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IN STEP WITH JESUS

“IF YOU ABIDE IN MY WORD, YOU ARE TRULY MY DISCIPLES”
(John 8:31)

Jesus himself taught, quite explicitly, that discipleship to Him, across the board and in every respect, was to be conceived as modeling oneself on the Lord himself. This was His meaning when He said, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me” (Matthew 11:29). The picture is of two oxen pulling a cart or plow, one of them a veteran, the other a youngster in training. A wooden yoke fastened over both their necks links them side by side. The young ox, paired with the veteran, learns to pull by imitating the other; indeed its only choice for comfort in this twosome is to keep in step with the older partner. In the disciple’s case, pairing with Jesus and learning from Jesus will be a lifelong business. The Savior’s invitation to it is compassionate: “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 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. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (11:28-30)

Modeling Christ, as part of the larger process of being modeled by Christ, is thus of the essence of the Christian life and of the divine-guidance process. Christians learn to live in Christ, to follow and fulfill the example that Christ has set us, and to recognize that this – only this – is the way of our maturation, namely, through imitation of him. It is by this means, in the first instance, that we are led in paths of righteousness, namely, by consciously keeping in step with our divine-human leader with whom we are inseparably yoked. The image is truly awesome, but very clarifying and very supportive. AMEN.

By Dr. J. I. Packer

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” Matthew 28:18 – 20

