11, verse 11) three times in order to tell you who He is. Three times He talks about obeying the will of the Father, suffering the will of the Father in all things, glorifying the Father by taking upon Himself the sins of the world. Even standing in front of them, He bears testimony of Someone greater than Him.

It is the humility of the individual standing in front of them and His introduction of Himself, in 3 Nephi, that brings them to their knees. They fall down at that point and worship Him because when He opens His mouth and you see *what* He is, and *who* He is, and what proceeded forth out of the heart of that Man, you know you are listening and looking at God indeed. And they fall down and they worship Him.

Turn to chapter 4, verse 7:

And in that day that they shall exercise faith in me, saith the Lord, even as the brother of Jared did, that they may become sanctified in me, then will I manifest unto them the things which the brother of Jared saw, even to the unfolding unto them all my revelations, saith Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father of...[heaven] and of...earth, and all things that in them are. (Ether 4:7; see also Ether 1:17 RE)

This is the ministry of the Lord. This is the comfort that he (the brother of Jared) would have, that He promises to bring to us. This text, that we're looking at in Ether chapter 3, is probably the best, single text in existence to study about gaining the knowledge of God and the process by which it is gained. But most importantly, it exposes the attitude that is possessed by the person who comes back to be redeemed. It tells you—not directly, it tells you indirectly—by telling you what he did. 'Go thou and do likewise' (see Luke 10:25-37; see also Luke 8:7-8 RE). Everything that you have been put through, and every challenge that you have been given, and every weakness that you possess have been given to you in a *studied way* to bring you, hopefully, to your knees. To bring you, hopefully, to feel the chastening hand of God so that you, in your day, in your circumstance, can look upon that as a gift because it surely is.

'I give unto men weakness that they may come unto me, and if they'll humble themselves and come unto me, I'll make weak things strong.' That's also in the book of Ether, and that's in an aside in which Moroni is complaining that the Gentiles aren't going to believe this book; the Gentiles aren't going to believe this record. They're going to say, "This stinks!" They're— Ether chapter 12, verse 26:

When I had said this, the Lord [God] spake unto me, saying: Fools mock, but they shall mourn...my grace is sufficient for the meek, that they shall take no advantage of your

weakness; And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. (Ether 12:26-27; see also Ether 5:5 RE)

That's an unavailability! That's an inevitability! You stand in the presence of a just and holy Being, you're going to realize your weaknesses. You're going to recognize what you lack.

I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them. (Ibid.)

How do weak things become strong? Not by fighting the battle that you're going to lose. It's by appreciating, as the brother of Jared did, the fact that none of us can come into the presence of God without feeling keenly this scripture. *But it is given unto— Fools mock...they shall mourn. I* (this is Christ speaking) *I give unto men weakness [for one purpose], I give unto them weakness that they may be strong.* (Ibid.)

The anvil that you're dragging around? That anvil was given to you. Don't curse it. Pray for God to come and lift it. You're never going to be able to get far carrying it anyway. You may not even be able to lift it, but in the economy of God, *that* is a gift. It's a gift. Not for you to act upon and surrender to, but for you to fight against in humility and meekness, and to say, "I'm not winning. I haven't won. It goes on and on, and yet *still*, I fight against it."

When will you finally come to Him and cry out? When, in the bitter anguish of your soul, like Joseph Smith in Liberty jail, "How long must I endure this? How long do I have to suffer from the abuse of the guards? How long do I have to sit inside a gated room, in a dungeon, to hear stories about the rape of the people who followed me? And the murder of the people that believed what I was teaching?" (See D&C 121; see also T&C 138 RE. Also see Parley Pratt Autobiography (1985), p.179-180.)

How long did Joseph's heart break in Liberty Jail? He emerged from that ordeal a fundamentally different man than the man who went in. People who say, "Oh yeah, in Nauvoo he got carried away with all kinds of things"— We'll talk more about that tomorrow. We'll talk more about this whole idea of marriage, and we'll touch upon the notion of plurality of wives. We'll brush up against that tomorrow.

Look, these scriptures, these invitations, these prophecies, *and this message* (that began in Boise and will conclude in Phoenix), this message is inviting you to do what was originally prophesied as this dispensation began (that we looked at, at the beginning in Boise, Idaho). The game's afoot. The challenge is underway. The opportunity is here. There was a price that had to be paid; it involved several generations. You do not kill a man like Joseph, by the conspiracy of his followers, without forfeiting an opportunity—but that moment has come to an end and a new moment is upon us. And if you'll hear it, I can declare to you in the name of our Lord that the day of salvation has once again arrived. Have faith! Be believing! He's real! I gave you a description of His demeanor. I gave that last time and I'm reiterating

again, here, some of the things about His attributes. Come to Him! Seek for Him! Have faith in Him! You have more reason to have faith and confidence in Him, right now, than the brother of Jared did in his day to have faith and confidence in Him.

