

## Narrow and Hard

### Caleb J. Patton

*“Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many.”*

English (NASB)	Greek	Definition
“Enter	eiserchomai	To go out or come in: to enter, of men or animals, as into a house or a city. Of things: as food, that enters into the eater's mouth, of entrance into any condition, state of things, society, employment. To arise, come into existence, begin to be. Of men, to come before the public. To come into life. Of thoughts that come into the mind
through-	dia	through, of place, with, in, of time, throughout, during, of means, by, by the means of, through, the ground or reason by which something is or is not, done, by reason of, on account of, because of for this reason, therefore, on this account
the narrow-	stenos	narrow, strait
gate-	pylē	a gate, of the larger sort, in the wall of either a city, a palace, a town, the temple, a prison, the gates of hell (likened to a vast prison), metaph. the access or entrance into any state
for-	hoti	that, because, since
the gate-	pylē	See previous
is wide-	platys	broad
and-	kai	and, also, even, indeed, but
the way-	hodos	properly, a way, a travelled way, road, a travellers way, journey, travelling, metaph. a course of conduct, a way (i.e. manner) of thinking, feeling, deciding
is broad/easy-	eurychōros	spacious, broad
that leads-	apagō	to lead away, esp. of those who are led off to trial, prison, or punishment
to-	eis	into, unto, to, towards, for, among

destruction,-	apōleia	destroying, utter destruction, of vessels, a perishing, ruin, destruction, of money, the destruction which consists of eternal misery in hell
and-	kai	See previous
there are-	eimi	to be, to exist, to happen, to be present
many-	polys	to be, to exist, to happen, to be present
who enter-	eiserchomai	See previous
through-	dia	See previous
it.-	autos	himself, herself, themselves, itself, he, she, it, the same

Very counter cultural statement

Our cutler really values mutual inclusivity

“The relative is absolutized and the absolute is relativized.” - Kent Hughes

To be narrow is considered to be a high insult in our day

“Call me vain, call me proud, call me mean—- but don’t call me narrow!”

### Select Narrow Mindedness

What are some things things that it would be bad to be narrow minded in?

- Non-essential things
- Things scripture does not give an absolute on
- Private vs. Public school
- Economic policy
- 
- 
- 

What should be/are called to be narrow minded in?

- Essential for salvation
- Anything God’s word gives clear definitive truth to

## The Wide & Easy Way

Jesus starts with a command to enter into the narrow gate and then explains why He is telling them that by way of a warning.

It is easy, common, and destructive to go the way of the wide gate.

<b>What is the wide gate?</b>	=====>	Unrighteousness	
- Living in licentiousness	=====>	Unrighteousness	==> Self Pleasing
- Living in legalism	=====>	Self-Righteousness	==> Self Promoting

Both are focused on self

Licentiousness in living for hedonism more or less. The pleasures of the world. Living for self by indulgence in unrighteousness.

*1 John 2:16 "For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world."*

Legalism is living for self by indulgence in self-righteousness. Elevating our pride or view of self by good works and morals. Using what we do to justify ourselves before God and others and even to ourselves.

*Matthew 6:1 "Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven."*

### Examples

- 1) Giving - Matthew 6:3-4
- 2) Prayer- Matthew 6:5-6
- 3) Fasting- Matthew 6:16-18

In general Jesus gives a warning against using spiritual disciplines as a means of glorifying ourselves. When we fall to this temptation we have perverted the means of meeting with and glorifying God as a means to glorify self.

We are stealing God's glory

*Deuteronomy 4:24 "For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God."*

What would be another word for living a moral lifestyle that is aimed at being right with God/ getting into heaven, but isn't a life that is solely trusting in the merit of Christ for the forgiveness of their sin?

### *RELIGION*

- 2) Unrighteousness
  - 1) Self Gratification
  - 2) Worldly Pleasures
- 3) Self Righteousness
  - 1) Legalism/Moralism
  - 2) Religion

*"Religion is the seeking after a god in your own image. Christianity is God's seeking you and moving to redeem you by the death of His Son, the Lord Jesus." James Boice*

### **Why is the wide gate considered easy?**

*John 15:18-19 18 "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. 19 **If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own**; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."*

To go through the wide gate/easy way requires very little effort. There is no resistance from this world. Matter of fact you will be praised along the way.

*Luke 16:15 And he said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. **For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.**"*

### **What are some examples of things this world praises?**

- 1) Abortion (Video Online, woman smiling through procedure)
- 2) Drunkenness (Snapchat, Facebook)
- 3) Sexual Conquests (College guys bragging)
- 4) Gay Marriage (Facebook like and praises on gay relationship status)

### **What are examples of things the church praises?**

- 1) Service to the church
- 2) Spiritual Disciplines
- 3)

*Matthew 6:1 "Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven."*

"Soon everyone will have to choose between that which is right, and that which is easy." -  
Morpheus "Matrix"

Everything in the world by nature is now moving in the direction of unrighteousness.

*Romans 8:20 "For the creation was subjected to futility..."*

*Romans 3:10 "None is righteous, no not one..."*

*Romans 6:19 "For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to **lawlessness leading to more lawlessness...**"*

So the gate is wide because there are so many that are taking that way. And the way is easy because it is the path of least resistance. You won't stand out in this world to live like the world.

