



PILGRIMS PATH

A Biblical Recovery Discipleship Journey

From Brokenness to Redemption in Christ

- John 8:56 -

**Pilgrims Path
Biblical Recovery Curriculum**

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The curriculum draws inspiration from the classic Christian allegory *The Pilgrim’s Progress* by John Bunyan, illustrating the Christian life as a journey of faith toward the Celestial City.

Publisher

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First Edition

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Mission & Vision

Our Mission

Pilgrims Path Recovery Support Ministry exists to help individuals struggling with addiction find lasting freedom through the transforming power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We seek to walk alongside men and women who are burdened by addiction, guiding them toward repentance, healing, and restoration through biblical truth, discipleship, and supportive Christian community.

Our mission is not merely to help individuals overcome destructive habits but to lead them toward **a new life rooted in Christ, shaped by Scripture, and sustained through fellowship with God's people.**

“If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”

— John 8:36

Our Vision

Our vision is to see lives transformed by the Gospel as individuals leave behind the destructive patterns of addiction and begin walking faithfully with Christ.

We envision a growing network of churches, ministries, and recovery communities using Pilgrims Path to help individuals experience spiritual renewal, restored relationships, and renewed purpose.

Just as the character Christian in *The Pilgrim's Progress* leaves the City of Destruction and begins a journey toward the Celestial City, participants in this ministry are encouraged to begin their own journey—walking step by step toward the life God has prepared for them.

Through this ministry, we hope to see:

- individuals restored through faith in Christ
 - families healed and relationships reconciled
 - churches equipped to minister to those struggling with addiction
 - former participants becoming mentors and leaders for others
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Our Core Beliefs

Pilgrims Path is built on several foundational biblical convictions.

Transformation Begins in the Heart

Addiction is not only a physical struggle but also a spiritual one. Lasting change comes through the renewal of the heart and mind.

“Be transformed by the renewal of your mind.”

— Romans 12:2

Freedom Is Found in Christ

True freedom from sin and addiction comes through Jesus Christ and the new life He provides.

“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.”

— 2 Corinthians 5:17

Community Strengthens Recovery

God designed believers to grow in fellowship with one another. Support, accountability, and encouragement are essential to long-term recovery.

“Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.”

— Proverbs 27:17

The Journey Requires Perseverance

Recovery and discipleship are lifelong journeys. Participants are encouraged to continue walking faithfully with Christ beyond the completion of this program.

“Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”

— Hebrews 12:1

Walking the Pilgrim's Path

Pilgrims Path invites participants to see their recovery as a journey. The road may include challenges, temptations, and difficult valleys, but God promises to guide those who trust Him.

Just as the pilgrim in the classic Christian allegory presses forward toward the Celestial City, participants are encouraged to continue walking faithfully toward the life God has called them to live.

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Curriculum Overview

Addiction is one of the most devastating struggles affecting individuals, families, and communities today. Many people trapped in cycles of drug and alcohol abuse feel powerless to escape. Programs often focus primarily on behavior modification, but the Bible teaches that the deepest problem behind addiction is not merely behavioral or physical; it is spiritual.

Scripture describes humanity as enslaved to sin apart from Christ (John 8:34). Addiction often exposes this slavery in a very visible way. What begins as a search for comfort, escape, or pleasure gradually becomes bondage.

The Pilgrims Path Recovery Curriculum approaches addiction through the lens of the Gospel. Instead of focusing only on sobriety, this program guides participants toward true spiritual transformation through Jesus Christ.

The name *Pilgrims Path* is inspired by John Bunyan's classic Christian allegory, *Pilgrim's Progress*. In that story, a man named Christian begins a journey after realizing he carries a heavy burden on his back. That burden represents the weight of sin. As Christian travels toward the Celestial City, he faces many obstacles, temptations, and trials along the way.

Recovery from addiction often feels similar. Participants begin their journey carrying burdens of guilt, shame, broken relationships, and destructive habits. Through Scripture, discipleship, and community, they learn to leave behind the paths that lead to destruction and walk toward new life in Christ.

This curriculum helps participants:

- Understand the spiritual roots of addiction
- Experience the freedom offered through Christ
- Develop healthy patterns of thinking and behavior
- Restore broken relationships
- Build a stable and purposeful life
- Continue walking faithfully as followers of Jesus

The goal of this program is not simply to help people stop destructive behaviors. The goal is to help individuals become disciples of Christ who walk faithfully for the rest of their lives.

How This Curriculum Helps Those Struggling with Addiction

Many people battling addiction feel trapped in cycles of guilt, relapse, and hopelessness. The Pilgrims Path curriculum provides a structured journey that helps participants:

- Identify the Root Problem

Addiction is often fueled by deeper issues such as misplaced worship, unresolved pain, destructive beliefs, and spiritual emptiness. This curriculum helps participants recognize these underlying causes.

- Experience True Freedom

Participants learn that lasting freedom does not come through willpower alone but through the transforming power of Jesus Christ.

- Renew the Mind

Destructive patterns of thinking often sustain addiction. By replacing lies with biblical truth, participants begin developing new ways of thinking and responding to life's challenges.

- Restore Relationships

Addiction frequently damages families and friendships. The curriculum provides guidance for seeking forgiveness, extending grace, and rebuilding trust.

- Build a New Life

Participants learn practical disciplines such as responsibility, accountability, service, and purposeful living that help support long-term recovery.

- Continue the Journey

Recovery is not a single event but a lifelong journey. This curriculum prepares participants to continue growing spiritually long after the program ends.

Program Structure

The Pilgrims Path curriculum is designed as a 12-week discipleship journey, with each lesson representing a step along the path toward spiritual maturity and lasting freedom.

Each session includes:

- Teaching from Scripture
- Group discussion
- Reflection exercises
- Scripture memorization
- Prayer and accountability

Participants are encouraged to see themselves not merely as individuals overcoming addiction, but as pilgrims walking toward Christ.

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Lesson 1

The Beginning of the Pilgrim's Journey: Freedom in Christ

This lesson introduces the foundation of the entire program. Participants explore the biblical concept of slavery to sin and discover how addiction reflects this bondage. The lesson explains that true freedom comes only through Jesus Christ. Using the imagery of Christian's burden in *Pilgrim's Progress*, participants begin recognizing the weight of sin and the need for transformation through the Gospel.

