

The Narrow Way and the Wide Way

Matthew 7:7-14—⁷Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: ⁸For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. ⁹Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? ¹¹If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? ¹²Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. ¹³Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: ¹⁴Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”

I. Verse 12—“Whatsoever ye would men should do”

A. Now, the Lord moves to how to interact with other people and the Lord now gives a simple statement in **Matthew 7:12**.

1. The verse says, “*Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.*”

B. This is a simple test for compliance with the law and prophets. Put yourself in their shoes and ask yourself what would I want if I was him.

1. This is the opposite of doing the wrong to others who have done the same wrong to us. This is so powerful of a tool.

2. Matthew 7:12 says, “*All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them*”

C. That tool has the power to extinguish the flames of hate and retaliation.

1. The tool is used every time you and I become irritated and angry and infuriated with another person. The tool of verse 12 is to just stop and say, “Okay. If I were him, what would I want done for me?”

2. The right answer is NOT, “I would want a punch in the nose.”

3. What the Lord was saying in verse 12 is “All you have to do is to put yourself in the other person’s shoes and ask what you would want done to you.”

D. If you do that, you will be obeying the Law and the prophets. He was accused of coming to destroy the law, but, what He really did was to explain the law.

1. He said about the law, “¹⁷*Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.* ¹⁸*For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled*” (**Matthew 5:17-18**).

2. This verse about doing to others what we would want done for us in as He said, “*This is the law and prophets*” (**Matthew 5:12**).

a. It can be that simple. All we have to think is, “If I were him, what would I want done to me?”

b. If I needed correction, how would I want to be corrected? What gentle way would I want for someone to approach me?

E. This is a concept of not doing what comes naturally to us which is to push a person away who has offended us or hurt us. Our natural response is to distance ourselves from that person.

F. What the Lord is saying here is to not do that with people. We are not to see them as distanced from you. We are to bring that person in so close to us that we imagine ourselves in that person’s shoes and ask the question, “If I were him, what would I want to be done to me?”

II. Verse 13—“Enter ye in at the strait gate”

- A.** Now, we have to keep in mind **the flow in the context**. He has just spoken about putting yourself into the other person’s shoes and do what you would want done if you were him as He moves into the subject of Heaven and hell.
1. **Matthew 7:13** says, “*Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat.*”
- B.** When we look at verse 13, we see that the Lord is talking about a gate, a narrow gate which leads to Heaven. There is another gate, a wide gate that leads to eternal destruction or hell.
- C.** The Lord only spoke about entering into the narrow gate. The Lord did not speak about entering into the wide gate.
1. No one has to enter into the wide gate. They are on it from birth. Man is born in sin and is already heading towards the wide gate that leads to hell.
- D.** It was the narrow gate that the Lord said had to be entered into. It is **not easy to enter** into that narrow gate as the Lord said when He used the word, “strive” or “struggle to” enter into that gate. Many will give it a try to enter into that narrow gate and not make it.
1. **Luke 13:24** says, “*Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*”
 2. It is worth the strife and worth the struggle and worth the fight to enter into that narrow gate.
 - a. When the Lord said to “strive to enter in,” that is not a description of the typical knock on the door with the “Would you like to go to Heaven? All you have to do is pray this prayer. Ready? Here we go. Repeat after me! Congratulations! You’re in!”
- E.** The point the Lord is making here is that there is a narrow gate, and there is a point in time when a person enters in through that narrow gate. That is the point in time that the Lord was telling Nicodemus about in **John 3**.
1. **John 3:3** says, “*Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except **a man be born again**, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*”
 2. **John 3:5** continues saying, “*Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except **a man be born** of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*”
 - a. This gate of being born again is hard to enter into.
 3. But, the gate is a gate that opens up into a road. The purpose of the gate is to get into the road, and the road is doing what He said in verse 12. We are to do to others what we would want them to do for us.
- F.** This is where the context is so important between verses 12 and 13. The Lord is asking us to look at a person we know who is far from God and on his way to hell and ask ourselves the question, “If I were him, lost as could be, what would I want others to do for me to get me saved?”
- G.** Now, the Lord has described a gate and a way when He said in **Matthew 7:14**.
1. The verse says, “*Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*”
- H.** So, the Lord has described a narrow gate that leads to a narrow way that leads to life—eternal life.
- I.** We have considered the narrow gate. That way is a road of faith and serious godly living.
- J.** After a person enters in through the narrow gate he finds a new life, a new heart, a new spirit, and a new way to make decisions in life and new interests in life.
- K.** The most dramatic discovery after entering through the narrow gate is a **new life** from having cried out to the Lord Jesus.

