

Lesson 54 - The Character of Avoiding Anxiety

1. With “fear” being one of the words used in the Bible to convey the meaning of anxiety, what can anxiety lead to? **Luke 21:26**

EGW: John and the other prophets also were witnesses of the terrible scenes that will take place as signs of Christ's coming. They saw armies mustering for battle, and men's hearts failing them for fear. They saw the earth moved out of its place, the mountains carried into the midst of the sea, the waves thereof roaring and troubled, and the mountains shaking with the swelling thereof. They saw the vials of God's wrath opened, and pestilence, famine, and death come upon the inhabitants of the earth. {SW, December 25, 1906 par. 7}

Already the restraining Spirit of God is being withdrawn from the world. And hurricanes, tempests, disasters by sea and land, follow each other in quick succession. Science seeks to explain all these. The signs thickening around us, telling of the near approach of the Son of God, are attributed to any other than the true cause. Men cannot discern the sentinel angels restraining the four winds that they may not blow until the servants of God are sealed; but when God shall bid his angels loose the winds, there will be such a scene of his avenging wrath as no pen can picture. {SW, December 25, 1906 par. 8}

A crisis is just upon us; but God's servants are not to trust to themselves in this great emergency. In the visions given to Isaiah, Ezekiel, and John, we see how closely heaven is connected with the events transpiring upon the earth. We see the care of God for those who are loyal to him. The world is not without a ruler. The program of coming events is in the hands of the Lord. The Majesty of heaven has the destiny of nations, as well as the concerns of his church, in his own keeping. {SW, December 25, 1906 par. 9}

God has revealed what is to take place in the last days, that his people may be prepared to stand against the tempests of opposition and wrath. Those who have been warned of the events before them are not to sit in calm expectation of the coming storm, comforting themselves that the Lord will shelter his faithful ones in the day of trouble. We are to be as men waiting for their Lord, not in idle expectancy, but in earnest work, with unwavering faith. It is no time now to allow our minds to be engrossed with things of minor importance. {SW, December 25, 1906 par. 10}

2. What feeling may we experience when overwhelmed, having great anxiety? **Psalms 143:4**

EGW: (no comment)

3. What can an overwhelming or anxious situation cause one to do? **Psalms 55:4-7 [A word that describes verses 6 and 7]**

EGW: You commit sin and deny your Saviour by dwelling on gloomy things, by gathering trials to yourself, and by borrowing troubles. You bring the troubles of tomorrow into today, and embitter your own heart, and bring burdens and a cloud upon those around you, by manufacturing trials. The precious probationary time that God has given you in which to do good and become rich in good works you are very unwise to employ in thinking unhappy thoughts and in airy castle-building. You suffer your imagination to run upon subjects that will bring you no relief or happiness. Your daydreaming stands directly in the way of your obtaining a sound, healthy, intelligent experience in the things of God and a moral fitness for the better life. {3T 332.2}

4. What contributes to high anxiety? **Jeremiah 51:46**

EGW: Jesus said: "Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars." "Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows." Yet Christ's followers were not to fear that their hope was lost, or that God had forsaken the earth. The power and the glory belong to Him whose great purposes would still move on unthwarted toward their consummation. In the prayer that breathes their daily wants, the disciples of Christ were directed to look above all the power and dominion of evil unto the Lord their God, whose kingdom ruleth over all, and who is their Father and everlasting Friend. {ST, November 4, 1903 par. 5}

5. What can uncontrolled anxiety lead to happening? **Daniel 2:1**

EGW: From the secret place of prayer came the power that shook the world in the Great Reformation. There, with holy calmness, the servants of the Lord set their feet upon the rock of his promises. During the struggle at Augsburg, Luther did not fail to devote three hours each day to prayer; and these were taken from that portion of the day most favorable to study. In the privacy of his chamber he was heard to pour out his soul before God in words full of adoration, fear, and hope, as if speaking to a friend. "I know that thou art our Father and our God," he said, "and that thou wilt scatter the persecutors of thy children; for thou art thyself endangered with us. All this matter is thine, and it is only by thy constraint that we have put our hands to it. Defend us, then, O Father!" To Melancthon, who was crushed under the burden of anxiety and fear, he wrote: "Grace and peace in Christ! In Christ, I say, and not in the world, Amen! I hate with exceeding hatred those extreme cares which consume you. If the cause is unjust, abandon it; if the cause is just, why should we belie the promises of Him who commands us to sleep without fear?" "Christ will not be wanting to the work of justice and truth. He lives, he reigns; what fear, then, can we have?" {GC88 210.1}

