

THE GENTLENESS OF MOTHERHOOD
1st Thess. 2:7

INTRODUCTION

A similitude is defined by Merriam-Webster's dictionary as "**a figure of speech comparing two unlike things that is often introduced by like or as**" The comparison idea of a similitude is designed to compare a common trait between two things that may be unlike in many other areas. The apostle Paul uses the similarity of a nursing mother to describe his relationship to the Thessalonians. Today, we will see that his comparison tells a great deal about the importance of gentleness of motherhood.

I. NURSING MOTHERS WERE VITAL TO CHILDREN THROUGHOUT THE COURSE OF SCRIPTURE.

- A. Until the invention of baby formula in the mid 19th century, nursing mothers were essential to the life of a baby.
- B. The use of the word "mother" indicates one who nurses. Vs. 7
 1. The word for "mother" is trophos from the Greek word trepho -- "**It is really the mother-nurse "who suckles and nurses her own children"**" -- Lightfoot lexicon
 2. Trophos is used in composition with the "soon" (σύν) preposition to note those who were nursed. Acts 13:1 (of those nursed in the same household); 1st Tim. 5:10 (of widows who nursed children)
- C. A "wet nurse" was essential for nursing kids in extenuating circumstances.
 1. The Hebrew word describing a nursing mother is yanaq which means "**to suck; to give milk.**" -- Strong's lexicon
 2. A wet nurse would fill in for a deceased mother.
 3. A wet nurse would fill in for a mother with feeding difficulties.
 4. A wet nurse was used by the rich to feed their children. Cf. Ex. 2:7-9 (of Pharaoh's daughter using Moses' mother to nurse him)

II. GENTLENESS IS A TRAIT OF A NURSING MOTHER. 1st Thess. 2:7

- A. "Gentleness" is "epios", a word used just twice in Scripture of one possessing **the absence of a warring, quarreling spirit; one that approaches things with a disposition that is at ease.**
- B. It is the opposite of fighting. Cf. Ja. 4:2 (of the believers during the diaspora fighting); Act 7:26 (of two Israelites fighting among themselves)

C. The adjectival form of epios (epieikes) notes a person characterized by a gentle disposition.

1. The adjectival use notes one who is "**forbearing, reasonable, fair.**" -- Reinecker/Rogers
2. The adjective is reflected in how one relates to others. Tit. 3:2 (with the unsaved); 2 Co. 10:1 (with believers)

III. THE GENTLENESS OF A NURSING MOTHER ALLOWS FOR CHERISHING 1st Thess. 2:7

A. "Cherish" is the Greek word thalpo (pres. Act. subj.-- customary idea) is used in Scripture of "**to warn, to foster**". -- Reinecker/Rogers

B. "Cherish" emphasizes the nurturing of a person or thing.

1. Thalpo is similar to the Hebrew word "rabats" is used of the brooding of a hen over her young. Deut. 22:6
2. Thalpo is used "**Primarily it means to warm, then to foster with tender care**".-- A.T. Robertson Eph. 5:29 (is used of a husband for his wife)

IV. CONCLUSION