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Session 1: Chapter 1
Fleeing the City of Destruction

1. Everyone is, in fact, a pilgrim in their own story on a magnificent journey with God. This pilgrimage requires you to discover and experience the fulfillment of God in your life while seeking the true life giver, Jesus Christ.

2. The rags represent the filthiness of our sin and the inability of our best deeds to earn us a place in heaven.

3. The heavy burden on his back represents the man’s sin, shame, and guilt that’s weighing down his soul, which neither he nor anyone else can remove. It’s debilitating to the point where he cannot think of anything else but the burden. When a person really begins to seek God through His Word, they begin to understand the magnitude of their sin as they stand guilty before Him.

4. The book the man is reading is the Bible, and this is his starting point in his quest for redemption. The more he reads the book, the more he becomes disturbed to learn of his fate and that of everyone in the city, including his family, due to sin.

The Word of God is not like other books. It’s alive and active and able to penetrate the innermost areas of our lives, revealing all there is and more. All our desires, thoughts, plans, and ideas are exposed before God. He’s aware of everything that we have done. There is no place to hide from His love for us.

5. Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 2:14–16 that our love for Christ is welcomed by believers but despised by unbelievers. Satan will try to put up roadblocks between our faith and our family and friends. When those close to us respond to our quest to know more about God with rudeness or indifference, we should not listen to them or argue. Just like Christian in the story, we should withdraw in prayer and read Scripture in order to seek a solution.

6. Evangelist represents a mature Christian, a pastor, a missionary, or any Christian who is being faithful to their calling to “go” and “tell” those they encounter the Good News of Jesus Christ.

The man said that he had been reading the book, knew that he was condemned to die, and knew that after death he would experience judgement. The first reason that he gave for not wanting to die was that he still had a burden on his back and secondly that he knew that burden would cause him to go to hell and be judged and executed.


8. In many churches, the gospel has been watered down to the point where the focus is on meeting our needs and solving our problems, not necessarily out of any conviction over sin. Christ has become a quick fix to temporary issues rather than the answer to all of life.
In Pursuit of Christian

1. Bunyan’s description of Christian’s world as “The City of Destruction” is a symbol of the entire world, with all its sins, corruptions, and sorrow and with no hope of salvation.

2. Obstinate refuses to accompany Christian on his journey. He’s worldly, prideful, insecure but manipulative, hostile, opinionated, unkind, sarcastic, cruel, and pushy. He first treats Christian as though he’s a fool for leaving his family then resorts to more hostile actions by mocking the Bible and calling Christian names. He represents those who hear God’s Word and reject it.

3. Answers may vary.

4. Pliable decides to accompany Christian on his journey. While he’s more likeable than Obstinate, he’s also naïve, easily influenced, superficial, inconsistent, and open to whatever is the best opportunity at the moment.

He represents those who hear the gospel and jump right in without ever considering the costs. He does so because, unlike Christian, he has no real burden (or conviction of sin) and is influenced by whatever sounds good. He wants all the blessings and joy of following God without any of the sacrifices and self-denial.

5. Putting our hands on the plow means that we have decided to commit our lives to God through faith and trust in Jesus Christ and will not look back to our past lives. Jesus lived in an agrarian society, and his audience would have completely understood what he meant. To be a successful plowman, you had to focus on the job and not get distracted by the things left behind. If you started looking back, the plow line would become crooked, and the field being plowing would not yield a full harvest. In the same way, if we look back to our previous life, we will not produce the harvest that God has in store for us. Not only that but we might even let go of the plow and fall back into our sinful ways.

A Conversation with Pliable

1. Pliable was concerned with what he would receive himself. After hearing about the paradise that Christian describes, he’s on board but for all the wrong reasons. When Christian began his journey, he sensed the need to be rescued from his burden, but Pliable had no burden and was just in it for what he would receive.

2. Christian allowed his desire for company to cloud his judgment and overlooked the fact that Pliable had
no burden. Evangelist provided an example that Christian did not follow. Before Evangelist provided the good news, he made sure that Christian understood the bad news.

Battling the Swamp of Despair

1. As soon as Pliable encountered difficulty (the muddy swamp), he was done with the journey. He was not expecting any problems but rather smooth sailing to the Promised Land. He got out without much difficulty because he was not convicted and therefore did not feel the weight of a burden on his back like Christian did.

2. Pliable is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, yet there is no root. He endures for a while, but when tribulation or persecution arise on account of the Word, he immediately falls away.

3. Answers may vary.

4. Despair is defined as the complete loss or absence of hope that things will get better. The Swamp of Despair represents a time in one’s life when they become so overwhelmed with conviction over their sin that they enter a state of depression and discouragement. They might also experience fears, doubts, anxieties, and hopelessness. The swamp can also represent all kinds of sins that we fall into, including temptation, pride, and other transgressions, both open and secret, that keep us down.

When we are in despair and without hope, we no longer love life or experience happiness, and it eliminates our trust in God. It can also lead to depression and anxieties that can have deadly effects on our physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

5. Generally, we will walk right into a “muddy pit” even though it can be avoided. Often it’s due to pride as we deny that rules are there for our own good. Or we might think that nothing bad will happen when we sin. We might also deny that the problem is as bad as it is, or we think we have the strength to handle it and don’t need anyone else’s help. Then we find ourselves completely stuck and unable to get out on our own.

6. A man named Help comes to his rescue and represents anyone God chooses to help people overcome their discouragement, despondency, and hopelessness.

7. God’s promise is that as we are delighting and seeking Him in our lives, He will faithfully hold us, even when the way is dark and circumstances tell us otherwise. We will fail at times, but there’s a big difference between one failing and one’s faith failing. True faith gets up off the ground and continues the journey the Lord has prepared.
The Advice of Worldly Wiseman

1. Worldly Wiseman represents the values and wisdom of this world. He advocates a way of salvation that’s acceptable to the world and seeks to pervert the ways of the gospel.

2. Worldly Wiseman used a variety of strategies to convince Christian to leave the path he was on, including being sensitive to Christian’s needs, discrediting Evangelist, using fear tactics, and implying that only weak people read the Bible and then become confused with obsessive behavior.

3. Legality represents people that think they can earn their salvation by keeping the law, and Civility represents hypocritical people that think they can earn their salvation because they are moral.

4. Paul does not believe the Galatians lack intelligence but rather that they lack discernment. It’s not that we should not follow the law or try to please God with our actions, but Paul is saying that we cannot achieve righteousness through those efforts. We might try to please God through our church attendance, teaching a Sunday school class, giving of our finances, going on a mission trip, trying not to gossip, fasting, reading the Bible, etc. The fact is, we can do all these things and still not be convicted.

In Search of Morality

1. Christian’s situation gets worse after following the advice of Worldly Wiseman. Not only does his burden get heavier but he becomes overwhelmed with fear.

2. Anytime we attach an effort instead of grace to salvation, we are in danger of legalistic behavior. We can do this through church attendance, financial giving, teaching Sunday school, working with children, singing in the choir, etc.

   There are many consequences for falling into a legalistic lifestyle, like guilt, pride, anger, depression, anxiety, frustration, and lack of joy. It’s such a serious issue because we rob God of His glory for what He did through Jesus Christ on the cross. We also contradict Scripture and minimize the seriousness of sin.

3. We have been saved through grace as a free gift from God; it cannot be earned. Before receiving this free gift, we were completely dead in our sins, a slave to all the world’s desires, and subject to divine judgement.

   If you are a slave to sin, you cannot free yourself. The only way to truly experience freedom in Christ is
to fully understand exactly what He did for you on the cross. Only then will you find complete peace in your life.

4. Paul clearly demonstrates that the law does not make anyone righteous before God and that the law is not based on faith. The law is related to our transgressions. A transgression is an act that goes against a law, rule, or code of conduct. In this case, it’s God’s Law that’s providing the objective standard for which the violations are measured. We would not know how sinful we were and how far we have deviated from God’s standard if it were not for the law. That’s the purpose of the law: to expose our sin and provide a clear plumb line of what’s right and wrong.

5. It would have been easy for Evangelist to be critical of Christian’s decision to veer off the path because he took bad advice. Instead, he begins with a series of questions all designed to allow Christian to not only discover for himself his mistake but to admit it as well. Christian needed forgiveness and to move on, but he could not receive it until he admitted he was in the wrong. Too often we delay spiritual healing because we play the blame game to excuse our actions rather than owning our mistakes.

6. Often we find ourselves in a position of providing advice to someone struggling with a life decision or experiencing moral failure. It’s important that we not rely on our opinions or the advice of the world but rather God’s Word to find the ultimate truth.

7. The three things that Evangelist said Christian must hate about Worldly Wiseman are that he turned people from the truth, he tried to make the cross repulsive, and he set people’s feet on the path that leads to death.

He was sorry for what happened, ashamed of being misled, and convicted, and he felt hopeless because he thought he would not be able to get back on the right Way.

8. Jesus presents a very stark image of the seriousness of sin. He was not promoting self-mutilation, as Judaism abhorred it, but rather understanding the cost one must be willing to pay to avoid spiritual death. It would be better to enter heaven with limbs missing than to have all your body parts and go to hell. It’s that serious. Sin needs to be repented of and avoided at all costs.

In today’s culture, we live in the age of tolerance, which often implies the compromise of one’s convictions. We have become tolerant of divorce, the use of alcohol, sex and sexual orientation, immorality, crime, and godlessness. This is reinforced with the barrage of media outlets (television, Internet, social media, etc.), all promoting sinful activities as normal.
Session 2: Chapter 2

Arrival at the Wicket Gate

1. Answers may vary.

2. Christian knocking represented his determination and strong desire to be let in, but it also shows us that God does not force anyone to get saved. We cannot save ourselves, because salvation is from the Lord, nor can we neglect the human desire of wanting to be saved.

3. Goodwill represents Jesus Christ because He is willing to let him in with all His heart.

4. Christian confesses to be a poor, burdened sinner; he seeks deliverance from the coming wrath; and he desires entrance to the way of life.

5. This dramatic illustration is a reminder that when souls are just on the threshold of salvation, they are usually assailed by the most violent temptations. Christ delivers us from our internal struggles, our thoughts that Christianity is not the truth, our thoughts about the cost of salvation, our thoughts that our sins cannot be forgiven, our thoughts that it’s too late for us, or our thoughts that we’ve resisted God too many times and now He has given up on us.

6. When we act in faith and walk through the door God has opened for us, His will cannot be opposed. He will open some doors; He will close other doors. But what He opens no one can shut, and what He shuts, no one can open. No human power can contravene what He determines.

7. The gate to heaven is “narrow” in the sense of having a requirement for entrance—faith in Jesus Christ. Salvation is found only in the person of Jesus Christ; He is the only way. The “wide” gate is non-exclusive; it allows for human effort and all of the world’s other religions.

8. Christ is the Wicket Gate, and Christian’s passing through the gate portrays his conversion. Christian is not relieved of his burden yet because he does not fully understand the basis of his forgiveness, so his conscience continues to bother or burden him. Although one might feel some relief when they accept Christ and might even feel as though they have relieved themselves of some of their burden, generally a full understanding of God’s mercy often comes later as they grow closer to the Lord. Christian confesses the misery of his burden and hears and responds to the invitation of Goodwill to enter through the Wicket Gate. However, that reflective moment of losing his burden comes later in the story, when he encounters the cross and is overcome with his shame and doubt caused by sin.
The House of the Interpreter

1. Goodwill, or Jesus Christ, sent Christian to the Interpreter, or the Holy Spirit, for illumination. When we profess Christ as our Savior, God gives us the Holy Spirit to shed light on the Scriptures and to help us better understand how we should relate to God, other people, and the world around us lest we remain in darkness.

1st Room – The Portrait of the Preacher

1. It is a necessity for a new believer to come under the leadership of a trusted and highly regarded pastor as soon as possible. It emphasizes the importance of being under the leadership and ministry of a godly shepherd.
2. E,H,F,G,A,C,D,B

2nd Room – The Dusty Room

1. The parlor (Jeremiah 17:9) – The parlor represents man’s polluted heart that has never been cleansed by the gospel.
   a. The dust (Romans 5:12) – The dust represents our original sin, which includes man’s sinful thoughts, desires, and actions.
   b. The first sweeper (Romans 5:20) – The first sweeper represents God’s law arousing the heart’s corruption and making us aware of how sinful we are.
   c. The young lady (Titus 3:5) – The young lady who sprinkled water and then swept the room represents a virtuous evangelist spreading the gospel.

2. It’s important for new believers to understand and appreciate that the law does not cleanse us of our sin, but it can, when used by the Holy Spirit, uncover, condemn, and convict us of sinfulness and strip us of our self-righteousness. The law is not the remedy and has no saving power, but it does help identify the problem then allows the gospel to come in and cleanse our lives. Both the law and grace are important and necessary, and they both function to accomplish God’s redemptive qualities in our lives.
3rd Room – Passion and Patience

1. Passion – Passion is the oldest child, representing the original desires of our heart before we received a change of heart by finding true peace and contentment in Christ. He appears restless, agitated, and anxious, representing those of this world that must have everything now, and is unwilling to wait for God’s best. He is controlled and driven by his feelings and desires and knows little of self-denial or self-control.

