

LEADER'S GUIDE

Discussion Questions: "Narrow and Wide Gates"

The Narrow (Strait) and Wide Gates is an excellent parable described by Jesus, comparing the choice of two different paths everyone will eventually make. The story begins with someone from the crowd asking Jesus a distressing question.

- 1) The Narrow and Wide Gates. (Read the verses outlined in blue: First read Luke 13:22-24, then Matthew 7:13-14). Someone asks Jesus "are there only a few people who will be saved? **What is His response?** Jesus answers the question by telling them to strive to enter through the narrow gate. He stated that many will seek to enter and will be unable to.
- 2) **Strive to enter. What does it mean when Jesus states in Luke 13:24 to "Strive to enter?"** Some of the new versions water down the terminology. King James refers to the word "Strive," the NIV uses "Make every effort," and NLT uses "Work Hard." Strive is more impactful, which means exerting oneself vigorously. Albert Barnes, in 1832 states, "Jesus means that we should be diligent, active, earnest; that we should make it our first and chief business to overcome our sinful propensities and to endeavor to enter into heaven."
- 3) **The Strait Gate: Why is the gate narrow?** The King James version uses "strait." Both "strait" and "narrow" are spelled the same in the Greek translation as "pent up, narrow, close or not entered." Jesus made the gate is narrow for a reason. We will discuss John's version later; for now, read John 10:9 and John 14:6 to help understand why the gate narrow and the importance of the gate. The gate is so narrow that there is only Jesus at the door. He and he alone will decide who will enter through the gate.
- 4) **Compare Matthew's version.** Finish the scripture Matthew 7:14: **"Difficult is the way (or pathway) which leads to life, and _____."** **Explain why only a few find it.** Luke's version, Jesus states many will seek, Matthew's version, Jesus states few will find it. The narrow way must first be sought after, searched, and then found. The way is narrow and not easily found or accepted it. Some may seek it, but they do not agonize over it. Consequently, their gate will be shut. Only a few find it because the narrow way is difficult.
- 5) **Why is the narrow way difficult?** The narrow gate, or the narrow path, is less traveled. Following Jesus Christ is not easy. His bar is high without sin. We must fight against our sinful nature. Jesus calls us to help others to find the way. We will also experience hatred and persecution. Societies will not like being told there is a higher standard to live up to. Non-believers do not want to be told they are sinners and need to end their sinful ways.

Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Created: 12/22/2022

LEADER'S GUIDE

- 6) **What does it mean “the narrow path leads to life?”** This is the path to eternal life. Read John 17:3, Jesus states, “And, this is eternal life – that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” Think of having eternal life with Jesus and having eternal joy in heaven.
- 7) **What is the wide or broad gate?** The wide gate is all-inclusive—everything other than the door through Jesus. (John 14:6) This includes all the world’s various views, religions, and lifestyles. The gate and pathway must be wide and broad to accommodate such an immense multitude. Also, Jesus states in Matthew 7:13 that the wide gate and the broad way led to destruction. There is no check at the door, for everyone will be welcome.
- 8) **What does it mean that the way is broad?** The way is broad means the pathway is spacious and easy to follow. In some churches, religions, and media, they say things like:
All roads lead to God
Everyone that does well goes to Heaven
Hell is just a fictitious myth made up to scare people
Whatever your belief or spiritual truth, many paths lead to Heaven.
This could not be farther from the truth. Specifically, reread John 14:6.
- 9) **What does it mean that many enter through it?** Christ makes it clear, entering the narrow gate, few will find it. Conversely, He also states that many will seek the wide gate and go in by it. People sometimes feel safer in crowds. They conclude that if everyone is doing the same thing, they must be on the safer path. It is a very enticing and secure feeling to belong. Going against the group can feel like you are isolated or alone.
- 10) **What happens to those who enter the wide gate and are led to destruction?** There are two ways to spend eternity. Either in Heaven in blessing with God or Hell in damnation. Suffering eternal torment separated from God is more excruciating than we can imagine. We may experience short-term pain from an injury or loneliness from a loved one passing. However, to endure eternity without God and a nightmare of misery would be indescribable, unbearable at best.
- 11) **I am the door.** (Read the verses outlined in purple: John 10:7-9) **What or who is the ‘gate’ being referred to?** Jesus is the gate or the door, depending on your translated version. Jesus answers this question in John 10:7 “I am the door of the sheep.” Moreover, in John 10:9, Jesus states, “I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.”

LEADER'S GUIDE

Jesus refers to those who enter the door using sheep as a metaphor for people. He most importantly mentions that once entered; you will be saved. This is the lesson to be learned, and Jesus explains explicitly this in John 14:6 "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." Jesus makes it clear that He is the ONLY gate to enter heaven. It cannot be any narrower than Jesus being the only "One" to make this decision. Without His approval and blessing, there is no other way to enter heaven.

- 12) **Who are the sheep?** The sheep represent the Church.
- 13) The master of the house. (Read the verses outlined in black: Luke 13:25-27)
Who is the master of the house? Jesus is the master of the house.
- 14) **What is the master's reply when someone knocks at the door?** Jesus states He does not know you nor where you come from. If Jesus does not have a relationship with that person, and He is not familiar with who they are, then Jesus will be blunt and honest and state I did not know you. It does not state that their path will be the wide or broad gate, but the narrow gate will certainly be shut.
- 15) **Why does Jesus say in Luke 13:25-27 "I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity."** Jesus illustrates how the narrow gate will be shut. All of this is just proof of friendship, not a relationship. The people who say, "We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets," are those who attended churches and talked about the Scriptures and the Lord, but they never accepted Jesus as their personal Savior. None of these things will avail themselves on the day of judgment. It will be only true love for God, a real change of heart, and a life of piety that can save the soul from death.
- 16) **Controversial question.** (Read the verses outlined in grey: Matthew 7:7-8). **How is this different from someone knocking on Jesus' door and Him opening it, compared to knocking on the master's door and Jesus' response, I do not know you?"** In Matthew 7:7, this is Jesus' response when you seek to be with Him and have a relationship with Him. He wants us to have a relationship with Jesus, God, and the Holy Spirit. All we have to do is ask to have one and start on the journey. Whereas in Luke 13:25, now that time has passed. They cannot live life deliberately, not choosing to have a relationship with Christ, and then knock and ask to be let in at time of judgment.
- 17) **I Am the Way** (Read the verses outlined in green: John 14:6) **What does it mean when Jesus says, "I am the way."** This verse John provides is part of another study. However, as a conclusion of passing through the narrow gate,

LEADER'S GUIDE

we felt it was necessary to include it at this time as the glorified result of entering the Kingdom of God. Jesus cannot make this any clearer. No one can come before the Lord God except through the blessing of Jesus Christ. When the day of judgment comes, if Jesus finds favor with you, He will wipe away all your sins, present you before the Lord, and witness to Him that your is soul pure and may enter into the Kingdom of God.