Lesson 2

Beliefs, Truth, and Worldview

Addiction is often sustained by false beliefs about life, identity, happiness, and coping. This lesson helps participants identify destructive beliefs and replace them with biblical truth. By learning how worldview shapes behavior, participants begin renewing their minds according to Scripture.

Lesson 3

Idolatry and Addiction

The Bible describes idolatry as placing something in the position that belongs to God alone. This lesson explores how addiction functions as a form of misplaced worship. Participants learn to identify the idols of the heart and begin replacing them with true devotion to God.

Lesson 4

Emotional Maturity and Healing

Many people struggling with addiction have experienced deep emotional wounds. This lesson explores the role of emotions, trauma, and emotional triggers. Participants learn how Scripture provides guidance for responding to pain in healthy and God-honoring ways.

Lesson 5

Guilt, Shame, and the Healing Power of the Gospel

Feelings of guilt and shame often keep people trapped in destructive patterns. This lesson explains the difference between guilt and shame and shows how Christ removes both through forgiveness and redemption. Participants begin embracing their new identity in Christ.

Lesson 6

Repentance and the New Birth

True transformation begins with repentance and spiritual rebirth. This lesson explores the biblical meaning of repentance, conversion, and regeneration. Participants learn the difference between temporary behavior change and genuine heart transformation.

Lesson 7

Renewing the Mind

Recovery requires replacing destructive thinking with biblical truth. This lesson teaches participants how to recognize lies, take thoughts captive, and develop new patterns of thinking through Scripture.

Lesson 8

Spiritual Warfare and Resisting Temptation

Temptation continues even after recovery begins. This lesson explores the spiritual battle believers face and teaches practical strategies for recognizing and resisting temptation through prayer, Scripture, and accountability.

Lesson 9

Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Restoring Relationships

Addiction often leaves behind broken relationships and unresolved bitterness. This lesson focuses on forgiveness, reconciliation, and restoring trust. Participants learn how to seek forgiveness and extend grace toward others.

Lesson 10

Brotherhood, Accountability, and Life in the Church

Isolation fuels addiction, while community strengthens recovery. This lesson emphasizes the importance of Christian fellowship, accountability, and involvement in the local church.

Lesson 11

Purpose, Responsibility, and Living a New Life

Recovery involves rebuilding life with purpose and discipline. Participants explore the biblical role of work, responsibility, and service while developing healthy routines that support long-term growth.

Lesson 12

Walking the Pilgrim's Path for Life

The final lesson prepares participants for lifelong discipleship. Recovery is not the end of the journey but the beginning of a new life walking faithfully with Christ.

LESSON 1

The Beginning of the Pilgrim's Journey: Freedom in Christ

Introduction

Every pilgrim begins with a burden.

In John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, the story begins with a man named Christian who becomes aware that he is living in the City of Destruction. As he reads the Book (the Bible), he realizes that judgment is coming and that his life is in danger. But more than that, he becomes painfully aware of a heavy burden on his back—a burden he cannot remove.

That burden represents the weight of sin.

Many people struggling with addiction know exactly what that burden feels like. It may not appear in the form of a physical weight, but it shows itself through guilt, shame, broken relationships, and the feeling of being trapped in destructive patterns.

Addiction often begins as an attempt to escape pain, loneliness, stress, or trauma. Yet over time, the very thing that promised relief becomes another chain of bondage.

The Bible describes this condition clearly. Jesus said:

“Everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.”

— John 8:34

Addiction is one of the clearest examples of this slavery. A person may promise themselves that they will stop tomorrow, only to find that tomorrow arrives and the cycle continues.

But the good news of the Gospel is that Christ came to set captives free.

Just as Christian's journey in *Pilgrim's Progress* begins with the realization that he must leave the City of Destruction, the journey of recovery begins when a person recognizes the seriousness of sin and turns toward Christ.

PURPOSE OF THIS LESSON

The purpose of this lesson is to help participants understand that addiction is not simply a physical habit or a psychological issue. At its deepest level, addiction is connected to the spiritual problem of sin and the human tendency to seek life apart from God.

True freedom cannot be found through human effort alone.

It is found through Jesus Christ.

KEY SCRIPTURE

“If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”

— John 8:36

This promise from Jesus reminds us that the deepest freedom a person can experience comes from Him.

OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Understand the biblical concept of slavery to sin
 - Recognize how addiction reflects this bondage
 - Learn why human effort alone cannot produce lasting freedom
 - Discover how the Gospel offers true liberation
 - Begin seeing their recovery as a journey toward Christ
-

THE PILGRIM THEME: THE BURDEN AND THE JOURNEY

In *Pilgrim's Progress*, Christian initially tries to ignore his burden. He continues living in the City of Destruction even though he knows something is terribly wrong.

Eventually he realizes he cannot remain there.

He must leave.

The Christian life begins the same way.

A person must recognize the seriousness of sin and the emptiness of life apart from God.

The prophet Isaiah described humanity's condition this way:

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way.”

— Isaiah 53:6

Addiction often represents this wandering in a very visible way. It shows what happens when people seek comfort, identity, or escape in something other than God.

But just as Christian begins his journey toward the Celestial City, God calls every person to turn toward Him.

THE BONDAGE OF SIN

Many people believe addiction is simply a bad habit or a disease. While physical and psychological factors certainly play a role, the Bible ultimately describes the deeper issue as spiritual bondage.

Jesus explained:

“Everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.”

— John 8:34

Slavery means a person is no longer in control.

Addiction illustrates this reality clearly. A person may want to stop, yet they feel compelled to continue.

Sin promises freedom but produces slavery.

FALSE PROMISES OF ADDICTION

Addiction often begins with a promise.

The substance promises:

- relief from pain
- escape from stress
- temporary happiness
- confidence or comfort

But those promises are deceptive.

What begins as escape soon becomes dependence.

What begins as pleasure soon becomes control.

The Bible warns about these deceptive promises:

“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.”

— Proverbs 14:12

WHY WILLPOWER IS NOT ENOUGH

Many people attempt recovery through sheer determination.

