

1. God reveals His ways to *_ordinary_* people.
2. A pattern for life: “As the Father sent me...so I *_send_* you...”
3. We are invited into the very workings of the *_Trinity_*.
4. Following Jesus is the way to *_life_*.
5. It is the way to real *_rest_*.
6. Christianity is *_apprenticeship_* to Jesus.
7. Is this really possible: *_unforced_* rhythms of grace?
8. How will it feel as we go? Not *_heavy_* or ill-fitting...
9. How does one keep *_company_* with Jesus?
10. Following Jesus: the *_free_* and *_light_* life.

Conclusion:

1. What has Christian life felt like as you’ve tried to get meaningfully involved?
2. Jesus’ vision for following him as the people of God.

Matthew 11:25–30 (The Message)

Abruptly Jesus broke into prayer: "Thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth. You've concealed your ways from sophisticates and know-it-alls, but spelled them out clearly to ordinary people. Yes, Father, that's the way you like to work."

“The Father has given me all these things to do and say. This is a unique Father-Son operation, coming out of Father and Son intimacies and knowledge. No one knows the Son the way the Father does, nor the Father the way the Son does. But I'm not keeping it to myself; I'm ready to go over it line by line with anyone willing to listen.

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. 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.”

Small Group Questions

“Following Jesus: Unforced Rhythms of Grace”

Todd Hunter

Matthew 11:25-30

Read aloud Matthew 11:25-30 in a literal translation (NIV, NASB, ESV, NLT, NKJV) and then read aloud the paraphrased version from The Message and then discuss these questions. See reverse side for explanation of different types of Bible versions.

1. In what ways might we listen to Jesus in order to “manage” his message and thus, like the religious leaders of his day, not have ears to hear? [See Mark 3:1-6 for an example of how the religious leaders typically responded to Jesus’ message.]
2. Jesus said following him was the way to “life” but Christianity (not just “church”) increasingly has a reputation for being boring and irrelevant. Do you feel this way? How do you contribute to this view of Christianity?
3. What “false” rests have you noticed in yourself? How might you find real rest in Jesus?
4. Discuss Todd’s comment regarding Christianity being all about apprenticeship to Jesus: “heaven is not the goal; heaven is simply the destination. The goal is spiritual transformation into Christlikeness.” How does spiritual transformation into Christlikeness relate to Bethel’s purpose of making disciples.
5. Can you conceive of a life in Jesus that is free and light? Do you have a hard time trusting Jesus for this life? Why or why not?
6. What things do you do now to “keep company with Jesus?” What other things might you do to “keep company with Jesus?” Discuss as a group and learn from one another.

Bible Translations

Have you ever read the Preface to your Bible? Did you know there was a preface to the Bible? Well, there really isn’t a preface to the Bible, but there are prefaces to translations. A great place to find out more about your Bible’s translation is in its preface.

Word-for-word

Also known as formal equivalence, word-for-word translations are exactly what they sound like. The translators make a special effort to carefully interpret each word from the original language into English. This philosophy of translation emphasizes God, the Divine Author, over the human reader of Scripture. Just as you would expect in other important documents such as contracts or marriage vows, the word-for-word translations strive for precision in translation. These are generally written at a high school reading level. Examples include English Standard Version (ESV), the New American Standard Bible (NASB) and the New King James Version (NKJV).

Thought-for-thought

Thought-for-thought translations are also known as dynamic equivalence or functional equivalence translations. These attempt to convey the full nuance of the passage by interpreting the Scripture’s entire meaning, not just the individual words. They may include words that were not in the original text in an effort to give the same meaning that the reader of the original languages would have had. Examples include the New International Version (NIV), the New Living Translation (NLT), and the Contemporary English Version (CEV).

Paraphrases

Paraphrases go one step further than thought-for-thought translations, combining Scripture and interpretive commentary into the translation method. The goal is to capture the poetic or narrative essence of a passage. For this reason, and because some passages in paraphrase cannot be divided into the same thought sections as the original, many paraphrased translations do not even have verse divisions in them. Some paraphrase translations include The Message (TM), The Living Bible (TLB), and The Amplified Bible (TAB).