



STUDY GUIDE July 23, 2023

Message Series: Road Trip
Message Title: The Narrow Road
Teaching Pastor: Ellis Hopson

Warm-up/Icebreaker: (10 min.)

Do you enjoy road trips, why or why not?

Pray:

Heavenly Father, we are so grateful for Who You are - almighty and powerful God, yet loving and kind and personal Savior. We ask that You still our hearts and remove all of the distractions that would take our minds off of everything You want to say to us in this place and in this moment. We thank You that You have a personal word for us from Your Word if we would just lean in and receive it. Let everything we say and everything we do during this time bring you honor and glory. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Get Started: (10 min.)

- When you hear the verse from Matthew 7:13-14: "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," what is your understanding of the meaning?

"Jesus isn't really talking about how we get to our destination the next time we hop in the car to go somewhere - He's telling us how to arrive at our eternal destination, and how we should navigate on our way there. What we're really being told here is simple: there's only one way that we can reach heaven - through a commitment to and a relationship with Jesus Christ. I'll say that again: there is only ONE way we can reach heaven - through a commitment to and a relationship with Jesus Christ. And that relationship should shape how we live on this side of heaven as well." - Ellis Hopson

- Do you agree or disagree with this? Explain your response.
- Do you think that your relationship with Jesus shapes how you live this side of heaven? If so, in what way?

Read John 10:7-19 NIV, Psalm 23:1-4.

- In what way is Jesus the Gate?
- When Christ is our Shepherd, what can we expect from Him in terms of navigating the narrow path?

"... how can both of these things be true? How can Jesus say that only a few will walk the narrow road that leads to life, while we also know God as the standard for all-inclusive, unconditional love?" - Ellis Hopson

- Using John 3:16-17, how would you explain these two seemingly contradictory truths to someone else?

Watch and Discuss Video (running time 7 min., 15 minute discussion)

- What specific “guardrails” do you currently have in place to keep you on the narrow path that Jesus has for you?
- What “guardrails” do you not currently have in place that you think you could benefit from? What is one step you could take to implement them in your life?

“I don’t know what your guardrails are - they could be any number of things for you. But I do know this: if you want to follow the narrow road, it’s critical that you find them. And you can. You CAN do this. Because the narrow road isn’t some unattainable goal that Jesus sets for us. It isn’t an exclusive club that only those uniquely qualified can access. It’s THE way to completely give your life to Jesus. And it’s available to YOU - if you’ll commit to it. If you’ll put off the old self, and put on the new. If you’ll ask God to show you what your guardrails are, then you don’t have to walk the road of peril and death. You can walk the road to life - you can walk the narrow way.” - Ellis Hopson

Reflect and Commit: (20 min.)

“I know that I don’t possess the willpower to make a one-time decision and have that singular moment make it stick for the rest of my life here on this side of heaven. So I have to have some things in place to keep me on the right path - not because I’m afraid I’ll waver in the decision, but because I’m SO committed to the decision that I want to do everything I can to live my life in a way that’s in line with the decision. And THIS is where guardrails are necessary. Because they don’t just keep us on the right path - they keep things that could hurt or knock us off course OFF of the path we’re trying to follow.” - Ellis Hopson

Read Colossians 3:9-10 and Ephesians 4:22-24.

- What parts of your “old self” do you need to put off? How might you go about putting on a “new self,” created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness?

Gather prayer requests and pray. (5-10 min.)

Pray:

Lord, we are so grateful that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life and that You have made a way through Him to come to You. Thank You that Jesus is the Gate to a relationship with You, and when we say yes to Him, He takes our hand and guides us along the narrow path to life, both here on this earth and forever in heaven. Help us to put those things in place that would keep us on the path You have for us and to eliminate everything that lures us off of Your path. Thank You that it is Your desire to answer this prayer, for our good and for Your glory. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.