

In the Crucible with Christ

Meekness in the Crucible

Lesson #10 for September 3, 2022

Scriptures: Ezekiel 24:15-27; Exodus 32:1-14; Matthew 5:5,43-48; 1 Peter 2:18-25; Psalm 62:1-8.

1. When was the last time you heard someone in ordinary conversation talk about *meekness* or someone being meek? *Meekness* is defined as “enduring injury with patience and without resentment.” That is certainly something that no ordinary, selfish human being would be interested in. *Meekness* is a word which is similar to the word *humble*. Not many people want to be humble either.
2. In actual fact, meekness or humility, if exercised as Jesus exercised it, is one of the most powerful characteristics known to humanity. Think of the roles played by Moses and Jesus Christ, probably the two meekest people we know about in the Bible. Were they weak? Not at all! **Meekness or humility is not weakness.**
3. Think of what Moses went through and what Joseph went through in their early lives to prepare them for what they did later.
4. From time to time, does God allow us to be broken in order to prepare us in one way or another for what is coming? And to be a witness to others?

Exodus 32:1-14: ¹When the people saw that Moses had not come down from the mountain but was staying there a long time, they gathered round Aaron and said to him, “We do not know what has happened to this man Moses, who led us out of Egypt; so make us a god to lead us.”

² Aaron said to them, “Take off the gold earrings which your wives, your sons, and your daughters are wearing, and bring them to me.” ³So all the people took off their gold earrings and brought them to Aaron. **⁴He took the earrings, melted them, poured the gold into a mould, and made a gold bull calf. [Can you make a god out of melted earrings?]**

The people said, “Israel, this is our god, who led us out of Egypt!”

⁵ Then Aaron built an altar in front of the gold bull calf and announced, “Tomorrow there will be a festival to honour the LORD.” **⁶Early the next morning they brought some animals to burn as sacrifices and others to eat as fellowship offerings. The people sat down to a feast, which turned into an orgy of drinking and sex.**

⁷ The LORD said to Moses, “Go back down at once, because **your** people, whom **you** led out of Egypt, have sinned and rejected **me**. ⁸They have already left the way that I commanded them to follow; they have made a bull calf out of melted gold and have worshipped it and offered sacrifices to it. **They are saying that this is their god, who led them out of Egypt. ⁹I know how stubborn these people are. ¹⁰Now, don’t try to stop me. I am angry with them, and I am going to destroy them. Then I will make you and your descendants into a great nation.**” [Would God talk like this?]

¹¹ But Moses pleaded with the LORD his God and said, “LORD, why should you be so angry with **your** people, whom **you** rescued from Egypt with great

might and power? ¹²**Why should the Egyptians be able to say that you led your people out of Egypt, planning to kill them in the mountains and destroy them completely? Stop being angry; change your mind and do not bring this disaster on your people.** ¹³Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Remember the solemn promise you made to them to give them as many descendants as there are stars in the sky and to give their descendants all that land you promised would be their possession for ever.” [sic] ¹⁴**So the LORD changed his mind and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened.**—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., Exodus 32:1-14). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].[†]

5. Do you see a conflict in this story? Would God really have abandoned the children of Israel to make a great nation out of Moses? Do you think God really intended to do that?
6. What did it mean to say that the LORD changed His mind?

Malachi 3:6: “I am the LORD, and I do not change.”—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

Numbers 23:19: God is not like men, who lie;

He is not a human who changes his mind.

Whatever he promises, he does;

He speaks, and it is done.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

Hebrews 13:8: **Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and for ever.**

