

Narrow is the Gate

Matthew chapter 7

We will examine the lead-up to the narrow gate. What must we be doing, and what shape is our heart in?

My Grandmother taught me this when I was in High School.

A fool is a man who knows not what he knows not, but a wise man is a man who knows what he knows not.

Judging

I'm sure most of us have heard it said, "Do not judge others." I know I have heard someone needing correction turn and say to a brother or sister, "Who are you to judge me? Don't you know the Bible tells us not to judge?" I am always taken aback when people stop short on a verse. We must use Scripture verses in their proper context. Let's look at that verse in its fullness.

1 "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. 2 For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. So, if you make judgments of ridicule or condemnation, you will be judged accordingly. It may not sound that bad, but it really is. We often allow our tempers to get the best of us, and we do not always extend grace to others, the very grace we often boast about. Hypocrites we are. The idea that we should not judge depends on the type of judgment we exercise. **John 7:24: "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."** What does this say to us? Judge with righteous judgment.

What is this righteous judgment?

- . righteous, observing divine laws
 1. in a wide sense, upright, righteous, virtuous, keeping the commands of God
 1. of those who seem to themselves to be righteous, who pride themselves to be righteous, who pride themselves in their virtues, whether real or imagined
 2. innocent, faultless, guiltless
 3. used of him whose way of thinking, feeling, and acting is wholly conformed to the will of God, and who therefore needs no rectification in the heart or life
 1. only Christ truly

4. approved of or acceptable of God
2. in a narrower sense, rendering to each his due and that in a judicial sense, passing just judgment on others, whether expressed in words or shown by the manner of dealing with them

John 5:30: "I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.

Galatians 6:1: "Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted." How could you make such a decision to correct if you had not first judged?

2 Timothy 2:24-26: "And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will." We are currently living in a time in our world where evil is perceived as good, and good is viewed as evil. (**Isaiah 5:20**).

We must remember our struggle is not with flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, **Ephesians 6:12**. Those same evil forces will test every step we take as we walk a narrow line between right and wrong when we do render correction and condemnation of our brothers and sisters we need to remember. **"But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted."** Even in or perhaps even more when we seek to help a brother or sister who has stumbled, evil will invade. It may lead to a confrontation as evil stirs emotions of anger.

7:3 "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? 4 How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. Do you see yourself as all righteous? I have dealt with some who may not come right out and say it, but as they talk, they imply it of themselves. These are those who can point out the faults of all others but never their own.

7:6: "Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces."

Dog in this sentence implies, metaphorically, a man of impure mind, an impudent man. "We might say that Jesus means, Don't be judgmental, but don't throw out all discernment either." David Guzik

7:7-8: “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

We have no power on our own to do those things God has planned for us. We can't jump high enough to make it to heaven, and we cannot be good enough to earn His grace. But when we seek Him with all our heart, our soul, and mind, He will be found and not just found but found happily waiting for us to call on Him. Sometimes we need to remember that, no matter how mature we are in the gospel and our walk with the Lord, we too will have that door open to us, as we watch for opportunities.

7:9-12: “Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? 11 If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! 12 So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

The Scripture here sets an example for us in compassion toward others. How much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts? **So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you,**

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Billy Graham's July 16th devotional examines this verse from the view of July 16, 1969, the day the Apollo made its first landing on the moon. He addressed the trajectory of the spaceship, the distance of travel, and emphasized the importance of staying on the right path. What if NASA had said, You're off a little bit, but it's okay. The distance they travelled was 225,623 miles.

If you're going somewhere and you're off course by just one degree, after one foot, you'll miss your target by 0.2 inches. Trivial, right? But what about as you get farther out? After a mile, you'll be off by 92.2 feet. One degree is starting to make a difference. If I take the distance, I would be off after one mile, and multiplying 92.2 feet by 225,623, I would end up 20,802,440.6 miles off target. That's a long way off target.

The average moderately active person takes around 7,500 steps/day. If you maintain that daily average and live until age 80, you'll have walked about 216,262,500 steps in your lifetime. Doing the math, the average person with an average stride who lives until age 80 will walk around 110,000 miles. Which is the equivalent of walking about five times around the Earth, right on the equator. What if I got off by 0.2 degrees again? I might end up going from the equator to the north or south pole and back across the equator again.

<https://snowbrains.com/brain-post-how-far-does-the-average-human-walk-in-a-lifetime/> ,
<https://whitehatcrew.com/blog/a-mere-one-degree-difference/>

Matthew 7:13: 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." The gate is the target, our distance of travel is a lifetime. However, out of our Christ Jesus, there is one who resides inside of us and guides us where we need to go. The distance is a lifetime. Which path shall we choose?

Leading into this verse, we are being taught how to live as a Christian. If I cannot live up to those teachings here on Matthew, how will I ever look as my Christ Jesus did? Is He not our role model?

He ain't heavy, He's my brother.