



# THE CHRISTIAN ADVENTURE

*A Bible Study from Pilgrim's Progress*

BY FRANK HAMRICK

  
**PositiveAction**  
BIBLE CURRICULUM

## **THE CHRISTIAN ADVENTURE**

Written by Frank Hamrick

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**MAP** Pilgrim's Progress



**CELESTIAL CITY**

**RIVER OF DEATH**

**BEULAH**

**MOUNT CAUTION**

**LAND OF ENCHANTMENT**

**DELECTABLE MOUNTAINS**

**DOUBTING CASTLE**

**PALACE BEAUTIFUL**

**BY PATH MEADOW**

**CROSS AND SEPULCHRE**

**VALLEY OF HUMILIATION**

**WALL OF SALVATION**

CLEAR HILL

HILL OF ERROR

RIVER OF DEATH

HILL OF LUCRE

VANITY FAIR

GATES OF HELL

VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH

VILLAGE OF MORALITY

WICKET GATE

INTERPRETER'S HOUSE

MOUNT SINAI

SLOUGH OF DESPOND

CITY OF DESTRUCTION



# PREFACE

When the Christian life is lived right—the way God intends it to be lived—it is heaven now, an exciting adventure every day. This is not to say that there are no problems and difficulties. In fact, the problems, sorrows, and dangers of the Christian life add to the excitement and are what make it an adventure.

No, not everything in the Christian experience is ideal. The birds do not always sing and the sun does not always shine, but no one can enjoy life more fully or have more thrilling experiences than the Christian who follows the Lord with all of his or her might.

This year's study, *The Christian Adventure*, follows Christian, the main character of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, through his many experiences and applies those experiences to you. In these pages, you will find yourself a burdened sinner seeking the wicket-gate and the way to the Cross. As a broken believer, you will feel relief when the burden of your sins falls from your back and is buried forever in Christ's tomb. You will learn to fight successfully against Apollyon, to stand firm amid the temptations of Vanity Fair, and to resist the enticement of riches. You will learn the danger of taking advice from worldly men, the peril of following those who flatter you, and the consequence of trying to find an easier way to serve God.

*The Pilgrim's Progress* is more than three hundred years old, but it is still relevant to modern young people because they travel the same path and meet the same monsters, giants, and tempters as did the seventeenth-century believers for whom John Bunyan wrote the book. *Relevant* is an overused word today, but that's exactly what this study is. In it, you will learn principles of dating and how to control impure thoughts that often enter your mind. You will see yourself as a companion of Christian as, with him, you journey the narrow way from the city of Destruction to the Celestial City.

Is your Christian life boring, or is it full of vitality and joy? The author, editors, and publisher of this book pray that this study will enrich and energize your life with godly energy by the time you complete it. Enter upon its pages with prayer

and determination, and walk with Christian through the adventurous journey of the believer.

## **How to Use This Book**

This student textbook includes a number of unique features, including the following.

### **Introductory Reading Assignments**

Every chapter begins with a reading assignment from *The Pilgrim's Progress* that sets the stage for what will be covered in that particular lesson. These readings should prepare you for and be supplemental to the teacher's lecture and the accompanying notes that you should take during that time.

### **Student Work**

Each lesson includes some work that you need to do at home. Normally you will want to do this work before your teacher begins teaching the lesson. That way you will have a pretty good understanding of the subject matter, which should make the class time more productive.

### **Notes from the Teacher's Lesson**

Every chapter also includes charts and diagrams that your teacher will use in the class lectures. These charts provide the "tools" that will help you focus on the key points of the lesson. You should fill in the appropriate blanks as your teacher presents the lesson and study them for the quiz that follows the completion of each lesson. (The quizzes include material from both your textbook readings and the teacher's lesson.)

### **Application Activities**

At the end of each chapter is a list of topics, project, and/or activities under the heading "Application Activities" that will help you make practical applications of the lessons you've learned. These activities are designed to be used at your teacher's discretion to help you develop, think about, and apply the principles learned from the introductory reading assignment and your teacher's lecture. They might

be reading assignments, discussion or debate topics, review activities, or writing assignments. Your teacher may use all or only a few of these items as appropriate for your particular class and to fit the time available for your class.

