



As you journey through these pages, we encourage you to scan every QR Code to have an interactive experience with the people, the sights and the sounds of Narrow Gate in all its various expressions.

SCAN THE CODE IN 3 EASY STEPS:



Throughout this book you will find QR codes to pages with more information or products.

- 1. Open your Camera app.
- 2. Hold your phone so the QR code appears in the viewfinder.
 Once your phone recognizes a code a notification will pop up.
- 3. Tap the notification to open the linked page.



Bill & Stacy Spencer

How do you tell a story in 30 pages that you've lived over 20 years? It's quite impossible ... and yet ... we've put together this snapshot of the journey of our lives over the past 20 years in hope that you will be inspired and reminded of God's work. In today's world, it's easy to ask, 'Where is God?' The media we consume seems to be filled with pain, suffering and darkness. It can easily overwhelm us and cause us to begin to doubt whether God still cares ... that He's still at work in the lives of everyday people.

God doesn't work through perfect people ... He works through broken people willing to be obedient to His Word and His ways. That is our story – and it's much like the story of every other person who decided to set aside their own 'personal agenda' and pursue God's agenda. We weren't officially trained...we didn't have a business plan or proforma. We just heard God speak and humbly obeyed.

What has happened over the past 20 years could never be encapsulated into the pages of a book. So, instead of telling the story of Narrow Gate, we wanted to share with you the IMPACT of Narrow Gate. We spent eight months researching the impact of Narrow Gate and contacted hundreds of our Graduates to ask this poignant question: How are YOU doing as a result of what we're doing? The premise is rather simple: to truly research an organization's impact, you don't measure the organization and its efforts... you measure the people impacted by the organization. Throughout this magazine, you'll find Key Findings and excerpts from interviews that were conducted as we surveyed hundreds of our Graduates from our beginning in 2004 until now, asking them if their core values changed, if their priorities changed, and if their lives were truly impacted by God through the ministry of Narrow Gate.

Young men have been coming to this sacred place for 20 years ... how has it changed them? Are the effects of that change long-lasting? How can you experience some of that change for yourself? If you are interested in finding the answers to those questions...just turn the page...your story is not over...God IS at work and He has put this story into your hands to speak to you. And, like every other person who has ever felt compelled to something greater than self, you'll get to use the inspiration captured in these pages to ask and answer the question, "Will I obey the call of God in my life?"

We're grateful beyond words for the thousands of people who have made Narrow Gate possible! Your choice has made this collective calling a reality. **May God continue to get all the glory!**

The eight month residential experience at Narrow Gate Lodge is available to qualified young men (ages 18-25), regardless of their financial resources. We have been able to offer students tuition-free experiences since our inception because of the generosity of thousands of people – and we invite you to join us. Narrow Gate is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and donations are tax deductible.

WHO AM I AND WHY AM I HERE?

Tucked away down a winding road in the hills of Middle Tennessee sits a 122-acre piece of property that appears unassuming at first. While the road is off the beaten path, hundreds of students and many friends have travelled here to find answers to two of life's most important questions: "Who am I?" and "Why am I here?"

The travellers come from all different backgrounds, geographic regions, ages, lifestyles, educations, occupations and religions. All in search of answers to some of life's most difficult questions.

Seeking answers ... seeking community ... they continue to come.

And after staying for a season – satisfied they have found what they are looking for – each person leaves this special place to take up their place in the world. To give to others the answers they have discovered. To live a life that truly matters.

FIELD GUIDE

TRANSFORM LIVES



LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR CORE TEACHINGS THAT TRANSFORM LIVES

This handy little Field Guide was created – to help you discover the answer to two of life's most important questions.







- NARROW GATE -

Narrow Gate Lodge is a place where young men ages 18-25 can get away from the distractions of the world to pursue God and His calling on their lives.

In the past 20 years, we've accepted young men from all kinds of backgrounds:

- High School graduates
- High School drop-outs
- College graduates
- College opt-outs

You see, we're not as focused on where a young man has been as where he's going. We are looking for young men who have the courage to step away ... to break the mold and do something different.

Narrow Gate Lodge is for young men who want to *Discover a Life that Matters*

NG IS TUITION-FREE!

NOTES ON LUKE 15

THE LOST COIN · THE LOST SHEEP · THE LOST SON Discover God's Passion for Restoring the Lost

by Bill Spencer

he road connecting Dickson, Tennessee, to Clarksville, Tennessee, is an hour of river bluffs and rolling hills covered in beautiful hardwood trees and farmland. It's the kind of road you'd choose on a sunny Sunday afternoon if you were looking for the perfect afternoon drive. I had never been on that stretch of two-lane, but I was fairly sure that the traffic would be light, and that the scenery would be inspiringly beautiful. I had no idea how right that thought would turn out to be. I would not have normally chosen to drive that stretch of highway, but my wife, Stacy, and I were headed north to see my parents in Missouri. We were already on the western side of Nashville and the connection to I-24 through the Tennessee countryside was the best way to avoid traffic. So, we loaded up in the car and headed north.

It was 2005 and our journey with Narrow Gate was still fresh. There weren't many days that passed without an attempt to glean some new insight about the Christian life from a book or a recorded sermon. We had the complete attention of Narrow Gate's earliest students, and they were looking to us for guidance—a truth that kept us hungry and scared every day. The ten-hour car ride to northern Missouri seemed like a golden opportunity to make some progress toward the hope that we wouldn't let them down.

We weren't ten minutes into the drive when we hit play on a John MacArthur sermon titled "The Tale Of Two Sons." We arrived at the end of that two-lane journey just as the sermon came to a close. My mind and heart had encountered a new way to look at the parables of Jesus, and I could never go back to the way I had seen the text before this encounter. I'm not sure that either of us said a word. We simply started again from the beginning.

The second listening was no less powerful than the first. It wasn't so much about the crafting of the message or the delivery of the sermon. It was the presence of God in the car with us as we listened. It was a spiritual awakening to the truth that the goodness of God can make purpose and passion burst into life in the heart of anyone—regardless of how much time had been wasted in pursuit of things that had no eternal or relational value. I could hear it in my heart; this was my story. This was the story of every guy who had agreed to enroll in Narrow Gate during its fledgling and ignorant beginning. This was the story of everyone everywhere who was honest enough to recognize that nothing we have or do can merit our redemption.