They tell themselves:

“I will never do this again.”

While determination is valuable, it is rarely enough to break the deeper power of sin.

The apostle Paul described this struggle:

“For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.”

— Romans 7:19

Human effort alone cannot change the heart.

True transformation requires something greater.

THE FREEDOM CHRIST OFFERS

Jesus came to do what human effort cannot accomplish.

Through His death and resurrection, Christ defeated the power of sin.

Paul explains this in Romans:

“We know that our old self was crucified with him... so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.”

— Romans 6:6

This means the believer is no longer defined by past bondage.

Christ offers forgiveness, transformation, and new life.

A NEW BEGINNING

The Gospel does not simply offer improvement.

It offers new creation.

Paul writes:

“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”

— 2 Corinthians 5:17

This transformation does not happen instantly in every area of life, but it begins the moment a person places their faith in Christ.

The pilgrim has begun the journey.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Participants should begin reflecting on their own journey.

Ask:

- What burdens have addiction placed on your life?
- What promises did substances make to you?
- How did those promises fail?
- What does true freedom look like?

Understanding these questions helps participants begin recognizing the need for Christ’s transforming power.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What similarities do you see between Christian’s burden in *Pilgrim’s Progress* and the struggles of addiction?
 2. Why do you think addiction often feels like slavery?
 3. What promises did substances make that turned out to be false?
 4. Why is willpower alone not enough to create lasting change?
 5. How does Jesus offer a different kind of freedom?
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PERSONAL REFLECTION

Write about the burdens you carried before beginning this journey.

What would it look like for Christ to remove that burden from your life?

MEMORY VERSE

“If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”

— John 8:36

CLOSING PRAYER

Father,

Many of us have carried heavy burdens for years.

We have sought freedom in things that only led to deeper bondage.

Thank You for sending Your Son to set captives free.

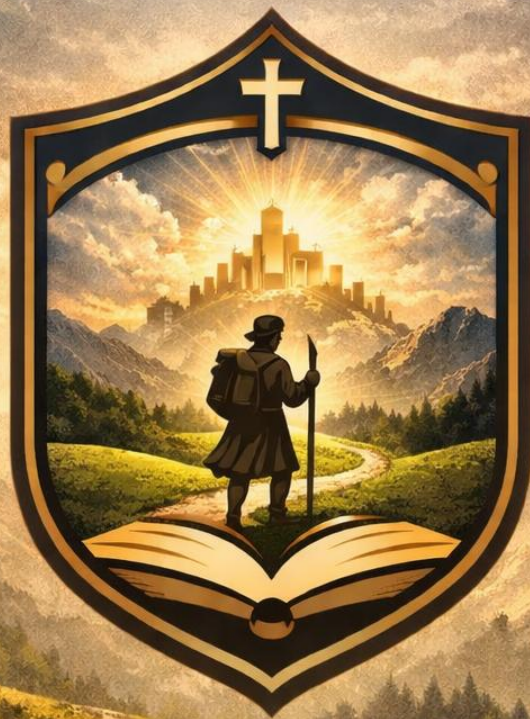
Help us begin this journey with humility and faith.

Give us courage to leave the paths that have led to destruction and follow Christ instead.

Guide us as we begin walking the pilgrim’s path.

Amen.

PILGRIMS PATH



FACILITATOR TEACHING SCRIPT

LEADING BIBLICAL RECOVERY GROUPS

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Facilitator Introduction & Guidelines

Leading the Journey

Welcome

Thank you for serving as a facilitator for the Pilgrims Path Recovery Support Ministry.

Your role in this ministry is deeply important. Many individuals who participate in this program are carrying burdens of addiction, shame, broken relationships, and discouragement. For some, this may be the first time they have encountered the Gospel in a meaningful way.

As a facilitator, your role is not simply to teach a lesson but to **walk alongside participants as they begin a new journey of faith, healing, and transformation.**

This curriculum is designed to help participants understand that recovery is not merely about behavior change but about **heart transformation through Jesus Christ.**

“If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”

— John 8:36

The Role of the Facilitator

Facilitators serve as guides along the pilgrim’s path.

Your responsibilities include:

- leading weekly lessons and discussions
- encouraging honest reflection and participation
- maintaining a safe and respectful environment
- pointing participants to biblical truth
- offering encouragement and accountability

It is important to remember that facilitators are not expected to have all the answers. Your primary role is to help participants **engage with Scripture and apply it to their lives.**

Creating a Safe and Respectful Environment

Participants must feel safe in order to share honestly about their struggles.

Facilitators should establish the following group expectations:

Confidentiality

Participants should trust that personal stories shared within the group will remain private.

Respect

Every participant should be treated with dignity and respect.

Honesty

Encourage participants to speak openly about their struggles and experiences.

Grace

Recovery and spiritual growth are processes. Participants may be at different stages of the journey.

Teaching the Lessons

Each lesson in the Pilgrims Path curriculum includes several components:

- Biblical teaching
- Discussion questions
- Reflection exercises
- Practical application

Facilitators should aim to guide the discussion rather than dominate it. Allow participants to reflect on Scripture and share their perspectives.

A typical session may follow this format:

1. Opening prayer
2. Scripture reading
3. Teaching from the lesson
4. Group discussion
5. Workbook exercises
6. Closing prayer

Most sessions will last 75–90 minutes.

Handling Difficult Conversations

Participants may share painful or sensitive experiences during group discussions.

Facilitators should respond with:

- patience
- compassion
- humility

Avoid attempting to solve every problem immediately. Often the most helpful response is simply listening and offering encouragement.

If a participant raises concerns involving serious mental health issues or crisis situations, encourage them to seek assistance from qualified professionals.

Addressing Relapse

Relapse may occur for some participants during the program.

Facilitators should respond with honesty and compassion. Encourage participants to reflect on what led to the relapse and recommit to their recovery journey.

Relapse should be treated as a serious challenge but not as a reason for condemnation.

The goal is to help participants continue moving forward.

Encouraging Spiritual Growth

The Pilgrims Path curriculum emphasizes several practices that strengthen long-term recovery:

- regular prayer
- studying Scripture
- accountability relationships
- involvement in a church community

Facilitators should regularly encourage participants to develop these habits.

