

## Christiana's Progress - Part 2 of the book "Pilgrim's Progress"

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Stage 6 - Part 2 - (pages 61 - 63)

Mr. Self-Willed is the character that stands out today in our Illustrated Message Review. What does he stand for? The definition of self-willed also means self-wild, obstinate, doing what one wants in spite of the wishes or orders of others. Synonyms are; contrary, perverse, uncooperative, headstrong, stubborn, mulish and pigheaded to name a few.

Let's read about a self-willed king of Israel, Saul, who lost his kingdom as a result of not obeying God. [1 Samuel 15:10-34](#). It says; *"Now the word of the Lord came to Samuel, saying, 'I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments.' And it grieved Samuel, and he cried out to the Lord all night. So when Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul, it was told Samuel, saying, 'Saul went to Carmel, and indeed, he set up a monument for himself; and he has gone on around, passed by, and gone down to Gilgal.' Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, 'Blessed are you of the Lord! I have performed the commandment of the Lord.' But Samuel said, 'What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?' And Saul said, 'They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice to the Lord your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.' Then Samuel said to Saul, 'Be quiet! And I will tell you what the Lord said to me last night.' And he said to him, 'Speak on.' So Samuel said, 'When you were little in your own eyes, were you not head of the tribes of Israel? And did not the Lord anoint you king over Israel? Now the Lord sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go, and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.' Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord? Why did you swoop down on the spoil, and do evil in the sight of the Lord?' And Saul said to Samuel, 'But I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and gone on the mission on which the Lord sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the Lord your God in Gilgal.' So Samuel said: 'Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. **For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.** Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king.' Then Saul said to Samuel, 'I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. Now therefore, please pardon my sin, and return with me, that I may worship the Lord.' But Samuel said to Saul, 'I will not return with you, for you have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel.' And as Samuel turned around to go away, Saul seized the edge of his robe, and it tore. So Samuel said to him, 'The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today, and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you. And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor relent. For He is not a man, that He should relent.' Then he said, 'I have sinned; yet honor me now, please, before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may worship the Lord your God.' So Samuel turned back after Saul, and Saul worshiped the Lord. Then Samuel said, 'Bring Agag king of the Amalekites here to me.' So Agag came to him cautiously. And Agag said, 'Surely the bitterness of death is past.' But Samuel said, 'As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women.' And Samuel hacked Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal. Then Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his house at Gibeah of Saul."*

This is a very powerful part of Bible history and God, through his prophet Samuel, makes it very clear that he does not tolerate stubbornness and rebellion because it leads to witchcraft or has the same ramifications as witchcraft. Saul lost his kingdom and testimony as a result of it. Saul so backslid that he even went to a witch (witchcraft) to try to conjure up the prophet Samuel from the dead to get advice. You can read it in [1 Samuel 28](#). Interestingly enough, it wasn't Samuel that he conjured up but a demon disguised as the prophet. How is that you may ask? Because Jesus makes it clear with the story of the rich man named Lazarus that the dead cannot

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go back to the living, so the prophet Samuel could not go back to give King Saul advice. Read the story of Lazarus in [Luke 16:18-31](#).

Mr. Self-will also twisted the Bible to fulfill his own lusts. How many people today are doing this today? What's the sin in your life that the Lord has told you to repent of, is it still alive and active in your life justified by some twisted scripture to continue to live in? Are you keeping fellowship with false teachers and brethren that allow you to live a life of duality?

**2 John 9-10** says; "*Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting.*" Anyone who teaches false doctrine, as a Christian, you're not even to give them your greeting. It's a sobering word that the Apostle John gives us.

**2 Corinthians 11:13-15** says; "*For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.*" This is exactly what Mr. Self-Will did; he pretended to be a Christian. How many are doing the same today? Even those in ministry and preaching from pulpits who are living in duality. We shouldn't be surprised with such pretension in churches around the world today as the Apostle Paul talked about it to the early church Christians.

In **Matthew 7:15-20**; Jesus clearly says how we can truly distinguish true followers of Christ by saying this "*Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them.*"

Mr. Self-Will, like who Jesus described, had all the 'christianese' down, knew what and how to speak the lingo, how to and how not to pray, etc. You can be a fruit inspector, Jesus admonished us to look for fruit in a disciples life and lifestyle. If you see and hear things that look fishy, you're to see what's really going on in their lives and not just swallow what they want you to see and hear hook, line and sinker.

You can't be a Christian and live like the devil - it's an oxymoron. You can't be a good tree and bear bad fruit and visa versa. I would venture to say that all professing Christians that live like Mr. Self-Will are not Christian and haven't repented of their sins. It's evident that he never repented of his sins - he pretended. Oh, he had some good righteous acts, because that gave him the 'right' to continue in his vices. He had a balancing act taking place...between the vice and the virtue, deeming himself good in God's eyes. But he was in pure deception.

**1 John 3:5-7** is clear when it says; "*And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.*" This is continuous willful sin. This isn't talking about your sins that you fall into on a daily basis, because we all fall short and when we do, we repent.