We finished the trip in constant conversation about the text, the sermon, the implications, and the ramifications. On and on we talked. I knew that I had to share this experience with the Narrow Gate guys, and I felt (as usual) completely ill-equipped and insufficient for the job. At least the long trip to Missouri and back would give me time to craft a plan. I truly believed that there was no way I could replicate the impact that this story had made in and on my life.

When we returned to Tennessee, I was anxious (yes, both eager and frightened) to get in front of the guys and see if this powerful encounter could be translated into their hearts. But it's important to get a picture of the circumstances we were living in during 2005. Stacy and I were still residing on the west side of Nashville. We had rented a small (800 square feet) log cabin on the southern side of Nashville, which was adjacent to the property where the Narrow Gate students spent their days. The cabin was for our "staff" and the students camped out on the backside of a church camp for kids. Stacy and I still worked at the company we began

in 1998, and the Narrow Gate students worked on building out and maintaining the camp during the days.

The staff would cook a casserole, of some sort, for dinner, and we would all meet around 6:00 p.m. at an outdoor pavilion on the church camp property. We'd sit at picnic tables and eat our food from paper plates with plasticware. When the meal was over, we'd gather around a fire until 10:00 p.m. or so, talking about God and His Word. That was the scenario that gave me the opportunity to try and hand my Luke 15 experience over to the guys. All I can tell you is that the goodness of God is able to accomplish what most of us are typically insufficient to even imagine.

It was powerful, conversation was lively, and the students were engaged even more than they would have been on a typical night. I don't recall how many nights we came back to this text and rehearsed its truth. It seemed like every time we opened the conversation, something new would bubble to the surface. It died off after a while, but when a couple of months passed, a new class arrived. The older students asked if the new guys were going to get to hear the lesson. A couple more months passed by and the same question arose. It became "tradition," of some sort, that one of the first lessons any Narrow Gate student would hear was Jesus' parable in Luke 15. In truth, that repeated event became one of my favorite things in life.

The circumstances of Narrow Gate changed a great deal in the years that followed that simple beginning. Narrow Gate moved away from the church camp and on to a home of our own—122 acres of Tennessee hillside (similar to the land that I drove through on the day I first listened to Luke 15). Now, the newest students of Narrow Gate camp on the highest hill on the Narrow Gate Lodge property. And every two months, as tradition would have it, a parade of older students gather with a staff member and climb Foundation Hill to sit around a campfire and tell the story of Luke 15. I cannot recall how many times I've made that hike, but not one of them disappointed.

If you ask a student what their favorite lesson at Narrow Gate was, you'll almost undoubtedly get the same response: Luke 15. At a recent graduate reunion, we asked the students which Narrow Gate Notes book they would like to have next. The response was unanimous: Luke 15! It was their

favorite lesson at Narrow Gate, and they wanted a tool to help pass their experience on to the people they love.

So, I'm sitting here writing this introduction. And I feel just as inept and inadequate to do this task as I felt on the day that I sat in the car knowing that I had to try and convey my experience to the students. But I've come to know this: God's goodness is sufficient to overcome any ineptitude or inadequacy that lives within me. The Holy Spirit's capacity to transcend human frailty is unquestionable, and that truth can be realized by both of us in this journey. He can empower my heart and mind to convey the hope that He brought to life in my heart from the day I heard this parable. And He can empower your heart to believe that a transformation is possible in you that you have never imagined.

NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE ON THIS JOURNEY
OF LIFE IN CHRIST, YOU ARE NOT WHERE YOU CAN
GO NEXT! THE POSSIBILITY TO BECOME WHAT
YOU HAVE ONLY HOPED, OR NEVER IMAGINED,
IS AS REAL AS THE POWER OF GOD TO SAVE AND
TRANSFORM LIFE.

That's a power I've witnessed consistently and constantly in my time with Narrow Gate. As you read through these pages, keep your heart tuned to the things that God is saying to you. Let His thoughts about your life become your thoughts about your life. Allow His picture of who He is calling you to be to become the hope of your tomorrow. Record this journey in the pages provided, and then believe that He is able and willing to make what seems impossible today, the reality of tomorrow! Let's get started.



PURPOSE

the reason for which something is done or created or for which something exists



IDENTITY CHANGE PRODUCES LASTING TRANSFORMATION

Key Finding #1: Lasting transformation happens because of a change in core beliefs.

ur data show that lasting transformation happens because of a change in core beliefs. An axiom we frequently use at Narrow Gate is "everything we do, every single day is an affirmation of what we believe to be true about ourselves." We use this axiom as a way to express the reality that what we believe about ourselves - what we believe about God, others, and our world - directly impacts how we feel and how we act. What we believe about our identity drives our behaviors. As a man thinks, so he is. The only place any of us can find such a durable identity is in the Scriptures. Narrow Gate establishes Scripture as a reliable source of truth and then explores how God views anyone who is 'in Christ' and provides real-life application for what it looks like to walk out your identity in Christ. Throughout our interviews we heard that the young men who come to Narrow Gate are in search of the answers to two questions: Who am I and Why am I here? We promise to help them discover a life that matters by helping them discover their Godgiven identity and purpose.

Discovering one's purpose is central to answering the question: *Why am I here?* But what about

that first question, *Who am I?*During their time at Narrow Gate, our students are informed (some for the first time) of the power of God to transform lives and give us new identities full of purpose.

ONE INTERVIEWEE SAID, "I AM
ABLE TO HAVE CONFIDENCE
IN BIG DECISIONS AND AM NO
LONGER PARALYZED BY FEAR."
ANOTHER SAID, "I EXPERIENCED
A PARADIGM SHIFT IN MY HEART
AND MIND AS I UNDERSTOOD
GOD AND HIS INTENTIONS
TOWARDS ME WERE FOR GOOD.
BEFORE NG, I BELIEVED GOD
JUST TOLERATED ME. AFTER NG,
I BELIEVED I WAS DEEPLY LOVED
BY HIM AND THAT CHANGED
HOW I VIEWED MYSELF AND
OTHERS."

