



RIDGEPOINT CHURCH • GROW GROUPS GUIDE

Choices & Warnings

A Better Way

WEEK 7

MATTHEW 7:13–28

Brent Warkentin • October 4, 2026



LEADER PREPARATION

- **Thank you for investing in your Grow Group each week!** If you have questions, need help, or are looking for additional resources, visit our Grow Group Leader page: ridgepointwichita.com/growleaders
- **Looking for an easy icebreaker? Grab the NOT JUST SUNDAYS card game** we handed out. Try just a few cards each week—have everyone answer one card, or let people choose between two. It's a simple way to keep building relationships!
- **This discussion guide is exactly that—a guide.** Skip questions, add your own, spend longer on a verse, or adjust it to fit your group. You know your group best! And if you have feedback on these guides, please let us know.

Opening (10 min)

OPENING QUESTION

Think of a time you were stuck on something (a project, a repair, a relationship) and thought, "There has to be a better way." Did you find it? What did it take?

MESSAGE SUMMARY

This week Pastor Brent brought our seven-week walk through the Sermon on the Mount to a close. Across Matthew 5–7, Jesus has offered us a better way to think, behave, and live, and in Matthew 7:13–28 He ends with two choices and two warnings. The first choice is between two roads: a wide road that is easy but leads to destruction, and a narrow road that is hard but leads to life. Putting our faith in Jesus isn't the hard part; the narrow road is hard because Jesus calls us not only to believe in Him but to live for Him, joyfully surrendering to His good rule. Then come two warnings. Watch out for bad leaders, whose doctrine or character will pull you off the narrow road. And don't trust empty words, because saying "Lord, Lord" means little if our lives don't back it up. Finally, Jesus asks where we will build: on the rock of hearing and doing His words, or on the sand of our own self-rule. Pastor Brent closed with the story of his parents, who faced cancer and Parkinson's at the same time and chose to keep trusting Jesus. The storms came, but their house stood on the rock.

KEY POINTS

- ◆ **Choose your road.** The wide road of self-rule is easy but ends in a dead end; the narrow road of living under Jesus' rule is hard but leads to life ([Matthew 7:13–14](#))
- ◆ **Watch out for bad leaders.** False prophets are recognized by their fruit, in both their doctrine and their character ([Matthew 7:15–20](#))
- ◆ **Empty words won't save you.** Sincere belief leads to sincere behavior ([Matthew 7:21–23](#))

- ◆ **Build on the rock.** Hearing and doing Jesus' words gives us a foundation the storms of life can't knock down ([Matthew 7:24–27](#))



UP • 20 MIN

A Daily Relationship with God

BIG IDEA

Jesus doesn't end His sermon with applause lines. He ends it with a decision. It isn't enough to admire His teaching; He invites us to stake our whole lives on it. A daily relationship with God is where the narrow road actually gets walked, one step at a time: hearing His words, trusting Him, and putting them into practice, even when that's hard.

SCRIPTURE AT THE CENTER

Matthew 7:13–14 (ESV)

"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."

In one sense, Jesus Himself is the narrow gate. He said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6, ESV), and there is "one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5, ESV). But notice that Jesus calls the way "hard." Trusting Him for forgiveness isn't the hard part. Living for Him is: being humble and merciful, refusing to retaliate, loving enemies, giving generously, forgiving again and again. The broad road of self-rule is easier, but greed, grudges, and selfishness lead to a dead end.

Matthew 7:15–16 (ESV)

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits."

Another way to say "false prophets" is "bad leaders." They can be bad in their doctrine, teaching that Jesus isn't the only way or that the Bible is a myth, or bad in their character. Pastor Brent pointed out that 20 of the 23 leadership qualifications in 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1, and 1 Peter 5 are about character. No leader is without sin, so the bar isn't perfection, but Jesus tells us to watch the fruit and not get pulled away from Him.

Matthew 7:21–23 (ESV)

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’”

We do need words to be saved: “if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9, ESV). But words become empty when they aren’t backed by a genuine heart and a changed life, the same way “I love you” means little if our actions say otherwise. None of us does God’s will perfectly, yet there should be consistency between what we say and how we live. This is a sober warning: a faith that is only “lip deep” is in for a big surprise.

