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but because His infinite strength, inherent in Godhood, was *controlled* to serve the purposes of the Father. When we make a deliberate, rational choice to allow our lives to be used in the service of God, we understand the principle of being His yokefellow.

To put on the well-fitted yoke of God is to recognize two essential facts. First, God's will is not an arbitrary, burdensome code, but a reflection of His own moral nature - and is designed for our ultimate good. Secondly, His yoke can only be put on voluntarily. No one is forced or coerced into discipleship. It is only through the determinate will of the individual that he lays aside his own agenda and steps into the harness of tamed strength. And that may be precisely why so many of us fight it.

If only Christianity were about "doing Bible things in Bible ways," we reason dubiously, discipleship would be a snap. If its focus were only the performance of public acts of worship, faith would be nothing more than learning ritual. And that's where logic become illogical. If religion is not rooted in our hearts, if we haven't given our whole hearts to the Lord, what would possibly motivate us to *maintain* the routine?

But yielding one's whole heart to another, even to the Savior, is tough. It is a learned response, stemming from a realistic perspective of one's proper place in this world. We are not little gods ruling our little corner of the cosmos. We are created beings. We are made from dirt. It is only through the creative genius of the One True God that we have life and breath at all. Jesus was "*lowly in heart.*"

Although He was no ordinary man, He still had "*emptied Himself*" of all the glories of heaven and took the form of a man. He lived in humble circumstances, yielding Himself even to the cross (Phil. 2:5-8). If one who was "*God manifested in flesh*" can be humble in the Father's service, how much more are we to "*have this mind*" as Paul charges?

Like Jesus, each of us must "empty" himself. Of pride. Of self-importance. Of selfishness. Of unrestrained lusts. It is only when we're stripped of Self that our strength is "tamed" and fit for the service of God. We can only put on God's yoke when our own has been consigned to the scrap heap. As Paul explains it, "*What things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. But indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ*" (Phil. 3:8-9).

- Steve Dewhirst



Have you put on the yoke with Christ?

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“For I Am Meek And Lowly In Heart”

Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek [or gentle] and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matt. 11:29). This expression is more than a self-effacing platitude; it embodies the very pith of the Lord's charge. Like connective tissue between vital organs, it links responsibility to rationale. It explains why Jesus is the only logical Teacher: because He is *already* what each of us must *become*.



Our charge to take on the “yoke” of Jesus is not a call to religiously correct formalism. It is a summons to yielding, deliberate reformation of character. It is an invitation to fulfill God's purpose for His elect: “*to be conformed to the image of His Son*” (Rom. 8:29). And who better

as an Instructor, than the Son, Himself, who has already yielded to the Father's will in total self-sacrifice? “*Tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin*” (Heb. 4:15), Jesus is the ultimate role model.

We sometimes stumble over the terms *meek* and *gentle*. Although they are used interchangeably by translators, they do not represent identical ideas. *Gentleness* is not the equivalent of *meekness*; rather, gentleness is a *result* of true meekness. And contrary to popular opinion, a man made *meek* is not a man made *weak*. Weakness, whether moral or physical, is no virtue.

The very concept of *meekness* is based on the recognition of strength. But great strength glorifies God and man only when it is *controlled* to some useful end. And such is the essence of meekness: *strength under control*. And Jesus is the benchmark. He came to earth as “*God manifested in flesh*” (1 Tim. 3:16), yet humbly submitted to the scorn of men. Not because He was weak,

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Flattering The King

by Jeff Kingry

**For do I now persuade men or God?
Or do I seek to please men?
For if I yet pleased men,
I should not be a servant of Christ.”
Galatians 1:10**

Diogenes of Sinope (412?-323 B.C.) was a Greek slave, considered by scholars to be a notable Greek philosopher, generally considered by historians as the founder of the school of Cynics. However, to all of us who have suffered such oafs with good humor, Diogenes is and will always remain the original world class curmudgeon.

Diogenes did not conceal his disdain for literature and the fine arts. He laughed at men of letters for reading of the sufferings of Odysseus while neglecting their own, and at orators who studied how to enforce truth but not how to practice it. According to a popular story, Diogenes walked through Athens in broad daylight carrying a lighted lamp, saying that he was looking for an honest man.

He wore coarse clothing when he might have worn soft, ate from the side of the road when he could have sat at rich men's tables, and slept on the hard ground, in the open streets, or under porticoes, spurning offerings of a bed in his own room by his many rich Athenian admirers.

Diogenes is said to have been sought out by Alexander the Great, who

venerated the aging cynic. Accompanied by his usual entourage of sycophant groupies, having just conquered the entire Aegean peninsula, the youthful general opened the conversation with, "I am Alexander the Great."

The philosopher cracked open one eye, for The Great Alexander of Macedonia had found Diogenes catching a nap in a hillside field of lentil. The old man looked up drowsily and answered, "And I am Diogenes the Cynic."

Alexander then asked him, "Honorable Diogenes, I have heard of your integrity and character from my tutors, and your wisdom is legendary wherever my travels have taken me. Good sir, in what way may I serve you?"

Diogenes, squinting up at Alexander hovering over him replied, "You can step out of my sunlight, youth."

Alexander is said to have been so struck with the Cynic's self-possession that he went away remarking, "If I were not Alexander, I should wish to be Diogenes." Easy enough for him to say.

But in Alexander's entourage was a former teacher of Diogenes, a certain Aristathenes. When the older teacher heard his former student snub the king, he went to Diogenes with not a little concern to offer him some political guidance. He found Diogenes grumpily gathering pottage by the wayside.

"Hail, old friend. You know, if you could learn to flatter the king you would



not have to eat lentils," Aristathenes greeted him.

Pointedly ignoring his former tutor, Diogenes continued gleaning, and after the obligatory timed comedic pause, flung over his shoulder, "Aristathenes, old friend, if you would learn to be content with lentils, you would not *have* to flatter the king."

The older I get, and the more I realize how little of life is benefited by our obsession in meeting the expectations of other people, Diogenes' Cynicism does begin to possess a certain rough charm. At least the old man retained his dignity and independence, in the face of a foolish and corrupt world, intact with a sense of humor. Ω

My first trip to China in 1992 was with Jeff Kingry and a number of other men. Jeff and his wife Anna were pioneers in the China work, opening doors for many of us. They have been courageous servants for many years.