There's an incident that I think— One word, one word in this incident really explains a great deal of what I have been talking about in this last installment. This is an event that occurs within the Book of Mormon, that may seem otherwise quite puzzling. But now that we've looked at the Ether chapter 3 material, and we go back and we look at this incident, it suddenly begins to have a connection to it. This is in Alma chapter 22. It involves Lamoni's father, the king. I want you to look at the father, beginning in verse 17 of Alma chapter 22:

And it came to pass that when Aaron had said these words, the king did bow down before the Lord, upon his knees; yea, even did he prostrate himself upon the earth, and cried [...and cried] mightily, saying. ([emphasis added] Alma 22:17; see also Alma 13:10 RE)

It's not the words of the prayer that provoked or gathered the attention of Heaven, though the prayer is in fact needed, relevant, and exactly what the Lord answered. It's what came before.

This is the king! This is the king that can have people killed, if he chooses to do so! This is the one who, like God, among his people exercises the power of life and death. This is the one who could exact from them taxes. This is the one who has absolutely no reason to do what he's doing here, but look what he does: he prostrates himself upon the ground, and he *cries out mightily*. He doesn't pray. He mirrors exactly what the brother of Jared did when *he* approached God, in the depths of humility and in the sincerity of his heart, showing absolutely his appreciation for the difference between himself, on the one hand, and God, on the other.

Don't mistake me—I do not think it is necessary to physically engage in this kind of display. When the display is an extension of what is in the heart, that is absolutely fine. But when what is in the heart is right, it doesn't matter how it's displayed because God looketh on the inner man. This king was so overtaken by what he had heard that he was *not* ashamed to prostrate himself in front of the missionaries. He was *not* ashamed to cry out in the depths of humility. He didn't care who saw it. He didn't do this for to be seen. He didn't care that he was being seen. He did this because at that moment, that was what he was. He was seeking grace from the throne of Grace. *O God, Aaron hath told me that there is a God; and if there is a God, and if thou art God...* ([emphasis added] Ibid., vs 18).

Do you see this? This isn't someone who's certain. This is someone who is convicted of his own inadequacy. It may not be that you don't know enough, it may actually be that you know too much that's wrong. It may be that what you lack— It's all going to be erased and started over anyway. If you could gaze into Heaven for five minutes, you realize that people that have been writing about this stuff since the beginning of time, who haven't gazed into Heaven, don't know what they're talking about. The suppositions, and the connections, and

the ideas that get floated around are not only false, many of them are offensive to God. They're not right. The board's going to be erased. God's going to re-order it. You're going to see things in a completely different light when it happens.

It's not that you're brilliant and a shining light of knowledge. It's what's in your heart, and how has your heart been prepared? And if your heart is open to receive: *I will give away all my sins to know thee...that I may be raised from the dead, and be saved at the last day. And now when the king had said these words, he was struck as if he were dead* (Ibid.). And then look what happens when he recovers, because as he was struck as if he were dead, he's converted. The Lord ministers to him.

And in verse 23: *The king stood forth, and began to minister unto them. And he did minister unto them, insomuch that his whole household were converted unto the Lord.* This is what happens when converted to the Lord—you can't stand to look about you and see other people who are left in the dark. You want to invite them, rather, as Nathanael was invited: "Come, and see for yourself" (see John 1:46; see also John 1:7 RE). You come to the Lord; you come and see for yourself. This little bit of skeptical praying, "If there's a God, if thou art God, will you make yourself known to me?" *That* worked—not because this is a magic incantation.

Those folks who go through ceremonies think that ceremonies have some powerful mojo, some compelling voodoo, but the purpose of the ceremony is to teach you a precept. The precept is what you ought to find within your heart. Rites and ordinances are intended to testify to a greater truth—it was anciently among the Jews. It is an Aaronic priesthood function to turn around and look at the ordinance as if it were an end in itself. It is *not* an end in itself, it is intended to be a symbol reminding you of some great truth concerning our God.

The capstone of the ceremonies that were restored through Joseph, involving a dialogue between you and the Lord in which you're brought back into His presence, and then following that, you're taken away and you're sealed for eternity—those are *lofty* concepts. They are powerfully portrayed in the ordinances and the rites. They are intended to convey to you the reality that all of this is possible because God does, in fact, intend to preserve *you* and all those associations that you prize, so long as they are worthy.