6. When we focus upon the issues giving us great anxiety and crumble, what does God say about our strength? **Proverbs 24:10**

EGW: Temptation is not sin, and is no indication that God is displeased with us. The Lord suffers us to be tempted, but he measures every temptation, and apports it according to our power to resist and overcome evil. It is in time of trial and temptation that we are enabled to measure the degree of our faith and trust in God, and to estimate the stability of our Christian character. If we are easily jostled and overcome, we should be alarmed; for our strength is small. Let us consider the words of comfort that have been left on record for our instruction: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." God has apportioned the temptation in proportion to the strength he can supply, and he never permits us to be tempted beyond our ability to resist or to endure. "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation." "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." Through prayer and the word of God we shall be enabled to overcome temptation. {ST, December 18, 1893 par. 12}

7. What ought we to try and avoid that can lead to being overwhelmed, which is high anxiety? **Psalms 77:3**

EGW: When you are under the pressure of mental anxieties, when you are hearkening to the suggestions of Satan and murmuring and complaining, a ministering angel is commissioned to bear you the succor you need and put to shame the language of your unbelieving mind. You distrust God; you disbelieve in His power to save to the uttermost. You dishonor God by this cruel unbelief and cause yourself much needless suffering. I saw heavenly angels surrounding you, driving back the evil angels, and looking with pity and sorrow upon you, and pointing you to heaven, the crown of immortality, saying: "He that would win must fight." {1T 544.1}

8. What are we not to be afraid of? **1 Peter 3:14**

EGW: This religion teaches us to exercise patience and long-suffering when brought into places where we receive treatment that is harsh and unjust. "He that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile." "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that we should inherit a blessing." "Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord

is against them that do evil. . . . If ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled." When Christ was reviled, he reviled not again. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth." His religion brings with it a meek and quiet spirit. {RH, May 4, 1897 par. 3}

9. What causes a troubling spirit? **End of Luke 10:41**

EGW: As Christ gave His wonderful lessons, Mary sat at His feet, a reverent and devoted listener. On one occasion, Martha, perplexed with the care of preparing the meal, went to Christ, saying, "Lord, dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me." This was the time of Christ's first visit to Bethany. The Saviour and His disciples had just made the toilsome journey on foot from Jericho. Martha was anxious to provide for their comfort, and in her anxiety she forgot the courtesy due to her Guest. Jesus answered her with mild and patient words, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." Mary was storing her mind with the precious words falling from the Saviour's lips, words that were more precious to her than earth's most costly jewels. {DA 525.1}

10. What are we not to be troubled over? **Mark 13:7 (2 answers)**

EGW: "And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet." Prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, men wrestled for the supremacy. Emperors were murdered. Those supposed to be standing next the throne were slain. There were wars and rumors of wars. "All these things must come to pass," said Christ, "but the end [of the Jewish nation as a nation] is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows." Christ said, As the rabbis see these signs, they will declare them to be God's judgments upon the nations for holding in bondage His chosen people. They will declare that these signs are the token of the advent of the Messiah. Be not deceived; they are the beginning of His judgments. The people have looked to themselves. They have not repented and been converted that I should heal them. The signs that they represent as tokens of their release from bondage are signs of their destruction. {DA 628.3}

11. Keeping in mind that God creates all things and takes responsibility for it even when things do not go as desired, so what is the real source of being troubled? **1 Samuel 16:14**

EGW: Through the influence of the people, David was promoted to take charge of the business

connected with warfare. He was leader in all their important enterprises. As Saul saw that David had won the love and confidence of the people, he hated him; for he thought that he was preferred before him. He watched an opportunity to slay him; and when the evil spirit was upon him, and David played before him as usual to soothe his troubled mind, he tried to kill him, by throwing with force a sharp-pointed instrument at his heart. Angels of God preserved the life of David. They made him understand what was the purpose of Saul; and as the instrument was hurled at him, he sprang to one side, and received no harm, while the instrument was driven deep into the wall where David had been sitting. {1SP 373.3}

12. What type of person ought to be distressed, troubled, anxious? **Lamentations 1:20**

EGW: What a source to which we can look in all times of trouble; the heart can have no misgivings! Man is erring, stubborn, rebellious, and defiant even against God; but the Lord is kind and patient and of tender compassion. He has heaven and earth at His command, and He knows just what we need even before we present our necessities and desires before Him. {ML 10.3}

