

[Enjoy the Parent preview below:](#)

I pray as you read this you will be reminded and encouraged in the name of our Lord of our charge from God as parents to train our children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. We are not to provoke our children lest they become discouraged.

In teaching Character I do not intend to teach Moralism. In fact by God's grace I pray that I will clearly distinguish between the gospel and moralism. As Tim Keller says,

“The gospel is that God saves you by grace and then you obey out of joy and grateful love.” There is a distinction between "religion" and the gospel. "We would say religion is 'I obey therefore God accepts me.' The gospel is 'God accepts me through the work of Jesus Christ and therefore I obey.' Those are two completely different impulses and they create two different kinds of people. Moralism is the view that you are acceptable (to God, the world, others, yourself) through your attainments. (Moralists do not have to be religious, but often are.) Even my efforts to obey it (the law) has been just a way of seeking to be my own savior.” – Tim Keller.

Dr. Keller is not suggesting that Christians should not lead moral lives. He is quick to point out that there is a difference between being moral and being moralistic.

**So I ask, why teach Biblical Character Training to children who may be unregenerate (not saved)?**

I like this quote from John Piper, “If we are not requiring obedience, we are confirming defiance. If we are not inculcating manners, we are training in boorishness. If we are not developing the disciplines of prayer and Bible-listening, we are solidifying the sense that prayerlessness and biblelessness are normal.

Inculcated good habits may later become formalistic legalism. Inculcated insolence, rudeness, and irreligion will likely become worldly decadence. **But by God's grace, and saturated with prayer, good habits may be filled with the life of the Spirit by faith. But the patterns of insolence and rudeness and irreligion will be hard to undo.**

Requiring obedience from children in conformity with God's will confronts them with the meaning of sin in relation to God, the nature of their own depravity, and their need for inner transformation by the power of grace through the gospel of Christ.

There comes a point where the “law” dawns on the child. That is, he realizes that God (not just his parents) requires a certain way of life from him and that he does not like some of it, and that he cannot do all of it.

At this crisis moment, the good news of Christ's dying for our sins becomes all important. Will the child settle into a moralistic effort the rest of his life, trying to win the acceptance and love of God? Or will he hear and believe that God's acceptance and forgiveness and love are free gifts—and receive this God in Christ as the supreme treasure of his life?

The child will have a hard time grasping the meaning of the cross if parents have not required of him behaviors, some of which he dislikes, and none of which he can do perfectly.

Christ lived and died to provide for us the righteousness we need (but cannot perform) and to endure for us the punishment we deserve (but cannot endure). If parents do not require external righteousness and apply measures of punishment, the categories of the cross will be difficult for a child to grasp.”

**I encourage you to ask God every day for His Spirit to inwardly restrain, enlighten, correct, purify and guide your child and to give you the grace to teach and to speak the truth of the gospel into your child's life in an appropriate way and time.**

## GENTLENESS vs. HARSHNESS Parent Preview

**Definition:** GENTLENESS is showing consideration and personal concern in meeting the needs of others.

**Tiny Tiger Definition:** GENTLENESS is showing consideration and personal concern for others.

### Other definitions or quotes:

- “But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere..” **James 3:17**
- “The quality of gentleness cannot be evaluated by the one giving it, only by the one receiving it.”
- “Accepting God’s comfort and grace during trials develops an attitude of kindness and gentleness toward others.”
- “Few of us will ever have the opportunity to perform great deeds of heroism, but to every one of us there is given the chance day by day to be sweet and gracious and winsome” – Margaret Sangster

### Application for Home and Life Skills Development:

**WHY TEACH GENTLENESS?** GENTLENESS is a quality of strength – the inner strength that that comes through sanctification where by the grace of God one is able to control oneself as opposed to the brute strength that cannot govern oneself when irritated. Gentleness is also an issue of outer development; how individuals interact with the people and the objects of their world.

- 1. I will show good manners.**
- 2. I will reject violence as a solution.**
- 3. I will look for ways to ease the pain of others.**
- 4. I will not annoy or irritate others.**
- 5. I will be a peacemaker.**

### Scripture Memory for class:

**“Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people.” Titus 3:1-2 (ESV)**

**Tiny Tiger:** “Remind them ...to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people.”

### PRAISE CHILDREN:

Gentleness teaches us the power of little things: a simple rudder turns a massive ship, a small trigger unleashes a powerful weapon, the tone of a person’s voice can cut or soothe the soul. When seeking to encourage character development with your children, remember the power of little things.

