

**WITNESS – Reaching out to others**  
*(Aim for 20 – 30 minutes)*

**Giving Thanks to God**

Thank God for his gentleness to you and for his sacrificial love.

**Praying for one another**

Where do you find it hard to show God's true gentleness, where do you tend to be either too firm or say nothing? Pray in groups of 2 or 3.

**Praying for our community**

How would Hungerford be different if everyone was filled with God's gentleness? Pray that this will be evident in our community.

# FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

## 8

### ***1 Thessalonians 2:1-12***

## **8 Gentleness**

*Purpose:* To learn the true meaning of gentleness and how it can characterize our lives.

*Gentleness* can mean being gentle, humble or considerate. Aristotle defined it as the balance between excessive anger and the inability to be angry.

Your aim in this study involves getting the group to understand that gentleness is a beautiful quality which can serve to enhance all the other pluses in one's personality. Again, you will be a more effective leader if the quality of gentleness has become vivid in your own life as a result of thinking through the answers to the questions. Ask God to work through his Spirit to change your life. Your group will sense the change, and your leadership will be different.

### **WELCOME – Breaking the ice** *(Aim for 10 minutes)*

What animal best describes your personality?

### **WORSHIP – Meeting the Lord** *(Aim for 10 – 15 minutes)*

**Pause:-**

- \* Make yourself comfortable,
- \* seek to relax any parts of your body that are carrying stress,
- \* breathe in and out slowly, breathing in God's love and breathing out anything that is not of God,
- \* repeat a prayer phrase like, "Thank you, Jesus" or "My God, my all" or "Jesus, Son of God have mercy on me a sinner".

**Rejoice:-** Listen to a song or read a psalm

**Ask:-** Ask God to speak to you as you study his word

**Yield:-** Surrender to God acknowledging that He is God and you are not and pray that you will put into practice what you believe He is saying to you as you study His word.

## **WORD – Applying the truth**

### ***(Aim for 40 – 45 minutes)***

The word *gentleness* conjures up wrong images for some people. It may denote a syrupy, self-denying quality. Or a quality which women have but “real men” do not! On the other hand, gentleness may be something we want very much. But we feel discouraged because the whole make-up of our personality is so far from being gentle. The Apostle Paul's treatment of the Thessalonians provides a model of the gentleness God desires in us.

1. Think of those who have helped you most to grow in Christ. What are some qualities you appreciate in them?
2. Read I Thessalonians 2:1–12. According to Paul, what are some *wrong* ways to share Christ with others (vv. 3–6)?
3. Give an example of how we might make an appeal to a non-Christian using tricks or flattery. How might a Christian minister use his job as a mask for greed?
4. In contrast, what were Paul's motives for sharing Christ with the Thessalonians?

Why are pure motives so important?

5. How was Paul like a mother to the Thessalonians (vv. 7–9)?

6. In what ways can we share “not only the gospel of God but our lives as well” with those around us?

What might this mean in terms of time, energy and vulnerability?

7. How was Paul also like a father to the Thessalonians (vv. 10–12)?

8. Why is it important for gentleness (v. 7) to be tempered with the qualities and goal mentioned in verse 12?

9. In what practical ways can we encourage, comfort and urge people to live lives worthy of God?

10. Think of those in whose lives you might exercise the kind of ministry demonstrated by Paul. How could gentleness enhance these relationships?

As you relate to others with your own unique personality and style, how can you express gentleness?

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