[sic]—*Good News Bible*.^{*††}

7. I do not know of any way to explain Exodus 32 without a knowledge of the great controversy and an understanding of God’s foreknowledge. God already knew that He would take Moses to heaven when Moses was finished with his work of leading the Israelites to Canaan. So, God was allowing this conversation to take place so the rest of the beings in the universe could see that Moses was a person God could trust, and they could see that he was safe to take to heaven. **The greatest evidence that a person is a real friend is shown when that person stands up for their friend’s reputation. That is what Moses did on this occasion. He did not even want his enemies, the Egyptians, to have a bad opinion of YAHWEH, Israel’s God.**
8. Having herded sheep for 40 years in the wilderness and realizing how helpless Israel was then, Moses felt a great closeness to those people that he was now “shepherding.” He pleaded with God on their behalf. There are two significant lessons we can learn from this experience: (1) God was giving Moses an opportunity to demonstrate how much he cared about those desperately disobedient people. (2) God’s grace is needed most of all when we least deserve it. Moses was demonstrating his capacity to be like God Himself.
9. In Numbers 12 there is a fantastic story about Miriam and Aaron complaining about the fact that Moses had married a Midianite wife. They called her a *Cushite*. *Cushite* suggests Ethiopian; but, in fact, she was not an Ethiopian although we cannot be sure that she did not have some Ethiopian blood. Notice some very important things in the story. God is no respecter of persons. To God, Zipporah was perfectly acceptable to be Moses’s wife!

Miriam and Aaron were asked to step forward in front of the tabernacle so God could speak to them directly. Notice the words He spoke to them.

Numbers 12:4-15: ⁴ Suddenly the LORD said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, “I want the three of you to come out to the Tent of my presence.” They went, ⁵and the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud, stood at the entrance of the Tent, and called out, “Aaron! Miriam!” The two of them stepped forward, ⁶and the LORD said, “Now hear what I have to say! When there are prophets among you, I reveal myself to them in visions and speak to them in dreams. ⁷It is different when I speak with my servant Moses; I have put him in charge of all my people Israel. ⁸**So I speak to him face to face, clearly and not in riddles**; he has even seen my form! How dare you speak against my servant Moses?” [Was God’s voice coming from the cloud?]

⁹ **The LORD was angry with them; and so as he departed** ¹⁰and the cloud left the Tent, Miriam’s skin was suddenly covered with a dreaded disease and turned as white as snow. When Aaron looked at her and saw that she was covered with the disease, ¹¹he said to Moses, “Please, sir, do not make us suffer this punishment for our foolish sin. ¹²Don’t let her become like something born dead with half its flesh eaten away.”

¹³ So Moses cried out to the LORD, “O God, heal her!”

¹⁴ The LORD answered, “If her father had spat in her face, she would have to bear her disgrace for seven days. So let her be shut out of the camp for a week, and after that she can be brought back in.” ¹⁵Miriam was shut out of the camp for seven days, and the people did not move on until she was brought back in.—*Good News Bible*.*† [Notice what God did when He was “angry”!]‡

10. On another occasion, following the disaster at Kadesh Barnea, three men from the tribe of Reuben, led by Korah, a Levite, challenged the leadership of Moses and Aaron. The story is recorded in Numbers 16. These rebels persuaded 250 other Israelite leaders to join them. There was some exchange of information. What happened next is recorded in Numbers 16:1-35.

Numbers 16:1-35: ¹⁻² **Korah** son of Izhar, from the **Levite clan of Kohath, rebelled against the leadership of Moses.** He was joined by three members of the tribe of Reuben—Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth—and by 250 other Israelites, well-known leaders chosen by the community. ³They assembled before Moses and Aaron and said to them, “You have gone too far! All the members of the community belong to the LORD, and the LORD is with all of us. **Why, then, Moses, do you set yourself above the LORD’s community?**”

⁴ When Moses heard this, he threw himself on the ground and prayed....

¹¹ [Moses said:] **“When you complain against Aaron, it is really against the LORD that you and your followers are rebelling.”**

¹² Then Moses sent for Dathan and Abiram, but they said, **“We will not come!”**...

¹⁹Then Korah gathered the whole community, and they stood facing Moses and Aaron at the entrance of the Tent. Suddenly **the dazzling light of the LORD's presence appeared to the whole community**, ²⁰and the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ²¹"Stand back from these people, and I will destroy them immediately."

²² But Moses and Aaron bowed down with their faces to the ground and said, "O God, you are the source of all life. When one person sins, do you get angry with the whole community?"

²³ The LORD said to Moses, ²⁴ "Tell the people to move away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram."...

