



# CLEAR VISION

CENTER FOR LIFE ENRICHMENT

*"Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth."* Matthew 5:3

## Blessed are the Meek

**Soul Food**

By Rich Blue

There is so much confusion today with the understanding of power, especially in the Christian community. It would seem that the obvious teaching of the Bible would be that followers of Christ should not covet power, they are to be meek (normally understood to mean "weak"), humble, turning the other cheek, accepting that the first shall be last, considering one another better than themselves and much more.

Yet, Jesus was clearly a very powerful and influential person who many believe was God's Son, the second person of the Trinity. Are we to understand that it was acceptable for Jesus to be potent and powerful yet we are to be passive and meek? If you believe that, or should I say were taught that, you are probably reinforcing your beliefs by recalling scriptures like, *"Consider one another as more important than yourself."* or *"Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult."*

Why is it that if we are at all powerful or successful, we must immediately give God the credit? Do you remember hearing as a kid, "Don't get a big head?" When I was a new Christian, I was especially touched by a sermon

*Being meek meant using my power responsibly and respecting the authority of God in my life.*

and following the service, I went up to the pastor and thanked him for his message. I remember feeling stunned by his response. Instead of receiving from him a simple, "Thanks", I was rebuked, "Oh, brother, don't praise me! Give God the glory. He is the only one deserving of praise." I can assure you, I never made that mistake again.

Early in my growth work I needed a lot of encouragement from my therapist to become comfortable with my power. I felt guilty and ashamed of my strength, always fearing I was "too

much", creating a dichotomy between my power and God's. It was as if my strength and power were a threat to God's. I had to

create compartments in my mind where I could be one person here and another person there. When I was an athlete on the field, one compartment, I could unleash and enjoy using my strength without much interference from my conscience. If I were to use that same intensity interpersonally—say, to tell the truth about what I thought and how I felt in the moment or to go fully for what I wanted—suddenly I would fear the indictment

of "God."

I remember beginning to make sense of meekness when I heard it defined as, *"Strength under control, like a stallion under the reins of its master."* The Bible refers to Moses (Num. 12:3) and Jesus (Mt. 11:29) being meek, yet we see that they were both capable of telling hard-hitting truths, leading courageously and being willing to die for what they believed. The principle I saw was that being meek meant using my power responsibly and respecting the authority of God in my life. Like the centurion who sought healing from Jesus for his servant (see Mat. 8:5-13), he had respect for Jesus' power. He said, *"...but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me..."* (Mat. 8:8-9). In the same way the

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## Meekness from a Mom’s Point of View By Sue Blue

God is referred to as our heavenly Father; the term father implies being a parent. There are also references to God in terms of a loving and tender mother, so it is safe to say that parenting is a picture of God. As a parent, one of my many goals for my children is to empower them to live successfully and powerfully in this world. To quote Bette Midler, I see myself as *“the wind beneath their wings”*.

Rich and I are in a new phase in our lives as parents—we are graduates! We have successfully launched our daughter and son and I am now finding myself trying to catch up and keep up with Lauren and Philip.

*My greatest joy is to see them succeed in ways that I have not.*

I am amazed at the things I learn from them and I am regularly being inspired by them. This is the way it is meant to be. Our job as parents is to build a foundation upon which they can stand. Then, like in a relay race, as we pass them the baton, we get to watch them accelerate past us going farther than we have gone ourselves.

My greatest joy is to see them succeed in ways that I have not. **My job now is to actually pick up the pace in my own life, taking risks, trying new things and continually growing and expanding as a person.** I see my role as one of going ahead and

scouting out the path in this next phase of life, creating a space for Lauren and Phil to follow. I believe this is how God views us. He sent his son to show us the way but left us with the vision that we can do even greater things than Jesus did. I don’t believe God is threatened by our accomplishments we have in life, but rather, pleased and excited to see his children soar to new heights.

God delights in my accomplishments as much as I delight in the success and personal growth of my children.

## Living Courageously

By Phil Blue

My senior year of high school has been the most intense nine months of my life. I have had the highest highs and the lowest lows. But what helped get me through it was my family. And when I think about the risks I took this year, I see my dad, not cheering for me on the sideline, but in the arena fighting with me.

