

One Word You Would Never Use to Describe Jesus

If you had to choose one word to describe Jesus, what would it be? For many Christians, quite a few words probably come rushing to the forefront of the mind: holy, awesome, wonderful, incredible, powerful, mighty, and sovereign; just to name a few. How about regal, loving, compassionate, humble, kind, even funny? Most certainly gracious, merciful, intelligent, wise, infinite, eternal, blessed, beautiful, perfect, supreme. Amen?

A very wise saint was once asked to answer this same question and his response has stuck with me for years, perhaps because it was not what I expected. To be honest, it never occurred to me, even upon giving the question some thought. His answer: relaxed.

He went on to explain that Jesus was the most relaxed person who has ever lived because He was never in a hurry. This explanation helped me understand what he meant because I know that hurry isn't a what, hurry is a how. To say that Jesus was relaxed doesn't mean that you could simply find Jesus taking it easy all the time, considering the lilies, all with a baby lamb draped over His shoulders. Quite the contrary. For 30 years of His life, Jesus was a blue-collar worker who probably supported His entire family before He would have even been legally old enough to work full-time in modern-day America. Then, for three years He entered into the most intense season of ministry the world has ever seen, all the while knowing that it would culminate in the most gruesome form of death the world has ever seen.

Nobody has accomplished more in such a short period of time than Jesus of Nazareth. He was the hardest-working and most productive man who has ever lived and He endured the most

stressful life imaginable. Yet, if we take a good, honest look at Him in the gospels, we will be compelled to marvel along with the wise old saint who answered above, because he was right; Jesus was, and is, relaxed. Jesus worked hard, but He didn't move about hurriedly, frantically, constantly busying Himself, or just reacting to the needs around Him. That's because hurry is a spiritual state, driven by deep-seated anxiety and insecurities in our soul. We desire relief and peace so badly; but we're not quite sure how to find it. So we do anything and everything to distract ourselves from the reality of this inner turmoil.

This is not how Jesus led His life. No, Jesus was relaxed in all that He did because He had a perfect sense of the Father's involvement in His affairs and a perfect sense of the Father's timing, and He had both of those because of His perfect connection with the Father. Now, before you pipe up, "Well, of course He did, He's Jesus!", I want you to consider that in the incarnation, though Jesus was both fully God and fully man the entire time, He experienced life, including His relationship to the Father, the same way we do—as a human being.

It is true that sin didn't hinder this connection in His life, but neither does it for us as Christians because that is precisely the barrier that Jesus came to remove. In fact, that was the main objective of His mission in the incarnation and His atoning work on the cross—to divert the wrath of God that was upon us because of sin so that our connection with God could be restored. In other words, this is part of our inheritance in Christ—all that is His is ours, including His relationship with the Father. Because of His saving work, we too can connect with God as He did.

For us, as it did for Him, this all boils down to two things. Jesus had the kind of connection with the Father that He did because:

1. He knew the Word of God.

2. He organized His entire life around rhythms of prayer. This wasn't the pray-as-you-go, "Help me, Lord" kind of prayer, but daily time devoted specifically to rest in the Father's presence, just He and God, alone. Prayer = rest.

What does this mean for us, practically? Slowing down. One sage writer puts it this way:

If you fill your calendar with important appointments
you will have no time for God.

If you fill your spare time with essential reading (extra-biblical)
you will starve your soul.

If you fill your mind with worry
about budgets and offerings (your needs),
the pains in your chest and the ache in your
shoulders
will betray you.

If you try to conform to the expectations of those around you
you will forever be their slave.

Work a modest day
then step back and rest.

This will keep you close to God.

Interestingly, this way of life is not only why Jesus was so relaxed, it is also why He was so effective in His work —He didn't plan out His work or ministry schedule and then shave off a little margin for prayer. Prayer was the entire context

and foundation of His work and ministry, and this is why His life was like a spiritual laser beam.

This same kind of life is available to us in Him. But you don't have to take my word for it. He invites us to this in Matthew 11:28-30:

"Come to me, all who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from Me. For I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."

Can you imagine if your closest friends and family members were asked to choose one word to describe you and the word they all chose was "relaxed"? Jesus can, and He wants that for you! Notice two things here: the invitation is "Come to from Me." Jesus Himself is the place where our souls will find rest, and if we've trusted in Him, then the means we have of meeting with Him are the indwelling Spirit, prayer and the Word. Jesus had the Scriptures memorized, but for the rest of us, this will probably mean taking our Bibles into the prayer closet with us. Yet, even then, we must not make the mistake that the Pharisees did, searching the Scriptures as an end in themselves. We must search them as a means to the end that they all point to—Jesus, our life, our rest, our Savior, our friend, our living, risen and relaxed King! {eoa}

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