

## Lesson 38 - The Character of Faith

1. What is the seventh item listed when one has the fruit of the Spirit? **Galatians 5:22**

**EGW:** If we keep our minds stayed upon Christ, He will come unto us as the rain, as the former and latter rain upon the earth. As the Sun of righteousness, He will arise with healing in His wings. We may grow as the lily, revive as the corn, and grow as the vine. By constantly looking to and patterning after Christ, as our personal Saviour, we shall grow up into Him in all things. Our faith will grow, our conscience will be sanctified. We will more and more become like Christ in all our works and words. Thank God, we shall believe His Word. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."-- Letter 106, 1908, p. 5. (To Elder and Mrs. S. N. Haskell, April 2, 1908.) {4MR 356.3}

2. What is faith? **Hebrews 11:1, 2 Corinthians 5:7**

**EGW:** To the distressed father, seeking for the tender love and pity of Christ to be exercised in behalf of his afflicted son, Jesus said: "If Thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." All things are possible with God, and by faith we may lay hold on his power. But faith is not sight; faith is not feeling; faith is not reality. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." To abide in faith is to put aside feeling and selfish desires, to walk humbly with the Lord, to appropriate his promises, and apply them to all occasions, believing that God will work out his own plans and purposes in your heart and life by the sanctification of your character; it is to rely entirely, to trust implicitly, upon the faithfulness of God. If this course is followed, others will see the special fruits of the Spirit manifested in the life and character. {SpTEd 115.1}

3. Where is our source of faith? **Hebrews 12:2, 1 Corinthians 12:8-9, Romans 12:3**

**EGW:** Many make a serious mistake in their religious life by keeping the attention fixed upon their feelings and thus judging of their advancement or decline. Feelings are not a safe criterion. We are not to look within for evidence of our acceptance with God. We shall find there nothing but that which will discourage us. Our only hope is in "looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith." There is everything in Him to inspire with hope, with faith, and with courage. He is our righteousness, our consolation and rejoicing. {5T 199.5}

4. What group of people actually have faith? **Galatians 3:11, Romans 5:1, Romans 3:28, Romans 1:17**  
[hint: the word in Galatians is short for the longer version towards the beginning of the verse.]

**EGW:** It is to this class that Isaiah referred in his prophecy, "A remnant shall be saved." From Paul's day to the present time, God by His Holy Spirit has been calling after the Jew as well as the Gentile. "There is no respect of persons with God," declared Paul. The apostle regarded himself as "debtor both to the Greeks, and to the barbarians," as well as to the Jews; but he never lost sight of the decided advantages possessed by the Jews over others, "chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." "The gospel," he declared, "is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." It is of this gospel of Christ, equally efficacious for Jew and Gentile, that Paul in his epistle to the Romans declared he was not ashamed. {AA 380.1}

5. After justification, we are expected to live a certain lifestyle, which may seem impossible but what does faith declare that we become? **Matthew 19:26, Acts 26:18 [hint: answer is in Acts.]**

**EGW:** Day by day, and hour by hour, there must be a vigorous process of self-denial and of sanctification going on within; and then the outward works will testify that Jesus is abiding in the heart by faith. Sanctification does not close the avenues of the soul to knowledge, but it comes to expand the mind, and to inspire it to search for truth, as for hidden treasure; and the knowledge of God's will advances the work of sanctification. There is a heaven, and O, how earnestly we should strive to reach it. I appeal to the students of our schools and college, to believe in Jesus as your Saviour. Believe that he is ready to help you by his grace, when you come to him in sincerity. You must fight the good fight of faith. You must be wrestlers for the crown of life. Strive, for the grasp of Satan is upon you; and if you do not wrench yourselves from him, you will be palsied and ruined. The foe is on the right hand, and on the left, before you, and behind you; and you must trample him under your feet. Strive, for there is a crown to be won. Strive, for if you win not the crown, you lose everything in this life and in the future life. Strive, but let it be in the strength of your risen Saviour. {RH, August 21, 1888 par. 17}