Patience – Patience is the younger child whose heart has already been conquered by grace. He seems to be at rest and represents the person that desires to wait for the best things from God, knowing that whatever he receives in eternal glory will be better than anything this world has to offer.

2. Passion mocks Patience because he believes Patience lacks initiative and success and is too focused on making provisions for the next world instead of making the most of this one.

Similarly, the rich man disregards the needs of Lazarus, who’s begging outside his gate. Instead, he finds that the good things he received in this world did little to help in the next. In contrast, Lazarus suffered in this world while patiently waiting for the next.

3. Answers may vary.

4. Passion’s pleasure is short lived. He’s satisfied for a season but then finds his happiness eroding away until he’s eventually left with just rags. From this, we learn that the riches of this world are fleeting and fragile. They appear enticing and desirable but can be gone in a moment.

We need to be very careful not to place our hope and security in our possessions. If we try to maintain an open-hand approach with the treasures of this world, we will not allow those things to capture our hearts.

5. Patience is an essential element in our growing in grace and being conformed to the image of Christ. All of this takes time and does not immediately happen at salvation. In fact, we need to pursue holiness for the rest of our lives, until the day we are ushered into eternity.

6. Even though the things to come seem far off, they are closer than we think, regardless of our age. It’s so easy for us to embrace the present as it offers immediate gratification, but “treasure that will last” is reserved for those that have patience and do not get distracted from the True Way.

4th Room – The Roaring Fire

1. The fireplace represents the heart of a Christian, and the fire represents the blaze of grace in the believer’s heart. The Holy Spirit kindles this fire by creating a passion for God in our hearts, allowing us to live a life that honors Him and speaks the Word of God boldly.
2. The enemy might use a variety of methods to douse any godly enthusiasm we have, like planting doubts and lies in our hearts, fighting against our faith, tempting us with sexual immorality, creating disunity among believers, taking us down through pride, causing us to be persecuted for our faith, crippling us with fear, or sidetracking us with worldly things.

3. The man sustaining the fire represents Christ in spiritual opposition to the devil, sustaining the flame of the gospel in a person’s heart.

It’s often hard for us to understand how God works weaknesses out for our good. A financial crisis, terminal illness, job loss, or broken relationship are all opportunities for God’s power to be displayed. Isaiah 55:8 says that His ways are not our ways. He can use people, circumstances, and difficulties in ways we cannot even fathom.

4. Regardless of what we are going through, God calls us to persevere and depend on Christ and His grace during difficult times. With God continually supplying grace to our hearts, we remember Christ and set our hope on the one who is working through us. The strength to persevere is not in us, not in our determination, not in our creativity, and not in our optimism. We press on only by the grace of God.

5th Room – The Palace

1. These people represent the saints of God that have endured to the end.

2. This group of men who desire to enter the palace but are afraid represent those in life who desire eternal life with all its blessings and joys but are unwilling to endure the suffering, persecution, and difficulties that come with obtaining it.

The company of men in armor guarding the palace represent the authorities of the established church and the state, who had the power to enact laws and create as much “hurt and mischief” as possible for those that would not conform to their ways.

3. Many people consider the cost of following Christ too high and selfishly choose preservation over sanctification. Even though they are within sight of the kingdom, they choose status, lifestyle, and perceived safety over the risks involved in following God, regardless of the benefit.

4. James is referring to the kind of friendship with the world where we love ourselves and put our pleasures before God’s pleasures. If we deliberately choose to follow the world’s philosophy rather than God’s will, we are in rebellion against God. Jesus reiterates this in Matthew 6:24. We cannot be on friendly terms with God if we follow the world’s philosophy. God wants us to include Him in all of life because He is in all of life, and without Him, we can do nothing.

5. The Christian life is not one of passive resignation. There will be conflict, suffering, and often lengthy
persecution. People in various parts of the world are being arrested, imprisoned, stripped of worldly possessions, and publicly harassed and humiliated to force them to renounce their faith.

When Jesus says, “violent men take it by force,” he is not saying that the people entering the kingdom were literally violent but rather their eagerness to see the coming of the Messiah was so overwhelming that it was as if they were attacking a city and beating down the doors to enter. Nothing was going to stand in their way.

6. Christian learns that he will face enemies along the way who will try to prevent him from reaching the Celestial City. Therefore, he must be prepared with his sword and helmet if he is to be successful. Seeing all those who are dressed in gold reassures Christian that he’s not alone, that others have successfully fought the battle and won, and, most importantly, that what he is fighting for is worth it in the end.

7. Like Christian, we are often much too sure of ourselves and ready to battle the world before we are fully equipped. However, preparation is the most essential part of the training. We should be immersing ourselves in prayer and the Word of God, allowing “Him who is able” to teach and train us so that we might avoid danger and temptation. Only then will we be prepared to battle the roaring lion that is seeking to devour us.

6th Room – The Caged Man

1. The iron cage represents the despair of one who has sinned to the point of losing hope of God’s forgiveness and salvation. The room is very dark as opposed to the other rooms, which were illuminated by the Interpreter, or the Holy Spirit, suggesting a lack of illumination and spiritual understanding that has caused this man to drift toward sin.

2. Answers may vary.

3. This man allowed himself to be driven by his lusts, he sinned against the light of the Word and the goodness of God, he grieved the Holy Spirit, he allowed an opening for the devil, he provoked God to anger, and he hardened his heart.

The reality of your enemy demands that you live with alert thinking and serious mindedness. The Word of God teaches us to take the devil seriously and warns us to be on guard against the forces of evil.

We are most vulnerable when we have left the provisions of God’s protection and foolishly trust in ourselves. We become like a defenseless animal alone in the wild, hurting or injured, making ourselves great prey for the prowling, crouching lion ready to spring upon us at any minute.

4. The man did not have any hope, because he truly did not want to repent. True repentance involves not only recognizing sin and its danger but also seeing its ugliness because it is offensive to the holy and
gracious God of the universe, whose mercy has been exhibited through Christ’s sacrifice on the cross. It involves hatred of sin and a desire to forsake it for the right reasons. We’re not talking about the shame and condemnation the enemy wants to heap on us but a godly grief. The most important thing is the condition of our hearts. This attitude is missing from most repentance, and it’s the very thing God is trying to teach us! Satan would like nothing more than for God’s people to so trifle with sin and rebellion that we become ensnared by it and convinced that we will never find relief and freedom.

5. Christian learned the importance of watching, praying, and being sober as a believer and the seriousness of spiritual matters. When we fail to take the Christian life seriously, we are crucifying Jesus again and bringing shame on Him. We must always take refuge in the gospel, turning from sin and running to Christ, and we must delight ourselves in God and His Word and promises, which will always free us from despair.

7th Room – The Unprepared Dreamer

1. The man’s dream frightened him because the Day of Judgment had come, and he was not prepared but was found unrepentant, still in his sins. Christian would have been able to identify with this man’s agony because he had experienced his own impending judgment earlier in the story when he cried out, “What must I do to be saved?”

2. d,c,a,b

3. Chaff – The chaff represents the people that died unrepentant of their sin. They are now sad, attempting to look away in guilt and shame, and desire to flee from His holy gaze, although they are unable to and are eventually thrown into the burning lake.

Wheat – The wheat represents the people that put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ and are now glad. The angels are commanded to take them to heaven to be with Christ.

4. God clearly provides warnings in His Word to avoid danger to our souls, and He promises that we may find peace and hope in the gospel. However, often we do not listen, so God may use various means to get our attention, like disrupting our plans, making us restless, extreme circumstances, defeat, the loss of possessions, and experiencing tragedies, among others.

5. Answers may vary.
Session 3: Chapter 3
Arrival at the Cross

1. Most Bunyan scholars agree that Christian’s sins were forgiven and that he was justified and received Christ when he entered the Wicket Gate. Like all new believers, Christian’s knowledge of his newfound faith is underdeveloped, so he does not yet fully understand the basis of his forgiveness. As a result, his conscience continues to bother or burden him until he arrives at the cross, where he begins to understand the work that Christ did for him on the cross, providing him assurance that his sins are forgiven. This alone removed his burden and allowed him to truly live free of his guilt and shame.

2. Salvation has often been described in three tenses: We are saved, we are being saved, and we will be saved. Our salvation is rooted in the past, worked out in the present, and guaranteed in the future. Christian was saved at the Wicket Gate, he is being saved on his journey, and he will be saved when he arrives at the Celestial City.

Salvation can no more be lost than it can be earned. It’s a gift from God! In truth, if someone claims they lost their salvation, then perhaps they were never saved to begin with. They may have decided that Jesus Christ is the Son of God but never made Him the sovereign Lord of their life.

3. Answers will vary, but there will always be conflict between the corruption of the flesh and the righteous desires of the renewed soul.

4. Christian was overjoyed and felt lighter once he was released of his burden. He no longer felt the guilt and condemnation of his sin. He was free. This caused him to weep and jump for joy because he finally had peace with God.

Joy is vital to our spiritual health. We cannot be effective for Christ if we are constantly being burdened by our sin. Continuing to hold on to our sin will eventually weigh us down and overpower us, leading to discouragement and eventually depression. But when we truly embrace the grace and forgiveness that Christ offers, God releases us of our guilt and burden.

5. The First Angel (Romans 5:1) – The first angel declared that Christian’s sins had been forgiven.

The Second Angel (Zech. 3:3–5) – The second angel exchanged Christian’s rags for new clothing, depicting God’s act of imputing human sin to Jesus Christ.

The Third Angel (Rev. 22:4) – The third placed a mark upon his forehead, setting Christian apart as a child of God. He also gave him a certificate bearing a seal of his assurance of his faith in Christ.

6. When someone believes, they are sealed with the promised Holy Spirit and are marked as belonging to God. The Holy Spirit Himself is the seal. We live in a world of no guarantees, where Christians face tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, and the sword (Romans 8:35). God understands this, and His desire is that His people feel secure and loved in His power. So God sends the Holy Spirit to
seal in our faith and protect us from evil forces, which won’t dare to enter a person bearing the mark of God’s own possession.

Simple, Lazy, and Arrogance

1. Simple (Proverbs 1:32–33) – Simple does not see any danger, because he chooses to be spiritually blind, trusting in the world around him. He’s ignorant to the Word and only trusts what he sees. Since he sees no immediate danger, why not sleep? Simple represents those that refuse to study the Word or persevere in their faith, unaware of the danger they are in.

Lazy (Proverbs 6:1–11) – Lazy just wants to sleep a little bit longer, representing one who just wants to indulge in the flesh. He is spiritually lazy, lethargic, and irresponsible and is mainly concerned with his own well-being and sensual contentment. This world provides a relatively harmless environment. One day, when it’s too late, he will finally awake to the reality of the poverty, paralysis, and misery of his soul.

Arrogance (Philippians 2:3) – Arrogance represents self-sufficiency. He needs no help and only wants to be left alone. He is defiant, rebellious, traitorous, and disrespectful, even when conscious of the very presence of God. But he’s in danger of self-destruction. He proudly boasts of being able to live as an island unto himself, to reject exhortation, to ignore fellowship, and to resist opposition unaided.

2. New believers can often be so excited about following Christ that they become susceptible to a naïve attitude when they meet people that do not share the same gospel-centered focus they have.

An Encounter with Formalism and Hypocrisy

1. Formalism and Hypocrisy entered the Way by climbing over the wall and not through the Wicket Gate. They had several reasons for not entering at the Wicket Gate. First, the Wicket Gate was out of the way and required too much effort, and the shortcut was much quicker. Secondly, climbing over the wall had been the accepted tradition by their countrymen for over a thousand years. Thirdly, they believed that it did not matter how you got on the Way as long as you did.

2. In today’s climate, there are those (even within the church) that would argue that salvation is not exclusive by faith in Jesus Christ by the grace of God. In fact, some might say that it does not matter how you come to God and that simply leading a good life will get you into heaven.

3. Formalist has perhaps some measure of faith but is a religious performer who possesses a form of godliness but denies its power. Hypocrisy tries to persuade himself that he is godly when he knows
nothing about it. He represents a religious pretender.

4. Christian believes that he is much different in mind, action, and will. He obeys God’s will, while they obey their own desires. He also has several identifying features, including new clothes, a mark on his forehead, and a sealed certificate all given to him from God through the Shining Angels.

5. Christian was not afraid to inform the two men that their entry onto the Way was illegal. They did not come through the gate as they were supposed to. And because their entry was illegal, they were not “born again” and had no right to be on the Way to the Celestial City. They had bypassed the proper means of entry onto the Way; they had not come via the cross and would be turned away when they arrived at the Celestial City!

Climbing the Hill of Difficulty

1. The Hill of Difficulty could represent many things in the life of a believer, including opposition, persecution, temptations, physical difficulties, overcoming sinful habits, forgiveness, etc.

God often allows difficulties in our lives to strengthen our faith, to build endurance and character, and, at other times, to jolt us back to reality from a sinful habit or even to challenge us. Difficulties also prepare us to minister to others that are experiencing similar situations.

2. The narrow Way leads to life, and all other paths lead to death.

Sometimes we are not sure if we are on the right path or even where a path will lead. We think that because a path looks difficult, it might not be the right path. Or, at other times, we are aware that the path leads to danger and/or destruction, but like Formalism and Hypocrisy, we choose to follow it nevertheless. Generally, we know which path is right based on the leading of the Holy Spirit, godly advice, or warning signs that keep appearing.

Often we get off the narrow Way when we are not spending time in God’s Word, when we are not in a good Bible-preaching church, when we isolate ourselves with no accountability, and when we do not provide ourselves proper boundaries for areas that cause us to sin.

3. To stay on the right path, we must take time each day to be in God’s Word and to pray. It’s important to unplug from technology and reconnect with God.

The simplest things can pull us off the right path. Sometimes our lives become too busy for us to focus on the Word of God. We allow our schedules to rule us instead of the other way around. Or we might use an alternative means to cope with being on the wrong path, like an addiction to drugs (both illegal and prescription), alcohol, etc. We also might put our head in the sand and deny that we are on the wrong path,
claiming everything is fine. We try to convince ourselves of what we want to be true.

4. The shady arbor represents times of spiritual rest and feeling at peace with God after experiencing victory over sin or being obedient through trials and difficulties.

Christian was encouraged and found rest when he sat down in the shady arbor. He was also encouraged when he pulled out his certificate and began to read as well as by reflecting on the rags that had been removed and the new clothes he had received.

5. There may be worse temptations in hours of rest than in hours of difficulty since your guard is down, leaving you open to sin. We can become lazy and neglectful, self-satisfied, self-indulgent, and overly confident and secure, and we can presume that our relationship with God is good.

6. When Christian left the shady arbor, he accidentally left his certificate behind. The certificate represents his assurance of salvation and the spiritual strength that he gets from reading passages of Scripture.

The Fear of Nervousness and Mistrust

1. Nervousness tells Christian of the increasing danger ahead on the path and how they were once headed to the City of Zion but now the trials are just too much. Mistrust tells Christian of two fierce lions that lie ahead on the path. They could not tell whether they were asleep or awake and ready to attack them. Regardless, the lions’ presence generated great fear and sent them heading back home.

2. The spies started their report optimistically about a land overflowing with milk and honey then pessimistically changed their tune and could only see the obstacles and potential failure and defeat. Joshua and Caleb were not ignorant of the obstacles but believed God had promised them this land and they needed to be faithful to take it. No matter what we do for God, there will be personal costs involved. We pay the personal costs because we believe and feel Christ is worth sacrificing for.

3. God has not given us a spirit of fear but one of power, love, and a sound mind. When we look at the obstacles in our lives, do we see ourselves as giants or grasshoppers? If we can learn to focus on God’s power instead of our own strength, we can rest assured that He will provide us with the courage we need and that no one can be against us.

4. Christian admitted that he was scared, but he took control of his thoughts and reasoned that it was safer to press ahead than to turn back, where he faced certain destruction. At least pressing ahead through danger offered the hope of life.

5. The Bible tells us to take every thought captive, which requires a real battle in our thought lives. As we
go through the day, we should try to catch thoughts and attitudes that are contrary to God’s will and keep them from gaining control of our minds and hearts.

6. Christian regretted that he had ever fallen asleep, he asked God for forgiveness, and he then went in search of his certificate.

7. Our past sins and failures often have present consequences to be dealt with and not swept under the rug. Sin will cause us to lose time as we have to backtrack and cover the same ground we had previously covered.
1. The Palace Beautiful represents the church and, at this point in the story, also represents the vantage point of a new believer who has not yet matured in his faith.

2. The lions represent satanic resistance, prowling and ready to attack those that would declare their faith by seeking entrance. This happens through the trials and persecutions believers encounter in their endeavors to attend church.

3. God is sovereign over Satan. The devil does not have a free hand in this world. He is on a leash so that he can do no more than God permits. Although the devil may roar and threaten, his power and access are limited.

4. d,a,e,c,b

5. Watchmen in ancient Israel were often stationed on high walls and were responsible for protecting towns and military installations from surprise enemy attacks and other potential dangers and impending threats.

In this story, Watchman represents an overseer of the palace standing guard to make sure that only genuine believers come in. He explains the purposes and functions of the Palace and elicits a testimony from Christian by asking him several questions.

6. Discretion represents those that have the ability to discern truth and error and then make wise and responsible decisions based upon solid facts and evidence.

7. The need for discretion can be difficult, especially when souls are at stake, but it would be unloving and deceitful for a church to welcome into its membership one who gave no evidence of a heart turned to Christ and a life changed by the power of His Spirit.

For the benefit of the body of Christ, we should take care, as best we can and knowing that our judgments are not infallible, to determine that those that come to join the church have a credible profession of faith and give evidence of God’s grace at work in their lives.

8. It is important to identify ourselves with a local body of believers for several reasons: It makes us accountable to proper spiritual leadership, we become like-minded with fellow believers, and it allows us to pool our talents and resources for the valuable purpose of reaching others for Christ.
An Interview with Piety, Prudence, and Charity

1. When we share our testimony, not only does it edify and encourage others in their own journey but our own faith is strengthened because the telling of it forces us to rethink what God has done for us. We are reminded of His saving grace, His blessings, His protection, and His love.

2. Piety represents our personal devotion and loyalty to God and our sincere desire to love and remain faithful to Him.

Piety asks Christian to share his testimony—all the things that have happened to him thus far on his pilgrimage—which includes when he first heard the gospel and became a pilgrim, what he learned at the House of the Interpreter, what happened to him at the cross, and the dangers and distractions that he faced and overcame.

3. Peter urged his readers to add goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, mutual affection, and love.

4. Prudence represents our carefulness to walk in the wisdom and truth of God’s Word. Christian prudence is godly wisdom in action as we apply God’s Word to what we think, say, and do.

Whereas Piety began the discussion by drawing out Christian’s story and testimony for the benefit of all in the Palace, Prudence probed deeper, which led Christian to introspection and self-examination. She focused on his internal thoughts, motives, desires, struggles, and responses and wanted to expose what was going on in his heart so that he could know where he was sinning and develop a strategy to guard his heart and mind against sin.

5. When you are prudent, you are in control of yourself, not impulsive; you are sensible; you listen to reason; you make decisions based on facts; you make sound judgements; and you think ahead and anticipate consequences.

6. Paul is not giving believers an excuse to sin nor a lack of desire to do what is right—he wants to do right. Nor is his problem knowledge, because he knows what the right thing is. His problem is a lack of power. He lacks power because the law gives no power. He recognizes that as he sins, he acts against his nature as a new man in Jesus Christ.

7. Christian’s strategy to guard against sin begins with his thought process. When tempted, he thinks about what Christ did on the cross and how he has been made a new person in Christ, and he reflects on God’s Word and eternal life in heaven.

8. Charity represents our compassion and love for others. Her line of questioning leads Christian to discover whether he has done everything that he could for his family, who are destined for destruction.

9. The point of this passage is the point of the gospel. If we live out our Christian lives with great commitment and diligence and we do all we can in ministry and service to our Lord, it will be meaningless
and of no value unless we are fueled by love.

10. Charity encouraged him by saying that Cain hated his brother because his deeds were evil and his brother’s deeds were righteous, and if his wife and children were offended by him for his righteousness, it was their fault; he was not responsible for their rejection of Christ.

**Suiting Up for Battle**

1. Bunyan most likely meant for the meal to represent the fellowship that believers share together in Christ, especially in the regular observance of the Lord’s Supper. At the table, they discussed Jesus Christ, His sacrificial death on the cross for His church, His defeat of Satan, why He established the local church, and His great love for pilgrims.

2. The Lord’s Supper is to be celebrated by those who have already been saved by grace through faith in Christ alone. It’s to be celebrated regularly and as a reminder of the grace of God over our sin and the need for forgiveness. It’s also a time when we should examine ourselves to make sure that we are not harboring unconfessed sin in our lives.

3. Every day brings new challenges to test our peace. Much of our time, energy, and money is spent trying to find and secure peace in our lives. But we can only have true peace if we’re in a right relationship with the Lord and have experienced forgiveness of our sins by God through what Christ has done.

   Jesus said, “I give you peace, the kind of peace that only I can give. It is not like the peace that this world can give. So don’t be worried or afraid.”

4. They take him first into the study, which represents the preaching and teaching ministry of the church and where we learn and study the Word of God.

   Often the mornings can be a time when we are fresh and more alert, especially before the demands of the day intrude, which generally tend to strike later in the day. Forming a practice of reading our Bibles and praying first thing in the morning will help us depend on and trust in God for the rest of the day.

5. The study of Scripture is vital to the life of a Christian because it is God’s Word to us—literally “God-breathed.” The Bible is totally reliable and without error and is as relevant today as the day it was written. The Bible also guides and protects us in our walk by exposing false teaching as well as helping us avoid temptation. We should attempt to know Christ better every day, and that takes a daily intake of the Word of God.

6. The purpose of the armory is to provide sufficient weapons necessary for gaining strength and achieving
victory over our enemies. It’s important to realize that it’s in the church where we learn about the weapons and equipment we need for our spiritual warfare against Satan. The provisions found in the armory include the sword, shield, helmet, breastplate, all-prayer, and shoes that will not wear out.

7. These passages make it clear that the real conflict taking place is a spiritual war with Satan, therefore no tangible weapons can be effectively employed against him and his demons.

The purpose of the full armor of God is to provide the believer with the spiritual tools needed to stand their ground during life’s daily spiritual struggles. Scripture makes it clear that our struggle is not with flesh and blood. In other words, our struggles in life have a spiritual root. Believers in Christ are called to utilize the full armor of God. Not doing so will expose the believer to the enemy’s schemes.

8. The more you grow spiritually, the more you will understand God and the truths in His Word. As you grow older physically, you will also grow spiritually, and being closer to death (heaven) and as a more mature believer, your understanding and vision will be clearer.

9. We need the company and support of God’s people when we go down into spiritual valleys and face times of difficulty and distress. We need their encouragement and admonition to guide us and help us make wise choices and not stumble and fall.

10. Descending the mountain after just experiencing a great spiritual victory can be difficult because we can easily become prideful and spiritually lazy while letting our guard down. It’s at times like these when we are more susceptible to stumbling.

These stumbles can take many forms: fear, doubt, restlessness, grumbling, impatience, self-indulgence, and carelessness, to name a few.

Our first response is to be aware that we are slipping in the first place and to call it what it is and not make excuses or be prideful. When we do, the Lord is always there to provide mercy and lift us up.
Session 5: Chapter 5
The Battle with Apollyon

1. Christian left the Palace Beautiful perhaps feeling some spiritual pride after his wonderful experience there. God will often use various life experiences to reveal spiritual pride in our hearts to humble us. In those moments, we must learn, just like Christian, to completely depend on God and utilize the spiritual armor He provides.

The Valley of Humiliation is a point in time when we throw down our pride and recognize that we are nothing without God.

2. Paul readily admits that he needed help in resisting pride, and it came in the form of a messenger of Satan to torment, weaken, and discourage him, even attempting to hinder his ministry success. But by God’s grace and Paul’s faith, Satan’s own weapon was turned against him as Paul was made spiritually stronger by rendering him physically weaker.

3. Apollyon represents the devil and the spiritual forces of evil that oppose God and seek to destroy and diminish God’s work and glory. In Greek, his name means “Destroyer.” He is a hideous creature, destructive, ruthless, violent, and the king of the army of locusts. He has come to confront Christian, reclaim him as his subject, and turn him away from following Christ.

4. The main reason there is no back plate is that God has our backs and our role is to stand firm and resist the devil; then he will flee from us. If we retreat, we become vulnerable and powerless and play into the devil’s hand. We must learn to stand our ground and stay in the fight against sin and temptation and not turn back from following Christ.

5. The Christian life is characterized by spiritual warfare and by the daily call to take up arms against the forces of evil.

6. Apollyon uses a variety of methods to try to discourage Christian, including:

   A. Making sin look promising, prosperous, and alluring by appealing to Christian’s desire for comfort, pleasure, safety, and freedom from danger and by promising to give him “what our country will afford.”
   B. Intimidating him with the possibility of suffering, trials, and harm, just like others that had followed the Way.
   C. Reminding him of the apostasy and hypocrisy of others that later turned their backs on Christ.
   D. Pointing to Christian’s own unfaithfulness and shortcomings in serving his new master.
   E. Attacking his motive for following Christ by accusing Christian of venturing to Zion for selfish reasons.

7. Christian responds wisely to Apollyon’s accusations. He doesn’t try to rationalize his sin. He doesn’t downplay or deny his sin. He doesn’t blame others or make excuses but rather focuses on Christ’s
forgiveness. Christian disarms the accusations by confessing that his sins were far greater and that Jesus had already forgiven them.

If Christian did not feel comfortable in who he was in Christ, he might have responded by making excuses for his sin or blaming others. He might have also rationalized his sin, claiming that everyone was doing it. Or he could have become so overwhelmed with guilt that it paralyzed him from doing anything at all. However, he understood the truth of the gospel and the abundance of God’s mercy to provide true forgiveness and peace that allowed him to stand firm against Apollyon’s attacks.

8. Apollyon aimed his first arrow not just at Christian’s chest but at his heart. Why? Because a sin-darkened heart does not have life flowing from it. According to Scripture, we must guard our hearts with the truth of His Word if we want love and life to flow from it.

Christian, armed for spiritual warfare, warded off the flaming dart with the shield of faith and then used his sword and Scripture to maintain his defense and guard his heart.