13. What ought we to be anxious over if it still is in our lives? **Psalms 25:17-18, Lamentations 5:16-17**

EGW: (no comment)

14. What is recommended to the troubled person? **2 Thessalonians 1:7**

EGW: When the mind dwells upon self, it is turned away from Christ, the source of strength and life. Hence it is Satan's constant effort to keep the attention diverted from the Saviour and thus prevent the union and communion of the soul with Christ. The pleasures of the world, life's cares and perplexities and sorrows, the faults of others, or your own faults and imperfections--to any or all of these he will seek to divert the mind. Do not be misled by his devices. Many who are really conscientious, and who desire to live for God, he too often leads to dwell upon their own faults and weaknesses, and thus by separating them from Christ he hopes to gain the victory. We should not make self the center and indulge anxiety and fear as to whether we shall be saved. All this turns the soul away from the Source of our strength. Commit the keeping of your soul to God, and trust in Him. Talk and think of Jesus. Let self be lost in Him. Put away all doubt; dismiss your fears. Say with the apostle Paul, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Galatians 2:20. Rest in God. He is able to keep that which you have committed to Him. If you will leave yourself in His hands, He will bring you off more than conqueror through Him that has loved you. {SC 71.2}

15. Instead of being anxious, what are we to have? **John 14:27**

EGW: Christ prayed that his disciples might be sanctified through the truth. It is not error but the truth of God that sanctifies the soul. When we follow in the humble path of obedience, we leave a bright track heavenward for others to walk in. It is our privilege to have a deeper experience in the things of God. Will you review your past life, will you see where your defects and mistakes have been, and when you see that they are many, will you remember that Jesus lives to make intercession for you, and not sink down in discouragement? Jesus pleads his blood before the Father, and says, "I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions as a thick cloud." Let this be the language of your heart: "Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God." Do not even for a moment distrust your Saviour's power to save you. Fall in your helplessness at the foot of the cross; today believe the promise of God. Jesus loves us with a love that is infinite. Oh, what love, what matchless love, he has shown for the children of men! Jesus does not desire you to wait to make yourself better; he desires you to take him today as your Saviour. This very day say: "He is mine, and I am his. I will give my soul into his keeping, and he will keep that which I have committed to his trust against that day. Through faith he will give me victory over the temptations of the enemy. I shall see of his salvation. I shall triumph in God." Do you not think that such language as this will drive back the enemy from the tempted soul? Satan tries to interpose himself between us and Christ, but we must drive him back by talking faith, and by exalting the power of Jesus to save us. Shall we not take steps in advance without delay? Shall we not show that we are not afraid to trust our Saviour in the darkness as well as in the light? I have been tested on this point. One loved one after another has been torn from me by death, and it has seemed as though it would crush me; but in these hours Jesus has seemed to say to me: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." {ST, March 17, 1890 par. 4}

16. What broken relationship should trouble us? **Psalms 30:7, Psalms 104:29**

EGW: (no comment)

17. When we grit our teeth and are determined to get through the situation through our own efforts, what will the results be, which includes following the steps outlined by humans? **Jeremiah 8:18**

EGW: The stars also have a message of good cheer for every human being. In those hours that come to all, when the heart is faint and temptation presses sore; when obstacles seem insurmountable, life's aims impossible of achievement, its fair promises like apples of Sodom; where, then, can such courage and steadfastness be found as in that lesson which God has bidden us learn from the stars

in their untroubled course? {Ed 115.4}

18. If people are anxious or troubled for the lack of something, what does that mean we need in our life? **Zechariah 10:2, Matthew 9:36**

EGW: The heart that has not become hardened through error, and has not been perverted through false theories,—the heart that honestly desires to know what is truth, will joyfully accept the message which Christ brings to the soul. Great multitudes listened with attentive ear to the precious words that fell from the lips of Christ. Many among them were wayside hearers, many were stony-ground hearers; but many were hungering and thirsting for a knowledge of spiritual things, such as they failed to receive from the religious teachers of the time. In the exposition of truth by these Jewish leaders were mingled the doctrines and commandments of men, and their injunctions were burdened with exactions which the people could not bear. The people were as men lost on a highway, where the sign-boards were placed above their reach, and the directions were written in a language they could not understand. But Jesus, the greatest Teacher this world ever knew, looked with compassion upon the people, as on sheep that had no shepherd, and invited them to come to him. He said: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Who is it that makes this gracious announcement, that extends to men this precious invitation?—It is he who is one with the Father. "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." {ST, October 24, 1892 par. 10}

