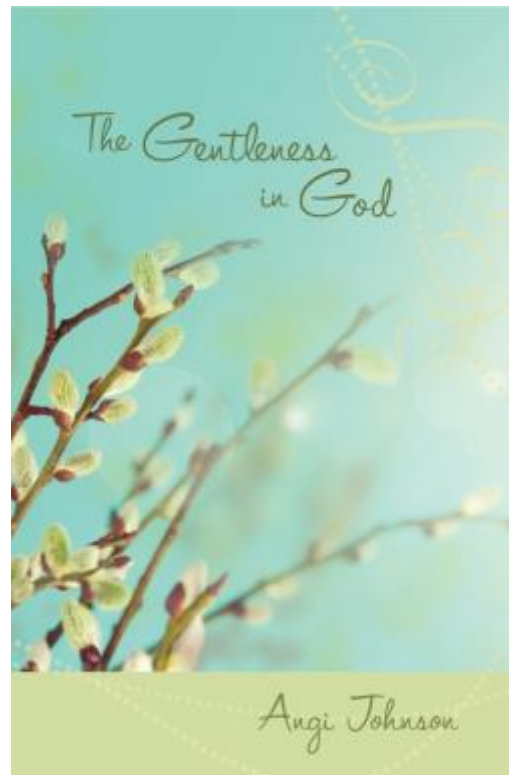


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THE GENTLENESS IN GOD

ANGI JOHNSON



Jesus described himself as “gentle and humble,” and we know that he perfectly reflects the Father. Still, many people struggle to draw close to God because they don’t understand his gentleness. He seems distant, easy to annoy, and more judgmental than loving. It doesn’t help that many Christians who accept God’s loving gentleness do a poor job sharing it with others.

God wants his children to be secure, free, and joyous in his presence. To experience this, we must see beyond his judgment to the heart of the loving Father, who is ready to gently lead us into an ever-deepening love and enthusiasm for him.

In *The Gentleness in God*, Bible teacher Angi Johnson explains what gentleness is and what it is not. She examines God’s gentleness as it appears in the Bible—even in context of God’s judgment and the bloody Old Testament battles. Then she explores internal and external hindrances to embracing God’s gentleness in our lives.

Johnson’s approach is both biblical and personal, both challenging and kind. She writes for an audience that is wary of God’s judgment, yet she does not flinch away from his justice. Readers of all backgrounds will come away from this book with a more nuanced perspective of God’s character—and particularly his gentleness.

About the Author

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ANGI JOHNSON

Angi Johnson became a Christian at age fourteen—despite her local church. After she received a BA in biblical studies at the University of Sheffield, she spent two years teaching the Bible in

Kenya. When she returned to the UK, she gained some secretarial qualifications and went back to work at her alma mater in an administrative capacity. Once there, she ended up (almost accidentally) earning a Master of Philosophy in biblical studies. She is a lay preacher in Anglican and Baptist churches and has a wide ministry in

several different locations around Sheffield. She also plays the organ, though not very well, and looks after two church gardens, but she is most passionate about preaching and teaching.



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What Others are Saying About **The Gentleness in God**

“If a book comes along which provokes opinions for and against and develops one’s own beliefs and understandings—and, even better, will provoke discussion—then it’s well worth reading. Such a book is this. It is perhaps not surprising that the combination of secularity, world events, and the loss of the Bible and religious discussion at home and in society has many people

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*concluding that God is uncaring at best and some kind of a tyrant at worst. **This book sets out to offer the truly biblical account that reinstates his nature as that of a gentle father—stern, as good fathers should be, but a true and gentle parent.***

—Canon David Slater, former vicar of the Cathedral Close at Salisbury, England

*“Gentleness, except by implication, seems to be a subject rarely tackled in our churches today. The Gentleness in God has had a real impact on my way of thinking on the subject. **An easy and compelling read, it has good biblical content with plenty to challenge the reader, and is all illustrated beautifully by the author’s personal anecdotes.** I found the third chapter on God’s gentleness in the Old Testament particularly thoughtful, enabling me to see his dealings with his chosen people in a wholly new way. This book should be a must-read, both for church leaders and for individual Christians. I cannot recommend it too highly.”*

—Dr. Anne Willcox, member of the chaplaincy team at Stepping Hill Hospital

Suggested Interview Questions

For Angi Johnson, author of
The Gentleness in God

Q: What is this book about?

A: It’s about the way God deals with people in the Bible and the way some people think he treats them. People who take a judgmental stance and are quick to believe that anything bad that happens is God’s

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punishment make it difficult for anyone to want to know him. The book explores the gentle way in which God loves to treat his people and encourages the reader to trust that God wants to be gentle with them.

Q: What factors prompted you to write the book?

A: As a child I was bullied at school, but I didn't realize it. I felt that there must be something wrong with me, that I was somehow not as good as everyone else and that I deserved the treatment. Back in 1960 bullying wasn't talked about like it is today, and I didn't realize that the bullies were doing anything wrong. Ultimately I accepted that I must be a sub-standard human being and largely stopped trying to make any friends. I didn't realize until I was adult that it had been because I had a different accent from the other children in my class.

When I became a Christian at the age of about 14, I thought that God would also regard me as sub-standard. I understood about being a sinner but never fully grasped what unconditional love and forgiveness were. I never *felt* loved by God, and the church I attended never made me feel loved or valued either. It was only a gradual process of discovering that God isn't looking for excuses to punish or reject me that I began to feel secure enough to try drawing close to him. This made life a whole lot easier. And more fun!

Q: What helped you in this process of discovering God's gentleness and love?

A: Reading books! Church wasn't always a place where God's love and kindness was demonstrated, so I learned a lot from reading, sometimes even from non-Christian books. Some books can be challenging in a way that leaves you feeling as if God is disappointed if not angry with you for not being good enough. Some books seem to try and do the work of the Holy Spirit in convicting you of sin and are full of accusations. This might be appropriate for some people but wasn't for me. I tried not to do that in my book but to try a more gentle approach and leave room for God to work.

Q: What is your book's most important message?

A: God's love doesn't change when we get things wrong, and he won't be looking for reasons to make us suffer. It can be easy to lose sight of God's gentleness, but it is there and it is real. When we know this then we can be less afraid and more open to him. And more at peace with ourselves.

Q: Does the book have a happy ending?

A: Definitely. It encourages us to trust God to handle us as gently as is consistent with our safety and well-being and his glory. It also encourages us to be gentle with each other, which definitely enriches lives and improves relationships.

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