

Spiritual Growth Lessons from Christian Ambassadors

Lesson 50 – The Path That Leads To Life

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With every path in life there is a destiny. There is a right way and a wrong way to go. Whether you think about it much or not at all, the fact remains, you are already on one of these paths and you are following one of these ways.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus presents two paths - the path that leads to life and the path that leads to destruction. The choice of which path to take is entirely up to us. But, desiring that we choose the right way, He gives us a forewarning,

Matthew 7:13-14 (NIV) - “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”

Jesus holds nothing back. There are two ways that we can live our lives; two ways that lead to two distinct destinies. One path leads to life, the other leads to destruction or death. The problem is, many people start on a path, but fail to ask the most important question, “Where is this path going to lead me?”

The broad Way And Its Appeal

The broad way Jesus speaks about is the way of Satan, who is the god of this world. The people on this path are unbelievers, those whose minds have been blinded by Satan. Satan, their spiritual head, is leading them to destruction.

II Corinthians 4:3-4 (KJV) – “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”

Think about it, when you are blind every step you take is a chance. Life becomes unpredictable, even risky, as you drift along with the flow of the rest of the world. What is the big appeal of the broad way, where the majority of people live? What motivates those who are on this path? It is the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes – people trying to bring satisfaction to their physical being. It is the pride of life – people trying to become important in themselves, apart from God. Though the people on this path *think*

they can see and have real understanding, John gives us the truth - they are blind! He warns us,

I John 2:15-17 (Amplified Bible) – “Do not love or cherish the world or the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh [craving for sensual gratification] and the lust of the eyes [greedy longings of the mind] and the pride of life [assurance in one’s own resources or in the stability of earthly things] - these do not come from the Father but are from the world [itself]. And the world passes away and disappears, and with it the forbidden cravings (the passionate desires, the lust) of it; but he who does the will of God and carries out His purposes in his life abides (remains) forever.”

The people who love Father God, have found another path altogether.

The Narrow Way And Its Appeal

The narrow way is the way of Christ. It is not some *ideal* way of life that we just sit around and discuss, as if it is impossible to achieve. It is achievable and it is serious business! Looking through the eyes of Jesus, He sees only one possibility in those who believe - surrender and obedience! Jesus seeks *followers*, those who *respond* - as well as believe His message of salvation. As their spiritual head, folks on this path trust Jesus completely. He leads them on the path to eternal life. What is the big appeal of the narrow way, where few people live? What motivates them? It is being able to partake of God’s divine nature, which in turn equips them with everything they need to escape the corruption in the world through lust. Peter describes this blessing,

II Peter 1:3-4 (KJV) – “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”

The Narrow Path – The Decision To Get On

Some people *say* they want to get on the narrow path, but only after they have taken care of other obligations, which they put ahead of Jesus. As Jesus went

from village to village, he met people who were using excuses for not being willing to accept the way of Christ he was offering them.

Luke 9:59-62 (KJV) - *And he said unto another, “Follow me.” But he said, “Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.” Jesus said unto him, “Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.” And another also said, “Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.” And Jesus said unto him, “No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”*

Jesus clearly states that when He calls, service to Him begins now and it involves our whole heart! We cannot get off by saying that some other obligation is more important than our commitment to God. A priority of love is at stake here!

Matthew 10:37-38 (KJV) – *“He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.”*

These may sound like strong words. But, they are necessary, because Jesus is well aware that some family members may not approve of a person’s decision to follow Him. Yet, this is a cost of discipleship - love of family should not be greater than our love for Jesus Christ.

I’ve Entered The Narrow Path – Now What?

Some people will respond to an altar call, go forward in a worship service to signify their decision to commit their lives to Christ – even get baptized, then later kick back and start thinking, “*I’m saved now, I’m home free!*” There is one major problem with those who have this attitude. The path is narrow and it is easy to miss one’s way and stray from the path. Brothers and sisters, the path is not an end in itself! This path *leads* somewhere. It leads to eternal life.

Mark 13:13 (KJV) – *“And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”*

All we can truthfully say at this point is, “*We may be on the narrow path, but if we aren’t moving with Jesus, we aren’t going anywhere.*” Even in the Old Testament exodus, people moved when the cloud moved! Jesus expects those who start out with Him on the narrow path to continue following Him (**the way**).

Luke 14:27-30 (NIV) – *“And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, ‘This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.’”*

As we move with Jesus on the narrow path, we will be “checked” frequently to see if we have what it takes to finish the course. Will we endure to the end? May our resolve be the same as that of Jesus!

Hebrews 12:2b-3 (NIV) – *“...who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”*

Questions for Personal or Group Study

(Please do not mail to CA for grading):

1. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus presents two paths that lead to two distinct destinies. One is the right way, the other the wrong way. The problem is, many people start on a path, but fail to ask what important question?
2. Each path has a spiritual head. Who is the spiritual head of the broad way? Who is the spiritual head of the narrow way?
3. What is the appeal of the broad way? What is the appeal of the narrow way?
4. When people *say* they want to get on the narrow path, but make excuses instead, what does this say about their commitment to Jesus? What is really at stake here?
5. If a family member disapproves of our relationship with Jesus, what does Jesus say we should do?
6. Some people answer an altar call, get baptized, then start thinking, “*I’m saved now, I’m home free!*” What is the major problem with this attitude? What have they failed to see?
7. In the Old Testament exodus the people moved when the cloud moved. If we are on the narrow path, but aren’t moving with Jesus, what will happen to us?
8. People on the broad way *think* they can see and have real understanding. What truth does John give us?