

AUTOPSY • Week 3: Autopsying Others

Daily Briefing • Day 4 of 5 • Herd Mentality = Hard Reality

WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE

Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God.

3 John 11

Sunday's message used a chart to identify others' outcomes and trace upstream to beliefs and behaviors. Today we ask the prior question: what standard are you using to assess what you find? You can watch or listen to the sermon at 1mso.church or on the One Missoula app.

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, keep me from being shaped by the crowd, from giving in to popular opinion, or from simply following the herd because everyone else is. Let me hear Your voice among all the others and follow without wavering. Guard me against living my life to fit in. I commit to walk with You even if I am the only one. I pray this commitment to You in Jesus' name. Amen.

TODAY'S TEACHING

Amazon built a business on the assumption that if enough people like something, it must be good. Millions of five-star reviews mean you buy it. When millions of people do something, you follow. That is a reasonable instinct in a retail setting. It is a dangerous instinct when it comes to the beliefs and behaviors that shape your outcomes. Because the majority is not doing well. Most people are financially stressed, relationally strained, physically exhausted, and spiritually adrift. The crowd is not the compass. In most cases, the crowd is the cautionary tale.

Jesus noticed this about crowds. In Matthew 7:13-14 He describes two paths with two very different traffic patterns. The wide gate leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. The narrow gate leads to life, and those who find it are few. This is not a poetic observation about difficulty. It is a description of a statistical reality about the distribution of human trajectories. Most people are on the wrong path. Knowing that does not make you better than them. It makes the autopsy practice more urgent, because you need a better standard than theirs to do it accurately.

Proverbs 14:12 adds a harder layer. The wrong path does not feel wrong. It seems right to the person walking it. Internal confidence and widespread adoption provide no protection against bad outcomes. Romans 12:2 names the only reliable alternative: a mind being renewed by God's Word rather than conformed to the world's patterns. The renewed mind is the only tool that can assess beliefs and behaviors against the right standard.

READ & MEDITATE

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."

Proverbs 14:12

"There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death."

Romans 12:2

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

Read Matthew 7:13-14 and notice which path has more travelers. That detail is not incidental. Then read Proverbs 14:12 and sit with the phrase “seems right.” The verse is not describing a path that feels obviously wrong. Then read Romans 12:2 and identify what it says must change before accurate discernment becomes possible.

REFLECT

Jesus does not say the two paths have roughly equal travelers. He says the wide path is crowded and the narrow one is found by few.

What does it tell you about your observation practice this week that the majority are on the path Jesus says leads to destruction? Where have you been using “everybody does it” or “most people think this way” as a reason to treat something as acceptable? This might look like deciding your level of church engagement is healthy because it matches most people around you, or concluding that your spending habits are fine because your peer group lives the same way, or assuming your approach to marriage or parenting is reasonable because most people operate similarly. Do some honest introspective self-assessment before moving on.

The autopsy practice only works with the right ruler. Using majority behavior as the standard means using the cautionary tale as the guide.

Where in your daily life do you most naturally reach for majority opinion as your guide rather than Scripture? What has that produced?

Proverbs 14:12 is not describing a path that feels dangerous. It is describing a path that appears reasonable, even wise.

Fill in the blanks from Proverbs 14:12:

“There is a way that _____ to a man, but its end is the way to _____.” (Proverbs 14:12)*

**These fill-in-the-blank questions use the ESV text. Your Bible may use different words for the same idea.*

Think of a belief or behavior in your own life that feels justified, widely practiced, or just normal. Does the fact that it seems right or that others around you are doing it tell you where it leads? Do some honest introspective self-assessment before moving on.

Romans 12:2 describes two forces in competition: the world's pattern that conforms through repetition and exposure, and the renewed mind that discerns through Scripture.

What does Romans 12:2 say produces the ability to discern what God's will actually is? Based on that, what is the only reliable tool for assessing whether a belief or behavior leads somewhere good?

Name one area of your life where you are more shaped by the world's pattern than by Scripture's design. This might look like where you get your news and how much it shapes your fears, which voices define what success looks like for you, or what entertainment you consume and how it has quietly redefined what normal looks and feels like. What would beginning to renew your thinking in that area look like this week?

PRAYER

Write your prayer or pray out loud. As we've read, God's ear is not dull. Talk to Him like He is listening and wants to hear from you.

MEMORY VERSE

Write or recite 3 John 11 from memory:
