

# THE CHRISTIAN ADVENTURE

BY FRANK HAMRICK

  
**PositiveAction**  
BIBLE CURRICULUM

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# Preface

John Bunyan wrote most of Christian’s journey in 1672 while imprisoned. Stuck in a filthy room crowded with men and women, with only his Bible and a copy of Foxe’s Book of Martyrs, Bunyan penned his work slowly on wrinkled pages. Yet in this setting, he was able to compose rich metaphorical imagery to recount his path of redemption by God’s grace.

Bunyan successfully merged the style and tone of the King James Version of the Bible with the pacing and setting of English folk tales. *The Pilgrim’s Progress* wound through a vivid allegorical landscape, which captivates us all the more for the wisdom we can find in its mountains and valleys, fields and cities, dangers and wonders. Few other works have captured such a broad, powerful, and accessible picture of the Christian experience. Hope, doubt, despair, isolation, pride, rebellion, repentance, love—these all reflect the heights and depths of our journey through this world.

It’s no wonder then that *The Pilgrim’s Progress*—despite having been written by a nonconformist while Charles II expanded Anglican control—released to instant success. The publisher immediately sold several thousand copies, a number that expanded with each successive edition. Untold millions have read the book since.

As a devotional and as a forerunner of the English novel, the book stands as one of the most widely read and influential works in modern Christianity. Pastors and poets alike reference Bunyan’s stories, and his imagery has impacted the imagination of the church forever. To think of salvation, many cannot help but see the burden of sin rolling off Christian’s back under the shadow of the cross. And to imagine heaven’s glory, many still see those golden spires on a hill, open to all who accept the King’s invitation.

This study seeks to guide students through the themes addressed by Part I of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. Part II, a fantastic addition featuring the story of Christian’s wife, is unfortunately not included here.

As you walk this path with your students, we pray that God would use this material to show you the immeasurable riches of His grace.

## Features of This Study

### Teacher’s Lectures

The lesson content in the Teacher’s Manual can help you prepare and present the truths of this study to your students.

#### Lesson Objectives

These serve as target truths for each lesson.

#### Teacher’s Lesson

The lecture material is presented verbatim—though formatted with headings and bullets in case you prefer to teach from limited notes.

## Notes from the Teacher’s Lesson

Each lesson in the Student Manual contains a fill-in-the-blank outline of the corresponding teacher’s lesson. Students can use this outline as a foundation for their lecture notes, which will help them study for tests and quizzes.

You can find digital presentations with these outlines on the *Christian Adventure* product page at [positiveaction.org](http://positiveaction.org).

We encourage teachers to approach lessons not so much as a fact-finding process, but as a way to strengthen the students’ relationship with God. Perfect truth includes love, and perfect love includes truth, so please take care to present this material in a way that both encourages and challenges your students. Make time for discussion, and encourage your students to share their questions with the class.

## Student Reading

Starting with lesson three, each lesson in the Student Manual features a reading assignment from *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. Students should read this section before hearing the teacher’s lecture.

The text included in this study is a modern-language version, with updated phrasing and vocabulary where appropriate. Embedded also are verse references that link Bunyan’s many allusions to passages of Scripture.

You can find a copy of all the student reading assignments on page 312 of this Teacher’s Manual.

## Student Exercises

Almost every lesson in the Student Manual includes exercises that students should complete outside of class. These exercises encourage students to seek God’s truth and love on their own, while also reviewing some of the content from the teacher’s lesson.

Early in this course, you may wish to complete some of these exercises with your students, especially if the students are not familiar with looking up and summarizing Scripture on their own.

### Application Activities

Each lesson in the Student Manual features additional projects and activities that you can review and assign at your discretion. Most of these would be more appropriate for higher grade levels.

## Testing and Evaluation

For classes that require a score or grade, the Teacher’s Manual includes lesson quizzes and unit tests. These cover material from the teacher’s lectures and the student reading assignments. Question types include matching, short answer, multiple choice, true-false, and short essays.

Quizzes, tests, and answer keys are at the back of this Teacher’s Manual. You can find editable versions of the testing material on the *Christian Adventure* product page at [positiveaction.org](http://positiveaction.org).

Some teachers also grade weekly Scripture memorization, as well as the completion of student exercises and extra activities. Note that these materials can help you evaluate students’ mastery of factual content—not, of course, their spiritual growth.

## Completed Pages from the Student Manual

This Teacher’s Manual contains a complete copy of the Student Manual. In each lesson, you can find facsimiles of the student exercises with suggested answers filled in.

A digital version of these facsimiles is available on the *Christian Adventure* product page at **positiveaction.org**. If presented via projector or screen, these pages can help you review exercises with your students.

## Scripture Memorization

At the end of this introduction, you’ll find a Scripture memory program with an assignment for each lesson. In the past, teachers have used this optional component in the following ways:

1. Assign verses to be recited or written in a graded quiz, whether weekly, monthly, or once a semester.
2. Assign verses to be written on the back of regular lesson quizzes, perhaps as extra credit.
3. Evaluate the students’ understanding of the verses by offering a fill-in-the-blank verse test, or one that requires students to match the text of each passage with its reference.

You can find printable verse cards on the *Christian Adventure* product page at **positiveaction.org**.

## Format and Grade Level

Though teachers have successfully adapted and taught this study in grades seven through twelve, we recommend this content for the ninth through eleventh grade.

As with any other Bible study, your students’ background, Scriptural literacy, and reading level will greatly impact their ability to approach this material. Some students may require additional teacher or parent involvement to understand and complete the exercises in the Student Manual.

## Notes

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## Suggested Weekly Schedule

This study includes 35 lessons—one for each week in an average academic year. In general, students should first complete their *Pilgrim’s Progress* reading assignment, after which teachers can review and expand the material in the Teacher’s Manual. Students can then complete the written exercises in the Student Manual. Any optional activities or Scripture memory can expand the students’ individual or group study.

Note that this study likely contains more content than you could cover in depth, especially in a three- or four-day-a-week class. Depending on the needs of your students—and depending on the time you spend in discussion or review—you may need to cover some minor points quickly or not at all.

### Five-Day Option

Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four	Day Five
<p>Introduce lesson objectives.</p> <p>Begin the teacher’s lesson.</p> <p>Introduce the Scripture memory verses.</p> <p>Assign the student exercises and any additional activities.</p>	<p>Continue the teacher’s lesson.</p> <p>Review Scripture memory.</p>	<p>Finish the teacher’s lesson.</p>	<p>Review the student exercises, as well as lesson content relevant to the quiz or test.</p> <p>Review Scripture memory.</p>	<p>Administer the quiz or test.</p> <p>Check or quiz Scripture memory.</p> <p>Discuss any student questions and additional activities.</p> <p>Assign <i>Pilgrim’s Progress</i> reading for the next lesson.</p>

### Four-Day Option

Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four
<p>Introduce lesson objectives.</p> <p>Begin the teacher’s lesson.</p> <p>Introduce the Scripture memory verses.</p> <p>Assign the student exercises and any additional activities.</p>	<p>Finish the teacher’s lesson.</p> <p>Review Scripture memory.</p>	<p>Review the student exercises, as well as lesson content relevant to the quiz or test.</p> <p>Review Scripture memory.</p>	<p>Administer the quiz or test.</p> <p>Check or quiz Scripture memory.</p> <p>Discuss any student questions and additional activities.</p> <p>Assign <i>Pilgrim’s Progress</i> reading for the next lesson.</p>

## Three-Day Option

Day One	Day Two	Day Three
Introduce lesson objectives. Begin the teacher's lesson. Introduce the Scripture memory verses. Assign the student exercises and any additional activities.	Finish the teacher's lesson. Review the student exercises, as well as lesson content relevant to the quiz or test. Review Scripture memory.	Administer the quiz or test. Check or quiz Scripture memory. Discuss any student questions and additional activities. Assign <i>Pilgrim's Progress</i> reading for the next lesson.

## Feedback

As a non-profit publishing ministry, we consider teachers our co-laborers in the faith. Each of our curricula remains a work in progress, and the people who teach these studies have a great impact on the scope and format of each new edition. If you have any comments, questions, or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us—we'd love to hear from you.

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## A Final Word

It's our prayer that this study helps you and your students know God's glory, grow in that knowledge, and share it with others. To see the most from this study, we'd encourage you to do the following:

- Spend time each day in the Word. Use the material in this study to guide your devotional reading so that you can present God's truth and love from the heart. Spend time also marking and adjusting the lecture content to suit your students' needs.
- Pray for your students, and ask God to grow you, as well.
- Be vulnerable to your students, expressing questions and confidence in equal measure. Encourage them to explore Scripture with you.
- Be the love and truth you want to see from your students.
- Depend on God's strength and grace, even in your weakness.

# Scripture Memory

Chapter	Passages	
1	Heb. 9:27	Rom. 8:3
2	Eph. 6:17	1 Peter 5:8–9
3	2 Tim. 3:12	John 14:6
4	Matt. 7:14	Luke 14:22–23
5	1 Cor. 1:21	Prov. 29:1
6	Acts 16:31	Mark 8:36
7	Rom. 3:20	Gal. 3:24
8	James 2:10	1 John 1:7
9	2 Tim. 3:16	1 Cor. 2:14
10	John 14:26	Prov. 16:1
11	John 16:13	Rom. 5:8
12	2 Cor. 5:17	Eph. 2:8–9
13	Rom. 8:8	2 Peter 1:4
14	John 10:27–29	Rom. 8:30
15	John 8:31	1 Cor. 6:19–20
16	Acts 2:47	Heb. 10:25
17	Acts 2:42	Acts 1:8
18	Col. 1:18	Eph. 4:11–12
19	1 Peter 2:11	James 3:6
20	John 8:44	1 John 2:16
21	Jer. 17:9	Rom. 10:11
22	Matt. 28:19–20	1 John 2:15
23	1 John 2:17	James 4:17
24	Rom. 13:1	Matt. 11:28
25	Acts 5:29	Heb. 13:7
26	Eph. 6:1	Rom. 14:23
27	1 Tim. 4:16	James 4:6
28	Eph. 6:12	Prov. 4:23
29	Prov. 16:6	Heb. 12:2
30	Eph. 2:10	2 Cor. 10:12
31	Matt. 6:33	Ps. 37:4
32	Prov. 25:28	Rom. 10:17
33	Phil. 1:21	Ps. 119:1–2
34	Ps. 27:1	John 8:12
35	John 14:2–3	Rev. 20:15



