

The Rhythm of Life



Finding Deep

Rest in Our Labor

Lesson 2: Burdens and Yokes

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Come to me, all 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.
(Matthew 11:28-30)

We all serve someone and are yoked to the person or thing we serve. Our _____ determine the nature of our burdens. What masters do I serve?

What yokes do I wear? What burdens do I carry?

I. _____ burdens from God that we are to bear _____.

A. _____ and the work needed to sustain it.

- Our necessary labor creates burdens for us.
- We become yoked to employers.

Let all who are under a yoke as slaves regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled.
(I Tim. 6:1)

- Physical aging and chronic pain create burdens.

For while we are still in this tent we groan, being burdened. (II Cor. 5:4)

We ourselves who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for the adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. (Rom. 8:23).

B. The various _____
in which we live. We are yoked to _____.
We bear the burdens and problems of the people close to us.

You lay the burden of all this people on me. . . I am not able to carry all this people alone. The burden is too heavy for me. (Num. 11:11,14)

- Family
- Church
- Friends
- Our neighbors, city, country, world

C. The _____ of life in a
_____ world.

So utterly burdened beyond our strength that we
despaired of life itself. (II Cor. 1:8)

I am not at ease, nor am I quiet, I have no rest, but
trouble comes. (Job 3:26)

II. _____ burdens that we were not
designed to carry. Burdens of _____
_____.

A. The unnecessary burden of _____ God

Living to please God is the responsibility and delight of
every Christian.

Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord
Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to
walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you
do so more and more. (I Thess. 4:1)

And without faith it is impossible to please him, for
whoever would draw near to God must believe that he
exists and that he rewards those who seek him.
(Heb. 11:6)

There is an appropriate desire and effort to please God, but there is also a twisted effort to earn God's favor that becomes an unnecessary and sinful burden when we believe that earning God's favor is up to us. No! Jesus earned God's favor for us!

We can be yoked to external _____ or self-imposed _____, burdened by the effort to keep rules to try to please God or religious leaders. Even after we are saved, we can bear this yoke.

Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? (Acts 15:10)

For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. (Gal. 5:1)

Why . . . do you submit to regulations – “Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch”? . . . These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh. (Col. 2:20-23)

B. The burden of pleasing _____

O Lord our God, masters besides you have had dominion over us. (Isaiah 26:13)

We are yoked to the _____ in which we live. Cultural expectations can create _____. The _____ close to us also impose expectations on us.

For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ. (Gal. 1:10)

You have to disappoint someone, and it is helpful to ask yourself, "Who am I unwilling to disappoint?"

C. The burden of pleasing _____ by trying to be like _____.

"When you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was destined to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. (Genesis 3:5-6).

- Trying to be God by trying to _____ everything.
In our pride we believe it is all up to us and that we actually have the ability to fix it all.
- Trying to be God by trying to be _____ for everyone.
- Trying to be God by trying to _____ everything.
Worry and anxiety are rooted in discomfort with not knowing what is going to happen.
- Trying to be God by trying to be _____.
- Trying to be God by trying to _____ everything.

Trying to please God, please people, or please ourselves are all specific cases of idolatry. We yoke ourselves to idols, to false gods. As we serve our idols, we become burdened by sin. The reality of our sin is heavy and worsened if we try to hide it. What sins are burdening you today? What sins are you trying to hide?

For my iniquities have gone over my head; like a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me. (Psalm 38:4)

III. The blessed and _____ burden of being yoked to _____

Take my yoke upon you. . . For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. (Matthew 11:29-30)

I led them with cords of kindness, with bands of love, and I became to them as one who eases the yoke on their jaws, and I bent down and fed them. (Hosea 11:4)

His commands are not burdensome. (1 John 5:3)

A. Being yoked to Jesus keeps us from bearing the burden of trying to please _____ in order to earn His favor.

B. Being yoked to Jesus prevents us from being burdened by trying to please _____.

C. Being yoked to Jesus rescues us from the addiction to pleasing _____ by indulging in sin or by trying to be God.

However, sometimes the burden of discipleship is heavy, especially for ministry leaders. See II Cor. 1:8-11.

IV. When the burdens become too heavy

Bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. . . For each will have to bear his own load.

(Gal. 6:2,5)

1. Is this burden from myself, the culture around me, other people, or my sin? Cast it away in the power of God.

Repent and turn away . . . Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! (Ez. 18:31)

And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. (Ez. 36:26)

2. Is this burden part of my God-given daily work that I need to joyfully bear alone in God's strength, yielded to Jesus? Cast your burden on the Lord and seek His sustaining grace, then ask others to pray for you.

Cast your burden on the Lord, and He will sustain you. (Psalm 55:22)

3. Is this burden part of my God-given necessary work, but of such an unrelenting nature that I need respite from it for a time? Seek help in bearing it.

4. Is this burden from God, but excessive in this season of life? Seek help in bearing it.

Application Questions

1. Read Matthew 24:45-46.

a. What category of labor are these verses describing?

b. What three adjectives does Jesus use in commending the servants? _____

2. Consider your burdens. List any unavoidable, God-given burdens in your life that you are tempted to be unfaithful in bearing. Are there any of these burdens that you are resentful of having to bear?

3. List any things you are doing in your life or rules that you have for yourself that are rooted in an attempt to earn God's favor.

4. Think carefully through your life and the decisions you make. What people are you trying to please? Who are you unwilling to disappoint?

5. List the 5 ways given in this lesson that we sometimes try to be like God.

Which of these temptations is greatest in your life?

6. How can you practically stay yoked to Jesus so that He is your only master?

7. One of the temptations of having a job with a human boss is inappropriate people pleasing. Read Ephesians 6:5-8. What principle do these verses give for making sure your service to a boss does not become sinful people pleasing?

8. In what ways do you impose your expectations on others? Are there ways you can give others more freedom to please God instead of pleasing you?

Prayerfully spend time this week identifying the burdens you carry and determining if they are from God or are self-imposed.

What burdens do you carry that you need to quit carrying? What burdens do you need to seek help in carrying?

