

The Tough and Tender spiritual leadership of Jesus, demonstrated and made known again in the Local Church Leaders (and through them to the Body of Christians)

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1Ti 3:1-7

The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. (2) Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, (3) not a drunkard, not violent but **gentle**, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. (4) He must **manage** his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children **submissive**, (5) for if someone does not know how to **manage** his own household, how will he care for God's church? (6) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. (7) Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.

Exodus 34:5-7 The LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. (6) The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, (7) keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, **but who will by no means** clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."

And then I was reminded of this passage:

1Th 2:1-13

For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was not in vain. (2) But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict. (3) For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive, (4) but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts. (5) For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness. (6) Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ. (7) **But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children.** (8) So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us. (9) For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. (10) You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers. (11) **For you know how, like a father with his children, (12) we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God,** who calls you into his own kingdom and glory. (13) And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.

What do these three passages have in common? A lot. But do you see the tenderness & toughness of God?

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Toughness & Tenderness of Christian Leaders and Christians

RESOURCE: John Newton Biography

I. Bible passages

1. 1 Timothy 3:1-7
2. Exodus 34:5-7
3. 1 Thess 2:1-13

What do these passages all have in common? Toughness and tenderness!

TOUGHNESS & TENDERNESS of John Newton

So why am I interested in John Newton? Because one of my great desires is to see Christian pastors be as strong and durable as redwood trees, and as tender and fragrant as a field of clover—unshakably rugged in the "defense and confirmation" of the truth ([Philippians 1:7](#)), and relentlessly humble and patient and merciful in dealing with people...It seems to me that we are always falling off the horse on one side or the other in this matter of being tough and tender—wimping out on truth when we ought to be lion-hearted, or wrangling with anger when we ought to be weeping. I know it's a risk to take up this topic and John Newton in a setting like this, where some of you need a good (tender!) kick in the pants to be more courageous, and others of you confuse courage with what William Cowper called "a furious and abusive zeal."^[2] Oh how rare are the pastors who speak with a tender heart and have a theological backbone of steel.

I dream of such pastors. I would like to be one someday. A pastor whose might in the truth is matched by his meekness. Whose theological acumen is matched by his manifest contrition. Whose heights of intellect are matched by his depths of humility. Yes, and the other way around! A pastor whose relational warmth is matched by his rigor of study, whose bent toward mercy is matched by the vigilance of his biblical discernment, and whose sense of humor is exceeded by the seriousness of his calling.

I dream of great defenders of true doctrine who are mainly known for the delight they have in God and the joy in God that they bring to the people of God—who enter controversy, when necessary, not because they love ideas and arguments, but because they love Christ and the church.

~ Joh Piper Biography of John Newton @ <http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/biographies/john-newton-the-tough-roots-of-his-habitual-tenderness>

II. Examples from the life of Jesus: do you see these character qualities in Jesus?

Seeing these qualifications in the life & ministry of Jesus:
(like 1 Cor 13 "LOVE is...?")

A Noble Task...Above reproach –

The husband of one wife - Sober minded
Self-controlled – Respectable – Hospitable - able to teach
not a drunkard - **not violent but gentle** - not quarrelsome
not a lover of money

He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive
He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil
Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.

1. Tough (MT 11:20-24)
2. Tender (MT 11:25-30)

TOUGH toward the proud

Mat 11:20-30 Then he began to denounce the cities where most of his mighty works had been done, because they did not repent. (21) "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. (22) But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. (23) And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. (24) But I tell you that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you."

TENDER toward the humble

(25) At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; (26) yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. (27) All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. (28) Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (29) Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (30) For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Jesus:

Tough toward the will of God to absorb the wrath of God against sin, die for sin and tough enough to take on and conquer the grave, bringing a death to death itself!

Tender enough to "*stoop to our weakness, Mighty as Thou art...and make me love Thee as I ought to love*" - Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart

III. Example of John Newton

1. Tough (as a defender of sound Biblical understanding of The Doctrines of Grace)

2. Tender:

Newton's tenderness because of God's grace to Him in Jesus: his sins are forgiven!

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound

That saved a wretch like me,

I once was lost, but now am found,

Was blind but now I see.

The effect of this amazement is tenderness toward others. "[The 'wretch' who has been saved by grace] believes and feels his own weakness and unworthiness, and lives upon the grace and pardoning love of his Lord. This gives him an habitual tenderness and gentleness Spirit. Humble under a sense of much forgiveness to himself, he finds it easy to forgive others." [71]

He puts it in a picture:

A company of travellers fall into a pit: one of them gets a passenger to draw him out. Now he should not be angry with the rest for falling in; nor because they are not yet out, as he is. He did not pull himself out: instead, therefore, of reproaching them, he should shew them pity. . . . A man, truly illuminated, will no more despise others, then Bartimeus, after his own eyes were opened, would take a stick, and beat every blind man he met. [72]

<http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/biographies/john-newton-the-tough-roots-of-his-habitual-tenderness>

IV. Call to Christian Leaders (1 Tim 3.1-7)

Call to All Christians

1Th 5:4-22 But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. (5) For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. (6) So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. (7) For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. (8) But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. (9) For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, (10) who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. (11) Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing. (12) We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, (13) and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. **Be at peace among yourselves. (14) And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.** (15) See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. (16) Rejoice always, (17) pray without ceasing, (18) give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. (19) Do not quench the Spirit. (20) Do not despise prophecies, (21) but test everything; hold fast what is good. (22) Abstain from every form of evil.

V. How can we walk in this?

1. Christian conversion: The New Birth / Regeneration / by faith in the death & resurrection of Jesus so that the Holy Spirit now indwells you and can lead & teach of the TOUGHNESS & TENDERNESS of Jesus!
2. Word of God & Prayer & thinking about what you are reading
3. Communication w others that is Tough & Tender