**THE  
CHRISTIAN  
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**UNIT 1**

## CHAPTER 1

# ***The Pilgrim's Progress: An Overview***

### **Lesson Objectives:**

1. To introduce *The Pilgrim's Progress*
2. To explain the condition of the lost
3. To describe the importance of the Word to the lost sinner

This year's study is unique in that it is both a Bible study and a book study. We will be studying the Word with the help of the greatest Christian classic ever written—*The Pilgrim's Progress*. This first lesson gives the student an overview of the story of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The second lesson considers the life of its author, John Bunyan. And the third lesson begins a study of the book itself. The students will read the text assigned each week and will then be taken to the Bible to see how the part of the story in that lesson illustrates the great doctrines and truths of God's Word.

This first lesson closely parallels the student's lesson, with the first three points being identical. Your fourth point, however, deviates from the student lesson and is the point of application to the student's life. (Remind the students that the test will include information contained in both the student textbook and the teacher's lessons—as well as anything in the text of *The Pilgrim's Progress*.)

Note that several names are used for the main character of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Before he is saved, he is called "Graceless." After his conversion, however, he is called "Christian." Throughout the text he is called simply "the pilgrim." Point out to the students that regardless of the name used, they all refer to the same character.

### **The Significance and History of the Book**

This material is identical to that found in the student textbook. Read the material carefully and be ready to relate it without having to rely too much on the student textbook.

### **The Style of the Book**

This material is identical to that found in the student textbook. Familiarize yourself with it so that you will not have to read it verbatim in class. Remember that the teacher's lesson should never give the students the answers to the student lessons. Allow the students to discover the answers on their own as they do the work in the student textbook as homework.

### **The Summary of the Book and Its Meaning**

This material is identical to that found in the student textbook. Study this section carefully so that you can relate it briefly and interestingly without having to read it to the students.

# The Five Greatest Truths of *The Pilgrim's Progress*

*The Pilgrim's Progress* drives home hundreds of great lessons and illustrates scores of truths that are relevant to spiritual things. However, five truths stand out boldly in this great classic.

## The Condition of the Lost

The pilgrim's burdened condition and utter hopelessness before he comes to the Cross illustrates graphically the condition of the world without Christ. The earth is doomed (2 Peter 3:10). Every man on earth is doomed to die and go to hell (Rom. 6:23; Heb. 9:27). Many people live under a terrible burden of guilt and fear. Some of them have sunken into the slough of despondency and defeat. Others, like Obstinate, are rebellious toward anything that is spiritual, whereas some, like Pliable, are curious but unwilling to pay the price of being identified with Christ. All of them wander aimlessly until they enter hell.

## The Power of the Cross

The Cross does what nothing else can do—remove the pilgrim's burden. Good works, baptism, good morals, keeping the commandments—none of these actions can lighten the poor pilgrim's load. The village of Morality fails miserably. In fact, it makes the load seem heavier. The world's wise men, with all of their intellect, cannot remove the load. Only at the Cross does the burden fall. [NOTE Heb. 9:22; 1 Cor. 1:23–24; 1 Peter 1:18–19; Rom. 8:3. These verses emphasize that it is not by man's wisdom—Mr. Worldly Wiseman—or by wealth or the keeping of the Law (Mr. Sinai) that a man is saved. Man is saved only by faith in the finished work of Christ on the Cross. Nothing else but His blood can save a soul and transform a life.]

## The Importance of the Word

The Word of God is prominent in the life of the pilgrim. Note the following ways in which the Word is emphasized.

### The Word Gives Graceless the Burden of His Condition

Bunyan writes, "I saw this man open the book and read in it, and what he was reading made him cry and tremble." Later, the pilgrim tells his wife that he has been informed that "our city is going to be burned with fire from heaven." The source of his information comes from 2 Peter 3:10. A little later, Bunyan writes, "One day when he was walking in the field this way, reading in his book as he usually did, he became even more distressed." Thus, we see that the reading of God's Word is what brings Graceless to see his condition and to desire the Celestial City.

### The Word Points Him to the Cross

After arriving at the wicket-gate, the pilgrim is pointed to Interpreter's house, where he is shown more clearly the way of salvation. Thus, it is the Word of God that shows a man not only that he is a sinner but also how he is to be saved and come to the place of trusting Christ. Romans 10:17 says, "So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God." If we are to bring men to Christ, we must rely completely on the power of the Word to cause them to trust Christ. One of the saddest commentaries on our day is the myriad methods that men use to get a sinner down the aisle or on his knees. Some preachers resort to tear-jerking stories. Others rely on soft lights, dramatic presentations, and soothing music. Some of them actually say that they use special pressure points on the back of the sinner's neck, which

the preacher squeezes as he puts his hand on the person's neck and asks him to bow and trust Christ. No wonder we get so many false professions! Most genuine professions of faith come through a sinful soul's agonizing over and wrestling with the power of the Word of God. At last, he surrenders to the Word, and only then is his burden removed.