### **A Word About Quizzes and Tests**

Your teacher will evaluate your work using a variety of tools, including chapter quizzes, Scripture memorization, various activities and/or writing assignments, and possibly major tests covering several chapters, or units. The questions for the quizzes cover the material in both the student readings and the teacher's lecture notes. The quizzes are made up of a variety of types of questions, including matching, short answer, true–false, multiple choice, and essays. The unit tests cover from four to six lessons, with the average number of lessons being about five. The same types of items will be used on the tests as are on the quizzes. The individual classroom teacher will determine various point values and grading scales.



# UNIT ONE



# Chapter 1

## THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS: AN OVERVIEW

### STUDENT WORK

*The Pilgrim's Progress*, the basis of our Bible study this year, is considered to be the greatest work ever written in the English language. Its total volume of sales is second only to that of the Bible. In our study of this book, we will first view the story as a whole. Next, we will study the life of the man who wrote the book. Then, in Lesson 3, we will begin our study of the book itself.

Take a few moments to scan the contents of this book. Notice that the entire text of the first part of *The Pilgrim's Progress* is printed in short segments at the beginning of each lesson or chapter of your book. Beginning with Lesson 3, you should take the following two steps:

1. Read the excerpt from *The Pilgrim's Progress* found at the beginning of each lesson.
2. Work through the lesson material after each reading selection.

### The Significance and History of the Book

John Bunyan wrote *The Pilgrim's Progress* during the years 1673–1675 while he was in prison for preaching the gospel. Bunyan was in and out of prison for a total of twelve years. During those years, he had only the Bible and *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* to help him while away the hours. It was during the latter stages of his second imprisonment that Bunyan began writing *The Pilgrim's Progress*. He completed it in 1675, and it was published in 1678.

After Bunyan wrote the story, he was not sure that it would be accepted by the public. No one had ever written an allegory on biblical truth. He let his fellow prisoners read the story and give their opinions of its usefulness. Some of them advised him to publish it; others advised him to forget it. He decided that the only way to know for sure whether it was worth publishing was to print it and see if anyone would buy it.

Within a year of its publication, several thousand copies had been sold. By the time of his death ten years later, more than one hundred thousand copies had been sold.

Although the plot of *The Pilgrim's Progress* makes a nice little story, it is not a children's book. It contains deep lessons for life. Both nobles and common men, educated and uneducated, have read the book with equal enjoyment and benefit. Some of history's greatest men admired it. For example, Charles Haddon Spurgeon called it the most important book in his life outside of the Bible, and he read it twice a year—more than a hundred times during his life. Spurgeon was one of the greatest preachers who ever lived.

Hudson Taylor, the great pioneer missionary to China, was also greatly influenced by *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Also J. H. Jowett, a great Congregational preacher of England and a master of the Word, rarely preached a sermon in which he did not refer to *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

Alexander Whyte, a great Scottish preacher of the nineteenth century, gained a reputation as a graphic and compelling preacher unparalleled even in a country of great preachers. He had a life-long fascination with Bunyan's great work. He preached whole series of sermons on *The Pilgrim's Progress* and referred to it in many of his sermons. He compiled his sermon sketches of the characters of *The Pilgrim's Progress* into a book titled *Bunyan Characters*. (The reprinted version of the book was retitled *The Characters of The Pilgrim's Progress*.)

## The Style of the Book

- *The Pilgrim's Progress* is an allegory. What is an allegory? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Bunyan called his story a metaphor. How does the dictionary define metaphor? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Christ taught the people of His day using a similar method. What do we call Christ's metaphors or allegories? \_\_\_\_\_

As you read *The Pilgrim's Progress*, remember that each character and each place that it mentions has a deeper meaning than what you might see at first glance. To understand the story best, we must know the intent and purpose of the author so that we can discover the deeper meanings behind the events he is recounting.

*The Pilgrim's Progress* was written during the seventeenth century by an Englishman who spoke and wrote using the language in the unique style of that time. The language of his original version is close to that of the language in the King James Version of the Bible and similar to but a little easier to read than the writings of William Shakespeare. In fact, the King James Version was translated in the same century in which Bunyan lived (1611). Bunyan was thoroughly saturated in the King James Version and in the language of that day.

Therefore, the original version of *The Pilgrim's Progress* has a beauty of expression that is found only in the much-loved King James Version of the Bible. The version that you will read, however, has been modernized so that today's young people can more readily understand, enjoy, and benefit from the lessons of this great book.