9. Sometimes our spiritual battles take much longer than expected. In fact, they are not often easily won in a day. Especially for those of us with habitual sins, the long game of spiritual warfare can be discouraging and exhausting. But we cannot lose hope in our fight, because the battle is for a purpose to shape us into who God wants us to be.

10. Apollyon was not trying to wound Christian aimlessly. He was very strategic in his battle. By wounding Christian in the head, he weakened his ability to understand God’s Word and, as a result, God’s will. Wounding him in the hand weakened Christian’s ability to receive and hold the truth of God’s Word. And wounding him in the foot weakened his ability to walk in the truth and be a living testimony to others.

11. The sword of the spirit is our only offensive weapon in the armor of God and is powerful in spiritual warfare. Without it, we can lose confidence because we have started to rely on the solutions of this world to solve our problems. The fact is, we are at our weakest in a spiritual battle when we lose our grip on the sword, the Word of God.

12. The Word of God has indeed proven itself to be sharper than any two-edged sword. It separates the truth from the lie by sharply cutting to the quick. It can cause someone to sharply change the direction of their life when its admonition is applied in one’s life. Just as a sword can save a life so can the application of Bible truths.

Christian defeats the dragon when he remembers and stands on the truth of God’s Word by quoting Micah 7:8 and Romans 8:37–39.

13. Bunyan is attempting to illustrate the importance of recognizing and remembering the one who provides us victory in a spiritual battle lest we become spiritually prideful. This can be done through praising Him in song and prayer, partaking of the Lord’s Supper, allowing God’s Word to continue to heal those injured, and providing us peace while we trust, rest, and hope in Him.
Entering the Valley of the Shadow of Death

1. The Valley of the Shadow of Death, or dark valley, represents the trials, temptations, and tribulations we go through in the Christian life. It’s a dark, dangerous, and solitary place where one feels alone or abandoned, both by God and others, leaving them spiritually drained.

2. Life is unpredictable at best! Just as we make it through one season of hardship another is fast on its heels to take its place. Most often we never see it coming. It could be a health crisis, the loss of a loved one, an employment shake-up, a betrayal, or some form of persecution, and it just does not seem fair.

During these times, we can become particularly vulnerable to temptation, discouragement, and spiritual desolation, but we are not alone. God promises us that He will not desert us in the valley. He does, in fact, walk right by our side, guiding us and comforting us with His presence. And just as Christ was struck down, crucified, and buried while his enemies rejoiced for a time, He rose on the third day. We may have fears within and struggles without, yet we are not destroyed; He will sustain us.

3. The spies knew of the riches that awaited them in the Promised Land, but their fear and lack of faith in the promises of God, as well as spreading fear throughout the entire Israelite community, left them to wander in the desert for 40 years. Just like the Israelites, our hardships and sufferings can be prolonged out of fear or lack of faith and trust in God.

Christian understood that to get to the Celestial City and attain eternal life, he must persevere through this valley and have faith. The only other option was to turn back, but ultimately, he knew that to be a worse option. He still had much to learn, and God would not waste this opportunity to grow his perseverance, character, faith, and hope.

Dark valleys are just a part of life, but throughout Scripture, God promises us victory if we have faith in Him and persevere. We can never truly know the awesomeness of God’s power and love until we have had a chance to experience His love and saving grace through the trials and tribulations that life brings.

4. Ditch – Matthew 15:12–14

The ditch represents the sin we fall into as a result of following the wrong person or culture or our own natural desires. When we do this, we become blind to the truth and fail to recognize and acknowledge sin as something that leads to destruction.

Quagmire – Psalm 69:14–15

Just like David felt overtaken and overwhelmed in the mire, we, too, can feel overtaken or overwhelmed by our sin. As believers, our repetitive sin is a cancer that continues to eat away at us, robbing us of any joy or hope. We know the right thing to do but continue sinning repeatedly, knowing full well we are disappointing God. This behavior continues to manifest itself, leading us to feel overwhelmed by and helpless against our own sin.
5. The only safe path through this dark valley is with Christ. He is the way, the truth, and the life and will keep us from falling to the right or left. In Him, we find forgiveness, and the Law no longer condemns us; we find the strength to walk in newness of life.

6. Bunyan portrays very real and vivid pictures of a raging Hell with flames, smoke, and sparks belching forth with accompanying hideous screaming, groaning, and dreadful sounds. Bunyan’s description is not without biblical support as we see a very similar description from Jesus.

7. Christian began to feel threatened by both the flames and demons coming after him and realized that the sword that he used to battle Apollyon was of no use is the valley. The sword could not keep him from falling off the path in the dark or being overtaken by evil creatures that sneaked up on him. Christian realized that only those who spend time with God in prayer can stand against the devil.

8. The devil launched his attack on Christian by sending an evil creature to follow closely behind him and whisper blasphemous thoughts in his ear. Not knowing that the creature was there, Christian was distressed and grieved to think that such wicked thoughts had originated from his own mind.

To guard against attacks and the battle for the mind, Paul tells us to destroy strongholds. A stronghold can be a mental battle that is arguing against the knowledge of God and is not easily dislodged. We must powerfully defend against it by taking captive every thought that is gaining control over what we think about ourselves and our lives. Then we should ask God to transform us by renewing our minds (Romans 12:2).

9. Christian was encouraged when he realized that others were in the valley and he was not alone. He also reasoned that if God had attended to others in the valley, He would attend to him as well, and he hoped that he would be able to catch up with him and have companionship on the journey.

10. God’s Word helps us by illuminating sin and temptation and releasing its power to allure and confuse us as well as helping us steer clear and avoid its entanglement. It’s not that evil is driven away but rather that it’s more clearly identified.

11. These people of the faith endured torture, mocking, scourging, chains of imprisonment, stoning, being sawn in two, wandering destitute in mountains and caves, and being afflicted and tormented. They obtained a good testimony, the promise of eternal life, and the promise that they might be made perfect, together with us (i.e., salvation, the heavenly city).
1. As believers, we do not all mature in our faith at the same rate. Christian had been a believer longer, but Faithful had grown spiritually more quickly. Spiritual maturity has less to do with age and more to do with one’s dedication to learning to become a disciple of Christ.

Faithful had just endured the Valley of Humiliation and was still fearful of what he had left behind. He pressed forward and would not wait for Christian to catch up for several reasons: He did not want to be negligent in his duty to continue following Christ, he did not want to be left open to attack, and he knew it would hinder Christian by giving him an excuse for not picking up his own pace.

2. Spiritual growth takes effort. In the Christian life, this might involve Bible study, scripture memorization, meditation and prayer, Christian fellowship, and serving others.

The warning for us is that even when we think we are standing firm, we need to be on guard against spiritual pride. When we begin to think that we are more spiritual than our brother, we fail to remember the grace that God has shown us and leave ourselves open to stumbling and falling into sin.

3. When Pliable returned to the City of Destruction, he was mocked and ridiculed for abandoning the way and not remaining faithful to his convictions and was now in more danger than he was before he left, now being regarded as a hypocrite and turncoat. Pliable knew his only hope was the gospel, but he was ashamed of his actions and therefore avoided those who could share the gospel with him.

4. The word “wanton” means promiscuous, sexually unrestrained, or having many casual sexual relationships. In this situation, Wanton represents the temptation to gratify our sexual lust. Wanton lures Faithful through flattery, pressure, and persuasive overtures and by promising him all manner of pleasure and contentment, specifically sexual satisfaction.

5. Faithful was able to keep himself from succumbing to Wanton’s temptation by remembering, thinking about, and quoting Scripture. He realized that if he were to follow through on the temptation, he would be defiling himself and sinning against God. He then committed himself to avoiding Wanton’s temptations by not entertaining sinful thoughts. Secondly, he turned his eyes away from the source of the temptation and refused to allow himself to do the things that would stir up his lusts and thereby make it more difficult to resist.

Wanton is still tempting believers today through work, relationships, books, magazines, television, movies, the Internet, mobile phones, texting, etc. Wanton can only promise temporary pleasure and happiness; it will never last, and she will never provide a clear conscience or eternal happiness.

6. Adam the First represents our struggle with our old sinful nature. Even though we are saved by grace, on occasion we still feel some of our old nature’s power trying to lure us back to a sin that we once
struggled with.

Adam the First used flattery and deceit to tempt Faithful into leaving the path and coming with him. He promised him a good job and that he would make him his heir living in a luxurious house married to all his daughters.

7. a. Lust (desires) of the flesh – The lust of the flesh includes sin such as sexual immorality, gluttony, and other indulgences.

b. Lust (desires) of the eyes – The lust of the eyes is the greedy desire for the material riches and possessions of this world.

c. Pride in possessions / Pride of life – The pride of life is boasting of ambition and achievement about what we have or do for the honor and applause of the world.

According to John, having a love for the world might be an indication that the Father’s love is not in us.

8. Eventually, Faithful was able to see through Adam’s ploy and resist the temptation by seeing the warning to put off his old self and once again walk by faith. This agonizing internal struggle between good and evil robs us of peace of mind and a good conscience and can often render life miserable.

9. Moses represents the work of the law. The temptation for Faithful is to achieve a right relationship with God through works and keeping God’s law, but he realizes that the law requires perfect adherence to be saved, which he is unable to do. The burden of guilt that he feels is unbearable, beats him down, and yields no mercy, and as a result, he must be punished and die.

10. God sent a rescuer, Christ Jesus, who came and, in mercy, raised up Faithful. We need one greater than Moses if we are to find the help we need. The law cannot show us mercy or give us life, but it can point us to one who can. All that put their faith in Jesus Christ are justified as a gift by the grace of God.

11. Discontent tries to persuade Faithful to return to his old life since if he enters the Valley of Humiliation, his reputation will be ruined and all his friends, including Pride, Arrogance, Self-Conceit, and Worldly Glory, will see that he’s weak.

Faithful tells Discontent that these so-called friends had already rejected him and he them. He also actually considered it an honor to go through the valley.

12. Christians are most at risk of becoming discontent when we are tempted to find our joy and satisfaction in something or someone other than Christ, whether it’s our spouse, children, finances, health, material possessions, work, status, etc. As Christians, we sometimes expect God to solve all our problems in the way we think He should while providing a stress-free life. When this does not happen, we become discontent in God’s provisions.

Paul instructs us to be content in every situation regardless of our outer circumstances and to instead pursue godliness for true happiness.
13. According to the dictionary, shame is a painful feeling of humiliation, distress, or guilt caused by the consciousness of wrong or foolish behavior.

Based on their conversation, Faithful’s impression is that Shame has the wrong name because his name suggests one who feels a measure of guilt or inadequacy and one who is convicted of sin or embarrassed by his actions. But Shame has no shame for himself. Instead, he is intent on disgracing others, especially those who would put their hope in God.

14. Shame’s wanted to make Faithful ashamed of the Bible, Christ, the gospel, and living a godly life. His aim was to discredit faith and make Faithful feel embarrassed about all that is good. He said religion is foolish and a waste of time and instead we should be adventurous by expressing the freedom to do whatever we want. He said religion may be fine for the poor and those that are less fortunate, but it is unbecoming to the educated and enlightened, those that should know better. He said it’s not seemly for those that would be mighty, rich, or wise in this world to so demean themselves by following God. He also scorns those that would ask forgiveness, feel conviction, make restitution, sorrow over sin, give benevolence to the poor, or label vices as sin. He thinks it’s a shame that people would be so taken in by faith in God.

We need to place our confidence in the gospel of Christ and proclaim it boldly with no fear that our confidence has been misplaced. We should also be able to apply it to our lives and show that we believe in it. When we indulge in the carnal desires of this world, we indicate that we lack confidence in our own message and do damage to the gospel. However, when we allow the gospel to dominate in all parts of our lives, we let everyone in our sphere of influence know that we’ve been with Jesus.

15. At first Faithful doesn’t know how to respond to Shame, but eventually he sees the emptiness of his arguments. He realizes that Shame is describing the world’s standards of living and happiness, not God’s standards. The actions and beliefs of those that are dedicated to living a gospel-centered life will seem strange to one that is not. In fact, having Christ is more valuable than all the riches of the world! In the end, everyone will bow before the throne and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Shame is a foe that we are likely to meet quite often on our Christian journey. We can find it in our family, friends, coworkers, school, teachers or college professors, the media, and culture in general. Basically, we can find shame wherever there are skeptics that want to find reasons to dismiss the claims of the Bible and make us feel like outcasts and out of step with the shifting social standards.
The Hypocrisy of Talkative

1. Faithful was drawn to Talkative because he came off as very attractive, bold, enthusiastic, and well spoken. He was tall, which might have meant that he was a man of stature in his community, and he seemed well versed in talking about the things of God.

We tend to like people that are most like us and that make us feel comfortable. It might be because we have a lot in common or that they share the same attitudes about the world, culture, and religion as we do. They might also be in the same stage of life that we are in, and they make us feel better about ourselves.

2. The Bible warns us against talking too much. In fact, the Bible says that a fool can be recognized by his many words and that a fool “multiplies words.”

It’s important that we not become overly judgmental of a talkative person however; rather, we should listen to them and then discern whether what they say is truth or error. We need to be on guard against the content of their speech to see if it is gossip, unloving, rude, superficial, or bad theology. If they are a Christian, we will know them by their fruit.

