

KIRBSTONES

ALONG THE NARROW WAY

curb-stone (kûrb'stôn') - *noun* - one of the stones or a range of stones forming a curb, as along a sidewalk or roadway. Historically, the curbstones were placed vertically along the edges of the roadbed, and the paving material was backfilled against the row of curbstones. The curbstones served ^{to}to hold the material in the roadbed, ^{to}to prevent the scattering of the material along the edges, and ^{to}to define the road itself from all the adjoining areas.

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¹³ "ENTER THROUGH THE NARROW GATE. FOR WIDE IS THE GATE AND BROAD IS THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION, AND MANY ENTER THROUGH IT. ¹⁴ BUT SMALL IS THE GATE AND NARROW THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO LIFE, AND ONLY A FEW FIND IT." - MATTHEW 7:13-14 - NIV



One of the most important choices we, as Christians, can make today is the commitment to accept personal responsibility. While our culture encourages us to deflect, excuse, and blame, Scripture consistently calls us to a higher path—the *high road of integrity, humility, and accountability*. This road is not the easiest, but it is the one that leads us to spiritual maturity and deeper discipleship.

When Jesus invites us to follow him, he invites us to take ownership of our thoughts, our actions, and even our in-actions. Spiritual growth requires more than belief; it requires honesty about who we are and who we are becoming. The apostle Paul reminds us, "Each one [of us] should test his own actions" (Galatians 6:4). That single verse challenges the blame-filled patterns we see everywhere around us and, if we are honest, sometimes what we see in ourselves.

Our thoughts are the seeds from which our lives grow. What we dwell on eventually shapes our attitudes, our decisions, and our relationships. Scripture urges us to "be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2b). We cannot prevent every discouraging or unholy thought from appearing, but we can decide which ones we feed and which ones we refuse to entertain.

Here is a simple example. Suppose someone cuts us off in traffic, and we instantly think, "People are terrible." That thought can influence our mood for hours. We may blame the other driver for our sour attitude, but the truth is that our response is ours to manage. Taking the high road means allowing the Spirit to renew our minds, so our thoughts reflect Christ rather than our irritations.

Jesus reminds us that our actions matter deeply. Not only do our actions reflect our character, but we will one day account for all we have done. Jesus teaches, "We will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word we have spoken" (Matthew 12:36). That is not meant to frighten us, but to remind us that our words and our deeds carry spiritual weight.

For example, imagine a Christian who snaps at a family member during a stressful moment. We might say, "You made me angry," placing blame on the other person. But no one can make us act unkindly. We are responsible for the tone we use, the words we choose, and the impact we leave. The high road requires us (1) to own our behavior, (2) to apologize when needed, and (3) to allow grace to shape us into people who reflect the character of Christ.

Sometimes the most difficult personal responsibility to acknowledge is our ownership for what we fail to do. Scripture is clear about this. "If anyone knows the good they ought to do and does not do it, it is sin" (James 4:17). Neglect is easy to justify, but it can cause as much harm as wrongful action.

Consider this third example. A neighbor is struggling and clearly overwhelmed. We see it, sense it, and think, "Someone else will help." It feels harmless, yet our in-action is a missed opportunity to show compassion. The high road invites us to step in, even when stepping in and stepping up is inconvenient, uncomfortable, or unnoticed.

Blame is the low road. It is crowded, noisy, and, sadly, familiar. Blame shifts responsibility, strengthens pride, and delays growth. We see it every day with our family members, our coworkers, and our elected government representatives. It allows us to point outward instead of inward. It is often easier to accuse than to confess, to excuse than to change.

But the high road—*Christ's road*—calls us to humility. It invites us to say, "I was wrong," or "I should have acted differently," or "I need grace to grow." These are not words of weakness, but words of strength! Accepting our personal responsibility opens the door to healing and real transformation.

When we accept responsibility for all three of these—*our thoughts, our actions, and our inactions*—our personal lives change, but so do our relationships.

Families flourish when people own their words and actions. Churches grow healthier when members refuse to blame others and instead commit to Christlike accountability. Unity deepens, trust grows, and grace becomes tangible.

Taking responsibility is not about shame or guilt; it is about maturity, integrity, and discipleship. It is about walking the high road, where we allow Christ to shape our hearts, renew our minds, and guide our steps.

May we be people who choose to assume responsibility over blaming others, the truth over excuses, and the high road over the easy road, as we follow the One who calls us forward in grace.

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