The Heart of This Ministry

Pilgrims Path is not simply a recovery program. It is a discipleship journey rooted in the Gospel.

Our hope is that participants will not only experience freedom from addiction but will also grow into mature followers of Christ who can eventually encourage others walking the same path.

Just as the pilgrim in the classic allegory continues walking toward the Celestial City, participants are encouraged to continue their journey long after the program ends.

A Word of Encouragement

Leading a recovery group can be both challenging and deeply rewarding. Some weeks may feel difficult, while others may reveal remarkable stories of growth and transformation.

Trust that God is at work in the lives of those you are serving.

“Let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”

— Galatians 6:9

Common Challenges Facilitators May Encounter

Practical Guidance for Leading Recovery Discussions

Leading a recovery group can be deeply rewarding, but it can also present unexpected challenges. Participants come from different backgrounds, carry different wounds, and may be at different stages of spiritual growth.

The situations below are common in recovery ministries. These guidelines can help facilitators respond with wisdom and grace.

When One Person Dominates the Discussion

Occasionally a participant may speak for long periods or frequently interrupt others.

While enthusiasm is not a problem, it is important to make space for everyone to participate.

Helpful responses include:

- thanking the participant for sharing
- gently redirecting the conversation to others
- asking another participant for their thoughts

Example response:

“Thank you for sharing that. I’d also like to hear from someone else. What are some other thoughts on this passage?”

When the Group Becomes Very Quiet

At times participants may be hesitant to speak, especially during early meetings.

Silence does not necessarily mean the lesson is ineffective. Participants may simply be reflecting.

Helpful strategies include:

- asking open-ended questions
- giving participants time to think
- allowing moments of quiet reflection

Avoid rushing to fill every moment of silence.

When Someone Becomes Emotional

Recovery discussions often involve painful memories and personal struggles. Participants may occasionally become emotional while sharing.

Facilitators should respond with compassion and patience.

Helpful responses include:

- allowing the participant time to speak
- acknowledging their experience
- thanking them for their honesty

Avoid rushing the conversation or immediately attempting to solve the problem.

Often the most helpful response is simply listening.

“Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

— Galatians 6:2

When a Participant Disagrees with Biblical Teaching

Some participants may struggle with certain biblical concepts or teachings presented in the lessons.

Facilitators should respond respectfully while remaining faithful to Scripture.

Helpful responses include:

- acknowledging the participant’s perspective
- encouraging continued reflection on Scripture
- guiding the discussion back to the biblical text

Avoid arguments or debates. The goal is to help participants thoughtfully engage with Scripture.

When Someone Minimizes Their Struggles

Some individuals may downplay the seriousness of their addiction or destructive patterns.

Facilitators should encourage honest reflection without shaming the participant.

Helpful responses include:

- asking thoughtful questions
 - encouraging personal accountability
 - reminding participants that growth requires honesty
-

When Relapse Occurs

Relapse can be discouraging for participants and leaders alike. However, relapse is not uncommon in recovery journeys.

When relapse occurs:

- respond with compassion rather than condemnation
- encourage honest discussion about what happened
- help the participant identify triggers or warning signs
- encourage renewed commitment to recovery

The goal is to help the participant continue moving forward.

When Participants Offer Advice to Each Other

Peer encouragement can be helpful, but sometimes participants may offer advice that is unhelpful or overly critical.

Facilitators should guide the conversation toward supportive responses rather than judgment.

Helpful reminders include:

- encouraging participants to share personal experiences rather than directives
 - redirecting the discussion to biblical principles
-

When Sensitive Topics Arise

Participants may share experiences involving trauma, abuse, or serious personal struggles.

Facilitators should respond with sensitivity and avoid pressing participants to share details they are uncomfortable discussing.

If a situation appears to require professional counseling or medical care, encourage the participant to seek help from qualified professionals.

Remember Your Role

Facilitators are not expected to solve every problem or provide professional counseling.

Your role is to:

- guide discussion
- encourage reflection
- point participants toward biblical truth
- create a supportive environment

Trust that God is at work in the lives of those participating in the program.

“He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion.”

— Philippians 1:6

Signs of Spiritual Growth in Recovery Participants

Recognizing Progress Along the Journey

Recovery and discipleship are processes that unfold over time. Participants may not experience immediate or dramatic changes, but small steps of growth can be powerful indicators that transformation is taking place.

Facilitators should learn to recognize and encourage these signs of progress.

Just as a pilgrim walking a long road takes many small steps toward the destination, participants often grow through **steady, gradual change**.

“Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”

— Hebrews 12:1

Increased Honesty

One of the first signs of spiritual growth is honesty.

Participants may begin speaking more openly about:

- past struggles
- current temptations
- emotional challenges

Honesty often indicates that participants are becoming more comfortable within the group and are willing to confront difficult truths about their lives.

Greater Personal Responsibility

As participants grow, they may begin to take greater responsibility for their choices and actions.

Instead of blaming others or circumstances, they may begin acknowledging their role in past decisions and expressing a desire to change.

This shift toward personal accountability is an important step in recovery.

A Desire to Understand Scripture

Participants may begin asking questions about the Bible, faith, or spiritual concepts.

They may show curiosity about how Scripture applies to their lives and struggles.

Even simple questions about biblical passages can indicate that participants are beginning to engage seriously with God's Word.

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”

— Psalm 119:105

Openness to Accountability

Participants who are growing spiritually often become more willing to accept encouragement, correction, and accountability from others.

They may begin seeking guidance from group leaders or fellow participants when facing difficult situations.

Healthy accountability relationships are an important part of long-term recovery.

Changes in Attitude

Growth may appear through subtle changes in attitude.

Participants may begin expressing:

- greater humility
- increased patience
- a willingness to listen
- gratitude for support

These changes often reflect deeper transformation taking place within the heart.

A Desire to Repair Relationships

As participants progress, they may begin acknowledging the harm addiction has caused in their relationships.

They may express a desire to seek forgiveness, rebuild trust, or restore connections with family members and friends.

Reconciliation is often an important milestone in the recovery journey.

Increased Participation

Participants who initially remained quiet may begin contributing more during discussions.