## The Summary of the Book and Its Meaning

The central figure of *The Pilgrim's Progress* is Christian, a married man with children who lives in the city of Destruction. In the story, we learn that his name at first was Graceless. Later, when he came to the Cross of Christ, his name was changed to Christian. Throughout the book, however, in addition to either of these names, he is often referred to simply as “the pilgrim.”

*The Pilgrim's Progress* is the story of how Christian journeys from the city of Destruction to the Celestial City. Its deeper meaning, however, is the story of a lost soul's flight to Christ and then its journey as a Christian from the Cross to heaven.

Because *The Pilgrim's Progress* is an allegory, the various characters and places have deeper meanings. Thus, we see in the story that a lost man is seeing his need of escaping the damnation of hell, but Satan is doing everything he can to thwart him. At last, however, the man is saved as he comes to the Cross of Christ. From there to heaven he faces all of the temptations and evils that Satan can muster. The Lord, however, provides for Christian's every need. At last, Christian reaches heaven at God's appointed time.

Sir Francis Bacon once wrote an essay titled “Of Studies” in which he stated, “Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested.” John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* is certainly one of the books that every Christian student should chew and digest.

## The Significance of the Characters and Places

Following is a list of the various characters and places found in *The Pilgrim's Progress* and their meanings. Pay particular attention to these places and people as you encounter them in your reading. Use the map of Christian's journey that is provided in your book to aid you in your study.

Person/place	Meaning/interpretation
The pilgrim as Graceless	A lost man
The pilgrim as Christian	A saved man
Obstinate	A rebellious man who tries to keep the pilgrim from trusting Christ
Pliable	A curious man who, for a time, shows some interest in being saved, but he is not willing to suffer and pay the price
Mr. Worldly Wiseman	The intellectual, egotistical religious person who tries to lead a soul in the wrong direction
Goodwill, the Gatekeeper	Jesus Christ, who is the Way and the Door
Interpreter	Both the minister of the gospel and the Holy Spirit
Evangelist	One who tries to win souls
Apollyon	Satan
The citizens of Vanity Fair	Unsaved people in a hurry to enjoy the pleasures of the world
Giant Despair	The Christian's own temptation to give up in his Christian life and let the world, the flesh, and the devil have the victory
By-ends	An unsaved person who is making an effort at religion but is a hypocrite. He is two-faced and is using his religion only to benefit his business, his popularity, and his ego.
Faithful	The virtue of faithfulness that Christian needs
Hopeful	The virtue of ever hoping or trusting in God
The Shining Ones	Angels
The city of Destruction	Generally, this world system, which is doomed to destruction; more specifically, the condition of every lost soul
Slough of Despond	A feeling of sadness and despondency through which most burdened sinners go before they get saved. Many such sinners never get through it and so never trust Christ for salvation.
High Hill near Morality	Man's efforts to save himself by keeping the commandments and living a good moral life
The wicket-gate	The point in time when a lost sinner sees that Christ is the answer for salvation
Interpreter's House	The place where the sinner is shown by both a Christian and the Holy Spirit just how to get saved
Hill and the Cross	Calvary, where the sinner is saved
Palace Beautiful	The local church
Valley of the Shadow of Death	Hard and difficult times in a Christian's life, both physically and emotionally

Vanity Fair	The world and all of its temptations and enticements
Hill of Lucre	The enticement of riches and materialism
Doubting Castle and By-path Meadow	The temptation to find an easier way to godliness and the doubts and fears by which a Christian can be tested
Delectable Mountains	The Word of God and the mature Christian's experience
Enchanted Grounds and Beulah	The point of sweet fellowship that a mature Christian achieves later in life
River of Death	The appointed time for a Christian to die (Note: if he is not careful, he can die before this point. Christians sometimes die prematurely when they get out of God's will.)
Celestial City	Heaven

## NOTES FROM THE TEACHER'S LESSON

### Five Great Lessons from *The Pilgrim's Progress*

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lost
2. The \_\_\_\_\_ of the Cross
3. The \_\_\_\_\_ of the Word
  - The Word Gives Graceless the \_\_\_\_\_ of His Condition
  - The Word Points Him to the \_\_\_\_\_
  - The Word Became His \_\_\_\_\_
  - The Word Frees Him from \_\_\_\_\_
  - The Delectable Mountains Represent the \_\_\_\_\_ of God's Word
4. The Prominence of \_\_\_\_\_
5. The \_\_\_\_\_ of the Way

## APPLICATION ACTIVITIES

1. Compare and contrast the original language of *The Pilgrim's Progress* with the modernized version in your textbook. What conclusions can you make from this study? Why do you think that the old language style has survived for so long? What influence has it had on our society?
2. Study the parables of Jesus. Make a chart outlining their surface plots and their deeper meanings. Find Scripture reasons why He taught in parables.
3. Conduct a study and write a report on the religious conditions in England during Bunyan's day.
4. Read "The Author's Apology for His Book" (see Appendix A) and write a summary of what it tells about why and how Bunyan wrote *The Pilgrim's Progress*.



