

Quiet Strength

By Brian Dahl

When I think of people who “inherit the earth,” certain characteristics come to mind:

- “Climbed their way to the top.”
- “Driven and accomplished.”
- “Gifted leadership.”

But Jesus describes a person who inherits the Earth in stark contrast to that thinking. He said, “Blessed are the meek.”

As a partner in a marketing agency for most of my career, I have met and worked with a wide variety of companies and people. One client we served for several years was especially impressive to me—a well-known, publicly-traded consumer products company.

Having them on the client roster was a big deal. They are industry leaders, and the people who work there are smart, credentialed, and successful. Even the cars in the parking lot are impressive.

I remember the first few times I parked my basic, older sedan in

their visitor lot. As I walked up the manicured path toward the grand entrance there was a voice inside questioning: “do I even belong here?” My work accomplishments and resume didn’t measure up to what was going on inside those steel and glass walls.

Yet that inner voice was not the voice of Jesus, who said, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” And this truth was first recorded in the messianic Psalm 37, verse 11: “But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy great peace.”

As a Christ-follower, this is an amazing truth. A counter-cultural transformational truth! Many business influencers today proclaim that inheriting the land is something we make happen. We forge our path to happiness with planning, talent, and grit. But I have found that approach leads to emptiness. It’s an illusion from Satan that only ends in disillusionment.

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INSIDE: REFLECTIONS

Blessed are the Meek

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. (Matthew 5:5)

It’s hard to imagine meekness as an effective strategy for triumphing over a hard and vengeful world. Yet, it is a core character trait Jesus wishes his disciples to manifest and magnify.

Meekness is highly attractive and quite effective in opening up hearts. It can be very disarming. It isn’t cowardly, in fact, it requires much grace, self-control, and willingness to step forward. We don’t do it alone.

God is the source of all meekness and the divine quality of Jesus. “Taste and see that the Lord is good.” (Psalm 34:8) In us it flourishes in a deep and abiding reliance on God’s faithfulness and control over every situation. It is expressed in deep courage and care in our relationships with others.



We are sent out into a world that is competitive, confrontative, and critical. If we respond angrily and arrogantly, it will create a hardness of heart in us. On the other hand, the meek will grow in expressing the love of God.

March Reflections: Pages 2-4

REFLECTIONS WEEK 1

Trust the Turbulence

By Annie Stutley

Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. (James 4:10)

My husband almost died. His life hung in the balance when lightning struck a plane engine during his return flight from a business trip—sparks, a loud crash, the plane veering in different directions, then completely sideways. He sent me a chilling text: “Annie. Something blew up on the plane. It’s not flying well. Just know I loved you more than anything in this world.”

I flew into a flurry of desperate texts: dozens of “I love yous,” apologies, and pleas for him to keep texting because seeing the three little swirling iPhone dots as he replied meant he wasn’t gone. I’d get updates—an emergency landing was 20 minutes away; it wasn’t looking good. I poured my heart into more texts. Then the little dots again. Update: he was calming the woman next to him. More texts from me. More dots. My son Billy walked in the door from practice. He’d been texted too.

“It’s okay, Mom. It’s okay.”

Then the dots vanished. My texts were undeliverable. I wailed. I convulsed. I completely broke into a million pieces.

But not Billy.

“Mom, remember what you believe. Remember who you trust.”

As I spiraled into darkness, Billy guided me back, reciting the Lord’s Prayer and declaring peace over his concern. Billy had hope in the midst of radio silence from a plane that last we heard was nosediving. He was in command, but solely because of who had placed his trust in, embodying the kind of strength Jesus preached about in Matthew 5:5. Billy wasn’t weak, nor did he chastise my emotions or spout useless platitudes. He was beautifully meek, choosing gentleness—a deeply spiritual might, yes might, that draws its power from unyielding faith in God’s promises.

Minutes later: “He landed, Mom. He’s okay.”

The dots had returned.

It’s easy to view meekness as submissive or docile because it’s easier to submit ourselves to fear than faith, anger than patience, pride than humility, and wrath than peace when

confronted by disappointments or even catastrophes. But in the turbulence, Billy’s unwavering faith through the chaos, his gentle strength, led us to inherit peace.

Annie Stutley is a member of the Editorial Team living in New Orleans, Louisiana. Find her at anniedstutley.com.