1. **1 John 5:12** says, *“He that **hath the Son hath life**; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”*
 2. Anyone who has passed through that narrow gate is aware that he has the Lord Jesus Christ and that he has a **new life**.
- L.** Then, he is surprised to discover that he has nothing less than a **new heart and Spirit** that comes from a new relationship with God.
1. **Jeremiah 24:7** states, *“And I will give them an **heart to know me**, that I am the LORD: and they **shall be my people, and I will be their God**: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.”*
 2. Anyone who has passed through that narrow gate knows that something very significant has happened to him. **He knows he knows the Lord** in a very new relationship. This new relationship is where the Lord is his Father, and He is one of His sons.
 3. Before passing through the narrow gate, a saved person could call God His father by saying the prayer, “Our Father which art in Heaven.” This was not just a religion to them. It was a true relationship.
 4. He has a complete liberty to call God his Father. After passing through that narrow gate, he knows that God has given him a special authority to call himself one of the sons of God. It is all part of this new birth experience from **John 1**.
 - a. **John 1:12-13** says, *“¹² But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: ¹³ Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”*
- M.** As he moves along in life down this new narrow road, he finds that he has a **new basis for making decisions in life**. That all comes from what he now sees that he did not see and what he sees is the invisible because he has new eyes which are the eyes of faith.
1. Just like Moses with his eyes of faith saw the invisible Lord in **Hebrews 11:27**.
 - a. The verse says, *“**By faith** he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as **seeing him who is invisible**.”*
 2. After entering that narrow gate, he feels like **David** who with his eyes of faith constantly saw the invisible Lord in **Acts 2:25**.
 - a. The verse says, *“For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved.”*
 3. After entering through that narrow gate, he finds himself looking constantly at things that are not seen by others as stated in **2 Corinthians 4:18**.
 - a. **2 Corinthians 4:18** states, *“**While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen**: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”*
 4. He can see things that are invisible because he has the eyes of faith. When he tries to describe the wonders of what he is seeing to a lost person who does not have the eyes of faith, that lost person looks at him with that look of, “I have no idea what you are talking about. I can’t see anything about what you are talking about.”
 - a. That happens because that lost person does **not have the eyes of faith**, so he can’t see.
 5. We use our eyes to walk. We look and based on what we see we make decisions where to walk.

6. If we see a hole in the sidewalk, we decide to not walk there and walk somewhere else because of what we see. That can be described as “We walk by sight.” We make the decision where to walk based on what we see.
 - a. The hymn describes **the eyes of faith** so well when it says,

*My faith looks up to Thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary,
Savior Divine;
Now hear me while I pray;
Take all my guilt away;
Oh, let me from this day
Be wholly Thine.*

7. The person who has entered in through the narrow gate no longer makes decisions in life based on what he sees with his physical eyes. Now, he uses his eyes of faith to see the invisible, and that is described in **2 Corinthians 5:7**—*“For we walk by faith, not by sight.”*
 8. Anyone who has passed through that narrow gate now has a **new way of making decisions** in life based not on sight and self-reliance, but on what is not seen and trust in God.
- N.** Anyone who has entered through the narrow gate has experienced a complete overhaul in his life with old ways out and **new ways of life**.
1. Anyone who has passed through that narrow gate now has totally different interests in life, like changing a bend in a piece of metal.
 2. He is now interested in being with the minority of the saved believers and not with the majority of the lost away from God.
 3. The world’s entertainment is not entertaining to him; he is very much aware that he is swimming against the stream.
- O.** But, anyone who has entered in through that narrow gate has not found an easy life because entering through that gate put a person into a **new warfare**.
1. Anyone who has entered in through that narrow gate has become aware that his life is now a new warfare.
 2. This is not a normal warfare. He becomes aware that this new warfare is a wrestling type of struggle. He has a struggle of endurance that is **not against man**. This warfare is against forces that are not human.
 - a. **Ephesians 6:12** says, *“For we wrestle **not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.**”*
 3. There is another level to this warfare that is not just against external forces of darkness. He now becomes aware that his warfare is carried out **on two fronts**. On one front is the warfare against the external spirits. The other front is described in **Romans 7:23-25**.
 - a. The verses say, *“²³ But I see another law in my members, **warring against** the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴ O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? ²⁵ I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.”*
 4. Anyone that has entered in through that narrow gate now only sees a spiritual war going on outside of him against the devil and powers of darkness. He also

sees the warfare on the other front where he is fighting against his own personal sinful desires.