## Chapter 2

# JOHN BUNYAN AND THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

### STUDENT WORK

Before beginning a study of any book, it's always good to know something about its author. We can learn to appreciate *The Pilgrim's Progress* more by knowing the life and background of John Bunyan.

Bunyan was born at Elstow, a small village about one mile from Bedford, England, in 1628. His father was a tinker (a mender of pots and pans). Because at that time only gypsies did that type of work, some people have been led to conclude that John was part gypsy. Although early in life John decided to follow his father's trade, he was not a gypsy. His family was poor. As a tinker, his father made little money, so the family was of the lower class and was therefore, in Bunyan's own assessment, among the "most despised of all the families of the land."

John Bunyan was a tall, impressive man. He wore long, wavy hair that he parted down the center. His S-shaped eyebrows, curved above thick lids and bulging eyes, gave an impression of deep perception and keen wit. He had a small moustache with upturned ends that separated his mouth from a large nose, and a small island of fuzz grew just under his lower lip. Dr. David Otis Fuller wrote, "One might easily imagine him clowning his way through 'A Midsummer Night's Dream,' and loving it."

As a child, Bunyan was greatly troubled by thoughts of the fearful torments of hell fire. He later wrote, "I feared that it would be my lot to be among those devils and hellish fiends who are bound there with the chains and bonds of darkness, waiting for the judgment." He became so obsessed with thoughts of judgment and hell

that even when he was playing his mind was afflicted, and he became very much depressed about his future.

After a while, however, his depression left, and he soon forgot his concern for hell and lost himself in sinful living. He turned his back on God. Whenever he saw someone reading Christian books, he pitied the person because “I felt as though he were in prison.”

- According to Job 21:14, what might Bunyan’s feelings have been at this time? \_\_\_\_\_ Bunyan wrote, “Heaven and hell were both out of sight and out of mind. As for being saved or being damned, I cared not in the least.”

However, God did not leave him alone but continued to pursue him. Several times, Bunyan almost died. Once he fell into a creek and almost drowned. At another time, he fell out of a boat into Bedford River and almost drowned again. And on another occasion he had a close encounter with a poisonous snake. He caught the snake, pried open its mouth, and pulled out its fang with his fingers!

Bunyan joined the army, and God continued to protect him although he lived an even more ungodly life than before. In *Grace Abounding*, he wrote, “When I was a soldier, I was sent out along with some others to a certain place to besiege it; but just as I was ready to go, someone asked to go in my place; as he stood sentry duty, he was shot in the head with a musket bullet and died.”

- Yet, none of these things awakened his soul to righteousness. In fact, he grew more rebellious against God and careless of his salvation. What is the connection between this story and Revelation 9:17–21?

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Until the Spirit of God arrests a soul, neither good nor bad circumstances will soften the heart for salvation.

In 1645, Bunyan returned to Elstow from the army and continued to live a life of sin. In 1649, he married, and his wife gave him two books to read: *The Plain Man’s Pathway to Heaven* and *The Practice of Piety*. These books did not waken his

heart to its need for salvation, but they did make him want to reform his vicious life.

He began to attend church (twice on Sunday), and he began to talk holily. In fact, he started acting so piously that the neighbors called him a “holy man.” He liked the label and tried to be even more holy. However, after about a year of acting the part and actually thinking that he was holy, he happened to walk down a street in Bedford where he heard three or four ladies talking about the things of the Lord. He was overcome, not only with their knowledge of the Word but also with their great joy. He had no joy in his religion, but theirs seemed real and natural. He began to doubt the genuineness of his religion.

“I saw as if they were on the sunny side of some high mountain, there refreshing themselves with the pleasant beams of the sun, while I was shivering and shrinking in the cold, afflicted with frost, snow, and dark clouds.”

