Chapter Two

Help and Worldly Wiseman

I saw in my dream that a man came to him whose name was Help, who asked Christian what he was doing in there.

Chr. “Sir, I was told to go this way by a man called Evangelist, who also directed me to that distant gate so that I could escape from the wrath to come. As I was traveling along, I fell in here.”

Help. “Why didn’t you look for the steps?”

Chr. “I was so full of fear, that I went the wrong way and fell in.”

Help. “Give me your hand.” So he gave him his hand, and Help pulled him out, placed his feet on solid ground, and encouraged him to go on his way.¹

Then I went over to Help and said, “Sir, since it is necessary to go over this slough when traveling from the City of Destruction to the wicket-gate, why is it that no one has repaired this place so that travelers may journey with more security?” Help responded, “This miry slough cannot be fixed. When a person feels the conviction of his sins, all the scum and filth that comes with this conviction runs from the hill down into this slough. Therefore, it is called the Slough of Despond. As the sinner is awakened about his lost condition, many fears and doubts arise in his heart. Also one may feel anxiety that discourages even further. All of these get together and settle in this place. This, then, is the reason for the badness of the ground.

“It does not bring joy to the King that this place remains in such a bad state.² His laborers have been hired, by the direction of the King’s surveyors, to repair this patch of ground, and have been at it for over 1600 years. To my knowledge, the slough has swallowed up at least 20,000 (even millions) cartloads of helpful instructions that have been brought from all places in the King’s dominion (they say they are the best materials with which to repair the ground). If it could have been repaired, it would have been by now. But it is still the Slough of Despond, and will continue to be, even after they have expended much energy.

“True, there are certain good and substantial steps that go through the very center of the slough. They were put there under the direction of the Lawgiver. But this place, at times, spews out so

¹ “He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand” (Ps. 40:2).

² “Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; say to those with fearful hearts, ‘Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you’” (Is. 35:3-4).
much filth that these steps can hardly be seen. Even if they are seen, some men get dizzy and
miss their step. They, then, become bogged down and lose their focus. But the ground is good
after they have gone through the gate.”3

Now I saw in my dream that by this time Pliable had reached his home again. So his neighbors
came to visit him. Some of them called him a wise man for coming back. Others called him a
fool for putting himself in danger by going along with Christian. Still others mocked his
cowardliness, saying, “Surely, since you had just begun your journey, I would not have been like
you and given up when you encountered a few difficulties.” So they humiliated Pliable. After a
while, he regained some of his confidence. When he did, they “switched gears” and began to
mock Christian behind his back. And this is all for now about Pliable.

Now as Christian was walking all alone, he saw someone in the distance coming toward him
across the field. They just happened to meet where their paths crossed. The gentleman’s name
that met him was Mr. Worldly Wiseman. He lived in the town of Carnal Policy, a great town
near the City of Destruction, Christian’s home-town. This man, then, meeting with Christian,
knew something about him, for Christian’s going away from the City of Destruction was well
known, not only in the town where he lived, but also in other places.

Master Worldly Wiseman, after observing the difficulty of Christian’s journey and listening
to his sighs and groans, began a conversation with him.

Worldly Wiseman. “How are you, my friend? Where are you going? You look so burdened!”

Chr. “I think I am as burdened as any person has ever been! As to your question about where I
am going, sir, I am going to the wicket-gate that is before me. For there, I am told, I will
understand how to get rid of my burden.”

W. Wiseman. “Do you have a wife and children?”

Chr. “Yes, but this burden is so heavy that I can’t enjoy them as I used to. I am really living as if
I didn’t have a family.”4

W. Wiseman. “Will you listen to me, if I give you some advice?”
Chr. “If it is good advice, I will. I need good counsel.”

W. Wiseman. “I would advise you, then, to get rid of your burden as quickly as possible. You
will never be at peace until then. Neither can you enjoy the blessings which God has given you
until you get rid of that burden.”

Chr. “That is exactly what I want to do: to be rid of this burden. But I cannot get it off by

3. “As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by failing to pray for you. And I will teach you
the way that is good and right” (I Sam. 12:23).

