

When I ask people if they know Jesus, most people answer yes. But the reality is that their lifestyle and moral choices do not remotely reflect a relationship with Jesus Christ.

What does it mean to know Jesus? Is he knowable?

In Matthew 11, Jesus was teaching people in the region of Northern Galilee, a region where he had performed many incredible miracles. While the people had seen Jesus do amazing things, most of them did not know him. They loved what he did, but they had no desire to know him.

Many people today know what Jesus did; they can explain the Gospel and that salvation is only found by repenting of our sins and placing our faith in Jesus. But do they really know him? Do we?

Come to Me

In Matthew 11:28, Jesus offers an incredible invitation, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” This invitation was so different from the teaching of the Pharisees, who taught a list of things to do and mandated endless rules to follow. Jesus knew the burden of the law of Moses. Instead of piling on more expectations, he invited the people—as he invites us today—to enter into a relationship with the God of creation, where he promises rest.

In 2025 it seemed that burnout was all too common within Christian ministries. I believe that the feeling of ministry exhaustion can be a result of laboring for Jesus rather than with Jesus.

At the start of 2026, Jesus invites us to come to him and rekindle our relationship with him—or perhaps get to know him for the first time. Take my Yoke

Jesus continues in verse 29, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

A yoke allows two animals to share a load and pull together. The animals yoked together need to be close in size and weight for the cart or plow to pull evenly. In the Bible, the yoke is sometimes referenced metaphorically to describe the weight of a task or obligation (see 1 Kings 12:11 and Isaiah 10:27). When Jesus speaks of his yoke being “easy”, he means that when we let him share our yoke, our burden is no longer heavy because he is pulling with us. When you work for Jesus, it is a heavy yoke; when you work with Jesus, it is easy.

Jesus invites us to take his yoke, and we will find rest for our souls (see Philippians 4:5b-7). When you are yoked with the Lord, you know the peace of God that passes all understanding (see Philippians 4:7).

Learn from Me

Jesus invites us to learn from him. As we come to Jesus, submitting to his leadership in our lives, we learn from him. We learn his ways, we learn his nature, and we find peace. Do you know what it means to learn from Jesus? The best way to learn from Jesus is by meditating on his word. The Bible is the revelation of Jesus, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, we see Jesus revealed in its pages.

Developing and growing our personal spiritual disciplines is good, but what if this year, our goal is to know Jesus more and to learn from him rather than trying to do more things for him?

His Yoke is Easy

In verse 30, Jesus continued, “For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” The yoke that Jesus has for us is tailor made for us. God knows us better than we know ourselves, and when we are yoked together with Christ, it fits us perfectly.

However, Jesus does not mean that the Christian life will be one of carefree ease. The Greek word for “easy”, can be translated as, “suitable fit” or “kind”. Jesus is saying that his yoke is kind and a suitable fit for our lives, and it will not weigh us down. This does not mean we won’t have challenges in life (see John 16:33); rather, we will be yoked with Jesus through the challenges of life.

He is Gentle and Lowly

In verse 29, we read the only time in the Bible where Jesus reveals his heart to us, when he says, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

In other places in the New Testament the word for gentle is translated as meek or humble. Jesus is not easily frustrated or exasperated; he has a gentle spirit.

Dane Ortlund writes, “He is the most understanding person in the universe. The posture most natural to him is not a pointed finger but open arms.”

Jesus is gentle, understanding, and humble. Jesus is the perfect picture of humility. The all-powerful creator of the universe humbled himself and became a child, on a rescue mission to save his creation (see Ephesians 2:8). Jesus is accessible and approachable. As we come to him, yoked with him, we find rest for our souls. Jesus desires to be yoked with us; he never gets tired of being with us and carrying us through the challenges of life.

This invitation is mind-blowing – to meet daily and walk with the one who gives us breath, powered by his strength and protected by his sovereign love.

At the outset of 2026, I want to invite you to take the yoke of Jesus and learn from him. May 2026 be a year of rest for your soul as you walk with Jesus!

Do you know Jesus? Are you walking with him daily?