Matthew 7:24–27 (ESV)

“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

Both builders hear Jesus’ words, and both houses face the same storm. The difference is the doing. Jesus claims to be solid ground we can trust and build our lives on, and He promises that if we live His better way, the storms of life won’t win.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ◆ Pastor Brent said believing in Jesus isn’t the hard part; living for Him is. Where does the narrow road feel hardest for you right now?
- ◆ He named areas of a “narrow road life”: honesty, work ethic, marriage, finances, sexual purity, kindness, and forgiveness. Which one is God putting His finger on for you this week?
- ◆ Jesus warns that saying “Lord, Lord” isn’t enough. Where do you notice a gap between what you say you believe and how you actually live?
- ◆ Think back over the whole Sermon on the Mount. What is one thing Jesus said that you’ve heard but haven’t yet done? What would doing it look like this week?



IN • 15 MIN

A Shared Life Together

WHY THIS MATTERS

Jesus says few people find the narrow road, which means it can feel lonely to walk it by yourself. His warnings also assume we need help seeing clearly: bad fruit and the gap between our words and our lives are hard to spot on our own. That is part of why your group matters. The people in this room can help each other stay on the narrow road.

GROWING TOGETHER

Over seven weeks your group has talked about anger, forgiveness, generosity, worry, and judging others. Now Jesus' closing question lands on all of you together: which of these teachings will we actually build on? A group that hears together can also do together. Keep encouraging one another, keep praying for one another, and be honest enough to ask, "How's it going with that?" When a storm hits someone in your group, the rest of you get to help them stand on the rock.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ◆ Who has helped you stay on the narrow road when it would have been easier to drift? What did they do that made a difference?
- ◆ Empty words and bad fruit are easier to see in others than in ourselves. How can this group lovingly help each other notice the gaps?
- ◆ Which teaching from this series has stuck with you most? How could the group help you keep living it after the series ends?
- ◆ When someone in our group is facing a storm, what does it look like for the rest of us to show up well?



OUT • 10 MIN

An Outward-Focused Faith

LIVING IT OUT

Jesus ends His sermon with a house that stands through the storm, and the people around us notice when it does. Pastor Brent's parents spent their lives telling people to trust Jesus. When cancer and Parkinson's came, they showed people how, facing it with dignity and trust instead of bitterness. A faith that is more than lip deep becomes a witness. Pastor Brent described his calling as helping as many people as possible move from the broad road to the narrow road: first to Jesus, then to a narrow road life. That calling belongs to all of us.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ◆ Who in your life is going through a storm right now? How could you point them to Jesus as the solid rock, in your words or your actions?
- ◆ Who has shown you what trusting Jesus looks like in a hard season? What made their faith believable to you?
- ◆ Where do the people around you see the clearest evidence that your faith is more than words: at work, at home, or in your neighborhood?

FOCUS ON GROUP PROJECT

- **Depending on your group's OUT PROJECT**, there may not be much to report each week, and that's okay! The biggest thing is simply keeping us in the loop.
- If you haven't already: **Please let us know what your group has chosen for your OUT PROJECT.**
- As you go: Keep us updated on any significant changes, needs, or progress with your project.
- Need ideas, resources, or guidance? Visit our [Grow Group Leaders page](#) for more help.

CLOSING PRAYER

Close your time together by inviting the group to share prayer requests. Then lead the group in prayer, drawing from these prompts from today's sermon:

PRAYER PROMPTS

- ◆ Pray that each person would choose the narrow road, not only believing in Jesus but joyfully living under His good rule (Matthew 7:13–14).
- ◆ Pray for wisdom to recognize good and bad fruit, and for Ridgepoint's leaders to be marked by sound doctrine and godly character (Matthew 7:15–20).
- ◆ Pray that our words and our lives would line up, so our faith is never just lip deep (Matthew 7:21–23).
- ◆ Pray for anyone in the group facing a storm right now, that they would stand firm on Jesus, the solid rock (Matthew 7:24–27).



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