Don't think that you lack the faith! If *this* king, with *this* prayer, can go to God and can ask and get an answer— *That's not the impediment.* The impediment is the pride of your heart, the hardness of your heart, the self-reliance that you think that you own, the traditions that bind you down, the arrogance of your heart, the unwillingness to *cry out mightily* to God and then to be open to receiving an answer. This was enough; and you too can do enough.

The Lord tells a story in Mark. This is Mark chapter 9. Beginning at verse 17, there's this fellow who comes to Christ and says,

Master, I...brought...thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit. [The spirit overtakes him, he foams at the mouth and gnashes his teeth.] I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out...they could not. [And Christ says,] O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?...they brought [the boy] unto Him...[he foams]...straightway the spirit [tore] him...he fell on the ground...wallowed foaming...he asked [the] father, How long [has it been] since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. And oftimes it [casteth] him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on [him]...help us. Jesus said unto him, if thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth...straightway the father of the child cried out [cried out], and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. [Help thou mine unbelief.] (Mark 9:17-24; see also Mark 5:8-9 RE)

You don't need more of what you already have. Why are you here? Well, most of you. Some have come only to criticize and to gather information. Some of you in the hardness of your heart are going to come to the point where, in the day of judgment, you will look back on this moment and realize, "I damned myself by the hardness of my heart and the bitterness of my soul because I came to judge a man whose heart was right before God, and mine was not." Your heart will be broken in *that* day.

But look at this man whose heart was broken on this day. He cried out, *Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.* "I have a desire, I have a willingness, but it is so fragile! It is so frail. I don't think it's enough." *That's* not the problem. Cry out! Ask Him!

Remember, His disciples who'd been following Him, His disciples who were His faithful followers, His disciples couldn't fix this boy. And they'd given up everything to come and follow Him. Jesus healed him. After the incident the disciples came to Him and said, *Why could [we not] cast him out?* Christ answered them, *This kind can come forth by nothing, but prayer and fasting (Mark 9:29; see also Mark 5:11 RE).*

Why do you have to be afflicted by prayer and fasting, if you're a follower of the Lord, in order to get to the point that you can accomplish this? Because *you* don't fall prostrate, crying out with tears. If this man, in this condition, can say, *I believe; help thou mine unbelief;* if this man can do this and have the Lord, on his behalf, work a miracle, *you too* can believe enough, *you too* can accomplish what you desire, *you too* can come to Him. Matthew covers the same incident, but in Matthew he picks up— This is Matthew chapter 17, beginning at verse 19:

Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?...Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind [come] not out but by prayer and fasting. (Matthew 17:19-21; see also Matthew 9:7 RE)

Faith as a grain of mustard seed was what the Lord said they needed. The defect does not consist in the absence of faith in the Lord. The defect consists in the arrogance and hardness of the heart, that prevents you from crying out in the realistic and anguish of your heart, looking to God who is trying to bring you to Him. *That* depth of humility, *that* status of being someone who is utterly harmless, *that* condition in which you present no threat to the righteous— You are harmless as a dove, you seek only the betterment of others. That is who God is, and what you must become in order for God to be able to redeem you *to be like Him*. That's you voluntarily changing to be that person by your submission to Him—because there is no reason to give to the proud, the vain, and the warlike the ability to torment and to afflict others. There is every reason to give to someone—who would ultimately be willing to give the rain to fall on the righteous and the wicked, and make the sun shine on both the righteous and the wicked—the power of God because the power of godliness consists in this kind of a heart. And in this kind of a heart, God can accomplish anything.

Turn to Luke chapter 18, because there the Lord pretty much tells you how it is He evaluates whether someone has purified themselves before Him. This is a story that the Lord makes up, in chapter 18 of Luke, telling a parable to those who trusted in themselves that they were righteous. Beginning at verse 10:

Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee...the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift...so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. ([emphasis added]Luke 18:10-14; see also Luke 10:7 RE)

God can only exalt the meek because only the meek can be trusted. This is what it means to sanctify yourself. Our idea of purity and Christ's idea are entirely based on different criteria. Why is meekness required *of* a God, *by* a God? What would happen if God Himself were not patient, willing to suffer abuse and be rejected? What would happen if God were egotistical? What would happen if God did not return blessings for cursings? What would happen if God were not *exactly* what He preached in the Sermon on the Mount? What if God did not bless those who spitefully used and abused Him? What would happen if God did not submit Himself to fall into the hands of wicked men, to be despised and rejected? And then to be killed in shame, hanging naked on a cross in full view of the world while people spit upon Him, while they mocked Him, and they ridiculed Him, saying, "If you really are what you say you are, come down from the cross, *then* we will believe."