PRAY

Heavenly Father of unending promises, grant me the strength to always place my trust in you.

REFLECT

How does embracing humility in God’s power, not ours, bring peace in turbulent times?

DISCUSS

What turbulence have we experienced in our work environment? How has our faith grown, and these challenges transformed us?

Keep Building God’s Kingdom

Did you know WorkLight can be designated as a beneficiary of your retirement plan or life insurance policy? You can even arrange for contributions from an IRA, 401(k) or pension fund.

Learn more about planned giving at WorkLight.org/Legacy

REFLECTIONS WEEK 2

What's Your Fragrance?

By Marty Anderson

... “you will not always have me. When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial.” (Matthew 26:12-13)

As I was reflecting on the story of the woman who anointed Jesus with expensive perfume before his crucifixion and burial, it occurred to me that this fragrance would have been strong and likely stayed with him for a long time.

Consider when he was being accused of blasphemy and being spit on by the high priest, leading priests, and elders. All the while, their noses would have told them they were in the presence of a king. What a bizarre scene.

Then there's the trial before Pilate. His nose must have told him this man was

certainly not a criminal. Jesus may have smelled better than Pilate! And consider the soldiers beating Jesus to near death, but thinking, “What is this smell?” Could it be that his smell was convicting them of their sins with every whiff?

What about us? What smell do people remember after interacting with us? It may not be a physical smell sensed with their noses, but we do convey an aroma. Is each of us memorable in a positive way or a bad way? Do we exude the fragrance of Christ?

Just like Jesus, our fragrance goes on and is remembered for a long time after we've gone. People will even talk about it at our funerals. Do we exude judgment? Impatience? Frustration? Or are we fragrant by being patient? Kind? Encouraging? Like Jesus, do we go out of our way to help someone? Or is it always all about us and our agendas?

How will we smell today? Let's exude the fragrance of Christ!

Marty Anderson lives in Bloomington, Minnesota, with his wife Cecilia. He is the president of the Minneapolis/St. Paul Chapter and a member of the WorkLight Editorial Board.

PRAY

Lord, help us to be like Jesus and have a servant's heart. Help us to treat others how we want to be treated.

REFLECT

How do people see you? Are you patient? Helpful? Or are you demanding and unkind?

DISCUSS

Do you look for and listen to feedback? How do you know what fragrance you exude?

REFLECTIONS WEEK 3

Role of Meekness

By Ron Schmalz

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. (Colossians 3:12-13)

My departure from work last year was certainly an exercise in finding God's will in a challenging situation, but I also learned an important lesson about the role of meekness when responding to his will in the workplace.

As I prayed over whether to leave the company, the Holy Spirit led me repeatedly to verses in the Sermon on the Mount, which were calling me to meekness. From Matthew 5:22: “I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment.” From Matthew 5:24: “First

go and be reconciled to them.” From Matthew 5:7: “Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.”

In our world today, meekness is often confused with weakness, but quite the opposite was true of Hebrew culture in the time of Jesus where it was understood as showing obedience to God's authority. In the Old Testament, leaders like Moses and King David demonstrated their meekness and strength through the graces poured out by the Holy Spirit. Jesus sets a perfect example during the agony in the garden when he says, “‘Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.’ An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him.”

Godliness and strength are found in our obedience to God's will through meekness and humility, which Jesus teaches us in the Beatitudes. By choosing to actively live out our faith each day, the Holy Spirit provides us with opportunities to bear witness to what we believe and helps us bring greater glory to God.

Ron Schmalz lives in Boulder Creek, California. He and his wife Terri are blessed with four children and two grandchildren. Ron works in high-tech specializing in enterprise architecture and cloud infrastructure.

PRAY

Lord, calm my anger and guard my tongue so I become a better instrument of your kindness and mercy.

REFLECT

How and when have you felt called by the Lord to model the Beatitudes, in particular meekness and being a peacemaker?

DISCUSS

Share a situation where the Beatitude of meekness has actually played out. How might meekness play out in us during our current challenges at work?

REFLECTIONS WEEK 4

Dream Job

By Nancy Huddleston

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. ... (Galatians 5:22-23)

As I sat in my car in the parking lot one frosty morning in Minneapolis, I asked the Lord to open my heart to be a good coworker as I looked up toward an office building that would be my new work home.

