**The Meekness of Moses**

The Holy Spirit tells us that Moses was the most humble man on the face of the earth (Numbers 12:3). Based on the concept many hold of meekness and humility, they seem strange character traits for a person with the strength to lead a ragtag group of millions out of slavery in Egypt through the Sinai Wilderness and to the land God had promised Abraham.

When we are introduced to Moses, he is reluctant to take on the task of leading the Israelites because of a profound sense of inadequacy. Not long after, he is confronting one of the most powerful kings in the world. At times in the Biblical narrative, we find Moses enduring personal attacks and ridicule while on other occasions, he is rebuking the people for their unfaithfulness. In Exodus 32, the Israelites begin worshipping a golden calf and God determines to destroy them, but Moses pleads with Him on their behalf and saves their lives. He then proceeds to cast down the stone tablets in anger, grinds up the calf into powder, puts the powder in the water and makes the people drink it! Just what is God’s definition of meekness?

A study of the life of Moses can help to clarify God’s view of humility. Moses’ behavior in life’s circumstances is better understood when you recognize that he put God first, the needs of others next and his own comforts and preferences last.

When the Israelite people demonstrated a despicable lack of gratitude for the sacrifices Moses constantly made on their behalf, he said nothing. When the people constantly complained about his leadership, he did not retaliate. When his own brother and sister jealously questioned his authority, he interceded for them to minimize God’s punishment.

But as apparent was his meekness before his brethren, his humility before his God was even more profound. When God spoke, there was no room for irreverence or compromise. Moses seemed to be without personal ego; folks could run roughshod over him but his demeanor shifted immediately when they began to criticize God.

Moses wasn’t self-righteous. He was too humble for that. But when Jehovah God rescued the Israelite people from Egyptian bondage, performed astounding miracles on their behalf, provided for their every need, led them and protected them, only to receive ingratitude, discontent and rebellion in return, Moses felt a genuine righteous indignation because of his complete devotion to God.

The indignation Moses displayed on those occasions was not out of character with his humility; in fact, it was because of his humility before God. Those who equate meekness with weakness are gravely mistaken. Because of his unique relationship with God, Moses had great destructive power at his disposal, yet he repeatedly requested restraint because of his love for the people he led.

If I am to have the humility of Moses, I must consider others better than myself and look out for their interests (Philippians 2:3). But at the most fundamental level, I must be motivated by complete devotion to and reverence for God. The result will be uncompromising convictions and a constant concern for the good of others. God, others, self; in that order.

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