Experiencing a change in identity alters one's core beliefs and changes the trajectory of one's life and life choices. In today's world of ever-changing identities, the Gospel provides a solid, unchanging identity for anyone who accepts Jesus as Lord and

Savior, We've witnessed how this unchanging identity provides stability for young men who are just beginning their adult lives and need a solid foundation to build upon. Identity in Christ and a belief in the validity of Scripture sets a sure foundation that young men can build on for the rest of their lives. For example, many came to NG with beliefs about their identity such as "I am unloved," "I am a failure," "I am an addict," "I am unworthy," or "I am weak." But as they learned and embraced their new identity in Christ through the NG experience and began to believe who God says they are their fundamental core truths changed and they began to believe that, "I am loved," "I am accepted," "I am capable," "I am valued," and "I am courageous." These new beliefs resulted in new actions and choices which impact their daily choices and lives for decades to come.

This impressive growth in confidence in their new identity is vital because it's this change in core beliefs that causes the lasting transformation we witness at NG.

Our graduates – even 10 years after leaving Narrow Gate – still quote powerful scriptural truths that inform their identity every day, which impacts their behaviors every day. 1 Corinthians 5:17 says: "I am a new creation in Christ. The old has passed away, behold all things have become new." Truths like these are now so deeply embedded into the hearts and minds of our graduates that they produce new habits, actions and thought patterns that propel them to live lives differently than before. For example, one graduate said, "I no longer recognize the manipulative boy I was before I showed up at NG ... I no longer associate with that thinking, attitude or behavior."

Another Graduate shared, "The world says behavior dictates identity but in reality, it is identity that dictates behavior." This graduate shared how his beliefs about himself before college (I'm not smart, I'm not disciplined, I don't want to go to school) led to poor college grades. So, he opted out of college and attended NG. After graduating NG, he stayed on as an intern and a staff member for another year before leaving NG to go back to college. After experiencing a life-transforming identity change at NG, when he returned to college with a different view of self (I am capable, with God all things are possible, I can do hard things), he was able to complete his college degree and got top grades while doing so.

When asked about the identity shift that happened to them as a result of NG, our interviewees say their identity went from "addict," "failure," "unloved," "unworthy," or "weak" to "freed from sin," "loved," "accepted," "cherished," "valued," and "courageous".

When these young men accept spiritual truth and spiritual identities as their current realities, every current decision and future decision becomes informed by Biblical principles. This illustrates how a change in core beliefs leads to lasting transformation.

This is important because it affirms our belief that the surety of Scripture transcends time and causes long-term impacts in people's lives. In our ever-changing world, Scripture provides a solid foundation for young men that helps them in their decision-making which is central to living a life that honors God.

95%

Because of my time at NG, I have discovered my PURPOSE IN LIFE!

100%

As a result of NG, I am more confident in my IDENTITY IN CHRIST!



SIGNIFICANCE

What is significant about our findings is the cascading affect our core beliefs concerning our identities has on every aspect of our lives.

At Narrow Gate, the foundational truths young men learn about God, His Word and what God says about believers in Christ ('you are a new creation'), are so transformational that they literally change every aspect of their lives for the rest of their lives.

Truth bears fruit in all areas ... relationships, career choices, daily disciplines or habits, even daily attitudes and perspectives are informed by their new identity which drives new behaviors, attitudes or thoughts.





Our company's focus is on roasting high-quality beans from responsible farms with organic practices. And while building a coffee roasting business is our focus, our purpose is building our people. You see, we believe that the workplace is a great environment for discipleship! As our team learns how to take a raw green bean and transform it into a finished product, they also are learning how they can be transformed through their work at NG Coffee Co. Leadership training, Bible studies, authentic community, business training....all these are essential to helping our people grow!

MEET OUR SIGNATURE BLENDS

FIRESIDE, RIDGELINE AND CRAFT & KING

- Our signature blends were named by our students who expressed how the RIDGELINE of the NG property is a special place for long walks.
- Transformational studies happen FIRESIDE.
- While Craft & King represents the craftsmanship at NG all In service to our King Jesus.



COFFEE CO COFFEE

COFFEE SUBSCRIPTION & NEVER RUN OUT OF YOUR FAVORITE BLENDS!

You can support the ongoing work of Narrow Gate by signing up for our monthly subscription service!

Each month, your fresh coffee will arrive at your door and with each cup, you'll not only enjoy the robust flavors but you'll know you are making an impact in someone's life!

DISCOVER A LIFE THAT MATTERS

STORIES OF LIFE TRANSFORMATION FROM NARROW GATE

t culminated with a suicide attempt.

I believed Christianity was a legalistic set of rules you had to live your life by, and I perceived God as a very distant, judgmental authority figure. All of this led to crippling depression. I was depressed for years and years. It got to the point I was planning to take my life and had a couple of thwarted attempts.

Then somebody mentioned Narrow Gate to me.

I was resistant to Narrow Gate at first, to be honest. It sounded terrible on paper: "Let's give up your phone and independence and go live in the woods for eight months."

But I was desperate. I didn't know "who" I was, or "why" I was

I sometimes will think back to things that happened before Narrow Gate and it feels like they're someone else's memories because I'm so radically changed by coming to have an actual, personal relationship with Christ — a thing I didn't know existed prior to that.

I had a great deal of biblical knowledge prior to Narrow Gate. I had grown up in church. I had read the Bible through numerous times. I showed up feeling like there wasn't a whole lot for me there. I was completely wrong! Because, what there was for me was what I was missing!

Living in the barn with ten other guys for months was probably the most important experience of my life. I learned how to see Christ in others, and I learned others could see Christ in me—which was just incredible. I had a deep problem with self-loathing. I had never felt lovable. What I needed was to be around people who loved me and to learn how to love people and how to love myself — because you can't love others as you love yourself if you hate yourself. And I did.

A graduate named Josh Meyers came out one weekend – kind of spur of the moment – to teach blacksmithing. Another guy and I said we would love to learn. I knew nothing about it. Never held a hammer in my life. He taught us some basic blacksmithing techniques. It was an awakening for me.

It was this incredible experience I'd never had before — making something with my hands. It lit a fire in me. It's all I wanted to do from that point on. I spent so much time out in the shops. It was wonderful. We had guys from the Tennessee Association of Woodturners come out. They taught me a lot.

Once I graduated, I transitioned to working at Narrow Gate Artisans and helping get that set up. I spent time with Phil Stoner, and he taught me more than I can express about design and woodworking and how to create beautiful things.

