



Enter Through the Narrow Gate

Matthew 7:13-14



This week we will look at God's Way - the only way - to get to heaven. Pray each day to talk to God about what you are learning.

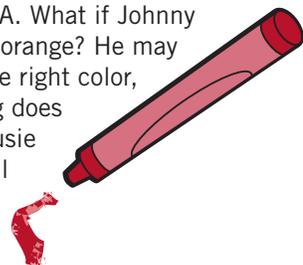
Day #1: The Wide Gate

Imagine a big box of crayons. Not just the 8-pack or the 16-pack. Picture the 96-pack - the giant box with the sharpener on the back. What if your teacher told you to find the red crayon to color a map? She warns you not to use any other color. You're not so crazy about plain old red. There's red-orange, violet-orange, and fuchsia. They seem close enough to you. But if you use one of those, would you be using the right color? There's only one way to get an A - the teacher's way. She created the assignment; she makes the rules. Even though there are 95 other colors, only one is the right one.

+ *Enter God's kingdom through the narrow gate. The gate is large and the road is wide that leads to death and hell. Many people go that way. But the gate is small and the road is narrow that leads to life. Only a few people find it.* - Matthew 7:13

Let's try to understand why the gate is large and the road is wide that leads to death and hell. There are lots of people who believe wrong things about God and heaven. Some people think that there are many ways to get to heaven. Other people think that it doesn't matter what you believe as long as you believe it with all your heart. There is no end to the number of ways people think they can get to heaven. But there is only ONE way. God created everything. He is the author of heaven and earth, and each of us. **We can only get to heaven God's way.**

The wrong beliefs about God and heaven are like the 95 other colors of crayons. None of them will meet the teacher's requirement. There is only one red crayon. Only that one is the acceptable way to get an A. What if Johnny thought the teacher said to use orange? He may believe with all his heart it is the right color, but his belief in the wrong thing does not make it true. And what if Susie believes that using any color will work? Unless she uses red, Susie will miss the mark.



Day #1 continued:

There are MANY ways that do NOT lead to heaven and only ONE way that does lead to heaven. Pray and thank God that He has provided the ONE way for you to spend eternity with Him in heaven.

Day #2: Never Good Enough

Another lie some people believe is that we can do enough good things to get to heaven. While it is a great thing to be kind and do things that are good, we can never be good enough to earn our way to heaven. God is perfect and can only allow perfect people to be with Him in heaven. But we are not perfect! We have sin. Ever since Adam and Eve chose to disobey God in the Garden of Eden, every person who has been born has been a sinner. We all choose to do wrong things. (Isaiah 53:6) There is nothing we can do that would make our sin go away.

With your parent's permission, get a glass and fill it about half way with water. That water is clean, pure, and good to drink. Now add a drop of food coloring (or a drop of paint) and mix it up. What if that food coloring was poison? Would you want to drink that water now? No way! That is no longer pure water. How can you make the water pure again? Try adding some more good water. Does that get the "poison" out? No matter how much good water you add you can never make the water pure again. That drop is like sin in our life. Once it is in, there is nothing we can do to get it out - no way for us to make ourselves perfect again. **God provided a way for us.**

+ Ephesians 2:8b-9 says, *"Your salvation doesn't come from anything you do. It is God's gift. It is not based on anything you have done. No one can brag about earning it."*

Pray and thank God that even though you are a sinner, He loves you. Even though you do not deserve to be in His perfect heaven, **He provided a way** for you to get there. Tomorrow we will look at God's plan - the **only** way - to get to heaven.

Day #3: God's Way

The Bible tells us there is no way for us to make ourselves pure once we have sinned. Our sin separates us from God who is perfect. Isaiah 59:2 says, *"But your sins have separated you from your God. They have caused Him to turn His face away from you. So He won't listen to you."* We are no longer pure and able to enter heaven. We cannot come up with our own plan to get to heaven.

Day #3 continued:

Proverbs 14:12 says, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death." So how can imperfect people be made perfect again?

Ever since the first people chose to disobey Him, God has required an animal to be killed on the altar to pay for the sins of His people. This seems so strange and harsh to us. But God is very serious about sin. Sin leads to death - separation from God (Romans 6:23). But the Bible tells us that blood atones for sin (or makes things right with God). *The life of each creature is in its blood. So I have given you the blood of animals to pay for your sin on the altar. Blood is life. That is why blood pays for your sin.* - Leviticus 17:11 The **life** of the blood covers the **death** of the sin.

God promised His people that one day He would send a permanent final sacrifice to take away all the sin of those who believe (Isaiah 49:6, Romans 11:26-27). God ALWAYS keeps His promises. Jesus, God's own Son, was the answer to that promise. Jesus came to live on earth in a human body. He faced all the things that other people face, but He never sinned. He was perfect. Because He was perfect, He could die in our place as our substitution. The Bible calls Jesus, "*the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!*" - John 1:29



1 Peter 3:18 says, "Christ died for sins once and for all time. The One who did what is right died for those who don't do right. He died to bring you to God. His body was put to death. But the Holy Spirit brought Him back to life."

The Bible tells us if we know we are a sinner and believe that Jesus is God and came to die in our place, we will be saved.

Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God. - John 1:12 (NIV)

God's grace has saved you because of your faith in Christ. - Ephesians 2:8a

Day #4: Default Setting

The dictionary says the word "default" means: A particular setting that is assigned automatically and remains in effect unless canceled or overridden. That's a mouthful, but it is important to understand. It is a lot like a DVD movie that is *automatically* set to play in English. English is the **default** setting for the movie. Every time you put the movie in, it will play in English - unless you do something to change it. In order to listen to the movie in Spanish, you would have to use your controller to find

Day #4 continued:

the different language options and scroll down to Spanish, choose Spanish and then push play. The word "default" is an important word to understand.

The bad news is the "default" or "automatic" setting for every human is to go down the wide road to destruction - and hell. This is because we are all sinners. Not one of us is perfect, so not one of us deserves to go to heaven with a perfect God. But the totally AWESOME news is there is another way. There is a narrow gate!



Jesus said, "*I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved.*" - John 10:9 (NIV)

Every person has to think about where their soul is going to go when they die. Each person must make the individual decision to put his or her faith in Jesus as the only way to get to heaven. If they do not, they will be swept away with the crowd - by default - down the wide road to death and hell. Have you thought about which path you are on? Jesus urges us, "*Enter God's kingdom through the narrow gate.*" - Matthew 7:13

Day #5: The Multitudes

The next time you go to the shopping mall or to the pool on a hot sunny day, look around you. Look at all the people. Sit still for five minutes and try to count all the people you can see. You will probably exhaust yourself trying to count them all.

Since we know the "automatic, default" setting for humans is the wide path that leads to destruction, what does that mean for most of the people in the world? It means most of them are **not** on their way to heaven. This breaks God's heart. John 6:40 says, "*My Father wants all who look to the Son and believe in him to have eternal life.*"



Thinking of all those people on the wide path should break our heart as well. Jesus told His disciples, "*Go into all the world. Preach the good news to everyone. Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved. But anyone who does not believe will be punished.*" - Mark 16:15-16 It is the best news ever that Jesus died to take away our sins. God wants us to tell everyone about the only way to heaven - His Son. God's Holy Spirit helps us tell the good news to our family, friends, neighbors and everyone we meet. (Acts 1:8)

Pray and ask God to give you the opportunity to share the awesome news that He has provided the ONE way to get to heaven!

