

Lesson 57 - The Character of Being Wise

1. What two items are able to make us wise? **2 Timothy 3:15, Proverbs 28:7, Proverbs 8:33**

EGW: Where shall we find laws more noble, pure, and just, than are exhibited on the statute-books wherein is recorded instruction given to Moses for the children of Israel? Through all time these laws are to be perpetuated, that the character of God's people may be formed after the divine similitude. The law is a wall of protection to those who are obedient to God's precepts. From what other source can we gather such strength, or learn such noble science? What other book will teach men to love, fear, and obey God as does the Bible? What other book presents to students more ennobling science, more wonderful history? It clearly portrays righteousness, and foretells the consequence of disloyalty to the law of Jehovah. No one is left in darkness as to that which God approves or disapproves. In studying the Scriptures we become acquainted with God, and are led to understand our relation to Christ, who is the sin-bearer, the surety, the substitute, for our fallen race. These truths concern our present and eternal interests. The Bible stands the highest among books, and its study is valuable above the study of other literature in giving strength and expansion to the mind. Paul says: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." {RH, February 25, 1896 par. 4}

2. Just being educated in those two items alone is not sufficient so what else are we expected to be instructed in to be wise? **Psalms 107:43, Psalms 101:2 [One verse refers to something God has and the other is the development in us.]**

EGW: God speaks to us through His providential workings and through the influence of His Spirit upon the heart. In our circumstances and surroundings, in the changes daily taking place around us, we may find precious lessons if our hearts are but open to discern them. The psalmist, tracing the work of God's providence, says, "The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord." "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord." Psalm 33:5; 107:43. {SC 87.2}

God speaks to us in His word. Here we have in clearer lines the revelation of His character, of His dealings with men, and the great work of redemption. Here is open before us the history of patriarchs and prophets and other holy men of old. They were men "subject to like passions as we

are." James 5:17. We see how they struggled through discouragements like our own, how they fell under temptation as we have done, and yet took heart again and conquered through the grace of God; and, beholding, we are encouraged in our striving after righteousness. As we read of the precious experiences granted them, of the light and love and blessing it was theirs to enjoy, and of the work they wrought through the grace given them, the spirit that inspired them kindles a flame of holy emulation in our hearts and a desire to be like them in character--like them to walk with God. {SC 87.3}

3. If we are to be wise, how are we to walk (live our lives)? **Ephesians 5:15**

EGW: Christ said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Satan has planted himself between God and man, and seeks to intercept every ray of light that God would have come to man. He casts his awful shadow across the earth, and envelops the human race in spiritual darkness. But through Jesus Christ, the Father is pleased to reveal his character to his chosen people. O, then walk in the light, appreciate the light, and step by step advance from light to a greater light. O that God might arouse his human agents, so that they would lay aside their schemes and inventions, their love for earthly amusements, and cherish his revealed grace and truth! Shall the Comforter be treated as a common thing, and be cast aside for some earthly, sinful, sensual enjoyment? My heart cries out in pain, "O God, pity thy people; for they will never discern the light from the throne of God, unless they walk circumspectly, and put away their foolishness, and take the cup, the full cup of the Lord's blessing." {RH, February 13, 1894 par. 12}

4. What are we to be wise unto? **Romans 16:19**

EGW: There is at the present time great need of caution. "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." James 1:19. Let us heed the warning: "I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, . . . and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil." Romans 16:17-19. {8T 167.1}

5. What creature should we observe and be wise? **Proverbs 6:6**

EGW: The wisest of men may learn useful lessons from the ways and habits of the little creatures of the earth. The industrious bee gives to men of intelligence an example that they would do well to

imitate. These insects observe perfect order, and no idler is allowed in the hive. They execute their appointed work with an intelligence and activity that are beyond our comprehension. The ants, which we consider as only pests to be crushed under our feet, are in many respects superior to man; for he does not as wisely improve the gifts of God. The wise man calls our attention to the small things of the earth: "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest." "The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer." We may learn from these little teachers a lesson of faithfulness. Should we improve with the same diligence the faculties which an all-wise Creator has bestowed upon us, how greatly would our capacities for usefulness be increased. God's eye is upon the smallest of His creatures; does He not, then, regard man formed in His image and require of him corresponding returns for all the advantages He has given him? {4T 455.2}

6. What wisdom are we not to seek after? **1 Corinthians 3:18-19**

EGW: Those who boast of wisdom beyond the teaching of the word of God, need to drink deeper of the fountain of knowledge, that they may learn their real ignorance. There is a boasted wisdom of men, that is foolishness in the sight of God. Let no man deceive himself. "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God: for it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness." Those who have only this wisdom, need to become fools in their own estimation. The greatest ignorance that now curses the human race, is in regard to the binding claims of the law of God; and this ignorance is the result of neglecting the study of the word of God. It is Satan's determined plan to so engage and absorb the mind, that God's great guide book shall not be the Book of books, and that the sinner may not be led from the path of transgression to the path of obedience. {RH, August 21, 1888 par. 4}