My real passion was the design side of things. I spent time with Bill, and we realized I had a passion and knack for operating the CNC – using the software and understanding how it functioned. A CNC is a computer-controlled cutting device. You use computer drafting software, like AutoCAD, to design objects. Then you program it so that the robotic cutter carves it. I really love the puzzle of it. I love having to think through everything and design it in advance. When I left, I was the metal shop and CNC supervisor.

I left Nashville, moved back to Amarillo, and stumbled into this job – a job I love, working for a company I really like, doing creative and fulfilling things every day. I met the woman who is now my wife. We fell in love, got married, and now have a daughter who turned one February 10th. Her name is Elsie Honey Webb Meredith. God led me back here – clearly for a lot of reasons — all completely different from what I thought they would be.

I work for a general contractor, Reinbold Incorporated, and we focus primarily on renovations. We've grown massively. We've got a huge new shop and 16 guys working here. I've got my own office now. It's very different from when I started, but I love it. I really do.

The first thing we see God do biblically is an act of creation. And it's not just utilitarian creation – it's art. It's something I've thought about a lot — the relationship between being reborn, becoming a child of God, and craftsmanship.

God, who, needing nothing, created something beautiful – just because! I think it's an element of us being built in His image that people are compelled to create. I think because we're created in God's image, we have the artisan spirit that God also has. When you begin to develop a deep relationship with God – those who have a bent towards it – that aspect of God in us tends to come out.

The very first instance in the Bible of anyone being filled with the Spirit was Bezalel and Oholiab in Exodus 31. They were the craftsmen who God anointed to build the Tabernacle. It's the first instance in the Bible of anyone filled with the Spirit. It's not for prophecy or warfare or any of the other things we tend to think about but it's to create things of beauty.

Operating the CNC and being able to envision an object and design it and then create it using that process. It really became my bread and butter. It's what I do now for a living. I love it. It's interesting how many of the things I learned at Narrow Gate, and then working at Narrow Gate Artisans, have really, really fed into it, too.

In my time at Narrow Gate Artisans, especially thanks to the guidance and teaching and mentorship from Phil, I learned the business side of it — how to design a product and market it. How to understand margins. A lot of those things that have really come into play in my daily life now are things that I learned sitting at the feet of Phil and listening to him teach us about how to construct a business.

When I was working with Narrow Gate Artisans in the early days, we did a lot of platters and cups and bowls. Today, I make everything. I build cabinetry, custom architectural accents, furniture — really all manner of things. A few months back, I built the housing for

a stained-glass fixture from the 1700's. The sky is the limit! I'll spend eight hours a day working and then clock out and continue working on my own projects afterwards. I'm building my daughter's crib with the CNC right now!

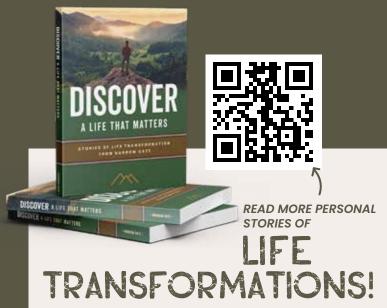
I wake up some days and I cannot comprehend how I arrived here! I was completely transformed.

Narrow Gate is this incredible process. I am still in a constant state of transformation and growth that was sparked by that. I'm a completely different, better, more mature, more loving person than I was when I left Narrow Gate in 2016. It started lifelong growth in me.

THAT'S A MIRACULOUS THING. NARROW GATE IS IN A CONSTANT STATE OF FLUX. EVERY PERSON WHO LEAVES AND COMES BACK IS SHOCKED BECAUSE IT'S SO DIFFERENT FROM THE WAY IT WAS WHEN THEY LEFT. BUT IT'S IN THIS CONSTANT STATE OF CHANGING TO BE EXACTLY WHAT IT NEEDS TO BE FOR THE PEOPLE WHO ARRIVE THERE – WHEN THEY ARRIVE THERE. THERE IS NO EXPLANATION FOR THAT OTHER THAN ABSOLUTELY THE INTERVENTION OF GOD!

I had no idea what to expect at Narrow Gate, but it was exactly what I needed. It was challenging, and it was fun, and it absolutely saved my life!"

-McKingie Meredith





PRAISE THE LORD!

f we believe that the 'spirit that raised Jesus from the dead, now resides in us' (Romans 8:11), then all we have to do is allow that Spirit to worship God through our bodies. At NG, young men who attend may come from various religious backgrounds or no religious background at all. During their time in this beautiful creation, they have time and opportunity to see things they may have never seen before or to even contemplate creation, sunrises, sunsets, waterfalls, leaves, small creatures that live in the woods. Everything that God created tells us something about God if we'll stop and watch and listen and consider.

A common axiom at NG is "you can't engage your body in any kind of activity and have your soul remain unaffected." Our bodies and souls are intertwined ... what happens in our soul, affects our bodies and what happens in our bodies, affects our souls. That's why there is the physical side of the NG experience camping, hiking, adventure. We are engaging the body to affect the soul.

Worship is also a way we engage the body and affect our soul. Opening our mouths, clapping our hands, raising our hands, bowing down prostrate...these are all physical activities that

when we engage these while worshipping God have an impact on our soul and our emotions.

Worship is a part of the daily life at NG. It may not always include music but worship is what our souls long to do. We discover that we can worship God while washing the dishes, running a weedeater, sitting still in the woods or on the porch swing contemplating nature. We can cultivate a lifestyle of worship and that will change us from the inside out.



WATCH THIS SHORT VIDEO ON THE **DIFFERENCE BETWEEN**

PRAISE & WORSHIP



WE PROVIDE AN ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUNG MEN TO DISCOVER THEIR IDENTITY AND PURPOSE.

On 122 wooded, rolling acres an hour southwest of Nashville, everyday life is traded for pursuing outdoor adventrue, learning meaningful life skills, living in community, and working together. Students try their hand at wood, leather, and metal crafting, and explore the ancient truths of Scripture. Narrow Gate Lodge offers a transformative, eight month tuition-free experience for young men ages 18-25.

, LEARN MORE



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OVER 6,500 5-STAR REVIEWS



TRUTH

the reality God created and defined, and over which He rules



Key Finding #2: Biblical truths create and sustain ongoing impact in our Graduates' lives and those they encounter.

he truths young men learn during their time at NG are transformational in the immediate and continue to impact their lives for decades to come. Bible study happens everyday and sometimes multiple times throughout the day at NG. And it's not just study but discussion. We believe that's one of the things that makes NG so impactful. A student can listen to a lesson from a live teacher and that same person is there the next morning having breakfast so questions can be answered. Because the truths taught at NG are foundational, they affect the basic core beliefs of every young man as well as their views on life, society, relationships and religion.