### Illustrations Used in KK4C Class

Along with teaching and expanding on the above definition, the ‘I Wills’, and scripture, **GENTLENESS** will be illustrated using:

- **GENTLENESS in nature with the Eastern Bluebird.** A bluebird's primary concern is for the welfare of its young. This does not prevent the bluebird from reaching out to help, however. Bluebirds have been known to help care for the young of other birds nesting nearby, providing food and protection much like the actual parent. **(No Character Card this Month they did not make one)**
- **Hero's of Character with Chief Massasoit (in 1621)** – Sadly contentions often result when two different people groups live close together. Chief Massasoit and the Pilgrims overcame this problem, however, when they drafted the seven-point peace treaty in March of 1621. They agreed, in part, that neither party would visit the other while carrying weapons. In an era of distrust and hostility, they thus maintained a spirit of peace and friendship for many years.

### Personal Evaluation – How strong gentle are you?

1. Have you developed self-discipline and humility in order to be attentive to the hurts and needs of others?
2. When you give instructions or responses to others, do you take into consideration their weaknesses and limitations?
3. Do you have a shepherd's mind-set toward those who are looking to you for spiritual leadership or example?
4. Have you translated past pain and suffering in your life into reminders to protect others and prepare them to have a right response to any offenders?
5. Are you irritable and reactionary when people with needs intrude upon your time and energy?
6. Do you speak evil of someone you dislike?
7. Do you give a soft answer so that you do not offend or discourage others?
8. Do you see potential in others and purpose to help them grow in the Lord?

### GENTLENESS in the Home Includes:

- Respecting one another's need for occasional peace and quiet.
- Being careful to tread lightly when another is hurting.
- Choosing to not make jokes about one another.
- Turning off loud music, television programs, or movies when they disturb others.

### Rewards of GENTLENESS

**GLADNESS** – A kind word lifts heavy hearts and brings joy to the giver as well as to the receiver. It doesn't take much to brighten someone's day.

**CALMNESS** – Avoiding harsh words and inconsiderate actions prevents wounded spirits and walls between family members. A peaceful home is a rare precious treasure, and gentleness greatly contributes to peace.

### Biblical Commentaries on GENTLENESS

“Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, <sup>2</sup> to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people. <sup>3</sup> For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. <sup>4</sup> But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, <sup>5</sup> he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, <sup>6</sup> whom he poured out on us richly

through Jesus Christ our Savior,<sup>7</sup> so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.<sup>1</sup>”

### **Titus 3: 1-7 (ESV)**

**3:1-2.** A large part of any pastor’s public ministry is reminding people of what they already know. Titus was to **remind** the Christians on Crete to be good citizens within their communities, a virtue in which Cretans were notoriously deficient. Though Paul did not repeat it here, his thought was no doubt that this behavior, like that of a Christian slave, will adorn the gospel and make it attractive to others (cf. 2:10). Paul listed seven qualities expected of Christian citizens: (1) **to be subject to rulers and authorities**; (2) **to be obedient** (cf. Rom. 13:1-7); (3) **to be ready to do whatever is good** (cf. Eph. 2:10; 2 Tim. 3:17); (4) **to slander no one**; (5) **to be peaceable and** (6) **considerate**; and (7) **to show true humility toward all men**. A Christian citizen should be an influence for good in the community in every way, demonstrating the loveliness of Christ to all through courteous and gracious behavior. This is precisely the lifestyle that results from understanding God’s grace. In other words the instructions in Titus 2:15-3:2 must be seen as concrete examples of the behavior required of one who understands God’s grace (2:11-14).

*Grace as a motivation for godly living (3:3-8).*

**3:3.** Paul never forgot the sinful condition from which he and his converts had been salvaged (cf. 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Eph. 4:17-24; Col. 3:6-7), and he reminded them of it once more. Instead of the gracious, Christlike people he was encouraging them to be, they once were just the opposite, being **foolish** instead of sensible, **disobedient** instead of submissive, **deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures** instead of self-disciplined and ready for every good work. Far from being peaceable, considerate, and humble, they were characterized by **malice and envy, being hated and hating one another**. Such is the brutish existence of people apart from God. While a veneer of civilization often obscures the bleak truth, the slightest crack in the surface of society reveals the reality behind the facade. The painful truth is that apart from God people degenerate into little more than animals wrangling over bones.