They may offer encouragement to others or share insights from their own experiences.

This participation often reflects growing confidence and trust within the group.

Concern for Others

One of the most encouraging signs of spiritual growth is when participants begin caring about the well-being of others in the group.

They may offer encouragement, prayer, or support to fellow participants who are struggling.

This reflects the development of genuine Christian community.

“Encourage one another and build one another up.”

— 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Patience with the Process

Recovery and spiritual growth rarely follow a straight path.

Participants may experience setbacks or difficult seasons, but continued engagement with the program and willingness to keep moving forward are positive signs.

Facilitators should celebrate progress rather than expecting perfection.

Encouraging Growth

Facilitators play an important role in encouraging participants as they grow.

When you notice signs of progress:

- acknowledge the effort being made
- encourage continued faithfulness
- remind participants that growth takes time

Small steps taken consistently can lead to lasting transformation.

Warning Signs a Participant May Be Approaching Relapse

Recognizing the Early Signals

Relapse is often a gradual process rather than a single event. It typically develops through emotional, mental, and spiritual changes that occur over time.

By recognizing these early warning signs, facilitators can help participants address struggles before they lead to destructive decisions.

“Be sober-minded; be watchful.”

— 1 Peter 5:8

Emotional Warning Signs

Emotional distress often appears before other signs of relapse.

Participants may begin experiencing:

- increased stress or frustration
- irritability or anger
- anxiety or discouragement
- feelings of hopelessness
- difficulty managing emotions

Participants may also appear emotionally withdrawn or overwhelmed.

Encouraging honest conversations about emotional struggles can help prevent further decline.

Isolation from the Group

One of the most common warning signs is withdrawal from community.

Participants approaching relapse may begin:

- missing group meetings
- avoiding discussions
- declining accountability check-ins
- distancing themselves from supportive relationships

Isolation often allows destructive thoughts to grow unchecked.

“Two are better than one... if one falls, the other lifts him up.”
— Ecclesiastes 4:9–10

Changes in Attitude

A noticeable shift in attitude can indicate that a participant is struggling internally.

Examples may include:

- defensiveness when receiving encouragement or correction
- dismissing the importance of the program
- expressing resentment toward others in the group
- minimizing past addiction struggles

These changes may signal that the participant is beginning to rationalize destructive choices.

Romanticizing Past Substance Use

Participants may begin speaking positively about past experiences with substances.

Examples include statements such as:

- “It wasn’t always that bad.”
- “I could probably handle it now.”
- “Maybe I overreacted before.”

This type of thinking often indicates that the participant is mentally drifting back toward old patterns.

Neglecting Spiritual Habits

Spiritual disciplines help strengthen recovery.

When participants begin neglecting practices such as prayer, Scripture reading, or church involvement, it may indicate that they are becoming spiritually vulnerable.

Encourage participants to remain connected to spiritual practices that support their growth.

Returning to Risky Environments

Participants may begin placing themselves in situations that previously contributed to addiction.

Examples include:

- reconnecting with unhealthy influences
- spending time in environments associated with substance use
- returning to habits that previously led to temptation

Facilitators should encourage participants to reflect carefully on the environments they choose.

Increased Secrecy

Secrecy often grows as individuals approach relapse.

Participants may:

- avoid answering questions honestly
- become vague about their activities
- hide struggles from the group

Encourage an atmosphere where honesty is welcomed and supported.

How Facilitators Can Respond

When warning signs appear, facilitators should respond with wisdom and compassion.

Helpful responses include:

- checking in privately with the participant
- encouraging honest reflection about current struggles
- reinforcing accountability relationships
- reminding participants of the support available within the group

Avoid responding with judgment or condemnation.

Instead, help participants remember that they are not alone in the journey.

Encouraging Hope

Even when participants struggle or experience setbacks, hope remains central to the recovery journey.

Remind participants that growth is possible through perseverance and faith.

“Let us not grow weary of doing good.”

— Galatians 6:9

Recovery is not a straight path, but with encouragement, accountability, and reliance on God’s grace, participants can continue moving forward.

Facilitator Teaching Script

Lesson 1 — The Beginning of the Pilgrim's Journey: Freedom in Christ

Lesson Goal

Help participants understand that addiction is not merely a bad habit but **bondage to sin**, and that true freedom begins with **Jesus Christ**.

Participants should leave this lesson understanding:

- addiction is spiritual bondage
 - human effort alone cannot fix the problem
 - Christ offers true freedom
 - recovery begins with recognizing our burden
-

Facilitator Preparation

Before the session:

1. Read the Lesson 1 curriculum.
2. Review the participant worksheet.
3. Read the following passages:

John 8:34–36

Romans 6:16–18

2 Corinthians 5:17

4. Pray for the participants.

Ask God to soften hearts and open eyes.

Materials Needed

- Participant workbooks
 - Pens or pencils
 - A Bible
-

Suggested Session Length

75–90 minutes

Session Outline

1. Opening Prayer
 2. Pilgrim's Progress Reading
 3. Teaching Time
 4. Group Discussion
 5. Burden Activity
 6. Reflection and Closing Prayer
-

1. Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Facilitator:

“Welcome everyone. Today we begin the Pilgrims Path journey together. This program is not just about stopping harmful behavior. It’s about discovering the freedom that Christ offers.”

Pray for:

- openness
 - honesty
 - humility
 - God’s guidance
-

2. Pilgrim’s Progress Reading (5 minutes)

Read this excerpt:

“I saw a man clothed with rags, standing in a certain place, with a Book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back.”

Explain briefly:

“This character is Christian. He has just realized that his life is headed toward destruction. The burden on his back represents the weight of sin and guilt.”

Ask participants:

“Have you ever felt like you were carrying a burden in life?”

Allow short responses.

3. Teaching Time (25 minutes)

Teach the key idea:

Addiction is not just physical or emotional.

It is also **spiritual bondage**.

Read John 8:34:

“Everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.”

Explain:

“Addiction shows us what slavery to sin can look like. Many people want to stop, but they feel trapped in the cycle.”

Important point to emphasize:

Willpower alone cannot fix the heart.

Only Christ can bring true freedom.

