

# His Yoke Is Easy and His Burden Is Light

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Let us remember that each person on this earth is a child of God and He loves each one.

The story is told of a man named Jack who had a beloved bird-hunting dog named Cassie. Jack was so proud of Cassie and often bragged about what a skilled dog she was. To prove this, Jack invited some friends to watch Cassie perform. After arriving at the hunting club, Jack let Cassie out to run around while he went inside to check in.

When it was time to begin, Jack was anxious to show off Cassie's amazing skills. However, Cassie was acting strangely. She wouldn't obey any of Jack's commands as she usually did so willingly. All she wanted to do was remain by his side.

Jack was frustrated and embarrassed and angry with Cassie; soon he suggested they leave. Cassie wouldn't even jump into the back of the truck, so Jack impatiently picked her up and shoved her in the kennel. He fumed as those with him made fun of his dog's behavior all the way home. Jack couldn't understand why Cassie was misbehaving. She had been trained well, and her whole desire in the past had been to please and serve him.

After arriving home, Jack began examining Cassie for injuries, burrs, or ticks, as he usually did. As he put his hand on her chest, he felt something wet and found his hand covered with blood. To his shame and horror, he found that Cassie had a long, wide gash right to her chest bone. He found another on her right front leg, also to the bone.

Jack took Cassie into his arms and began to cry. His shame at how he had misjudged and treated her was overwhelming. Cassie had been acting uncharacteristically earlier in the day because she was hurt. Her behavior had been influenced by her pain, her suffering, and her wounds. It had nothing to do with a lack of desire to obey Jack or a lack of love for him.<sup>1</sup>

I heard this story years ago and have never forgotten it. How many wounded individuals do we have among us? How often do we judge

others based on their outward appearance and actions, or *lack* of action, when, if we fully understood, we would instead react with compassion and a desire to help instead of adding to their burdens with our judgment?

I have been guilty of this many times in my life, but the Lord has patiently taught me through personal experiences and as I have listened to the life experiences of many others. I have come to more fully appreciate the example of our dear Savior as He spent so much of *His* time ministering to others with love.

My youngest daughter's life experience has included emotional health challenges from the time she was a little girl. There have been many times throughout her life when she felt like she couldn't go on. We will be forever grateful to the earthly angels who have been there during those times: sitting with her, listening to her, crying with her, as well as sharing *together* unique gifts, spiritual understandings, and a mutual relationship of love. In such *loving* circumstances, burdens have often been lifted on *both* sides.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, quoting 1 Corinthians, said, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal."<sup>2</sup>

He continued:

"Paul's message to this new body of Saints was simple and direct: Nothing you do makes much of a difference if you do not have charity. You can speak with tongues, have the gift of prophecy, understand all mysteries, and possess all knowledge; even if you have the faith to move mountains, without charity it won't profit you at all.

"Charity is the pure love of Christ' [Moroni 7:47]. The Savior exemplified that love."<sup>3</sup>

In John we read, "By *this* shall all men know that ye are my disciples, *if ye have love one to another*."<sup>4</sup>

Many talks have been given by our Church leaders on charity, unity, love, kindness, compassion, forgiveness, and mercy. I believe the Savior is inviting us to live a higher, holier way<sup>5</sup>—*His* way of love where *all* can feel they truly belong and are needed.

We are commanded to *love* others,<sup>6</sup> not to judge them.<sup>7</sup> Let's lay down that heavy burden; it isn't ours to carry.<sup>8</sup> Instead, we can pick up the Savior's yoke of love and compassion.

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; ...

“For *my* yoke is easy, and *my* burden is light.”<sup>9</sup>

The Savior does not condone sin but offers us His love and extends forgiveness when we repent. To the woman caught in adultery, He said, “Neither do *I* condemn thee: go, and sin no more.”<sup>10</sup> Those He touched felt His *love*, and that love healed and transformed them. *His* love inspired them to *want* to change their lives. Living *His* way brings joy and peace, and He invited others to that way of living with gentleness, kindness, and love.

Elder Gary E. Stevenson said: “When we confront life’s wind and rainstorms, sickness and injuries, the Lord—our Shepherd, our Caregiver—will nourish us with love and kindness. He will heal our hearts and restore our souls.”<sup>11</sup> As followers of Jesus Christ, shouldn’t we do likewise?

The Savior asks us to learn of Him<sup>12</sup> and do the things we have seen Him do.<sup>13</sup> He is the embodiment of charity, of pure love. As we incrementally learn to do what He asks of us—not out of duty or even for the blessings we might receive but purely out of love for Him and our Heavenly Father<sup>14</sup>—His love will flow through us and make all that He asks not only possible but eventually much easier and lighter<sup>15</sup> and more joyful than we could ever imagine. It will take practice; it could take years, as it has for me, but as we even desire to have love be our motivating force, He can take that desire,<sup>16</sup> that seed, and eventually turn it into a beautiful tree, full of the sweetest fruit.<sup>17</sup>

We sing in one of our beloved hymns: “Who am I to judge another when I walk imperfectly? In the quiet heart is hidden sorrow that the eye can’t see.”<sup>18</sup> Who among *us* might have hidden sorrows? The seemingly rebellious child or teenager, the children of divorce, the single mother or father, those with physical or mental health challenges, those questioning their faith, those who experience racial or cultural prejudice, those feeling alone, those longing to be married, those with unwanted addictions, and so many others dealing with a wide variety of challenging life experiences—often even those whose lives appear perfect on the surface.

