

GROUP LEADERS NOTES – STUDY 26

- e) The wide gate is the one that we are most likely to be attracted to.
- f) The wide gate accommodates many people and there will be plenty of company on the wide road leading from it. The problem is that it leads away from God and ends in destruction.
- g) The narrow gate is not so attractive at first. It does not have so many people on the road. Jesus describes it as 'hard'.
- h) But it leads to God and to life. That means we will know real blessing even if the road is not so easy.

Question 6

Examples of what the group might come up with:

- We can begin to tolerate sin.
- We can no longer read our Bibles.
- We begin avoiding fellowship with other Christians.
- We can start joining in with unedifying talk and gossip.
- We can stop using our money for the Lord's Work.

Question 1

- a) This statement from Jesus is not the sum total of the Christian faith. It is the principle that should govern our attitude towards others.
- b) Kingdom values turn perceived wisdom on its head. In following on from the previous verse (n.b. "*so whatever....*") we see that our response to the love of God as a giving Father, is directed towards others.
- c) It is therefore a principle that only believers can embrace.
- d) Notice that it is expressed in the 'positive' rather than the 'negative', which would read something like: 'Do not do anything to anyone that you would not want them to do back to you'.
- e) What Jesus says passes the initiative over to us to set the tone. So for example; rather than 'don't be horrible to someone in case they are horrible back', we might say 'I will be nice to that person because that is how I would like people to treat me'.

Question 2

- a) What Jesus is teaching is consistent with the Old Testament scriptures and fulfils the revealed will of God found in the Law and Prophets.
- b) Jesus is not teaching anything that does not tie in with what God always required of His people.
- c) Some writers have suggested that verse 12 follows on from chapter 5:17-20; with what goes in between as the 'bracketed' outworking of it. In other words it summarises that section of the Sermon.

Question 3

- a) The well-known preacher Martyn Lloyd Jones wrote concerning the movement from verse 12 to verse 13: *“Here we can safely say that our Lord really has finished the Sermon as such, and that from here on He is rounding it off, and applying it, and urging upon His listeners the importance and necessity of practising it and implementing it in their daily lives”*.
- b) In this remaining section of the Sermon on the Mount we therefore find the call for genuineness in the disciple’s response to the demands of Jesus that have been laid out so radically in the preceding chapters.
- c) Each example that will now follow will contrast the genuine and the counterfeit. It is important that we discern which is which.

Question 4

- a) We often use these verses to illustrate the gospel; the way that leads to heaven compared to the way that leads to hell. In John 10:9 Jesus describes Himself as the ‘gate’ or ‘door’; and in John 14:6 he is ‘the way’ to the Father. **This is a good and helpful way of explaining the gospel!**
- b) Having said that, these verses come in the context of Jesus setting out what the life of true discipleship looks like. Therefore, we can also see in them Jesus contrasting the characteristics of living life according to the way of the kingdom (which we know leads in the end to life); and the way of the world, which we equally know will result in destruction.
- c) The kingdom He has come to establish is completely different from anything else that the world had ever known and has to be

lived in accordingly. It is not an easy life; it is not popular; and in many ways it can be said not to come naturally.

- d) One of the gates Jesus describes clearly attracts a crowd and many people are entering through it; caught up in the surge. The other is very narrow and only takes one at a time. You cannot hide in the crowd because there is not one when you go the kingdom way.
- e) Having said that, the kingdom life might be a narrow ‘way’, but it is not a narrow ‘life’. It is full of blessing and freedom.
- f) But because the gate and the path are narrow, there are certain things you cannot take with you; there just isn’t room!
- g) We must make a break with the way of the world and its values. We even have to make a break from self; the putting off ‘the old self’ that Paul describes in **Col 3:5-10**.

Question 5

- a) To be on the broad way is seen as being more tolerant. We are open in terms of what we think to be appropriate and the path is wide enough for people to pass each other without any interference in what either is doing.
- b) On the other hand the narrow way is that which is God’s chosen way for us. It is not always the popular way and can be lonely.
- c) Jesus does not want His disciples to follow the crowd.
- d) That doesn’t mean that we should be isolationist and have nothing to do with anyone who disagrees with us. It does mean that we deliberately turn from the world’s values to kingdom values; the theme throughout this great Sermon on the Mount.