

MAD WORLD

LIVING SANE IN A CRAZY WORLD

Mad World Series

Small Group Material

Participant Guide

Part 2 - "The Easy Way"

May 7th, 2017

Bottom Line: *The end of self-centeredness comes when you find your sufficiency in Christ.*

Study Verses: *1 John 2:15-17, James 4:4-7, Matthew 7:13-14, Proverbs 14:12*

Define The Win: *Participants would be able to articulate the difference between the narrow and wide road. They would recognize where they are finding it challenging to stay true to what they believe is true and where they might be falling for the lies culture feeds them. Group members would pinpoint places in their lives where there is a resistance to fully surrendering over to God.*

Key Points

- *When you find the easy way to be hard, it isn't because it's hard. It's because the easy way only leads you towards death.*
- *The narrow way is hard because it is hard to stay true to what is true.*
- *The wide road is easy because it seems right and it is easy to believe.*
- *If anyone loves the Father, the love of the world is not in them.*
- *We live in a world that has the power to make you think and feel whatever they want.*
- *You are not going to find what you're looking for in a hurry.*
- *We must give up the allure of what is easy and live in submission to what is true.*

- *We can act on what we believe instead of simply reacting to what we see and feel.*
- *We've been entrusted to care and leverage this world by God. To ignore this call is what leaves us mad.*
- *The narrow road requires us to slow down, merge and submit everything to Him.*

ENCOUNTER

- **Think of a time when you found yourself saying, "Life is hard." Why did you describe your situation in this way? What do you believe was the source of this tension?**
- **We live in a world that has the power to make you think and feel whatever they want. What are some lies from culture that you fell for? How were these lies disguised as truth?**
- **How does the allure of this world create madness within us?**
- **As believers we're called to walk upon the narrow road. When you hear "narrow road," what imagery and emotions come to mind? How does your answer influence your willingness to follow this way?**

FORMATION

- **Read Matthew 7:13-14. What makes the wide road easy? Why is the way of Jesus hard? What actions and beliefs differentiate the two?**
- **Read James 4:4-7. How are friendship with the world, humility/pride and submission tied together? What connection do they have with each other? Why is grace given to those who are humble but opposition felt for those who are prideful?**
- **Read 1 John 2:15-17 and Proverbs 14:12. According to this passage, what three things fuel the world? How does the allure of these three things cloud our judgement and create madness in our relationships?**

EXPRESSION

- **Where are you finding it challenging to stick on the narrow road and stay true to what is true?**
- **You're not going to find what you're looking for in a hurry. Where do you need to slow down and pay attention? What are you missing by being in a hurry?**

- The narrow road requires us to slow down, merge and submit everything to Him. What are you unwilling to surrender? Why are you reluctant to let go in this area? What would surrendering this thing look like?

LEADER INSIGHT: *Culture preaches that all of our hopes and dreams are within our reach. We can have everything our hearts desire. It's possible to have our cake and eat it too. We live in a world that possesses the power to make us feel and think whatever it wants. The allure leaves us dazed unsure of what is true. We feed into the lies and follow them hook, line and sinker.*

We enable what we think and feel to have so much control over us. Our emotions often dictate our response to the circumstances we face. This way seems right. We reason in our mind that because we "feel" a certain way that it must be true. Yet, this deception always leads us down a road of discontentment, disillusionment, and destruction. Eventually, we are left shaking our head and wondering why life is so hard.

In those moments, when life seems hard, we aren't experience difficulty, what we are encountering is actually death. Proverbs 14:12 says there is a way that seems right to man, but in the end it leads to death. At first glance, the other option doesn't seem appealing either. As believers, we're called to follow the narrow road. Our eyes should be set in a different direction and our feet planted in our convictions.

This level of obedience seems impossible. When we picture this narrow road, our mind gravitates toward an image of us walking on a tight rope of moral perfection. If we don't take every step perfectly we are a goner. But, that's not what walking on the narrow road is about. This way is one rooted in trust and dependence.

What makes the narrow road hard is the opposite of what makes the wide road easy. It is challenging to reject the pull of what we think and feel. Staying true to what is true takes perseverance and steadiness, especially when we face adversity, when we want to indulge and when we want to escape. We're terrified of slowing down and being still because we don't want to come face-to-face with the condition of our heart. Submission goes against the grain of our "me first" culture.

The narrow road requires us to slow down, merge and submit everything to Him. We must give up the allure of what is easy and live in submission to what is true. Rather than reacting to what we see and feel, we are able to respond and act on what we believe.