



**W**hen people began to organize their societies and create groups of persons who lived together in the same territorial space, contagious diseases took on a special role.

Throughout history, there have been many epidemics and pandemics that have plagued humanity, leaving millions of people affected by these diseases. In 541, the Byzantine Empire, which was the eastern division of the Roman Empire, was struck by a terrible plague that sowed death and destruction as it spread throughout Europe. In four months it overtook 40% of the population, more than 35 million people.

Between the years 1346-1353, the “black plague” killed half of the European population; it is estimated that more than 75 million people lost their lives.

Cholera outbreaks have been present from 1817 to the present day. It is currently estimated that 3 million infections occur each year, claiming up to 143,000 lives.

In 1918, during the last year of the First World War, the so-called “Spanish flu” began to spread throughout the world without control, leaving in its wake around 50 million deaths.

Smallpox, measles, and other pests have

appeared throughout history. But there is a pandemic that is worse and the most deadly. Without exception, we all suffer from it, and yet the vast majority of us ignore it. It appeared thousands of years ago, and despite enormous scientific efforts to eliminate its effects, no one has survived it.

It is called “sin” (or dishonor towards God and disobedience to Him). At the beginning, after creation, Adam and Eve became “infected” and spread the disease to all humanity. Despite the money and good deeds spent on a cure, no one has overcome the illness. The Bible clearly says: “*For the wages of sin is death.*”

However, there is good news! He goes on to say, “*But the free gift of God is eternal life, in Jesus Christ our Lord*” (Romans 6:23). And he gives us the reason for that statement: “*The blood (death) of the Lord Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin*” (1 John 1: 7b).

This cure by God was explained by Jesus when he said: “*God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life*” (John 3:16). It is a gift from God to you. Have you believed and accepted it? You can receive it today!



**M**aybe this story reminds you of someone you know. Let's use a fictitious name... William. He had an argument with his parents about various ideas and opinions and decided to leave his home. His mother kissed him and said, "I love you very much. You know the door is open for when you want to come back."

William thought that returning would force him to submit to the opinions of his parents, and his selfishness and pride would never allow him to do so. Many times he wanted to phone home to hear how his parents were doing, but he wouldn't because he felt it would be a confession that their beliefs and ideas were right.

On one occasion he teamed up with a friend, working hard to gain a good position, but he lost everything when the "friend" disappeared leaving him on the street. He had wasted so much time and money that he was embarrassed. He became convinced that his parents were resentful of what he had done and that they would never want to see him. He acknowledged that his decision to leave was too hasty and that his mistake was so great that he was not worthy of their love.

After two years he became sick with an illness that was very difficult to cure. His savings were diminishing and almost gone, and the people he had chosen as friends were abandoning him. In the end he was left by himself and was very lonely. One night, he thought of his home and what life would be like there. He felt he had to call his parents on the phone to say hello. No matter how resentful his parents were, he decided he'd have to swallow his own pride and call.

Regaining strength, the next day he made the call. As he waited, his hands trembled partly because of his weakness, and partly because of the emotion he felt. At last they answered; it was his mother's voice.

"Mom, it's Billy!"

His mother burst into tears and couldn't speak, while William was in agony, fearing she wouldn't want to speak with him. She finally said, "Son, I was waiting for your call. Since you left, I've been by the phone practically day and night. I love you very much. Come back, please."

Then it was William's turn to cry. "But, Mom, after what I did, I'm not worthy to come back. I'm so embarrassed!"

"But Son," answered his mother in a trembling voice, "all was forgiven long ago. Nothing will make us happier than seeing you again!"

Many people wonder if God will listen to them because they have ignored Him for so long. They say, "Do I have the right to speak to Him now? Will God listen to me?"

Sometimes when we ask ourselves this question we believe that He will not listen to us because of our disobedience and our sin. We think that He is not willing to receive us. We need to realize that God is always willing to forgive us, no matter how serious our offense is.

The key to establishing a relationship with God is that we sincerely seek Him, acknowledging and confessing that we are sinners. We must admit that we need His forgiveness, believing that Jesus Christ, being God, is our Lord and Savior, who died in our place. We can pray right now, and He will surely answer our request.

We hope you make that "call" before an emergency arrives. But if not, remember that an emergency may possibly come upon you in a specific way so that in your despair you will call on God, who continues to await your call. The Lord says in Psalm 50:15: "*Call on me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you and you will honor me.*" □

# Which path are you on?

The Bible is full of fascinating illustrations and stories, and through them God is able to express eternal and spiritual truths for us. One of those illustrations refers to the steps a person takes in this life to reach their eternal destiny. It is compared to a path.

The passage in Matthew chapter 7 speaks of two of these paths. It says: "*Enter by the narrow*



*gate; for the gate is wide and the way (path) is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it."*

It is evident that the wide path is the one taken by the person who seeks only what pleases him or her. The Bible says it is very spacious, but it leads to eternal destruction.

The narrow path, on the other hand, is not as easy to discover or follow, but it leads to eternal life. Most people settle the matter thinking, "Of course I am on the road to Heaven"

However, the Bible speaks of another way, and most people have never noticed it. It is in Proverbs 14:12 which says, "*There is a way which man thinks is right; but its end is a path of death.*" We can to choose this path by mistakenly believing that it is the best way to reach eternal life.

The truth is, although it seems to be good, this third path ends up at the same place as the wide path. They are one and the same path. There is really no difference between the two.

If we choose to enter through the narrow door, then we will walk the path that leads to eternal life.

The Lord Jesus Christ said, "*I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved*" (John 10:9).

Which path are you on?

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# The poor rich man



**C**arlos was an office worker with a power company in the City of London. By betting on British football games, he had won 225,134 pounds, which at that time was an incredible sum of money.

After speaking for several hours with some professional financial advisors about how to invest his money and maintain it, Carlos left the bank. On his way out a journalist asked him to make a statement.

He stood by his big car which was driven by a chauffeur and said, "I think I must be the saddest and most depressed man of

England! I was perfectly happy when I lived in my little house in a working-class neighborhood in the City. Now I feel depressed and very unhappy. I'd like to be back with the other boys in the office. If I had won only a small amount I would be happy, but the quantity I won is too much for a man like me!"

Not everyone would feel the same way as Carlos. We would need to be in his situation to see how we'd react. The truth is he expressed what many people honestly think about their possessions, even if they don't want to admit it. Wealth complicates our lives, raises concerns and strips the holder of some of the best things in life. And, if wealth is given too much importance and priority, it can completely drown out spiritual needs and concerns.

The Bible says: *"Let your conduct be without covetousness, be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave your nor forsake you' "* (Hebrews 13:5). And *"And having food and clothing, with these we will be content"* (1 Timothy 6:8).

It is possible, and very likely, that we are concerned about material possessions in a way that can lead us to lose everything that has permanent value. Jesus said, *"For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his soul?"* (Matthew 16:26). □