4. “What I mean, brothers, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they had
none” (I Cor. 7:29).
myself. And there is no man in our country who can take it off my shoulders. Therefore, as I told you before, I am going this way so that I can get rid of my burden.”

W. Wiseman. “Who told you to go this way to get rid of your burden?”

Chr. “A man who seemed to be a very great and honorable person. His name, I recall, is Evangelist.”

W. Wiseman. “Curse him for his counsel! There is not a more dangerous and troublesome way in the world than the one that he has told you about. You will definitely find my words to be true if you listen to his counsel. I can tell that you have already run into something, because I see the dirt from the Slough of Despond on you. That slough is only the beginning of the sorrows that come to those who travel on that road. Listen to me! I am older than you. You are probably going to encounter exhaustion, pain, hunger, perils, nakedness, sword, lions, dragons, darkness, and, in a word, death! What I am telling you is true, having been confirmed by many testimonies. So why should a man so carelessly throw himself away by listening to a complete stranger?”

Chr. “Why, sir, this burden on my back is more terrible to me than all these things which you have mentioned. No. I don’t care what I encounter in this way, if I can find deliverance from my burden.”

W. Wiseman. “How did you get your burden in the first place?”

Chr. “By reading this book in my hand.”

W. Wiseman. “I thought so. It has happened to you just as it has happened to other weak men who meddled with things too lofty for them and were drawn off course. These distractions not only take away the strength of a man (as they have done to you), but also cause him to go on dangerous adventures seeking something but not knowing what he is looking for.”

Chr. “I know what I am searching for. It is to be freed of this heavy burden.”

W. Wiseman. “Then why are you going this way, since you will encounter so many dangers? If you only had the patience to listen to me, I could tell you how to get rid of your burden, but without experiencing the dangers you would most certainly face in the way you are now going. The solution is right here. And, I will add, you will find much safety, friendship, and contentment.”

Chr. “Sir, reveal your secret.”

W. Wiseman. “In the village ahead of you (the village is named Morality), lives a gentleman named Legality, a very judicious man. He has a very good name and has the skill to help men remove the burdens they carry on their shoulders. To my knowledge he has done a great deal of good in this matter. And besides that, he has the skill to cure those who are a bit fanatical about their burdens. To him, as I said, you may go and be helped immediately. His house is not quite a mile from here. And if he should not be at home, he has a handsome son, Civility, who can
remove your burden as well as the old man himself. There, as I said, you may have your burden removed. And if you do not want to go back to your home-town (and I don’t think you should) you can send for your wife and children. They can join you in this village where there are houses that are empty, one of which you may have at a reasonable rate. The food there is also cheap and good. You will live a happy life, living by honest neighbors who have a high standard of living.”

Now Christian was at a standstill. Soon, however, he concluded, “If this is true what this gentleman has said, my wisest course of action is to take his advice.” Then he went on speaking.

**Chr.** “Sir, which way do I take to this honest man’s house?”

**W. Wiseman.** “Do you see that high hill in the distance?”

**Chr.** “Yes, very well.”

**W. Wiseman.** “You must go to that hill, and the first house you come to is his.”

So Christian turned out of his way to go to Mr. Legality’s house for help. But when he got close to the hill, it seemed so high, and the side that was next to the road hung over so much, that Christian was afraid to go further, lest the hill fall on him. So he stood still and didn’t know what to do. Also, his burden now seemed heavier to him than while he was on his road. In addition, flashes of fire came out of the hill and made Christian afraid that he would be burned; he broke out in a sweat and began to shake with fear. Now he began to be sorry that he had taken Mr. Worldly Wiseman’s counsel.

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For further information, please contact:

The Jackson Institute  
P.O. Box 500071  
Atlanta, Georgia 31150-0071  
Tel: 770-518-7994  
jacksoninstitute@mindspring.com  
www.tji.org

5. “Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the LORD descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, the whole mountain trembled violently” (Ex. 19:18).

6. “On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast. Everyone in the camp trembled” (Ex. 19:16).

“The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, ‘I am trembling with fear’” (Heb. 12:21).