^{27b} Dathan and Abiram had come out and were standing at the entrance of their tents, with their wives and children. ²⁸Moses said to the people, "This is how you will know that the LORD has sent me to do all these things and that it is not by my own choice that I have done them. ²⁹**If these men die a natural death without some punishment from God, then the LORD did not send me.** ³⁰**But if the LORD does something unheard of, and the earth opens up and swallows them with all they own, so that they go down alive to the world of the dead, you will know that these men have rejected the LORD.**"

³¹ **As soon as he had finished speaking, the ground under Dathan and Abiram split open** ³²**and swallowed them and their families, together with all of Korah's followers and their possessions.** ³³So they went down alive to the world of the dead, with their possessions. The earth closed over them, and they vanished. ³⁴All the people of Israel who were there fled when they heard their cry. They shouted, "Run! The earth might swallow us too!"

³⁵ **Then the LORD sent a fire that blazed out and burnt up the 250 men who had presented the incense.**—*Good News Bible*.^{*†‡}

11. **But Korah's family did not perish.** They remained faithful and continued to write songs for the children of Israel. A number of those songs are preserved in the book of Psalms.

Numbers 26:9-11: ⁹And his sons Nemuel, Dathan, and Abiram. (These are the Dathan and Abiram who were chosen by the community. They defied Moses and Aaron and joined the followers of Korah when they rebelled against the LORD. ¹⁰The ground opened and swallowed them, and they died with Korah and his followers when fire destroyed 250 men; they became a warning to the people. ¹¹But the sons of Korah were not killed.)—*Good News Bible*.^{*}

12. But the problems had not ended. Notice that the rebellion continued.

Number 16:41-49: ⁴¹ The next day the whole community complained against Moses and Aaron and said, "You have killed some of the LORD's people." ⁴²After they had all gathered to protest to Moses and Aaron, they turned towards the Tent and saw that the cloud was covering it and that the dazzling light of the LORD's presence had appeared. ⁴³Moses and Aaron went and stood in front of the Tent, ⁴⁴and the LORD said to Moses, ⁴⁵ **"Stand back from these people, and I will destroy them on the spot!"**

The two of them bowed down with their faces to the ground, ⁴⁶and Moses said to Aaron, “Take your firepan, put live coals from the altar in it, and put some incense on the coals. Then hurry with it to the people and perform the ritual of purification for them. Hurry! The LORD’s anger has already broken out and an epidemic has already begun.” ⁴⁷Aaron obeyed, took his firepan and ran into the middle of the assembled people. When he saw that the plague had already begun, he put the incense on the coals and performed the ritual of purification for the people. ⁴⁸**This stopped the plague**, and he was left standing between the living and the dead. ⁴⁹The number of people who died was 14,700, not counting those who died in Korah’s rebellion.—*Good News Bible*.*† [Nearly 15,000 died in this rebellion!][‡]

13. Are there people with whom you have contact on a fairly regular basis who desperately need God’s grace? Could we reach out to them in meekness and humility? What about the beggars who stand on the street corners, asking for money?

Matthew 5:43-48: [Jesus said:] ⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your friends, hate your enemies.’ ⁴⁴**But now I tell you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,** ⁴⁵so that you may become the children of your Father in heaven. For he makes his sun to shine on bad and good people alike, and gives rain to those who do good and to those who do evil. ⁴⁶Why should God reward you if you love only the people who love you? Even the tax collectors do that! ⁴⁷And if you speak only to your friends, have you done anything out of the ordinary? Even the pagans do that! ⁴⁸You must be perfect—just as your Father in heaven is perfect!”—*Good News Bible*.*†‡

14. What example did Matthew give to illustrate God’s kindness even to His enemies?
15. God was not talking about a warm, fuzzy feeling toward our enemies! He was talking about a specific action to reveal care and consideration for those who perhaps are least deserving.
16. It is important in understanding this passage to realize that the Greek word for *perfect* actually means “mature,” even “ripe” when speaking about fruit. This is not a picture of some unattainable goal. God Himself has promised to make us “mature” if we allow.
17. In light of these examples we have just discussed, do you see characteristics in your own life that need to be changed?
18. Jesus Himself was the greatest Example of true humility and meekness.

