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The Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan

*The Pilgrim's Progress* is a famous Christian allegory written by the tinker and pastor John Bunyan while he was in prison. It is about a pilgrim, later named Christian, who finds out that his city will one day be destroyed and the only way to escape is to travel to the Celestial Kingdom. Thus begins Christian's journey from the City of Destruction to the Celestial Kingdom. Along the way he meets many people, learns dozens of valuable lessons, and finds a greater purpose serving the King who had laid down His very life to save those headed to destruction.

Christian lives with his wife and children in a small cottage in the City of Destruction. He finds a book that warns of the coming destruction and judgment for his city and all who dwell there. Filled with fear and anxiety, and weighed under by his heavy burden, Christian tries to warn his family; unfortunately, they think he is going crazy and ignore him. After several days of this, Christian is met by a man named Evangelist who, after finding out about Christian's trouble, instructs Christian to follow the Light through the Wicket-gate and on to Mount Zion. Christian then rushes out of the City of Destruction, ignoring the pleas of his family and neighbors to return.

At first, Christian's journey does not go well, and he is led astray a few times. Two of his neighbors—Obstinate and Pliable—try to bring him back to the City of Destruction, but fail. After passing through the Slough of Despond with a little aid from

Help, Christian runs into another shady character who informs Christian that Mr. Legality on the Hill can remove Christian's burden. Unfortunately, Christian finds out that the Worldly Wiseman's doctrine only leads to heavier burdens after Evangelist finds him cowering under the toppling mountain. After this, Christian returns to the right path and makes sure not to talk to anyone else who might lead him astray. It took hours for Christian to reach the Gate, and its keeper, a man named Good-will. Upon entering the Gate, Good-will warns Christian of a captain named Beelzebub who looks to destroy all who enter through the Gate on the way to Mount Zion and sends Christian on to the house of the Interpreter. At the house of the Interpreter, Christian is shown the King's sacrifice and the virtues of patience, grace, courage, and hope. After taking exceptional care to understand and remember these valuable lessons, Christian embarks on the Path of Salvation which leads to the Cross. It is here that Christian is delivered of his burden and given a Seal of admittance into the Celestial Gate. No longer is Christian weighed down by his burden, now he is newly clothed and filled with joy.

Filled with new purpose, Christian continues following the path to Mount Zion. Before long, Christian comes to the Hill Difficulty, which is very steep, and to the Palace Beautiful where Watchful and his daughters Discretion, Prudence, Piety, and Charity live. Here he is given some armor for the battles that were ahead and sent on to the Valley of Humiliation. In this valley, Christian engaged in the legendary battle against Apollyon, and barely won. After this, Christian continued into the Valley of the Shadow of Death, after which he caught up to his friend Faithful who had left the City of Darkness shortly after Christian. Together, the two recounted their tales and continued on their journey. Their next destination was a well-known town called Vanity Fair, one so

bad that Evangelist took the time to carefully warn the pilgrims about it. Upon entering the Fair, Christian and Faithful didn't take part in any of the entertainment or buy anything, causing an uproar and an intervention by the Judge. Despite their innocence, they were imprisoned, tortured, and sentenced to death, Faithful being the first. Hours before Christian's own death, one of the guards left the cell door open for him to escape and followed after Christian due to both his and Faithful's courageous testimonies. The guard, named Hope, became Christian's companion and continued with him until the very end. At first, the two leisured on through the Pleasant Meadow, meeting a few other travelers and engaging in philosophical debates; however, calamity soon followed when Christian strayed from the path and got them both locked up in Doubting Castle. After escaping, the duo gathered courage and trudged up the Delectable Mountains. Their next test was given by the Flatterer and they slowly fell into his net, but all was not lost as the Shining one freed them and reminded them that their final destination was just up ahead. With joy, Christian and Hope ran up the path only to be stopped by what seemed like an impassible barrier—the River Jordan. Here, Christian and Hope were given the choice to ascend into Heaven and on to their King.

After his deliverance, Christian diligently serves his King while journeying to join Him on Mount Zion. On the way Christian met many people, endured quite a few tests, and was led astray many times on the way to Mount Zion. Yet through it all he persevered until the very end and was rewarded with acceptance into the Celestial Kingdom.