### **The Word Becomes His Armor**

At the Palace Beautiful, Christian is clothed in armor. He goes forth and immediately meets the terrible Apollyon in the Valley of Humiliation. With the "sword of the spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17), he pierces Apollyon and gains the victory. Even today, we can have no victory over Satan and his demons apart from our skilled use of His Word, even as Christ overcame Satan during His temptation in the wilderness—by quoting the Word of God.

### **The Word Frees Him from Despair**

Captured by Giant Despair, Christian is about to give up when he remembers the key that Evangelist gave him. This key represents the promises of God's Word. He uses the key and is freed at once from the Giant's castle of doubt. Many times we, too, are tempted to give up and forget the whole struggle. Satan has us defeated and discouraged. In such circumstances, we have only one way to escape. Defeat is dissolved by resorting to God's Word. When one gets out of fellowship with God, he has only one way back—by reading God's Word.

### **The Delectable Mountains Represent the Enjoyment of God's Word**

Christian climbs to the high elevations of the Delectable Mountains and enjoys the scenes, the fruit, the water, and the refreshment of those high places. This episode is a picture of the mature Christian who has climbed to the heights of spiritual victory and is enjoying all of the blessings of God's Word. From these mountain heights, Christian catches his first glimpse of heaven, and it makes him hasten to get there even quicker. Thus, we see the importance of God's Word in the life of every Christian.

### **The Prominence of Satan**

Everywhere we turn in this story, we see Satan. He is disguised in many forms, but he is always the same being. He is the rebellious Obstinate, who tries to tease Christian into turning back to the city of Destruction. He is the egotistical Mr. Worldly Wiseman, who leads the pilgrim astray. He is the roaring lions, who block the way to the Palace Beautiful. He is Apollyon, who seeks to deal Christian a mortal wound in the Valley of Humiliation. He is Judge Hate-good, who condemns Christian to death at Vanity Fair. He is Giant Despair at the Doubting Castle and the black Fowler, who traps Christian in a net after leading him astray. One cannot read *The Pilgrim's Progress* without being reminded that Satan is the Christian's real, thinking, determined enemy. Satan is alive and active. First Peter 5:8–9 admonishes, "Be sober, be vigilant [watchful]; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith. . . ."

### **The Difficulty of the Way**

The last great lesson in this classic is the fact that the Christian life is no bed of roses. The path that Christian must tread is not easy; it is filled with terrors and dangers, pits and snares, and death and despair. God does not guarantee a Christian popularity, wealth, fun, and smoothness for being in His will and

way. One must be willing to pay the price of affliction if he is to serve the Lord. In this regard, note the following examples and their associated verses.

- Moses endured great afflictions to serve God (Heb. 11:25).
- Paul endured great afflictions (Acts 20:23).
- The Macedonian Christians endured a great trial of afflictions (2 Cor. 8:1–2).
- False professors do not endure afflictions (Mark 4:13–17).
- Christ warns that we will not have it easy as Christians (2 Tim. 3:12).

Are you willing to pay the price? Will you, like Christian in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, fight the fight of faith and stand for Christ? Or will you be like some of the lesser characters of the book and give up, turn back, fall asleep, and be defeated?

Challenge the students to arm themselves with the armor of God's Word and to go forth with faith and courage to meet the enemy.

## 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? \_\_\_\_\_  
**a story that has an underlying meaning different from the surface meaning of the story itself; a story in which the characters, places, objects, and events have another meaning, often morally or spiritually instructive**
- Bunyan called his story a metaphor. How does the dictionary define metaphor? \_\_\_\_\_  
**an implied comparison between two different things; the use of a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object**
- Christ taught the people of His day using a similar method. What do we call Christ's metaphors or allegories? **parables**

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*

- The **Condition** \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lost
- The **Power** \_\_\_\_\_ of the Cross
- The **Importance** \_\_\_\_\_ of the Word
  - The Word Gives Graceless the **Burden** \_\_\_\_\_ of His Condition
  - The Word Points Him to the **Cross** \_\_\_\_\_
  - The Word Became His **Armor** \_\_\_\_\_
  - The Word Frees Him from **Despair** \_\_\_\_\_
  - The Delectable Mountains Represent the **Enjoyment** \_\_\_\_\_ of God's Word
- The Prominence of **Satan** \_\_\_\_\_
- The **Difficulty** \_\_\_\_\_ 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*

### Lesson Objectives:

1. To relate the historical background of John Bunyan
2. To show the importance of the Bible in Bunyan's life

This lesson concerns the author of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, John Bunyan. In a very real sense, *The Pilgrim's Progress* is the story of Bunyan's own spiritual experience.

Bunyan was born in Elstow, England, in 1628 and died sixty years later in London. He is best known for his great allegory *The Pilgrim's Progress*, which he wrote in 1673 and published in 1678 (more than three hundred years ago).

However, Bunyan was also greatly loved in his day for his outstanding preaching ability. He was also a great poet. His poetic introduction to *The Pilgrim's Progress* (called "The Author's Apology," or defense) is a masterpiece and reveals his sharp humor and keen mind. In addition to *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Bunyan wrote a host of other books, including *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (his autobiography), *The Holy War*, *The Greatness of the Soul*, *Mr. Badman*, and *The Groans of a Lost Soul*.