2 Peter 2:18-22: ¹⁸They make proud and stupid statements, and use immoral bodily lusts to trap those who are just beginning to escape from among people who live in error. ¹⁹They promise them freedom while they themselves are slaves of destructive habits—for a person is a slave of anything that has conquered him. ²⁰If people have escaped from the corrupting forces of the world through their knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and then are again caught and conquered by them, such people are in a worse state at the end than they were at the beginning. ²¹**It would have been much better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than to know it and then turn away from the sacred command that was given them.** ²²What happened to them shows

that the proverbs are true: “A dog goes back to what it has vomited” and “A pig that has been washed goes back to roll in the mud.”—*Good News Bible*.*†

19. Many people had slaves in the days of Jesus and Peter. Some of those slaves were treated very badly. But, Peter said that even those who treated their slaves very badly should have been obeyed on principle. Think of all that Christ went through without murmuring or complaining.
20. True Christians, looking forward to an eternity living in the perfect environment of heaven, should be able to suffer through times of stress and problems on this earth—even the seven last plagues—so long as they keep the future in mind.
21. During most of those hours when Jesus went through that last night and morning of trials and beatings, He just kept quiet. Here is one reason why.

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] **Herod questioned Christ in many words, but throughout the Saviour maintained a profound silence.** At the command of the king, the decrepit and maimed were then called in, and Christ was ordered to prove His claims by working a miracle. Men say that Thou canst heal the sick, said Herod. I am anxious to see that Thy widespread fame has not been belied.... [But, Jesus remained silent.] **Herod was irritated by this silence. It seemed to indicate utter indifference to his authority. To the vain and pompous king, open rebuke would have been less offensive than to be thus ignored. Again he angrily threatened Jesus, who still remained unmoved and silent.**—Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages** 729.2-730.2.†‡

22. Often, silence is the best answer in trying to deal with those who are unfair and angry.

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] So often the most proud people, the most arrogant and pushy, are those who suffer from low self-esteem. Their arrogance and pride—and total lack of meekness or humility—exist as a cover, perhaps even unconsciously, for something lacking inside. What they need is something we all need: a sense of security, of worthiness, of acceptance, especially in times of distress and suffering. We can find that only through the Lord. In short, meekness and humility, far from being attributes of weakness, are often the most powerful manifestation of a soul firmly grounded on the Rock.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Thursday, September 1.‡

23. True followers of God do not need to be afraid. We can claim God as our Defender, our Protector, and the One who will never let us down. We may suffer through problems; but, we can depend on Him in the end. See Psalm 62:1-8.

[EGW:] Without cause men will become our enemies. **The motives of the people of God will be misinterpreted, not only by the world, but by their own brethren.** The Lord’s servants will be put in hard places. A mountain will be made of a molehill to justify men in pursuing a selfish, unrighteous course.... By misrepresentation these men will be clothed in dark vestments of dishonesty because circumstances beyond their control made their work perplexing. **They will be pointed to as men that can not**

be trusted. And this will be done by members of the church. God's servants must arm themselves with the mind of Christ. They must not expect to escape insult and misjudgment. They will be called enthusiasts and fanatics. But let them not become discouraged. God's hands are on the wheel of his providence, guiding his work to the glory of his name.—Ellen G. White, *Spalding and Magan Collection** 370.2 [undated]; *The Upward Look**€ 177.3-4.†‡

24. Have you ever had to deal with fanatics? What is a fanatic? There have been two very extreme but opposite views as to what a fanatic is. One group claims that *fanatic* is an acronym for “**F**riends **A**nd **N**eighbors **A**ll **T**ogether **I**n **C**hrist.” Others suggest, tongue in cheek, that: Fanatics are people who do what Jesus would do if He were as well-informed as they are!

25. Do you think you are immune to abuse and people who speak against you?

[EGW:] The difficulties we have to encounter may be very much lessened by that meekness which hides itself in Christ. If we possess the humility of our Master, we shall rise above the slights, the rebuffs, the annoyances, to which we are daily exposed, and they will cease to cast a gloom over the spirit. **The highest evidence of nobility in a Christian is self-control. He who under abuse or cruelty fails to maintain a calm and trustful spirit robs God of His right to reveal in him His own perfection of character. Lowliness of heart is the strength that gives victory to the followers of Christ; it is the token of their connection with the courts above.**—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 301.3.†‡

26. Can humility and meekness help us to rise above slights, hurts, and annoyances? Unfortunately, there are many people who despise true Christianity because of its emphasis on humility and meekness. Meekness is taught and exemplified throughout Scripture.

