

Only One Way to Life

SCRIPTURE Matthew 7:13-14: "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few."

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. ★ We come to the conclusion of Christ's sermon. With a masterful illustration, He portrays the whole of humanity as being in desperate need of responding to Him so as to find the only one way to life. Eternal destinies for each individual hang in the balance. The first point to understand about this passage is that this is a command. What is the unstated assumption about mankind when reading this passage? How does this reality bring humility when looking at the world around you?

2. What is the key focus to the whole (beginning and end) of Matthew 7:13-14? Read Psalm 118:19-20 with this passage.

With this key in mind, look at the position Christ claims for Himself in Matthew 7:21–23, "Not everyone who says **to me, 'Lord, Lord,'** will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say **to me, 'Lord, Lord,** did we not prophesy **in your name,** and cast out demons **in your name,** and do many mighty works **in your name?**' And then will **I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me,** you workers of lawlessness.'" Is the exclusivity on Christ or on people? Why does this matter?

3. Matthew 7:13-14 also gives us a caution. For the gate is wide and consists of it being: deceitful, safe, impressive, promising, natural, popular, etc. This gate as well as the way is broad that leads to destruction. This way is easy in that it is most agreeable to corrupt nature. Why do sinners find the broad way easy? What are some things about this broad way that still draws our affections to it as believers? What are some practical ways of disciplining our minds to stay on the narrow way and not be lured by the popularity and approval of the broad way?

DISCUSSION GUIDE

4. Read Matthew 19:24. Discuss with your group some of the character traits of this narrow gate from the sermon? How do these character traits show the holiness and goodness of God?

5. ★ **For the gate is narrow and the way his hard.** Read Acts 14:22. The meaning of the word for narrow is: strictly press, rub together; hence compress, make narrow, conveys the basic idea of **pressing**. The tense of the verb points to a continuing state. What does the narrow path imply in regard to perseverance as believers in Christ? What are some of the purposes of the narrow path?

6. Another contrast to this passage is popularity. Population and personal opinion are not the voice of truth. Read Exodus 23:2, Proverbs 14:12, and Judges 21:25. It is few who find this path and many who stay on the broad, popular path. We naturally are tempted to look to numbers for determining truth. How can we encourage one another to take joy and confidence in the glory of Christ and His Word rather than being tempted into what is popular?

We should also issue a caution here concerning the “few.” Let us not miss the sad note this word plays. Surely the voice of the only Savior utters this word with a measure of grief in His heart. We are not to take on an ascetic mentality; judging peoples, going out of our way to be socially difficult, always ready to protest, argue, correct, and denounce the world—opposing culture simply because it is not Christian. That there are only few should come as no surprise, nor should it be discouraging. Despite the global mission (Matthew 28:19-20), not all will accept Christ and His good news (Matthew 22:14). That Jesus says, “few,” should promote humility, gratitude, and compassion, not arrogance. Give examples of wrong attitudes regarding the idea of “few.” Discuss how we might demonstrate humility, gratitude, and compassion in light of God’s grace towards us.

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7. The two paths in this passage lead to a destination. The picture is like that of John Bunyan's description of two cities: one **the City of God** and the other **the City of Destruction**. Both lead to an everlasting destiny. There is an inseparable connection between our present lives and our future destinies. Read Philippians 1:27-30 and Revelation 21:27. How should our hearts respond to theses to realities of an everlasting destination?

8. ★ Discuss the idea of **narrowness** that Jesus presents here. Read John 10:9, John 14:6 and Acts 4:12. What is the key to answering the challenge: "Do you really think that Jesus is the only way to heaven? What about all the other religions in the world? What about all the good people who live virtuous lives? Surely a good God will not condemn people who are faithful to what they believe. How can you say that Jesus is the only way to life?"
