

CHOOSE LIFE!

I. The Scripture: Choosing the Narrow Gate

13"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."

Matthew 7:13,14

II. Looking at the Scripture

1. Choosing Which Way to Go

What choice does Jesus command before He even describes the options?

What makes the wide gate so popular?

What do you think the result of the wide gate, destruction, looks like?

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Read John 10:9,10. In what position does Jesus place Himself?

What is the result of going through the gate of Jesus?

Read Matthew 7:14 and John 10:10. What does Jesus mean by having life "to the full"?

2. The Road Less Traveled

Read John 14:1-6.

"Where are we going? I don't know, do you? Who's going to lead the expedition?"
You can hear the words of Thomas as he asks Jesus for directions (v.5).

Why do you think so few people choose the narrow gate?

Read Deuteronomy 30:15-20. What options are listed for the Hebrew people?

What final command does Moses give in verse 19?

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III. The Scripture and You

1. Decide to Live, Don't Live to Decide.

Many people are procrastinators when it comes to making decisions. Some people have allowed their procrastination to cause them to take the "wide road that leads to destruction." Remember, not deciding to live for Jesus is a decision!

Complete these sentences:

The biggest decisions weighing on my shoulders are...

I would make better decisions if I would . . .

I am glad to be alive because . . .

Circle two of the following sentence completions that describe you:

I think the majority of my decisions end up . . .

1. being on the right track.
2. in a heap of trouble.
3. being wise and worthwhile.
4. turning out for the better eventually.
5. teaching me about failure.
6. returning to haunt me.
7. never being decided.
8. being decided by others.

Here's a story worth thinking about:

One morning a vulture was hungry. While flying over the river, he saw a dead animal's carcass floating down the river on a piece of ice. The vulture landed on the ice and began to gorge himself with this delightful meal. He looked up to take a breath of air and noticed that he was 100 yards from a waterfall and that the ice was moving rapidly toward the waterfall. But instead of flying away, he kept eating, though keeping his eye on the waterfall. At 25 yards he decided to take one last bite. Then at 10 yards he took one last mouthful. With only a few feet to go before the falls he tried to fly, but his feet were now frozen to the ice, and he tumbled to his death over the falls.

Don't make excuses! Many a person has wasted his life by putting off the vital long-term priorities for the less important short-term ones.¹

¹ Jim Burns, *Getting In Touch With God*, (Eugene: Harvest House, 1986), p. 162.

2. There Is a Cost Involved in Choosing

Choosing the narrow or wide path in life does require a cost.

What is the cost of the narrow way?

What can you see as the cost for the wide way? What has it cost you to follow Christ?

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What potential costs might be waiting for you to sacrifice for Christ?

Read the following statement then rate yourself from one to ten (ten being highest).

When it comes to discipline, saying no to second best for the sake of having the best, I rate myself as a _____.

Circle three responses:

The areas of my life that are most difficult to discipline are . . .

eating habits

sleep patterns

handling of money

sexuality

thoughts

humor

prayer life

sarcasm

speech

study habits

relationships

church attendance

anger/moods

criticism of others

exercise

habit of back biting

other:

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3. Life's Too Short for Bad Decisions

One day when I was caught up in the tyranny of the urgent, a friend of mine sent me some thoughts entitled, "Things That Life Is Too Short For." Here are a few of those special thoughts.

- Life is too short to nurse grudges or hurt feelings.
- It's too short to worry about getting ready for Christmas. Just let Christmas come.
- It's too short to keep all your floors shiny.
- It's too short to let a day pass without hugging your loved ones.
- It's too short not to take a nap when you need one.
- It's too short to put off Bible study.
- It's too short to give importance to whether the towels match the bathroom.
- It's too short to miss the call to worship on a Sunday morning.
- It's too short to stay indoors on a crisp fall Saturday.
- It's too short to read all the junk mail.
- It's too short not to call or write your parents (or children) regularly.
- It's too short to work at a job you hate.
- It's too short not to stop and talk to children.
- It's too short to forget to pray.
- It's too short to put off improving our relationships with people we love.
- Life is just too short. Way too short to settle for mediocrity!

Now take a moment to list five personal "life is too short fors."

Life is too short for . . .

**Little decisions like these are what makes life exciting,
rewarding and renewed!**

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