

# The Three Ways

Road One is full of bad people: drunkards, robbers, people seeking pleasure and perversions. The folks on this road don't even claim to be good. They are on the road Jesus spoke of when He said, "wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat" (Matthew 7:13).

Road Two is traveled by people quite the opposite. These folks are dedicated to living in the fear of the One who will judge the world. They deny themselves of fine things big and small that they consider a danger to their spiritual lives. They live as if this world were not their real home. They walk on the road Jesus spoke of when He said, "strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14).

Road Three is traveled by people who seem too good to be on the first road and yet do not fit on the second. These folks are called Christians, but they would never be considered fanatics. They have sins in their lives and hearts which they consider to be irrelevant in this era of grace. They go to church, do mission work, and help others. They appear to be on another road to heaven.

Thus things appear to the casual "Christian". The idea of a third road raises some questions for the person who studies the Bible. Why did Jesus mention only two roads in His Sermon on the Mount? Did He forget to classify all those good people who don't seem to fit on either of the two roads? If not, what is this third road, and where are the people headed who are on it? Perhaps we can answer these questions by examining the two roads Jesus spoke about.

**The Broad Road.** "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat" (Matthew 7:13).

Wide . . . broad . . . many . . .

A wide gate means no one will have a hard time getting in. We can get in with any of the luggage we carry—grudges, lusts, selfishness, anger, pornography. A broad way means that there is plenty of room on this road to keep all this and anything else we like.

The broad road with the wide gate is the road we all once traveled because it just comes natural to go that way. It is like floating on a river and just going with the current.

**The Narrow Road.** "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13).

Strait . . . narrow . . . few . . .

A strait gate means that no one can get on this road with his baggage of pride, lust, anger, or ambitions. Since the road itself is narrow, we cannot reach out and get our baggage once we are on this road; there is simply no room for it. *What a boring road, we might think.* But take note and you will see that those

who travel this road are the most contented of all people. This is because they have found fulfillment in the road itself, which is Jesus. They have their eyes on the end of the road, which is life.

We have examined the two roads of which Jesus spoke; now, what is that third road?

The fact is—Road Three is a myth. Period. It is simply one of the many lanes that occupy that wide, spacious road that leads to destruction. This lane is favored by religious folks because those who walk on it at least have the appearance of some decency. Painted on the smooth pavement of this lane are catchy choruses and Bible verses in various versions. On Sundays the singing of the choir and the Sunday school discussion can be heard. It all seems so jolly, but in reality it is sad because many who cruise along this lane think they are headed nowhere but to heaven.

"Road Three" is popular among religious people because it seems right (Proverbs 16:25). Pastors themselves travel it (Isaiah 56:10-12), and people love it! They like to believe that with all their baggage they can still travel the road to heaven (2 Timothy 4:3).

How can we know we are not on "Road Three"? We had better know: it is a life-or-death matter. Here are five points to help us:

1. We must really want to know which road we are on. "The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way" (Proverbs 14:8).
2. If we find ourselves on "Road Three" we must repent and switch roads. "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings" (Jeremiah 3:22).
3. We must search with all our heart for the narrow road. Jesus said, "seek, and ye shall find" (Matthew 7:7). God's message to Israel in Jeremiah 6:16 is still for us: "ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."
4. We must act on what we know is right, and God will open His road before us. "The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way" (Proverbs 11:5).
5. We must focus on Jesus, who said, "I am the way" (John 14:6). We certainly want to find ourselves on the narrow road when we get to the end of it, do we not? That, however, will not happen automatically. To be on this road in the end we must walk on it today.

—Rodney Mast