Our interviewees repeated back to us many of the lessons they learned and explained how those foundational truths are still relevant to their daily results...it's measured by obedience," one responded. in obedience to God while trusting God with all the outcomes in his life. This results in his feeling joyful and hopeful about his future whereas before NG, he was unsure and insecure. "Know the truth, believe the truth, take action on the truth and your feelings will get in line...sometimes" was another truth that a young man shared. He explained how knowing the daily, even when he doesn't feel like it. Over time, he knows that if he will be faithful to ACT on the truth, his feelings will begin to line up with his actions instead of the other way around. These truths don't just inform actions, they inform attitudes and beliefs.

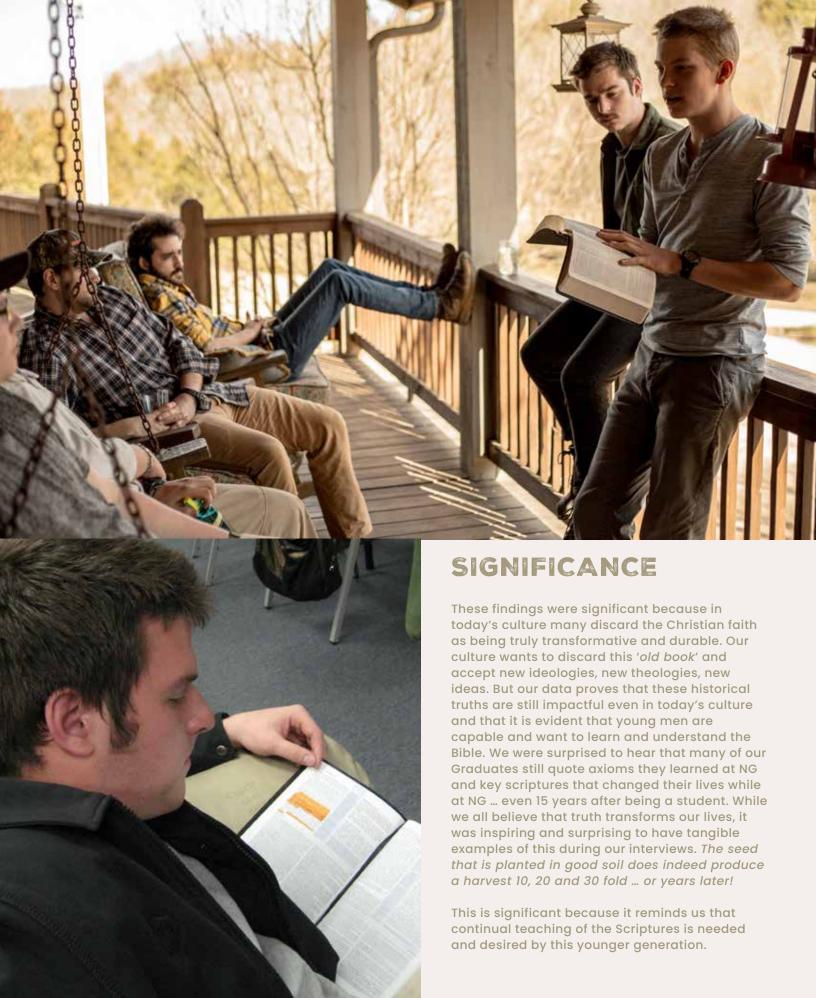
One interviewee shared how before NG, he viewed his

resources as his own, but he no longer believes that. He said, "Everything I have is a gift from God. So, I now always inquire of God, how He wants me to invest the resources He's given me. I am a much more generous person than I've ever been and God is continuing to stretch me in being even more generous."

WHEN DESCRIBING SOME OF THE TRUTHS LEARNED WHILE AT NG, OUR RESPONDENTS USED WORDS LIKE 'TRANSFORMATIONAL," "SUBMISSION," "LOVE," "SACRIFICE," "HONESTY," "AUTHENTIC," "EXISTENTIAL." "SELFLESS." AND "HUMILITY."

At NG, we help increase young men's Biblical literacy, but we also teach them tools to help them understand the Bible at a more personal level. According to our survey data, there is a dramatic difference in a young man's understanding of the Bible before NG and after NG. Before NG, almost 70% of respondents reported that they understood their Bible only a little or not at all. After NG, more than 90% of respondents reported that they understand the Bible quite a bit or a lot.





DIRECTION

the position towards which someone or something moves or faces



Key Finding #3: The practice of spiritual disciplines informs the discovery of purpose in all aspects of life.

roverbs 23:7 says, "As a man thinks so he is." It's been proven how powerfully our thoughts impact our behaviors and attitudes. That's why the practice of spiritual disciplines is so vital to living a purposeful and meaningful life. At NG, we provide training on spiritual disciplines and because students are with us for 8 months, by the time they leave NG, these disciplines have become regular habits for them. Because they experience the benefits of daily practice during their time at NG, they are more likely to continue those disciplines once they leave NG.

Regarding spiritual disciplines, one respondent shared, "WELL, NARROW GATE SET ME UP FOR SUCCESS IN A LOT OF WAYS. BUILDING THE DAILY HABIT OF SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES..., JUST GETTING IN THE WORD, GETTING IN PRAYER. BUILDING THE HABIT WAS REALLY ESSENTIAL.

BUT ALSO CHANGING MY PERSPECTIVE ON THOSE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES. IT USED TO BE SOMETHING THAT WAS JUST GOOD TO DO...BUT NARROW GATE HELPED ME TO SEE THAT THIS IS ESSENTIAL FOR MY SPIRITUAL LIVELIHOOD. THIS IS FOOD. THIS IS WATER. THIS IS WHAT EQUIPS ME TO HANDLE THE ONSLAUGHT OF THE WORLD. THAT'S AWESOME. NOW, I NEED TO BE IN PRAYER. I NEED TO GET IN THE BIBLE."

AFTER NG

Able to **HEAR** from God!

AFTER NG

Make decisions based on Biblical principals or





Hearing from God is also an essential part of the Christian faith and practicing the spiritual disciplines enables us to do just that. Our survey data show the dramatic impact NG had on these young men's ability to hear from God.

