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Grounders:

Have you ever been harsh? Something flawed inside each of us says that we can satisfy our desires by being harsh. Whether at the airlines counter or the fast food line, in the check out isle or the exit lane, on the basketball sidelines or the telephone line, we believe that harshness will satisfy our desires. Jesus gave us a different way in the third of eight secrets to satisfaction through surrender. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "*Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth*" (Matt. 5:5).

Who are satisfied? The gentle are satisfied. The NASB says, "*Blessed are the gentle.*" Gentleness is power under the Spirit's control. Like a bit in a horse's mouth, the Spirit's residence in our hearts guides us when we are gentle. The Greek word for "gentle" is *praus* from *prautes*. Aristotle defined it as the middle course of being angry, between being angry for no reason and not getting angry at all. Gentleness is getting angry at the right time with the right measure for the right reason.

Jesus told us that He was "*Gentle...in heart*" (Matt. 11:29). The God of the universe is gentle, not harsh, in heart. Paul told us that the result of the Holy Spirit's dwelling in us is *gentleness* (Gal. 5:23). If the Spirit of God is alive in us, then we will be gentle, not harsh, in heart.

Why are they satisfied? "*They will inherit the earth.*" This is Jewish phraseology for the blessings of God's kingdom, His divine reign, rule, and order on this earth now and in the future. We see this in the Old Testament. Remember the Israelites and their quest to inherit the Promised Land? Canaan, as it was known, was referenced by the Israelites as a type of heaven. Contrasting God's curses for those who are harsh with the blessings for those who are gentle, or meek, David said, "*But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy great peace*" (Ps. 37:11). We were designed to be satisfied by the kingdom of heaven, that invisible movement of God's reign, rule, and order in our lives. We find satisfaction, not through our harshness, but through our gentleness because gentleness restores relationships.

How are they satisfied? They surrender their harshness. We are gentle in heart when we surrender our harshness to God, and He satisfies our desires. Gentleness restores three dimensionally. Gentleness restores: (1) our relationship with God, (2) our relationships with others, and (3) others' relationships with God.

First, gentleness restores our relationship with God. Jesus said that His *gentleness restores our souls* (Matt. 11:29). James, the half-brother of Jesus and the pastor of the New Testament church in Jerusalem said that we should humbly, or *gently*, receive the word of God planted in our hearts which saves, or restores, us with God (Jas. 1:21). Are you harsh with God in any area of your life? Maybe He didn't heal someone in the way or with the timing that you saw fit. Perhaps He has allowed suffering in your life that you deem unreasonable. Possibly, you don't have the career, spouse, or children that you thought He should give you. Whatever that harshness against God might be, surrender it to Him today. Say, "I can't. You can. I can't satisfy my desires through harshness toward You, but You can satisfy my desires if I surrender my harshness to you."



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Second, gentleness restores our relationships with others. Jesus said that our words flow from our hearts (Lk. 6:45). When we are harsh in heart, so are our words. When we are gentle in heart, our words are gentle—powerful under the Spirit’s control. Proverbs 15:1 says, “*A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.*” Are you harsh with your words in any relationships? Do you find yourself being harshest with those closest to you? Try surrendering your harshness for gentleness with your heart and subsequently your words. You will find restoration in your relationships with others.

Third, gentleness restores others’ relationships with God. This applies to both the surrendered and the un-surrendered. Paul said that when the surrendered is caught in sin, that we should restore them *gently*, realizing that we could be tempted as well (Gal. 6:1). Peter said that when we answer the un-surrendered with the reason for the hope that we have in Christ, we should do so *gently* (1 Peter 3:15). With whom are you harsh because of their un-restored relationship with God? It might be gays, Muslims, the self-righteous, conservatives, liberals, or addicts. Are you willing to surrender that harshness to God and them, experiencing gentleness in heart and the inheritance of God’s blessings? Satisfied through surrender,
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