

## MONDAY 12.4.23 - Matthew 11:28-30

A man witnessed a farmer plowing with two oxen. He thought it strange as one ox was huge and the other was very small. It was odd to see a farmer trying to plow with two such unequal animals in the yoke. He stopped and spoke with the farmer about this arrangement. The farmer said, 'I want you to notice something. See the way the oxen are hooked to the yoke? You will observe that the large ox is pulling all the weight. The little ox is being broken in, but he is not actually pulling any weight.' We can think this way about today's scripture when our Lord says, "Take my yoke upon you, learn of me". Typically, a load is equally distributed between two that are yoked together. When yoked with Jesus Christ, He bears the load and we who are yoked to Him share in the joy and the accomplishment of the labor but without the burden of the yoke.

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

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## TUESDAY 11.5.23 - 2 Timothy 2:24-25

<sup>4</sup>And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. <sup>25</sup>Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth,

Recently, I have found myself thinking about the simple difference between being selfless and selfish. This simple concept seems to permeate so much of what we are instructed to do in Christ. I see it again in today's topic of gentleness. If I enter a situation with a loud and demanding tone, chances are that I am not thinking about the other person so much as I am thinking about myself and getting my own way. On the other hand, if I enter a situation with a gentle spirit, my concern for the other people involved becomes evident. What's more, a gentle spirit given to us by the Holy Spirit may well allow us to be used of God to point people to knowledge of the truth which is salvation through Christ. As you enter into people's lives this week, pray that God will give you a spirit of gentleness that will point people to Christ.

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

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## WEDNESDAY - 12.6.23 - Galatians 5:22 -23

In St. Petersburg, Russia stands a magnificent statue of Peter the Great. He's seated on his horse with his hand uplifted, pointing his nation onward. He was the maker of modern Russia, and in many respects he deserves the title "great." However, he was also subject to outbursts of fury and anger. In one of these fits of rage, he killed his own son. Toward the end of his reign, Peter the Great once remarked, "I have conquered an empire, but I was not able to conquer myself." I wonder how many of us can echo those words. It was Solomon who wrote, "Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city" (Proverbs 16:32). Self-control is the final fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:23), and it's an important part of living in the Spirit (v 16). Ask God to help build this essential virtue into your Christian experience.

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

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## THURSDAY 12.7.23 - Proverbs 25:28

Walls are barriers to keep things in or out. Ancient cities were surrounded by walls as their primary defense system. People and possessions were protected behind thick fortifications and gates that could be locked. Just like cities, people build walls around themselves to ensure privacy and guard their thoughts. Self-control is one of those walls. It keeps one's tongue, appetites, temper, and general behavior within acceptable boundaries. If a city's walls were breached, enemies could enter, take what they wanted, and leave the rest in ruin.

The same can be said of people without self-control: their personal defenses are broken, and their conduct is often inappropriate, leaving behind broken relationships, possible financial loss, and a damaged reputation. We must pray for wisdom and guidance in our dealings with others. Self-control is one of our gifts through the Holy Spirit. We must exercise it with His power.

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

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## FRIDAY- 12.8.23 - Psalm 141:3-4

What a great gift this psalm offers to us. "Set a guard over my mouth...watch the door of my lips." "Do not let my heart incline to evil." "Do not be busy with wicked deeds."

How the Lord knows our hearts. How desperately wicked they are and how much our physical bodies want to walk in the way of the world. The world, the flesh and the Devil pull at us from every side and even from inside. More than an angel and a demon on either shoulder advising us, our own mind is busy seeking dishonoring activities and expressions. How easily we can give way to anger, a cutting remark, a negative slight. Yet God provides us freedom to not obey. He gives direction, instruction and power to keep from these, and instead to be faithful, righteous and pure. With His spirit, we can actually exercise self-control. Surprise, a spiritual gift!

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

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E2 GROUP OPPORTUNITIES

SUNDAY MORNINGS - 9:40am

- Kids** CHILDREN'S CHURCH (Ages 4 – 4th Grade)  
LOCATION: Camp Shiloh on the Lower Level  
*available during the 9:40 service*  
NURSERY (through Age 3)  
LOCATION: Camp Shiloh on the Lower Level  
*available during the 9:40 service*
- Youth** YOUTH GROUP (5th – 12th Grade)  
LOCATION: Youth Activity Center (across street)
- Adults** WINTER QUARTER – Begins December 3rd  
LOCATION: B8-10with Gene Steinruck  
**Explore the Bible** - *Genesis 1-19*  
LOCATION: B11with Randy Hutchison  
**Bible Studies for Life** "A Name Like No Other"  
LOCATION: B1-2 "Goliath Must Fall"  
with Chris Domenico

SUNDAY EVENINGS - 6:00pm

- Kids** MESSIAH KIDS (Kindergarten – 4th Grade)  
LOCATION: Camp Shiloh on the Lower Level
- Youth** YOUTH GROUP (5th – 12th Grade)  
LOCATION: Youth Activity Center (across street)  
*5th–8th Grade meet downstairs*  
*9th–12th Grade meet upstairs*
- Adults** Dive Deep with Doug  
LOCATION: Worship Center

E2 WINTER SMALL GROUP

- Men's** TUESDAY EVENING STUDY- Begins December 5th  
**Daniel** by JD Greear - with Vince Diloretto  
6:30pm in B1-2

ADVENT 2023

- Wednesday** EVENING SMALL GROUP  
**Because of Bethlehem** by Max Lucado - Discover the hope and promises of Christmas because of one baby born in Bethlehem. 11/29 - 12/20 at 6:30pm in B8-10 with Barry Wills.

**Galatians 5:22-23**  
**The Fruit of Gentleness**

*"But the fruit of the Spirit is ... gentleness"*

Most people respond to rudeness in one of three ways:

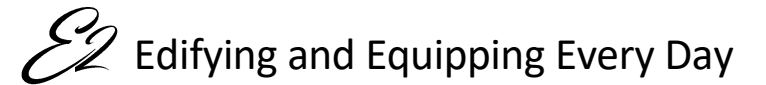
1. \_\_\_\_\_  
• 1 Samuel 25:2-13
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
• 1 Samuel 25:21-22
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
• 1 Samuel 25:32-35

When treated rudely, it's essential to ...

- Think \_\_\_\_\_ (vv 26, 28, 29, 30, 31)
- Act \_\_\_\_\_ (vv 28, 31)

Five Strategies for Developing Gentleness

- Actively seek to make others feel at \_\_\_\_\_
- Show \_\_\_\_\_ for the personal \_\_\_\_\_ of others
- Avoid \_\_\_\_\_ speech and \_\_\_\_\_ manner
- Don't be threatened by \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ about a person who has fallen



TAKING OUR NEXT STEP TOGETHER IN THE WORD



December 4th - December 8th

INTRODUCTION:

Part of our purpose and strategy as a church is to Edify and Equip (E2) every believer. We desire to see every person take their next step with God, both individually as well as with families and small groups (E2 Communities). This devotional is to aid us in just that. We invite you to join us in daily devotion.

OVERVIEW:

Monday's and Tuesday's readings will be a follow up on Sunday's message, "The Fruit of Gentleness" with Pastor Doug Lyon. Wednesday's through Friday's devotions will help prepare us for the message on 12.10, "The Fruit of Self-Control" with Pastor Doug Lyon.

KEY/MEMORY VERSE: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law." Galatians 5:22-23

TO SIGN UP OR REQUEST MORE INFORMATION FOR ANY GROUPS OR CLASSES, PLEASE USE THE CONNECT CARD IN YOUR BULLETIN. THANK YOU!