



What makes Jesus' yoke easy and His burden light is that in Jesus' own active obedience (His perfect fulfillment of the Law of God), He carried the burden that we were meant to carry. His perfect obedience is applied (imputed) to us through faith, just as His

righteousness was exchanged for our sin at the cross (2 Corinthians 5:21) "For He made Him Who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.." Our obedience to Jesus then becomes our "Spiritual Worship" (Romans 12:1) "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." Furthermore, we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit who works in our lives to mold us into the image of Christ, thereby making the yoke of Jesus easy and His burden light. The life lived by faith is a much lighter yoke and a much easier burden to carry than the heavy and burdensome yoke of self-righteousness under which some continually strive to make themselves acceptable to God through works.

Consider Taking This Yoke



This is not about getting rid of one load in exchange for another load; that isn't the idea. And I don't believe we should view this as being harnessed to one side of a yoke, with Christ on the other side where I pull my half, and He pulls the other half. No - that's not it. I believe all we need to see in the yoke is SUBMISSION AND

GUIDANCE; as we submit to Christ, we are guided in exactly the path and the work that is right before God! When you decide to take His yoke and when you believe in Him, and then do what He says... obeying the gospel and living as His disciple -- We Are Coming To Him... We Are Taking His Yoke. We Are Learning And We Are Finding Rest For Our Soul.

It May Not Be A Painless Road But It Is The Most Glorious One

He said, "My yoke is easy and My burden is light." This doesn't mean - no effort is required. This doesn't mean that everything about being a Christian is smooth and painless. But if we are wearing this yoke and you are being led in exactly the work that pleases God, there is a deep, inner delight; there is a joy that in stark contrast to - the offensive yoke of the Pharisees or any other human religious system.



Matthew 11:28 -30 - "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 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. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." One of the most beloved passages in the New Testament is

Matthew 11:28-30. In it the Lord summarizes the invitation to discipleship that characterized His earthly ministry, but to understand the invitation of this passage, we need to understand the background. In this passage the Lord was addressing the people of Israel who were burdened and weighed down with the externalism and the legal do's and don'ts of the Pharisees, and with the consequences—the guilt, frustration, and dissatisfaction that always goes along with legalism.

The Burden of Legalism



For instance, in Matthew 23:2, Christ referred to the Scribes and the Pharisees as men who "sit in Moses' seat." What was His point? The Pharisees claimed the authority of Moses as interpreters and teachers of the Law which meant they also demanded that all in Israel who submitted to Moses should also submit

to them. Then, in Matthew 23:4, the Lord warned the people of the oppressive and legalistic ways of the Pharisees. He said, "And they tie up heavy loads, and lay them on men's shoulders." He was speaking about the way they had hidden the true meaning of the Old Testament Law with all the religious rules and regulations that these religious externalists had instituted as the way to God, to true spirituality, and as a way to receive God's blessing in life. They had codified the Mosaic law into 365 prohibitions and 250 commandments. But even though the Old Testament Law was good, holy, and righteous, it did not bring liberty because it was weak in that it depended on man. It did not provide the means of fulfilling the law and thus it left man under the guilt and load of sin. Rather than freedom, it brought oppression. Paul called it an "Administration Of Death." Instead of a sense of release, it brought a sense of guilt and failure. Those who were under the Mosaic Law were said to be yoked to Moses. Those who were under the authority of the Pharisees were said to be yoked to the Pharisees.

The Yoke Of Burden

Acts 15:7-11 - "And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them: "Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they."



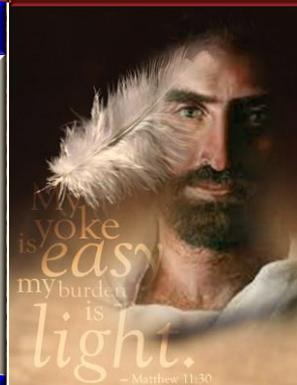
"Take My Yoke Upon You . . ."

A yoke is a farming implement that joins two animals (such as oxen) together, so that the animals can share the workload evenly and become more productive. Sometimes, an older, more experienced animal is yoked with a

younger, less experienced animal, so that the older animal can train the younger animal while they work together. The word "Yoke" was a technical term used in the context of teaching in Judaism. Every rabbi had their own "Yoke", that is, their own interpretation of the Old Testament Scriptures. The rabbis would pass on their own brand of teaching by living in community with his students. By using the illustration of a yoke, Jesus is asking us to share and be partners with Him in His work, in His ministry and service. He is also telling us that He will train us. "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My Name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled; do not be afraid..." (John 14:26 ,27) Jesus wants us to come to Him and learn from Him in a continuing relationship. He will equip us, teach us, and guide us to be effective in life and service, if we allow Him. If we come to Jesus and do things His way, in partnership and communion with Him, He promises that we will find rest and refreshment for our souls. In the process we will become more like our Rabbi Jesus: gentle and humble in heart.

"For My Yoke Is Easy . . ."

The yoke that Jesus gives is easy. It is easy because Jesus shares it with us. It is easy because it is productive and useful, and not vain and futile. It is easy because it is correct and life giving. Moreover, it is easy because it fits well.



The picture here is of a yoke that has been custom fitted for us. Jesus was a builder by trade, possibly a carpenter. A carpenter in Nazareth would most likely have had personal experience in hand carving wooden yokes. If so, Jesus would have made sure that the yokes He worked on fitted well, and were shaped and suited to the individual animals. While Jesus' teaching and principles are the same for everyone, our various ministries and missions are different. As Jesus' disciples, each of us has been allocated "custom fitted" ministries, purposes, and

roles in life. We live out these ministries and roles by actively partnering with Jesus and following His teaching.

"And My Burden Is Light."

We do have a yoke: an interpretation of Scripture to live by. And we do have a burden: a role and a responsibility as followers and servants of Jesus. But if we fulfil our role with Jesus close to us, sharing the load, and if we do things his way, in his strength, then our work will not become tiresome or burdensome. Jesus does not call the qualified but He qualifies the call. When God calls, He equips! God qualifies those He calls. He will not call us and then abandon us to figure things out in our own strength. "I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13) Whatever God requires, He will provide for. "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:19) God will always provide the skills, ability, direction and resources we need to carry out His will. (Hebrews 13:21) "May He equip you with all you need for doing His will. May He produce in you, through the power of Jesus Christ, every good thing that is pleasing to Him. All glory to Him forever and ever! Amen." God cannot and will not fail. "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31) "No one who hopes in God will ever be put to shame!" (Psalm 25:3) "No one who follows God wholeheartedly will ever regret it!" (Isaiah 49:23 It's not about our ability, It's about our availability.

We Are All Works In Progress.

We are all works in progress. God uses you and me, imperfect as we are. As we allow ourselves to be used by God, God will change us for the better – from the inside out. But if we don't have faith in God, trusting and obeying him, being faithful in what he has asked us to do (big or small), we will be stuck. We will never move forward in our walk with God. If we don't trust and obey, we will keep going around in circles.