6. With faith, what can we cast away before us, in a spiritual sense? **Matthew 17:20, Matthew 21:21 [hint: the object regards the pile of sins in our lives.]**

**EGW:** "This is the will of God" concerning you, "even your sanctification." 1 Thessalonians 4:3. Is it your will also? Your sins may be as mountains before you; but if you humble your heart and confess your sins, trusting in the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour, He will forgive and will cleanse you from all unrighteousness. God demands of you entire conformity to His law. This law is the echo of

His voice saying to you, Holier, yes, holier still. Desire the fullness of the grace of Christ. Let your heart be filled with an intense longing for His righteousness, the work of which God's word declares is peace, and its effect quietness and assurance forever. {AA 566.2}

7. Who are our examples in faith? **Hebrews 11:4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24; 2 Timothy 4:7, Daniel 6:4**

**EGW:** These examples of human steadfastness bear witness to the faithfulness of God's promises--of His abiding presence and sustaining grace. They testify to the power of faith to withstand the powers of the world. It is the work of faith to rest in God in the darkest hour, to feel, however sorely tried and tempest-tossed, that our Father is at the helm. The eye of faith alone can look beyond the things of time to estimate aright the worth of the eternal riches. {AA 575.2}

8. What word(s) show that faith is developed and not simply bestowed? **Matthew 9:29, Luke 7:50, 1 Thessalonians 3:10, Jude 1:20**

**EGW:** Oh that I could impress upon all the importance of exercising faith moment by moment, and hour by hour! We are to live the life of faith; for "without faith it is impossible to please God." Our spiritual strength depends upon our faith, When I know this, how can I keep silent upon this subject? The world's Redeemer says, "According to your faith be it unto you." When you settle down in gloom and despondency, you sin against God; because it shows that you have not faith in Jesus. It shows to those around you that you do not take God at his word. When he has done so much to evince his love for you, how great this sin must appear in his sight! "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" {HS 130.7}

9. What helps build up our faith? **1 Peter 1:7, James 1:3**

**EGW:** But our sea will not always be smooth. We shall have storm and tempest. But we are not to look upon these as something strange. Meeting difficulties is a part of our education, and is necessary to the formation of a strong, symmetrical character. And through trials we are to be purified and our faith strengthened. So James says, "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience." We do not always understand the meaning of our trials and difficulties; but in the future life we shall understand things that here greatly perplex us. We shall also realize how strong a helper we had, and how angels were commissioned to guard us as we followed the counsel of the Word of God. {SW, April

28, 1908 par. 9}

10. What instrument helps develop faith? **2 Timothy 3:15, Romans 10:17**

**EGW:** "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Romans 10:17. The Scriptures are the great agency in the transformation of character. Christ prayed, "Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth." John 17:17. If studied and obeyed, the word of God works in the heart, subduing every unholy attribute. The Holy Spirit comes to convict of sin, and the faith that springs up in the heart works by love to Christ, conforming us in body, soul, and spirit to His own image. Then God can use us to do His will. The power given us works from within outwardly, leading us to communicate to others the truth that has been communicated to us. {COL 100.1}

11. What type of heart is necessary for faith? **2 Timothy 2:22**

**EGW:** Let them be quick to hear things that will profit the soul, and be slow to speak, unless it be to represent Jesus, and to witness to the truth. Show humility of mind by modesty of demeanor. Let your conversation be seasoned with grace. Educate the soul to cheerfulness, to thankfulness, and to the expression of gratitude to God for the great love wherewith he hath loved us, and thus adorn the doctrine of our Lord and Saviour in all things, at all places, and at all times. Glorify the Master by witnessing in your character to the work of the Holy Spirit upon your soul. Let Christ arise in the soul as a wellspring of life. Christian cheerfulness is the very beauty of holiness. Those who are rich in faith will make manifest the grace of Christ. Paul charges Timothy, saying: "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: if we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself. Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.... Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work. Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."