Read John 8:36:

“If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”

Explain:

“This is the foundation of our entire program. Real freedom comes through Christ.”

4. Group Discussion (20 minutes)

Use the discussion questions from the worksheet.

Suggested questions:

1. What promises did addiction make to you?
2. How did those promises turn out?

3. What burdens has addiction placed on your life?

Encourage participation but **never force someone to speak**.

Helpful leader response phrases:

- “Thank you for sharing.”
 - “That took courage to say.”
 - “Many people here may relate to that.”
-

5. Burden to the Cross Activity (15 minutes)

Give participants a moment to complete the **Burden Worksheet**.

Ask them to write down burdens they are carrying.

Examples:

- guilt
- shame
- broken relationships
- fear

If using a cross in the room:

Invite participants to place their written burdens near the cross.

Explain:

“In *Pilgrim’s Progress*, Christian’s burden falls off when he reaches the cross. That represents what Christ does for us.”

This moment is often **powerful and emotional**, so allow silence if needed.

6. Reflection and Closing (10 minutes)

Ask participants:

“After today’s lesson, what stood out to you the most?”

Allow several responses.

Then remind them:

“Today we started the journey. The pilgrim path is not easy, but it leads to life.”

Read John 8:36 again.

“If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”

Close in prayer.

Pray for:

- freedom
 - healing
 - courage for the journey
-

Facilitator Tips

1. Expect Hesitation

Week one participants may be quiet or cautious.

This is normal.

2. Avoid Over-Talking

Let participants speak.

Recovery grows through **honesty and community**.

3. Emphasize Hope

Many participants arrive feeling hopeless.

This lesson should leave them with **hope that change is possible**.

Common Participant Responses

You may hear statements like:

“I’ve tried everything before.”

Response:

“That’s a very common experience. The difference here is that we are focusing on the heart and the work God does in us.”

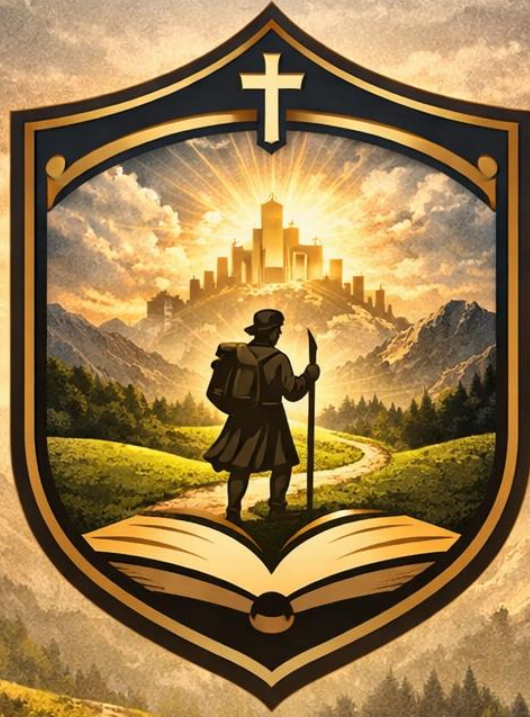
Key Takeaway

Participants should leave knowing:

Freedom from addiction begins with Christ.

Everything else in the curriculum builds from this truth.

PILGRIMS PATH



BIBLICAL RECOVERY WORKBOOK

A JOURNEY FROM ADDICTION TO FREEDOM

**Pilgrims Path
Biblical Recovery Curriculum**

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Scripture Notice

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, English Standard Version (ESV).

Scripture quotations are used by permission.

Ministry Disclaimer

Pilgrims Path is a biblical discipleship and recovery curriculum designed to assist individuals struggling with addiction and destructive life patterns.

This material is intended for spiritual instruction and encouragement and is not intended to replace professional medical, psychological, or clinical treatment. Participants dealing with serious medical or mental health conditions should seek guidance from qualified professionals.

About Pilgrims Path

Pilgrims Path Recovery Support Ministry exists to help individuals struggling with addiction find freedom through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Through biblical teaching, discipleship, and supportive community, participants are encouraged to leave the “City of Destruction” and begin walking the path toward lasting transformation.

The curriculum draws inspiration from the classic Christian allegory *The Pilgrim’s Progress* by John Bunyan, illustrating the Christian life as a journey of faith toward the Celestial City.

Publisher

Pilgrims Path Recovery Support Ministry

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Mission & Vision

Our Mission

Pilgrims Path Recovery Support Ministry exists to help individuals struggling with addiction find lasting freedom through the transforming power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We seek to walk alongside men and women who are burdened by addiction, guiding them toward repentance, healing, and restoration through biblical truth, discipleship, and supportive Christian community.

Our mission is not merely to help individuals overcome destructive habits but to lead them toward **a new life rooted in Christ, shaped by Scripture, and sustained through fellowship with God's people.**

“If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”

— John 8:36

Our Vision

Our vision is to see lives transformed by the Gospel as individuals leave behind the destructive patterns of addiction and begin walking faithfully with Christ.

We envision a growing network of churches, ministries, and recovery communities using Pilgrims Path to help individuals experience spiritual renewal, restored relationships, and renewed purpose.

Just as the character Christian in *The Pilgrim's Progress* leaves the City of Destruction and begins a journey toward the Celestial City, participants in this ministry are encouraged to begin their own journey—walking step by step toward the life God has prepared for them.

Through this ministry, we hope to see:

- individuals restored through faith in Christ
 - families healed and relationships reconciled
 - churches equipped to minister to those struggling with addiction
 - former participants becoming mentors and leaders for others
-

Our Core Beliefs

Pilgrims Path is built on several foundational biblical convictions.

Transformation Begins in the Heart

Addiction is not only a physical struggle but also a spiritual one. Lasting change comes through the renewal of the heart and mind.

“Be transformed by the renewal of your mind.”

— Romans 12:2

Freedom Is Found in Christ

True freedom from sin and addiction comes through Jesus Christ and the new life He provides.

“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.”

— 2 Corinthians 5:17

Community Strengthens Recovery

God designed believers to grow in fellowship with one another. Support, accountability, and encouragement are essential to long-term recovery.

“Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.”

