

## 5-Day Devotional: Guarding Against the Great Deceiver

**Day 1: The Narrow Gate**      **Reading: Matthew 7:13-14**      **Devotional:** Jesus presents us with a sobering reality: the path to life is narrow, and few find it. This isn't meant to discourage us but to awaken us to the seriousness of our spiritual journey. The narrow gate requires intentionality—we cannot drift through it casually. Many settle for the wide road because it demands nothing, promises everything, and accommodates our desires. But Jesus calls us to something different: a deliberate choice to follow Him fully. Today, examine your spiritual walk. Are you making "every effort" to enter through the narrow door, or have you unconsciously merged onto the broad way? The narrow path may be challenging, but it alone leads to eternal life. Choose wisely, choose deliberately, choose Christ.

**Day 2: The Danger of Deception**      **Reading: 2 Corinthians 11:13-15**      **Devotional:** Satan's greatest weapon isn't obvious evil—it's deception dressed as light. Paul warns that false teachers masquerade as servants of righteousness, making their lies palatable and even attractive. The frightening truth is that those being deceived never realize it. We cannot simply ask ourselves, "Am I deceived?" and trust our answer. Deception blinds us to our own blindness. This is why Jesus emphasized complete surrender and why Scripture must be our standard, not our feelings or cultural norms. We need the Holy Spirit to reveal areas where we've been subtly led astray from truth. Today, humbly ask God, "Where am I being deceived?" Then listen. Examine your life against Scripture, not against those around you. Truth protects us, but only if we're willing to receive it.

**Day 3: Bearing Good Fruit**      **Reading: Matthew 7:15-20**      **Devotional:** Jesus gives us a clear test for authenticity: examine the fruit. Words are easy; anyone can claim devotion to God. But fruit—the tangible evidence of a transformed life—cannot be faked long-term. A good tree produces good fruit naturally, from its very nature. This principle applies both to evaluating spiritual leaders and to examining our own lives. What fruit is your life producing? Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness? Or anxiety, bitterness, selfishness, and compromise? Religious activity—even prophesying, casting out demons, or performing miracles—means nothing without genuine relationship with Christ. God isn't impressed with our résumé; He examines our character. Today, honestly assess the fruit in your life. If it's lacking, return to the root: deeper intimacy with Jesus, who alone transforms us from the inside out.

**Day 4: Christ's Preeminence**      **Reading: Colossians 1:15-18**      **Devotional:** Paul declares that Christ must have preeminence—first place—in all things. Not some things. Not most things. All things. This is the heart of the narrow way: absolute surrender to Christ's lordship. He is not merely a part of our life; He is the center around which everything else orbits. When Christ has preeminence, our decisions, relationships, finances, time, and ambitions all submit to His authority. The question isn't whether we believe in Jesus, but whether He truly has first place in every area of our lives. Where have we relegated Him to second or third position? What competes for the throne of our hearts? Today, conduct an honest inventory. Identify areas where Christ doesn't have preeminence, then consciously surrender those areas to Him. True freedom comes not from maintaining control but from giving Him complete authority over everything.

**Day 5: Eyes of the Heart Enlightened**      **Reading: Ephesians 1:18-21**      **Devotional:** Paul prays that our spiritual eyes would be opened to see three magnificent realities: the hope of our calling, the riches of our inheritance, and the surpassing greatness of God's power available to us. This is what we gain by walking the narrow way—not merely fire insurance from hell, but participation in Christ's resurrection power and eternal glory. The narrow path isn't about what we give up; it's about what we gain. We exchange temporal pleasures for eternal treasures, worldly acceptance for divine approval, and self-determination for Spirit-empowerment. The same power that raised Christ from death works in those who believe. This truth transforms how we face every challenge, temptation, and trial. Today, ask God to enlighten the eyes of your heart. Let Him show you the incomparable riches waiting for those who walk faithfully on the narrow way.