

LESSON 8

THE WAY TO THE HEAVENLY KINGDOM



OBJECTIVES

1. To understand that the heavenly kingdom is for those who make the effort and work hard.
2. God gives us the wisdom to make the right choices if we rely on Him fully.
3. To make the right decisions in our lives.

MEMORY VERSE

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

(Matthew 6:33)

PRAYER

1. Thank God for gathering us here so that we can worship Him and learn more about His words.
2. May God help us to keep to the narrow path toward the heavenly kingdom.
3. May God also help us make the right choices in our lives.
4. Ask God to help us focus on this lesson and apply its teachings to our lives.



Overview

1. Jesus' Mission: Preaching & Healing

2. The Way to the Heavenly Kingdom

- Walk the narrow path
- Transform into a good tree to bear good fruit
- Build yourself upon the rock that is God

3. Linking to the Ten Basic Beliefs—Salvation is given by the grace of God through the faith of believers.

4. Life Application

- Testimony: Staying on the narrow path
- Dealing with anger
- Speaking bad words and swearing
- Lying
- Victory in Christ—Taking off old self and putting on new self through renewal

5. Activity—The House on the Rock



Background Knowledge for Teachers

Jesus came to this world for many reasons. However, His main purposes were to save mankind from the bondage of sin and to preach the truth. Jesus was also full of compassion for all people, healing them on many occasions. Aside from Jesus' sacrifice for us and His power of healing, the most important things to us are His teachings, especially the ones about how to live our lives and what to do on the way to the heavenly kingdom.



Reaching Out to Your Students

Students at this age may not think a lot about the path to the heavenly kingdom. They most likely only know that proper baptism and the Holy Spirit are all that are required to enter heaven. Thus, it's important to stress to your students that we must pursue the heavenly kingdom, and that does not just mean receiving the precious Holy Spirit and proper baptism. We must live according to God's word with the help of the Holy Spirit. We must apply God's teachings to our lives and strive to separate ourselves from worldly things in order to be holy.



Opener

5 Minutes

Before we begin today's lesson, let's review the lesson you learned about John the Baptist. What did John do that was so important? (He prepared the way for Jesus. He baptized people.)

Let's open our Bibles and read Matthew 4:12-17.

We can see that when John was put in jail, this became the signal for Jesus to begin His ministry. John's mission of preparing the way for Jesus was completed.

Let's also read John 3:23-36. John mentioned something very important in verse 36: "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." This brings us to the lesson today: One of the purposes for Jesus coming into this world was to save our souls. This is one of the reasons why Jesus began His ministry by saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt 4:17). But what is the way to the heavenly kingdom? We will learn about this today.



Vocabulary

resist: to stand firm against the actions, effects, or force of something; to keep from giving in

persecution: the act of treating a person or a group of people badly, especially because of race, religion, beliefs, etc.

zeal: great enthusiasm or interest; active pursuit

deceive: to mislead by a false appearance or statement

Homework Answer Key

1. False; the narrow way is the most difficult.
2. True
3. True
4. This is the easy path. The wide gate and broad way represent the world and the kind of people who travel on this path. Most of the people in the world travel on this path because it's much easier to give in to our worldly desires than to try to resist them.
5. This is the difficult path. Most people choose not to take this path because it's narrow and difficult. But those who follow it are those who follow God's will.
6. We need to examine ourselves spiritually to make sure that we have good motives and that we listen to and obey the word of God daily.
7. doing, will
8. God
9. tests, worries, money



Bible Discovery & Spiritual Teaching

30-35 Minutes

FOR TEACHERS

Print out the Bible Discovery worksheet before class. Distribute it to the students now. The students will be filling it out as you go through the lesson. Keep one copy for yourself to reference. The answers are underlined throughout this section.

Today we'll learn about the way to the heavenly kingdom.

The Narrow and Wide Gates

Let's turn to Matthew 7:13-14.

Here, Jesus explains the narrow and wide gates:

"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it."

What does Jesus mean?

Let's take a look at the first teaching on the Bible Discovery worksheet.

The wide gate and the broad way represent the world and the kind of people who travel on this path. Most of the people in the world choose to travel on this path because it's easier, but it leads to destruction. How is this path easier, though?

Following the ways of the world around us is easier than following the Bible. Can you think of a time when you've been tempted to do something wrong, such as play instead of work, skip church, or lie your way out of a situation? These are all examples of worldly things and actions that pull people away from God, and these people either don't know it's happening or simply do not wish to resist this pull. By letting their worldly desires take over, they are walking the path that leads to death, rather than the path that leads to life.

