

Walking the Straight and Narrow

¹³ Enter [go in] through the narrow gate [door], because wide [broad] is the gate [door], and spacious is the road, which leads to destruction, and those entering [going on] through it are many. ¹⁴ How narrow is the gate [door], and restricted [hard pressed] is the road, which leads to life, and those finding it are few! **Matthew 7^{JCR}**

The way of life requires discipline—to live we must conduct ourselves in a manner that is consistent with the intent of existence. This entails exactness and execution, that is, compliance with the Creator's commands and careful conduct according to the Creator's commands. Because life consists of those particular tasks which YHWH our God has commanded us and those productive tasks which YHWH our God has commissioned us, we must work—sacrifice ourselves. Here, be positively precise and productive. Do the good that we know and can do—do that which glorifies God. If something is good, it is beneficial for everybody and can be shared with everybody. If something glorifies God, it serves the purpose of enhancing life, edifying people, and encouraging integrity. There are folks outside our doors who do not know that YHWH loves them. There are folks outside our doors who are dying to get what we got. We must show them love by being responsible for ourselves in relation to others. We must show them love by sharing the forgiveness and mercy by which we live. We must show them love by fostering genuineness in relation to others and by being truthful ourselves. We must show them love by being consistent in our evaluation of others, not operating by double standards. We must take pride in doing quality work, be prompt in fulfilling our commitments, be proper in executing our responsibilities, and be prayerful in conducting ourselves. Sacrifice of self involves forcing ourselves to do the good that we should do and forfeiting ourselves by pursuing that which gives witness to God.

Because walking the straight and narrow requires precision—scrupulous satisfaction of some specifications or standards, because walking the straight and narrow requires precaution—self-conscious subjection to some specifications or standards, we must always be careful of sloppiness and slothfulness in our ministry. Every Providence Park member must, now, step up to the plate and deliver their best for the Father and the Master. In some respect, our future hangs in the balance, depending upon what this generation of Providence Park members will do! To get anything worthwhile in life or out of life you must put out or in a worthwhile effort in life! No work, no wages! No faith, no fruit! No cross, no crown! Bottom-line, to walk the straight and narrow we must follow the Master—walk by faith! The Master said:

²⁴ If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. **Matthew 16^{RSV}**

¹So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any incentive of love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ²complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³**Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves.** ⁴Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵**Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,** ⁶**who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,** ⁷but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸**And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.** ⁹Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰**that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,** ¹¹**and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**
Philippians 2^{RSV}