

*"Enter through the narrow gate. For **wide is the gate and broad is the road** that leads to **destruction**, and many enter through it. 14*

*But **small is the gate and narrow the road** that leads to **life**, and only a few find it.
Matt 7:13-14*

*"**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*

The above passages have been correctly used to reference the exclusive nature of the salvation God offers to us through His Son, Jesus Christ. But as I thought about it, it would seem it may also be correctly referenced and applied to the challenge to ascend from immaturity to maturity in our walk with the Lord. The Lord is desirous of not only coming into relationship with us, but He is preparing for Himself a beautiful Bride, holy, spotless, surrendered to Him, an utter delight to Him in every way. But how does He transform us? How do we in real time move from glory to glory? By **embracing the "from(s)" and the "to(s)"**. Paul writes that we are being remade, made over, completely changed. Listen to His perception of this process:

*But **we all**, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, **are changed** into the same image **from glory to glory**, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.
2 Cor 3:18 KJV*

or try this translation on for comparison:

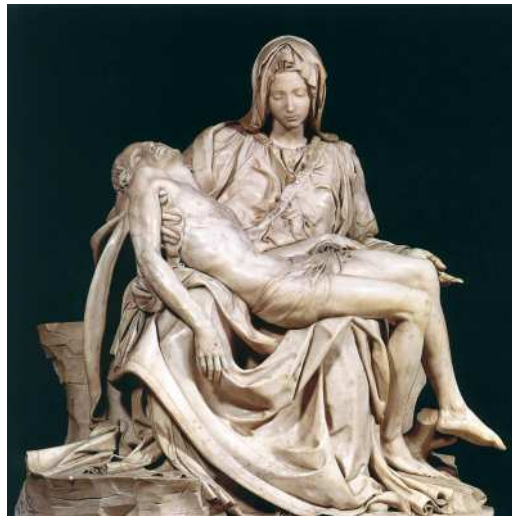
*All of us! Nothing between us and God, our faces shining with the brightness of his face. And so **we are transfigured** much like the Messiah, ***our lives gradually becoming brighter and more beautiful*** as God enters our lives **and we become like him**.
2 Cor 3:18 The Message*

There oughta' be a song, don't you think, called "Wide and Broad!". We are encourage to disregard this "street" and choose another one. That of course would necessitate a second song, "Small and Narrow!"

What might this look like? His plan for us is to occur inside of us. **Talk about an inside job!** And what, pray, is He going to do? His plan is to cause us to let Him transform us, actually change us from "the way we were" when we began our relationship to Him to the point that we actually **look like Him, talk like Him, act like Him, love like Him, and glorify God like Him. Wow!**

But how is He going to do such an unbelievable thing? After all, He is God, He is Perfect and Sinless! We are - - -well, we are not! This is what I'd like to consider with you. The big question is - - **HOW?**

Let me first give you a word picture. When Michelangelo carved a character out of stone, it was his belief that **the character was already in the stone**. It only needed to be liberated from everything around it! He would say he did not in fact carve David or the Pieta out of marble; rather, he would say he carved away from David all that was not him. He liberated Jesus and Mary in the Pieta from everything that was not them! Amazing concept, yes? Check out the Pieta and think about this philosophy. But even as you study this thought that drove Michelangelo, be sure the Father has a far better, far more powerful, far more beautiful plan for your life.



There is incredible truth in this. When we enter into a truly saving relationship with Jesus, He takes up residence inside us, and we also at that point are placed inside Christ. Paul comments, “For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.” So when Father looks at us, He already sees us as having been made perfect by Jesus already! The only one who hasn’t gotten that message yet is us, and in particular, our old self, our carnal man, if you will!

But, you may ask, be more specific. **How** does God change us from our initial condition to one even remotely resembling Him? The answer is - one step at a time.

God has this incredible way of working with us. He initially woos us to Himself. He puts a lot of effort into convincing us that “broad and easy” roads are just that. They are entered onto effortlessly through a gigantic wide gate and give temporary satisfaction, but in reality they actually are roads to nowhere. Walking the wide and the broad road may make you popular, rich

and/or famous, but it can never give you the **one thing** you were born needing: a place to rest, an unrelenting desire to be found by the One who has loved you from before you were conceived – an insatiable desire for fellowship with the God of the Universe and the Lord of all nations. St. Augustine put it well when he said, “Our hearts are made for Thee, oh Lord, and they will be restless until they rest in Thee.”

What a fantastic plan He has! He has built another road Himself. The gate of entryway to this road is very small (only one can get through at a time, and this road goes straight through His heart), and its lanes are quite narrow. This is the road that takes you from what Paul calls “glory to glory.” It is the narrow road of surrender. It is the road of real holiness.

How does the Lord use this road? What does He do on this road? He begins to, if you will, clean us up. He rearranges our priorities from being self-centered to Christ-centered; He begins to show us areas in our lives that are at variance with values He embraces. How? By presenting us with situations that call up responses in us that are inappropriate.

Perhaps a person struggles with impatience. One learns patience by being challenged again and again by a person or situation that rings our impatient bell until we cry out to the Lord to show us another way! The minute we do, (presuming we’re willing to surrender the sin of impatience,) he does just that; He shows us His way, His grace that He has already given us to respond with His life values. As we gain victory through embracing Him in this new area of our lives, we will find ourselves on a new “glory” hill. Perhaps our tongue is sharp and critical. Sure enough we are going to be presented with one opportunity after another to be kind and assuring instead of biting and condemning. It reminds me a bit of how Jesus helped Peter to “undo” his three denials of him by asking him three times, “Peter, do you love me?”

These sections of the narrow road where these testings and times of correction are what I call the **“to” and “from”** places. Paul says we are being changed **from** glory **to** glory. I think the “glory” parts are the wonderful highs we experience when we have grasped His grace in a particular area of our lives and have flowered into the fruit of a new and deeper communion with Him! Oh how wonderful these times are. Like Peter, James and John on the Mount of Transfiguration, we say to the Lord, “Oh, this is AWESOME!” Let’s just put up some tents and just stay here in this place of new victory!”

Oh, but He has other little foxes He wants to help us catch. This happens not on the “glory” mountain tops, but rather in the valleys of **“from” and to,”** in between the glory times.

The thing that is so wonderful about following Him all the way is that His plan culminates in our ultimate ascension to His side as His Bride, with Jesus as our Bridegroom. He says in His Word that it is from this unimagined position of fellowship, grace and favor that we will rule and reign with Him!

So how about you? Are you ready to rise up from where you are and walk the narrow road? It's a wondrous road, it is a miraculous road. It is often a painful and lonely road. It is a road that no mortal can travel himself. The only fuel that can propel you along the way is the fuel of surrender to His grace. This is the road where we make the decision to die to our old selves and live to Christ. It is here, often in the valleys, that we learn what it means to receive Jesus Christ as Lord of our lives.

What is He talking to you about these days? What challenges are you facing? Did you ever stop to consider that the things you find yourself battling against are not actually against flesh and blood, but they are actually situations the Lord is permitting so as to cause you to run to Him for cover? Oh, what a wonderful thought!

What road are you on right now. How wide is it? How broad are its gates? Not many travel the narrow road, but the ones who do are the real winners! I want all I can have of Him. Don't you? Come on, let's hit the road!