7. What are we not to be wise after? **1 Corinthians 1:26**

EGW: As Paul searched the Scriptures, he learned that throughout the ages "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence." 1 Corinthians 1:26-29. And so, viewing the wisdom of the world in the light of the cross, Paul "determined not to know anything, . . . save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." 1 Corinthians 2:2. {AA 127.2}

8. What are we to avoid being wise in? **Romans 11:25, Romans 12:16, Isaiah 5:21**

EGW: Bear in mind the fact that the church militant is not the church triumphant. Cultivate a spirit of kindness, of true, heavenly courtesy. Some may look upon this manner of courtesy as mere weakness; but do not regard it thus. It will always pay to be kind, to be courteous. "Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another. . . . Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. {19MR 203.4}

9. What do wise people not speak about? **Job 15:2**

EGW: We are living in the last days, when error of a most deceptive character is accepted and believed, while truth is discarded. Many are drifting into darkness and infidelity, picking flaws with the Bible, bringing in superstitious inventions, unscriptural theories, and speculations of vain philosophy; but it is the duty of everyone to seek a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. The importance and benefit of Bible study cannot be overestimated. In searching the Scriptures our minds are caused to dwell upon the infinite sacrifice of Christ, on his mediation in our behalf. As we see his love, as we meditate upon his humiliation and sufferings, the same spirit of self-denial and sacrifice for the good of others will be kindled in our hearts. As we behold Jesus by the eye of faith, we shall be "changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." {ST, February 6, 1893 par. 8}

10. What are we not to be wise to do? **Jeremiah 4:22, Proverbs 14:16**

EGW: There are two classes of educators in the world. One class are those whom God makes channels of light, and the other class are those whom Satan uses as his agents, who are wise to do evil. One class contemplates the character of God, and increases in the knowledge of Jesus, whom God hath sent into the world. This class becomes wholly given up to those things which bring heavenly enlightenment, heavenly wisdom to the uplifting of the soul. Every capability of their nature is submitted to God, and their thoughts are brought into captivity to Christ. The other class are in league with the prince of darkness, who is ever on the alert that he may find an opportunity to teach others the knowledge of evil. If place is made for him, he will not be slow to press his way into heart and mind. {RH, November 17, 1891 par. 1}

11. What do the wise, like being educated in things such as the sciences of the world, really become? **Romans 1:22**

EGW: Cold, philosophical speculations and scientific research in which God is not acknowledged are a positive injury. And the evil is aggravated when, as is often the case, books placed in the hands of the young, accepted as authority and depended upon in their education, are from authors avowedly infidel. Through all the thoughts presented by these men their poisonous sentiments are interwoven. The study of such books is like handling black coals; a student cannot be undefiled in mind who thinks along the line of skepticism. {CT 423.4}

The authors of these books, which have sown the seeds of doubt and infidelity broadcast over the world, have been under the training of the great enemy of God and man, the acknowledged head of principalities and powers, the ruler of the darkness of this world. The word that God has spoken concerning them is, "They . . . became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools;" "because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful." Romans 1:21, 22. They rejected divine truth in its simplicity and purity for the wisdom of this world. {CT 424.1}

Whenever books by these infidel authors are given the precedence, and the word of God is made secondary, there will be sent out of the schools a class of students no better fitted for the service of God than they were before they received their education. {CT 424.2}

12. Who is the "wise steward"? **Luke 12:42-43**

EGW: Look at the picture that is drawn of the faithful and wise steward. The Lord says. "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household?" The Son of Man is represented as one taking a far journey, who gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work. Do we comprehend this? Do we act upon it? Do we realize that to every one of us is given a work to do? The work is not all left to those who hold official position, nor to the ministers, but to every member of the church Christ has given his work. There are to be no indolent ones; and yet how many ignore all spiritual responsibility. There are do-nothings. The pages of the book of God reveal a mournful blank. They are trees in the vineyard of the Lord, but they bear no fruit; they are cumberers of the ground. {GCB, October 1, 1896 par. 11}

13. As we approach closer to the bridegroom coming, what do the wise have that is symbolic of the Holy Spirit? **Matthew 25:4**

