

# Equipping The Saints

"...For the equipping of the saints for the work of service..." ~ Ephesians 4:12

January 31, 2016

1.31

## Few Are They Who Find It

(By Andrew Dow)

As we explore the Bible it is astonishing how many times God could have used people of vast numbers and strength, but instead chose to use those who were few in number. *For example, consider the story of Noah.* Peter wrote that in the time of Noah **“a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water”** (1 Pet. 3:20). Of the entire population of the world, the Lord only chose eight souls. *Furthermore, consider the Israelites.* When the people of Israel left Egypt and came to Mt. Sinai the Lord chose them to be His people (cf. Exo. 19:5-6). God could have selected a nation that was numerically superior, but He chose Israel. *Another example of this can be found in the time of the judges.* While preparing for battle, Gideon arrived with an army of 32,000 people. The Lord told him, **“The people who are with you are too many for Me to give Midian into their hands”** (Judges 7:2). Gideon sent home 22,000 scared soldiers and 9,700 soldiers who knelt down to drink water before the Lord was finally satisfied with the number. The remaining men in the Lord’s army amounted to 300. **“The Lord said to Gideon, ‘I will deliver you with the 300 men...’”** (Judges 7:7).

If we turn to the pages of the New Testament we find that the God we serve has not changed (cf. Mal. 3:6; Heb. 13:8). Jesus clearly states in Matthew 7:13-14 that it is still *the few* who will

find themselves on the side of God. Let's note that, in this text, Jesus presents two options and then issues a challenge to us.

**Option #1 – The Wide Gate:** Jesus first tells us that **“the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it”** (Matt. 7:13). There are things about this pathway that make it appealing. *First, It is appealing because “the way is easy.”* It is much easier for us to drive through open roads than through restricted work zones full of barriers. To travel the wide road is essentially effortless. *Second, it is appealing because “those who find it are many.”* Many times we enjoy following the crowd. We want to do what they do, dress how they dress, and go where they go. We may have friends and family who are traveling this easy road, and we want to be with them. Entering through this gate, however, will lead to destruction.

**Option #2 – The Narrow Gate:** Next, Jesus describes the narrow gate—**“the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it”** (Matt. 7:14). Our Lord describes these gates in exact opposite terms. While the wide gate is easy, the narrow way is hard. Jesus never suggests that Christians will be free from struggle and hardship (Matt. 11:28-30). Therefore, as Jesus points out, only a few will find and follow the narrow gate. Just like Noah and his family, the Israelites, and Gideon's 300 men, those who will enter through the narrow gate are few in number. The reward for following through the difficult, sometimes lonely gate is eternal life.

**The Challenge:** The challenge is simple—**“Enter through the narrow gate”** (Matt. 7:13). Jesus challenges us to enter by the narrow gate and partake in all that would follow such a lifestyle. We are challenged to take the route that few people will follow.

We are challenged to travel a road that may be different from our friends and family. We are challenged to step through a gate that will lead us to life.

**Conclusion:** As we read the Bible we ought to be impressed with the difficulty that people of faith endured before us. It's hard to be a part of the minority. Why did Noah endure? Why did a remnant of Israel remain faithful? Why did Gideon's 300-man army fight? Because God promised deliverance!

How much more will we gain if we are apart of the few who find the narrow gate? God has promised that if we endure the difficult life of following Christ we will receive life. God has always desired to use the few—the best of the best. Let it be our goal to be numbered among the few who walk the narrow way.

## 9 Ways To Be Evangelistic Without Being The Teacher

(By Berry Kercheville)

**5. Can You Practice Hospitality?** New Testament writers repeatedly *commanded* Christians to be hospitable. **“Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality”** (Rom. 12:13). **“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares”** (Heb. 13:2). Jesus often used meals in homes as an opportunity to connect and teach. It is truly amazing that in an age where most Christians live in nice homes or even nice apartments, so few open their homes, especially to guests who are not Christians. When I was growing up, my grandparents lived in a twelve-foot wide mobile home. Today, most would believe that would be inadequate for hospitality. And yet, my grandparents devoted themselves to

filling their little home with those who visited worship. Quite often grandma was not prepared for the number she invited. No worry, she would pull out leftovers to complete the main meal. There were enough green beans for three people, enough corn for three others, some black eyed peas, some baked beans, two different kinds of bread, and three different meats. There was enough for everyone though everyone could not have everything on the table. Hospitality does not need to be fancy. In fact, the attempt to be fancy is the reason most do not practice hospitality. Please, fancy and formal is what limits others from being hospitable and can even be ineffective. Guests are more comfortable when we just share a simple meal – and we are more comfortable as well. The house need not be perfect. Give the floors a quick sweeping, clean the bathroom, and let the rest go. Being hospitable is what is important. If you believe your house and meal needs to reflect a food magazine advertisement, you will rarely be hospitable. Remember, when you share your home and food with a lost soul, you have shared a meal with the Lord himself (Matt. 25:31-46). Don't leave the Lord outside your door.

*[originally published as part of a two-part article on [focusmagazine.org](http://focusmagazine.org)]*

### **Notes:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

*"Go therefore and make disciples..." (Matthew 28:19-20)*