— Proverbs 27:17

The Journey Requires Perseverance

Recovery and discipleship are lifelong journeys. Participants are encouraged to continue walking faithfully with Christ beyond the completion of this program.

“Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”

— Hebrews 12:1

Walking the Pilgrim's Path

Pilgrims Path invites participants to see their recovery as a journey. The road may include challenges, temptations, and difficult valleys, but God promises to guide those who trust Him.

Just as the pilgrim in the classic Christian allegory presses forward toward the Celestial City, participants are encouraged to continue walking faithfully toward the life God has called them to live.

How to Use This Workbook

Welcome to the Journey

This workbook is designed to guide you through the **Pilgrims Path Biblical Recovery Curriculum**, a 12-week journey focused on spiritual transformation, healing, and freedom through Jesus Christ.

Throughout this program, you will explore how the Gospel speaks directly to the struggles of addiction, brokenness, and destructive life patterns.

Each lesson builds on the previous one, helping you understand:

- the spiritual roots of addiction
- the hope of forgiveness and new life in Christ
- how to renew your thinking
- how to rebuild relationships and responsibility
- how to continue walking faithfully beyond recovery

This journey draws inspiration from the classic Christian allegory *The Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan, which describes the Christian life as a journey toward the Celestial City.

In the same way, this program invites you to begin walking a new path—one step at a time.

How the Workbook Is Organized

The workbook is divided into 12 lessons, each designed to be completed over one week.

Each lesson includes:

Biblical Teaching

Each lesson explores Scripture that helps explain the spiritual realities behind addiction and recovery.

Reflection Questions

These questions help you think honestly about your experiences, beliefs, and struggles.

Discussion Prompts

These questions are used during group discussions to help participants learn from one another.

Personal Exercises

Activities and worksheets help you apply biblical principles to your life.

Prayer and Scripture

Each lesson encourages you to spend time reflecting on God's Word and seeking His guidance.

How to Get the Most from This Workbook

This workbook will be most helpful if you approach it with **honesty and openness**.

Consider these suggestions as you work through the lessons:

Be Honest

Growth begins when we are honest about our struggles, fears, and mistakes.

Participate in Group Discussion

The program is designed to be experienced in community. Listening to others and sharing your experiences can be an important part of the journey.

Take Time to Reflect

Some exercises may take time and careful thought. Do not rush through them.

Engage with Scripture

God's Word provides guidance and truth throughout this journey.

Ask for Help

If you feel stuck or discouraged, talk with your group leader or accountability partner.

Your Personal Journey

Every participant's story is different.

Some people arrive feeling hopeful. Others may feel uncertain, discouraged, or overwhelmed.

Wherever you begin, this workbook is simply a tool to help guide the journey.

The goal is not perfection but progress.

“Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus.”
— Hebrews 12:1–2

Walking the Path Together

Recovery is not meant to be experienced alone.

This program is designed to help participants grow together through:

- accountability
- encouragement
- shared experiences
- prayer

As you work through the lessons, remember that many others are walking this path alongside you.

A Final Encouragement

The pilgrim journey begins with a single step.

Some steps may feel difficult, but each step forward is an opportunity for growth and transformation.

As you work through this workbook, may you discover the freedom and hope that Christ offers to all who seek Him.

“If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”
— John 8:36

Group Guidelines & Expectations

Walking the Journey Together

The Pilgrims Path program is designed to be experienced in community. While personal reflection is important, many of the greatest insights and encouragement will come through conversations with others walking the same path.

In order to create an environment where everyone feels safe to share honestly, we ask all participants to follow the guidelines below.

Confidentiality

What is shared in the group should remain within the group.

Participants are encouraged to share honestly about their experiences, but that honesty can only happen when everyone knows their story will be respected.

Respecting confidentiality helps create trust within the group.

Respect for Others

Every participant enters this program with a unique story.

Participants should listen respectfully when others speak and avoid interrupting, judging, or criticizing.

Recovery is a process, and everyone is learning and growing.

Honesty

Growth happens when we are honest about our struggles and experiences.

Participants are encouraged to speak truthfully about their challenges, thoughts, and emotions during discussions.

Honesty creates an environment where healing and transformation can occur.

Participation

Everyone is encouraged to participate in discussions and activities.

However, no one will be forced to share personal experiences if they are not ready to do so.

Listening can be just as valuable as speaking.

Encouragement, Not Criticism

Participants should seek to encourage one another rather than criticize.

Constructive support can help others stay committed to their recovery journey.

“Therefore encourage one another and build one another up.”

— 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Personal Responsibility

Each participant is responsible for their own choices and actions.

The group can provide encouragement, accountability, and support, but lasting change requires personal commitment.

A Community of Grace

This group exists to help people grow, learn, and move forward.

Mistakes may happen along the journey, but participants should treat one another with patience and grace.

“Bear with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other.”

— Colossians 3:13

Our Commitment

By participating in this program, we agree to help create an environment where people can share honestly, learn together, and support one another on the pilgrim's path.

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _____

The 12 Steps of the Pilgrim's Path

Lesson 1 – The Beginning of the Journey

- **Freedom in Christ**

Recognizing the burden of addiction and discovering that true freedom begins with Jesus.

Lesson 2 – Truth and Belief

- **Replacing Lies with Truth**

Understanding how beliefs shape behavior and why God's Word is trustworthy.

Lesson 3 – Idols of the Heart

- **What We Worship**

Recognizing how addiction can become a false refuge that replaces God.

Lesson 4 – The Valleys of the Journey

- **Emotional Wounds and Healing**

Learning to face pain honestly and trust God with the past.

Lesson 5 – The Crossroad

- **Guilt, Shame, and Forgiveness**

Discovering how the Gospel removes condemnation and gives a new identity.

Lesson 6 – Turning the Road

- **Repentance and New Direction**

Learning the difference between regret and true repentance.

Lesson 7 – Renewing the Mind

- **Changing the Way We Think**

Replacing destructive thought patterns with biblical truth.

Lesson 8 – The Battle Along the Road

- **Temptation and Spiritual Warfare**

Learning how to recognize and resist temptation.

Lesson 9 – Restoring the Journey

- **Forgiveness and Reconciliation**
Addressing broken relationships and pursuing healing.