It's easy when considering the lack of condemnation we will get from the world, but it's actually the hard way when considering loads of condemnation we will get from the Lord.

*Matthew 7:21-23 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' 23 And then will I declare to them, '**I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.**'"*

*Hebrews 10:31 "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."*

This passage is personally very challenging to me. It sobers me to take a moment and reevaluate to make sure that I am solely trusting in the righteousness of Christ and Christ alone for my right standing with God.

Knowing and being known in a personal relationship with Christ was the standard of the narrow way

**Here is a challenging question:**

When was the last time that you were persecuted for your faith?

*1 John 3:13 "Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you."*

*John 15:18-20* "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. 20 Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you."

*II Timothy 3:12-13* "Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, 13 while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived."

God tells us regularly that if we are living in the narrow way that we will be misunderstood, resisted, persecuted, and even hated in this world.

Now this isn't a call to go and stir up trouble. Matter of fact Christ just a few verses earlier said something to the opposite.

*Matthew 7:6* "Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you."

But our convictions to live God honoring, Christ exalting, gospel preaching lives should bring about a level of resistance and even persecution to our lives that lines up with "the way is hard"

### **Is there a struggle**

"It's ok to struggle, but not to stay there."

When we come to Christ the struggle has just begun. One of the greatest evidences of grace that I look for in a brand new believer is that they are struggling with their sin. Because if they are struggling with it that means that there is conviction and a resistance to wanted to do it. This switch from a love of the world and a hatred to God to a hatred of the world and a love for God is exactly what II Corinthians 5:17 says will happen.

But even in older and more mature Christians we can have a settling in our hearts. A turning cold towards the things of Christ and fervency in our walks with God.

*Hebrews 3:13* "But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin."

And its not a matter of IF this will happen but WHEN this will happen.....

*Luke 22:32-34* "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you,[d] that he might sift you like wheat, 32 but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. **And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.**" 33 Peter[e] said to him, "Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death." 34 Jesus[f] said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me."

## **Undertow Illustration**

- Have to constantly be pushing against the current
- To stay still is to be moved

## **Salmon Swimming Upstream**

- That has to be exhausting
- If they stop swimming for even a second they will lose so much ground

## **A Convicting Story to Endure For the Gospel**

*“Sir,” addressing the preacher, “if I believed what you and the church of God say that you believe, even if England were covered with broken glass from coast to coast, I would walk over it, if need be, on hands and knees and think it worthwhile living, just to save one soul from an eternal hell like that! Charlie Peace*

Its convicting to think how short I fall of even a man's thoughts (who probably did not know Christ) of what my life should look like, not to mention how short I fall from the life that Christ has called me to live.

Thankfully there was one that did something even more unthinkable than walk across England on his hands and knees.....

## **Isaiah 53**

3 He was despised and rejected[b] by men;  
a man of sorrows,[c] and acquainted with[d] grief;[e]  
and as one from whom men hide their faces[f]  
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

4 Surely he has borne our griefs  
and carried our sorrows;  
yet we esteemed him stricken,  
smitten by God, and afflicted.

5 But he was pierced for our transgressions;  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,  
and with his wounds we are healed.

.....

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,  
yet he opened not his mouth;

....

10 Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him;  
he has put him to grief;[g]

....

11 Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see[i] and be satisfied;  
by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant,  
make many to be accounted righteous,  
and he shall bear their iniquities.

.....

yet he bore the sin of many,  
and makes intercession for the transgressors.

Just like Jesus prayed for Peter when the struggle came, so too he sits at the right hand of the throne of God and prays for us.

JESUS PRAYS FOR US!

### **Call to a Decision**

“Enter”

Jesus starts this passage off with a very simple command. “Enter by the narrow gate.”

Call to a decision.

- 1) Coming to Christ
  - 1) Monergistic
  - 2) Power of God
  - 3) God gets all the glory & credit
- 2) Daily obedience
  - A) Synergistic
  - B) Empowered by God

*Philippians 2:12-13* “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, 13 **for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.**”

There is a decision that is first made when we come to Christ. Totally empowered by the grace of God. And totally a response to the saving work that Christ has already done in our hearts. Our act of faith in Christ is the first response of a regenerated heart by Christ.

But then comes the struggle. Daily we are called to abide, remain, remember the gate that we have entered. To not go back to our old way of life. To not forget our first love, but to remember, repent and do the works we did at first.



*Deuteronomy 30:11-20* "For this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. 12 It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' 13 Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' 14 But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it.

15 "See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. 16 If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God[a] that I command you today, by loving the Lord your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules,[b] then you shall live and multiply, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. 17 But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, 18 I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish. You shall not live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. 19 I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that **I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, 20 loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days**, that you may dwell in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them."

"How sweet all at once it was for me to be rid of those fruitless joys which I had once feared to lose!...You drove them from and took their place..." Augustine

### **So What?**

Is the a call to pull yourself by your boot straps and try harder? ==> Absolutely NOT!

What decision do you need to make today?

- 1) Flee some constraining sin?
- 2) Confess bitterness/seek restoration w/ someone (Spouse, friend, co-worker, family)
- 3) Seek Biblical counsel/truth on a specific area of your life
- 4) Recommit to daily meeting w/ and enjoying Christ