



Fruit of the Spirit— Discipleship
A Series that will bring Fruit to your Life
 ~ Troy DeFeo

Bible Study Nine:

“ Joy in Christ’s Rest ”

JOY:

Text: Matthew 11:28-30

There is a part of us that yearns for the rest that Jesus gives. Our lives are full of activity—activity that all too often seems empty and worthless. Quiet and solitude are unheard of. In the midst of a frenzied pace, Jesus continues to gently give the invitation: “Come to Me and Rest.”



What are some of the deep longings of your heart? For what do you yearn?

Read: Matthew 11:28-30

What invitation does Jesus give in this passage? _____

What do you think it means for us to “come to Jesus” spiritually?

Are there certain things you want to come to Jesus about and certain things you do not? _____

Jesus invites all who are what? _____ vs. 28

What might He have in mind that they will be? _____

A.W. Tozer, Theologian “The common human desire (Is) to put the best foot forward and hide from the world our real inward poverty...There is hardly a man or a woman who dare to be just what he or she is without doctoring up the impression. The fear of being found out gnaws like rodents within their hearts.”

vs. 29- What is a yoke and what does it do? _____

What does it mean, therefore, to take Christ’s yoke upon you?

Does Jesus make a promises to those who respond to his invitation? _____

Insight on the Yoke:

In Jesus' day, farmers used a yoke — a kind of collar — to link two oxen to each other. The yoke was then attached to some other object, such as a plow. Linked by the yoke, the two oxen could then work together, pulling whatever burden was attached to the yoke. Jesus applies this image to our life with Him.

Don't you think it's a little bit strange that Jesus' idea of getting us to rest in Him involves putting on a yoke? A yoke was not created for rest; it was created for work. It literally has nothing to do with rest at all. When Jesus invited the weary and heavy laden to come to Him and find rest, we would expect Him to say something like, Take off that yoke you're wearing — you don't need it anymore! Doesn't that feel great? Now run... be free! But Jesus' solution for yoke-weariness was not to cast off the yoke entirely; it was to yoke ourselves to Him, to walk in step with Him.

This is a different kind of yoke, one perfectly fitted to support and aid us in fulfilling His purpose for our lives. That doesn't mean being yoked to Christ will always be comfortable, but it's not supposed to crush us either.

Farmers used to train young oxen to plow by partnering them with stronger and more mature oxen. The job of the younger ox was simply to follow in the same direction and keep pace with the teacher ox. The older ox pulled most of the weight and understood the commands of the plow driver. As long as the young ox followed the older ox, everything was fine. But if the younger ox decided to speed up or lag behind, the work became much more difficult. Only by keeping pace with the older ox could the younger ox complete the day's work without collapsing from exhaustion.

When we are yoked to Christ, He carries most of the weight.

Finding “rest for your soul” can bring lots of Joy— how is that?

vs. 30 How does it bring you joy know Christ's yoke is easy and his burden is light? _____

Insight Commentary: “The gracious invitation...is recorded only by Matthew. It is addressed in the first instance to those upon whose backs the Pharisees were laying heavy burdens by demanding meticulous obedience not only to the law itself but to their own intricate elaborations of it. Every law-abiding person is of necessity under yoke, and the expression “the yoke of the law” was commonplace in Judaism. (Acts 15:10) Jesus the Messiah also calls His disciples to accept a “yoke,” but how different is Jesus yoke! In the first place it is not really obedience to an external law at all, for it is first and foremost loyalty to a Person, which enables the disciple to do gladly, and therefore easily, and without feeling that he is struggling under a heavy burden, what that Person would have

him to do....Where a relationship exists between a disciple and Himself (His) yoke is easy and (His) burden is light. Moreover, the way of life that He desires His disciples to follow is his own life.” -- Matthew France, Commentary

The heavy-laden people Jesus spoke to did not know grace. Instead, they were yoked to a complex system of Jewish regulations referred to as “the law.” Obeying the law as perfectly as they could was how they stayed in right relationship with God and made sure that the work they were doing for Him was acceptable. The reason Jesus didn’t tell His listeners to throw off the yoke completely is because they still had work to do — and as long as we are alive, we too will always have work to do. Work is a good thing. We were created for purpose, and that purpose often finds expression through our daily tasks. A life without work is not possible, nor is it desirable. So the question is not, “Will you work?” but “How will you work?” How will you pull the burden of your life’s work along?

The people in Jesus’ day were using the yoke of the law to pull their life and everything in it along. It left them “tired, worn out, and burned out on religion.” The yoke of grace Jesus offered was contrary to the yoke of the law. It was a move from depending on one’s own efforts and ability to depending on God’s grace and power.



vs. 29- Jesus describes himself a “gentle and humble in heart” -- How does these qualities of a person increase your desire to come to Him and learn from Him? _____

So, is there anything you need to “humbly” come to Jesus about? _____