

Gentle and Patient Shepherd

Detailed Outline

Part 3 of 5

“He chose David his servant and took him from the sheepfolds; from following the nursing ewes he brought him to shepherd Jacob his people, Israel his inheritance. With upright heart he shepherded and guided them with his skillful hand.” (Psalm 78:70–72 ESV)

II. An Elder Must Be Gentle and Patient.

A. Gentle

1. Example of Jesus

- a) Jesus was gentle and lowly; he didn’t push people around.

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

- b) We shouldn’t be kicking people around, pushing them around.

“He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.” (Isa. 40:11)

2. Example of young parents

- a) Be gentle with first-time parents whose children cry during the meetings of the church.

- b) Assure them, be gentle with them, don’t cast a hurtful eye at them for disruptions.

“I am so happy you are pro-life, it brings me joy to hear your child cry in the meeting.”

“It thrills me to know that there are young families in our fellowship—they are the next generation.”

3. The requirement of an elder is that he be “gentle.”

“Therefore an overseer must be . . . gentle” (1 Tim. 3:3)

- a) This is not “salad bar theology;” we can’t pick and choose what we want.

- b) An elder “must” be gentle.

4. The example and teaching of Paul

- a) When confronting a serious problem, Paul warned the Corinthians with gentleness.

“I, Paul, myself entreat you, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—I who am humble when face to face with you, but bold toward you when I am away!” (2 Cor. 10:1)

- b) Even dealing with people who may be antagonist or critical of us.
“But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children.” (1 Thess. 2:7)
- c) When dealing with people are struggling, we restore people with gentleness.
“Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.” (Gal. 6:1)
- d) When dealing with people who oppose us:
“And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth.” (2 Tim. 2:24–25)
- e) Do all of these things, but do it all with complete patience and gentleness.
“... Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.” (2 Tim. 4:2)
“We put no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by . . . patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love . . .” (2 Cor. 6:3, 4, 6)

5. The reason for treating one’s opponent with gentleness is that it enhances the possibility of restoring someone to the truth.

“God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.” (2 Tim. 2:25–26)

- a) Gentleness makes people more receptive to listening to rebuke, and more open to heart and mind change.
“Sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness.” (Prov. 16:21)
- b) We sometimes think that raising our voice or pounding the pulpit will get our point across. But sweetness of speech is persuasive. It is God’s way.

B. Patient

1. Our work as elders is a spiritual work with people, so it must be done in God’s way with patience and care.
 - a) An impatient elder is as destructive to the people as an impatient father is to his children.
 - b) As fathers, sometimes we are really good at scolding our children.
 - c) Where we sometimes lack is in encouraging our children, being kind, gentle, building them up patiently.

2. Patience is needed in leading people because life is filled difficulties, injustices.
 - a) Love suffers long.
 - b) Patience is needed when dealing with the many weaknesses and failures of people.
 - c) We live in a fallen world. People have eccentricities, problems, and struggles.
 - d) We need to have patience with people who are:
 - 1) Slow to learn
 - 2) Resistant to change
 - 3) Weak in the faith
 - 4) Forgetful in their responsibilities
 - 5) Quick to complain
 - 6) Emotionally unstable
 - 7) Fearful, wayward
 - e) All these need to be dealt with patiently.

“... Encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.” (1 Thess. 5:14)
 - f) Elders need to be patient because “church work is slow work.”
 - 1) Being patient doesn’t mean being passive.
 - 2) Paul didn’t give up on the Corinthians, cut them off, or act vindictively.
 - 3) He answered their criticism, confronted their sin, and warned them of discipline to come.
 - 4) But he entreated them and did it in a very loving way, in the spirit of true patience and heartfelt love.
3. Without gentleness and patience, a leader has a serious deficiency.