- He went home and for several days searched the Bible, considering his condition. During this time, two verses of Scripture helped to open his eyes: John 14:6 and Matthew 7:14. (Read these verses and write them in the following spaces.) \_\_\_\_\_

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- But he still could not clearly understand. Would God save him? If God chose those whom He would save, would He choose John Bunyan? Or, what if God had already chosen everyone who would be saved and had already filled heaven and no room was left for John Bunyan? For many days, he was tormented with this thought, until one day Luke 14:22–23 seemed to jump out at him. (Read this passage and write it in the following space.)

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The phrase “and yet there is room” (as the King James Version states) gave him the assurance that he needed, and he was saved.

Soon thereafter, he told the three ladies whom he had overheard in Bedford of his salvation experience. They introduced him to their newly arrived pastor, John Gifford. Over the next while, Gifford taught Bunyan the doctrines of grace. In 1653, Bunyan was baptized and joined Gifford’s church.

In 1656, he was encouraged to preach to the people of Gifford’s little Baptist church, and soon crowds flocked to hear this uneducated but godly tinker-preacher. In that day, it was unheard of for a man with no schooling to preach. Furthermore, it was illegal for anyone to preach without a license from the state! Bunyan had neither the license nor the education. Yet, his wit, vivid imagination, and masterful preaching held audiences spellbound.

For the first two years, his preaching dealt almost exclusively with the sinfulness of man.

“I preached what I felt,” he wrote, “what I smartingly did feel; even that under which my poor soul did groan and tremble to astonishment. I went myself in chains, to preach to them in chains. Thus I went on for the space of two years, crying out against man’s sins, and their fearful state because of them.”

Soon, however, the Lord gave him more knowledge of His Word, and for the next two years, after Gifford had left the church, he ministered at Bedford. During this time, he preached a different message: “Jesus Christ in all his offices, relations and benefits unto the world.” Later, God led him to a third truth about which he began to preach: the mystery of the union of Christ.

For six years, Bunyan preached at Bedford, during which time he learned a number of lessons. In his autobiography, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, he offered the following observations of some of those lessons.

“I have observed, that where I have had a work to do for God, I have had first, as it were, the going of God upon my spirit, to desire I might preach there.” If a church or a person needed to hear John Bunyan, God seemed to lay that church or person on Bunyan’s heart. He then went to them and always found them ready to listen and be saved.

“I have also observed, that where there has been a work to do upon sinners, there the devil hath begun to roar in the hearts and by the mouths of his servants.” Whenever God was about to do a great work, Bunyan received his greatest attacks and threats from ungodly men. This taught him to praise God when the clouds grew darkest because he knew that the sunshine of God’s blessing soon would follow.

Bunyan had a peculiar running battle with Satan. Sometimes while he was preaching, he was violently assaulted with thoughts of blasphemy and was strongly tempted to speak the blasphemous words to the congregation! He also had a long running battle with pride. Satan was constantly telling him how great he was, as the following incident from *Toplady’s Works* (Vol. 4, p. 11) illustrates.

“Mr. Bunyan having preached one day with peculiar warmth and enlargement, some of his friends, after the service was over, took him by the hand, and could not help but observing what a sweet sermon he had delivered. ‘Ay,’ said the good man, ‘you need not remind me of that for the devil told me of it before I was out of the pulpit.’”

Another battle that Bunyan fought with Satan involved the lies and slanderous attacks upon his character that the evil citizens of Bedford launched against him. At various times he was rumored to be a witch, a Jesuit priest, and a highway robber. Some people said that he had frequented harlots and even had two wives at once!

Bunyan said of these slanders, “Now these slanders, with the others, I glory in, because they are but slanders, foolish or knavish lies and falsehoods cast upon me by the devil and his seed. So, then, what shall I say to those who have thus bespattered me? Shall I threaten them? Shall I entreat them to hold their tongues? No, not I. Therefore I bind these lies and slanders to me as an ornament; it belongs to my Christian profession to be vilified, slandered, reproached, and reviled...I rejoice in reproaches for Christ’s sake.”

After five or six years of uninterrupted preaching, he was asked in 1660 to preach in Samsell, a suburb of Bedford. He had planned to preach on John 9:34, but as he stood to preach, the constable walked in and arrested him for preaching without a license. A mock trial followed, during which Bunyan made fools of the judges. However, he was sentenced to twelve years in the Bedford jail. Justice Keeling sternly read the sentence: “You must be had back again to prison, and there lie for

three months following; and at three months' end, if you do not submit to go to church to hear divine service, and leave off your preaching, you must be banished from the realm: and if, after such a day as shall be appointed you to be gone you shall be found in this realm or be found to come over again without special license from the king, you must stretch by the neck for it, I tell you plainly.”