I'd just left a job I loved. But after much prayer I'd come to realize my skills were no longer a good fit for that organization, so I embarked on a search for a new opportunity.

In my new job I was on a creative team, which consisted of three young men, all in their 30s. I was a 50-something communications specialist, handling communication needs for clients of an association management company.

On the first day, lunch was scheduled with the creative team. As we started to get to know each other, I learned that two young men were living bachelor lifestyles, while the other was a young husband and father. I started thinking we didn't have anything in common, and I asked the Lord to continue to open my heart.

Much to my surprise, we all fell into a great working relationship. They were entertained by my old-time colloquialisms, such as "six of one, half dozen of the other." I asked inquisitively about their design projects to understand how they visualized showcasing the articles I was creating.

My boss was the age of my oldest son, but he was wise beyond his years. We were always the first to arrive in the office, which afforded us time to get to know each other better. Before we both moved on to other jobs, we'd become great friends, and have stayed in touch ever since.

The Lord softened my heart, pushing away the pain I felt from giving up what I thought was my "dream job," and opening my eyes to a new

challenge, which I can say was the best job I ever had.

Nancy Huddleston is a member of WorkLight's Editorial Team. She and her husband Mike live in Burnsville, Minnesota, and she is a freelance writer and editor.

PRAY

Lord, help us to open our hearts to new coworkers, new opportunities, and new challenges in the workplace.

REFLECT

When was a time when you used meekness to overcome a challenging situation in your workplace?

DISCUSS

As we "taste and see that the Lord is good" (Psalm 34:8) how can we cultivate relationships with our coworkers?

PRESIDENT'S NOTE



Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (Matthew 11:29)

Inheritance of the Meek

The scripture in *The Flame* is sourced from the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible. So, you may not see it at first in the scripture above, but Matthew 11:29 is a direct reference to meekness. In fact, the King James Version even uses the word "meek" in place of "gentle."

Whichever translation you use, Jesus tells us and shows us through the Gospel that he is meek. This is an

essential attribute of the spiritual life, and it is made most clear and available through Christ himself. He is the model for meekness for all of us.

If you're anything like me, this can be confusing to the mind. How could the Son of God be meek? Isn't he all-powerful? The Alpha and Omega? But therein lies one of the most important aspects of our Lord and Savior. He is fully God and fully man. Yet he came to deliver us from sin, even to the point of being humbled to death. He is the way.

What does it mean for my Lord to be both all-powerful and meek? For starters, it means I have a lot to pray about. Especially in those moments where my fleeting illusions of power interfere with my own humility.

But even when I'm gentle, I can find myself distracted by a desire to get it right. If I could just be a little more patient or a little more kind. Then maybe I would finally be meek. But this isn't merely an exercise in personality management. It's a lifelong journey to know and experience the living God.

Where are you in your meekness journey? While it's worth looking at your heart and behavior, it's probably best to spend most of your time focusing on Jesus.

With you in Christ,
Wes



Intentional Meekness

By Tom Petersen

I should have been angry.

For the third week in a row, a colleague had stood me up, skipping a meeting I had scheduled to repair our broken relationship.

While ordinarily I would have been angered by his slight (or, less charitably, his power play), I had a different mindset that day. I had recently recognized my tendency to be angry at work. I had been praying to God for help. My scripture reading provided examples of Biblical leaders—including Moses, David, and Jesus—who had set aside their respective wills in order to fulfill God's call on them. I was trying to follow their example.

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. (Philippians 2:5-7)

It was sometime later when I realized that this approach modeled Jesus' call for us to be meek.

Meekness Isn't Weakness

In the work world, meekness is often seen as weakness. We generally describe it with negative terms like "mousy" or "door mat." But in his studies of the Sermon on the Mount, British pastor D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones describes meekness as emptying ourselves, so we have a singular focus on God's glory. Doing that gives us

confidence in our actions, knowing the power of relying on God's control and not our own efforts.

In my case, acting meekly meant rising above any hurt or embarrassment I might have felt from my colleague's rebuffs. It meant not trying to assert my interests. It meant rejecting non-productive responses like complaining to others about him. Instead, it took the form of quiet resolve to continue to pursue him regardless of the personal cost, knowing that my work success—and my Father's pleasure—required maintaining a relationship with him.

