



Leader's Guide for "You Were Never Meant to Carry That"

Matthew 11:28–30 | Pastor Dave Bennett | Series: Triggered

Session Overview

This week's discussion focuses on how Jesus invites us to release the heavy loads we were never meant to carry—spiritually, emotionally, and mentally. Using Matthew 11:28–30, Pastor Dave reminds us that Jesus offers rest not by removing all responsibility, but by exchanging our self-imposed burdens for His perfectly fitted, grace-filled yoke. Encourage participants to be honest about what they're carrying right now—pressures, expectations, and anxieties—and to explore what it really means to "learn from" Jesus and find rest for their souls.

Session Flow (60–75 minutes)

1. Welcome and Icebreaker (10 min)

- Example question: "What's something you've carried that was heavier than you expected—physically or emotionally?"
- Purpose: to open conversation around burdens and expectations.

2. Scripture Reading (5 min)

- Read Matthew 11:28–30 aloud.
- Optionally invite someone to read the same passage from another translation (e.g., NLT or The Message) to hear the tone of Jesus' invitation in fresh language.

3. Discussion (40–50 min)

- Use the 10 discussion questions provided below.
- Select 6–8 of them depending on group size and time.
- Encourage vulnerability—many will identify with the feeling of being "weary and burdened."

4. Application and Prayer (10–15 min)

- Invite each person to silently name one burden they need to release.
- Pray specifically for peace and rest in place of pressure and striving.
- Consider closing with a prayer of exchange—laying down our burdens to take up Christ's yoke.

Discussion Questions

- 1. Pastor Dave opened with a story about rucking—carrying too much weight in an unhealthy way. In what ways can you relate to that spiritually or emotionally?**

Leader Note: Draw parallels between physical overexertion and spiritual overload. Encourage participants to share personal “rucking” experiences of carrying too much—emotionally, mentally, or spiritually—and reflect on how it affected them.

- 2. Jesus invites the weary and burdened to come to Him. What kinds of “weights” do people in today’s world commonly carry that Jesus never asked them to?**

Leader Note: Discuss modern burdens like perfectionism, performance pressure, financial stress, or the need for approval. Emphasize that Jesus’ invitation is to release—not to manage—those loads.

- 3. John the Baptist—a bold prophet—experienced anxiety and doubt while in prison. What does this teach us about faith and human limitation?**

Leader Note: Highlight that even strong, faithful believers can struggle with doubt. Faith and uncertainty can coexist; God doesn’t condemn honest questions but meets us within them.

- 4. Pastor Dave said, “The gap between expectation and reality creates our level of stress and anxiety.” Where have you experienced that gap recently?**

Leader Note: Help participants reflect on unmet expectations—of God, others, or themselves. Invite honesty about disappointment and how Jesus can reshape perspective when things don’t go as planned.

- 5. Jesus responded to John’s doubts with evidence of His work, not with rebuke. How might that shape the way we support others who are struggling with faith or fear?**

Leader Note: Emphasize Jesus’ gentleness and patience. Encourage the group to consider how they can reflect that same compassionate posture toward those who are anxious, hurting, or questioning.

- 6. What do you think it means to “exchange your yoke” with Jesus? How is His yoke different from the ones we put on ourselves?**

Leader Note: Clarify that “yoke” represents partnership and shared direction. Jesus’ yoke brings learning, relationship, and grace, while self-imposed yokes often come from striving, rules, or fear of failure.

- 7. Pastor Dave said Jesus’ yoke is “fitted perfectly for you.” How does that truth challenge the tendency to compare your life or calling to others?**

Leader Note: Discuss how God’s design for each person is unique—His yoke fits our specific shape, story, and purpose. Comparison only adds unnecessary weight; grace allows us to walk freely in our own calling.

8. Jesus' yoke is also designed to "share the load." What does that look like in practical terms in your daily life or relationships?

Leader Note: Explore shared responsibility and divine partnership. Encourage practical examples—praying together, relying on community, or letting God carry emotional burdens we try to control.

9. Philippians 4:6–9 was quoted as a pathway to peace. Which part of that passage—prayer, gratitude, thought life, or action—feels hardest for you to practice right now?

Leader Note: Guide reflection on which spiritual habits most strengthen inner peace. Help participants identify one small, consistent way to cultivate that discipline this week.

10. What one burden do you sense Jesus asking you to release this week? What might change if you truly laid it down and took up His rest?

Leader Note: Encourage tangible application. Have participants name one specific burden, then pray about exchanging it for Christ's peace and rest. This can be a meaningful closing moment.

Closing Prayer Suggestion

"Lord Jesus, thank You for inviting us to come to You when we are weary and burdened. Forgive us for trying to carry what was never ours to bear. Teach us to trade our anxiety for Your peace, our striving for Your strength, and our control for Your kindness. Help us to walk in step with You, under Your perfectly fitted yoke of grace. Amen."