After three months in jail, Bunyan was brought before a Mr. Cobb, who examined him and pleaded a long time with him, trying to convince him not to preach any more. The account of the conversation is interesting and again shows Bunyan's great intellect and amazing ability to confound his accusers.

Cobb thought that he had convinced him when he asked if Bunyan believed the Scripture that commanded him to obey those who had the rule over him (Heb. 13:17). Bunyan agreed that he believed the Scripture. Then Cobb said, “Well, the king requests that you preach no more.”

Bunyan replied, “Sir, the law hath provided two ways of obeying: the one to do that which I in my conscience do believe that I am bound to do actively (that is, to preach the gospel); and the other, when I cannot obey actively (because of the law), I am willing to lie down, and to suffer what they shall do unto me.”

At that, Cobb sat silently for a great while and then rose and left. Bunyan called after him, thanking him for his kindness and meekness in listening to and talking with him!

Bunyan was left in prison for twelve years, until release in 1672. During his imprisonment, he had only two books to occupy his time: his Bible and *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* (both of which still exist today). During the long years, he began writing his autobiography (*Grace Abounding*) and *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Before he could complete *The Pilgrim's Progress*, however, he was released in 1672. He enjoyed only about six months of freedom, however, before he was again arrested and confined for another six months. During this confinement, he finished *The Pilgrim's Progress* and wrote *The Holy City's Resurrection* and *Of Prayer by the Spirit*.

The first part of *The Pilgrim's Progress* (the part that you have in your textbook) was published in 1678. He completed and published the second part, which is the story of how Christian's wife and children follow him to the Celestial City, in 1684. *The Holy War* was published sometime after 1678.

Bunyan became the pastor in a new church that was erected just for him in Bedford. There he preached until he became sick after visiting a family in a chilling storm. Ten days later, he died at the house of Mr. Straddock, a London grocer, on August 12, 1688.

One sentence from Bunyan's classic book perhaps best marks the philosophy of his life: "If you will go with us, you must go against wind and tide. You must own religion in his rags as well as in his silver slippers; and stand by him, too, when bound in irons as well as when he walketh the streets with applause."

- What do you think the preceding statement means? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## NOTES FROM THE TEACHER'S LESSON

- John Bunyan Lacked a \_\_\_\_\_
- He Was a Man of the \_\_\_\_\_
- He Was a \_\_\_\_\_

## APPLICATION ACTIVITIES

1. Read and summarize Bunyan's autobiography, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*.
2. Read and summarize *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*. In your report, explain why this book had such an influence on Bunyan's life.
3. Make an annotated list of Bunyan's complete works. (An annotated list means a list with comments about each work.)
4. List the books that have had the greatest spiritual influence on you and explain how and why they affected you.
5. Research the lives of other great Christians and list the books that influenced them.



## Chapter 3

# THE SOUL UNDER CONVICTION

This first section of our study of *The Pilgrim's Progress* deals with Christian in his lost condition. As we will see later in the story, he is named Graceless at this point (although that name does not actually occur in the text until later) and is not actually a Christian for quite some time. Therefore, we will sometimes refer to him as Graceless in this lesson. Because man is saved by the grace of God, those who have not been saved are without grace, or “graceless.” When Bunyan says in the story that he lay down in a place to sleep, he is referring to his prison cell, from which he was writing his story.

Well, why not just read it for yourself. After you've finished reading the selection, complete the study that follows the reading assignment.

### **Reading Assignment from *The Pilgrim's Progress***

As I was walking through the wilderness of this world, I happened to come to a certain place, where I lay down to sleep. While I was sleeping, I began to dream. In my dream, I saw a man who was dressed in dirty, ragged clothes. He was standing there facing away from his own house, and he had a book in his hand and a heavy pack, or burden, on his back (Isa. 64:6; Luke 14:33; Ps. 38:4).

As my dream continued, I saw this man open the book and read in it, and what he was reading made him cry and tremble. Clearly no longer able to keep his emotions inside, he cried out, “What will I do?” (Acts 2:37; 16:30; Hab. 1:2–3).

Still in this state of distress, the man went home. He tried as long as he could to hide his anguish from his wife and children. He didn't want them to know that he was troubled. But his mental anguish only increased until he finally could no longer contain himself, and he told them what was bothering him.

