



## **WOW: Word Of the Week**

### **PILGRIM**

**November 15, 2023**

November, Thanksgiving. Pilgrim: a word I learned first in the study of U.S. History. Also a word that shows up in the Bible. I turn to words related to Thanksgiving a week early since I have another WOW in mind for next week.

Pilgrim. The dictionary says the word refers to any person who travels to a place for religious reasons. In a general sense, the word refers to one traveling through a foreign place or space.

Biblically, the word is found in Heb 11:13 and 1 Pet 2:11. It is translated in various ways in modern translations: strangers, immigrants, to be present among another people, foreigners, sojourners. The point is that Christians are passing through this place on a journey to another place.

Historically, the Pilgrims of U.S. history thought they had arrived at their destination. Biblically, Christian pilgrims arrive at their destination when they reach a celestial land.

Think. Contemplate. Seek truth. Orientation. Understanding. In your Christian walk, are you a pilgrim? Am I a pilgrim? I love sayings, memorable phrases. I filled boxes with little sayings clipped from here and there before computers and technology make saving and accessing sayings easy! I paraphrase: "If Christians are just passing through this world on their way to a heavenly home, why do so many Christians establish residency here?"

Lessons about pilgrims.

Pilgrims venture into the unknown. Who could have accurately foretold what would occur for the Pilgrims of the early 1600s? Who can accurately foretell the unknown today?

Pilgrims are willing to pay a great price to reach their destination. While only one person died on the 66-day voyage of the Mayflower, only 50 of the original 102 passengers survived the first winter. U.S. historians observe that "they weren't thinking about colonizing."

Pilgrims have a long-range view. The writer of Hebrews (11:13) says they had seen and greeted the promises from afar, but were strangers and exiles on the earth.

Pilgrims are focused. Peter (1 Pet. 2:11): "I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul." There are dangers along the way. Be ready. Keep the goal in mind.

This WOW, these thoughts, are brief. I encourage you this week to contemplate your Christian pilgrimage. Seven pilgrim questions. What is the goal, the destination, of your life? What do those who watch you daily see as your priority? Do you live a daring, risky Christian life? What price are you paying to realize your spiritual goal? Do you live for the present, for the here and now? How often do you think about heaven? How is the spiritual focus of your life?