Woe unto all those who say, "If you really are who you say you are," when the voice of God is sounding in their ears. *They* would have rejected the Lord as well. *They* would have

crucified the Lord as well. *They* are not His sheep because they do not hear His voice. If they *were* His sheep, they *would* hear His voice.

In a letter written August 16, 1834, Joseph Smith expected Zion could be established very soon. He wrote:

“we have a great work to do...but little time to do it in and if we dont exert ourselves to the utmost in gathering up the strength of the Lords house, there remaineth a scourge” ([spelling as in original], JS Papers, Documents Vol. 4, p. 106.)

In the same letter he reminded people in his day that:

“so long as unrig hteousness acts are suffered in the church it can not [be] sanctified neither Zion be redeemed.” ([spelling as in original], Ibid., p. 107.)

At the time, he considered the church to be “in a languid cold disconsolate state.” (Ibid.) It was the opposite of the lively, confident, and happy state accompanying righteousness, even when worldly circumstances are direful and the wicked seem to triumph. When doing what the Lord *asks*, we *can* be lively because He will accompany *our* efforts and add His strength to our labor. If we have a hope in Christ, we can be confident. If our sins have been forgiven, we have every reason to be happy.

Virtue and patience are required of us, every bit as much as it has been required in *every* age. We cannot wallow in sin, nor be prideful, and expect to do *any better* than those who have already failed. The best guard against our failure is humility, meekness, long-suffering, and patience. We must not charge ahead when the Lord has not prepared the way for us to proceed safely. There’s much still to be done, but it must be done when, where, and how the Lord directs; and that also not in haste because haste brings confusion, resulting in pestilence—including violence and jarring contentions.

From emails and phone calls I’ve received since my talk in Moab, it’s clear that there are those who want to move *now*, in haste. There are ambitious men who offer to lead others hastily into new paths, claiming to be so mighty and strong that they can offer great rewards in the afterlife—in exchange for following *them* here. I offer you no such thing. You must look to Christ for forgiveness of your sins, and follow His example of self-sacrifice, patience, obedience, and virtue.

I can only urge you to patiently allow the *true Shepherd* to guide us all into *His* pastures, showing Him the respect due to a Redeemer. I mentioned the idea of kingship in Moab. Remember the great King, Christ, came—not to *be* served but *to* serve. He did not lord it over others, but *He knelt* to elevate them. He came as a meek and lowly servant, and went about doing good. He died to save the lives of others. When He arose from the dead, He went to the Father and advocated forgiveness for those who despised and abused Him!

What kind of king would God send? Even if his bowels are a fountain of light and truth, and even if he were to hold the scepter of power in his hand, I doubt a king sent by the Lord would be markedly different than our True King. He would endure the abuse of misunderstanding, criticism, and mockery from those who refuse to understand. He would serve patiently, never asserting any claim to greatness. Joseph said, In this world, “the more a man is exalted, the more humble he will be, if actuated by the Spirit of the Lord.” (*JS Papers, Documents, Vol. 4, p. 198.*) When such a king dies, and returns to God to report, he will have only kindness for those who opposed him as he served God. *We should all be like that. We should all be like our Lord.*

Christ’s greatest commandments were simple, and given to every one of us:

- *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind* (Matthew 22:37; see also Matthew 10:23 RE).
- *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself* (Matthew 22:39-40; see also Matthew 10:23 RE).
- *Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets* (Matthew 7:12; see also Matthew 3:44 RE).

If we do these things, there’s no time to proclaim our greatness, to assert the right to be a leader, or to command others. Servants do not strut, but behave meekly. They only take such acts as the true Master commands.

Turn back to D&C section 121. There’s a couple verses there that I want to suggest, particularly *if you view the man and the woman together as one*. Read these verses as if it’s descriptive of ‘*the one*,’ which is you and your wife:

Many are called, but few are chosen. [This is beginning at verse 40 of section 121.] *No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned; By kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile* (D&C 121:40-42; see also T&C 139:5 RE).

