

# On Gentleness: Wild horses and the Fruit of the Spirit

by Jill Muñoz

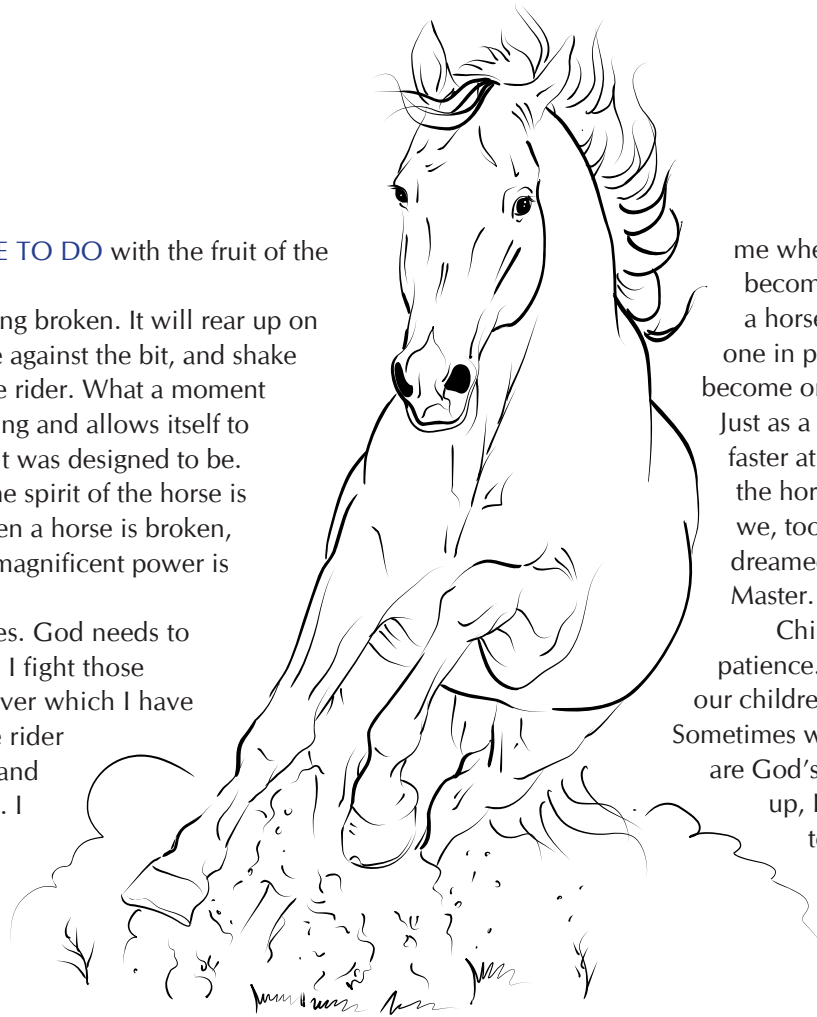
**WHAT DO HORSES HAVE TO DO** with the fruit of the Spirit?

A wild horse fights being broken. It will rear up on hind legs, whinny, struggle against the bit, and shake its head—all to buck off the rider. What a moment when the horse stops fighting and allows itself to become the gentle mount it was designed to be. This only happens when the spirit of the horse is broken or gentled. It is when a horse is broken, that it becomes useful. Its magnificent power is harnessed.

We are like wild horses. God needs to break or gentle our spirits. I fight those circumstances in my life over which I have no control. God is like the rider who uses the “bit, bridle, and saddle” to gentle my spirit. I can only be useful to Him and His purpose when God has broken me from my self-seeking ways.

What about you? Like me, do you need to stop fighting God every step of the way? To let God break you for His purpose?

Gentleness is the harnessed power of a soul yielded to God’s desires. When God is the master of my life, leading



me where He wants me to go, I become useful to Him. Just as a horse and its master become one in purpose, we, too, need to become one in purpose with God. Just as a horse will go farther and faster at its master’s urging because the horse trusts its master, so we, too, can go places we never dreamed, as we learn to trust our Master.

Children can try a mother’s patience. We have plans for our children. Hopes and dreams. Sometimes we forget that these children are God’s children. As they grow up, He is working in their lives to produce His plan and purpose. Many times the plans God has are not our plans. What to do? Gentleness is the fruit of the Spirit that yields to God’s desires. It is often

difficult to lay aside our plans and let God work out His plan and purpose in their lives. Difficult, yes. But not impossible.

It is also difficult to lay aside our plans for our own lives and yield to God’s desires. Giving up career plans? Moving?

Cancer? Losing a leg? Caring for aging parents? Divorce? Alcoholism? Drugs? Death of a spouse or child? None of that trouble for me, Lord, please!

But even if we didn't "sign up" for any of the above, sometimes we find ourselves in the very midst of one or more of these situations. What do we do then?

One way of looking at such unplanned circumstances is to flip the question and ask: "What's *right* with this situation?"

This came home to me recently. Our church prayer group was meeting in our home. We served dinner, had a Bible study and a time of prayer. I was busy serving and trying to get others to help. However, everybody was so busy talking, they didn't seem to hear me or they would halfheartedly do the task. At the end of the evening, I complained LOUD and L-O-N-G to my husband about how tired I was of serving. By the next week's prayer group, I had mysteriously injured my foot and couldn't walk. So there I sat, while everyone had to prepare the meal and serve me. Not only did I eat dinner, I ate humble pie! I couldn't do anything for over two weeks and if you know me, I like to be active; going places and doing things. God taught me an important lesson. I learned that I would rather serve than be served.

God produces the fruit of gentleness in us when we become yielded to His leading. Just as a horse yields to the leading of its rider, a spirit broken and yielded to Him produces the needed strength to be useful as a witness to Christ. When the tough, the unexpected, and the unplanned things in life occur, the authority of the Word of

*"A broken and a contrite heart, God will not despise" (Psalm 51:17).*

*"The humble He teaches His way. All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth" (Psalm 25:9-10).*

*"Give thanks in all circumstances for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thessalonians 5:18).*

*"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10).*

*"Everyone has turned to his own way and the Lord has laid on Christ the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6).*

*"Be anxious for nothing but in everything with prayer and thanksgiving let your request be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6).*

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your path" (Proverbs 3:5-6).*

*"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jeremiah 29:11).*

God and the power of the Holy Spirit, enable us to become witnesses to the God we serve. By God's grace, we acquire the quiet and gentle strength to say, "Your will be done," and mean it.

The Son yielded to His Father's will in the Garden of Gethsemane. He endured the cross, despising its shame to give us forgiveness. Jesus fulfilled God's plan and purpose to give us eternal life. Are we yielded to the Father's will yet? Have we been broken? Or are we still fighting the circumstances over which we have no control?

Just as the horse is broken or gentled and yields to the rider, so, too, our spirit needs to be broken by God to make us useful to Him in His service. Ask God to produce in you the fruit of the Spirit: gentleness.

We want our lives to matter. But our lives only matter when we are yielded to the will of God.

*Reference: Naked Fruit by Elisa Morgan, 2004. [www.revellbooks.com](http://www.revellbooks.com).*

*Illustration from [istockphotos.com](http://istockphotos.com)*

*Jill M. Muñoz has returned to Ontario with her husband, Rev. Roberto Muñoz, to help care for her mother-in-law who has Parkinson's disease. Her family's film-production ministry has recently completed Dr. Paul L. Maier's lecture series on DVD, entitled Christianity and the Competition.*