

small group **discussion**

For the sermon on June 15-16, 2013
"The Narrow and Wide Gates"

lean in

What's the narrowest path you've hiked, or the narrowest road you've driven on?

look down

This week we continue the sermon series, *Daily Revolution*, centered on Jesus' teachings from the Sermon on the Mount found in Matthew 5-7. The Sermon on the Mount was taught on the hills surrounding the Sea of Galilee to a massive crowd that had followed Jesus through the region. As you read this teaching from Jesus, there may be times when Jesus' words seem harsh. This week's passage can certainly feel that way. Remember, Jesus is teaching to people who have been immersed in a religious culture that was far from life-giving. He wants people to know the true way to God.

Read Matthew 7.13-14 together. What's your initial impression of these verses? What emotions does it generate?

Read Matthew 5.3-10 together. This is the very first teaching in Jesus' sermon. How do these words set the tone for the entire Sermon on the Mount? What key words or phrases do you see that describe the type of kingdom that Jesus is building? Compare that to what you know about the Jewish religious system of the day led by the Pharisees.

Read Matthew 7.13-14 again. Could the Beatitudes (Matthew 5.3-10) be a window that looks into what the narrow gate truly is? Why or why not?

Read Matthew 7.15-20 together. Jesus gives a stern warning: "Watch out...!" What imagery does Jesus use here? What picture do you have in your mind when you think about these false teachers?

look in

Whenever we explore a difficult teaching from Jesus, we need to ask difficult questions of ourselves. Below is a list of sobering questions. Beware! This could lead to some uncomfortable discussions. Remember, Jesus desires for you to be off the wide path. Following Jesus on the narrow path looks dynamically different from the shallow religiosity of the wide path. As you discuss these hard questions, rephrase them to look more like the narrow path of following Jesus.

- Do you attend church and small group because you love Jesus or out of obligation?
- Do you really grieve your sins and desire to be right with God?
- Whose kingdom are you really building: yours or God's? Is God king in your life?
- Is it possible you have been serving faithfully only to discover your service was out of selfishness motives and not out of a desire to follow and obey Jesus?
- Have you ever served but harbored hate? Do you serve but have not asked Jesus to be Lord of your money, sexuality, hobbies, or emotions?
- Have you participated in worship but not allowed God to transform your heart?
- Has guilt or obligation driven your spiritual activities like prayer, worship, and service?



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