

Eph 7 Article

Eph 7:2 - Be completely humble and gentle. When I am doing seminars on marriage, I will ask women in the group what virtues or characteristics they most desire to find in men. No matter how many times I have asked that question nor how many groups I have put it before, the answers tend to be the same. At the top of the list there is a strange combination. What they want from men are basically three things: confidence, strength and tenderness. I think that *tenderness* is a critical word that puts restraints on the other two qualities. Somebody who mixes strength with tenderness is a person who will never abuse strength in the direction of brutality.

The women also say that they want men who have a spirit of confidence. Again, there is a link between strength, confidence and tenderness. A person who is strong and confident of his strength can afford to be tender. There is a tremendous difference between confidence and arrogance. Arrogance seeks to humiliate other people. The arrogant person expresses a kind of disdain or contempt for other people, and nothing is more destructive to the harmony of a group or a marriage. A marriage is a relationship of two people. The church follows the paradigm of that marriage relationship, and the virtues that are necessary for a successful marriage are the same virtues that are necessary for the success of any interpersonal relationships, particularly interpersonal relationships within a church.

So that when the apostle says that humility and gentleness are to be manifested as being worthy of the calling wherewith we were called, which excludes a spirit of arrogance or brutality which is demeaning towards other people.

What should be more natural for a Christian than to practice humility? The apostle's teaching in this book from the very beginning of the text includes an overarching emphasis on the graciousness of our redemption. If my entrance into the church and into God's kingdom is not based on my merit, but strictly and simply on the grace of God and his election, then I have everything to be humble about. As Paul says elsewhere, 'Let him who boasts boast in the Lord' (1 Corinthians 1:31; 2 Corinthians 10:17). It is fitting, then, that the response to the call of God be one rooted and grounded in humility and gentleness.¹

Eph 7: 9 - When Paul says in verse 9 that Christ 'descended to the lower earthly regions', he is not referring to Christ's death and burial but to his incarnation, when he became a man and lived on earth. It is the fact that he descended before he ascended that makes his ascension unique from other ascensions.

In the Old Testament the idea of ascending was linked to two activities. First, it described drawing near to the presence of God. The Tabernacle was set on a hill and people went up to it. Later, the Temple was built on a mountain in Jerusalem and there is a section in the Book of Psalms, called the Psalms of Ascent (120–134), which describe the worshippers' approach to the Temple at the festival periods of Israel. So Jesus, when he ascended, entered God's presence.

'Ascending' was connected to the enthronement after victory, when the spoils of battle would be brought up to God's house and captives from the battle would be led through the city. This reference to captives is not a description of Satan but to Christ's people whom Christ defeated in the sense of destroying their sins and setting them free. He presented the train, comprising his people, to the Father.²

lower parts of the earth—The antithesis to "far above all heavens," is to show that this phrase means the regions *beneath* it. His soul at death descended to Hades, that is, underwent the ordinary condition of departed spirits of men. The leading captive of satanic powers here, is not said to be at His descent, but *at His ascension*. Ac 2:27, 28, and Ro 10:7. ³

¹ Sproul, R. C. (1994). *The Purpose of God: Ephesians* (96–97, 101–102). Scotland: Christian Focus Publications.

³ Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Eph 4:9). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.