

GATES ROADS AND DETOURS

Navigating Life's Pathways, Choices, and Consequences

A Three-Part Teaching Series

SERIES OVERVIEW

Life is a journey filled with decisions. Every decision places us on a pathway that leads somewhere.

The Bible gives us a powerful picture of this journey through **gates, roads, and detours**. Jesus described two gates and two roads: the broad road that leads to destruction and the narrow road that leads to life.

The issue is not simply where we are today. The greater question is:

Where is the road we are traveling taking us?

This three-part series helps us understand:

1. **The Two Gates and Two Roads** — choosing the road that leads to life.
2. **Removing the Detours and Thorns** — dealing with the obstacles that hinder our progress.
3. **Staying on the Narrow Road** — renewing our minds, trusting God, praying, practicing diligence, and taking responsibility for our choices.

The goal is not merely to identify the right road, but to **continue walking faithfully on it**.

PART 1

THE TWO GATES AND TWO ROADS

Key Scripture

Matthew 7:13–14

Jesus presents two gates and two roads. One is broad and spacious and leads to destruction. The other is narrow and compressed and leads to life.

The choice is ours.

The Bible repeatedly presents this same decision:

“Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death.”
— Jeremiah 21:8

And:

“Choose life, that you and your descendants may live.”
— Deuteronomy 30:19

1. Every Person Is Traveling Somewhere

Nobody remains stationary in life.

We are continually making choices, developing habits, forming attitudes, and establishing priorities.

Those choices create a direction.

The important question is not simply:

“Am I moving?”

The question is:

“What direction am I moving in?”

Proverbs 19:3 reminds us that people can make destructive choices and then blame the Lord for the consequences.

Therefore, we must accept responsibility for our decisions.

2. The Wide Road

The wide road can appear attractive because it offers:

- Ease
- Popularity
- Instant gratification
- Fewer restrictions
- Less discipline
- Greater conformity to the world

But Scripture warns that its destination is destruction.

The fact that many people are traveling a road does not make that road God's road.

Popularity is not the same as truth.

3. The Narrow Road

The narrow road requires:

- Discipline
- Diligence
- Commitment
- Sacrifice
- A renewed mind
- Dependence upon God

The narrow road may be more difficult, but Jesus said it leads to life.

Choosing the narrow gate represents choosing God's way rather than simply choosing what is convenient.

4. Remember Where We Came From

Before salvation, humanity was separated from God by sin.

Romans 3:9–19 describes the condition of humanity apart from God.

Yet Romans 2:4 reminds us that God's kindness leads people toward repentance.

Salvation is therefore not something we accomplish by our own goodness.

It is God's gracious provision through Jesus Christ.

5. The Choice Has Consequences

Our choices matter.

Revelation 20:11–15 presents the seriousness of eternal consequences.

The teaching is therefore not intended merely to help us make better daily decisions.

It reminds us that the direction of our lives has eternal significance.

PART 1 KEY THOUGHT

Choose the gate carefully because every gate opens onto a road, and every road has a destination.

PART 2

DETOURS, THORNS, AND THE NEED FOR DILIGENCE

Choosing the narrow road does not mean that the journey will be effortless.

Once we are on the narrow road, we must learn how to recognize and remove **detours and thorns**.

1. Slothfulness Creates Thorns

Proverbs 15:19 says:

“The way of a sluggard is overgrown with thorns, but the path of the upright is a level highway.”

Thorns can represent:

- Neglected responsibilities
- Bad habits
- Unresolved issues
- Temptations
- Distractions
- Spiritual laziness
- Wrong attitudes

Neglect allows small problems to become larger problems.

Proverbs 24:30–34 pictures a field becoming overgrown because it was neglected.

The principle:

What we continually neglect can eventually hinder our progress.

2. Drive Out the Thorns

Numbers 33:50–55 provides the picture of removing what could become a continuing problem.

Verse 55 warns that what was allowed to remain would become:

“pricks in your eyes and thorns in your sides.”

Spiritually, this teaches us not to make peace with obstacles that continually interfere with our walk with God.

We must identify them, confront them, and deal with them.

3. Four Major Detours

The three teachings identify four important areas where misplaced trust can become a detour.

Detour #1 — Trusting the World System

The world offers many distractions.

Mark 4:14–20 warns that:

- The cares of the world
- The deceitfulness of riches
- The desire for other things

can choke the Word and make it unfruitful.

We must distinguish between living in the world and allowing the world's system to determine our priorities.

Detour #2 — Trusting Government as Our God

Government has a legitimate role in society, and Scripture teaches believers to respect authority and pray for leaders.

But government cannot become our ultimate source of:

- Salvation
- Provision
- Security
- Direction
- Hope

Psalm 146:3–6 warns against placing ultimate trust in human leaders.

1 Timothy 2:1–2 calls believers to pray for those in authority.

Respect authority, but place ultimate trust in God.

Detour #3 — Trusting People and Human Devices

People matter.

Technology can be useful.

Human wisdom can provide practical assistance.

But none of these should replace dependence upon God.

Psalm 118:8 says:

“It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to put confidence in man.”

Human solutions have limitations.