Within your family, within your marriage, are you and your wife learning to use persuasion? Within your marriage, are you and your husband learning to use gentleness in dealing with one another? Are the two of you, together, facing one another in all the difficulties that come as a result of being married? Are you facing that together in meekness? Do you find that in all the relationship troubles, turmoils, and challenges, what predominates is kindness? Is there a search for understanding that results in pure knowledge, when it comes to a dilemma? Look at verse 37:

That they may be conferred upon us, it is true; but when we undertake to cover our sins, or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control or dominion or

compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the heavens withdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man. (D&C 121:37; see also T&C 139:5)

It's been my observation that so soon as the Spirit of the Lord withdraws, *that quickly* will another spirit step in to assure you that you're right, you should be vindicated; that you ought to proceed on in the arrogance of your heart to feel yourself justified and vindicated. There are false spirits that go about, but there are no better an audience to receive the whisperings of those false spirits than it is the abusers who, having grieved the spirit and caused it to withdraw, accept the counsel from yet another spirit that says, "You're right, press on! Well done! You're good! You're right! You'll be vindicated! This is all God's work, and you're a great man because you're engaged in God's work! Do not back down, do not relent. Forget about persuasion; you should never be long-suffering, you should make those under your rule suffer. They *should* yield to your rule. There is no place for meekness: we believe in a God of strength, a God of power, a God whose work can be done despite the frailties of man. There is no need for men to be meek—and it's kind in the end, after all, to punish, and to force, and to coerce because we have a good objective in mind!"

All the lies and all of the deceit that led, in turn, to Catholicism falling into the abyss that *it* fell into, are presently in play with spirits that worked this out long ago—taking the Restoration of the Gospel as yet another opportunity in which to whisper in, once the spirit is withdrawn.

So, does your marriage help you avoid covering your sins? Does your marriage, because you're never going to solve this problem in the community until you first begin to solve it within the walls of your own home— You're never going to have Zion that exists somewhere among a community until, *first*, that community is composed of those who have a marriage that is in the image of God. Does your marriage help you avoid gratifying your pride? Does it help pull down your vain ambition? Is your ambition to exalt the two of you, rather than the one of you? Does it bring you, time and time again, to not exercise control but to respect the freedom to choose?

Your kids are going to make mistakes. It's not your job to force them to *not* make the mistake. It's your job to counsel them, and to let them have the experience by which your counsel makes sense and is vindicated. You hope the mistakes that they make are not too serious, but even if they're serious and they involve lifelong struggles, it's their right to choose; and it's your obligation to teach and to persuade, and then to *rejoice* when they return after they are tired of filling their bellies with the husks that the pigs are fed. It's your job to go and greet them, and put a robe on their shoulder, and put a ring on their hand, and to kill the fatted calf.

It's *not* your job to beat them and to chain them to the farm, so they can't go away and behave foolishly. They need to know that your bonds of love towards them are stronger than death itself. They need to know that they will endure in your heart into eternity. And

not only your children, but one another because we *all* make mistakes. *Do not* exercise dominion, *do not* exercise compulsion; exercise long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, and kindness. Some of the biggest disasters come when you do not give people the right to choose freely, and you attempt to coerce them. Be wise, be prudent, be someone that they would respect and they would listen to.

Now, it's clear when it comes to the gospel that the gospel has, as its standard, absolutes. Doctrine and Covenants 1, section 31, says, *For I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance (D&C 1:31; see also T&C 54:5 RE).*

And if that's not a troubling enough idea, then if you go to King Benjamin in Mosiah 4, verse 29, it says (this is King Benjamin talking): *And finally, I cannot tell you all the things whereby ye may commit sin; for there are divers ways and means, even so many that I cannot number them (Mosiah 4:29; see also Mosiah 2:6 RE).*

So, there's an infinite supply of opportunities with which to commit sin, *and* God cannot look upon that with any degree of allowance. It's sort of a formidable challenge for us to look at, but there is a divine purpose underlying that. And that divine purpose is to bring us in humility to God, recognizing that there's a gulf between who and what we are, and what it is that is expected of us in order to be truly holy.



The foregoing excerpts are taken from:

- [A Glossary of Gospel Terms, Meekness](#), Restoration Edition p.160,
- Denver's talk entitled "Zion Will Come," given near Moab, Utah, on April 10th, 2016,
- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #6, entitled "Zion," given in Grand Junction, Colorado, on April 12th, 2014,
- Denver's talk given at the Chiasmus Conference in American Fork, Utah, on September 18, 2010,
- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #8, entitled "A Broken Heart," given in Las Vegas, Nevada, on July 25th, 2014,
- His conference talk entitled "The Doctrine of Christ," given in Boise, Idaho, on September 11th, 2016,
- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #9, entitled "Marriage and Family," given in St. George, Utah, on July 26th, 2014, and
- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #10, entitled "Preserving the Restoration," given in Mesa, Arizona, on September 9th, 2014.