Mr. Honest says; "*He pretended to be a pilgrim; but I persuade myself he never came in at the gate that stands at the head of the way.*" He didn't go through the gate by asking Jesus to forgive him of his sins and receive him as Lord and Savior. He was doing what a very large percentage of people are doing today in the religious world. They're not born again, they're performing religious duties and as long as they have a perceived good balance between vice and virtue, they think it's all good and that God will have mercy on them. It's utter deception.

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Let's look at some scriptures that clearly show that you must repent of your sins to become a Christian and not continue in them. There are conditional steps to become a Christian and if you haven't done them, you're not a Christian. What is repentance? It's confessing your sins and having sincere regret and remorse about them. Calling them out by name. It's asking Jesus to wash them away with his precious blood.

**Matthew 9:12-13;** *"When Jesus heard that, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."*

**Acts 2:38;** *"Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

**Acts 3:19;** *"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."*

**Acts 17:30;** *"Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent."*

**2 Corinthians 7:10;** *"For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death."*

**2 Peter 3:9;** *"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."*

Mr. Self-will obviously did not repent of his sins but rather in pretention of being a Christian, continued in them twisting the Bible verses to justify his actions. To be honest, I don't think repentance is being taught much in the pulpits today because it confronts self-will, stubbornness and rebellion at the core of the heart of man.

We read in the script the following;

*MR. GREAT-HEART. "But what grounds had he for his views?"*

*MR. HONEST. "Why, he said he had Scripture for his warrant."*

*MR. GREAT-HEART. "Dear me! Mr. Honest, present us with a few examples."*

*MR. HONEST, "So I will. He said to have to do with other men's wives was practised by David, God's beloved; and therefore he could do it. He said to have more women than one wife a thing Solomon practised, and therefore he could do it. He said that Sarah and the godly midwives of Egypt lied, and so did Rahab, and therefore he could do it. He said, that the disciples went at the bidding of their Master, and took away the owner's ass, and therefore he could do so too. He said, that Jacob got the inheritance of his father by way of guile and pretence, and therefore he could do so too."*

It's unacceptable as a Christian to think like this. King David almost lost his entire kingdom because of his adultery and his own son almost took him out had it not been for the mercy of God on him. In fact, his son, Absalom went as far as committing adultery with King David's concubines on the top of the palace for all Jerusalem to see, mocking his father. King Solomon's heart was lead astray to follow after pagan gods because of his lust for women. It's a travesty to think that men and women will justify their sins because of the stories in the Bible, and think that in the end, God will forgive them. It's twisting the Holy Word of God, thinking only for ones selfish and lustful desires of the flesh...and it's happening in 'so-called' Christians.

**1 Peter 2:6-8** says; *"Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame." Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected has become*

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*the chief cornerstone," and "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed."*

Like Mr. Self-Will, people will twist the Bible to their advantage, it will get you to do righteous acts and yet live like the devil, as long as they have a virtuous masquerade on the outside, their vices will be justified. This is called religion and it will not save your soul. Religious people will split hell wide open and religion will not save your soul. If you're not born again, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus says in **Matthew 18:6-9**; "*Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!*

*"If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire."*

In other words Jesus is making it clear that if you are truly a Christian you live a lifestyle of repentance, and not causing anyone to sin as a result of your unrepentant lifestyle.

**Matthew 16:24-26** says; "*Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"* You're not profiting anything by living a self-willed lifestyle.

**James 1:21-25** says; "*Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does."*

**1 John 3:4-9**; "*Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God."*

It's a lifestyle of repentance, it's a lifestyle of trusting God to give you the power not to sin because you have a repentant life. If you do sin when you're a Christian, you confess it and God is faithful to forgive you, cleanse you from all unrighteousness. We know that we all fall short of this scripture, we sin on a daily basis. The key to living victorious is the confession of the sin when we yield to it.

In **Matthew 16:24-25**, it says; "*Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it."* The world is telling you exactly the opposite, to keep your life and lifestyle.

Matthew Henry's Commentary says this about the scripture we just read;

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*"Note, All the disciples and followers of Jesus Christ must deny themselves. It is the fundamental law of admission into Christ's school, and the first and great lesson to be learned in this school, to deny ourselves; it is both the strait gate, and the narrow way; it is necessary in order to our learning all the other good lessons that are there taught. We must deny ourselves absolutely, we must not admire our own shadow, nor gratify our own humour; we must not lean to our own understanding, nor seek our own things, nor be our own end. We must deny ourselves comparatively; we must deny ourselves for Christ, and his will and glory, and the service of his interest in the world; we must deny ourselves for our brethren, and for their good; and we must deny ourselves for ourselves, deny the appetites of the body for the benefit of the soul."*

A good question to ask yourselves is; are you a self willed person who is playing the role of a Christian, pretending, and living a unrepentant dual life as a sinner and a saint at the same time believing that eternal life is in your favour?

If so you genuinely have to repent of you sins, name them out before God, if need be confess them to another Christian, ask God to forgive you of your sins, receive his forgiveness and ask Jesus, the Holy Spirit, to come into your body which becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit, and then continue in a lifestyle of repentance of sins committed on a daily basis till the day you die. Daily repentance is an ongoing lifestyle as a Christian, it's not a onetime event. Repentance will keep you out of self-will.