A tall man, Bunyan struck a very imposing figure. He wore his hair to his shoulders (a common practice in his day) and parted it in the middle. His eyebrows were S-shaped and curved over large, bulging eyes and thick eyelids. He had a large, bulbous nose and a small moustache, which curved upward at the ends. Under his mouth grew a shadowy island of fuzz. He looked like a character right out of Shakespeare, and when he talked, people listened!

### Bunyan Lacked a Formal Education

Few people realize that this man, so famous and intelligent, was uneducated. His parents were poor. His father was a tinker (a mender and peddler of used pots and pans). Generally, such people were looked down upon as ignorant, and of a lower class. In his autobiography, Bunyan stated that his family was not well liked and was relatively unknown. Although his parents were very poor, they did get John into grade school, where he learned to read and write. Beyond that, he said, he forgot everything that he learned.

The amazing fact is that such a poor, uneducated man, coming as he did from a peddler's hovel, should achieve such feats as Bunyan did.

### His Accomplishments

John Bunyan wrote the greatest masterpiece of Christian literature other than the Bible. Dr. David Otis Fuller, in his book *Valiant for the Faith*, states, "The secret of his fantastic success was probably above everything else his use of the English language. It is sheer wizardry. He stuck to the principle of economy, never inserting a word unless he had to . . . he taught in parables. And his diction had the pure strain of the King James Version, in which he was steeped."

Note for the students that the text of *The Pilgrim's Progress* found in their textbook is a modernized version, designed to make their reading easier and more understandable. Encourage them to read the original version of the work after they have completed this study to see for themselves how rich its language is and how it is so much like the language of the KJV Bible.

This “ignorant” man’s work has been a source of mental stimulation and enjoyment for some of the world’s greatest statesmen. For well over three hundred years now, both Christian and secular giants have proclaimed *The Pilgrim's Progress* to be the greatest single book ever written. Charles Spurgeon, the greatest preacher of all time, read the book more than a hundred times during his life, never tiring of it and always learning new truths. J. H. Jowett seldom preached a sermon without drawing an illustration from it. Hudson Taylor, Alexander Whyte, and other great preachers throughout history were greatly influenced by the book. Even such great poets as William Cowper raved about it, calling Bunyan an “ingenious dreamer in whose well-told tale sweet fiction and sweet truth alike prevail.”

Yet, this influential masterpiece was written by an uneducated tinker! At his many court hearings, Bunyan baffled the most educated lawyers and judges of the day with his brilliance. He literally made fools of highly educated officials who sometimes stood silent and confused when he had finished defending himself. Yet, he was uneducated.

Twelve hundred people came to hear him speak before 7:00 a.m. on cold, damp, winter mornings. England saw nothing like it again until the days of George Whitefield and John Wesley nearly a hundred years later.

The *Encyclopedia Britannica* calls Bunyan “the greatest literary genius produced by the Puritan movement.”

## **An Illustration**

**Q:** What does this illustrate?

**A:** Not many mighty, not many noble are called (1 Cor. 1:26–29).

**Q:** Why aren’t many mighty or noble called?

**A:** Verse 29 gives the A: “That no flesh should glory in his presence.” Bunyan is a great example of this truth. He was every mindful that he was only an uneducated tinker; yet, the Lord chose to use him mightily.

## **Bunyan Was a Man of the Bible**

### **He Had No Human Teacher**

Very few people of Bunyan’s day had heard the truth of the gospel. His wife gave him a book, *The Practice of Piety*, and helped him read it. This book caused him to start searching for the truth, but no one seemed capable of clearly explaining the gospel to him. He spent hours wandering in the fields around his home reading the Bible. He reached some ridiculous conclusions based on one verse, but then another verse of Scripture would set him straight.

As he studied the Word, he evolved from one plan of salvation to another, believing at various times that salvation was earned by

- Acting holy
- Worshipping the church and the priests
- Keeping the commandments

Finally, he met three ladies who knew the Lord. Their joy convinced him that he hadn't yet found the way. As he heard these ladies talking in the doorway of a building, he became miserable and renewed his search.

One day, John 14:6 gripped his heart, and he realized that Christ was the way. Later, Matthew 7:14 convinced him that not many people were saved and that Christ was the gate to heaven. Yet, he still did not know how to get there.

He kept searching and asking questions.

“What if God won't choose me to be saved?”

“What if God has already filled heaven and is through calling men to be saved?”

This particular question was answered one day as he read Luke 14:22–23, in which the phrase “and yet there is room” filled his heart with joy.” Thus, he kept learning and growing until he gained the assurance of his salvation.

At last, a Mr. Gifford appeared on the scene to help him better understand the truth. No doubt, Evangelist in *The Pilgrim's Progress* was based on Mr. Gifford.

## **He Practiced Much Meditation**

Knowing no one who knew the truth of the grace of God, Bunyan devoted many hours to thinking through the Bible and arguing with himself. These hours of meditation had a profound effect upon him. It made him a deep thinker and provided him with scriptural answers for almost every imaginable argument. The constant exercise of his brain and continual immersion of his mind in Scripture expanded and deepened his mental powers.