Let's look at the next teaching.

The Way to Eternal Life

In verse 14, it says that the way that leads to life is difficult. This path is for the people who follow Christ's commands and God's will. The broad way of the world leads to destruction; Jesus teaches us clearly which path leads to eternal life, and why taking that path can be so difficult. Let's turn to Luke 18:18-30.

The story here is simple: a rich man came to Jesus to ask how to inherit eternal life. But when Jesus told him to

leave all of his belongings behind, he just couldn't do it. After this, Jesus even told His disciples, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!" He knows that when we have things that we value, it's difficult for us to just leave them behind and pursue God.

Can you think of a very precious object that you have in your life? It could be anything: a toy or a piece of jewelry, your cash box, or even a person whom you love very much. Maybe you have several things that you feel like you wouldn't be able to live without. Now, can you imagine being asked by Jesus to throw all these things away and follow Him? I think this would be very hard for all of us to do. Jesus knows this, which is why He calls the way to eternal life narrow and difficult to walk. It isn't just about being persecuted for believing in Christ, it's also about being able to disregard any of our worldly possessions or material dreams, and only focusing on Jesus.

But there's another part in these verses that we need to pay attention to. Let's read verses 29-30 again. What is the ultimate prize that Jesus offers us? (Eternal life.) Can you imagine being able to enter heaven and living there forever? This is what Jesus offers us in exchange for walking the narrow way. So even though it may be difficult, in the long run, God will bless us abundantly if we choose to follow His commands instead of choosing the easier, broader path of the world.

Now, let's look at the next teaching and turn back to Matthew 7:16-20.

Bearing Fruit

The Bible often uses fruit to represent a person's deeds, actions, or qualities. A good fruit represents good actions or behavior. The Bible lists the fruit of the Spirit as "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal 5:22-23).

In order to bear good fruit, though, Jesus states that you must first be a good tree. "Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?" He asks. Only good trees can bear good fruit, whereas bad trees can only bear bad fruit. So, in order to have qualities such as love or faithfulness in our actions, we must first become a good tree. This means that we need to examine ourselves spiritually to make sure that we have good motives, and that we listen to and obey the word of God daily (Mt 12:33-35). Once we transform ourselves into a good tree, we will naturally bear fruit that is pleasing to God.

Let's read Matthew 7:21-23.

Do God's Will

Simply accepting Christ and calling on His name does not guarantee our place in the heavenly kingdom. Even being able to cast out demons and perform miracles in Jesus' name does not necessarily mean that God is pleased with us. What do you think will please God? Jesus mentions in verse 21 that doing God's will is of the utmost importance. On the other hand, those who practice lawlessness, and not His word, will be rejected by God on the last day. Therefore, as we walk the path to the heavenly kingdom, we need to remember to examine ourselves constantly to see if our thoughts, speech, attitude, motives, and deeds are pleasing to God.

Finally, let's look at the example of two builders in Matthew 7:24-27.

The Wise and Foolish Builders

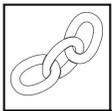
We represent the house and God is the rock. We know that rocks are hard, solid, and very strong. People who

build on the rock are those who hear the word of God and **put it into practice**. That means they apply God's word to their lives. If we build ourselves upon the rock, then we will not fall apart when the rain, floods, and winds come.

What do the rain, the flood, and the winds refer to? These refer to any form of a trial or test that may come to any one of us. This includes persecution (Mt 13:21), the many worries of this world, being deceived by money and riches (Mt 13:22), etc.

Simply understanding or knowing God's word won't help us during trials. Spiritual maturity comes by constant training. We can train ourselves by reading the Bible, praying, singing/listening to hymns, attending Sabbath service, going to SSC, etc.

The way to the heavenly kingdom is about obeying God's will and living out God's word (Jas 1:22-25; 2:14-17).

**Linking to the Ten Basic Beliefs***2-5 Minutes*

Salvation is given by grace through faith.

1. Jesus came to save us from our sins. He is our Savior.
2. In order to receive salvation and enter the heavenly kingdom, we must obey the will of God, stay on the narrow way, bear good fruit, and put our faith in God.

Salvation is given by the grace of God through the faith of believers. They must rely on the Holy Spirit to pursue holiness, to honor God, and to love all people.

