

# FAN OR FOLLOWER?



Small Group Discussion Guide

## Contents

Part 1	Knowing the Difference Matthew 13:1-23	6
Part 2	The Narrow Way Matthew 7:13-29	10
Part 3	Counting the Cost Matthew 10:32-42	14
	The Basics of Salvation	18

© New Life Community Church 2015

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.

New Life Community Church  
4101 W 51st Street, Chicago, IL 60632  
[www.newlifecommunity.church](http://www.newlifecommunity.church)



## DISCUSSION GUIDE

### Read Matthew 13:1-23

In this parable, Jesus tells a story about a seed and describes four types of soil. He later explains the meaning of the parable that the seed represents the message of gospel and the four soils represent the human heart. In each case, the same seed falls but depending on the soil results in a different outcome. People respond differently to hearing the Good News because they are in different states of readiness. Some result in fans and others in true followers.

What is the message of the kingdom, the good news, the gospel?

#### The Hard Heart

How does having a hard heart make it difficult for someone to hear the good news?

Why is the good news sometimes hard for people to accept and believe?

#### The Shallow Heart

What are some of the troubles that keep you from becoming a follower of Jesus?

What persecutions do you face as a follower of Christ?

#### The Divided Heart

What are the worries of this life that keep you from believing and trusting in God?



*Every true disciple must also become a disciple maker.*  
**#fanorfollower**

How do worries, riches, and pleasure distract us from following Jesus?

#### The Ready Heart

What makes the difference in the good soil?

Jesus is clear that the good soil also produces fruit. What fruit (evidence) is there of God working in your life?

How has he changed and transformed your character, priorities, and purpose?

#### Here are three types of fruit and questions to ask yourself:

- 1) The fruit of repentance. Have I turned from my sinful ways and asked Jesus to forgive me so that I can have a new life and relationship with God?
- 2) The fruit of the spirit. How has God changed my life and transformed my inner character in a way that others can see a difference?
- 3) The fruit of disciples. When have I shared the good news with others and encouraged them to put their trust and follow Jesus?

**Pray for one another and ask God to make your heart ready to receive the gospel message and produce fruit in your life.**



## DISCUSSION GUIDE

### Read Matthew 7:13-29

The narrow way isn't popular. Many people have not understood what Jesus taught, saying things like, "I'm a good person" or "I'm not that bad." However Jesus teaches that the narrow way is hard and only a few enter through it. The narrow way isn't hard because it is hidden. The narrow way is hard because it is costly. Only by entering through the narrow gate do we encounter God and experience life.

#### The Narrow Way is Not Popular

What would you say to someone who says, "I try to be a good person and do the right thing. Sure I'm not perfect, but I'm not as bad as \_\_\_\_\_."

Why is the message that there is only one way to God, through Jesus Christ controversial today?

#### The Narrow Way is Not Easy

What does following Jesus cost you?

Proverbs 14:12 says, "There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death."

#### The Narrow Way Won't Fail

What is the difference between knowing the truth and living the truth?

How do we put our faith into practice and live it out each day we are given?



*The narrow way isn't hard because it is hidden. The narrow way is hard because it is costly. #fanorfollower*

What is the difference between the house that falls and the house that stands? What is the foundation for your faith?

#### How do you recognize a false prophet or teacher?

1) Pay attention to the *manner* of living a teacher shows. Do they show righteousness, humility and faithfulness in the way they live?

2) Pay attention to the *content* of their teaching. Is it true fruit from God's Word, or is it man-centered, appealing to ears that want to be tickled?

3) Pay attention to the *effect* of their teaching. Are people growing in Jesus or merely being entertained, eventually falling away?

The test is not in a profession of faith or by the works we have done for God. The real test is in our obedience to God. Humble obedience and yielding to the Spirit of God is a sign of his life in us.

What is the difference between doing things for God and having a relationship with God?

**Pray that God would help you put into practice what you are learning and ask God to give you strength and endurance as you overcome challenges and seek to follow him.**

**PART 3      COUNTING THE COST**

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**DAILY BIBLE PLAN**

Read the chapters from the Bible each day and write down what you observed. Take a moment to pray as you begin your day.