His meditation also affected his speaking and writing style. Those who heard him and those who study his writing style testify to the fact that he never wasted a word; he made every word count. His powers of expression were unequalled in his day. Naturally, one who is so entrenched in biblical phraseology will certainly have some of it rub off on his everyday speech and writing. After all, the written biblical expression is the most perfect and magnificent method ever used because God wrote it! Bunyan let the Scriptures control his expression.

## **He Faced Great Temptation**

As you read *The Pilgrim's Progress*, you will be impressed by the constant attacks of Satan against the soul of the pilgrim. These attacks parallel the temptations and attacks that Bunyan himself faced, as the table shows.

Bunyan went through enough testing and trials for a dozen men. Yet, he emerged as one of the brightest of God's stars.

**Q:** What do you think sustained him and carried him over each new trial?

**A:** One thing—God’s Word and its precious promises. No wonder he could write *The Pilgrim’s Progress* so vividly and convincingly!

Bunyan revealed Satan’s attacks against him in the plot of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*

<b>Satan Attacks The Pilgrim</b>	<b>Satan Attacked John Bunyan</b>
Through both his neighbors and Pliable and Obstinate	Through a group of men who tried to get him to follow their lead in mocking Christ
Through the Slough of Despond	Through three years of mental torment as he was constantly tempted to “sell Christ”; he eventually reached a point at which he thought that he had given in and truly sold Christ and could never be saved
Through Mr. Worldly Wiseman, who tried to get him involved in working his way to heaven	By getting Bunyan to clean up his life, quit his cursing, go to church twice on Sunday, and become the bell ringer for all services (i.e., the deception of good works)
Through Giant Despair and Doubting Castle in an effort to get Christian to give up his journey	By making him hear the whisper, “Abandon your hope”; he could not get the thought out of his mind for weeks and sank deeper and deeper into despair
Through numerous characters who try to get him to turn back	Through demons that made him almost blasphemous while he preached
Through a wretched attack from Apollyon	Through a terrible sickness, the untimely death of his wife, the blindness of one of his children, and twelve years of imprisonment for nothing more than his faithful preaching of the gospel

### **He Drenched Himself with the Book**

David was perhaps the deepest thinker of the Old Testament, and a key word in his life and writings was meditate. He spent hours in meditation. That’s why he alone was qualified to write the deep praises of Psalms.

Today, however, we live in an age of visual stimulation and entertainment that has caused people to lose their ability or desire to think and express themselves. Most people have passive minds. Television has so entertained the mind that man cannot think creatively or deeply. In fact, time that would normally be devoted just to thinking and meditating, or at least to doing something creative, is today wasted by blankly staring at a TV screen or a computer monitor or video game. People prefer to be amused (the root words mean “without thought”) rather than to muse (“to think”).

If we would have the brilliance and usefulness of this “uneducated” man Bunyan, we must learn to exercise our minds in daily meditation on God’s Word (1 Tim. 4:13–15).

## Bunyan Was a Preacher

First and foremost, however, Bunyan was a preacher. He was 45 years old before he wrote his first book. Both before that time and afterward, he was best known for his fiery and eloquent preaching. He held audiences spellbound. He never considered himself a writer, only a preacher of the gospel.

In Bunyan’s day, one had to be licensed by the government to preach, but he refused. He was convinced that only God had the authority to call and commission a preacher of the gospel. He stoutly refused to ask for a license. Therefore, in 1660 he was arrested and told not to preach. He refused to agree and finally was sentenced to prison. As he was leaving the presence of the judge, Bunyan said, “If I were out of prison today, I would preach the gospel again tomorrow, by the help of God.”

He suffered a total of twelve years of imprisonment. Although he was offered several opportunities for release if he would agree not to preach, he always refused.

Occasionally, the jailer would secretly release him on weekends—and he always preached while he was out! This practice is reminiscent of Peter in Acts 4:18–20 (see also 5:17–19, 26–29). The authorities commanded Peter not to preach, but he preached anyway. Then, in 5:18, he was arrested, but before he was tried, he escaped (released with the help of an angel). When the authorities found him, he was in the temple—preaching! Once more, they hauled him in and commanded him not to preach. They then beat him before releasing him (5:40). And what did he do next? He preached! (See 5:41–42.)

If we only had men like him today! The greatest need of our day is preachers! God has given us the formula for winning men to Christ (1 Cor. 1:21). John Bunyan was a firm believer in this principle. His writings have outlived his preaching, but it was his preaching that affected the men of his day.

## 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? **Depart from us.** \_\_\_\_\_ 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?  
**Although he encountered things that should have made him aware of the brevity of life and of eternity, he did not repent, just as the men in the verses did not.** \_\_\_\_\_

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

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.) \_\_\_\_\_

**John 14:6—Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**

**Matthew 7:14—Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.**

- 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.)

**And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.**

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? \_\_\_\_\_  
Answers will vary.  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

### NOTES FROM THE TEACHER'S LESSON

- John Bunyan Lacked a Formal Education
- He Was a Man of the Bible
- He Was a Preacher

### 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

### Lesson Objectives:

1. To describe the anguish of the soul convicted of its sin
2. To emphasize the importance of the soul winner's method
3. To encourage the students to consider their eternal destiny

The opening words of *The Pilgrim's Progress* show the narrator lying in a certain place (in the original version, it is called "a den"). That place is the Bedford jail, where Bunyan was imprisoned for twelve years. There he began the story as he dreamed of a man clothed in rags, holding a book in his hands, and carrying a heavy burden on his back. His first words are, "What will I do?" Later, he cries out again, "What can I do to be saved?" Thus, we see the condition of a lost soul who is burdened about his condition.

