

● THE Gospel Part 10 – What Is Striving To Enter Through The Narrow Door? Part Three – Study Guide

This study guide examines the standards of the "secret life" required of the redeemed and the specific criteria Jesus Christ uses as the gatekeeper of the Kingdom. It focuses on the internal motivations of righteousness, the necessity of forgiveness, and the warning against false prophets who promote an easy path.

Definitions of Key Words

- **Hypocrite:** One who performs religious or righteous acts specifically to be seen and honoured by men rather than God.
- **Reward:** In this context, it refers to either the temporal praise of men or the future "age-lasting" inheritance and glory given by the Father.
- **Mammon (Money):** A master that competes for the devotion of the heart; the sources argue it is impossible to serve both God and this master.
- **Strive (*Agonizomai*):** The "agonizing" effort required to align one's life with the standards of the Sermon on the Mount to enter the narrow gate.
- **False Prophet:** A teacher who wears "sheep's clothing" (appearing as a believer) but inwardly leads the redeemed toward a wide and easy gate that results in loss.
- **The Narrow Gate:** The hard, restrictive entrance to life that few find because it requires total change and obedience.

Expansion of Key Points

1. The Principle of Secret Righteousness

The sources emphasize that the "striving" for the Kingdom involves the internal motivation of our actions. According to **Matthew 6:1-4**, acts of righteousness—such as giving to the needy—must be done in secret rather than to be seen by others. If a redeemed person seeks the praise of men, they have "received their reward in full" through that temporal recognition and will receive no future reward from the Father.

2. The Protocol of Prayer and Fasting

Jesus defines prayer not as a public performance of "babbling" like pagans, but as a private communion with the Father. In **Matthew 6:5-6**, the redeemed are instructed to pray in their "room" with the door shut. Similarly, **Matthew 6:16-18** warns that fasting should not be accompanied by a somber face to show others, but should be kept between the individual and God so that the Father who "sees in secret" may provide the reward.

3. The Conditionality of Forgiveness

A central "hard" truth of the Kingdom is that God's forgiveness toward the redeemed is conditional upon their treatment of others. As stated in **Matthew 6:14-15**, "if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses". This is described as a form of "agony" because forgiving those who have sinned against you is naturally difficult and requires significant change.

4. Serving Two Masters: God vs. Money

The heart's devotion is binary; it cannot be divided between the Kingdom and material wealth. **Matthew 6:24** explicitly states that "no one can serve two masters" and that "you cannot serve God and money". The sources suggest that the "deceitfulness of riches" is a major trap for the redeemed, as treasure on earth is subject to moth, rust, and thieves, whereas treasures in the Kingdom are eternal.

5. The Priority of the Kingdom over Anxiety

The redeemed are commanded to abandon "pagan" anxieties regarding food, drink, and clothing. Instead of worrying, which cannot add a single hour to one's life (**Matthew 6:27**), the believer is told in **Matthew 6:33** to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness". The Father already knows these needs and will provide them to those who make the Kingdom their primary daily objective.

6. Judgment and the "Log" in the Eye

Entry through the narrow gate requires a cessation of judging others. **Matthew 7:1-2** warns that the measure of judgment you use will be measured back to you at the judgment seat of Christ. Before a redeemed person attempts to correct a "speck" in a brother's eye, they must first remove the "log" of hypocrisy from their own eye to "see clearly" (**Matthew 7:3-5**).

7. The True Context of "Ask, Seek, and Knock"

The promise that "everyone who asks receives" (**Matthew 7:7-8**) is often taken out of context. The sources argue this does not apply to "outsiders" or the disobedient, but specifically to the **obedient redeemed** who are following the rigorous standards set out in the preceding chapters. The door is opened to the "son" who is walking in the will of the Father.

8. The Warning Against False Prophets

The reason "few" find the narrow gate is primarily the influence of **false prophets (Matthew 7:13-15)**. These individuals teach that the way is "easy" and the gate is "wide," in direct opposition to Jesus's words. They are difficult to detect because they come in "**sheep's clothing**"—sounding and looking like true believers—but are inwardly "ravenous wolves" leading many to destruction and loss.

