

Easyyoke

*Matt 11:29-30 NIV 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*

*1 John 5:3 NIV This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome.*

### **The Secret of the Easy Yoke**

(quotes from Dallas Willard's The Spirit of the Disciplines)

G.K. Chesterton once quipped that "Christianity has not so much been tried and found wanting, as it has been found difficult and left untried." The vast, grim "cost of discipleship" is something we hear constantly emphasized. But, it must not be left to stand as the whole truth. We would do far better to lay a clear, constant emphasis upon the cost of *non-discipleship*. As Kierkegaard reminds us, "It costs a man just as much or even more to go to hell than to come to heaven." To depart from righteousness is to choose a life of crushing burdens, failures, and disappointments, a life caught in the toils of endless problems that are never resolved. The "cost," though it may take all we have, is small when compared to the lot of those who don't accept Christ's invitation to be part of His company.

The words of Jesus quoted above from Matthew and reiterated in 1 John 5:3 present an alternative to the desolation of life lived apart from God. Yet, in all honesty, most believers find the concept of seriously following Jesus' teachings to be more an expression of a hope, a mere ideal, than a statement of potential reality. We reason that we're in a period of grace---we are saved by grace, not by anything we do---so obedience to Christ is actually not necessary. And, it is *so* hard, anyway. It cannot be expected of us, much less enjoyed by us.

Think of certain young people who idolize an outstanding baseball player. Can we expect them to perform as their idol if they try to emulate him only during the game. Obviously not! We understand that the star performer himself achieved his excellence by choosing an overall life of preparation of mind and body, pouring all his energies into that total preparation, to provide a foundation in the body's automatic responses and strength for his conscious efforts during the game.

What we find here is true of any human endeavor capable of giving significance to our lives. We are touching upon a general principle of human life. It's true for the public speaker or the musician, the teacher, the surgeon, or the Christian husband. A successful performance at a moment of crisis rests largely and essentially upon the depths of a *self* wisely and rigorously prepared in the totality of its being---mind and body. The "secret of the easy yoke," then, is to learn from Christ how to live our total lives, how to invest all our time and our energies of mind and body as He did. We must learn how to follow His preparations, the disciplines for life in God's rule that enabled Him to receive His Father's constant and effective support at the moment of crisis.

Think of how we exclaim over and mark as rarities those who seem truly to have the power and spirit of Christ about them. The very way the bright exceptions stand out proves the rule that the guidance given by the church in America is not even counted on by the *church itself* to produce the disciplined and focused kinds of people we know it should produce.

*Luke 17:10 NLT In the same way, when you obey me you should say, 'We are not worthy of praise. We are servants who have simply done our duty.'* "

## Spiritual disciplines

The disciple or apprentice of Jesus, as recognized by the New Testament, is one who has firmly decided to learn from Him how to lead his or her life, whatever that may be, as Jesus himself would do it. And, as best they know how, they are making plans---taking the necessary steps, progressively arranging and rearranging their affairs---to do this. Dallas Willard

### ***The Spiritual Disciplines - Door to Liberation***

(from Richard Foster's Celebration of Discipline)

#### A. The Inward Disciplines

1. Meditation - Psalm 119:78
2. Prayer - Mark 1:35
3. Fasting - Matthew 9:15
4. Study - Deuteronomy 11:18

#### B. The Outward Disciplines

1. Simplicity - Luke 12:15
2. Solitude - Mark 6:31
3. Submission - Philippians 2:8
4. Service - John 13:14-15

#### C. The Corporate Disciplines

1. Confession - James 5:16
2. Worship - John 4:23
3. Guidance - Acts 13:1-3
4. Celebration - John 15:11

#### **The Two Primary Objectives of Discipleship Training** (Dallas Willard)

1. To bring apprentices to the point where they dearly love and constantly delight in their "heavenly Father" who was made real to earth in Jesus and are quite certain that there is no "catch," no limit, to the goodness of His intentions or to His power to carry them out.
2. To remove our automatic responses against the Kingdom of God, to free the apprentices of domination, of "enslavement" (John 8:34; Rom 6:6) to their old habitual patterns of thought, feeling, and action.

