

Citizenship in the Kingdom of God  
Week 9  
Narrow Path

***Context : This takes place during the time of Jesus' teachings. Jesus had many who followed him. His disciples were the main characters that followed him from place to place. Among them were other Jews, some spectators from afar, some religious leaders, of course there were those who were seeking the healing power of Jesus, some who have already accepted Jesus as the Messiah the Son of God, and there were others who saw him, heard him teach but still did not believe in Jesus. Yet the question was asked, ' what must one do?' and this is where the lesson Begins!***

Anchor verses:

Mathew 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.

Luke 13:22-30

He went on his way through towns and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem. And someone said to him, "Lord, will those who are saved be few?" And he said to them, "Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. When once the master of the house has risen and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door saying, 'Lord, open to us,' then he will answer you, 'I do not know where you come from.' Then you will begin to say, ' We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.' But he will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of evil!' In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but you yourselves will be cast out. And people will come from east and west, and from north south, and recline at the table in the kingdom of God. And behold, some are last will be first and some are first will be last."

***Question: What does Jesus mean by the "Narrow Gate /Narrow Door"? Is it literally a gate or door? What does he mean wide is the gate that leads to destruction? Was he trying to discourage the people?***

Continuing on with the context in mind, read the following verses.

John 3:16-20

“For God so loved the world , that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the Judgement : the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”

***Looking at John 3:16-20, Are people quick to think that main point to this verse is about ‘getting into Heaven?’ When people just read one of the most popular vers in the Bible, the answer would be yes! But when you read the rest of the scripture it gave them more of what is needed more to do as followers in that time and in ours today.***

***Big Question:***

***What was the biggest battle that people of that time struggled with? Allow the class to answer, get some feedback and then continue reading the lesson.***

Read the following passage to bring into perspective the answer to the question that was just asked.

Romans 8:1-8

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

**Use the following stories to help the class to hear the battle in theory. Use them as examples to show what when some followers asked 'what must I do?' and how they responded to Jesus.**

**You will see bold letters in each story which is what Jesus was meaning about the Narrow Path.**

Mark 10:17-31(Paraphrase)

The rich young man asked, what must he do to inherit eternal life? Jesus asks if he knew the commandments, the young man responds by saying all those things he has kept. Then Jesus 'out of love' tells him that lacked one thing and that was to sell all that he had and give to the poor, he will have treasure in heaven **and follow me.**

Disheartened by the saying the young man went away sorrowful.

*\*the young man could not leave his flesh desire of his riches to **follow Jesus!***

Luke 9:59-62

To another Jesus said, "**Follow Me.**" but he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father. And Jesus said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead, But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.

Yet another said, "**I will follow you,** Lord, but first let me say farewell to those at my home."

*\*Neither of these two individuals could leave their fleshful relationships with family members to **follow Jesus!***

John 6:63-66

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But there are some of you who do not believe. (For I knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) And he said, This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father."

After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer **walked with Him.**

*\*The many did not believe Jesus even after following him to be the Son of God. It was hard for them to leave their fleshful ideas of who Jesus was.*

***In closing, continue to keep the lesson in context. Jesus was not only teaching to his disciples but to the many that followed him.***

From the time that Jesus started his journey on earth, his primary goal was for his people to **Follow him**.

Matthew 4:19

And he said to them, " Follow me, and I will make you fisher of men."

***Jesus understood at his time that the battle for many was to leave their fleshful desires, needs and comforts to follow him. By this is what he meant as to be the Narrow gate (Matthew 7:13-14) and the Narrow Door (Luke 13:22-30). The narrow path is following Jesus. We in our culture and time still see this battle and struggle for many who seek to follow Jesus but turn away or make excuses to why they can not.***

***What action must a person take in order to win the battle over the fleshful things (family members, money, work, leisure time, etc) that have been the excuses in the lives of many and follow him?***

Action verses: final verse of lesson:

Proverbs 3:6

Seek his will in all you do, and he will show which path to take,

***\*We ought to seek him in all things***

Matthew 11:28-30

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 you souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

***\* we should go to Jesus, learn from him and live as he teaches us!!***

***In all we must diligently do what we must to stay on the Narrow Path. The narrow path of following Jesus, continuously learning, continuously praying, continuously lifting his name to others and be willing to leave our fleshful desires behind!***