3. Christian has many concerns about Talkative. He says that Talkative might be a great speaker and able to talk doctrine and the Scriptures, but he fails to live by what he professes. He also presents himself very well, but on closer examination, his actions don’t measure up to his words. He is knowledgeable, well spoken, and polite, but those who know him more intimately claim that he’s sinful, unjust, and unreasonable. His hypocrisy and conduct have caused many to stumble, fall, and turn away from the faith.

4. Some of Jesus’ sharpest words were aimed at those that lived in hypocrisy and led others astray by their hypocrisy. Jesus referred to the Scribes and Pharisees as a “brood of vipers” for their hypocrisy, and then, in Matthew 18, he warned us about the dangers of leading others into sin.

We might be able to think of many in the church today that fit the description of Talkative. They use Christian talk and do religious things, mingle with believers, and might have even convinced themselves that they are on the right path. Yet their hearts are far away from God, and their behavior does not match up to what they proclaim with their mouths.

5. The understanding of true saving faith is salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ. But true faith does not exist without works, because once we have Christ in our lives, He is working in us to accomplish His purposes. James tells us that faith without works is a dead faith because the lack of works reveals an unchanged life or a spiritually dead heart. A true saving faith will transform one’s life, which is demonstrated in the works that we do. We are not only justified (declared righteous) in salvation but sanctified (made righteous) and set apart for good works.

6. As eloquent as Paul was, he knew the gospel can be confusing to people if not presented clearly. He might have also wanted to be prepared for anything, including trick questions or the use of the right illustrations to make his point. Given the fact that Paul no doubt felt confused at times, we should also pray for clarity in our conversations with others. God can use us to reach more people with a clear message.
than with a cloudy one.

We have the same responsibility to make sure we know the truth and present that truth in the clearest and most accurate and applicable way, but then we must trust God to bless that truth to the hearts and lives of those whom we counsel.

7. Talkative’s first response as to how a person can know whether they are truly saved was that there is a great outcry against sin. Faithful told Talkative that there is a difference between crying out against sin and actually hating sin. It’s one thing to go through the motions and say that you’re against sin, and it’s an entirely different thing to say that you hate the sin.

Faithful used three illustrations to explain the difference between hating sin and crying out against it. First, he used the biblical illustration of a preacher that preaches against sin in the pulpit and then indulges in the sin he preached about in his life and home. Secondly, he used the illustration of Potiphar’s wife, who cried out against the sin of adultery but was ready to commit it with Joseph. Thirdly, he used the illustration of a mother with a child, who, when the child is behaving badly, may be upset but then will quickly embrace the child in love.

8. Talkative’s second response to Faithful’s question about how a person can know whether they are truly saved was that if one knew a lot about the Bible and could extol theology with ease, they must be saved. Faithful told him that this evidence should have been mentioned first but is also false. He told him that it is not enough to just have knowledge of the Scriptures, but we should be resolved to be doers of the Word.

We need knowledge that compels us to obedience out of love from the heart. If we live out our Christian lives with great commitment and diligence and we do all we can in ministry and service to our Lord, it will be meaningless and of no value unless we are fueled by love.

9. Faithful could have told Talkative that he had heard about his reputation and then could have just walked away. However, he recognized that Talkative’s soul was in danger since he was professing a lie for the truth and living in sin. He was willing to engage Talkative because he did not want him to continue in error and deception.

10. h, d, a, g, b, c, e, f

11. His question to Talkative was, first, if he had experienced this saving grace and, second, if his life and conduct were consistent with that experience.

Talkative at first was embarrassed because although he could talk about saving grace, he had not lived it out in his heart or life. His conviction was quickly quenched, however, and he became defensive, claiming that Faithful caught him off guard and had put him on the spot. But he refused to answer the question and was not willing to have this type of discussion with Faithful nor have his life examined by him. He then left because he was confronted and exposed as a hypocrite.

12. Many today would agree with Talkative and say that Faithful was being insensitive and not sympathetic to alternative lifestyles. They would say that he is being judgmental and needs to be more
understanding and loving of other people. After all, we are all sinners, and what makes Faithful any better than Talkative?

These words from the Sermon on the Mount are often quoted but seldom understood in context. Jesus is not giving a pass to those that are still infatuated with their sin. He is warning us of hypocrisy. Our own sin should loom largest in our eyes. We must turn away and flee from our own sin, and then we will see clearly to help others turn from the sins that beset them.

13. God’s Word commands us to separate from those who would claim Christ yet cling to sin.

Evangelist Warns of the Coming Tribulation

1. Evangelist has appeared twice before, once at the beginning, where he pointed Christian to the Gate, and at Mount Sinai, where he admonished Christian for heeding the voice of Worldly Wiseman and straying from the Way.

2. Answers may vary.

3. We can often become overwhelmed with the responsibilities of the Christian life. It can happen when we feel there’s so much work to be done and we feel we cannot possibly do it all. If we are not careful, we can begin to think that our time, energy, and finances are not making any difference and would be better spent elsewhere. We most often feel this way because our flesh becomes weak from exhaustion, derailing any good intentions that we have.

4. Paul says that it’s not enough just to run the race. We must run it with purpose, pushing ourselves to the limit with unwavering commitment to win. To do so takes sacrifice and training and the avoidance of things that will hinder our pursuit of the goal.

5. Evangelist is commending them for doing well while at the same time reminding them that the devil is always prowling around like a roaring lion waiting to devour them (or shed their blood). Often when encountering difficult situations, we can lose hope and believe that God has abandoned us. Therefore, we should keep focused on the crown and believe without waver.

6. He warned them that on their journey, they would encounter hardship in one form or another and that there would be enemies in the town ahead that would try to kill them. In fact, one of them would die and so seal their testimony with their blood.

He encouraged them to persevere and to commit themselves to the Lord’s will for their lives and to continue to do good and to not fear or lose heart but to be brave.
Session 7: Chapter 7
On Trial at Vanity Fair

1. From a human perspective, everything in this world often appears futile and empty. As Christians, we know that it’s because we were made to engage in something that transcends this world. Ecclesiastes tells us that what we actually desire is to fear, obey, and find our satisfaction in God. Everything else is a cheap imitation and ultimately pointless.

2. The town of Vanity Fair represents the pride, arrogance, and conceit of the world system in which we live that’s under Satan’s control. It’s a life void of the gospel of Jesus Christ but full of pleasures that can never fully satisfy and are meaningless from an eternal perspective. Vanity Fair is a dangerous trap that Satan uses to distract us, tempt us, and guide us away from knowing and following the one true God.

3. It was important for Bunyan to establish a time frame to remind readers that sin is not a new thing but rather as old as man.

The fair is described as all year long because temptations are always around us, in every age, in every generation, and in all walks of life. We have an enemy to our souls, and he would have us believe the same lie he spoke in the Garden, that his way is more desirable than God’s way.

4. Satan will use a variety of temptations to get our attention, and that includes taking something that is inherently good and corrupting it with sin and tempting us with it. This happens when we pursue something in the wrong way, perhaps with deception; when we want something for the wrong reasons; or when it takes control of our lives and we make it an idol. For example, music and entertainment can be good, but when these draw our heart away from God, they then become sin to us.

5. We think a big, powerful nation and its extravagant culture is something to behold, but the greatest glory of the greatest nation is as a drop in a bucket compared to the greatness and glory of God.

6. As Christians, we cannot escape Vanity Fair. We must go through it. But while we are in the world, we do not have to be worldly minded. It’s God’s will that we walk through this world, often in places we might not expect, so that we can have a positive influence on others. However, we must be on guard to maintain the mind of Christ and not allow repeated exposure to a particular worldview to impact our thoughts and actions.

7. Christian and Faithful’s clothes, speech, and values and priorities were different. What the people of Vanity Fair considered most important did not have the same importance to Christian and Faithful.

8. We should consider truth of the highest value and spare no cost to obtain it, and once we have obtained it, we should guard it and not trade it for any earthly gain.

9. The fact that Paul mentions living or dying suggests that he might be subject to capital punishment. But for Paul, he said that either way, he cannot lose. He took comfort in the fact that either he would die and
be with Christ or continue in his ministry of advancing the knowledge of the gospel for the sake of others.

10. Paul claimed that his imprisonment had actually turned out for the advance of the gospel. In fact, the whole Roman guard had been exposed to Paul’s preaching as he had the opportunity to share with many soldiers about Christ. At the end of the book, Paul passed on greetings from the saints of Caesar’s household who had also become followers of Christ.

11. Faithful responded to the charges by saying that he caused no disruption at the fair and that he was a man of peace. Furthermore, as for any men that might have been won to them, it was because they saw and understood the truth and were now better off as a result.

12. When Peter and John were forbidden to preach the gospel, they responded by telling the Jewish leaders that their command was illegitimate and that as followers of Christ, they must keep His commands even when they violated the orders of the state.

Christians have always stressed their duty to be good citizens and obedient to the state. However, when the state’s commands conflict with God’s commands, believers must follow the Lord. Christians have the right—indeed, the God-given duty—to disobey the state whenever the government forbids what the Lord commands or commands what the Lord forbids.

13. When the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul.

14. If we truly believe Jesus’ words, then we should obey them and tell others the truth about sin, righteousness, and judgement.

15. Flattery is different from a compliment in that the flatterer has selfish motivations and hopes to gain something over the one being flattered.

16. In today’s politically correct world, the mere suggestion that one belief system is universally true and morally binding on everyone is considered close minded and even classified as a form of mental illness by some professors. In some arenas of speech, expressing your Christian thoughts can be considered hate speech.

17. Although there was a crowd gawking at Faithful’s demise, there was a chariot and horses waiting to take him to the Celestial City through the clouds with the sound of a trumpet.

18. God has different ways in which He will glorify himself through His children. Faithful is delivered to death, faithful to the end, as a testimony of the supreme value of life in Christ. Christian is released to press on in the faith as an encouragement and hope for others. And God, who is sovereign over all things, is glorified by both.
Session 8: Chapter 8
The Deceitfulness of Riches

1. A young Saul was not only present but also approved of the stoning death of Stephen. Years later, it would be natural for a more mature Paul to reflect on that moment with regret. However, he might also find encouragement in his own present sufferings. God often uses the way we respond to life’s difficulties as a powerful witness to others.

2. This verse does not say that God will provide us only success in life but rather it should reassure us that God has a purpose for our suffering. God does not always take away our suffering but provides us hope during it.

3. Mr. By-Ends was a man of the world who desired money and social standing above all else and had no reservations about using religion to obtain those things. He wanted to maintain control over his life, allowing him the freedom to explore whatever truth felt right in the moment. He claimed to follow Christ but was a hypocrite and only embraced religion for the most favorable outcome, not for personal holiness.

The By-Ends of the church today can be found in the wealth, health, and prosperity teachings of many charismatic churches as well as those who seek religion only to solve their problems and not to worship and live for the one true God.

4. The fact is, we might all have used religion with the wrong motivations at some point. Some, however, might use it for financial gain, for popularity, to control others, for self-promotion, to rationalize their behavior, or to judge others.

5. True discipleship involves the cross and self-denial. To deny yourself means to surrender your will to the Lord without trying to please yourself. It’s to put away the idea of living a life of pleasure and giving in to our personal desires. To follow Christ, we must put Him above ourselves and seek to do those things that please Him. This idea not only seemed foreign to By-Ends but also offended him. People become naturally offended when they perceive a threat to their own freedoms.

6. All four men were former classmates under the teaching of Mr. Gripe-man, where they learned the art of prospering—how to accrue possessions, power, pleasure and profit by any means necessary: violence, cheating, flattery, lying, or fake religion.

7. The four reasons that Money-Love offers to validate a minister’s desire to modify his religion are:

   1. It’s not sinful to desire more pay, and since the opportunity has come his way, it must be in the providence of God for him to pursue it.
   2. More study and more opportunities to preach will certainly make him a better preacher.
   3. Compromising his principles for the new church is not wrong; in fact, it demonstrates self-denial and a winning attitude, affirming that he has the qualities that will allow him to excel in ministry.
4. Moving from a small church to a large church is evidence of success and should not in any way be judged as covetous.

8. Money-Love again sees no problem and affirms the businessman’s desire to modify his religion in order to expand the opportunity in his market in these ways:

   1. It’s always good and beneficial to go to church and engage in religion regardless of the motivation.
   2. It’s not sinful for a man to marry a rich woman or convince potential customers to do business at his store.
   3. Since being religious is good, getting a wife is good, and growing your business is good, getting a wife and growing your business by being religious must certainly be good.

9. Some might find their reasoning appealing because it appeals to our natural desire to put ourselves first.

This passage does not give us an option because worldliness is, at its core, a matter of the heart. If your heart is captured by the world, you will love the things of the world. If your heart is captured by the love of God, you will be drawn to Him and to the things of God.

It’s not wrong to succeed in business or your career. Many natural desires are legitimate if they are kept under control and used in the sphere for which God designed them. They become sinful when we seek to fulfill them in selfish, ungodly ways.

10. Jesus said that the motivation for the people following him was to receive more food rather than observing the signs that confirmed His being the Messiah.

Our attitude should be one of a thankful and grateful heart humbled by any blessing that we receive. Often, however, we are selfish, only regarding our own happiness and seeking just the loaves and fishes, not seeking the righteousness of Christ and honoring His Kingdom.

11. Christian draws out his answer from Scripture, providing four examples of men who used religion for personal gain: heathens, hypocrites, devils, and sorcerers.