God remains our ultimate source of wisdom and direction.

Detour #4 — Trusting Finances

Money can become a false source of security.

Financial responsibility is important, but money cannot become our master.

Jesus said:

“You cannot serve God and mammon.”
— Matthew 6:24

The issue is not simply possessing money.

The issue is **where we place our trust.**

4. Remove Detours Early

A detour becomes more difficult when we continue traveling it.

A thorn becomes more difficult to remove when it is allowed to become deeply rooted.

Therefore:

Deal with spiritual obstacles early.

Prayer, Scripture, repentance, self-examination, and obedience help us remain on the road God has established.

PART 2 KEY THOUGHT

Do not allow temporary detours to become permanent destinations.

PART 3

STAYING ON THE NARROW ROAD

The final part brings the series together.

Choosing the narrow gate is important.

Removing detours is important.

But we must also learn how to **remain faithful on the road.**

1. Renew Your Mind

Romans 12:2 provides one of the central principles of this series:

“Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.”

The battle for direction often begins in the mind.

A renewed mind helps us:

- Recognize God's will
- Identify distractions
- Resist worldly pressure
- Evaluate our choices
- Remain focused
- Walk according to God's purpose

2. Walk in the Spirit

Galatians 5:16–17 describes the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit.

We cannot successfully navigate the narrow road by simply following every desire that comes into our minds.

We need the direction of the Holy Spirit.

3. Guard What Influences You

The teaching in Part 3 specifically identifies media and other influences as things that can shape our thoughts and behaviors.

Therefore, we must ask:

What is influencing the way I think?

What is influencing my decisions?

What is influencing my desires?

Not everything that is available to us is beneficial for us.

4. Choose Diligence Over Slothfulness

Diligence is a recurring theme throughout all three parts.

Colossians 3:23–24 teaches us to work wholeheartedly as unto the Lord.

Proverbs 21:5 reminds us:

“The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but every one who is hasty comes only to want.”

Diligence means making thoughtful, purposeful decisions rather than continually choosing shortcuts.

Diligence asks:

- What does God's Word say?
- What decision honors God?
- What consequence could this choice produce?
- Am I responding thoughtfully or impulsively?
- Am I dealing with the problem or avoiding it?

‘5. Pray for Direction

Prayer keeps us connected to God while traveling the road.

Colossians 4:2 says:

“Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.”

Prayer is not merely an emergency response.

Prayer is part of how we remain watchful.

We also pray for those in authority, as instructed in 1 Timothy 2:1–2.

6. Don't Compare Your Road With Someone Else's

One of the challenges of walking the narrow road is seeing other people seemingly prosper while living according to different priorities.

Philippians 2:14–16 calls believers to live as lights in a dark world.

Our responsibility is not to compare our obedience with someone else's disobedience.

Our responsibility is to remain faithful to God.

7. Finish With Gratitude

Gratitude changes our perspective.

Colossians 4:2 connects prayer with thanksgiving.

Instead of constantly focusing on what we lack, gratitude helps us recognize what God has already provided.

Gratitude strengthens contentment and resilience.

THE COMPLETE GATES, ROADS, AND DETOURS PICTURE

THE GATE

A choice



THE ROAD

A direction



THE DETOURS

Distractions and misplaced trust



THE THORNS

Problems allowed to grow through neglect



THE RENEWED MIND

Discernment and transformation



DILIGENCE

Intentional obedience



PRAYER

Dependence upon God



GRATITUDE

A thankful perspective



THE DESTINATION

Every road ultimately leads somewhere.

THREE QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. WHAT GATE AM I CHOOSING?

Am I choosing God's way, or am I allowing convenience, popularity, pressure, or temporary gratification to determine my direction?

2. WHAT DETOURS ARE TRYING TO PULL ME AWAY?

Are there areas where I have begun placing excessive trust in:

- The world system?
- Government?
- People?
- Human devices?
- Finances?

3. WHAT THORNS NEED TO BE REMOVED?

Is there something I have neglected that is now hindering my spiritual progress?

SERIES SUMMARY

Part 1 — Choose the Gate

There are two gates and two roads. The narrow road leads to life.

Part 2 — Remove the Detours

Slothfulness, misplaced trust, distractions, and neglected problems can create thorns that hinder our progress.

Part 3 — Stay on the Road

A renewed mind, diligence, prayer, gratitude, and dependence upon God help us continue faithfully on the narrow road.

FINAL CHALLENGE

Every day brings another decision.

Another gate.

Another crossroads.

Another opportunity to choose God's way.

The question is not simply:

“Which road is easier?”

The question is:

“Which road leads where God wants me to go?”

Proverbs 4:26 provides the closing instruction:

“Take heed to the path of your feet; then all your ways will be sure.”

Let us choose carefully.

Let us remove the thorns.

Let us recognize the detours.

Let us renew our minds.

Let us remain diligent.