[BSG:] **Biblical religion, in both the Old and the New Testaments, is characterized by meekness.** Moses is known for being the meekest person on earth (*Num. 12:3*). David declared that “the meek shall inherit the earth” (*Ps. 37:11, NKJV*). The prophets announced that God will bless the meek (*Isa. 11:4; Isa. 29:19; Isa. 66:2; Zeph. 2:3; Zeph. 3:11, 12*). God Himself is described as meek and as promoting meekness (*Ps. 25:9, Ps. 45:4, Ps. 147:6*). Jesus was meek (*Matt. 11:29, Matt. 21:5, 2 Cor. 10:1*) and placed meekness at the foundation of Christianity (*Matt. 5:5*). The apostles were meek (*2 Cor. 10:1*) and urged Christians to be meek (*Gal. 5:23, Eph. 4:2, Col. 3:12, 1 Tim. 6:11, 2 Tim. 2:25, Titus 3:2, James 1:21, James 3:13, James 4:6, 1 Pet. 3:15, 1 Pet. 5:5*). While the empires and kingdoms of the earth are constructed on such values as audacity, power, and military conquest, the religion of God builds and conquers with meekness, love, and grace. However, God's meekness does not mean that He is powerless. Rather, meekness is an essential trait of God's character and His way of relating to the universe and to us sinners.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 132.†‡§

27. The German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche had very different ideas about meekness.

[BSG:] **Is Meekness Slave Morality?**

One of the strongest attacks on Christianity and its concept of humility and meekness in the modern period came from the German existentialist philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900). Not only was suffering an integral part of Nietzsche's life, but it also was an essential area of interest in his philosophy. At a very young age, he lost his father and many other members of his family. Throughout his life, Nietzsche struggled with debilitating health issues and was eventually isolated by a mental illness during the last 11 years of his life. As he studied classical languages and philosophy, Nietzsche became especially interested in ancient Greek culture and philosophy. From this lens, he concluded that Europe had lost its ancient vigor. The culprit? None other than Christianity! **Nietzsche thought Christianity had robbed Europe of its classical Greek and Roman culture of heroism, power, and nobility.** The West, indeed, humanity in its entirety, according to Nietzsche, needed to redeem that classical outlook if it wanted to survive and thrive.

According to Nietzsche, there are two types of morality: the morality of the masters, of the noblemen, of the strong-willed man, and the morality of the slaves or of the weak. **Master morality** sets its own values, decides on its own course of actions, and evaluates them through the prism of their consequences, such as helpful (good) or harmful (bad). Thus, autonomy, power, wealth, nobility, optimism, exuberance, and courage are regarded as good, while weakness and meekness are regarded as bad. **By contrast, slave morality does not generate values or actions but merely reacts to, and opposes, the values or actions set by the master morality.** While master morality focuses on action, **slave morality is reactionary (or, as Nietzsche would put it, resentment)**; while master morality is oppressive, slave morality is subversive and manipulative; while master morality is more individualistic, slave morality is more communitarian.

Thus, because the weak are unable to overthrow the powerful by sheer force, they resort to reinterpreting and disparaging the value system of the masters. Instead of enjoying the morality of the strong man, the weak project their situation of humiliation into the absolute, universalizing their values. [Hitler loved Nietzsche!]

According to Nietzsche, Christianity is a religion of the weak, of slave morality. In his own words: "Christianity has taken the side of everything weak, base, failed; it has made an ideal out of whatever contradicts the preservation instincts of a strong life; it has corrupted the reason of even the most spiritual natures by teaching people to see the highest spiritual values as sinful, as deceptive, as *temptations*. The most pitiful example—the corruption of Pascal, who believed that his reason was corrupted by original sin when the only thing corrupting it was Christianity itself!"—Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols and Other Writings*, ed. Aaron Ridley and Judith Norman (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 5.