Lesson 10 – Traveling Companions

- **Community and Accountability**
Understanding why the Christian life is meant to be lived with others.

Lesson 11 – A Life of Purpose

- **Responsibility and Growth**
Rebuilding life with discipline, service, and purpose.

Lesson 12 – Continuing the Journey

- **Persevering in Faith**
Preparing to continue walking faithfully beyond the program.

Reflection

As you begin this journey, take a moment to consider where you are starting.

What burdens are you carrying today?

What do you hope will change as you walk this path?

Lesson 1 Participant Worksheet

The Beginning of the Pilgrim's Journey: Freedom in Christ

Opening Reflection

In *Pilgrim's Progress*, the character Christian begins his journey with **a heavy burden on his back**. This burden represents the weight of sin, guilt, and brokenness.

Many people struggling with addiction carry similar burdens.

Take a moment to reflect on your own journey.

What burdens have you been carrying?

Examples might include guilt, shame, broken relationships, fear, or consequences from addiction.

Write your thoughts below:

Pilgrim's Progress Reflection

Read this excerpt:

"I saw a man clothed with rags, standing in a certain place, with a Book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back."

— *Pilgrim's Progress*

What similarities do you see between Christian’s burden and the struggles of addiction?

Scripture Study

Read **John 8:34–36**

“Everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin... So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”

What do these verses teach about the nature of sin?

What do these verses teach about the freedom Jesus offers?

Addiction and False Promises

Addiction often begins with promises that seem appealing.

Examples include:

- relief from stress
- escape from pain
- happiness or confidence
- forgetting problems

What promises did substances make to you?

How did those promises turn out in reality?

Identifying the Burden

Christian carried his burden until he reached the cross.

Addiction often creates many burdens in life.

Check the burdens that addiction has created in your life:

- Guilt or shame
- Broken relationships
- Financial problems
- Legal trouble
- Health issues
- Emotional pain
- Loss of trust
- Isolation from others
- Spiritual emptiness

Which of these burdens feels the heaviest to you right now?

Freedom Through Christ

The Bible teaches that true freedom begins when a person turns to Christ.

What do you think true freedom would look like in your life?

Discussion Reflection

After group discussion, write down one insight or truth that stood out to you today.

Personal Commitment

Recovery begins with a willingness to start the journey.

Christian had to **leave the City of Destruction** before his journey could begin.

What is one step you need to take to begin walking toward freedom?

Memory Verse

Write the memory verse below:

John 8:36

Prayer Journal

Write a prayer asking God to help you begin this journey toward freedom.

Lesson 1 Activity Worksheet

The Burden to the Cross

Understanding the Burden

In *Pilgrim's Progress*, Christian begins his journey carrying a **heavy burden on his back**. This burden represents the weight of sin, guilt, shame, and brokenness.

As he travels toward the cross, something remarkable happens:

“His burden loosed from off his shoulders, and fell from off his back.”

The cross of Christ removes the burden that no person can remove on their own.

This activity helps you identify the burdens you have been carrying and begin bringing them to Christ.

Step 1 – Identify Your Burdens

Addiction often creates many burdens in life.

Write down the burdens you have been carrying.

These may include:

- guilt
- shame
- broken relationships
- fear
- anger
- regret
- loneliness
- legal consequences
- health struggles

Write your burdens below:

Step 2 – Reflect on the Weight

Look at the burdens you listed above.

Which burden feels the heaviest right now?

How has this burden affected your life?

Step 3 – What the Bible Says

Read the following Scripture:

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

— Matthew 11:28

“If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”

— John 8:36

What do these verses teach about Jesus and the burdens we carry?

Step 4 – Bringing Your Burden to the Cross

Imagine placing your burdens at the foot of the cross.

Write one burden you want to surrender to Christ today:

Draw or Write Your Burden at the Cross

Draw a simple cross below. Then write the burdens you want to place at the cross around it.

(Participants write or draw inside this space)

+

Step 5 – A Prayer of Surrender

Write a prayer asking God to help you release these burdens and trust Him with your life.

Reflection

Christian could not remove his burden by himself.

It fell off when he came to the cross.

Recovery begins when we stop trying to carry our burdens alone and begin trusting Christ.

The Pilgrim Commitment Covenant

Beginning the Journey

Leaving the City of Destruction

In *Pilgrim's Progress*, Christian begins his journey when he realizes that the life he has been living will ultimately lead to destruction. Carrying a heavy burden, he leaves behind the city he once called home and begins walking toward the narrow path that leads to life.

In the same way, the beginning of recovery requires a decision. It is a recognition that the old path—though familiar—leads to bondage, brokenness, and destruction.

The pilgrim's journey begins with a step of faith.

“Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction... but the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life.”

— Matthew 7:13–14

My Decision to Begin the Journey

Today I acknowledge that the path I have walked has led to destruction in my life and in the lives of those around me.

I recognize that addiction, sin, and destructive choices have placed a burden on my life that I cannot remove on my own.

I believe that true freedom is found through Jesus Christ.

“If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”

— John 8:36

With God's help, I am choosing to begin the pilgrim's journey.

My Commitments as a Pilgrim

As I begin this journey, I commit to the following:

1. Honesty

I will seek to be honest about my struggles, my past, and my need for change.

“The truth will set you free.”

— John 8:32

2. Humility

I recognize that I cannot overcome addiction and sin through my own strength alone.

I need God’s help and the support of others.

“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

— James 4:6

3. Growth

I commit to participating in this program with an open heart and a willingness to learn.

I will seek to grow through Scripture, prayer, and accountability.

“Be transformed by the renewal of your mind.”

— Romans 12:2

4. Community

I will seek encouragement and accountability from others walking this journey with me.

“Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.”

— Proverbs 27:17

5. Perseverance

I understand that this journey may be difficult, but I commit to continuing forward even when the road becomes challenging.

“Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”
— Hebrews 12:1

My Pilgrim Commitment

Today I choose to begin the pilgrim’s path. I will seek to leave behind the patterns that have led to destruction and pursue the life God desires for me.

I understand that this journey will require honesty, humility, and perseverance, but I believe that God is able to guide me as I walk forward.

Participant Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Reflection

Why are you choosing to begin this journey today?