   1. Genesis 34:20–24 – Heathens were those outside a covenant relationship with God, like Hamor and Shechem, who were willing to be circumcised, along with their countrymen, in order to gain wives, property, and livestock from Israel.
   2. Luke 20:46—47 – The hypocrites were the Pharisees who used religion to increase their status and swindle money and property from unsuspecting widows.
   3. Matthew 26:14–16 – The devils were represented by Judas, who was willing to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver.
   4. Acts 8:19–22 – The sorcerers were represented by Simon, who thought he could purchase the power of God to heal with money.
The Snare of the Silver Mine

1. The plain of Ease represents a time of relief in the Christian life when we experience comfort and healing. It’s a departure from discomfort, difficulty, and persecution, and we feel as though our load is lightened. Unfortunately, this is not the normal pattern for the Christian life, whereas tribulation, persecution, and trials often are, so it did not last for long.

2. The hill of Lucre represents the prosperity of the world and our temptation to become overly consumed with making money or to become too consumed with materialism.

   The danger or temptation that can occur when we focus on obtaining wealth and prosperity is that we forget God and become proud and arrogant, leading us to make bad decisions that we might not otherwise make. Just like the ground in the mine, it is deceptively unstable and prone to collapse, causing many that who get too close to the edge to fall in.

3. Paul mentions Demas three times in Scripture, first mentioning him as a fellow worker and dear friend and then as a deserter for leaving him for Thessalonica, having been consumed with love for the world.

   Demas represents those that start well but then abandon the church because they succumb to immorality, or perhaps they simply cave in to the relentless temptation of obtaining wealth and a more comfortable, prosperous life.

4. Money is not the problem but rather our attitude toward it. Paul tells us that an unchecked desire for money will lead us to become deceived by the comforts we enjoy and oblivious to the danger surrounding us or the danger we are in.

5. Christian had heard of this place as one that hinders pilgrims from pressing on in their journey. It distracted them from pursuing godliness and eternal life. Some in the past ventured too close to the edge of the mine and fell in, while others were slain and some were maimed.

   Although Demas claimed to be a follower of the faith, Christian recognized him as one who had been condemned and those that followed in his steps would suffer a similar condemnation. He compared him to Gehazi in the Old Testament, who valued money and possessions over obedience, and Judas in the New Testament, who betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. In the end, both perished. Gehazi left Elisha’s presence stricken with leprosy, and Judas took his own life.

6. Although Christian and Hopeful continued their journey and avoided the perils of the mine, By-Ends and his friends did not. They fell prey to Demas and were not seen traveling along the Way again.
A Monumental Warning

1. The story of Lot’s wife is told in Scripture, where God sent angels to warn Lot and his family to flee Sodom and Gomorrah because He was about to bring judgment on the city. As they fled, Lot’s wife turned back and was turned into a pillar of salt.

2. It was only by God’s grace that Hopeful did not receive the same punishment as Lot’s wife, but ultimately God knows the condition of our hearts. He knew that Hopeful’s heart wanted to please Him. He also knew that Lot’s wife’s heart was filled with the trappings of this world. She resented being dragged out of Sodom because that was where her heart was. She treasured what was behind her, so she perished as if she were still a citizen of Sodom.

3. God wants us to fully realize the seriousness of sin and the importance of learning, not only from our mistakes but the mistakes of others. All of God’s judgments—on Sodom and Gomorrah, on the Sons of Korah, on Lot’s wife—are warnings to us to take the wrath of God seriously. Every display of God’s wrath is a call for us to turn away from sin and come to Christ for mercy, forgiveness, wisdom, and righteousness.

4. The warnings along our path are often very clear, yet we will ignore or discount those warnings because we think that it does not apply to us or we believe we can handle the temptation. We must make every attempt to flee from sin at all costs. There are consequences to every sin, and we can never assume that we are safely beyond their reach.

5. Christian and Hopeful considered their encounter with Lot’s wife as a reminder of what could happen if they did not try to avoid committing the same sin.

Jesus is telling us that when He comes, we cannot be like Lot’s wife. We must not fix our hearts on this life alone; we must be prepared without hesitation to follow Him and leave the things of this world behind.

6. When we sin with the full knowledge of God’s judgment of those sins, we are acknowledging that we see God but we do not fear Him. If there is a good and righteous God, He must offer exact retribution. However, Christ will take on that righteous wrath of God if we would trust in Him. He will not force Himself on us though. If we make it a practice to ignore God, He will often give us over to the consequences of those sins.
1. The River of God represents the peace and joy that God provides that refreshes and revitalizes our hearts in Christ and allows us to heal and meditate on His blessings.

2. By-Path meadow represents our own efforts to guide and direct our lives, especially when we become discouraged in following God’s path. The steps represent how easy and dangerous it is to get off God’s path and fall into a pattern of making decisions without considering the will of God first.

Leaving God’s path for our lives seems appealing when life becomes hard. Therefore, we jump to a new path that seems easier, more pleasant, and less demanding. Sometimes it even seems to lie parallel to the true path, but we soon learn that it’s not.

3. Christian had gained confidence, but his confidence was in his progress, not God’s. This misplaced confidence soon leads to carelessness and forgetfulness. There are many actions that we may think are right and even good, but due to our ignorance, over confidence, or pride, we begin to trust our own judgment and to lean on our own understanding rather than Scripture.

4. Christian and Hopeful realized their error as night approached and they lost sight of Vain-Confidence, who was not a trustworthy guide but became lost in the darkness and fell into a deep pit. Christian and Hopeful heard him fall and tried calling out to him, but there was no answer as Vain-Confidence had died pursuing his own path to the Celestial Gate.

Vain-Confidence represents those that trust in themselves rather than God. They are eternally misled, believing they are on the right path but having no confidence in God, His Word, or His grace.

5. In a relationship where there is an apology offered for an offense but forgiveness is withheld, this can bring sorrow and resentment to both parties involved.

6. One who expresses worldly sorrow is not concerned about breaking the laws of God, but rather they are upset because they were caught or must pay the consequences. There is no repentance. Godly sorrow understands that what you did was wrong and that ultimately your sin was against God. It brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, whereas worldly sorrow brings death.

7. When we stray, Scripture can be an encouraging and significant voice directing us back to a biblical standard. The only way to truly know if we are on the right path is to look to God’s Word, which lays out a clear path for us to follow. This will also keep us from leading others off the path. The Bible should always be our standard because God speaks to us through His Word.
Trapped in Doubting Castle

1. Christian and Hopeful found it difficult to return to the Way because they were struggling against the rising tide waters and nearly drowned. The consequences of their bad decision not only endangered their lives but left them exhausted trying to return to the right path.

Returning to a godly way of life is much more difficult than our original waywardness. The consequences of our sin can produce an overwhelming amount of guilt, sorrow, and regret that can cause us to lose faith in the one who can help us. Even when we have honestly repented, we must still live with the consequences of our actions, and often that can feel like a heavy burden.

2. Wandering off God’s path will leave us weak and easy prey to the enemies of despair and depression. Christian became overwhelmed with doubt and despair and did not have the confidence to use God’s Word (his sword) when he most needed it.

3. The dungeon of Doubting Castle is a miserable, unforgiving place representing the doubts and fears of those that feel trapped under the weight of their sin. Giant Despair represents the temptation of despair and depression that results when we do not manage the conviction of our sin in a biblical way.

David describes his feelings of guilt as though his bones were wasting away and that God’s hand was heavy on him, sapping his strength as in the heat of summer.

4. When our own sin and bad decisions directly impact the lives of others, it can leave us feeling overwhelmed with guilt and remorse. Examples could be adultery, a financial decision that places your family in jeopardy, or the unintentional physical harm of another. Even though we are trying to get back on the right path, the consequences of the sin remain.

5. Distrust causes us to waver and question what we know to be true, and despair beats us down without mercy, leaving us helpless and with no way out, even to the point where we lose hope.

We should not lose sight of God’s truth because we need His wisdom and discretion to help us navigate life and stay on His path without stumbling. It involves trusting God to watch over us and believing that He has everything in His hands, that He loves us, and that He promises to make everything work out for our good when we put Him first in our lives.

6. Christian had focused all his thoughts on his problems and difficulties rather than remembering who his God was, what He was capable of, and what He had done for him in the past.

7. Hopeful did not disagree that the situation was bad but reminded Christian that murder, including suicide, is contrary to God’s Word. He then went on to remind Christian that Giant Despair was not in control; God was. Then he detailed a variety of scenarios in which God might work to allow their escape. Finally, he encouraged Christian not to bring shame upon himself by committing suicide but rather to have
patience.

8. Giant Despair, or the darkness, loses its strength in the light and truth of God’s Word.

9. Hopeful reminded Christian how God had protected him by recalling his former triumphs in his battle with Apollyon, while walking through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and his experience at Vanity Fair. He also reminded him of how courageous he was through all those hardships and to not quit in shame.

The weight of depression can linger and lie even upon the most mature believers, leaving us discouraged and feeling trapped. The remembrance of former spiritual conquests is essential to gaining spiritual endurance.

10. If we come to God with even the least amount of doubt, essentially we are saying that we do not believe He sees us and is aware of our difficulties. When we ask for wisdom in faith, we should not doubt that He has given it to us or we are like one who is blown around in the sea without any clear direction where they are heading.

11. The key that all believers have is the promises found in God’s Word. Once Christian realized that he possessed all the promises of God, he found there was no need to be a captive to despair any longer. If Christian had only trusted in God and His promises first, he never would have been in Doubting Castle and a prisoner of Giant Despair.

When we store the Word of God in our hearts, we have the key to the great resources of God. Whatever the need, distress, hurt, or sorrow, all can find relief and healing in God’s redemptive, unconditional love. If you are a Christian, the wonderful truth is that you already have in your possession all that is necessary for your deliverance. You need only to trust in the promises of God.

12. Coming out of despair and depression is not going to be easy. It will be difficult and will take effort, time, and patience. It’s not normally a one-time prayer event but rather a time of deep prayer, studying, wise counsel from fellow Christians, and continually reminding ourselves of the promises of God.

13. They made plans to erect a sign near the steps where they had crossed over into By-Path Meadow to warn others that would come after them. Our experiences, even our struggles and failures, can be useful to others to warn them of danger and encourage them to keep to the right path.

Session 10: Chapter 10
The Shepherds in the Mountains

1. When Christian was at the observation point at the Palace Beautiful, he could see the beauty of the Delectable Mountains but only from a distance. Now that he was there, his vantage point was much different. He had a wider view and could see more clearly the world around him. As we mature in our Christian walk and as our understanding of God’s Word increases, we learn to appreciate the ministry of the church as well as those in the church. We also begin to see the world around us differently than before.

2. The shepherds represent the pastors and elders of a church whose responsibilities are to guide, protect, and feed the flocks. The church is inhabited by the Lord’s sheep—people for whom Christ died.

3. Knowledge (Romans 15:14, Titus 1:9–11) – Knowledge is possessing information about certain facts. In the case of a pastor, it’s knowing God’s Word and being able to teach this truth to others competently and with confidence as well as refute false doctrine.

   Experience (1 Timothy 3:6) – Experience is possessing the knowledge or skill gained through direct exposure to a situation. In the case of a pastor, it’s not only having personally experienced the ups and downs of life but also having ministered to others through their life trials.

   Watchful (Acts 20:28) – Being watchful is to be alert and on guard to what is going on around you. In the case of a pastor, it’s someone who can easily recognize sin and danger in the world and provide warnings for others to beware.

   Sincerity (1 Corinthians 13:1) – Sincerity is the quality of being free from pretense, deceit, or hypocrisy. In the case of a pastor, their sincerity in their love for others must be evident and genuine to all.

4. The hill called Error sloped gradually upward on one side to a steep cliff where men had fallen to their deaths. Their bodies had remained unburied as an example to others that tumbled into heresy by listening to false teachers.

   Hymenaeus and Philetus are examples of false teachers that reject true Christian doctrine and say the resurrection has already taken place, confusing the faith of some believers.

   The hill called Error is a sermon, or warning, of the dire consequences of being led astray by those that would distort truth to their own liking. When we start entertaining erroneous and unbiblical thoughts, we become unable to discern truth from error. We should be thankful God has given us the church and faithful shepherds that guide and protect the flock from error.

5. Christian and Hopeful looked down in the valley, in the direction that they came, where they could see other pilgrims that had wandered off the Way while looking for an easier path to follow. These pilgrims were soon captured and blinded by Giant Despair and now stumbled around, lost in a graveyard.
Sometimes following the path God has laid out for us is difficult. However, when we wander from that path, we are trading a life of joy and peace for a life of death, misery, and trouble. It might not seem that way at first, but we soon find the new path filled with many traps that leave us discouraged and in despair. This leads to us wandering among the dead, weighed down, blinded to the truth, and unable to see any hope.

6. God’s Word, whether read or preached, can convict us of current sins and also remind us of God’s saving grace of past sins. Unfortunately, it can become all too easy to forget or become blind to our past errors and the lessons we learned. A reminder of past sins will help us clearly evaluate current temptations and dangers that lie ahead as well as help us more deeply appreciate the mercy of God, who keeps us from the worst of consequences.

