

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus has been teaching his disciples about how they are to live as his followers. He is quite specific in his teaching.

Read Matthew 7: 13-14

1. In this reading Jesus says that he is the way to God, and that obedience to him is the way to the fullest experience of life. Can some in the group explain what happened to them when they discovered Jesus as the way to God?

Having become followers of Jesus, in a new relationship with our creator we are called to a narrow way of obedience to him.

Like everything else in the world, human beings are made to a certain design; to a particular specification. For something to work it needs to function according to its created purpose.

The broad way of living is living as we like, obeying our quite natural responses. It is choosing to live as we please and to live according to our rules without reference to God.

2. With this in mind, Jesus says that the 'the broad way' will lead to destruction in our lives. How, for instance, does showing no mercy (4:7), stirring up trouble (5:9), and strong feelings of hatred (5:22) make us feel and how do they affect others? Do these attitudes and behaviours feel like *life*?

3. Jesus says that the narrow way of obedience leads to life. How do the qualities of mercy, peace and love - attitudes that Jesus calls us to in the sermon on the mount - affect us and others? Can some people share examples in their own lives of where they have changed from the 'broad way' of living as they pleased to the 'narrow way' of living for Jesus. How did that change feel like life compared with the old way?

4. Living life in obedience to Jesus so we can experience the life of God is not always easy. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus talks twice about prayer, and also about fasting and giving. In what ways do you think that these things will enable us to experience more of the life that God wants us to know?