None of us have perfect lives or perfect families; I certainly don’t. When we seek to empathize with others who *also* experience challenges and imperfections, it can help them feel that they are not alone in *their* struggles. *Everyone* needs to feel that they really *do* belong and *are* needed in the body of Christ.<sup>19</sup> Satan’s great desire is to divide God’s children, and he has been very successful, but there is such power in unity.<sup>20</sup> And how we need to walk arm in arm with each other on this challenging journey of mortality!

Our prophet, President Russell M. Nelson, said: “Any *abuse* or *prejudice* toward another because of nationality, race, sexual orientation, gender, educational degrees, culture, or other significant identifiers is offensive to our Maker! Such mistreatment causes us to live beneath our stature as His covenant sons and daughters!”<sup>21</sup>

While President Nelson has invited all to enter and stay on the covenant path that leads back to our Father in Heaven, he also provided the following counsel: “If friends and family ... step away from the Church, continue to love them. It is not for you to judge another’s choice any more than you deserve to be criticized for staying faithful.”<sup>22</sup>

Friends, let us remember that each person on this earth is a child of God<sup>23</sup> and He loves each one.<sup>24</sup> Are there people in *your* path who you have felt inclined to judge? If so, remember that these are valuable opportunities for us to *practice* loving as the Savior loves.<sup>25</sup> As we follow *His* example, we can be yoked with *Him* and help foster a feeling of love and belonging in the hearts of all our Father’s children.

“We love him, because he first loved us.”<sup>26</sup> As we are filled with the Savior’s love, His yoke truly *can* be easy, and His burden *can* feel light.<sup>27</sup> Of this I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

#### Notes

1. See Jack R. Christianson, *Healing the Wounded Soul* (2008), 27.
2. 1 Corinthians 13:1; see Moroni 7:44–48.
3. Joseph B. Wirthlin, “The Great Commandment,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2007, 28.
4. John 13:35, emphasis added; see also verse 34.
5. See Russell M. Nelson, “Opening Remarks,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2018, 6–8.
6. See Matthew 22:36–40; John 13:34–35.
7. See Matthew 7:1–4; Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Merciful Obtain Mercy,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2012, 70–77; see also Robert C. Gay, “Taking upon Ourselves the Name of Jesus Christ,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2018, 97–100.
8. An exception to this includes bishops and stake presidents. “Each bishop and stake president is ‘a judge in Israel’ (Doctrine and Covenants 107:72). By this authority they help members repent of sin and come unto Christ, who forgives sin (see 32.1 and 32.3)” (*General Handbook: Serving in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 31.1.7, ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

9. Matthew 11:28–30; emphasis added.
10. John 8:11, emphasis added; see also verses 3–10.
11. Gary E. Stevenson, “Hearts Knit Together,” *Liahona*, May 2021, 23.
12. See Matthew 11:29.
13. See 3 Nephi 27:21–22.
14. See Matthew 22:37–39.
15. See Mosiah 24:15.
16. See Alma 32:27.
17. See Alma 32:41.
18. “Lord, I Would Follow Thee,” *Hymns*, no. 220.
19. See 1 Corinthians 12:12–27; see also Jeffrey R. Holland, “Songs Sung and Unsung,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2017, 49–51.
20. See Sharon Eubank, “By Union of Feeling We Obtain Power with God,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2020, 55–57; see also Dale G. Renlund, “The Peace of Christ Abolishes Enmity,” *Liahona*, Nov. 2021, 83–86; Sharon Eubank, “Turning Enemies into Friends” (Brigham Young University devotional, Jan. 23, 2018), [speeches.byu.edu](https://speeches.byu.edu).
21. Russell M. Nelson, “Choices for Eternity” (worldwide devotional for young adults, May 15, 2022), [broadcasts.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://broadcasts.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).
22. Russell M. Nelson, “Choices for Eternity,” [broadcasts.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://broadcasts.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).
23. See Romans 8:16.
24. See Isaiah 49:16; Romans 8:35, 38–39.
25. See Luke 6:31–38.
26. 1 John 4:19. “We are speaking here of the first great commandment given to the human family—to love God wholeheartedly, without reservation or compromise, that is, with all our heart, might, mind, and strength. This love of God is the first great *commandment* in the universe. But the first great *truth* in the universe is that *God loves us* exactly that way—wholeheartedly, without reservation or compromise, with all of *His* heart, might, mind, and strength” (Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Greatest Possession,” *Liahona*, Nov. 2021, 9).

27. See Matthew 11:28–30.