EGW: The coming of Christ, as announced by the first angel's message, was understood to be represented by the coming of the bridegroom. The widespread reformation under the proclamation

of his soon coming, answered to the going forth of the virgins. In this parable, as in that of Matthew 24, two classes are represented. All had taken their lamps, the Bible, and by its light had gone forth to meet the Bridegroom. But while "they that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them," "the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps." The latter class had received the grace of God, the regenerating, enlightening power of the Holy Spirit, which renders his Word a lamp to the feet and a light to the path. In the fear of God they had studied the Scriptures to learn the truth, and had earnestly sought for purity of heart and life. These had a personal experience, a faith in God and in his Word, which could not be overthrown by disappointment and delay. Others "took their lamps, and took no oil with them." They had moved from impulse. Their fears had been excited by the solemn message, but they had depended upon the faith of their brethren, satisfied with the flickering light of good emotions, without a thorough understanding of the truth, or a genuine work of grace in the heart. These had gone forth to meet the Lord, full of hope in the prospect of immediate reward; but they were not prepared for delay and disappointment. When trials came, their faith failed, and their lights burned dim. {GC88 393.3}

14. Where do wise men build? **Matthew 7:24, 1 Corinthians 10:4**

EGW: How different is the faith that is presented to the world today as essential to salvation. It has no vitality, no reality. It does not unite the believers as branches to the living Vine. It is not the faith that works by love and purifies the soul. It is a formal, nominal acceptance of a popular story, and has about as much efficacy as the faith that accepted Abraham Lincoln as a good administrator of governmental affairs. Genuine faith will show definite results in the character, and will exert a controlling influence over the thoughts of the heart, and the affairs of the life. It will lead its possessor to practice the principles of his belief. Says Jesus, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven." "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock." Says the apostle, "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." It is the doing of the words and works of Christ that testifies to the saving qualities of your faith. {ST, March 30, 1888 par. 4}

15. While the wicked are running around doing wickedly and the wise understand what is going on, what time has arrived? **Beginning of Daniel 12:10**

EGW: God permits men to work out the purposes he would have saved them from had they kept his commandments. When in the face of light and evidence, they refuse to obey, they must reap the harvest of the seed they have sown. "Many shall be purified, and made white and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand." The wicked have chosen Satan as their leader. Under his control the wonderful faculties of the mind are used to construct agencies

of destruction. God has given the human mind great power, power to show that the Creator has endowed man with ability to do a great work against the enemy of all righteousness, power to show what victories may be gained in the conflict against evil. To those who fulfill God's purpose, for them will be spoken the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." The human machinery has been used to do a work that is a blessing to humanity; and God is glorified. {BTS, February 1, 1903 par. 5}

16. Because God has declared "he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still" (Revelation 22:11), what is the result of the wise? **Daniel 12:3**

EGW: Prophecy reveals the fact that we are nearing the end of all things, and the people of God are to be the light of the world. In character and life we are to make manifest the requirement of God in humanity; and in order to do this, we must gather up the rays of divine light from the Bible, and let them shine forth to those who are in darkness. Christ must abide in our hearts by faith, that we may know and teach the way to heaven. "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever." {RH, April 28, 1891 par. 10}

17. What type of words do the wise speak? **Ecclesiastes 10:12**

EGW: The act of Christ in breathing upon his disciples the Holy Ghost, and in imparting his peace to them, was as a few drops before the plentiful shower to be given on the day of Pentecost. Jesus impressed this fact upon his disciples, that as they should proceed in the work intrusted to them, they would the more fully comprehend the nature of that work, and the manner in which the kingdom of Christ was to be set up on earth. They were appointed to be witnesses for the Saviour; they were to testify what they had seen and heard of his resurrection; they were to repeat the gracious words which proceeded from his lips. They were acquainted with his holy character; he was as an angel standing in the sun, yet casting no shadow. It was the sacred work of the apostles to present the spotless character of Christ to men, as the standard for their lives. The disciples had been so intimately associated with this Pattern of holiness that they were in some degree assimilated to him in character, and were specially fitted to make known to the world his precepts and example. {3SP 243.1}

18. Regarding prophecies especially, what will the wise be able to discern? **Ecclesiastes 8:5**

EGW: I urge my brethren and sisters to read their Bibles as they have never yet read them. The

evidences that we are in the last days are being given us right in our own ranks. Some who have become self-sufficient, and have rejected the counsel of the Lord, are being left to follow their own human judgment. Let those who have been influenced by the words and works of such, discern the signs of the times, and see in these men the very ones of whom the apostles have warned us. And as we see these predictions being fulfilled before our eyes, may we be led to a more earnest study of the Scriptures, and to a determination to believe and to teach the word of the living God. {RH, March 26, 1908 par. 12}