Before NG, almost 75% of respondents reported that they were unable to hear from God. After NG, more than 89% reported they were able to hear from God quite a bit or a lot.

When asked about decision-making, 89% of our survey respondents indicated that after NG, they make a lot more decisions based on Biblical principles and obedience to God. This means that because of our work with young men and establishing spiritual disciplines, their process of decision-making is being deeply impacted their process of decision-making is being deeply impacted for the rest of their lives.

"YOU CANNOT ENGAGE YOUR BODY IN ANY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND HAVE YOUR SOUL REMAIN UNAFFECTED."

Narrow Gate Axiom

SIGNIFICANCE

What's encouraging about this finding is that given time (eight months) and the right environment to practice the *spiritual disciplines*, young men discover the benefits of practicing the spiritual disciplines.

It's easy to be less than disciplined, but what our data showed is that young men who continued in the practice of the disciplines after leaving the NG environment continued to have positive experiences by impacting other people's daily lives.

It's encouraging to think of young men praying WITH their employees or walking up to a stranger in a Kroger because they were prompted by God and to consider what impact these types of activities can have on others and our world in general.

- NARROW GATE -

GRADUATES ARE...

FATHERS, HUSBANDS, SONS, COLLEGE STUDENTS, REAL ESTATE DEVELOPERS, DOCTORS, AVIATORS, ENGINEERS, PASTORS, WORSHIP LEADERS, MILITARY SERVICEMEN, COLLEGE GRADUATES, BUSINESS LEADERS, HOME BUILDERS, FINANCIAL ADVISORS, ARTISANS, SOFTWARE DEVELOPERS, GRAPHIC DESIGNERS, VIDEOGRAPHERS, TEACHERS, ELECTRICIANS, ACCOUNTANTS, ANAYLYSTS, LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS, PYCHOLOGISTS, MARKETERS, MANAGERS, FIREFIGHTERS, PLUMBERS, MISSIONARIES, FIRST RESPONDERS,

BUT MOST OF ALL . . .



OUR MISSION AT NARROW GATE IS TO MAKE **DISCIPLES!**

While we focus on doing that mainly through our residential program known as NG Lodge, we also want to provide resources to help YOU grow as a disciple. Check these out . . .

IN MY OWN WORDS

Our most popular YouTube series - In My Own Words - features NG Students sharing a unique teaching or scripture that has personally impacted their lives. These messages are completely written by the students in their own words.

CHECK OUT THIS SERIES ON OUR YOUTUBE PAGE TO HEAR HOW GOD IS TRANSFORMING LIVES AT NG







A podcast embarking on a journey of discovery as we navigate the depths of the Christian faith and living a life that matters. Created, hosted and produced by NG Graduates, Colin Smith, Logan Pringle & Weston Brann.







MINISTRY OF JESUS - BOOK AND VIDEO SERIES

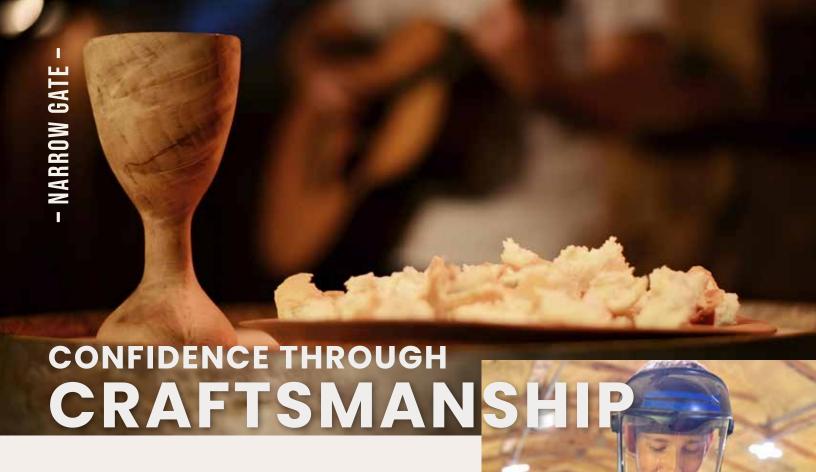
Imagine reading the Gospel accounts of Jesus' life in chronological order! The Ministry of Jesus book contains just the text of The Gospels but in chronological order. In addition, to help you go even deeper in study, Narrow Gate produced over 100 short video teachings by our Staff to help you grow as a disciple of Jesus. This curriculum is great for invdividual study, small group studies or homeschooling. Makes a valuable gift for anyone of any age. Purchase the leather bound book at narrowgateleather.com/collections/books-content/

The book provides a chronological account of the Gospels and contains just the text of scripture masterfully woven together by Rick Meyers.



OR SIGN-UP AS A MONTHLY SUPPORTER OF NG AND GET YOUR COPY FREE ALONG WITH A BAG OF OUR NG COFFEE!





n the book of Exodus 31 as God was giving instructions into the building of the Tabernacle, God spoke to Moses and said "See I have called by name Bezelel, I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all kinds of craftsmanship, to make artistic designs for work in gold, in silver, and in bronze, and in the cutting of stones for settings, and in the carving of wood, that he may work in all kinds of craftsmanship."

At Narrow Gate, we offer opportunities for people to explore craftsmanship...to experiment with various tools and raw materials to discover creativity that God has placed inside them. Our generous partners and volunteers have helped create our fully-equipped woodshop, metalshop, leathershop, and a lumber yard with a hydraulic sawmill and vacuum-kiln.

For our Lodge students, we not only provide safety training and hands-on experience in our woodshop, metalshop, leathershop, sawmill and kiln but we also help them discover to hear how God speaks to us in our daily work and activities. We accomplish this by incorporating biblical curriculum into each project so that we sense how God speaks through metaphors of life.

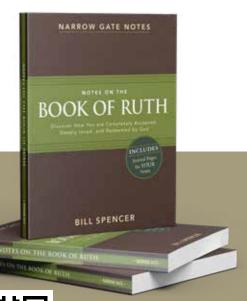


YOU CAN SEE SOME EXAMPLES BY WATCHING SOME OF OUR SHOP TALK VIDEOS





Some of the projects our students complete during their time at NG include our Philemon box, a wooden communion and platter turned in our woodturning studio, a stunning Crown of Thorns in our Metalshop along with a hand-sewn leather Bible wrap cover. There are numerous other projects the guys will work on during their time at NG Lodge.