In this state, he goes home and at last tells his wife and children of his distress. The fact that he does not do so right away is a striking parallel to John Bunyan's own life when he first started searching for the way of salvation. However, when the pilgrim tells his family, they think that he is crazy or insane. Later, they become hardened. Then they begin to tease and mock him. Sometimes they simply pay no attention to him. Here we see the condition of those who are just as lost as that pilgrim, but they do not realize their danger.

Finally, we see a man named Evangelist, who has the answers for the pilgrim and points him toward a wicket-gate by way of a shining light, toward which the pilgrim hurries.

We can see the following three scenes in the opening moments of our drama.

### Scene 1: The Burdened Sinner

#### All Are Burdened, but Only One Is Concerned

It is interesting to contrast the pilgrim with his family and neighbors. They all live in the same city. The pilgrim is not the only one who is doomed; they all are.

Note his words to his family: "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."

The whole town is doomed, but only one person is concerned about their impending fate.

God says that all have sinned (Rom. 3:23), yet not everyone is concerned about that condition.

God says that all must die (Heb. 9:27), yet not everyone is burdened.

God says, “That they all might be damned who believed not the truth” (2 Thess. 2:12), yet few people care.

## **The Reason Only One Is Burdened**

The reason for the burden shows why only one person is burdened.

**Q:** Why is the pilgrim burdened?

**A:** He has been reading the Word, and what he reads creates his burden.

As we noted in our first lesson, only the Word can burden a man for his sinfulness. Although all of the citizens are in rags, and although all of them are doomed to die and suffer the flames of hell, only one of them really believes it because only one has been exposed to the Word.

## **Scene 2: The Light-Hearted Sinner**

As in the story, the vast majority of the world’s population, although facing the same fate as the pilgrim, is either totally unaware of their condition or are unconcerned about it. Note what the Bible says about the majority of the lost.

### **They Are Blinded (2 Cor. 4:3–4)**

“The god of this world,” Satan, has blinded man with false religion, false security, and ignorance.

### **They Are Hardened (Prov. 29:1)**

Many people who have never heard the gospel are blind to their condition. However, millions of men and women have heard the gospel time after time, and many of them have become hardened (as were the pilgrim’s family members). Some people have heard of hell and judgment so much that it no longer bothers them. Some of them have heard of Christ’s love and death so much that it no longer moves them.

Thus, we see the kind of people who mock and deride true believers and persist in their sin. The Word of God, when given to a blind sinner, will either open his eyes and cause him to run toward Christ or harden him and cause him to run farther from Christ.

## **Scene 3: The Wise Evangelist**

At this point, one of the most important figures in the story appears. Although we see this man only about three times in the entire allegory, without him the story would have no happy ending. He is the one who starts the pilgrim on the right road.

A Sunday school teacher pointed a young shoe salesman to Christ and thus gave the world D. L. Moody.

A poor layman sat in church one cold Sunday morning and, seeing that the preacher could not make it because of the heavy snowfall, stood to his feet and delivered an impromptu sermon to a handful of people. At the conclusion, he spotted a young boy huddled under the balcony and called out to him that he was a sinner and that he must “look to the Lamb of God.” That young boy looked that morning, and Charles Haddon Spurgeon was saved!

So it has gone throughout history. Unknown soul winners have been used around the world to point countless thousands of people to Christ and create the great Christian dramas that are recorded in heaven.

Note the following two facts about Evangelist in our story.

### **He Appears at the Right Time**

We can learn two things from this fact.

1. God leads saints and sinners together.
  - When a Christian is right with God and filled with the Spirit, God either leads him directly to unsaved people who are “ripe,” or He leads these “ripe” people to the prepared soul winner.
  - If you find yourself constantly running into hungry souls, it is a sign that God has accepted your spiritual condition and is using you. If you never seem to find people who are ready to be saved, it is probably because you are not suitably prepared.
2. The man who finds the hungry souls is the man who is hunting for them.
  - Fishermen have a saying: “The man who catches the fish is the man who fishes.” So it is with soulwinning. No doubt, Evangelist was scouting for burdened sinners when he happened upon the pilgrim. If you never go soulwinning, you will never win sinners to Christ.

### **He Knew the Right Approach**

We can also learn two lessons from the way that Evangelist deals with the pilgrim.

#### **He Asked Questions**

Note in reading the story that Evangelist asked the pilgrim five questions. One of the best methods of soulwinning is to probe the soul and conscience of a man. Questions make a man think and lead him to condemn himself. Evangelist did not fly upon him and rebuke him for his sin. Instead, he lovingly led the man into a consideration of his condition without so much as once accusing him. The pointed questions direct the man’s thoughts to his need. Such questions set a man to thinking. “Where would you go if you were to die tonight?” “What of your soul’s destiny?”

Dawson Trotman, founder of the The Navigators, used to ask simply, “Are you a Christian?” If the answer was “I’m a church member,” he would reply, “I didn’t ask if you were a Churchian but if you were a Christian!”