Help From the Holy Spirit

Over time, my persistence paid off. The colleague and I never became friends, but we found a way to work together. Rather than lashing out in retaliation, I got into the habit of calling on the Holy Spirit when I felt myself getting agitated or taking offense by behavior that I could interpret as disrespectful. Adopting a teachable spirit made the process much easier.

I have failed more times than I have succeeded in modeling meekness in the workplace. But on this occasion, I had the quiet confidence that what I was doing was the work of my Father, and the assurance that I wasn't doing it alone.

Tom Petersen is a former utility communications professional who writes on work and faith issues and is a member of WorkLight's Editorial Team. He and his wife Cathy have two children.

Quiet Strength

Continued from page 1

To understand Matthew 5:5 we need to better define the word "meek." Today, meekness is closely aligned with weakness—someone who is timid and easy to push around. People who drive basic, older sedans, for example.

Merriam-Webster defines meek very differently: "Enduring injury with patience and without resentment." And when I read that, other words came to mind: gentleness, long-suffering, and restraint.

Meekness isn't weakness; rather, it's actually a quiet strength that Jesus describes. And the source of that strength is not me. It's strength from our omnipotent, creator God that is at work in me when I surrender to him.

True meekness completely changes the game. We don't work on our power and success. That would be a disaster and ultimately fail. But when we work for our Father, our mindset is to serve God and people in the power of the living and resurrected savior, Jesus Christ.

In God's economy, meek is the perfect word to describe those who inherit the Earth. The Earth and everything in it belong to God. And he invites us to be heirs of his Kingdom when we surrender our lives to him.

The Greek word used for meek in Matthew 5:5 can be translated as "power under control," "bridled strength," and "power harnessed for a purpose."

Let's reflect the meekness of Jesus when he submitted to God's will at the cross. To endure injury without resentment, bearing the fruit of the spirit. Let's work and live in submission to God's power for God's purpose.

Come Holy Spirit!

Brian Dahl is a partner at DKY, a brand marketing agency in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He is also a WorkLight board member, and the DKY team supports WorkLight marketing communications needs.



STEWARDING OUR MINISTRY SERIES:

Communications Committee



This is one in a series of articles introducing the way members are using their talents to help support and care for different aspects of our ministry.

There are many opportunities to join together in developing and supporting WorkLight. We rely on our members to actively participate in one of our key committees because we are all called “to be Christ in the workplace.” There’s always room for more. In order to familiarize you, we’ll occasionally feature the specific objectives and activities of our committees.

The Communications Committee supports the Board of Directors, staff, Editorial Team, and all of our marketing and design suppliers. Together they effectively strategize and oversee WorkLight’s communications and marketing efforts to communicate and illustrate a spirit-led movement of brothers and sisters who unite to build God’s Kingdom in the marketplace.

The committee can have up to nine members including at least two board members. They meet formally once a month with our president and operations manager attending. Current members are Steve Becker, Luke Cahill, Brian Dahl, and Nancy Huddleston.

Steve and Nancy served in 2023 as Chair and Co-Chair respectively.

Two key components of the communication team’s oversight are marketing communications and the two editorial programs of WorkLight, *The Flame* and the *Spark*. Steve and Nancy work with the Editorial Team to manage their content. Brian Dahl works with his staff at DKY Inc. and vendors to support WorkLight’s marketing communications efforts, including the website, videos, fundraising and promotion of our programs.

We are very blessed to have a professional team like DKY who, for the last several years, have generously offered their in-kind services that unites our marketing efforts.

Under our president’s leadership, each committee is asked to set three objectives. Along with that each committee establishes key dashboard indicators to track and measure the effectiveness of their efforts.

The Communications Committee’s three objectives in 2023 were:

1. Increasing participation and engagement from members in contributing content.
2. Provide more effective support for fundraising including year-end.
3. Foster a sense of being a shared

missional community across local efforts.

The Editorial Team has developed a process that is engaging past contributors as well as identifying new ones. They worked with the board to establish themes and desired features, including reporting on local activity to support the efforts to reach WorkLight’s goal of 500 igniters by 2025. While they’ve made inroads, there is much more they can do in coordinating with the local leaders and members. This is a priority for 2024.

