

Meekness

“Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.”

James 1:21.

The Greek word which is translated as meek or meekness (*praus/proutes*) is a word with many definitions and implications. In part it means *gentleness*. In Matthew 11:29 Jesus says, *“Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle [praus] and lowly in heart ...”* It can also mean *humbleness*, like when we read in Matthew 21:5 about Jesus entering Jerusalem, *“Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, your king is coming to you, humble [praus], and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.’”* As with many words, this one has multiple implications. So what does James mean? How are we to receive the word with gentleness/humility?

James's passage makes more sense when we begin to understand meekness in terms closer to humility and being humble. But there's also more to it than that. We receive the word with meekness when we first and foremost recognize that it is from God. The authority of the word has its place in eternity. It does not come from men and it is not flawed. If we assume that it is from men, then we won't receive the word with meekness because we believe we are in a position to talk back to it, to prove it wrong, to argue against it. This is what James's meekness is. James means: Don't think you know better.

When we recognize the word is from God, we understand that we're in no position to assume that we know better than the word. If we don't receive the word with meekness – if we talk back to it, reject it, ignore it out of pride rather than accept it out of humility – then the word won't do us any good. It will be advice we choose to accept or to ignore based on our understanding. But when we accept the word with meekness, then we won't override it. We know that we don't know better and that it's exactly what we need to hear.

Putting away filthiness and wickedness is a prerequisite for accepting the word with meekness. If we don't put away wickedness, then we still think we know better. We're still talking back to God. It's only in our actions that we demonstrate what we really believe in our hearts. If we understand from our heart that God is always in the right, then we're in the position to accept the word with meekness. [DJR]