CLASSES FOR THE PUBLIC!

For those who are not students, we do offer additional classes throughout the year.

Sign-up for our emails to learn about upcoming classes at narrowgate.org

BOOK OF RUTH

READ THROUGH AND WRITE WHAT GOD IS SAYING TO YOU, GROW WITH US!

The notes contained in this book are designed to get you to think and talk with God about his timeless and perfect expression of love toward you.

It's not for you to learn what someone else thinks or knows; it's for you to record what you think and know on the journal pages provided. And in the process, you'll not only be inspired, you'll be changed into a vessel of loving compassion with a heart to help rescue and see others transformed.

Order your copy today

NOTES ON CULTURE & CONTEXT

DISCOVER THE WORLD AND TEACHINGS OF JESUS AS RABBI

by Bill Spencer

ike many things in life, what started out with good intent became stale and tainted over time. Most theologians ascribe the rise of the "Pharisee" party to the "Hasideans" or "Chasidim," which is plural for "Hasid"—meaning "Pious One." This movement of conservative Judaism is believed to have its origins in a group of stalwart Jews who fought against and repelled the Assyrians during the Maccabean Revolt. At the conclusion of that war (around 165–160 BC), the desire to see Jerusalem return to its unified pursuit of YHWH drove the leaders of that era to pursue holiness and righteousness through obedience and adherence to the Law of God.

The Chasidim saw themselves as "set apart" (which is the meaning of the word "Pharisee") from the rest of society for the purpose of modeling holiness and righteous behavior, according to the law. It wasn't originally intended to be a way of looking down on others as much as it was designed to be a way of calling others to a better standard of submission and obedience to the Law of God. But what began as a call to repentance and obedience quickly became something other than that. Like most human endeavors, when the public doesn't meet the standard

of those who consider themselves the model for some behavior, frustration sets in. Frustration is followed by judgment. Judgement is followed by contempt. Contempt is followed by condemnation.

The Pharisees grew from a collection of hopefully emblematic leaders to a judgmental political party who saw people's sin long before they saw people. Their view of themselves as "better-than," coupled with the original hope of leading Israel into a more righteous state of thought and action, created a separation from the masses that traded inspiration for condemnation. By the time Jesus arrived on the scene, they no longer sought to be inspiringly emblematic of obedient righteousness. Instead, they wielded shame and contempt as tools of the trade. And, in certain cases, that contempt became condemnation—even condemnation to death. Understanding this truth will truly change how you see the events of Jesus' ministry. It will also set a framework for the gospel that will color every word you read in the text. So, let's spell out that framework as the last piece of our contextual introduction to this text.

Are you curious or confused about why Jesus ministered the way He did?

Join Bill Spencer in a journey of discovery that every Narrow Gate student experiences. You'll be introduced to a new world of insight and understanding that will transform how you see Jesus and His teachings.

When you understand the background and cultural settings, you'll come away with a richer, fuller

picture of Jesus and His ministry. It will deepen your perspective on His words and actions as a Jewish Rabbi, as well as an eternal Savior. Allow your picture of the gospel to take shape in a way that fosters the same loving compassion that Jesus had for everyone He encountered.

The "lawyers" of Jesus' time on earth taught that there were four different levels of sin, and they required four different approaches to repentance. The first was a simple infraction of the commandment accompanied by an immediate and persistent cry for forgiveness— which was granted. The second was a willing breach of one of God's prohibitions—which required the same contrition connected with the first group and a sacrifice made on the Day of Atonement. The third was a purposeful and sustained sin that required contrition, a sacrifice made on the Day of Atonement, and a year of personal suffering. But the fourth was by far the worst—to openly profane the name of God through word or deed. Tax collectors would be a good example of this sort of infraction. This will play heavily into the way we see Jesus and His ministry to the people He encountered.

WHEN YOU UNDERSTAND THE
BACKGROUND AND CULTURAL
SETTINGS, YOU'LL COME AWAY WITH
A RICHER, FULLER PICTURE OF JESUS
AND HIS MINISTRY.

NARROW GATE NOTES





BILL SPENCER

READY TO GET STARTED?



Order your copy today & *dig deeper* into the transforming truths NG teaches about Culture & Context.

PERSEVER

persistence in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success



Key Finding #4: Confidence in who God is gives me confidence in who I am which gives me courage to take action and have tenacity to not quit.

he transition from childhood to adulthood can be tumultuous. The search for what it looks like to be a man has been deeply distorted by our culture and social media deeply informs today's young adult males. Young men are searching for authentic models of manhood, and they are also asking the key question "do I have what it takes to be a man?" A focus at NG is on providing challenging opportunities every day for young men to lean into that question

and discover their answers. The NG experience includes outdoor adventures, daily chores and work activities, developing basic woodworking skills, learning to work with tools and leather, basic house and vehicle maintenance, as well as exposure to a variety of construction skills. These are all a part of the eight month residential experience. These experiences breed a confidence that many did not have before coming to NG.

One interviewee said, "BASICALLY,
EVERYTHING I'VE DONE SINCE NARROW
GATE I WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO
DO BEFORE. I HAD NO CONFIDENCE IN
WHO I WAS. AND I DIDN'T BELIEVE I
WAS LOVABLE. THAT WAS THE REASON I
COULD NEVER BE HONEST AND GENUINE
WITH ANYONE. I'M ABSOLUTELY
CERTAIN I WOULD HAVE NEVER HAD
THE CONFIDENCE IN MYSELF TO EVEN
APPROACH THE WOMAN WHO BECAME
MY WIFE. NOW I HAVE CONFIDENCE, IT'S
AN ACT OF FAITH."

SIGNIFICANCE

Embracing challenges and growing in confidence to persevere through challenging situations are key indicators to a young man being successful in today's world and are indicitive of the lasting impact NG is having on young men. Imagine a world full of young men who believed this way! What good could be done by an army of young men - committed to Biblical decision-making and walking in their identity in Christ - fueled by the confidence to overcome challenges and persevere through various situations?

Confidence is something that grows over time. It starts with a spark, but it can fan into a hot fire that empowers people to do incredible things.