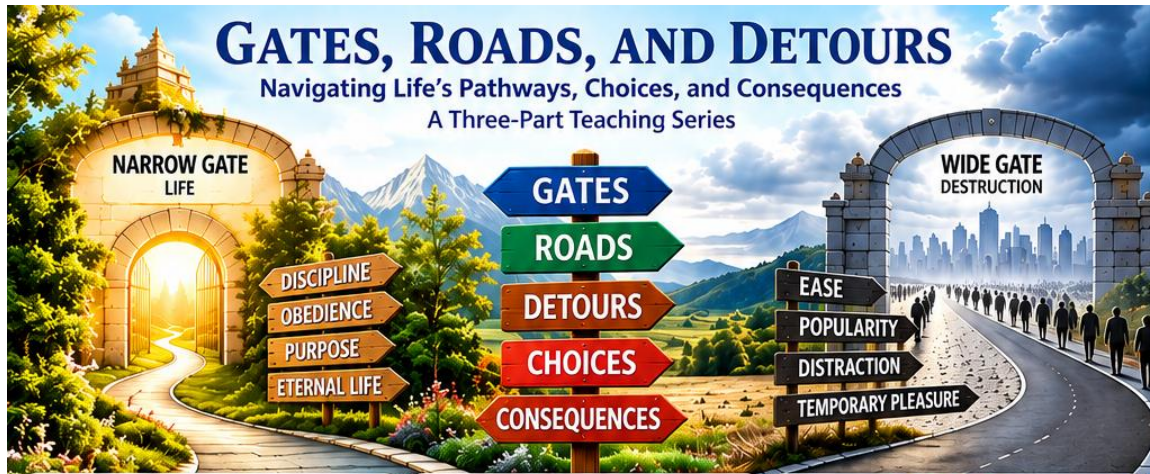
Let us pray.

And let us continue walking faithfully on the road that leads to life.

[Click here.](#) Main resource

Short synopsis:

Here is the central progression of three parts of the teaching: **choice** → **obstacles** → **perseverance**. Part 1 establishes the two roads, Part 2 identifies the detours and thorns, and Part 3 gives practical ways to remain on the narrow road.



PART 1 THE TWO GATES AND TWO ROADS

Key Scripture: Matthew 7:13–14

"Enter through the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and spacious and broad is the way that leads away to destruction ... but the gate is narrow and the way is straitened and compressed that leads away to life, and few are those who find it." (AMP)

- 1 **Every Person Is Traveling Somewhere**
Our choices create a direction. Proverbs 19:3
- 2 **The Wide Road**
 - Ease and popularity
 - Instant gratification
 - Fewer restrictions
 - Leads to destruction
- 3 **The Narrow Road**
 - Discipline and diligence
 - Commitment and sacrifice
 - A renewed mind
 - Leads to life
- 4 **Remember Where We Came From**
Humanity is separated from God by sin, but God's kindness leads us to repentance. Romans 3:9–19; Romans 2:4
- 5 **The Choice Has Consequences**
Our decisions have eternal significance. Revelation 20:11–15

KEY THOUGHT

Choose the gate carefully because every gate opens onto a road, and every road has a destination.

PART 2 DETOURS, THORNS, AND THE NEED FOR DILIGENCE

Key Scripture: Proverbs 15:19

"The way of a sluggard is overgrown with thorns, but the path of the upright is a level highway." (RSV)

- 1 **Slothfulness Creates Thorns**
 - Neglected responsibilities
 - Bad habits
 - Unresolved issues
 - Temptations and distractions
 - Spiritual laziness
- 2 **Drive Out the Thorns**
Do not make peace with obstacles that hinder your walk with God. Numbers 33:50–55
- 3 **Four Major Detours**
 - Trusting the World System**
Cares of the world can choke the Word. Mark 4:14–20
 - Trusting Government as Our God**
Respect authority, but place ultimate trust in God. Psalm 146:3–6; 1 Timothy 2:1–2
 - Trusting People and Devices**
People and technology are useful, but cannot replace God. Psalm 118:8; Isaiah 31:1
 - Trusting Finances**
Money cannot be our master. Matthew 6:24
- 4 **Remove Detours Early**
Deal with spiritual obstacles before they become deeply rooted.

KEY THOUGHT

Do not allow temporary detours to become permanent destinations.

PART 3 STAYING ON THE NARROW ROAD

Key Scripture: Romans 12:2

Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind." (RSV)

- 1 **Renew Your Mind**
A renewed mind helps us discern God's will and resist worldly pressure. Romans 12:2
- 2 **Walk in the Spirit**
The Holy Spirit empowers us to resist temptations. Galatians 5:16–17
- 3 **Guard What Influences You**
Be mindful of media and other influences that shape your thoughts and behaviors.
- 4 **Choose Diligence Over Slothfulness**
Work wholeheartedly as unto the Lord. Colossians 3:23–24; Proverbs 21:5
- 5 **Pray for Direction**
Continue steadfastly in prayer. Pray for those in authority. Colossians 4:2; 1 Timothy 2:1–2
- 6 **Don't Compare Your Road With Someone Else's**
Live as a light in a dark world. Philippians 2:14–16
- 7 **Finish With Gratitude**
Prayer and thanksgiving help us remain focused and content. Colossians 4:2

KEY THOUGHT

A renewed mind, diligence, prayer, and gratitude help us continue faithfully on the narrow road.

THE COMPLETE PICTURE

