

Weightless

by Emerson Brown

I have been backpacking several times in my life. If you don't know, backpacking is like car camping, only without the car. You carry everything you need on your back several miles into the wilderness to get the full experience of solitude and adventure. I enjoy almost everything about backpacking – except for when you begin to feel like you're lugging bags of concrete up the mountainside. Like the time my brother and I hiked 4 miles straight uphill one evening on empty stomachs, not knowing if we would make it to the campsite before nightfall – after already having hiked 10 miles that day. Not fun.

Sometimes life feels like that. You're carrying around so much heavy baggage that you feel it would be easier to just sit down and give up. It could be the pressure of daily life that weighs down on you. Maybe it's concern for a sick loved one whose physical, emotional, or spiritual needs you've been caring for. Perhaps it's financial worry or the stress of working in a spiritually taxing environment that burdens you. Or it could be that you're dragging the guilt of your past sins behind you. Over time, this weight can pile up to create a feeling of helplessness and despair.

Thankfully, our God cares so much that he offers to lift that burden off our shoulders. David wrote: *“Cast your burden upon the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken”* (Psalm 55:22). Scripture assures you He will hear your prayers when you *“cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you”* (1 Peter 5:7).

If you should question how much God really does care, and how much of your load He is willing to bear for you, think about the cross. Peter says, *“And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed”* (1 Peter 2:24). There is no greater burden than sin, but because of His immeasurable love Jesus willingly took it to the cross with him. Not because we deserve it, or that we asked him to. He just did, because He loves you.

This should equip us to likewise *“bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ”* (Galatians 6:2). Anytime we see a brother or sister struggling under a load, we have the strength to help them carry that because God has lifted our own load off.

Do you know what weightless feels like? After laboriously hiking uphill with a 40-pound pack, and after reaching the top you take that weight off – what a relief! Indeed, what a greater relief to cast our burdens onto the Lord!

“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

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