19. Who and what are we to keep our eyes focused upon during anxious moments? **John 14:1-3**

EGW: I am at a loss to understand the attitude of those who claim to have great light, who claim to believe in the soon-coming of Christ, when they have so little interest in his appearing. It was necessary that the Son of the infinite God should come to be the light of the world, to be the fountain of healing mercy to a lost race. Every one engaged in the service of Christ should have the heart filled with mercy and tenderness, that he may be able to reveal Christ to the world. We cannot be justified in withholding from him our highest, noblest service, and giving our ability to self-service. Those to whom God has revealed the treasures of his love and grace, are to be representatives of his mercy; and he has commissioned his angels to be ministers unto them, that they may be co-laborers with himself. When Jesus was about to leave his disciples, he said to them, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not

come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." And what is the special work of the Comforter? "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." {RH, January 20, 1891 par. 6}

20. Instead of complaining under our breath or to one another, Who are we allowed to complain to?
Psalms 102:1

EGW: There should be more prayer and weeping, and more confession of sin to God and to one another. Let the indifference be broken up, let the complaining and faultfinding cease, and the time heretofore worse than wasted in this manner be spent in prayers of living faith for the refreshing from the presence of the Lord. {GW92 224.4}

21. Instead of looking for an escape, using fantasy a way out of the situation, where should we be led to? **Psalms 61:2**

EGW: "A Tried Stone" is Christ, tried by the perversity of man. Thou, O our Saviour, hast taken the burden; thou hast given peace and rest; thou hast been tried, proved by believers who have taken their trials to thy sympathy, their sorrows to thy love, their wounds to thy healing, their weakness to thy strength, their emptiness to thy fullness; and never, never has one soul been disappointed. Jesus, my Tried Stone, to thee will I come, moment by moment. In thy presence I am lifted above pain. "When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I." {RH, March 19, 1895 par. 9}

22. But what must we keep in mind that may occur to our outward body in a crisis situation showing where our focus needs to be? **2 Corinthians 4:16**

EGW: "For which cause," Paul declared, "we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." Paul felt the power of the enemy; but though his physical strength was declining, yet faithfully and unflinchingly he declared the gospel of Christ. Clad in the whole armor of God, this hero of the cross pressed forward in the conflict. His voice of cheer proclaimed him triumphant in the combat. Fixing his gaze on the reward of the faithful, he exclaimed in tones of victory, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far

more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." {AA 332.2}

23. In copying Jesus' example, what are we expected to do in face of such contradictions by others regarding ourselves? **Hebrews 12:2**

EGW: The apostle had carefully guarded himself, that he should not betray any murmuring, or make any appeal to his own sympathies. But, for the benefit of those who should follow Christ, he was determined to leave an example worthy of imitation. He was continually "looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." This knowledge in his experience he committed to Timothy, that it might be committed by him to others. He desired that Timothy should heartily believe, and carefully meditate upon the sufferings, the crucifixion, and the resurrection, of Christ, and find in the mission of Jesus sufficient support under all trials in the Christian life, that he might be able to endure all for Christ's sake. For if the Master of the house had to suffer trial and persecution, shall not they of his household? Is the servant above his Lord? When Timothy should suffer trouble as an evil-doer because he testified of the mission, the sufferings, the crucifixion, the resurrection, and the ascension of Christ, he was to remember that Paul, his father in the gospel, had been a partaker with Christ in his sufferings, because he was a believer in him, and a doer of his words. Timothy was not to be surprised if he received the same treatment as had his father in the gospel. {RH, September 11, 1888 par. 3}

24. What example is set that ought to help us through the situation? **Luke 10:42, 39**

EGW: As Christ gave His wonderful lessons, Mary sat at His feet, a reverent and devoted listener. On one occasion, Martha, perplexed with the care of preparing the meal, went to Christ, saying, "Lord, dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me." This was the time of Christ's first visit to Bethany. The Saviour and His disciples had just made the toilsome journey on foot from Jericho. Martha was anxious to provide for their comfort, and in her anxiety she forgot the courtesy due to her Guest. Jesus answered her with mild and patient words, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." Mary was storing her mind with the precious words falling from the Saviour's lips, words that were more precious to her than earth's most costly jewels. {DA 525.1}