5. The struggle against personal sinful desires is no less a fight than the fight against spirits as described in **1 Corinthians 9:26-27**.
 - a. The verses say, *"²⁶ I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; **so fight I**, not as one that beateth the air: ²⁷ But I keep under my body, and **bring it into subjection.**"*
6. The battle against internal forces of personal sin is a battle with a calling to take no prisoners, but to put to death every sinful desire in a process called mortification.
 - a. **Colossians 3:5** says, *"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry."*
7. He soon finds out that alone, he is not able to put to death every sinful tendency, and that he needs help. He is not left without help in this process of mortifying his own personal sin as **God the Holy Spirit comes to his help**.
 - a. **Romans 8:13** states, *"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye **through the Spirit** do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."*
8. It is one thing to fight an evil enemy that is without, but it is far more difficult to fight the sinful enemy of the flesh that is within.
9. Anyone who has passed through the narrow gate realizes that he is in a **new warfare** against external and internal enemies.
10. A new warfare requires **new weapons** to fight with which are effective weapons.
11. Because the warfare is **not between flesh and blood**, the weapons that he needs are not the traditional weapons used against flesh and blood. These weapons are called mighty weapons because these weapons do not come from man.
 - a. **2 Corinthians 10:4** says, *"For the weapons of our warfare are **not carnal**, but **mighty through God** to the pulling down of strongholds."*
12. For example, for the warfare he has a complete set of armour that comes from God.
 - a. **Ephesians 6:13** says, *"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour **of God**, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."*
13. For his fight, he has **three** factors that make a great difference in him being effective in his battle. They are listed in the following verse:
 - a. **2 Corinthians 6:7** says, *"By the (1) **word of truth**, by the (2) **power of God**, by the (3) **armour of righteousness** on the right hand and on the left."*
14. **The word of Truth** is the weapon of "It is written" or "The Bible says." This is the sword of the Spirit (**Ephesians 6:17**).
15. **The power of God** means that man does not rely on his own power and strength in this battle. He relies on the power of God.
16. Finally, **the armour of righteousness** helps to keep man from seeing his downfall.
 - a. If there is one downfall for him, it is a life that harbors a secret sin. That is his Achilles heel.
 - b. He knows that he is prone to fall, so he is very quick to confess and turn from any sin.

1) **1 John 1:9** says, *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

17. There is something that he has that comes from him, and it is what he uses to get the victory over the filthy, sinful, perverted world around him. It is found in **1 John 5:4**.

a. The verse says, *“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our **faith**.”*

P. As soon as he enters into that narrow gate, he sees clearly that there is no middle ground for anyone in life.

1. Either a person has life, or they are dead.
2. Either a person is saved, or he is lost.
3. Either a person is going to Heaven, or he is bound for hell.

Q. There are only two roads, and they both lead into eternity.

1. One is an eternity in Heaven, and one is an eternity in hell.

R. Once he passes through that narrow gate, there is no question in his mind. He knows he is bound for Heaven.

S. The greatest thing about that narrow gate is that it is open and not closed. The narrow gate is opened to anyone who wants to come in as the invitation is in **Revelation 22**.

1. The verse says, *“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”*

T. That narrow gate is open because the Lord Jesus said in **John 7:37**, *“In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.”*

III. Verse 13—*“Wide is the gate, and broad...many”*

A. That is for the narrow gate, and the person who makes his way through that narrow gate into the narrow way. The Lord said in verse 14, *“Few there be that find it.”*

B. What that person has done by fighting his way to get through the narrow gate to get on the narrow way is very rare or as the Lord put it, *“Few there be that find it.”* Most never find it.

1. They either pass by it and say, *“It is nothing. It is just religion—not for me.”*
2. Or they look at how narrow it is and say, *“It is too hard for me. I have to give up too much of what I like. It is too restrictive,”* and they take a pass on the narrow gate.

C. They do not enter into the narrow gate because they make a comparison like this:

1. *“One gate is narrow, and one gate is wide. I like wide.”*
2. *“One way is narrow, and one way is wide. I like wide.”*
3. *“One gate is hard to find, and one gate is easy to find. I like easy.”*
4. *“One way has a few people on it, and one way has lots of people. I like lots of people.”*

D. Why is it that people go through the narrow gate?

1. Because they don't have the will to fight to go in
2. Because they don't have the energy to fight to go in
3. Because they don't want to surrender to God their will
4. Because they don't have the humility to come to God as dirty, rotten sinners
5. Because their life is one great “Dare” where they are saying to God, *“I dare you to judge me for my sin.”*
6. Because they are angry with God and want to get back at God