7. As the pilgrims open the door in the hillside, they see only darkness and smell smoke with the scent of sulfur. They also hear the rumblings of fire and the cries of tormented souls. This place represents the terrors of hell for hypocrites that confess faith but fail to live it out.

The sermon or warning is for those that may appear to be genuine, make a profession of faith, and may be very involved in spiritual activities for some time but are not a real Christian at all. They outwardly profess faith in Christ while inwardly persisting in sin.

8. There are many that appear to be among the faithful that no one would even suspect would fall away in the end. They are hypocrites. To finish strong and faithful, Christian and Hopeful realize they must rely on the strength that only God can provide.

9. Looking through the shepherds’ perspective glass, Christian and Hopeful were able to see in the distance a glimpse of the gate and the glory of the Celestial City for those that persevere in their walk with Christ.

Christian and Hopeful’s hands shook as they held up the glass because they are reminded of their own sin and the judgement that comes to those that remain in their sin. Even though we can look intently through the lens of God’s Word, we can only see a glimpse of the glory that awaits us in eternal life, due to the sin of this world.

An Encounter with Ignorance

1. Christian was described as despondent and having a great burden on his back as he felt the weight of his sin. Ignorance, on the other hand, was described as “very lively” and was certain he was on his way to the Celestial City, never mentioning his sin, a burden, or the cross.

2. Ignorance just assumes he will enter the Celestial City where all good people enter. He claims to know God’s will and live well. He prays, fasts, tithes, and gives to charity. Ignorance is placing all his confidence
for entering the Celestial City in himself and his own abilities. But no good people enter Heaven, only
those that have been justified.

3. The rich young ruler was depending on his own abilities and confidence, just like Ignorance, to save
him. Jesus challenged him to move beyond his good deeds and explore what was in his heart.

4. Christian was concerned for Ignorance. He told him that he did not come in at the Wicket Gate (Christ)
but entered through a crooked lane (his own works). He continued to tell him that on the Day of Judgement,
he would be found to be a thief and a robber and would not gain entrance to the city.

5. Many people show interest in the gospel because they want to find meaning or perhaps even feel good
about themselves. Unfortunately, many of those same people find the teachings of the Bible too
demanding and following the ways of Jesus too difficult. They would rather make up their own rules
according to what makes them feel good.

6. There’s no point in continuing a conversation with someone who has deep-seated beliefs and is not
currently receptive to your teaching. They are ignorant of the truth and “wise in their own eyes.” Forcing
your ideas on them will only make them argumentative. It takes patience and discernment to know when
to speak, how much to say, and when to stop. Eventually we must leave it up to the Holy Spirit to work
in the person’s heart and pray for them.

7. The dark lane represents the path of the wicked, which is absent of the light of God’s Word. When our
minds continue to pursue sin, we become blind to the truth and can no longer see the light of Scripture.

Turn-away represents those that know the truth and once made a profession of faith but have since turned
away from that saving faith. They might have been spiritually enlightened at one time, but their return to
the darkness and false doctrine proves that they were never actually saved to begin with.

8. Turning away from God can happen for a variety of reasons, including becoming disillusioned with the
church, allowing others to have undue influence over our thoughts and behaviors, listening to those who
disparage the Scriptures and the Christian faith, or spending time chasing the things of this world rather
than pursuing God.

The Assault on Little Faith

1. Little Faith represents those Christians whose faith is genuine but weak. Because of their small amount
of faith, they are spiritually unprepared to face the trials and temptations of this world.

When Jesus talks of those of little faith, he’s referencing a specific event rather than someone being in a
constant state of not trusting Jesus. This would be called unbelief. Those with little faith tend to worry
instead of trusting God or panic in certain situations instead of looking to Jesus. When Matthew talks
about a person having “little faith,” he is not challenging what they believe but how much they trust.

2. Answers may vary.

3. Even though our struggles might not turn out how we like, we are promised that they will not destroy us, and our promise is not this world but an eternal one prepared for us by Jesus Christ. Even when our inner self might feel like it’s wasting away, we can be renewed each day in Christ.

4. In a time of trial, Paul tells us to draw near to the God of peace, focus on His grace to us in Christ Jesus, and pour out our hearts to Him, and the result is, His peace will stand guard over our hearts and minds.

5. We should reject such guilty feelings as false guilt and not let them rob us of joy and peace. The Lord has been true to His promise to forgive.

6. Those going through difficult life challenges need to be reminded that God is working in their lives regardless of what is happening externally. We need to be reminded of the awareness of God’s grace at work in our lives and our joy as we rest in the work of Christ for our salvation.

7. The jewels represent the salvation of our souls, which are kept safe with Christ in heaven, where thieves cannot break in and steal. Eternal life is just that—eternal. There is no one, not even yourself, who can take Christ’s God-given gift of salvation away from you.

8. Christian considered Hopeful’s comments lunacy because Little Faith’s jewels were a gift of grace. He did not earn them nor could he be separated from them, and he would never think of selling them because of the value he placed on the jewels.

The difference between the money and the jewels rests in their security. The money represents our spiritual comfort and peace, and when we experience hard times or give in to sin, we experience weakness, doubt, and shame. Our jewels are secure and cannot be taken away. They are our heavenly reward and our inheritance in God’s Kingdom.

9. Answers may vary.

10. Hopeful was evaluating Little Faith’s temptation from a distance, implying that if he had been in Little Faith’s place, he would have done differently. However, Christian understood the true intensity of Little Faith’s trial, having experienced it himself close up and not just by thieves but by their master as well. He tells Hopeful that it’s easy to criticize others when you have not been in their situation and that Hopeful probably would not have done any better. Not only that, but the three villains were empowered by their master (Satan), who would come to their aid if needed.

We should never underestimate the power of sin or Satan. From a distance, it appears less intimidating, but up close, it is a powerful force.

11. Great Grace represents mature believers that are strong in the faith, are seasoned in spiritual warfare, and know the Word of God. He’s courageous and has fought and won many battles but has limitations
and has struggled at times because he is not Christ but rather lives to serve and glorify Him.

12. First, Christian tells Hopeful that we must be prepared for spiritual warfare by putting on the armor of God, especially with the shield of faith. Secondly, we should never travel alone. We should walk alongside others in the faith so that we may strengthen those around us.
1. Even with an abundance of knowledge and experience, we can continue to struggle with many of the same sins we have always battled. Sometimes it’s because we become prideful after believing we’ve won the battle and do not need God’s guidance anymore. Then we subtly become trapped in the same sin again and wonder how we got there.

2. Christian and Hopeful did not recognize the Flatterer because he was in disguise, wearing a white robe to conceal his real identity.

They were lured into following him because he spoke as someone with authority, showing interest by asking them where they were going, and then offering to help them. He also said he knew the direction to the Celestial City and all they needed to do was follow him.

We later learn that he is a false apostle who has transformed himself into an angel of light. In other words, he was pretending to be a Christian in order to lead them astray.

3. Flattery has selfish motivations and is used to manipulate others in order to get what they want. A compliment is intended to benefit the recipient, whereas flattery benefits the flatterer.

4. The goal of the flatterer is to spread a net for his neighbor’s steps.

Getting caught in the net of flattery generally happens incrementally, over time, as you find yourself moving away from the truth to where you are outright denying or contradicting the truth. Little by little, you stop trusting Christ and start trusting yourself while failing to stay in God’s Word. This can be a real danger for the seasoned Christian that has reached a level of spiritual maturity and feels accomplished (or flattered) over their defeat of past sins and trials. But sin and self-pride will always make us stumble and eventually become ensnared.

5. The angel frees them from the net and then sets them back on the right path, but he also explains to them who the Flatterer is and then asks questions that make them reevaluate their sin. Then he whips them to teach them the right way to walk.

The whip and whipping represent the discipline of the Lord in our lives to wisely lead and keep us on the right way. God’s discipline can be hard, but when we go astray, His desire is to restore us and prevent us from being destroyed by sin.

6. Christian and Hopeful thanked the Shining One for his kindness, his discipline, and placing them back on the right path.

7. Answers will vary.
The Laughter of Atheist

1. The traveler’s name is Atheist, and he’s walking in the opposite direction of the Celestial City, back toward his home. He claims to have been searching for the City for over twenty years with no success, and now he no longer seeks eternal life and is going home.

2. He responded by howling in laughter and then mocked Christian and Hopeful by calling them ignorant. In addition, he demeaned their lifestyle as a tiresome journey that would only end in pain since, as he stated, “There’s no such place in all the world that they are searching for.” He also claimed to have once been a pilgrim, searching for 20 years without any luck, and now he was heading home to resume his life of sin.

In Psalm 53:1, the “fool” has less to do with intelligence and more to do with sinfulness. Many atheists are very intelligent, but since they cannot understand the existence of God based on what they see around them, they reject God completely. But their true reason in rejecting the existence of God is a desire to live free of the moral constraints of God.

3. It’s truly unfortunate when one rejects faith in God, but often their life demonstrated that they were never a true disciple to begin with. We also should not be surprised or alarmed by the mockery of those that have rejected God.

4. Hopeful is on heightened alert, having just been freed from the Flatterer’s net, and does not hesitate to answer that they should avoid following the bad counsel of “smooth talkers” like Atheist.

The word “walk” in 2 Corinthians 5:7 is metaphorical and refers to how we conduct our lives. We should continue to follow God’s plan and His Word regardless of what life throws at us. We need to have faith in the things of God that we cannot see, hear, or touch—those unseen realities like Jesus and heaven—and can only be believed in our hearts.

We should place our hope in God’s Word and His promises and not stray from it. Just like with the Flatterer, they strayed because they neglected God’s Word even though they had instructions.

5. Atheist faces a grave ending. In the beginning of the passage, he was described as being quiet and alone. Even if you are surrounded by others, when you do not have God, you are alone. And now he had decided to turn back to his old lifestyle that he had previously abandoned prior to following Christ. His decision to return had made him bitter and scornful, causing him to laugh at those who would forsake all the world has to offer in order to find eternal life, and he will end up empty and without hope.
Crossing the Enchanted Ground

1. The Enchanted Ground represents a time in our lives when things are going relatively easy and smooth and we become spiritually complacent. When this happens, we grow drowsy in our souls, thereby letting our guard down and becoming easy prey to sin.

This danger can manifest itself in the life of a Christian in a variety of ways, including irregular church attendance, lackluster worship, and not engaging others in the gospel. In addition, our study, devotionals, and prayer life slack off as we lose interest, even to the point of sliding on what we know to be right and wrong for what is easy and convenient.

2. Christian reminded Hopeful of the dangers of the Enchanted Ground by recalling the shepherds’ instructions (or God’s Word). They also realized the danger of walking alone, knowing that a companion was essential to keeping alert to the surrounding dangers. And finally, they decided to engage in positive conversation to encourage each other in their spiritual walk.

3. Hopeful was immersed in the same worldly lifestyle that was promoted and lived out by other citizens at Vanity Fair. He was a shallow person who was ensnared and entrenched in sin, with a love for the world and everything in it, including extravagant living, wild parties, drinking, swearing, lying, immorality, Sabbath breaking, and more. He had no interest in spiritual matters and made every effort to turn a blind eye to the gospel.

4. The turning point in Hopeful’s life came when Christian and Faithful came to Vanity Fair. Hopeful watched how they lived, listened to what they said, and saw their deep commitment to Christ—even to the point of suffering and death. Both their lifestyle and their words intrigued him and compelled him to begin thinking about his own spiritual state as well as eternal death.

5. Hopeful did not immediately come to Christ, because he did not realize that his conviction was the work of God’s grace in his life. Secondly, he still loved his sin and was not ready to change. Thirdly, he did not want to break off relationships with old friends whose company he enjoyed. And finally, when he did feel the weight of his conviction, it brought feelings of guilt that he wanted to avoid.

Hopeful was reminded of his sinfulness when he encountered people who were doing good; when he heard the Bible read or mentioned; when he became sick or heard of others who were sick; when he heard about someone who died, especially if the death was tragic or unexpected; and especially when he thought about his own death and judgement before God.

6. Hopeful decided to become a better person by fleeing from overt sins and sinful friends. He then devoted himself to religious duties like praying, reading, weeping over sin, and being honest with his neighbors.

From reading Scripture, Hopeful learned about the futility of works in trying to be right with God. He also learned that even if he was able to live a perfect life with no sin from this day forward, he would never be able to do enough good works to repay his former debt of sin. He also discovered that he was held back
by pride over the satisfaction of the reforms he had made in his life, which just added new sin to his guilt before God.

7. Faithful told Hopeful that he needed to find righteousness in someone who had not sinned since neither his own righteousness nor the righteousness the world had to offer could save him. The righteousness of Christ alone is sufficient to save because Jesus is the Mighty God and because He had lived a perfect life for sinners and died in their place as a sacrifice for their sins. Those who put their trust in Him will have the righteousness of Christ credited to them.

8. There are many reasons why people might think God would be unwilling to save them, especially if they feel they have wrecked their life with drugs, abortion, divorce, multiple marriages, illicit sex, lying, fraud, etc. But God invites us to come to Him regardless of our situation.

When Jesus tells all who are weary and burdened to come to Him for rest, He isn’t speaking here of physical burdens but rather the burden of sin. His invitation is for everyone who is tired of trying to carry that heavy burden of sin themselves.

