

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

Heavenly Father we take upon ourselves the mantle of authority that Jesus delegates to us and in His name we speak to every household in Hungerford and say to you:-

1 Relationships

We bless you in the Name of the Lord. We bless your marriages that they may be strong and whole. We bless the relationship between each marriage partner that it may be loving, forgiving, merciful and strong. We bless every intergenerational relationship within each household that there may be peace and love and understanding flowing between each one.

In Jesus' name we bless every network of wholesome and supportive friendship.

2 Health

We bless your health that you may be strong and well. In Jesus' name we resist any sickness or disease which seeks to invade this parish and to every person in the parish we say, be well, be strong, be healthy. To any who are sick right now we say we bless you in Jesus' name with a speedy recovery.

3 Wealth

We bless your wealth that you may have plenty to replace poverty. We bless you to have enough to live and enough to give. We bless the work of your hands that whatever you turn your hand to which is wholesome may be profitable. We bless every wholesome enterprise that is conducted by you that it may prosper and be successful. We bless the local businesses that they may be successful and profitable.

4 Education

We bless the local schools that they may be secure, safe places for teachers and pupils alike. We bless the children's capacity to learn and develop relationships and we bless their simple trust in Jesus that their trust may grow and become enriched.

5 Church

We speak to the Church and we say we bless you in the Name of the Lord that the Holy Spirit and the Word of God may flow out from you in power. We bless the hearts of all who live in the parish that they may be quickened to hear and respond to the Voice of the Living God. We bless all who live and work here, that the overflow of the blessings of the presence of the kingdom of God may fall upon you. **Amen**

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

1 Thessalonians 2:1-12

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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)***

What has been the best thing that has happened since our last meeting?

OR

When have you felt closest to God since our last meeting?

Pray your “thank yous” to God

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 1 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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