#### **He Knew Where to Point Him**

The wicket–gate represents Jesus Christ. The pilgrim did not know enough of the Word to know that Christ is the Way. Evangelist perceived this fact immediately. Thus, he pointed him to a shining light, which speaks of the Word of God. He thus directed the pilgrim to study the Word concerning Christ. Perhaps it was the book of John to which he directed him, for, as he ran toward the gate following the light, he shouted the key words of John’s Gospel: “Life! Life! Eternal life!”

As we meet burdened sinners, if we detect that they are not yet instructed well enough to be saved, we must keep them in the Book, and the best book to lead them to the wicket–gate is John’s Gospel.

## Conclusion

Everyone should face two questions that Evangelist asked the pilgrim:

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

**Q:** Why do men not want to die? What about you, teenager? Are you ready to die? If death were to seek you today, would you be afraid? Would you be ready?

The pilgrim was not willing to die because he was not ready to die. He knew that death meant hell for him. What about you?

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

**Q:** If you are afraid to die or if you are not ready to die, why are you doing nothing about it? Why should a man stand still all of his life when he knows that he must die and suffer in hell?

Perhaps your answer is like that of the pilgrim: “Because I don’t know where to go.” If you do not know what to do, then listen to Evangelist Paul: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31).

## 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 a man who was dressed in dirty, ragged clothes, all our righteousnesses
- Psalm 38:4 a heavy pack, or burden, on his back, mine iniquities
- Acts 24:25 made him cry and tremble, Felix trembled
- Acts 16:30 What shall I do? What must I do to be saved?

### 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 he was reading in the book
- What does this book represent? the Bible, God's Word

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 this book I'm reading says that:
  - Death I'm condemned to die
  - Hell and then to be judged

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? And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.
- What does Isaiah 30:33 say that evidently worried Graceless? Tophet is old, deep, and large; God's breath is like brimstone.
- What do you think Tophet is? Hell

### 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? that the city will be burned (destroyed) by fire
- What does he say to his family that might remind you of Hebrews 2:3? The city and its inhabitants would be destroyed by fire unless some way of escape was found.
- What is their reaction to his statement? They were amazed, not that they believed him, but that they thought he was crazy, insane, and mentally unbalanced.
- The more he talks to them, the more Proverbs 29:1 applies. What happened? They're hardened to his message, and then they begin to treat him rudely, scold him harshly, and ignore him.

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? \_\_\_\_\_  
**He, too, often wandered aimlessly in the fields, seeking a way to find peace for his lost soul.** \_\_\_\_\_
- How is Acts 8:26–31 parallel to the situation of Graceless? \_\_\_\_\_  
**The Ethiopian eunuch was sitting in the desert in his chariot reading the Word of God (Isaiah) and wondering about its meaning.** \_\_\_\_\_

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. **Why are you crying?** \_\_\_\_\_
  2. **Why are you not willing to die seeing that life is filled with so many problems?** \_\_\_\_\_

3. **If this is your condition, why are you simply standing still?** \_\_\_\_\_
4. **Do you see the wicket-gate?** \_\_\_\_\_
5. **Do you see the shining light?** \_\_\_\_\_

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? \_\_\_\_\_  
**He knew from the Word that he must die and then face judgment, and he's neither willing nor able to do so.** \_\_\_\_\_
- Why is Graceless unwilling to die despite the fact that his present life is miserable? \_\_\_\_\_  
**He was afraid that his burden would sink him lower than the grave and that he would end up in Tophet, and he wasn't ready for that!** \_\_\_\_\_
- Why is Graceless standing still? \_\_\_\_\_  
**He didn't know which way to go for his salvation.** \_\_\_\_\_

### 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? \_\_\_\_\_  
**Once he (and the plowman) starts, he can't turn back again.** \_\_\_\_\_
- In Genesis 19:15–17, how does Lot's experience parallel the story of Graceless? **Both of them were told to leave their respective cities with their families and not to look back lest they be consumed with the cities when they were destroyed.** \_\_\_\_\_
- In Jeremiah 20:10, what were Jeremiah's enemies anxious to see happen to him? **They wanted to see him fall to enticements, etc., so that they could rejoice in his downfall and could get revenge against 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? \_\_\_\_\_  
**He ran the other way, stopped his ears against their cries, and repeated to himself his goal of eternal life. He refused to look back.** \_\_\_\_\_

## NOTES FROM THE TEACHER'S LESSON

### The Burdened Sinner

- All Are Burdened, But Only One Is **Concerned** \_\_\_\_\_
- 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 Word of God** \_\_\_\_\_.

### The Light-Hearted Sinner

- They Are **Blinded** \_\_\_\_\_
- They Are **Hardened** \_\_\_\_\_

### The Wise Evangelist

- He Appears at the **Right Time** \_\_\_\_\_
- God Leads **Saints and Sinners** \_\_\_\_\_ Together
- The Man Who Finds Hungry Souls Is the Man Who **Hunts** \_\_\_\_\_ For Them
- He Knew the **Right Approach** \_\_\_\_\_
- He Asked **Questions** \_\_\_\_\_
- He Knew Where **to Point Him** \_\_\_\_\_

## 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.