For Nietzsche, Christianity is another reaction of the poor and weak, designed to overthrow and control the powerful through manipulation. Christians have resigned themselves to their fate of slavery and do not have the will to become masters of their own destiny. For this reason, they hypocritically denounce as sinful what the powerful people have and exalt as virtue what Christians cannot have, imposing their new morality onto all humans. Thus, because Christians could not overpower the rich and the powerful by other means, they devised a way to control the strong with their morality. In this Christian morality, for instance, **Christians would convert their inescapable weakness and submission to other people into the virtue of obedience.** And **the Christians' inability to take revenge would impel Christians to invent the virtue of forgiveness.** Likewise, they would design other virtues, such as piety, love, reciprocity, and equality. No matter how noble these virtues may seem to many, **for Nietzsche, Christian morality was unacceptable, irrational, and repulsive, because, in his view, Christians used these virtues to reverse the morality of the strong and noble man of this world, to enslave and even oppress him.** To Nietzsche, Christian morality keeps people under control, keeps them in obscurity, and makes them ordinary, unexceptional.

Obviously, Nietzsche's criticism of Christian morality and its fundamental concept of meekness is a lamentably wrong understanding of Christianity. The Christian virtue of meekness does not spring out of powerlessness—but out of God's power, justice, and love. When Jesus was taken to the Jewish court and one official slapped Him, Jesus demanded an answer for that unjust act (*John 18:23*). The Gospels make it clear that Jesus died on the cross, not because He did not have any way of escaping (*Matt. 26:53*) but because He voluntarily and lovingly gave His life for our salvation (*John 10:17, 18; John 18:4–11; John 19:11; Phil. 2:6–9*). Christian meekness is the result not of fear but of love.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 132-134.^{†‡§} [Many believe that Nietzsche inspired Hitler!][‡]

28. While Jesus, living on this earth, may have seemed at times to be weak, in fact, He is the most powerful Being in the entire universe. His meekness and His humility are no sign of weakness. **Nietzsche's criticism of Christianity is completely wrong. Christians choose to be humble and meek because they love people as God does.**

Philippians 2:5-11:⁵The attitude you should have is the one that Christ Jesus had:

⁶He always had the nature of God,

but he did not think that by force he should try to remain equal with God.

⁷Instead of this, of his own free will he gave up all he had, and took the nature of a servant.

He became like a human being and appeared in human likeness.

⁸He was humble and walked the path of obedience all the way to death—his death on the cross.

⁹For this reason God raised him to the highest place above and gave him the name that is greater than any other name.

¹⁰And so, in honour of the name of Jesus
all beings in heaven, on earth, and in the world below
will fall on their knees, [That will include Satan himself!]
¹¹and all will openly proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†‡}

29. The truth is that we are sinners, and we have rebelled against God. As a family, we have departed further and further from God's ideal. Our realization of this fact should cause each of us to be humble and meek. There is no thing or Person about which we can be proud except our Father God. Think of what He has done for us in addition to creating us.

Romans 3:25-26: ²⁵⁻²⁶God offered him, so that by his blood [footnote: *by his blood; or by his sacrificial death.*] he should become the means by which people's sins are forgiven through their faith in him. **God did this in order to demonstrate that he is righteous.** In the past he was patient and overlooked people's sins; but in the present time he deals with their sins, **in order to demonstrate his righteousness.** In this way **God shows that he himself is righteous** and that he puts right everyone who believes in Jesus.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†‡§}

30. Meekness is a part of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5:22-23: ²² But the Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³**humility**, and **self-control**. There is no law against such things as these.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

31. In conclusion, let us note that in dealing with Moses, God was not demonstrating wrath as it is normally understood by people in our day. **God's wrath is simply His turning away in loving disappointment from those who do not want Him anyway; thus, leaving them to the inevitable and awful consequences of their own rebellious choices.** If God were to step away from us completely, we would immediately perish.
32. It may seem like God is humiliating us when He talks about our sin problem. But, God needs to be honest and truthful. Are we taking Him seriously enough?
33. There is an additional consideration which is very important. This earth is a theater for the universe, demonstrating what happens when creatures rebel against our heavenly Father.

1 Corinthians 4:9: For it seems to me that God has given the very last place to us apostles, like people condemned to die in public **as a spectacle for the whole world of angels and of humanity.**—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

34. You are on the "stage" every day and every minute. What are you demonstrating to the universe about yourself and about God and about the effect He has had on you?

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