

Sanctification Is Gentle

Scripture Reading — Matthew 11:28-30

I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. — Matthew 11:29

My friend Ron was miserable; he was inwardly tormented. He explained this to me late one night, by his backyard pool, with the waterfall gently babbling. There, in the darkness, he told me his story:

When he was about 13 years old, Ron started getting into trouble, and he got caught. “So,” he said, “my dad starts hitting me. He drags me upstairs to my room and throws me to the floor. I’m lying there, bleeding. Then he takes a Bible, slaps it into my chest, and tells me I need to memorize the Bible so I will stop sinning. Then he leaves, slamming the door.”

Neither Ron nor I spoke for quite a while, as the pool’s little waterfall gurgled like a fountain. Jesus, God, the Bible—and fists. A bleeding boy on the floor, trying to memorize the Bible so he won’t get hit again.

Now, let’s get this straight: No one can beat sanctification into you. Preachers cannot shout it into you. No one can frighten someone into it. You cannot force it onto someone else. It is God’s work—and God’s alone. It is good, and it is done with gentleness.

In giving us the image of a yoke (usually used with a pair of oxen for pulling), Jesus shows us the truth of his lordship. This is his gift of gently guiding us into a life of peace, love, and joy. As hard as that may be to accomplish, we need to disregard anyone who has tried to beat religion into us.

Prayer

Lord, come to me and lead me. I really want your true and gentle lordship. Bless me, and heal my wounds. In your name I pray. Amen.

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