



FAMILY STUDY

Pilgrim's Progress: Stay the Course!



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Pilgrim's Progress: "Stay the Course!"

Staying on the Path

In John Bunyan's book, "Pilgrim's Progress," we follow the allegorical adventures of a traveler named "Christian" who is making his way from the city of Destruction to the holy Celestial City. Christian's journey represents the journey every believer in Jesus Christ takes - from destruction to God's presence in heaven. As in the story, the journey of the Christian can often be difficult. The path to following Jesus is narrow, and there are no alternate routes. But sometimes, when following Jesus seems difficult, we are tempted to stray off the path and take what appears to be an easier way.

Throughout "Pilgrim's Progress," Christian faces challenges which threaten to draw him off of the one and only path which can lead him to heaven. In this part of the series, Christian is threatened by promises of an easier way and by doubts and fears. Such obstacles can often derail us on our walk with God. Ultimately, Christian learns that we must keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and on His Word. This is our best defense against all of the foes who would stop us in our tracks or lure us off the right path. We encourage you to look up, study, and discuss the Scripture references listed in this Family Study, and may God bless you as you continue YOUR walk with God!

Blessings for Staying on God's Path

Deuteronomy 5:32-33 Psalm 16:11 Psalm 119:32-35
Proverbs 12:28 Proverbs 23:17-19

Warnings about Straying from God's Path

Proverbs 4:14-18 Proverbs 15:10 Proverbs 21:16

The Threat of Fear

Fear can lead us off of God's path or stop us in our tracks. How often are we fearful as we walk with God? It seems like a normal and common reaction to uncertain or difficult times, but if we are following God's path, it is not necessarily a logical one. While it is understandable that one might feel dread or uneasiness about an unknown or frightening situation, fear can also be an indication of a lack of trust in God. If we are not obeying and following God, we have good reason to fear. But, if we are walking in God's will, then we can know that He is with us, protecting us and working for our good.

Matthew 14:29-31 Mark 4:35-41 Mark 16:4-6

The Threat of Doubt

Doubt has stopped many a person from realizing God's full blessings for them. In our world, we get used to the way we see things work, and we can become skeptical that God will protect us or bless us as He promises. Yet, we should realize that God is more trustworthy, more dependable and more faithful than anyone else in the universe, and there is absolutely no reason whatsoever to doubt Him!

Examples of Needless Doubt

Matthew 14:29-31 Mark 4:40 John 20:24-29
Matthew 17:17 Luke 24:25

Dangers of Doubting God

Deuteronomy 32:20 John 8:24 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12
Mark 16:14 John 16:8-9 Hebrews 3:12
John 3:18 John 3:36 Romans 11:19-21

The Threat of an "Easier" Way

There is only one way to God, and that's through Jesus. Period. There is no other way, and there is no easier way. This is not to say that God's plan for salvation is difficult, but in a godless world, devoting one's life to Christ is not easy. Since Christ is the ONLY path for salvation, there can be no easier way, because there is no OTHER way.

John 8:24 1 Corinthians 3:11 Revelation 20:12-15
John 14:6 Philippians 2:9-11 Revelation 21:22-27
Acts 4:12 1 John 2:22-23

Combatting the Threats

There are very real threats which can harm us as we try to walk with God. However, the Lord has provided us a sure-fire method of avoiding and combatting those threats - reading, studying and living His Word. If we hide His Word in our hearts, it will light our path, protect us and bring us blessings.

God's Word is Our Lamp

Psalm 19:8 Psalm 119:130 2 Peter 1:19
Psalm 119:105 Proverbs 6:23

God's Word Brings Blessings

Joshua 1:8 Luke 11:28 Revelation 1:3
Psalm 19:7-11 John 5:24
Matthew 7:24 John 8:31-32

God's Word Purifies Us

Psalm 119:9 John 17:17 1 Peter 1:22
John 15:3 Ephesians 5:25-26

Looking Christward and Heavenward Keeps Us On Course

John 3:13-19 Colossians 3:1-2 Hebrews 12:2

Conclusion

The Christian walk is not an easy one. There are countless threats that take many forms, all in an attempt by the enemy to lure us off the road that leads to eternal life. We should all be aware of these threats and how to avoid or combat them, because although no one can snatch us from God's hand, once we have given our lives to Him, we can still be rendered ineffective in our service to Him and distant in our fellowship with Him. So keep His Word close to your heart and on your lips. There are glorious rewards at the end of the journey, and we'll make it there if we stay on the path!