

# Narrow & Broad Gates and Ways (Matt. 7:13-14)

## A Small Group Outline



### 1. Praise (Purpose: To worship God)

- What are you thankful for this week? (let the group's secretary write these down in an A4 hardcover or some notebook)
- Song Service
  - Sing a few songs of praise to God

### 2. Pray (Purpose: To carry each others' burdens and to seek the Lord)

- What challenges did you have this week? (write these down in an A4 hardcover or some notebook)
- Go into a season of prayer

### 3. Review (Purpose: To learn accountability)

- Tell us how it went with what you promised to do in last week's meeting? (e.g. Who did your share your faith with this past week? Who did you minister to? How did actioning your I WILL STATEMENT go?)
- Where people have failed to fulfil what they said they would, do not be harsh with them but gently encourage them to try again in the coming week. Give them more support by phoning or joining them in the week.

### 4. Give (Purpose: To be good stewards of our monies)

- This is the time to return tithes and offerings. If done electronically, kindly ensure that you get the bank account details of your local church from your treasurer. Don't forget to complete an envelope and to send the breakdown to him/her.

### 5. Discover (Purpose: To learn to listen to God, and be obedient to His Word)

#### • Notes for the facilitator

- Read *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings (MB)*, pp. 138-144
- The Sermon on the Mount ends with end time illustrations related to judgement and Christian commitment: the two ways (vss 13-14), the two trees (vss 15-20), and the two builders (vss 24-27) – *George Knight, Walking with Jesus on the Mount of Blessing*
- In the time of Christ the people of Palestine lived in walled towns, which were mostly situated upon hills or mountains....The narrow, upward road leading to home and rest furnished Jesus with an impressive figure of the Christian way" (MB 138)
- **Narrow gate and way:** The **gate** appears to symbolise the initial acceptance of Jesus, while the **way** signifies the Christian life subsequent to that acceptance (*George Knight*)
- **Broad gate and way:** Notice that there is no mention of anyone entering the broad gate, i.e. because we are born on the way that leads to destruction. *We thus don't need to make a decision to enter the broad gate/way, but a conscious decision to leave it.*
- **"In the road to death the whole race may go, with all their worldliness, all their selfishness, all their pride, dishonesty, and moral debasement.** There is room for every man's opinions and doctrines, space to follow his inclinations, to do whatever his self-love may dictate. In order to go in the path that leads to destruction, there is no need of searching for the way; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad, and the feet naturally turn into the path that ends in death" (MB 138)
- "But the way to life is narrow and the entrance strait [challenging/difficult]. **If you cling to any besetting sin you will find the way too narrow for you to enter.** Your own ways, your own will, your evil habits and practices, must be given up if you would keep the way of the Lord. He who would serve Christ cannot follow the world's opinions or meet the world's standard. Heaven's path is too narrow for rank and riches to ride in state, too narrow for the play of self-centered ambition, too steep and rugged for lovers of ease to climb. Toil, patience, self-sacrifice, reproach, poverty, the contradiction of