“Oh, Honey!” he cried to his wife. “Oh, my children! My insides are in turmoil because of a burden that lies heavy on my heart. To make it even worse, I’ve learned from a reliable source that our city is going to be burned with fire from heaven. In this destruction, all of us are going to be ruined unless we find some way to escape.”

His wife and children stood silent in amazement, not because they believed what he said but because they thought that he had suddenly been seized with temporary insanity. Because it was getting near bedtime, they thought that the best thing they could do for him was to put him to bed. Perhaps a good night’s rest would settle his brain. So they quickly helped him into bed.

But the man’s night was just as troublesome to him as had been the daytime. Instead of sleeping, he only sighed and cried as he thought about his condition.

When morning came, the man’s wife and children asked him how he was feeling.

“Worse!” he declared. And again he began to tell them of the bad news of how their city was to be burned—and they with it if they didn’t find a means of escape. But they would hear none of it and instead became hardened to his warning. They tried to drive such thoughts from his head by being quite rude to him. Sometimes they ridiculed and laughed at him. At other times, they scolded him sharply. And at still other times, they simply ignored him.

Finally, getting no sympathy or other positive response from his family members, the man began to withdraw from them, retreating into a shell much as a turtle does when it is disturbed. He began spending time alone in his room, praying for them and pitying them for not believing him. But most of the time he spent feeling his own miserable condition. Sometimes he went outside alone and just walked in the fields, reading or praying. He spent several days in this way.

Then I saw in my dream that one day when he was walking in the field this way, reading in his book as he usually did, he became even more distressed. As he read, he burst out again, “What can I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30–31). He looked about desperately, first this way and then that way, as though he was trying to run. But he never ran in any direction because he didn’t know which way to run. Then I saw a man (I later learned that his name was Evangelist) coming toward him, and when he got to him, he asked, “Why are you crying?”

He answered, “Sir, this book I’m reading says that I’m condemned to die and then to be judged (Heb. 9:27). I’m not willing to die (Job 10:21–22) and not ready to be judged (Ezek. 22:14).”

Then Evangelist said, “Why aren’t you willing to die? Isn’t this life filled with more than enough evils to make anyone want to die?”

The man replied, “Because I’m afraid that the burden on my back will sink me even lower than the grave; I’ll fall right into Tophet (Isa. 30:33). And, Sir, if I’m not fit to go to prison, I’m certainly not fit to go to judgment and, from there, to execution. It’s these thoughts that make me cry.”

Then Evangelist said, “If this is the situation you’re in, what are you doing just standing there?”

He answered, “Because I don’t know where to go.” Then Evangelist handed him a rolled-up piece of parchment on which was written, “Fly from the wrath to come” (Matt. 3:7). The man read it and then looked closely at Evangelist. “And just where am I supposed to fly?”

Evangelist pointed his finger across a very wide field. “Do you see that wicket-gate over there?” (Matt. 7:13–14).

“No.”

“Well, do you see the light that is shining over there? (Ps. 119:105; 2 Peter 1:19).”

“I think I do.”

“Keep your eye on that light,” Evangelist said, “and go right up to it and you will see the gate that I mentioned. When you knock, the person who opens the door will tell you what you must do next.”

So in my dream the man began to run. He hadn’t run far when his wife and children, realizing that he was leaving them, began to cry after him, “Come back! Come back!” But the man put his fingers in his ears and kept running. “Life! Life! Eternal life!” he cried (Luke 14:26). He never looked behind him (Gen. 19:17) but kept running toward the middle of the field.

# STUDENT WORK

## The Condition of Graceless

The condition of Graceless is a perfect picture of all lost souls. Read the following verses in the Bible and place beside each reference the statement in the first paragraphs of the reading assignment for this lesson that illustrates the corresponding condition of the lost soul.

- Isaiah 64:6 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Psalm 38:4 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Acts 24:25 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Acts 16:30 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## The Conviction of Graceless

- Graceless is broken and burdened over his and his family's condition. According to the reading, what causes this conviction and burden?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What does this book represent? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

When Evangelist comes, he asks why Graceless is crying. In his answer, Graceless reveals three things that contribute to his conviction. Beside each of the following items, place the statement from the reading that best reveals its part in convicting Graceless.

