

Pilgrim's Progress Discussion Questions Week 3

The Cross

1. As Christian begins his journey, the burden on his back is still weighing him down until he arrives at the cross. Many have speculated that Christian was saved when he entered earlier at the Wicket Gate, while others suggest he was saved when the burden rolled off his back at the cross. What do you think, and why? Why might a believer continue to carry his burdens after being saved? Do you remember what Pastor Al said about 'forensic' and 'psychological' guilt?
2. Read Philippians 2:12–13. What does it mean to be saved if we still need to be working out our salvation? Does this mean you can lose your salvation?
3. Christian must travel up a small hill to the cross and then later up the Hill of Difficulty. What consistent struggles do you face that threaten to deter you from working out your salvation?
4. Why is continuing to carry our own burdens so dangerous to our spiritual health?
5. Describe the role of each of the three shining angels that appeared to Christian as he was relieved of his burden.

Three Sleepers

6. Christian is enthusiastic when he leaves the cross, having just experienced great blessing, deliverance, and a renewed sense of joyous assurance. Then he encounters three men, Simple, Lazy, and Arrogance, who have a very naïve attitude toward the world. Describe each of these men and what they represent today. Simple (Proverbs 1:32–33) Lazy (Proverbs 6:1–11) – Arrogance (Philippians 2:3)

Formalism and Hypocrisy

7. Leaving Simple, Lazy, and Arrogance behind, Christian then meets two other travelers named Formalism and Hypocrisy on the Way. How do these two men get on the road? What is their defense for not entering at the Wicket Gate?
8. Formalism and Hypocrisy were convinced that their way was an acceptable shortcut, arguing, "What difference does it make how we get on the Way as long as we get on it?" How might someone make this same argument today?



9. Formalism and Hypocrisy claim that there's little difference between themselves and Christian. But after carefully probing and investigating their beliefs further, what conclusion does Christian come to?
10. Read John 10:1, 7–10. What scriptural basis does Christian use to inform the two men that they enter the Way illegally? What did he say would happen to them when they arrived at the Celestial City?

Hill of Difficulty

11. What does the Hill of Difficulty represent in the life of the believer? According to James 1:2–5, 1 Peter 4:12–13, and 2 Corinthians 1:3–5 why might God allow difficulties in your life? What was the most difficult experience you encountered early on in your Christian life?
12. What is the benefit of the narrow Way over all other paths? How do you make sure that you are on the right path?
13. Once you are on the right path, how do you stay on it and not become distracted by the noise in the world today? What distracts you from staying on the right path?
14. Eventually, Christian becomes drowsy and slips into the very condition he had earlier found to be so deplorable in Simple, Lazy, and Arrogance. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:6–8. What sort of dangers might we encounter when we allow ourselves to fall into a "spiritual sleep"?

Fears and Failures

15. How did Christian first respond to Nervousness and Mistrust's news of the lions, and how did he keep himself from panicking? Read 2 Corinthians 10:5. How can we control the thousands of thoughts that enter our minds each day, and how can we take every thought captive?
16. How does Christian respond to the discovery that he has lost his certificate?
17. Christian was overcome with joy to find his certificate and was spiritually revived, reassured, and thankful but soon realized the price that was to be paid for his laziness. What does this event teach us about how our past sins and failures can have present consequences for our lives?