**3:4.** But all of that changed **when the kindness and love** (philanthrōpia, lit., “love for man”) **of God our Savior appeared**. The contrast is startling. In verse 3 man is the actor, but in verses 4-7 man is merely the recipient, and God becomes the actor. What man could in no wise do for himself, God initiated for him. (On the reference to God as Savior, see comments on 1 Tim. 1:1.)

**3:5.** God in His grace saves those who believe, not because of any righteousness in them (cf. Rom. 3:21-24; Eph. 2:8-9; 2 Tim. 1:9), but **because of His mercy**. The three words, “kindness,” “love,” and “mercy” (Titus 3:4-5) all represent aspects of God’s grace. The dual means of grace through which He accomplished this salvation are (1) the **rebirth** spoken of as a **washing** from the filth of sin, and (2) the **renewal by the Holy Spirit** (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17). No mention is made here of the role of faith in the process because Paul’s entire focus was on what God has done, not on human response.

**3:6-7.** God **poured out** the Holy Spirit on the world **generously through Jesus Christ our Savior**. Jesus was the Mediator of the Spirit (cf. Acts 2:33). The language intentionally conjures up images of the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17). God’s purpose in pouring out the Holy Spirit was **so that, having been justified by His grace, believers might become heirs having the hope of eternal life**. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is intimately involved, the New Testament explains, with bringing to fruition God’s gracious purposes to save (cf. Rom. 8:15-17; Gal. 4:6-7; Eph. 1:13-14). What God in His grace began, God in His grace will see to the end, through His Spirit.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Holy Bible : English standard version*. 2001 (Tit 3:1-7). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

<sup>2</sup> Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:766). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

## How to best use this Parent Preview at home:

It takes diligence to train our children ‘in’ and ‘of’ the gospel and in good character each day. However, this is your ministry as a parent: “Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it”. And by God’s Grace your child will have true “repentance toward God and of GENTLENESS in our Lord Jesus Christ.”

**This letter has tips to help you at home as you reinforce the biblical character training that your child is learning in our karate classes.**

1. If you invest a few minutes a day and implement some of the ideas in this monthly letter at home you will help your child get SO MUCH MORE out of the time you spend at our school as well as establish patterns for successful behavior as adults.
2. If you do not have interest or time to read this entire newsletter. We encourage you to take a few seconds and just scan through the different topics.
3. Try it for a month! Print out this newsletter, and then each day pick something to discuss and practice with your children. We do it over dinner.

**Here is an idea:** We have five ‘I wills’, one scripture, and one definition. That is seven things total. What I try to do is take one of those seven things and discuss it, explain it, and catch my child doing it and applying it that day. Or, if they missed an opportunity to apply it I try to show them how they could have used it.

**I take very seriously the opportunity you give me by allowing me to partner with you to teach your child the things of God.**

So, **I appeal you by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the spirit to strive together with me in your prayers to God on behalf of your child that he or she would bear fruit for God in their lives.** Please pray before and during **every** class your child attends. Pray for God to open his or her eyes, ears, and heart to understand and apply His truth that we will be sharing that day. **Also, please pray for us** that we would be good stewards of the time you have given us with your child and we would be GENTLENESSful witnesses of our Lord and His word. **Every class, every time, please join with us in prayer.**

## **The Power of a Partnership and Consistency**

**I hope for the chance** to expose your child to sound Biblical Character Training **over a long period of time.** And Lord willing, the longer the term of exposure to this curriculum the **BIGGER** the impact will be on your child and his or her growing in Christ-likeness and being a means by which God displays His Glory.

**And your child will be exposed to this character building curriculum everyday you visit our school!**

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*International Association of Character Cities. (2000). Achieving True Success.*

*Institute of Basic Life Principles. (2001). The Power of True Success*

**Adam Schainblatt’s Karate Kids For Christ - 10940 Raven Ridge Rd., Ste 118; Raleigh, NC 27614  
(919) 870-0525 [www.Karate-Kids.org](http://www.Karate-Kids.org)**