

KIRBSTONES

ALONG THE NARROW WAY

curb-stone (kürb'stön') - *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 ⁽¹⁾to hold the material in the roadbed, ⁽²⁾to prevent the scattering of the material along the edges, and ⁽³⁾to define the road itself from all the adjoining areas.

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

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What defines you? What do you examine or calculate daily that gives you a really good feeling inside about (1) who you are, (2) what you are about, or (3) how you experience yourself, as you try to measure up?

How do you measure your self worth? What plumb line do you engage to quantify your success? As you assess yourself, with whom do you compare yourself? What are your standards for this personal measurement?

How we answer these questions can shed a great deal of light on our values because of our competitive human nature. And, our answers help us define our self worth, which drives our self esteem. What are your drivers?

Historically, folks have compared themselves to their neighbors. They seek affirmation that they have arrived by measuring the value of their homes, driving the most expensive and latest model cars, or dressing in the latest styles as designers move hemlines up and down and shrink lapels and ties from wide to narrow and back to wide.

Where we work, where we play golf, and where we worship have defined our self worth for generations. And, if the information is available, the size of one's financial portfolio can become a critical driver in this very shallow perspective of human worth.

More recently our drivers of self worth may range from a daily check on our credit scores—*tirelessly seeking that elusive 850*—or the quantity of likes we receive on a personal social media post on Facebook. Whatever we are using to measure up, to affirm our worth, or to appear better than someone else is absolute folly when we consider the nature of our eternity.

The apostle, Paul, teaches that (1) we are all the same, (2) we are brothers and sisters in Christ, and (3) we are to place our trust in the promise that God fulfilled in the sacrifice—*once for all*—when Jesus died for our sins and was resurrected overcoming the sin that had separated us from the Father.

6 This mystery is that through the gospel the gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 3:6 — NIV

If history has taught us anything about western civilization in past centuries, it is that life is all about us, and that we are to strive to do all in our power to succeed, to excel, and to move beyond everyone else. Our society teaches that life is a competition and that we must compete to prove our worth.

That good feeling we get when we step on the bathroom scale, and the number displayed is favorable, can be a positive indicator of our general health. The celebration of lights and vibration we experience when we reach 10,000 steps on our fitness trackers is another sign that we are intentionally minding our health.

The dangerous signs that we are giving too much attention to the frivolous and inconsequential details of our lives pop up when we put too much emphasis on things that are of showy pretense.

One way to gauge if we are too deeply immersed in our own self worth—as *it can be measured in this world*—is when our daily mood is affected by what we seek to affirm.

Jesus came (1) *to overcome* the sin that had plagued our world for generations, (2) *to defeat* Satan as he put him in his place, and (3) *to pave* the way for us to finally experience God's grace, so that we could all benefit from a relationship with our Father in heaven. Folks, this is not a competition! God wants all of us to experience the love he extends to us.

How are you measuring your personal self worth? Are you looking at pretense and at trivial things that will pass from this life? Are you engaged in activities that will surely take you further from a healthy relationship with your Father in heaven? Or, are you focused on things eternal, and, as a result, declaring God's grace for everyone, discipling others as we are taught in Scripture?

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Robert Wingfield Kirby III, D.Min.