

JESUS^{AT THE} CENTER OF THE KINGDOM

GROUP GUIDE

This guide is designed to help you study the Scriptures and deepen your relationship with God. Use this guide by yourself or with others.

To find a group, visit brookwoodchurch.org/groups.

Message Title: *Two Paths*

July 12, 2026

CONNECT

If new people have joined your group, take time to introduce yourselves to each other.

1. On a scale of 0–10, how peaceful has your heart been this week? Explain why.
2. When have you chosen a harder path because you believed it was better in the long run?

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

This is the third part in a message series titled *Jesus at the Center of the Kingdom*, which covers the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5-7. In the summer of 2024, we looked at Matthew 5. In the summer of 2025, we studied Matthew 6. We're concluding the series this summer, studying Matthew 7.

Matthew 5-7 is most commonly referred to as *The Sermon on the Mount* because Jesus gave this powerful teaching from a mountainside (*Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain... Matthew 5:1a ESV*). The name simply points to where it happened, but the message is much more than a location. It's an invitation to another way of life. It's a call to a life of humility that restores and strengthens relationships, to a life of prayer that draws us closer to God, and into a relationship with God that realigns us with His purpose for our lives. It provides us a way to know what is true and who we can really trust. It's a call to build our lives on the foundation of Jesus so we can stand firm when the storms of life come crashing in. Ultimately, *The Sermon on the Mount* is Jesus' announcement of what His kingdom is like and what kind of people His grace is forming us to become. *May we be these kind of people.*

PRAY

Take a few minutes to quiet your heart and release the cares of the day. Take a couple of deep breaths and allow any tightness you feel in your neck and shoulders to relax. Then pray together, asking God to meet each of you right where you are. Ask Him to show you more of His beauty, His truth and His direction. Invite others to voice their prayers as they feel led.

GROUP TIPS

- If your group has eight or more people, it might be helpful to break into circles of four or five for greater participation and deeper discussion. When you come back together, invite each group to share a few takeaways from their conversation.
- Don't worry if you don't get to all the questions. Spend time reading and really thinking about what the Bible is saying and what God is revealing to you personally.

STUDY AND DISCUSSION

Matthew 7:13-14 (ESV)

¹³“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. ¹⁴For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

1. What two gates does Jesus describe?
2. What does Jesus mean when He says, *enter by the narrow gate*?
3. What do you notice about the number of people on each road?
4. What feels surprising or uncomfortable about Jesus' contrast?
5. When you hear the phrase, *the way is hard that leads to life*, what comes to mind?
6. What kinds of *wide gates* might look attractive but lead away from life?
7. Do you think a person can go through one gate, but then later choose the other gate? Explain.
8. For you personally, do you feel this passage more as a warning or an invitation? Share your thoughts.
9. How often do you stop and ask yourself, *where is this path actually leading me*?
10. What helps you keep following Jesus when the way feels lonely or costly?
11. Where have you experienced the narrow way leading to freedom, healing, or joy?
12. What would it look like for our group to walk this road together rather than alone?

Take time this week to reflect on these passages from The Message* version of the Bible:

John 10:7-9 (MSG)

“I am the Gate for the sheep. All those others are up to no good—sheep rustlers, every one of them. But the sheep didn’t listen to them. I am the Gate. Anyone who goes through me will be cared for—will freely go in and out, and find pasture.”

John 14:6-7 (MSG)

Jesus said, “I am the Road, also the Truth, also the Life. No one gets to the Father apart from me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him. You’ve even seen him!”

* The Message is commonly understood as a paraphrase rather than a formal translation. NavPress explains, *Eugene Peterson renders the meaning, tone, and force of the biblical text in fresh, idiomatic English rather than closely following the original wording.* It can help familiar passages sound fresh again, especially for devotional reading. But for study, doctrine and memorization, a more formal or balanced translation such as NIV, ESV, NASB, CSB or NLT is safer.

LIVE IT OUT

Based on this week’s lesson, God is calling me to move from _____ to _____ .

Ask God what He wants to say to you, then spend a few minutes quietly listening for Him to speak. This could be a word or phrase from the passage that stands out to you, or a simple thought He brings to mind.

PRAY

Share what you sensed God saying to you and pray for each other.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Here’s a great verse to memorize based on this week’s teaching. Read it every day until you can repeat it without thinking. Trust God to bring it back to mind at just the right time!

*Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life.
No one comes to the Father except through me.”*

John 14:6 (NIV)