- The Word of God \_\_\_\_\_:
  - Death \_\_\_\_\_
  - Hell \_\_\_\_\_

When a person is lost, he cannot be saved unless he first comes under conviction, and that conviction can come only through the Word of God. As the person reads the Word or hears it preached, he becomes aware of his sinful condition and realizes that he must die and suffer in hell for his sin if he is not saved. This knowledge becomes a great burden upon his back; it will allow him no ease until it is removed at the Cross.

- What does Hebrews 9:27 say? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What does Isaiah 30:33 say that evidently worried Graceless? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What do you think Tophet is? \_\_\_\_\_

### **The Confrontation with His Family**

- Graceless comes home with a heavy heart. For a while he tries to hide his burden, but, at last, he has to share it. What does he first inform them that he has discovered in 2 Peter 3:10? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What does he say to his family that might remind you of Hebrews 2:3? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What is their reaction to his statement? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- The more he talks to them, the more Proverbs 29:1 applies. What happened? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The lesson: A person who hears the gospel will either become convicted (as was Graceless) or he will reject it and become hardened.

## The Continuing Concern of Graceless

- Graceless cannot find ease from his conviction, so he wanders daily in the field, reading his Bible. How is this a perfect picture of Bunyan's own experience? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- How is Acts 8:26–31 parallel to the situation of Graceless? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The lesson: A searching sinner is every preacher's dream. Few people today are burdened about their sin and searching for an answer of how to ease that burden. The preacher's job is to preach on sin, hell, and judgment such that men become burdened and start seeking relief for their souls' burdens.

## The Conversation with Evangelist

Evangelist met Graceless and pointed him in the right direction. Every Christian is to be like Evangelist. We should always be looking for graceless people with burdens on their backs to whom we can give directions to Christ. Note that Evangelist used one of the best techniques of witnessing—he asked questions! He got Graceless to think about and then admit his burden. Too many soul winners do all of the talking and thereby cause the sinner to clam up and refuse to talk.

- What were the questions that Evangelist asked?
  1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Such questions are aimed squarely at causing the lost soul to reach the following conclusions:

1. I have a problem.
2. I have to die and go to hell.
3. I can't stand still but must do something about it.
4. I must go through a narrow gate, a way that the crowd isn't going.
5. I must follow the light of God's Word to reach the gate.

- Why is Graceless crying? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Why is Graceless unwilling to die despite the fact that his present life is miserable? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Why is Graceless standing still? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **The Cry of His Neighbors and Family**

When a person begins to show a real desire and keen interest in spiritual things, he will face the taunts and jeers of his unsaved friends and family members. They will tease him, mock him, and even threaten him because his sudden change in attitude makes them look bad. Similarly, Graceless hears the cries and taunts of his family and friends as he hurries toward the wicket-gate.

- How does Luke 9:62 apply to Graceless? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- In Genesis 19:15–17, how does Lot’s experience parallel the story of Graceless? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- In Jeremiah 20:10, what were Jeremiah’s enemies anxious to see happen to him? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

The lesson: The world does not like to see one of its own get caught up in spiritual things, so it puts even more pressure on the sinner who is under conviction, thereby making it even harder for him to come to Christ.

- When his family calls after him, what does Graceless do that a sinner must do if he is to make it to Christ? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## NOTES FROM THE TEACHER’S LESSON

### The Burdened Sinner

- All Are Burdened, But Only One Is \_\_\_\_\_
- The Reason Only One Is Burdened
  - He is the only one that really believes his condition because he is the only one that has been exposed to \_\_\_\_\_.

## The Light-Hearted Sinner

- They Are \_\_\_\_\_
- They Are \_\_\_\_\_

## The Wise Evangelist

- He Appears at the \_\_\_\_\_
- God Leads \_\_\_\_\_ Together
- The Man Who Finds Hungry Souls Is the Man Who \_\_\_\_\_  
For Them
- He Knew the \_\_\_\_\_
- He Asked \_\_\_\_\_
- He Knew Where \_\_\_\_\_

## APPLICATION ACTIVITIES

1. What are some other scriptural techniques of soulwinning? Regardless of the techniques used, however, upon what (ultimately) does the salvation of a soul depend?
2. What personal qualities must an effective soul winner possess? Why?
3. Where might you find burdened souls to whom you could be an Evangelist?
4. Conduct a study of other religions (e.g., Islam, Catholicism, and Buddhism), emphasizing the different ways in which their adherents react toward one of their own that converts to Christianity.