- sinner against Himself, was the portion of Christ, and it must be our portion, if we ever enter the Paradise of God” (MB 138)
- **“Yet do not therefore conclude that the upward path is the hard and the downward road the easy way.** All along the road that leads to death there are pains and penalties, there are sorrows and disappointments, there are warnings not to go on. God's love has made it hard for the heedless and headstrong to destroy themselves.... In the downward road the gateway may be bright with flowers, but thorns are in the path. The light of hope which shines from its entrance fades into the darkness of despair, and the soul who follows that path descends into the shadows of unending night” (MB 139)
    - So while the broad way may appear to be easy and exciting, it has painful consequences even in this life: Hangovers, HIV, sexually transmitted diseases, guilt, lack of peace, etc.
  - **“The veriest sinner need not miss [Christ’s] way.** Not one trembling seeker need fail of walking in pure and holy light. Though the path is so narrow, so holy that sin cannot be tolerated therein, yet access has been secured for all, and not one doubting, trembling soul need say, ‘God cares nought for me’” (MB 140)
  - **“All the way up the steep road leading to eternal life are well-springs of joy to refresh the weary.** Those who walk in wisdom's ways are, even in tribulation, exceeding joyful; for **He whom their soul loveth, walks, invisible, beside them.** At each upward step they discern more distinctly the touch of His hand; at every step brighter gleamings of glory from the Unseen fall upon their path; and their songs of praise, reaching ever a higher note, ascend to join the songs of angels before the throne. [See Prov. 4:18]” (MB 140).
  - “There are many in the broad way who are not fully satisfied with the path in which they walk. They long to break from the slavery of sin, and in their own strength they seek to make a stand against their sinful practices. They look toward the narrow way and the strait gate; but selfish pleasure, love of the world, pride, unsanctified ambition, place a barrier between them and the Saviour. To renounce their own will, their chosen objects of affection or pursuit, requires a sacrifice at which they hesitate and falter and turn back.... They desire the good, they make some effort to obtain it; but they do not choose it; **they have not a settled purpose to secure it at the cost of all things**” (MB 143)
  - **“The only hope for us if we would overcome is to unite our will to God's will and work in co-operation with Him, hour by hour and day by day....** Are we willing to have our will brought into perfect conformity to the will of God? Until we are willing, the transforming grace of God cannot be manifest upon us” (MB 143)
  - Thus in summary we find the following characteristics of each gate/way:
    - **Narrow gate/way:** It has restrictions (such as forbidding hate, lust, retaliation, judgmentalism), it demands discipline, self-denial, surrender, sacrifice, perseverance, changing priorities. So, even though salvation is free and Jesus encourages all to come to Him, we cannot enter the gate carrying the baggage of the world.
    - **Broad gate/way:** No restrictions, ‘do as you please’, self-indulgence, convenience, popularity, a downward path to destruction.
  - **Some examples of the clash between ‘broad way thinking’ and ‘narrow way thinking’:** Those who believe in creation are often called ignorant; those who believe in the traditional male-female view of marriage are called haters and bigots; those who believe in sexual purity are called prudes and old fashioned; those who abstain from certain entertainments are called boring and irrelevant; those who return tithe and spend monies to extend God’s kingdom are called impractical and unwise.
- *Read Matt. 7:13-14. Preferably let one person read it. Let everyone then put down their Bibles and get the group to reconstruct the passage in their own words. This teaches the group to be careful in quotation Scripture correctly and to use it as the basis of their discussions.*

- **Discussion Questions** (*use only a few*). *The notes in italics after some of the questions below are for the facilitator, and not to be read out to the group.*
  - What do you think Matthew is trying to separately illustrate with the symbols of a gate and a way/road?
  - What do you think makes the narrow way so difficult?
  - What are the joys and blessings on the narrow way?
  - What do you think makes the broad way so easy?
  - Why do you think people may be tempted to prioritise popularity and convenience above pleasing Christ?
  - What are some of the pains and difficulties along the broad way?
  - Give examples of how 'broad way thinking', can clash with 'narrow way thinking' in society today?
  - Why do you think there is no mention of entering the broad gate, but only encouragement to enter the narrow gate?
- **Application Questions** (*select a few depending on your time. One has to be the I WILL STATEMENT*)
  - Do you have an experience of the glamour and fun of travelling on the broad road, but which later ended in pain and suffering? If so, kindly share.
  - Do you have an experience of the difficulty of travelling on the narrow road, but which was accompanied by peace and joy? If so, kindly share.
  - Briefly share an experience from travelling on the narrow road?
  - What led to your entry through the narrow gate [your conversion experience]?
  - If you were to categorise your life over the past 6 months, which **way** have you largely travelled on? Kindly elaborate.
  - What can you do this week to point someone to the narrow gate?
  - I WILL STATEMENT: Formulate an I will statement in response to what you have discovered in the Word. Let the group's secretary also record these in an A4 notebook. Ensure that everyone gets a chance to give their I WILL STATEMENT. You have to be specific. E.g. "By God's grace, I will choose the narrow way of integrity, principle and truth, as I enter a new business venture this month. I am well aware that this path comes with lots of challenges and difficulties, but I commit myself to staying on it."

**6. Share** (*Purpose: To be witnesses of our faith*)

- Do you have anyone you could share today's lesson with this week? *Be specific.*

**7. Closing prayer**

*Prepared by Shandrell Penniken / Northern Conference*