**Check for Understanding***5 Minutes*

1. **What does the broad way and wide gate mean? What is it referring to? Is this the easy path or the difficult path?** This is the easy path. The wide gate and broad way represent the world and the kind of people who travel on this path. Most of the people in the world travel on this path because it's much easier to give in to our worldly desires than to try and resist them.
2. **What do the narrow way and narrow gate refer to? Is this the easy path or the difficult path?** This is the difficult path. Most people choose not to take this path because it's narrow and difficult. But those who follow it are those who follow God's will.
3. **How do we become a "good tree"?** We need to examine ourselves spiritually to make sure that we have good motives and that we listen to and obey the words of God daily.
4. **Jesus mentions in Matthew 7:21 that _____ (doing) God's _____ (will) is of the utmost importance.**
5. **We must build ourselves on the rock. The rock represents _____ (God).**
6. **What does the beating of the rain, the floods, and the winds refer to?** It refers to any form of a trial or test that may come to any one of us. This includes persecution, the many worries of this world, being deceived by money and riches, etc.



Life Application

10 Minutes

[There are 4 Life Application worksheets included in this lesson; please go over them with the students as time permits.]

1. Bearing Good Fruit

Objective: To understand the teaching of leading a life on the narrow way and what it means to bear good fruit.

Read the testimony together with the students or ask the students to read it silently to themselves. When they have finished reading, ask them to answer the questions below, then go over the questions together as a class.

Questions

1. What did the couple do on Saturday? What happened the next day on Sunday, when the couple reopened the restaurant?

They closed their restaurant and observed the Sabbath by going to church. Their business made double the amount of money the next day.

2. Which path is this couple traveling on, the narrow or the wide? What is the evidence?

They are traveling on the narrow path, the path less traveled. While the other people around them are not observing Sabbath and are keeping their businesses open, this couple chose to close and go to church.

3. This couple bore good fruit because they had good motives, and they listened to and obeyed the word of God daily.

4. How is this couple like people who build their house on the rock?

They heard the word of God, His commandment to keep the Sabbath, and put it into practice by applying it to their lives.

5. Think of a time when you had to choose between the narrow path and the wide path. Explain which path you chose and why you chose that particular path.

[Invite students to share their answers.]

2. Slow to Anger

Objective: To understand the teachings about good trees and bad trees and to help students deal with anger. In order to be a good tree that bears good fruit, we must ask God to help us during our times of weakness.

After the students have read the story and answered the questions, go over the answers together. Then, conclude by sharing "The Bible Truth about Anger".

Questions

1. How do you think Terry felt after his little brother explained why he was in his room?

He probably felt a little embarrassed for getting so angry about it. He also might have calmed down.

2. Feeling anger is not wrong, but how might Terry have reacted to the mess in his bedroom if he had correctly understood the situation?

It would have helped him deal with the situation in a better way and not become so angry about it.

3. Did you ever become angry quickly, only to find out later that you misunderstood the situation?

[Invite students to share their answers.]

The Bible Truth about Anger

Proverbs 14:29 "He who is slow to wrath has great understanding, but he who is impulsive exalts folly."

James 1:19-20 "So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God."

These are the teachings from God about anger. We need to follow these instructions to set us apart from others in the world and take the narrow path. Anger is an emotion everyone in the world has, but we, as children of God, must learn to control it by trying to understand a situation before becoming very angry and yelling. This way, we can become a good tree because people can recognize us by our words and deeds.

3. Doing the Right Thing

Objective: To understand the teaching of the Wise and Foolish Builders; to learn how to put the word of God into practice; and to obey His commands. Cursing and using the Lord's name in vain are against the teachings of God.

Proverbs 3:1 "My son, do not forget my law, but let your heart keep my commands."

Give the students time to read the scenario, then have them answer the questions. Go over the questions when they have finished answering them, then conclude with the following.

Questions

1. How did Greg do the right thing?

He did not swear or curse like his friends did.

2. What is the commandment from Exodus 20:7 about?

It is about misusing God's name. God does not want us to use His name in vain or without real purpose. That means we should not dishonor God's holy and great name by using it without care. It "cheapens" His name.

3. Do your friends also use bad words or swear? Are you ever tempted to say the same things they do?

[Invite the students to share their answers.]

Conclusion

In Colossians 4:6, Paul tells us, "Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one." Our speech should contain wholesome, pure, kind, and beneficial words. These are words that encourage and build up, instead of tear down or curse God.

More verses to keep in mind:

- **Proverbs 16:23** "The heart of the wise teaches his mouth, and adds learning to his lips."
- **Proverbs 25:11** "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver."
- **Exodus 20:7** "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain."