Biblical References within the Source

- **Matthew 6:1-4:** Beware of practising righteousness to be seen; secret giving.
- **Matthew 6:5-8:** Prayer in secret vs. hypocritical public prayer.
- **Matthew 6:9-13:** The Lord's Prayer; "Thy Kingdom come... on earth".
- **Matthew 6:14-15:** Conditional forgiveness of sins.
- **Matthew 6:16-18:** Fasting in secret to be rewarded by the Father.
- **Matthew 6:19-21:** Storing treasures in heaven vs. on earth.
- **Matthew 6:22-23:** The eye as the lamp of the body.
- **Matthew 6:24:** The impossibility of serving two masters (God and Money).
- **Matthew 6:25-32:** Do not be anxious about life, food, or clothing.
- **Matthew 6:33-34:** Seeking first the Kingdom; sufficient trouble for the day.
- **Matthew 7:1-5:** Judging others; the speck and the log.
- **Matthew 7:6:** Not giving what is holy to dogs or pearls to pigs.
- **Matthew 7:7-12:** Asking, seeking, knocking; the Golden Rule.
- **Matthew 7:13-14:** The narrow gate vs. the wide gate; few vs. many.
- **Matthew 7:15-20:** Beware of false prophets; sheep's clothing; fruits.
- **Matthew 5:21:** Exceeding the righteousness of the Pharisees.
- **Matthew 18:1-4:** Changing to become like a little child.

- **2 Timothy 2:19:** Turning away from unrighteousness.

Study Questions

- **Audience and Context:** According to the source, why is it vital to read Matthew 7:13-14 in the context of Chapters 5 and 6?
- **Motivation for Righteousness:** What is the specific "loss" incurred if a person performs their good works to be seen by others?
- **The Agony of Forgiveness:** Why is the command to forgive others described as "agony" or "striving"?
- **The Master Rule:** Explain why "money" is described as a master that makes serving God impossible.
- **The Door Holder:** Who is the "gatekeeper," and what criteria is he "checking off" for those who want to enter?
- **False Prophets:** Why is it noted that the redeemed "will not recognize" false prophets today?

Answer Key

- Because Chapters 5 and 6 define the **criteria** (the checklist) that Jesus uses to decide who enters the narrow gate; without the context, people "predefine" the gate their own way.
- They lose their **reward from the Father in heaven**; their only reward is the temporal, fleeting praise of men.
- Because forgiving those who persecute or sin against you is naturally difficult and requires a fundamental **change in character** and a rejection of the "easy" way.
- Because the heart cannot be divided; you will eventually **love one and despise the other**. Money creates a "deceitfulness" that leads to anxiety rather than trust in God.
- **Jesus Christ** is the gatekeeper; He is checking whether you have come the "agonizing route" of secret righteousness, forgiveness, and seeking the Kingdom first.
- Because they come in **"sheep's clothing,"** looking and sounding like true believers, and their "fruits" (deception) are often only fully unveiled in the resurrection.

Exhortations

- **Shut Up and Keep it Quiet:** Stop sharing your "good works" on social media or blowing trumpets in the church; if you want a reward from the Father, you must learn to **operate in secret**.
- **Check Your Direction:** If your Christian walk is "easy" and requires no agony or striving, you are likely on the **wide path to destruction**. Turn back to the hard way defined by Jesus.
- **Forgive to be Forgiven:** Do not let the sun go down on your resentment. Recognize that your own **salvation and forgiveness** from God are blocked until you release those who have sinned against you.
- **Stop the Anxiety:** If you are running after "stuff" like the pagans, your heart is in the wrong place. **Seek the Kingdom first**, and trust that the Father who feeds the birds will much more clothe you.
- **Nail Your Own Log:** Before you point out the failures of another believer, spend that energy on **your own repentance**. Fix your own life so you can eventually help others with a clear eye.