

We are still paying the price for Adam and Eve's original sin. We live in a world that is ruled by Satan and so we suffer sickness and death that should not be. Jesus came and made a way for us to be reconciled to the Father, a way that was not there before. Be warned though, it is a hard way. It is a narrow gate and the way is difficult. The narrow gate is the moment of salvation. Blessed are those who find it. Jesus came in the flesh and spent three years teaching us how to walk this hard road (read the gospels). We need to see beyond the hardship of this life, and see the joy of an eternity spent with Jesus. We need to follow His example. "If my living for Jesus does not involve some inconvenience, some discomfort, some sacrifice, or some risk then I should examine very closely my level of obedience to God" -*Cal Bombay*. Be careful what you testify, if you have no problems, no valleys that you must go through, eventually someone will question your easy Christianity.

God is still in the business of making disciples. There are two ways of making disciples; we try to bribe people to see things our way, we offer a reward of some kind. Or we challenge them to something that is difficult. One appeals to a selfish nature, the other to a heroic bent. Is Jesus trying to bribe us or challenge us? The life of a Christian is to do good and strive for righteousness, to become like Jesus; not for our glory but for God's. A Christian is a soldier and we are in a battle often with ourselves **Rom. 7:19**. Often, when we live the quiet, don't rock the boat, kind of Christianity, the world sees us as boring. Christ calls us to be disciplined; we are called to be a fighting force against evil, to stand against injustice and oppression. We are called to suffer persecution without complaining, and to give our lives, if necessary. God expects us to expose sin to the light. All this will make us offensive to many. We are to be God's conscience in this world, to have Christ's character.

We can never let ourselves think that because God loves us so much we can wander off the narrow path. Extreme love can lead us onto the broad and easy road walking with the world again. Extreme fear of doing wrong will lead us into legalism and we will lose sight of His love altogether. We must balance love with reverence (fear). Jesus went around doing good, yet He also brought correction through offence. He was uncompromising and unconventional in His approach. He said what needed saying and moved on. Don't think that the Christian life is an easy one. It is a revolutionary one. Being a Christian is not for the faint of heart **Rev. 3:15,16**. Don't even let yourself get to that point. We need to examine ourselves continually to be sure we are closely following Him. When we find ourselves offended by the preaching of the Word, we need to ask ourselves why? Very often it is because God is trying to open our eyes to sin in our lives. Many people however take their offence and leave. There is an underlying problem of not wanting to submit to God. More and more we need to deny ourselves and rather than be discouraged we need to accept the challenge of entering the narrow gate and walking the difficult road. The encouragement is not only the rewards that await us but also that we do not walk alone.