

# LINKS PLAYERS

DAILY DEVOTIONAL FRIDAY BIBLE STUDY FOR MAY 31, 2013

## HOW NARROW THE WAY?

*He said to them, "Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to." (Luke 13:24, NIV)*

THERE'S A COURSE IN MY TOWN THAT GOLFERS AVOID. It's narrow all the way around, with trees overhanging fairways and demanding shaped shots. The penalties aren't in the hazards or beyond the white stakes; the penalties lie beneath the canopies and behind broad trunks.

Maybe there's a course like this in your town, a course that is, in a word, *narrow*.

I don't know how that word sits with you. In a time when many think the best way to go when it comes to God is to throw the doors of his kingdom wide open—so open that God as he *is* may not even be necessary, but rather God as we *think him to be* is good enough—it can be a bit of a gamble to utter the word *narrow*.

Jesus seemed to preach two messages. In one way of speaking, he noted that the kingdom was not nearly as narrow as some rabbis suggested. The Jewish people, for one, were not alone in God's kingdom; even the Gentiles were to be welcomed—an opening that flourished with the Holy Spirit's work in and through the apostles. Ne'er-do-wells and harlots weren't to be turned away either, not if they were willing to release their hearts to Christ and be forgiven.

But then Jesus came up with words like those in today's passage, where the road to eternity was lined with hedges that keep out those who do not belong. The idea of "casting a broader net" just doesn't work in this context.

So which is it? Wide or narrow? Well, let's state what we know for certain: the door to God's kingdom leaves no room for unbelief. "Whoever believes in me," Jesus said, "will be saved." And thus, too, we find that the Scriptures consistently and vigorously defend Christ as the lone avenue to salvation.

If this is "narrow," we must say, "So be it." But then we must make every effort to get ourselves and our friends in that broad audience through that narrow door, the door where God's grace meets our faith.

## Opening questions: Down the corridor

What is the narrowest golf hole you can ever remember playing? How'd you do? In another vein, are you a person who sees the way to God as too narrow, too wide, or just about right?

## The open door

*Read Matthew 22:1-10 and Acts 11:1-18.* How do these passages demonstrate God's desire to include in his kingdom as many as turn to him?

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## The narrow way

*Read Matthew 7:13-14, John 14:6, and Acts 4:8-12.* How do these passages confirm a singularity of Christ's position as our Savior?

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*Head back to the parable of the wedding feast in Matthew 22 and read verses 11-14.* How do these verses help us see that there are qualifications for being included in the kingdom?

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*Read Hebrews 11:6.* What does this verse describe as the qualification for finding God?

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