Ignite: Meekness

Objective: By the end of the lesson the student will understand why the meek shall inherit the earth.

Bible Verses:

Matthew 5:5	Galatians 5:22-23
Galatians 6:1	James 5:16
Titus 3:2	Psalm 37:9-11
Psalm 25:9	Psalm 147:6

Essential Question? Does meekness mean weakness? How do you define meekness? *Teacher Note*: Get the students to address the questions and flip chart their responses.

Opening:

Read Matthew 5:5. Remember when we the scripture says "blessed" here it is like saying "happy." So how can meekness make us happy? Jesus is not saying being weak or fearful will bring happiness. Jesus is talking about our attitude or outlook. Meekness here is about being strongly grounded in Christ. That will bring happiness and those people will be in God's Kingdom on the earth. Let's better understand meekness.

Teacher Note: Make sure all scriptures are read out loud in the class by student volunteers.

Content:

The Greek philosopher Aristotle defined meekness as the middle ground between the extremes of intense anger and great indifference. It is the happy medium between too much anger and too little passion.

Theologian William Barclay opined that Matthew 5:5 could be translated as, "Blessed is the man who is always angry at the right time, and never angry at the wrong time." So what meekness is about here is even temperament? We need to avoid the extremes of severe anger and apathy.

How can we become biblically meek? The first step is accepting Christ as our Lord and Savior. When we repent and get baptized we receive God's Holy Spirit and one of the fruits of the Spirit is meekness (Galatians 5:22-23).

Another meaning for meekness is self-control. Think of it like a horse that is "broken" for riding purposes or a dog that is "house broken." Before the animals are "broken" they are in a wild

and uncontrollable state. The horse cannot be ridden and the dog chews furniture or pees on the floor. After training, the animal is now self-controlled. Our relationship with Christ helps control us in the proper way. So another way of reading Matthew 5:5 is, "Blessed are they who are entirely self-controlled." Weakness is giving in to the worst that is in you. Meekness is mastery over it.

The Greek word for meekness can connote "kindness" or "gentleness" too. Gentleness is consideration for others (Galatians 6:1). Gentleness can help us admit our faults to each other (James 5:16). Gentleness can encourage others (Titus 3:2).

What else is a big take away from Matthew 5:5? Yes that the kingdom of God is coming to this earth. Our reward is not heaven we will live on earth when Christ returns (Psalm 37:9-11).

Independent Practice:

Have the students break into groups and discuss some hot button issues they may have. For example, someone may not like being called a particular name or being spoken to in a harsh tone. Have the student's role play scenarios where they are confronted on their hot button issues. By role playing the issue in a controlled environment we begin to practice the self-control we can display in real life.

Close/Reflect

If time permits have the students reflect on these two scriptures: Psalm 25:9 and Psalm 147:6

Any final comments or questions?

Sources: The Zondervan 2000 Pastor's Annual, by T.T. Crabtree, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999).