Confidence affects big decisions and small decisions. When a young man lacks confidence, it stunts his movement into adulthood and maturity. What makes this finding significant is we are left wondering, how do young men grow in confidence in today's world? With so much learning transitioning to online classes and real life experiences being removed from young men's opportunities due to COVID, cost of college, lack of good modeling by fathers and/or cultural leaders, how can a young man learn confidence virtually? NG is an exceptional place where confidence is grown through real-life experiences, challenges and relationships.

ANCE

Another respondent shared, "Before coming to NG, I was so afraid of failure that I was unable to try new things. Now I see failure as more of a learning opportunity and I resist the urge to be complacent. I'm pushing myself personally and professionally." Another reported, "Before NG I was a big introvert and spent little time outdoors. Now, I'm constantly in community and find great peace and connection with God through nature." Through hands-on teaching, real-life modeling and a proven structured curriculum, young men's perspectives about life and its challenges are changed as they learn to face difficulties with courage and confidence. Studies have shown that people with higher confidence are more willing to learn, challenge themselves, and have better resilience in the face of difficult transitions.

Our survey data show that because of the challenges young men faced during their NG Lodge experience, 85% of our graduates indicate they are quite a bit or a lot more confident to overcome challenges after their NG experience.

Before NG, nearly 75% of our graduates indicated they were not at all or a little confident in overcoming challenges in life.

Scripture teaches that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope (Romans

5:4). Suffering can take many forms and we are in no way implying that young men "suffer" at NG, but they do encounter hard things, face challenges, and learn how to be uncomfortable during certain seasons or situations. Some suffering is due to our sinful and wrong choices, but some is due simply to the world being fallen. We help young men discover that as a Christian, the goal of life is not comfort but conformity. The bottom line is when we suffer, we have an opportunity to grow in our endurance. To learn the art of going beyond what our comfort zone would dictate. This is the place of true growth! Endurance produces character and consistent endurance leads to the establishment of what we all want but very few have: character! In addition to embracing challenges, our survey data reveal that our graduates also grew in their character because they grew in perseverance. More than 90% of respondents reported that they have grown in perseverance.

AFTER NG

More confident in overcoming challenges.

AFTER NG

Have grown in perseverence.







TN Box Beams exists to create an environment where young craftsmen can learn woodworking skills, develop professionally and personally, and craft beautiful all-wood box beams for homes and businesses.

Most of our employees had little-to-no woodworking experience when they began but discovered that through good training and practice, they could create something beautiful and meaningful with their hands.

To date, we've built over 10,000 beams and currently ship our beams all across the country.

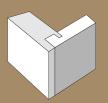
Profits from TN Box Beams go to help keep Narrow Gate tuition-free.

FINISH THE LOOK WITH

- -COLUMNS
- -FLOATING SHELVES
- -CORBELS
- -CASED OPENINGS
- -BRACKETS
- -HEADER WRAPS
- -LINTELS
- -CEILING PACKAGES



WHY CHOOSE OUR BOX BEAMS?



LOCK **MITER JOINT**

Site-built box beams made with 45° miter joints split over time. Ours don't.



REAL WOOD

Made from real wood. Our beams look authentic because they are.



90% LIGHTER THAN **SOLID TIMBER**

With a hollow core, our beams are a breeze to install compared to the solid timber alternative.





RELATIONS

the way in which two or more people are connected, or the state of being connected.



RELATIONSHIPS ARE KEY TO A MEANINGFUL LIFE

Key Finding #5: A right view of God informs an accurate view of self and directly affects our view of relationships with others.

ur beliefs affect our actions. So, at NG, when we change a young man's beliefs about the purpose of relationships, their actions or behaviors also change. According to our data, 85% of our graduates said that as a result of their time at NG, they are more intentional about building relationships

"BEFORE NARROW GATE, RELATIONSHIPS WERE ALL ABOUT ME AND WHAT I COULD GET OUT OF THE RELATIONSHIP. HOW CAN I MANIPULATE THIS RELATIONSHIP TO GET WHAT I NEED? BUT AT NG, I REALIZED THAT RELATIONSHIPS AREN'T ABOUT ME AT ALL. RELATIONSHIPS ARE THE TOOL GOD USES TO DO HIS WORK IN ME AND THROUGH ME AND THIS WAS A PARADIGM SHIFT FOR ME."

Our data show that the most important aspect of affecting change in relationships is to shift the paradigm of understanding about the purpose of relationships. At NG, we focus on helping young men engage in authentic and transformative relationships. That means, developing effective relational skills grounded in humility and focused on the importance of adding value to other people's lives through servant-leadership, demonstrating generosity, and cultivating a lifestyle that puts others before self. As a young man's perspective on relationships change, they become better husbands, fathers and leaders.

Because healthy relationships are central to healthy families and healthy communities, NG prepares and equips young men to be a part of an authentic community which enables them to build strong bonds that are mutually beneficial and to seek out ways to serve others.

Our survey data show that as a result of NG, over 90% of our graduates agreed that they are a part of a vulnerable and life-giving community. This may be a church, a small group, a home church or any other community group of like-minded believers.



HIPS



SIGNIFICANCE

Establishing a worldview that every man (and woman) is an image bearer of God positively impacts relationships across the board. A society of men who view themselves and others as image-bearers of God will be a society of men who impact the world for good. The highest value of human existence is realized when a society recognizes and acknowledges the image of God in every member. Without a right view of relationships based in interdependence and selflessness, the "common-unity" of community is impossible to achieve. Our graduates view of relationships sets them apart from many of their peers which makes them visual ambassadors of the Christian faith. Because they view relationships differently, they interact with people in a way that feels different which causes people to ask questions and inquire about the WHY behind their actions/beliefs. The implications are that because they view relationships differently, they will have a more positive impact on everyone they encounter throughout their lives.

We call this "the ripple effect".

WATCH OUR RIPPLE EFFECT VIDEO









The eight-month residential experience at Narrow Gate Lodge is available to qualified young men (ages 18-25), regardless of their financial resources. We have been able to offer students tuition-free experiences since our inception because of the generosity of thousands of people – **AND WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US.**Narrow Gate is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and donations are tax deductible.





We are now able to receive non-liquid gifts like stock, real estate and business interests. And if you wish to include Narrow Gate in your planned giving, please let us know!

REQUEST A NARROW GATE SPEAKER, SCHEDULE A TOUR OR CONNECT WITH OUR STAFF AT INFO@NARROWGATE.COM OR 931.583.0633

QUESTIONS? Contact Stacy Spencer at stacyspencer@narrowgate.org.



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