Trying with all my heart to get into Princeton and Yale was the hardest thing I have ever done. When I learned that Yale wasn’t interested, I had only Princeton left and I didn’t know what to do. Should I go for it or should I pad my fall and not let anyone know I am looking at the Ivy Leagues? I ended up going for it; my dad did too. I let people know how much it meant to me to get into Princeton and had the courage to believe I was going to get in. I visited the school, called people

and set up interviews. I had my football coach send Princeton a highlight tape. I had references from a Big Ten speed and strength coach who knew I could play Division I football. But, when it was all said and done, I got rejected by the school...along with ten other schools.

I was devastated. I had gone for something with all my heart and it didn’t work out. Feelings of inadequacy overwhelmed me and I went into a depression for a couple weeks. I couldn’t even throw the rejection letters away; I was clinging too hard to those schools. They represented my hunger for success and acknowledgement. They symbolized my first big failure. But what I eventually learned was that they were no failures at all. The rejection letters initiated me into a higher echelon of living.

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## Daddy's Girl

By Lauren Blue Schifferdecker

People often ask me what it's like growing up with a dad who is a therapist. They wonder if he analyzes me all the time or has an answer for every problem. And the answer is, "No." The way that I describe it to people is like growing up with a doctor. When a doctor gets home, he doesn't whip out his stethoscope and check everyone's heartbeat or listen to their breathing. But he is the first person you call when you're in pain or have an emergency.

My dad has done a lot of personal growth work. As I've grown up, it may seem crazy to say, but I've seen him grow up too. One thing that has been consistent is his desire to push people to be their best. No excuses, even if you're 3-years-old. When I was just about that age, I was messing around with the stereo. I liked to twist the big old knob and watch the needle go back and forth—a delight for the eyes, but not so much for the ears.

Instead of yelling at me, my dad came over and taught me how to work the stereo. He showed me how to turn it on, find the station I wanted and control the volume. He was incredibly empowering. He treated me with respect and expected me to be responsible and it was devastating when I disappointed him.

If you've worked with my dad, you know he's incredibly intense. No matter what the emotion, he feels things passionately. We laugh because he's always going 100 miles an hour, even for the everyday things. On our last vacation to San Francisco, my dad stumbled out of the bathroom with a huge red line across his forehead. Apparently there was a little glass shelf, above the sink, and when he went to spit out his toothpaste, he didn't see it and head-butted this little shelf. Even while brushing his teeth, my dad is aggressive. Growing up with that intensity all the time was both a gift and a

hurdle.

My mom says my dad and I are exactly alike, so it goes without saying, that we've had our share of battles. Since I'm so much like him, I think he was harder on me. He genuinely believed in me and knew I could be the best. I don't think I ever lost a track meet when my dad was cheering for me. And by cheering, I mean screaming with his whole body, sweating, spitting and probably scaring most of the other spectators.

When my dad is behind me, I feel like I can do anything. And when I fail he's always there with me while I weep—praising me for going for something out of my reach and pushing me to try harder. I just can't lose in my dad's eyes. And those are the moments when I think to myself, "Man, I bet my dad's a good therapist."

## Living Courageously

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It was a rite of passage welcoming me to the courageous way of living.

My dad went through this rite of passage with me. Whether it was crying with me or giving me encouragement, I made it through with his support.

My girlfriend broke up with me the day before graduation and we were talking the other night about how angry and upset I was. She asked me how I could make myself so vulnerable and let people know how much

they hurt me. I knew why. I had learned that in order to go for big things, risk is involved. And with risk comes the possibility of huge failure as well as immense success. This year I have experienced both the pain of defeat and the joy of victory. None of this would have been possible if my dad hadn't entered the ring with me and taught me how to fight.

## Blessed are the Meek

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centurion's orders had the authority to get things done, he understood the power of Jesus' word as the commander in chief of the universe.

Let's grow up and stop acting like children. Don't hold yourselves back. Embrace your power, tell the truth, do what is right and love each other. Lay aside your shallow and superficial attempts to mask your strength with inauthentic humility and acknowledge that when we live powerfully we honor God in all that we do. God is not threatened by our influence or po-

tential. Instead, He expects each of us to make the most of our talents through investing wisely and maximizing His return on investment. If God is our Father, then we are all His children and when we play full out we will bring Him the greatest joy.

### Scriptural Prayer:

Ephesians 1:17-21

*I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened*

*in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.*



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