12. What piece of armor covers that heart? **1 Thessalonians 5:8**

**EGW:** Do not live a life of uncertainty. "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.... Let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation." Every human agent knows for himself whether his feet are tending toward the city of our God, or tending toward the darkness of the shadow of death. There are many who claim to be Christians who are as spurious coin. They are traveling in the broad road of selfishness and sin. But he who rests upon the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour, who has received Christ by faith, has the promise that he is the son of God. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." As sons of God, we are partakers of the divine nature. We know what true light is, and know the power of the grace of Christ. We have the faith that works by love and purifies the soul. {RH, April 9, 1895 par. 9}

13. What else does that piece of armor represent that shows if we exercise it that it is connected to faith? **1 Samuel 26:23, Ephesians 6:14-16, Galatians 5:5** [Also, note that the other symbol for faith still protects the heart.]

**EGW:** The hours of probation will soon close. Is your work for the Master of that character that you will hear the "Well done good and faithful servant?" Remember that every soul making efforts in the divine life, finds every inch of ground disputed by antagonistic force, and he must gird himself for the conflict by earnest prayer, and fight the good fight of faith. He is called to wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. There is no strength to be invested in warring against each other. If individually we make progress in spirituality the loins must be girt about with truth, and we must have on the breastplate of righteousness; we must take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit. Brethren, seek God. Seek Him while He is to be found; call upon Him while He is near. {15MR 151.3}

14. What is the motivation for our faith? **Galatians 5:6**

**EGW:** "In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love," and purifieth the soul. {LUH, November 17, 1909 par. 9}

In these words the Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul assures us that all our external privileges, all our high profession of acceptance with God, cannot take the place of faith. Sincere faith in Christ is

that alone which can secure for us an entrance into the city of God. Faith in Christ, expressed in the life and character, revealed in love for God and for our brethren, makes the human agent a power in the world and in the church. I am made sad to see that many have not this faith and love; for these are the signs of our Christianity, the witness that we are the children of God. True faith in Christ will recover the backslider from the entanglements of the world, and engage him from day to day in service, that will keep his brethren from backsliding. This is the work that God requires of every soul. {LUH, November 17, 1909 par. 10}

15. What are we not to do even, with a faithful prayer? **James 1:6, Hebrews 10:23**

**EGW:** It is our privilege, as children of God, to hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering. At times the masterly power of temptation seems to tax our willpower to the uttermost, and to exercise faith seems utterly contrary to all the evidences of sense or emotion; but our will must be kept on God's side. We must believe that in Jesus Christ is everlasting strength and efficiency.... Hour by hour we must hold our position triumphantly in God, strong in His strength.--Lt 42, 1890. (HC 124.) {2MCP 687.1}

16. When Jesus returns, what will He be looking for? **Proverbs 20:6, Luke 18:8**

**EGW:** The words of Jesus addressed to this generation may well be regarded with sorrow and awe. He asks, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" Christ looked down the ages, and with prophetic eye marked the conflict between the antagonistic principles of truth and error. He saw how real Christianity would become almost extinct in the world, so that at his second advent he would find a state of society similar to that which existed before the flood. The world would be engaged in festivity and amusement, in theatrical shows, in the indulgence of base passions. Intemperance of every grade would exist, and even the churches would be demoralized, and the Bible would be neglected and desecrated. He saw that the desperate revelries of the last days would only be interrupted by the judgments of God. {ST, April 21, 1890 par. 1}