4. The Three Steps to Victory in Christ

Lead a short discussion on how it is important for us to take off our old self and put on a new self. Afterward, ask the students to fill out "The Three Steps to Victory in Christ" worksheet.

Read Colossians 3:1-10, 12-14.

Let's look at verses 9 and 10. We must take off our **old self** and put on a **new self**. According to Romans 6:4, "Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should also walk in newness of life."

This means that when we are baptized, our old self "dies," and we are reborn. We must therefore take off our old selves and rid ourselves of the wicked things of the world. The world is the broad way and the wide gate. We must travel on the path of righteousness, which is the narrow path and the path less taken. Taking off our old selves also means getting rid of "all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth" (Col 3:8).

The only way we can be reborn into a new self is with the Holy Spirit. After we have put away this world, we must **put on Christ**. How do we put on Christ? We put on Christ with the **renewal** of our mind, by knowing more about God's word.

Romans 12:2 says, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

The renewing of our mind and this transformation into our new self does not take place overnight. We must draw near to God daily by praying, reading the Bible, singing or listening to hymns, and applying the teachings of God to our lives. If we can continue in this transformation, we will also know and follow God's good, pleasing, and perfect will. When we rely on Jesus, He can guide us on the narrow path, and He can lead us to the narrow gate where we will enter and find the heavenly kingdom.



Activity

The House on the Rock

10-15 Minutes

Objective: To remind the students to build their house upon Jesus Christ, the rock.

Materials

- Origami paper or square pieces of paper
- Smooth rocks for each student about the size of your palm or fist
- Glue

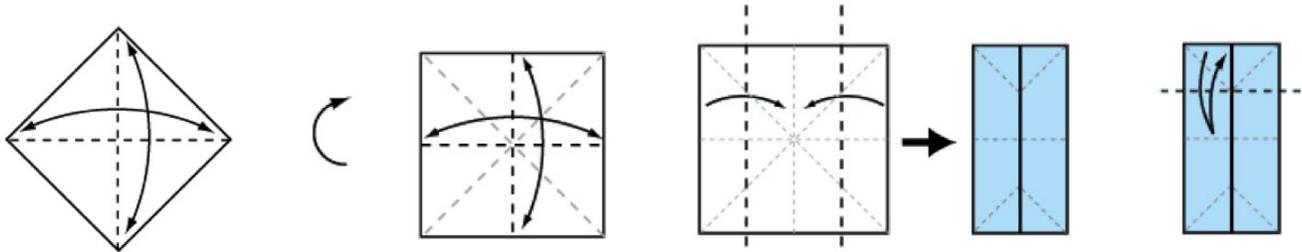


Instructions

1. Give each student a piece of origami paper.
2. Following the instructions, teach them how to fold an origami house. They can decorate the house with rooms and windows after they finish making the house.
3. When they are done, ask them to write this verse on the roof of the house:

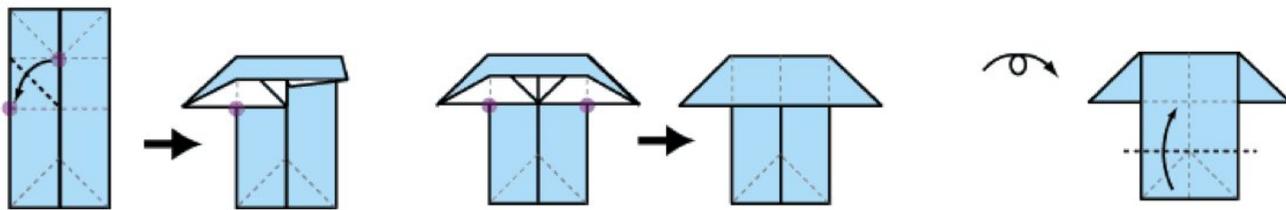
"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them,
I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock." (Matthew 7:24)

4. Paste the bottom of the stand of the house (made in Step 7) to the top of the rock.
5. The students can place this in their room as a reminder.
7. Conclude with a prayer.



1. Start with a square piece of paper, white side up.

Fold the top corner of the paper down to the bottom corner. Crease and open again. Then fold the paper in half sideways.
2. Fold the paper in half, crease well and open, and then fold again in the other direction.
3. Now fold the outer edges in to the center line. Crease well.
4. Fold the top edge down to the center line and open out again.