7. So, the ones who actually turn and fight to go through that narrow gate are small, and that is why the Lord said to His followers, *“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom”* (Luke 12:32).
- a. He called his followers “little flock” because they were so small in number.
- E.** The Lord described another gate—a wide gate and another way, a broad way.
- F.** The Lord said that this is where most people are found; it is the broad way.
- G.** This way is attractive because it is broad, and many people are on it.
- H.** This is the way of, “You see it, and you get it.”
1. It is where the lust of the eyes guides people or as Job put it in chapter 31, *“If my step hath turned out of the way, and mine heart walked after mine eyes”* (**Job 31:7**).
 2. This broad way (the world) is where most people are. The heart follows the eye—the physical eye.
 - a. The narrow way is also the heart following the eye, but that is a different eye; that is the eye of faith.
 - b. On the narrow way, the eye of faith sees, and the heart follows faith.
 - c. On the broad way, the physical eye sees, and the heart follows what the physical eye sees.
- I.** One thing about that narrow way is that the sides are brought in to keep a person in line.
1. But, the broad way has nothing on the side to keep a person in line. There are lots of company in doing what is not right which is what the Lord said to Israel in **Exodus 23:2**.
 - a. The verse says, *“Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil.”*
 2. **Leadeth to destruction** is the terrible description that references an eternal destruction in hell.
- J.** The way that leads to Heaven has a narrow gate, and the way that leads to destruction has a wide gate.
1. But, the difference can be described by a funnel and which way the funnel is turned.
 2. The narrow gate to Heaven is like a funnel that is looked at from the small end. It looks very narrow, but then it opens up.
 - a. **Proverbs 4:18** states, *“But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”*
 3. The more a person walks in life with the Lord Jesus, the better his life becomes like the hymns put it.

*Every day with Jesus
Is sweeter than the day before
Every day with Jesus
I love Him more and more.*

*Since I started for the Kingdom,
Since my life He controls,
Since I gave my heart to Jesus,
The longer I serve Him,
The sweeter He grows.*

- a. The body is just falling apart, but the light of the Lord keeps getting brighter and brighter. So, the deteriorating body doesn’t matter, because the Lord is getting brighter and brighter.

- K.** The two gates are like a funnel turned two ways.
1. The narrow gate is looking at the narrow end of the funnel, but then that funnel opens up more and more as the light of the Lord grows brighter and brighter.
 2. The wide gate is looking at the wide end of the funnel, but then that funnel narrows down into destruction.
 3. If a person enters into the funnel from the narrow end, it opens up to more joy and more happiness in the Lord Jesus Christ because He said in **John 10:10**.
 - a. **John 10:10** says, *“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”*
 - b. That word “abundantly” means “excessively.”
 4. But, if a person enters into the funnel from the wide end, it just narrows down more and more until that person comes to death and destruction and hell.
- L.** It is interesting that the Lord Jesus describes death and hell with the one word—“destruction.”
1. A person spends their whole life building
 - a. Building up his health and his body
 - b. Building friendships and relationships
 - c. Building a family
 - d. Building a home
 - e. Building up his possessions
 - f. Building his career
 - g. Building his work
 - h. Building his reputation
 - i. Building his hobbies and recreations
 - j. Building his knowledge
- M.** All of life is one massive effort to build. The difference between the saved and lost is just one building—building a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.
1. If a person builds a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord of his life, he has entered into the narrow gate and started down the road of the Lord,
 - a. **John 14:6** says, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”*
- N.** But, if a person has not built that relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, then he is on the wide road. The word that the Lord Jesus used to describe its end is the word, “destruction.” The Lord calls that person a fool who was building only for himself in **Luke 12**.
1. **Luke 12:18-21** says, *“¹⁸ And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. ¹⁹ And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. ²⁰ But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? ²¹ So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”*
 2. The man said in **Luke 12:18**, *“I will build greater.”*
 3. The Lord said in **Luke 12:20-21**, *“²⁰ Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? ²¹ So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”*
 4. The end of the wide road is destruction—destruction of everything he has built in life.
 - a. His health and his body are destroyed.

- b. His friendships and relationships are destroyed.
 - c. His no longer has his family.
 - d. He no longer owns his home.
 - e. His possessions will be gone.
 - f. He no longer has his career and work.
 - g. He cannot enjoy his hobbies and recreations.
5. It is all destroyed.
6. Both ways lead to eternity. Death does not mean annihilation or ceasing to be. Hell is not the disappearance of souls. Hell is eternal.
- a. Just as Heaven is the place of eternal life, hell is the place of eternal death.

IV. Verse 14—*“The way, which leadeth unto life”*

A. The narrow gate is so wonderful as the Lord said in **Matthew 7:14**.

- 1. The verse says, *“Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”*

B. So, the Lord started in verse 13 with a command—*“Enter ye in at the straight gate.”*

C. The Lord gave a reason for entering in at the strait gate with a warning which was *“For wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat”* (**Matthew 7:13**).

D. In other words, the Lord was saying that hell is real, and hell is to be feared.

E. But, then the Lord finished by giving the assurance that there is another way—the way of verse 14.

- 1. **Matthew 7:14** says, *“Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”*