17. How strong must our faith be to be part of the patient saints? **Revelation 14:12**

**EGW:** While you hold the banner of truth firmly, proclaiming the law of God, let every soul remember that the faith of Jesus is connected with the commandments of God. The third angel is represented as flying through the midst of heaven, crying with a loud voice, "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12). The first, second, and third angels' messages are all linked together. The evidences of the abiding, ever-living truth of

these grand messages, that mean so much to us, that have awakened such intense opposition from the religious world, cannot be extinguished. Satan is constantly seeking to cast his hellish shadow about these messages, so that the remnant people of God shall not clearly discern their import, their time, and place; but they live, and are to exert their power upon our religious experience while time shall last. {2SM 117.2}

18. How strong can our faith actually become? **1 John 5:4**

**EGW:** When a man is earnestly engaged day by day in overcoming the defects in his character, he is cherishing Christ in his soul-temple; the light of Christ is in him. Under the bright beams of the light of Christ's countenance his entire being becomes elevated and ennobled. He has the peace of heaven in his soul. Many give loose rein to passion, avarice, selfishness, and deception, and all the time excuse themselves and lay the blame on the circumstances which brought around the trial to themselves. This has been your case. God permitted your surroundings to exist to develop character. But you could have made your surroundings; for by resisting or enduring temptation, circumstances are controlled by the might of the will in the name of Jesus. This is overcoming as Christ overcame. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." {4T 346.1}

19. When pressures press in all around us, how faithful are we to be? **Revelation 2:10**

**EGW:** Like God's servants of old, many were "tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection." [Hebrews 11:35.] These called to mind the words of their Master, that when persecuted for Christ's sake they were to be exceeding glad; for great would be their reward in Heaven; for so the prophets had been persecuted before them. They rejoiced that they were accounted worthy to suffer for the truth, and songs of triumph ascended from the midst of crackling flames. Looking upward by faith, they saw Christ and angels leaning over the battlements of Heaven, gazing upon them with the deepest interest, and regarding their steadfastness with approval. A voice came down to them from the throne of God, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." [Revelation 2:10.] {GC88 41.2}

20. What shall we receive if found faithful? **1 Peter 1:5, 9; Hebrews 6:12; 1 Timothy 6:12**

**EGW:** In these thoroughly converted souls the world has a witness to the sanctifying power of truth upon the human character. Through them Christ makes known to the world His character and will. In the lives of God's children is revealed the blessedness of serving the Lord, and the opposite is seen in those who do not keep His commandments. The line of demarcation is distinct. All who obey

God's commandments are kept by His mighty power amid the corrupting influence of the transgressors of His law. From the lowliest subject to the highest in positions of trust, they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.--Manuscript 56, 1900. {Ev 316.1}

21. What does faith not cancel out? **James 2:17, 26; Romans 3:31**

**EGW:** The law reveals to man his sins, but it provides no remedy. While it promises life to the obedient, it declares that death is the portion of the transgressor. The gospel of Christ alone can free him from the condemnation or the defilement of sin. He must exercise repentance toward God, whose law has been transgressed, and faith in Christ, his atoning sacrifice. Thus he obtains "remission of sins that are past," and becomes a partaker of the divine nature. He is a child of God, having received the spirit of adoption, whereby he cries, "Abba, Father!" {GC88 467.3}

Is he now free to transgress God's law? Says Paul: "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law." "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" And John declares, "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous." [Romans 3:31; 6:2; 1 John 5:3.] In the new birth the heart is brought into harmony with God, as it is brought into accord with his law. When this mighty change has taken place in the sinner, he has passed from death unto life, from sin unto holiness, from transgression and rebellion to obedience and loyalty. The old life of alienation from God has ended; the new life of reconciliation, of faith and love, has begun. Then "the righteousness of the law" will "be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." [Romans 8:4.] And the language of the soul will be, "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day." [Psalm 119:97.] {GC88 468.1}

22. What must we be careful of? **Luke 16:10**

**EGW:** "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much." Luke 16:10. The importance of the little things is often underrated because they are small; but they supply much of the actual discipline of life. There are really no nonessentials in the Christian's life. Our character building will be full of peril while we underrate the importance of the little things. {COL 356.1}