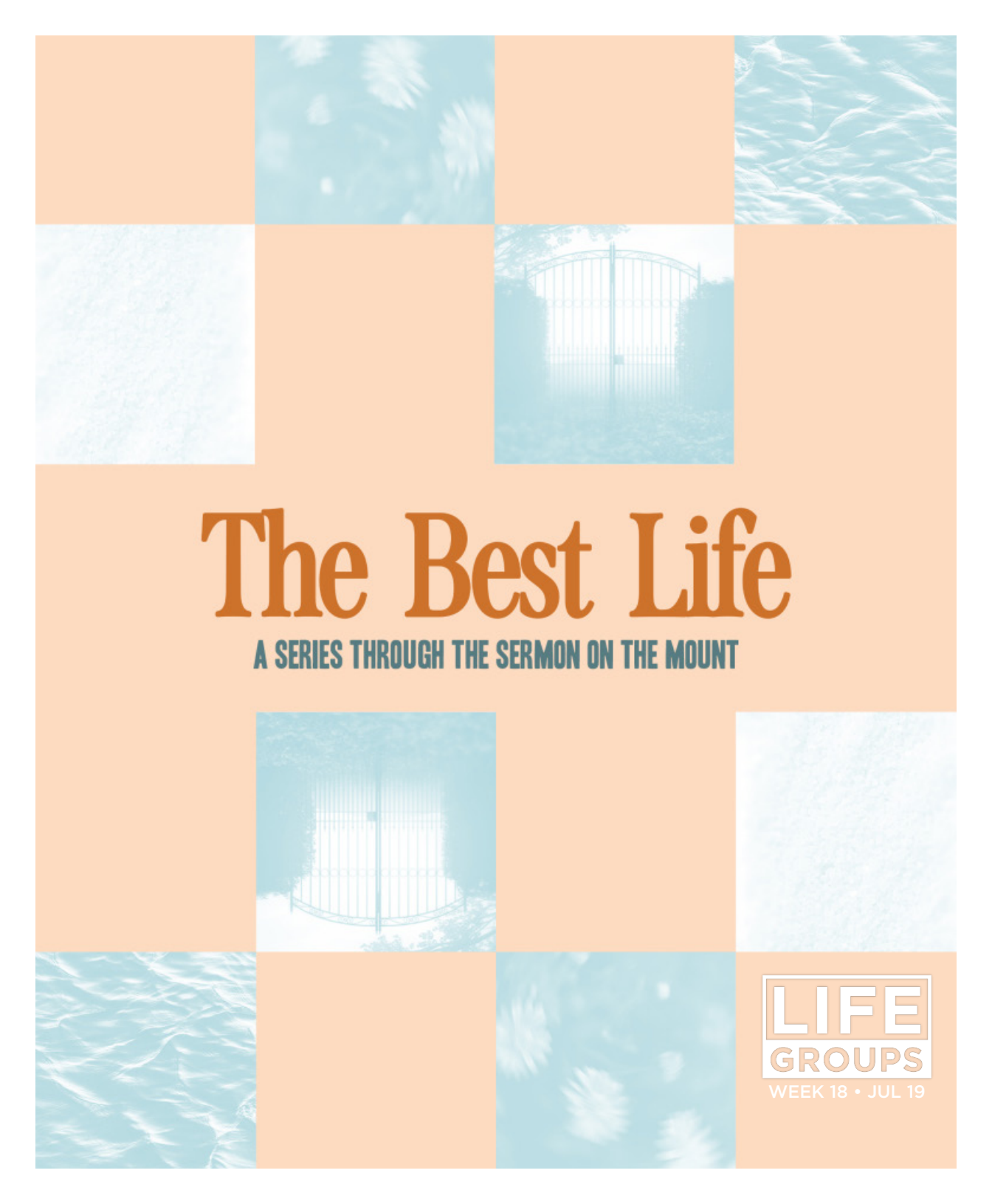




The Best Life

A SERIES THROUGH THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

LIFE
GROUPS
WEEK 18 • JUL 19

NORTHSHORE'S COMPELLING STATEMENT

Hope changes everything.

ICE BREAKER

Think of a time in your life when you chose a harder, less popular path over an easier one in: school, work, relationships, or faith. What made you choose it, and what did that cost you?

BACKGROUND

Matthew 7:13-14 appears near the end of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), in Jesus' longest section of teaching recorded in the Gospels. He delivered this sermon on a hillside to large crowds, with His disciples gathered close. The passage comes just before His closing warnings about false prophets, empty profession, and the two foundations. That makes this section a solemn call to evaluate the direction of one's entire life.

The image of gates and roads would have been easily recognized by the people, but Jesus gives it a striking reversal. Common expectation might assume the wide, easy path is the blessed one. Instead, Jesus declares it the road to destruction. The narrow gate -- the word in Greek, *stenē*, meaning: narrow, straight — is Jesus' call to life in Him. Jesus does not explain in verse 13-14 exactly what the narrow gate is, but the broader Sermon and the Gospel of John (10:9; 14:6) make clear He is speaking of Himself and the demands of genuine discipleship.

The contrast Jesus draws is not merely good choices vs. bad choices, but it is a contrast between two ultimate ends: destruction and life. The sobering note that "those who find it are few" is an urgent call. Jesus is pressing His listeners to examine not just where we are headed, but whether we have truly entered by the right gate at all.

REVIEW

What was meaningful from the above context or the sermon from last Sunday?



KEY VERSES: Matthew 7:13-14

Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.



HEAD LEVEL: *What does it say? These help us to examine what the Word tells us.*

1. Jesus says the narrow way “leads to life” and the wide way “leads to destruction.” Read Romans 6:23 and John 10:10. Based on these verses, what does Jesus mean by “life” -- is He speaking only of eternal life after death, or something more?
2. The text says those who find the narrow gate are “few.” Read Matthew 22:14 alongside Matthew 7:13-14. What does the word “few” communicate about the nature of saving faith?
3. Jesus uses the word “hard” to describe the narrow way. In the context of the entire Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), list three specific demands Jesus already laid out that make this gate narrow and points to the cost of true discipleship?

DEEPER DISCOVERY:

- Luke 13:22-30
- John 10:1-10
- Deuteronomy 30:15-20



Heart Level: *What does it mean? These questions help us shape our beliefs around the objective truth of God's word.*

1. Jesus says “many” are on the road to destruction and “few” find the narrow gate. Sitting with that reality honestly, personally, what does it stir in you? Does it feel sobering or something else?
2. The wide road is described as “easy”, which implies the narrow road involves real resistance, loss, or sacrifice. What is the hardest thing about walking the narrow road in your life right now?
3. Jesus does not say the narrow road is joyless; He says it leads to life. How does the promise at the end of the hard road shape the way you feel about its difficulty?



HANDS LEVEL: *What does it mean to me? These questions help us commit to live out the truth in our everyday lives and commit to potential next steps.*

1. The narrow road is rarely walked alone. Who in your life is walking it faithfully? Ask them: “What does the narrow road look like for you right now, and how can I encourage you?”
2. What spiritual disciplines (prayer, scripture reading, fasting, community worship) are you currently practicing to ensure your daily life stays oriented toward the narrow way?
3. Think of someone in your circle, friend, coworker, or family member who appears to be on the wide road. How does Matthew 7:13-14 shape the urgency with which you hold their eternity in mind? What is one loving step you can take toward that person this week?



MEMORY VERSE: Matthew 7:12

Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

(Please remember that these requests are confidential and need to stay within the group.)