Sunday      Exodus 33:7-23, John 13:35, Romans 8:14

Monday      Exodus 34:1-8, 2 Timothy 3:1-7,  
Galatians 5:16-18

Tuesday      Luke 24:13-48

Wednesday      Ephesians 1:3-14

Thursday      Ephesians 1:15-21, Ephesians 2:1-7,  
Romans 8:11

Friday      Philippians 3:4-14

Saturday      Jeremiah 9:23-24, Psalm 103:6-18

**Memorize      Romans 8:14**

*“For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.”*

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

### Read Matthew 10:32-42

Although our relationship with God is personal, our conversion is not a private matter. We must publicly confess (acknowledge, proclaim, declare) that Jesus is our Lord and Savior. Romans 10:9-10 says, "That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord' and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved." This is the simple message of the gospel.

#### A Test of Confession

According to Romans 10:9-10, what do you need to do to be saved?

Have you confessed Jesus is Lord in a public way? If yes, when was that? If not, what is holding you back from doing so?

Have you ever taken the step of believers baptism since trusting Jesus for salvation?

#### A Test of Commitment

Sometimes those closest to us do not understand our faith and can be the hardest people to share with. How have you experienced that with your own family or friends?



*No relationship or commitment in your life can be greater than your love and commitment to God. #fanorfollower*

Have you ever had a time where you had to follow God and do what was right, even though others were telling you differently?

#### A Test of Consecration

"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." Matthew 16:24

The word deny means to disregard, lose sight of, and forget your own self and interests. How do you deny yourself each and every day?

Taking up the cross is not a one time, single event. How do you take up your cross each and every day?

**Pray that your family and friends would come to know God and experience his love, grace, and forgiveness. If you have never confessed Jesus is Lord and asked God to forgive you for your sins, this is a good opportunity to pray with someone in your group.**



## THE BASICS OF SALVATION

**A – ADMIT** my sinful condition and need for salvation. Repentance God our creator is holy, loving and just (Exodus 34:6-7). He desires fellowship with us, and He loves to bless us (Psalm 103:1-5). Though humans were created in perfect fellowship with God, the first man Adam rebelled against God and brought sin and death upon all humans (Romans 5:12). Sin, any rebellion against God, is what separates us from God (Isaiah 59:2). I was born a sinner by nature (Psalm 51:5). In my life I have violated both my God-given conscience and the revealed laws of God (Romans 3:14-15; Exodus 20:1-17). God is just and must punish all sin. (Exodus 34:7) God's just punishment for sin is death, eternity in hell (Romans 6:23; Matthew 25: 41; Revelation 21:8). Though I may have done some good in my life, I know my good deeds cannot earn salvation or cancel out my sins (Titus 3:4-5). Because of my sin I am deserving of God's punishment and can do nothing but ask for mercy (Romans 3:23; Luke 18:13-14). Sin destroys my mind, my body and my relationships. Because I believe these things about my sinful condition, I stop trusting in my own good deeds to save me and turn away from my sin.

**B – BELIEVE** the truth about Jesus Christ. Faith Jesus Christ is God in human flesh (Colossians 2:9), who loved us and willingly died for guilty sinners (Romans 5:8). Jesus paid the death penalty that sinners deserved to pay (1 Peter 2:24). Through His sacrifice, justice was served (Romans 3:25-26). God can now allow sinners to be forgiven and restored to Him when they repent of sin and trust in Jesus (Acts 5: 31). We can be saved because of God's grace (undeserved favor), through faith in Jesus (Ephesians 2:8-9). Jesus forgives sins, gives sinners His righteousness and restores them to fellowship with God (2 Corinthians 5:21). Believing in Jesus for salvation means relying upon Him alone to make me a new person, give me new spiritual life, give a life of spiritual victory here and now (2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:4-5; John 10:10) and one day bring me to eternity in heaven (John 3:16).

**C – CONSECRATE** myself to Jesus Christ by trusting and obeying His Word. I choose to trust and follow Jesus Christ daily, living for Him since He died for me (2 Corinthians 5:15). I will work out the free gift of salvation by letting God work in me (Philippians 2:12-13). I will let God renew my mind and transform my life by reading and obeying His Word (Romans 12:1-2; James 1:22). I will let the Holy Spirit bring changes to my character (Galatians 5:22-25). I will let God make me holy and accomplish His will through my life (Ephesians 2:10; Ephesians 4:22-24). I will celebrate God's grace and mercy by joining up with other believers who can encourage me to follow Jesus (Hebrews 10:24-25). I will give God glory by loving people and telling them about salvation in Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:9-12).