The fundraising objectives were achieved by coordinating with the fundraising committee, DKY, and the support of an outside expert (see February 2024 issue report). The last objective needs more continual effort and is carrying over into new objectives for 2024.

The Communications Committee in 2024 is transitioning to a stronger emphasis on WorkLight’s marketing communications while still building on the successful work in increasing member contributions to the *Flame* and *Spark*. With this in mind, Brian Dahl will be assuming the role of communications chair and Steve Becker will assist as co-chair. Nancy Huddleston will continue as chair of the Editorial Team.

There continues to be availability to join the Communication Team or participate in WorkLight’s Editorial Board. If you have an interest in either let us know. Contact one of WorkLight’s Board Members for the Communications Committee, or Steve or Nancy for the Editorial Team.

Join our Community of CONTENT CONTRIBUTORS

We welcome stories for both *The Flame* and our Spark Workday Reflections. Go to bit.ly/WLcontentguide for details on contributing.



NEWS

THANK YOU, LARRY FAVOR

Our brother in Christ Larry Favor's time on the Board of Directors has come to an end after years of critical leadership through change and transformation. Larry will remain deeply involved in the Santa Cruz Chapter, as he has for decades. Thanks be to God for men like Larry who step up to lead and steward with such love and passion.

WELCOME, JOE BIRKHOLZ

After getting to know WorkLight from the inside out by serving on our Finance and Governance Committees and participating in a Small Group, we are pleased to welcome Joe Birkholz as the newest member of the Board of Directors, as well as our Executive Committee, as the secretary. Joe is a passionate follower of Jesus Christ, loving husband, father of seven, and mid-career igniter also known as the chief risk officer of Bridgewater Bank in Minnesota.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE SERVICE

WorkLight operates with a National Governing Board alongside a

robust set of working committees. Committees are where board and non-board members work side-by-side to steward critical areas of the organization such as Finance, Fundraising, Program, Communications, and Governance. Do you have board experience? We are always looking for the right men and women to join the effort to build God's Kingdom in the workplace.

TRIVIA

In Fall of 2022 we celebrated 40 years of ministry for our National Challenge Weekend. Throughout 2023 we have seen Challenge Weekends across the country attract first-time igniters. How many first-time Challenge Weekend igniters do you think we had between the 2022 National Challenge Weekend and the end of 2023?

Last month's answer: The CIC/WorkLight Home Office has been headquartered in five different states (Indiana, Minnesota, California, Arizona, and Virginia).

2024 CHALLENGE WEEKENDS

Fresno Women's Chapter

- April 19–21 at St. Anthony Retreat Center, 43816 Sierra Dr., Three Rivers, California.

Salinas/Santa Cruz Men's Chapter

- April 26–28 at Mission San Antonio De Padua in Jolon, California.

Minneapolis' Hilltop Small Group

- April 26–28 at a local member's cabin in central Minnesota.

Palm Desert Women's Chapter

- May 10–12 at Sacred Heart Church, 42230 Deep Canyon Road, Palm Desert, California.

Check out these events and more at worklight.org/events/.

Be the One. Host a Challenge Weekend™

Is God calling you to lead? Do you want Christ to shine brighter in workplaces across the world? Consider hosting a Challenge Weekend in your community. We provide the tools and support you need. You can be the one to impact a new generation in your area.

Learn more at worklight.org/challenge-weekends

"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called."
Ephesians 4:4

WORKLIGHT

*"I have been
crucified with Christ
and I no longer live,
but Christ lives in me."*

Galatians 2:20

MARCH 2024

WorkLight.org

THE FLAME

WORKLIGHT PRAYER

Father,

*Fill us with your Holy Spirit
that we may be made new
and bring the presence of Christ into all we do;
That we may grow in love for you, and for all;
That we may be humble and wise stewards of your creation;
That we may bring your light into our workplaces;
That we may lead all to unity in you;
Through Jesus, our Lord.*

Amen

VISION Being Christ in the workplace

MISSION To encourage and equip Christians to be God's presence in the workplace by the power of the Holy Spirit, exercising faith, integrity, and excellence

VALUES Christians in Commerce (DBA WorkLight) is an ecumenical organization committed to:

- Growing and being transformed in Jesus Christ
- Manifesting the gifts of the Holy Spirit
- Building strong brotherhood and sisterhood
- Serving God and expanding his Kingdom in all aspects of our lives



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