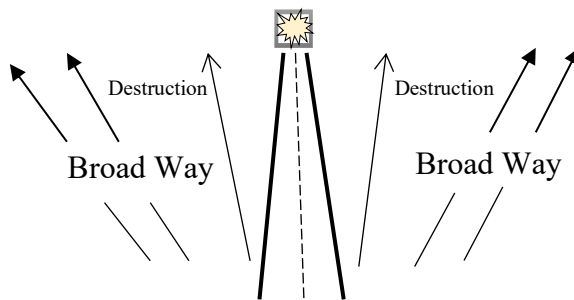


~Part Five~

Side Roads that Miss the Mark

Jesus is the Narrow Gate



Jesus poignantly described the way to the Father, stating in John 14:6, “*I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*” Later, Jesus illustrated His statement using a word picture in Matthew 7:13-14. Jesus is the narrow gate. “*You can enter God’s Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell¹ is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way. But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it.*” (NLT)

According to these scriptures and others, Jesus is the narrow gate. Entering by the narrow gate represents the way to know God and to experience His infinite love. The invitation to enter by the narrow gate is extended to every person. *Every person is invited* to enter God’s kingdom through the narrow gate; no one needs to miss heaven. God wants us to experience His love, so that is why He has given us a clear and precise way to know Him.

Side Road #5 Mixture, also known as adulteration

In the previous lessons, we have been studying the various ways we mistakenly and unwittingly try to “add God to our lives.” Now we are going to look at how we sometimes “add to God,” trying to make Him more acceptable or relevant. *Adding God to* is a sinister cousin of *adding to God*.

Earlier, I cautioned that because of deceiving spirits, a person who is seeking God must be careful. We know from Romans Chapter 1 that we have an inward bent to seek God, *but* our search must be genuine and not self-serving. A seeker is in a vulnerable state because spirituality is an attractive buzzword, and not everything spiritual is of God. If we flit around like a butterfly, tasting and sampling the nectar of all things spiritual, we will encounter seducing spirits.

Unfortunately, the act of seeking spirituality is fraught with many deceptive messages that are eternally fatal. Please study God’s genuine message of redemption from His Word, so that you will be able to spot the counterfeit. 1 John 4:1-3 says it this way, “*Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.*” (NKJV)

God addresses the issue of “mixing” in the first commandment, stating in Deuteronomy 5:7-10, “*You must not have any other god but Me. You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind, or*

¹ The NKJ translation says, “...the way that leads to destruction.”

an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea. You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods.” (NLT)

In other words, God is saying, “If you are married to Me, I am a jealous God, and I will not tolerate your dating around with other gods. No mixing Me together with idols to create a harem that you want to control.”

A typical example of adulteration is when a person mixes (adds to the gospel message) some type of spirituality that does not honor Jesus as Lord, nor adheres to the precepts of the Bible. The adulteration takes place when a “spiritual person” mixes Christianity with an occult practice. A few of these occult practices include witchcraft, voodoo, Wicca, paganism, polytheism, astrology, mysticism, New Age, TM, or even a daily horoscope. The spiritualist simply hangs the cross of Christ next to other religious symbols, claiming there are many ways to God, which is a concept that naturally appeals to many people.

Moreover, many cultic organizations purport Christian theology but deceptively hide the adulteration behind a thinly veiled façade. A few examples that woefully adulterate Jesus’ Gospel are the teachings and philosophies of The Watch Tower Society, Freemasonry, Mormonism, and the Church of Scientology. Understanding the pitfalls of adulteration is why we should diligently study genuine biblical doctrine. The Bible plainly teaches that adding anything to the Gospel message is adulteration and defiles it. These deceptions are dangerously easy for the uninformed person to fall prey to.

Why do people gravitate toward the idea of mixing “many ways to God?” Here’s why. *If you are doing the mixing, you are in control of the outcome.* Having, and maintaining, control infers that there is no need to be answerable to an all-powerful God—the tenet based upon the first commandment.

In 2 Corinthians 11:3-4, the Apostle Paul laments, “*But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the Spirit you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough.*” (NLT)

Dr. Michael Youssef says this about adulterating the simple Gospel Message. “When Paul says he fears the Corinthians will be seduced away from a ‘sincere and pure devotion to Christ,’ the word ‘sincere’ is not the best translation. The Greek word here is *haplotēs*, which literally means singleness and simplicity—a word that would describe a glass of clear water without any impurities or additives. It's interesting that both the Old Testament prophets and the Apostle Paul use the image of *adultery* to describe religion to which falsehood has been added. Similarly, we say that when a harmful substance is added to pure water, the water has been *adulterated*. To adulterate is to taint and contaminate.”

Adulteration can also take place on a societal level as well. We have already established that societies and people groups intuitively worship on a collective basis. Much like an individual may add Jesus for a perceived convenience, a clan, tribe, or society can also raise the banner of Christ over their community or realm of influence. However, if Jesus is mixed with any cultural practice, co-mingling it with scripture, then the Gospel Message is polluted and has no power to save.

Religious hierarchy and/or theocratic rule has been an important component in many civilizations, especially eastern cultures. Historically speaking, and consequently, when missionaries introduce Christianity in this setting, the outcome usually produces an adulteration of

the Gospel Message. Why? Cultural lore, mythology, philosophical musings, or “national religions” have often been deeply embedded for many generations. This means that Christianity is often viewed through the lenses of current lore, which leads to adapting the Gospel Message to fit traditions for cultural convenience. The Apostle Paul addressed the topic² of mixture many times while traveling outside the regions of Jewish influence. —Ω

 Information and Revelation  Application and Transformation
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Heavenly Father, thank You for Your Word that gives me a clear and precise way to know You personally. Thank You for putting in my heart the desire to know You and to seek after You, for in my search, You promise blessing and eternal life. Thank You for guarding my heart and giving me discernment to know Your voice and the courage to obey Your Word.

LORD, I submit to You and Your ways. Your Word says that as I submit to You, the devil must flee when I tell Him to. Therefore, I proclaim Jesus is Lord and I answer to Him and Him only with sincere and pure devotion. So, I speak to Satan and His deceiving spirits, “your assignments against me are cancelled and any authority you have had over me is rebuked in the name of Jesus—by the power of God’s Word and by Jesus’ shed blood you must flee!

LORD, help me see clearly any areas where I have adulterated Your Gospel Message and stripped it of its power to save and heal. I ask You to restore any area of my life that I have given over to Satan because of trying to add an unholy alliance to Your authority in my life. Help me live by Your pure Word and speak its truth in all circumstances. I proclaim Your love and make these proclamations in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Excerpted and adapted from, “*Having the Mind of Christ*”
By David E. McFadden
www.DeeperLifeSeries.com

² See Acts 17:16-34