**1. Motivate**

When you go on a trip, what are some of the choices you have to make as you plan and prepare?

* where to go, destination, route, means of transport
* set up route on GPS or map app on your phone
* when to go

A video introduction to the Bible Study is available. View it at <https://watch.liberty.edu/media/t/1_jy6vptwd> If you have no wi-fi where you teach, it is best to download the video to your computer from <https://tinyurl.com/bddzwf32>

* where to stay
* what to pack
* sites to see, events to take in
* people you might visit along the way

**2. Transition**

Jesus talked about the journey of life … He spoke of choices we must make.

* Today we look at what road to take, whom to listen to, and whom we will obey.
* God’s Kingdom is reserved for those who obediently follow Him.

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 No, Most People Will Not

Listen for a contrast.

Matthew 7:13-14 (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. 14 But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

What are advantages and disadvantages of the different kinds of gates and roads?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Advantages | Disadvantages |
| Narrow Gate, Road | * leads to life
 | * hard to find
* hard to enter, narrow
* few find it
* a difficult road
 |
| Wide Gate, Road | * easy to enter, broad
* easy to find
* many find and enter
 | * leads to destruction
 |

Why is the narrow road tough to follow for people today?

* demands submission to God
* requires self-control (in contrast to broad way requirements)
* peer pressure
* world makes itself attractive
* requires intentionally showing love to others

What broad roads did you (or people you know) travel before meeting Christ?

* pursuit of pleasure,
* chasing after material things
* rebellion against God, ignoring Jesus
* go along with the crowd
* no involvement in spiritual things at all
* searching for meaning and satisfaction in their jobs
* work-acholic
* totally involved in their hobby (golf, sports, etc.)

Many religions teach self-sacrifice. How is this different from traveling the narrow road and being a follower of Jesus?

* these have to do with earning one’s way to gain merit
* they are works related religions
* Believers would sacrifice as the *result* of allowing God to change their lives

What was your entry through the narrow gate like?

* heard the gospel as a child
* came to Jesus as a result of a revival service
* heard someone present the plan of salvation
* saw the Jesus film
* someone came to my door and witnessed to me, invited me to church
* life messed up and was looking for something better

In what sense is it narrow-minded to believe in Christ?

* you believe in the specifics of the Word of God
* you reject the world’s attitudes
* you are focused on living to please the Lord
* your lifestyle will reflect what God says, not what the world says

What is there about the narrow gate and the narrow road that requires a long term view or perspective of life?

* requires self discipline now for delayed reward
* contrast to worldly wide way which offers immediate, short term gratification
* need to think with eternity’s values in mind

How do you develop that long term perspective?

* careful choice of what you fill your mind with (entertainment, news, etc.)
* fill your mind instead with Truth of God's Word
* make it a habit, a practice to invest your resources in God's Kingdom (outreach ministries, missions, spending time ministering to others)

3.2 Caution, Do Not Be Misled!

Listen for warnings to heed.

Matthew 7:15-20 (NIV) "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. 16 By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? 17 Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

According to this passage, what are some characteristics of false prophets?

* come in sheep’s clothing
* inwardly are like ferocious wolves
* they are disguised to look harmless or good, but are really mean and nasty
* you should be able to spot them by absence of the Fruit of the Spirit and the presence of the fruit of the flesh.

What would be some examples of false prophets in our world?

* certain media (Radio/TV) preachers
* people who are in Christian ministry for the fame and fortune
* people who advocate liberal, non-biblical theologies
* “humanists” who want to reject the influence of God on our culture (through government, media, materialism)
* entertainment (movies, music, etc.) – live for the gusto, get your jollies NOW

How to carefully evaluate “fruit” without judging (which Jesus warned against).

* Watch your attitude, don’t let it take on a condemning nature
* This is not a time for frequent put-downs (gossip) about the lack of spirituality of someone who doesn’t happen to get along with you
* Remember that “fruit inspection” is for the purpose of discerning who might be a false prophet, not just rejecting someone you don’t like

Consider the contrasts of different kinds of fruit:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, [23] gentleness* and *self-control*. | Galatians 5:19-21 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: *sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; [20] idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions [21] and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like*  |

Remember that these Fruit of the Spirit are qualities that are the *result* of being under the Kingdom/Rule of God

⇨ When God is ruling in your life, these beautiful fruits are what will naturally be seen

3.3 Trust and Obey

Listen for mistaken claims.

Matthew 7:21-23 (NIV) "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

What kinds of things will people claim before God who want to enter heaven?

* we called you “Lord”
* we prophesied in your name
* we drove out demons in your name
* we performed miracles in your name

If religious words and acts do not make one fit for the kingdom, what does?

* doing the will of God the Father
* obedience
* having a personal relationship with God
* submitting to His rule in your life

In what ways do we fool ourselves about our own devotion to Jesus Christ?

* thinking that we please God by action, by performance
* trying to pile up good deeds to over balance our failures
* struggle with being good but often failing and wondering why

What do some people say, thinking they are good enough to go to heaven?

* I believe in God
* I try to do lots of good deeds
* I help others
* I don’t swear or drink or chew … or go with girls/boys who do

How can we know if we are doing the will of God?

* obedience to the teaching of God’s Word
* following specific commandments
* living by the principles of God’s Word
* living by faith – trusting God’s Holy Spirit to guide, direct, empower
* submitting to the rule of God in your life

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

Application

Accept Christ.

* Because a relationship with Christ is the only way to heaven, pray and trust Christ for salvation.
* Your Bible Study leader would be glad to help you.

Research the truth.

* Meet this week with one to two others from your group and discuss why a belief in Universalism is faulty.
* Consider why Christ is the only way to eternal life.

Share Christ.

* Pray and look for an opportunity to talk with a friend or acquaintance
* Explain how he or she can go to heaven through faith and trust in Christ.

Crossword
Clues and Words taken from Matthew 7:13 – 23 (NIV)
Help and other Family Activities found at <https://tinyurl.com/bddzwf32>

