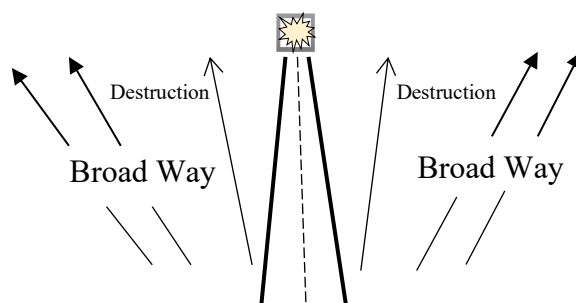


~ Part Six ~

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 #6—Pride, putting God in orbit around me

Whether intentional or not, we sometimes add God to our resume as if to enhance the value of our brand.² I call this mindset a “lapel pin” Christian, much like a politician wears an American flag lapel pin to garner approval. We can’t add God to our lives; it doesn’t work that way—a significant distinction that few people grasp with their heart. Trying to include God in your current way of thinking *or doing* is backward theology.

You cannot add God and His Word to your life—*He has to become your life. God’s Word should eventually define everything about you—it becomes who you are.*”

Think about it. When I add something new to my life, whether a lake house, lawnmower, club membership, credit card, or nanny, I did so for a reason. It makes sense that my decision to add a *person, place, or thing* was specifically made to benefit me. Since we are arguably a selfish species, I contend that I will strive to control and use my new *person, place, or thing* for my convenience and will manipulate it to my liking. Otherwise, the benefits associated with the *person, place, or thing* that I added to my life will wane and become too troublesome.

If we dare apply this logic to an attempt to add God to our lives, we soon discover a problem; we can’t control or use Him for our convenience. Even so, we selfishly “wear” Him at some level or capacity to garner approval from others. This extreme self-centered attitude is the polar opposite of biblical teaching and, therefore, a disqualifier for entering the narrow gate.

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

² Personal branding, “building your brand” is the mania of our time.

Summary—Side Roads that Miss the Mark

The discussions in this six-part series have revolved around side roads that miss the narrow gate and lead to destruction. According to Matthew 7:13-14, Jesus said that He is the narrow gate that leads to the Father, and broad is the way that leads to destruction. Jesus clearly states that most people will not find the narrow gate. The “broad way” infers that most people will choose to “alter” Jesus to fit their liking or to refuse Him outright as they plod their way toward a heavenly hope.

Reviewing the side roads from **Part 1 through 6:**

- 1) Independent spirit – “I can find my own way, thank you.”
- 2) Mental assent - settling for a religious experience without personally knowing God
- 3) Impersonal faith - keeping God at arm’s length
- 4) Goods works - being good enough for heaven without Jesus
- 5) Mixing non-scriptural beliefs with biblical orthodoxy, rendering the true Gospel Message powerless
- 6) Pride - insincerely adding Christ to enhance our “brand”

Rejecting Jesus as the narrow gate can only mean one thing to someone seeking God—an alternate god³ is sought and found as a replacement—a counterfeit. That is because every person has a default setting to find God and is “wired to worship Him.” The misdirected search automatically defaults to a side road that misses the narrow gate.

Having made a case for the “broad way to destruction,” please know that the narrow gate is available to anyone who legitimately wants to find it. God’s love is relentless in pursuing the person on a side road, even if he or she knows it is wrong to be there. The scriptures invite, “whosoever will.” Jesus said that He came so that none should perish. The invitation is extended to every sincere person no matter how many mistakes or miscues have occurred, including side roads taken.

If you are anxious about your condition, please know that God looks on the heart, telling us to “...be still and know that I am God.” If you discovered that you are on a side road, and want to get it right, all that is needed is a change of heart and mind. According to the Bible, salvation is in Jesus. He is the only way to have a relationship with the Heavenly Father. “*There is no other name under heaven by which we can be saved.*”⁴ By believing in Jesus and receiving Him as your Savior, you can begin your journey with God and enter the narrow gate to His Kingdom.

 Information and Revelation
 Application and Transformation

Heavenly Father, thank You for giving me the desire and ability to find You, for Your Word says, “And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart—I will be found by you, says the Lord...” LORD, help my search be true and honest so that You will be glorified in my life, for a hypocrite dishonors You and Your kingdom. Help me day-by-day live according to Your ways so everything about me is defined by Your Word. LORD, I give You permission to keep me in the Way, for without You all is lost and I perish without a heavenly hope. Help me look to Jesus and Him only for He is the narrow gate—there is no other name under heaven by which I can be saved. LORD, I turn from my selfish ways and I receive Jesus today and make Him my Lord and Savior. Jesus is the only hope of glory! I proclaim Your love and make these proclamations in Jesus’ name. Amen.

³ Spirituality has always been in vogue because we are spirit beings living in an earthly body. The only question is: which spirit will a person seek and then submit to.

⁴ Acts 4:12