5. Take the inside flap and fold down along the crease shown, to the outside edge. Flatten.
6. Repeat on the other side, and flatten.
7. Turn the house over and fold the bottom edge up to the bottom of the roof.

Open it out partially. This is the stand for the house.

The Way to the Heavenly Kingdom

Teaching	Meaning
Verse 14: For wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.	The wide gate and the broad way represent the _____. This path is _____ to take, but it leads to _____.
Verse 14: Enter by the narrow gate	The way that leads to _____ is _____. This path is for the people who follow Christ's _____ and God's _____.
Verses 15-20: What is bearing "good fruit"?	A good fruit refers to good _____ or behavior. The Bible lists the fruit of the Spirit as "_____, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, _____, gentleness, self-control."
Verses 15-20: What is a "good tree"?	A person who always examines themselves _____ to make sure that they have good _____, and that they listen to and _____ the word of God daily.
Verses 24-27: Who is the rock and who is the house?	
Verses 24-27: What do the people who build their house on the rock do?	People who build on the rock _____ the word of God and put it into _____.
Verses 24-27: What do the rain, the flood, and the winds refer to?	These refer to any form of a trial or _____ that may come to any one of us. This includes persecution, the many _____ of this world, being deceived by money and riches, etc.
Conclusion	The way to the heavenly kingdom is about obeying God's _____ and living out God's _____.

Bearing Good Fruit

Instructions: Read the short testimony and answer the questions below.

There was a very hardworking couple in our church. They owned a restaurant and did their best every day to run their business. They opened every day except Saturday, the Sabbath day. For any restaurant owner, this would be a foolish thing to do, as the weekends are the busiest days of the week because more people have time to go out. Thus, Saturday would be one of the days when they would make the most money. However, they knew that they had to keep the Sabbath holy and not do any work that day. They did not worry that they would lose money. Every Saturday, they attended service all day at church while the other restaurants around their area stayed open.



Each Sunday, they would open their restaurant again. Something miraculous always happened: they noticed that on Sundays they made double the amount of money. They gained the extra amount that they lost from closing on Saturdays. How wonderful!

God was showing them that if they make the right choices in their lives, obey God's command, and live out God's word, there is nothing to worry about.

*"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,
and all these things shall be added to you." (Mt 6:33)*

Questions

1. What did the couple do on Saturday? What happened the next day on Sunday, when the couple reopened the restaurant?

2. Which path is this couple traveling on, the narrow or the wide? What is the evidence?

3. This couple bore good fruit because they had good motives and _____ to and _____ the word of God daily.

4. How is this couple like people who build their house on the rock?

5. Think of a time when you had to choose between the narrow path and the wide path. Explain which path you chose and why you chose that particular path.

Slow to Anger

Instructions: Read the story below and answer the questions that follow.

Terry loved his little brother, but found him to be very annoying at times. One day while Terry was away at school, his little brother got into his room, took everything out of the closet and piled it all on the bed.

When Terry got home and found the mess, he flew into an angry rage. He stormed around the house looking for him, but when he could not find his brother, he became even angrier. Finally, he found his brother playing in the neighbor's yard. He yelled at him, "Did you come in my room and mess everything up?"

His little brother, shaking with fear, said, "Yes, I was in your room, but I..."

"Why were you in my room?" Terry snapped back. "Why are you touching my stuff? You took everything out and didn't put anything back!"

Terry's brother continued, "I didn't mess up your room. I was cleaning the closet for you. Some food fell inside your closet and it started to smell."

**Questions**

1. How do you think Terry felt after his little brother explained why he was in his room?
2. Feeling anger is not wrong, but how might Terry have reacted to the mess in his bedroom if he had correctly understood the situation?
3. Did you ever become angry quickly, only to find out later that you misunderstood the situation?

The Three Steps to Victory in Christ

Instructions: Read Colossians 3:1-10, 12-14. Fill in the blanks in the tables below.

Step 1: Take Off Our Old Self

List the things that you would like to get rid of, such as anger, lies, and things of the world. Try to be as specific as possible.

Old Self	
1.	4.
2.	5.
3.	6.

Step 2: Put On Christ

Step 3: Renew Our Minds

In the first column below, briefly describe how you will take off the old things listed in Step 1 above. In the second column, list some things you will do to renew yourself daily, such as read the Bible, spend time practicing God's word at home (by doing chores or helping your parents), set aside time in prayer, or ask for the fullness of the Holy Spirit to grant you the strength to put off your old self and renew your mind.

How I Will Remove the Old Self	Ways I Will Renew My Mind
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