19. What are the wise, even as a poor child, willing to receive that a king is not? **Ecclesiastes 4:13, Proverbs 9:8**

EGW: Testing times come to all. How do we conduct ourselves under the test and proving of God? Do our lamps go out? or do we still keep them burning? Are we prepared for every emergency by our connection with Him who is full of grace and truth? The five wise virgins could not impart their character to the five foolish virgins. Character must be formed by us as individuals. It cannot be transferred to another, even if the possessor were willing to make the sacrifice. There is much we can do for each other while mercy still lingers. We can represent the character of Christ. We can give faithful warnings to the erring. We can reprove, rebuke, with all long-suffering and doctrine, bringing the doctrines of Holy Writ home to the heart. We can give heartfelt sympathy. We can pray with and for one another. By living a circumspect life, by maintaining a holy conversation, we may give an example of what a Christian should be; but no person can give to another his own mold of character. Let us duly consider the fact that we are to be saved, not as companies, but as individuals. We shall be judged according to the character we have formed. It is perilous to neglect to prepare the soul for eternity, and to put off making our peace with God until upon a dying bed. It is by the daily transactions of life, by the spirit we manifest, that we determine our eternal destiny. He who is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much. If we have made Christ our pattern, if we have walked and worked as he has given us an example in his own life, we shall be able to meet the solemn surprises that will come upon us in our experience, and say from our heart, "Not my will, but thine, be done." {RH, September 17, 1895 par. 10}

20. What are wise people able to turn away, cause to cease? **Proverbs 29:8**

EGW: (no comment)

21. What will a wise person not utter? **Proverbs 29:11**

EGW: (no comment)

22. What will wise people avoid putting into their bodies? **Proverbs 20:1**

EGW: It was Christ who in the Old Testament gave the warning to Israel, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." Proverbs 20:1. And He Himself provided no such beverage. Satan tempts men to indulgence that will becloud reason and benumb the spiritual perceptions, but Christ teaches us to bring the lower nature into subjection. His whole life was an example of self-denial. In order to break the power of appetite, He suffered in our behalf the severest test that humanity could endure. It was Christ who directed that John the Baptist should drink neither wine nor strong drink. It was He who enjoined similar abstinence upon the wife of Manoah. And He pronounced a curse upon the man who should put the bottle to his neighbor's lips. Christ did not contradict His own teaching. The unfermented wine which He provided for the wedding guests was a wholesome and refreshing drink. Its effect was to bring the taste into harmony with a healthful appetite. {DA 149.4}

23. Who do the wise seek out to associate with? **Proverbs 13:20**

EGW: Young people desire companionship, and just in proportion to the strength with which their feelings and affections fasten upon those with whom they associate, will be the power of those friends to be either a blessing or a curse to them. Then let parents beware. Let them guard every influence of association. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed" (Proverbs 13:20). The youth will have associates and will feel their influence.... {HP 172.2}

24. What activity are the wise involved in? **Proverbs 11:30**

EGW: The converted soul lives in Christ. His darkness passes away, and a new and heavenly light shines into his soul. "He that winneth souls is wise." "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever." What is done through the co-operation of men with God is a work that shall never perish, but endure through the eternal ages. He that makes God his wisdom, that grows up into the full stature of a man in Christ Jesus, will stand before kings, before the so-called great men of the world, and show forth the praises of Him who hath called him out of darkness into his marvelous light. Science and literature cannot bring into the darkened mind of men the light which the glorious gospel of the Son of God can bring. The Son of God alone can do the great work of illuminating the soul. No wonder Paul exclaims, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto

salvation to every one that believeth." The gospel of Christ becomes personality in those who believe, and makes them living epistles, known and read of all men. In this way the leaven of godliness passes into the multitude. The heavenly intelligences are able to discern the true elements of greatness in character; for only goodness is esteemed as efficiency with God. {RH, December 15, 1891 par. 9}

25. Individually speaking, what do the wise do, which is symbolic of being prepared? **Proverbs 10:5**

EGW: (no comment)

26. Who are earthly examples of being wise? **Genesis 41:39, 1 Samuel 18:14**

EGW: The king believed all that Joseph said. He believed that God was with him, and was impressed with the fact that he was the most suitable man to be placed in authority at the head of affairs. He did not despise him because he was a Hebrew slave. He saw that he possessed an excellent spirit. "And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is? And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art. Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled; only in the throne will I be greater than thou." {1SP 138.1}

(no comment on David)

27. In the end, what do the wise inherit? **Proverbs 3:35**

EGW: The wise shall inherit glory. Proverbs 3:35. {AG 350.1}

God has elected a character in harmony with His law, and anyone who shall reach the standard of His requirement will have an entrance into the kingdom of glory. Christ Himself said, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not on the Son shall not see life" (John 3:36). "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). And in the Revelation He declares, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14). As regards man's final salvation, this is the only election brought to view in the Word of God. {AG 350.2}