9. Faithful encouraged Hopeful to approach God by falling on his knees and asking God to reveal the Lord Jesus to Him.

10. Depending on our life experience, there can be many obstacles that hinder or delay our coming to Christ, including convincing ourselves that our sin is so great that God would never save us. This was Hopeful’s battle as well as struggling with fears, doubts, and the pull of Vanity Fair on his heart. But God needed him to come to a place where he was truly willing to lay down that life and pick up the new one God had planned for him. For many, that can be more of a struggle than it is for others. Coming to Christ is more than just a quick prayer and responding to an invitation. It’s a total life transformation in which one truly lays down their life of sin to make Jesus the Lord of their life. There are those that might pray the sinner’s prayer many times but never truly mean it.

11. Hopeful came to understand that believing and coming were the same. Coming to Christ is simply believing. It’s realizing that you’re a sinner and in need of God to save you by offering you mercy, grace, and forgiveness. Then you trust Christ as your means of salvation and begin to follow His way of life.

12. Hopeful now began to see that the world was condemned, and it did not seem as alluring or attractive to him anymore. He understood that a righteous God can make sinners righteous before Him. He was also now ashamed for the life he had once lived and amazed that he never considered the beauty of living for Christ before. Finally, he found satisfaction in the pursuit of holiness for the sake of Christ, not any worldly gain.
Ignorance Follows His Heart

1. A casual approach to the Christian life opens the door to all kinds of risks, including minimizing the danger of sin and falling away from the faith.

2. A) Thinking about God and heaven (James 2:19) – Ignorance claims that he thinks about God and heaven, but Christian counters that even the demons think about God and heaven and tremble.

   B) Desiring God and heaven (Proverbs 13:4) – Ignorance claims that he desires God and heaven, but Christian said that “desire” alone attains nothing; even the lazy desire yet have nothing.

   C) Trusting in his own heart (Proverbs 28:26 and Jeremiah 17:9–10) – Ignorance claimed to trust the affirmations of his heart, but Christian said that the heart is deceitful and those who trust in it are fools.

3. Christian tells Ignorance that the true measure of the heart is not our feelings and passions, our hopes and aspirations, or even the experiences or obstacles we’ve overcome. The true measure of the heart is the Word of God. If we’re to rightly measure the heart, we should not believe what our hearts tell us is true. Instead, we should believe what God’s Word tells us is true.

   Following our hearts (or feelings) is bad advice. The fact is, we cannot trust our feelings, because our feelings change as often as we do. Therefore, our hearts cannot be relied upon as a compass to guide us through life. When we follow our hearts, we are in fact just following ourselves.

4. The Word tells us that in our natural condition, we’re not good and we all have bad hearts. If left to ourselves, our hearts are evil, crooked, and dark. This is our natural condition and the true measure of the heart. Christian said that if this is what we believe about ourselves, then we’re thinking good thoughts because our thoughts would be in alignment with what God says about our hearts.

5. Answers may vary.

6. Our experiences and imaginations over the course of our lives can shape our thoughts about God. But we’re not free to just imagine God as we want Him to be, which would likely be defined by our own feelings or sense of justice. Rather, to truly know God, we’re to seek what He reveals about Himself in His Word.

7. Answers may vary.

8. Christian rightly concluded that Ignorance’s faith was false, imaginary, and unbiblical. As a result, his faith is deceitful and dangerous because it leaves him under God’s wrath and condemnation, all while convincing him that all is well.

9. Paul’s answer is, absolutely not! How can we who are freed from sin still practice it? When we are truly justified by Christ, we have also been sanctified (made holy) and given the power to turn away from sin
because we’re forgiven. God has given us new hearts that no longer desire sin but pursue righteousness.

10. 2 Corinthians 4:6 – God must open our heart if we are to escape darkness and be given the light of knowledge.

John 6:44 – It’s God who draws us to Himself and grants us salvation in Christ.

Ephesians 1:17–19 – We need the power of God’s Spirit to open the eyes of our understanding to truly know the hope for which we have been called.

Ephesians 4:17–18 – Apart from the grace of God, our hearts will be hardened, and we will continue to walk in ignorance.

Our responsibility when we’re called is to come to Christ and confess and believe. In our salvation, God does all the work and deserves all the glory.

The Backsliding of Temporary

1. The root cause for failing to grasp the seriousness of sin for people like Ignorance is that they’re spiritually blind and lack a fear of God.

2. Christian says you can identify true godly fear because it begins with conviction of sin and helps us see our great need for a savior. It then drives us to Christ as our only hope. Finally, it instills in us a reverence of God, keeping us mindful of His presence.

Psalm 111:10 – Fear of the Lord leads to wisdom and understanding.

Matthew 10:28 – Fear of the Lord helps us place our fears in God rather than men.

Psalm 128:1 – Fear of the Lord leads to blessing.

Proverbs 14:26 (NKJV) – Fear of the Lord leads to confidence and life.

3. Christian says that nonbelievers suppress fear and conviction for several reasons: They believe all fear is bad and wrongly attribute it to the work of the devil, they think their fear will undermine their faith, they believe they should have no fear so they brazenly ignore it, and they want to appear spiritually strong and righteous.

We live in a world that champions self-confidence and self-esteem over godly fear. Any sort of weakness is to be shunned and avoided at all costs. But as believers, we know that through Christ, our weakness can be our strength and that godly fear is not weakness but rather wisdom and strength that anchors us to the one with all the power.

4. Temporary is from Graceless, a town that can be described as lacking in true saving grace. That town
is near Honesty, which indicates one who is trying to live morally. However, he lives under the same roof as Turnback, providing an example of someone who abandons his faith and returns to the ways of the world. Temporary is an unbeliever who is trying to live a moral and good life but is surrounded by those who lure him away from the faith.

Temporary represents a pilgrim whose profession of faith is short lived. In the beginning, he was zealous for the faith even to the point of expressing sorrow by weeping over his sin. But in the end, he lacked the power to change his mind and life, having found new friends who were leading him in the wrong direction. His faith was only temporary, so once his guilt faded, he returned to his former life of sin.

5. We most likely use the term backsliding to refer to a Christian that reverts to pre-conversion habits or falls into sin generally by turning from God to pursue their own desire. Since a saved person is secure in Christ and will not be kicked out of God’s family, we mean that someone has grown cold toward Christ. Bunyan seems to use the term to refer to someone who was temporarily awakened spiritually and then went back on his old ways without ever really being saved because their mind and life were never changed.

6. Mark 14:27 – The backsliders here are the disciples who, even though they said they would not abandon Jesus, when He was arrested, they all ran. However, this was a crisis of faith when they temporarily questioned their beliefs.

Galatians 6:1 – The backslider here is also just experiencing a temporary crisis of faith. They are caught in some sin and need the church to work to gently restore them.

Hebrews 6:4–6 – The backslider in this scenario is a nonbeliever that had only “tasted the goodness of the word” and then later rejected it.

Luke 8:13 – The backslider here is a nonbeliever that backslides because they have no true root in Christ.

7. 1) Backsliders are temporarily awakened spiritually because of their guilt and shame. Once their shame diminishes, and because their minds have not yet changed, they return to their former sinful life.

2) Backsliders fear men and the consequences they will have to endure for following Christ more than they fear God.

3) Backsliders find religion useful in times of weakness but a crutch in times when they feel confident and strong.

4) They dislike feeling guilty and ashamed when convicted of sin, so they harden their hearts.

Backsliding may manifest itself in several ways, including dropping out of church, losing fervor for the Lord, walking away from a ministry or a family, or falling back into old sinful habits.

8. 8,3,6,1,5,9,4,7,2
Session 12: Chapter 12
The Country of Beulah

1. The land Beulah is meant to represent the sweet, peaceful moments and the comforting grace that many believers receive before their deaths. It represents our longing for heaven and desire to be with Jesus.

2. Beulah was a place of safety that bordered heaven, was within sight of the Celestial City, and was where angels commonly walked. It was a land of abundant provision and far beyond the reach of the trials, temptations, and evils that they had faced throughout their pilgrimage. The air was sweet and pleasant with lovely flowers, birds were singing, and the sun always shined. There were gardens and vineyards where they found rest and strength to complete their journey.

3. God has provided every human soul with an awareness of something more than this life can deliver. For every believer, and especially a seasoned believer at the end of their life, this reality can manifest itself in a hope that one day they will find fulfillment in another world.

4. Paul is saying that, either way, he cannot lose and that he will choose to honor Christ in life or death. For him, to live is Christ (which is good) and to die is heavenly gain (which is also good). Over time, a believer can grow weary of a sinful world, and their soul begins to crave to be at home with the Lord. “To live is Christ” is to spend your life loving, delighting in, and serving Jesus. There is nothing more worthy than to honor Him with your life through fellowship and worship. To gain death is to be with Christ in perfect holiness, peace, and eternal rest.

5. Answers may vary.

The River of Death

1. The river barrier represents death or what someone experiences when they die. It’s the last enemy that they must face before gaining entrance to the city. This “last enemy” is death, the most fearsome opponent the soul must face in this earthly life.

2. According to the Bible, Enoch and Elijah are the only two people God took to heaven without them dying. Genesis 5:24 tells us that Enoch walked with God and then was no more as God simply took him away. Second Kings 2:11 tells us that Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind in a chariot of fire.

3. Thinking of our own impending death can bring distressing thoughts for many reasons. The more we tend to make this world our home, the more difficulty we will have leaving it, and we will cling to it with
every last breath we have. But if we view this life through eyes of faith and according to the promises of God, we will greet death not as an enemy but as an entrance to glory. Not fearing death does not mean that you are looking forward to the process but rather to what lies beyond.

4. The end of our lives can be a frightening and difficult experience for the best of us. But in that moment, our awareness of God’s grace will be strengthened (deeper) or weakened (shallower) according to our faith and trust in Him.

5. As Christian enters the river, he starts panicking and begins to sink, fearing that he will never make it the Celestial City. He loses his senses and cannot remember any of the blessings and encouragement he received along the Way. His thoughts turn inward, focusing on the difficulties he is presently experiencing as well as his old sins, which return to haunt him. He believes God has abandoned him rather than trusting on the promises of Scripture and the presence of Christ.

6. Hopeful finds the river much shallower and, unlike Christian, walks across with firm footing. He keeps his head above the waves and sees the Gate when Christian is unable to. Hopeful’s thoughts are of Christ and not on any difficulties or sin. In fact, in death, Hopeful continues to encourage his brother and point him to Christ.

7. Philippians 1:21–23 – When we depart this world in death, we will be united with Christ.

2 Timothy 4:6–8 – There is a crown of righteousness awaiting us on the day of our death.

Isaiah 43:2 – God will protect us through the entire death experience.

Psalm 23:4 – God will comfort us through the entire death experience.

Hebrews 13:5–6 – God will never leave us through the entire death experience.

8. Answers may vary.

A Heavenly Welcome

1. This passage compares our earthly bodies to tents and heavenly bodies to eternal houses. These “tents” are fragile and can be destroyed, but our “ eternal houses” are indestructible and made by God. Once the earthly tents come off, Christians will not be left “naked,” that is, without a body to live in. When the new body is “put on,” we will go from mortality to immortality.

Fully recognizing that this body is not forever does not mean we check out of present-day life. Rather, we put things in perspective and become fully engaged in what God is doing around us while also looking forward to our glorious future.

2. Hebrews 12:22–24 – Heaven will be filled with God, Jesus, the righteous, and angels, all in joyful
assembly.

Revelation 2:7 – We will eat from the Tree of Life.

Revelation 3:4 – We will be clothed in white.

Revelation 21:4 – There will be no more sorrow, sickness, affliction, or death.

Revelation 22:3–4 – There will be no sin, and we will serve God and see Him face to face.

Isaiah 57:1–2 – We will find rest and will walk in righteousness.

Matthew 8:11 – We will feast with the saints of old.

Galatians 6:7–8 – We will enjoy our eternal reward.

1 Corinthians 15:51–52 – We will be clothed with glory and equipped to ride out with the King of Glory at the sound of a trumpet.

1 Corinthians 6:2–3 – We will rule, reign, and judge with Him.

1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 – We will be in the presence of the King forever.

Revelation 19:6–9 – The City is filled with the sound of a great multitude praising God, and we will feast at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

3. Christian had carried his certificate through his journey as evidence (or assurance) of faith in Christ Jesus sealed by the work of the Spirit. Christian would refer to his “assurance” when he needed comfort, and when he lost it for a time, he was frantic.

4. Answers may vary.

5. Ignorance assumed that he would readily be welcomed in at the gate of heaven. In his mind, he had lived well, had attended church, and had eaten the bread and drank of the cup in the presence of the Lord.

6. The man who arrived without proper wedding clothes in the parable of the wedding feast faced a similar outcome as Ignorance. During the days of Jesus, to appear without proper clothing at a wedding feast would be deemed offensive and a sign that the person was oblivious to the significance of the invitation. This person represents those that claim to be Christians but are not leading a godly life. They received an invitation but instead thought they would just come to God on their own terms.

7. Bunyan likely concluded his story in this way as a wake-up call for those that think they are saved but are not. To be on the very threshold of heaven but then be turned away is an eternal tragedy. Bunyan had a pastor’s heart and wanted people to understand what was at stake. All our good works and knowledge of religion will never save us. Only Christ and Christ alone can save!

8. Answers may vary.