

The Pilgrim's Progress
Chapter 1 & 2 Review

The four characters that open The Pilgrim's Progress are Christian, Evangelist, Obstinate and Pliable. Acknowledging that we are sinners who need to be saved is the most sobering reflection and burden that we will ever experience on earth. This is what has happened to a man who becomes known as Christian. Isaiah 64:6 says; *"but we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."* King David also says in Psalm 38:4; *"For my iniquities have gone over my head; like a heavy burden they are too heavy for me."*

Absolutely no human or any spirit being can remove from us the burden and penalty of sin except Jesus Christ. As we cry out to be saved, Jesus says; *"I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."* Jesus also says in John 3:16; *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."*

So who or what is an **evangelist**? They're described as a person who preaches the gospel of Jesus Christ. They will point you the way to Jesus and how to give your life to Him. They'll often use the scripture from Hebrews 9:27 where it says; *"And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment."* Is there an evangelist in your life? Are you heeding his concern for you that you need to be born again to have eternal life with Jesus Christ? Or do you need to be an evangelist in someone's life, to point them to heaven and the reality of eternal life. Like Christian, he's being warned to flee from or fly away from The City of Destruction, which is the world. Jesus says in Luke 14:26; *"If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sister, yes, and even his own life [in the sense of indifference to or relative disregard for them in comparison with his attitude toward God]-he cannot be My disciple."* That's what we see Christian doing as he leaves his wife, children, family and friends who have concluded that he's lost his mind, to pursue eternal life which he read about in the book. I love where it says that Christian puts his fingers in his ears and runs along crying, 'life, life, eternal life'! At times that's what we need to do in life to shut out the voices that want to hold us back from following Jesus don't we!

The fellow named Obstinate is his first hindrance who he meets up with who tries to dissuade Christian from following what Evangelist told him. Obstinate means stubbornly refusing to change one's opinion or chosen course of action, despite attempts to persuade one to do so. Some synonyms are: stubborn, unyielding, inflexible, unbending, bullheaded, self-willed, stiff-necked, rigid....and the list goes on! Do you see yourself as an obstinate person? Are there obstinate people in your life who are trying to hold you back from becoming a Christian or pursuing Jesus with all your heart? If you see yourself as obstinate and are resisting serving Jesus wholeheartedly, you can repent and receive forgiveness of your burden and sins. I Samuel 15:23 says; *"For rebellion is as [serious as] the sin of divination (fortune-telling), and disobedience is as [serious as] false religion and idolatry..."* Rebellion and being obstinate go hand in hand.

It's interesting to see that the opposite or antonym of Obstinate is **Pliable**, which means easily bent, flexible. Synonyms are: elastic, supple, workable and springy. It also means: easily influenced with synonyms being: impressionable, adaptable, compliant, yielding, persuadable and receptive. So Christian is being confronted with people of opposing characteristics. Pliable is good when it's being yielded to the Lord and being mouldable in His hands, but if not, they are a person which blow whichever way the wind blows. Isaiah 64:8 says; *"But now, O Lord, You are our Father, we are the clay, and You our potter; and all of us the work of Your hand."* Are you pliable in the Lords hands and allowing Him through the Holy Spirit to work in your life?

Be encouraged to pursue eternal life, regardless of the mockers and obstinate people that may cross your path to discourage or dissuade you.