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## Gentle, Not Weak

By Shannon Ford on March 18, 2022

**TODAY'S READING:** 1 Thessalonians 2

Paul's opponents may have argued that he did not really care about his converts and that in return they should no longer care about him or his message. Paul countered by reciting his actions among the Thessalonians. He tenderly cared for them as a mother would care for her children (1 Thessalonians 2:7). He was willing to pour out his life for them. He suffered hardships for them. He strove to live as an example for them. He loved them like a father. Paul's example reminds us that caring Christians are gentle with other believers.

The Bible goes out of its way to demonstrate Jesus' gentleness. In fact, the Old Testament depicts the Messiah as unusually gentle, telling us that Jesus would not break a "bruised reed" or snuff out a "smoldering wick" (Isaiah 42:3). In the gospels, Jesus affirmed His gentleness: "I am gentle and humble in heart" (Matthew 11:29). And the apostles often reminded the early Church of Jesus' gentleness: "By the meekness and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you" (2 Corinthians 10:1).

Unfortunately, too many people equate gentleness with weakness. Gentleness is a strong hand with a soft touch. It is a tender, compassionate approach toward others' weaknesses and limitations. A gentle person still speaks truth, sometimes even painful truth, but in doing so guards his/her tone so the truth can be well received.

**PRAYER:** Lord, teach me to be strong, yet gentle. Help me to never confuse gentleness for weakness. Thank You for Your gentleness with me. In Jesus' name, amen.

**TOMORROW'S READING:** Weekend is for catch-up and review.

**MONDAY'S READING:** 1 Thessalonians 3

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