

Authentic Discipleship

#1 -The Gates

“Most people’s Christianity is like an old bed: firm at both ends and sagging in the middle. On one end, you trust Christ as Savior and get your sins forgiven. On the other end, one day you go to heaven. In between, it gets pretty desperate. You have lots of questions that boil down to one: Where is the abundant life Jesus promised?”¹

Group Questions and Discussion:

1. Can you relate to this description of your Christian life?
2. In Matthew 7:14 Jesus said, “But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it.” Do you see your search for truth as the “sagging in the middle” of your Christian life?

Read:

- Matthew 19:16-22, Mark 10:17-27, or Luke 18:18-23

This story of the Rich Young Ruler is an example of the life many Christians lead. Trying to please God by obeying the “rules” and continually feeling empty. Your spirit is telling you there is more, but you just can’t find it. You have read and heard about the “abundant life” in John 10:10, but just don’t experience it. Like the Rich Young Ruler, you simply turn away, feeling disheartened and sorrowful to search for life’s meaning from another source. You think the sacrifice is too big.

“I’ve found that there is a series of gates along the path to life. These gates are the progression from being a completely external person (trying to find life in things and people around us) to being an internal person, finding life in the One who lives within us. These gates are unique to each person”²

{Facilitator: Tell a short testimony of your search for life – read book pp. 18-24 for an example}

Let’s go back to when you first believed Jesus Christ died for you and rose from the dead for you. That would be the first “gate.”

Small Group (max 2-3) Questions:

1. When did you first believe in Jesus? Who lead you to this belief? How did you feel?
2. Did you attend different churches or denominations? Why did you change? What was missing?
3. When did you first hear about the Grace message? Are you struggling with the truth that Christ Is Life?
4. Have you shed all of your external person?

Whole Group:

Share some stories as time permits.

Reread Matthew 7:14

We are all searching for this gate. This study will serve as a beacon for us to find this small and narrow gate.

Closing Prayer

¹ Dan Stone and David Gregory, *The Rest of the Gospel, When the Partial Gospel Has Worn You Out* (Eugene, Harvest House Publishers, 2000), 17.

² *Ibid.*, 18.