

DISCUSSION GUIDE

SUMMER
AT
HILLSIDE

September 3, 2023

To the Weary & Burdened ~Jayden Zwerner

This Discussion Guide is designed to help you **think more deeply** about the sermon and **engage with others** through thoughtful conversation, biblical exploration and **allow God to work** in your life as you apply what you discover.

➤ CONVERSATION STARTER

What is something you have worked really hard for? How has it enhanced your life?

➤ EXPLORATION

It is not uncommon to spend a lot of time planning, preparing and working hard for many things in our lives. Working hard is a good thing, as long as we are working toward something worthwhile.

If we are not careful, we can begin to believe that we have to work to the point of exhaustion, living in a constant state of being overwhelmed and consumed by the tasks at hand. What if God has a different plan for us?

Matthew 11:28-30 (From your bible, read aloud)

This passage may be familiar to you, but don't let that keep you from reading it carefully. In fact, **take a moment to read it again slowly.**

What stands out to you from this passage?

Jesus is speaking here to Jewish people who were living under the weight of the law. Their burdens were made even heavier by the manmade requirements and regulations imposed on them by the religious leaders of their day.

Jesus is offering rest, not just physical rest, but a true and deep rest for the soul. The invitation is to give you a place to share that thing that keeps you up at night and makes it hard to take a deep breath. Jesus invites us into a different way of being.

What is it that most worries you, the thing that keeps you up at night?

Invitation 1: Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened.

Jesus knows we carry burdens and his invitation is for us to bring our burdens to him. This is not a shameful thing, it is part of being human. Only from Jesus can we gain true rest as he teaches us how to share our lives with him.

Invitation 2: Take my yoke upon you.

A yoke is a wooden frame joining two animals together so that they can pull heavy loads. This may be unfamiliar to us, but to the Jewish people at that time it was a very familiar sight. Jesus is offering to carry the load with us.

He invites us to take His yoke, to link up and allow Him to lead us.

Jesus reorders our lives and our priorities so that the focus of our lives is following Him.

1 John 5:3 (From your bible, read aloud)

A yoke today might look like:

- The expectations of others
- The shame of past mistakes
- The drive for success
- The fear of failure
- The search for significance

Jesus is inviting you to release these heavy yokes of expectation so that you can learn from him how to live differently.

Invitation 3: Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart...

Jesus is not asking us to pretend that our cares and concerns don't matter. He is offering to teach us his ways of working through the challenges we face with his help.

Luke 9:23-24 (From your bible, read aloud)

What your soul needs is only found as we walk with Jesus: learning, following and modeling our lives after him.

"A disciple is a person who has decided that the most important thing in their life is to learn how to do what Jesus said to do." ~Dallas Willard

What are you currently doing to learn how to do what Jesus said to do?

Jesus is not offering freedom from commitment or work. Taking his yoke requires trust, obedience, sacrifice and work. But this kind of work is meant for our good. Read how Eugene Petersen summarizes it in the Message Version.

"Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace, I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

Matthew 11:28-30 (MSG)

When we read about the unforced rhythms of grace, it doesn't mean we will have an easy life with no work and all play. Instead we find ourselves connected to a God who does the impossible. We learn from a God who is kind, gentle, slow to anger, abounding in mercy and humble in heart.

"Only as we walk ever deeper into this tender kindness can we live the Christian life as the New Testament calls us to. Only as we drink down the kindness of the heart of Christ will we leave in our wake, everywhere we go, the aroma of heaven, and die one day having startled the world with glimpses of a divine kindness too great to be boxed in by what we deserve." ~Dane C. Ortlund. *Gentle and Lowly*

What is one specific burden you currently carry that you need to surrender to Jesus?

> TAKE AWAY

An invitation for all of us:

- Make the time to take an honest inventory of your soul. Name the burdens, really name them & bring them to Jesus. Receive the gift of rest, just as you are.
- Take on His tailor-made yoke. Surrender the identities and expectations that aren't yours to shoulder? His yoke is not burdensome, it fits you perfectly.
- Learn His ways: seek to know Jesus, to learn His ways and to respond to His invitations daily. This is your invitation to learn the unforced rhythms of grace.

Keep in mind as you take time to reflect that you are already more loved than you could ever imagine. God gives us a daily invitation to learn to live like your soul has found its rest and your life is filled with God's grace.

Take some time to pray for each other, asking God to help you identify burdens that are meant to be carried with His help.