

Gentleness

Treating others softly with kind consideration.

Proverbs 15:1 (NASB)

“A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”

Opposite—Harshness

Start here

1. Memorize the definition.
2. Memorize Proverbs 15:1.
3. What is the opposite of gentleness?

Story and questions

Mr. Tuttle, a high school teacher, dealt harshly with his students. Recently he belittled Sue in front of her class for turning in a paper late. He could be nice, but his habit of lashing out alienated many people, even a few teachers. Rumor had it that some of the senior boys were out to get him. One day after school the front tires on Mr. Tuttle's car were flat. There was a hand-written note on his windshield that said, "Lighten up, JERK!" Mr. Tuttle was irate!

1. What qualities does Mr. Tuttle lack? (*gentleness, sensitivity, wisdom*)
2. How could learning to be more gentle help Mr. Tuttle?
3. What should the principal of the school do about the situation?
4. What are other words for gentleness? (*softness, tenderness, amiableness*)
5. What picture would you use to illustrate gentleness? (*shepherd with lamb*)
6. How can parents help children learn more gentleness in the following situations:
 - When petting a puppy
 - When dealing with an angry sibling
 - When speaking to their parents
 - When they are angry

Bible verses and discussion questions

1. God is described as gentle in Isaiah 40:11. How does He display gentleness?
2. Read Proverbs 15:1. What does a soft (gentle) answer do? (*turns away wrath*)
3. Can you remember a time when someone gave a gentle answer? What happened?
4. According to Pr 15:1 what do harsh words do? (*stir up anger*)
5. Can you remember a time when someone gave a gentle answer? What happened?
6. Can you remember a time when someone gave a harsh answer and it stirred up anger?
7. Where does gentleness come from according to Galatians 5:22? (*the Holy Spirit*)
8. In Galatians 5:22 what other spiritual fruit is closely associated with gentleness? Explain how each fruit relates to gentleness. One example would be that patient people are often gentle.
9. What things can people do to be more gentle? (*Think before they speak. Work to control their anger. Avoid revenge. Show love. Forgive.*)
10. Who do you know who displays gentleness? Give an example of something they did that displayed this quality. (*an adult helped a child who skinned his knee*)
11. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:5-7. What did gentleness have to do with Paul's ministry?

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12. What is taught about gentleness in 2 Timothy 2:24,25 and Titus 3:1-2?
13. According to James 3:17 how is God's wisdom related to gentleness? What other things are closely related to gentleness in this verse?
14. Can you think of examples from the Bible where God's wisdom is gentle?
(Proverbs 15:1 tells us to answer softly. This is being gentle and leads to peace with others. Ephesians 4:32 tells Christians to be kind and tenderhearted toward one another.)
15. How can forgiveness help us learn to be more gentle. *(There may be someone who said or did something to us in the past that made us angry. We may harbor a grudge and a sense of bitterness or resentment towards them. This may cause us to react harshly toward them when we see them. If we forgive them and let the offense go, we will likely be more gentle in how we treat them.)*
16. Are there times when gentleness might be inappropriate? Explain.
17. How did Jesus display gentleness in Matthew 26:36-46?
18. How did Jesus display gentleness in John 8:1-11?
19. Why was Jesus not gentle in Mark 11:15-17? *(He needed to take strong action against the religious leaders who made the temple a den of thieves)*

Application

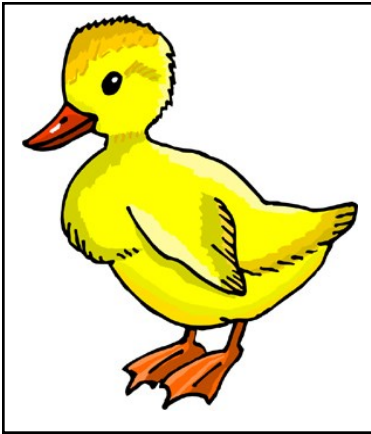
1. Describe a time when someone dealt gently with you. What happened?
2. Describe a time when you dealt gently with someone else. What happened?
3. Is it hard for you to be gentle when you are angry, tired, or grouchy? If so, what can you do to change the way you respond to people?
4. In your opinion, do people perceive you as a gentle person? Explain.
5. If you want to be gentle why must you learn to control your temper?
6. What are some situations when it is especially important to be gentle?

7. How can the saying, "Everyone wants mercy for themselves, but justice for everyone else," help people learn to be more gentle with others? *(Since everyone wants mercy for themselves when they do something wrong, they should think more about being merciful to others rather than just giving people what's coming to them. Mercy is often gentle.)*
8. Is there someone you were harsh to when you should have been gentle? Make plans to go to them and apologize.

Activities

1. Role play the following situations twice. The first time have the parent respond harshly and the second time gently. Ham it up!
 - a daughter tells her father that she got an "F" on her report card in Math
 - a son calls home and tells his mom that he just wrecked the car
 - a child comes in crying because he fell and hurt his arm
2. How could you be more gentle in the following situations:
 - someone cuts down your friend and you feel like getting even
 - someone accidentally breaks something that is very precious to you
 - a teammate seems to be giving up right when the team needs him most
3. Write a short letter to God telling him at least three ways you plan to be more gentle. When you are finished, seal it in an envelope and put date on the outside. Put the envelope in one of your drawers with plans to open it a month later. When you open the envelope, read what you wrote and evaluate yourself on how well you have done being more gentle.
4. Memorize Proverbs 15:1. Make a puzzle out of it and put it together for time.
5. Close in prayer asking God to help you be more gentle in your dealings.

Notes:



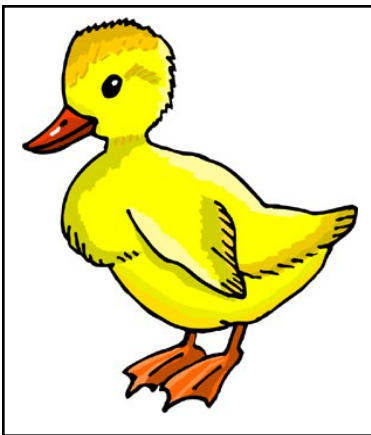
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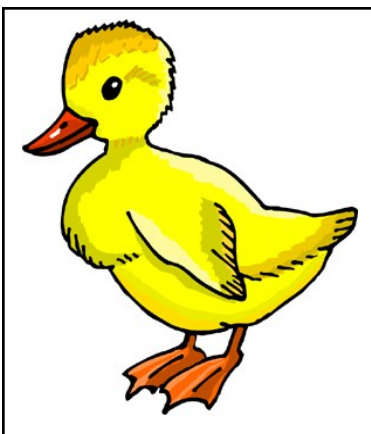
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