

Lesson 59 - The Character of Being Compassionate

1. Who is our example for copying the character trait of compassion? **Psalms 86:15, Psalms 111:4**

EGW: He manifested his character to him. He represented himself as a God, full of compassion and tender mercy. And these are the fruits that we shall bear if we are partakers of the divine nature. We are to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God, or there is no life in us. Jesus explained what he meant when he gave utterance to these words. He said, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." We do not live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, as we should. We do not give the diligent, prayerful study to the Bible that we should, desiring the sincere milk of the word, that we grow thereby. We do not believe in Christ as we should, or we would not be so far separated from God. What shall we do? How shall we stand in the judgment? We should stand today as we shall wish to stand then. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." {RH, April 2, 1889 par. 4}

2. What is the definition of being compassionate? **Psalms 145:8**

EGW: The apostasy of Israel was an evil more dreadful than all the multiplied horrors of famine. God was seeking to free the people from their delusion, and lead them to understand their accountability to the One to whom they owed their life and all things. He was trying to help them to recover their lost faith, and he must needs bring upon them great affliction. "The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy." "Though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men." {RH, August 21, 1913 par. 11}

"Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?" "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? for I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye." "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" {RH, August 21, 1913 par. 12}

3. Who is the most popular person in the Bible that showed compassion? **Luke 10:33**

EGW: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise." {3T 523.3}

Here the conditions of inheriting eternal life are plainly stated by our Saviour in the most simple manner. The man who was wounded and robbed represents those who are subjects of our interest, sympathy, and charity. If we neglect the cases of the needy and the unfortunate that are brought under our notice, no matter who they may be, we have no assurance of eternal life; for we do not answer the claims that God has upon us. We are not compassionate and pitiful to humanity, because they may not be kith or kin to us. You have been found transgressors of the second great commandment, upon which the last six commandments depend. Whosoever offendeth in one point, is guilty of all. Those who do not open their hearts to the wants and sufferings of humanity will not open their hearts to the claims of God as stated in the first four precepts of the Decalogue. Idols claim the heart and affections, and God is not honored and does not reign supreme. {3T 524.1}

4. Who showed compassion in the parable representing God? **Luke 15:20**

EGW: We should beware that we do not give place to doubt and unbelief, and in our attitude of despair complain of God and misrepresent Him to the world. This is placing ourselves on Satan's side of the question. "Poor souls," he says, "I pity you, mourning under sin; but God has no pity. You long for some ray of hope; but God leaves you to perish, and finds satisfaction in your misery." This is a terrible deception. Do not give ear to the tempter, but say: "Jesus has died that I might live. He loves me, and wills not that I should perish. I have a compassionate heavenly Father; and although I have abused His love, though the blessings He has graciously given me have been squandered, I will arise, and go to my Father, and say: 'I have sinned, . . . and am no more worthy to be called Thy son: make me as one of Thy hired servants.'" The parable tells you how the wanderer will be received. "When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." Thus the Bible represents God's willingness to receive the repentant, returning sinner. {5T 632.1}

But even this parable, tender and touching as it is, comes short of expressing the infinite compassion of the heavenly Father. The Lord declares by the prophet: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." While the sinner is yet far from his Father's house, wasting his substance in a strange country, the Father's heart is yearning over him; and every longing awakened in the soul to return to God is but the tender pleading of His Spirit, wooing,

entreating, drawing the wanderer to his Father's heart of love. {5T 632.2}

5. What relationship should have the strongest compassion? **Isaiah 49:15**

EGW: With the rich promises of the Bible before you, can you give place to doubt? Can you believe that when the poor sinner longs to return, longs to forsake his sins, the Lord sternly withholds him from coming to His feet in repentance? Away with such thoughts! Nothing can hurt your own soul more than to entertain such a conception of our heavenly Father. He hates sin, but He loves the sinner, and He gave Himself in the person of Christ, that all who would might be saved and have eternal blessedness in the kingdom of glory. What stronger or more tender language could have been employed than He has chosen in which to express His love toward us? He declares, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." Isaiah 49:15. {SC 54.2}

Look up, you that are doubting and trembling; for Jesus lives to make intercession for us. Thank God for the gift of His dear Son and pray that He may not have died for you in vain. The Spirit invites you today. Come with your whole heart to Jesus, and you may claim His blessing. {SC 54.3}

As you read the promises, remember they are the expression of unutterable love and pity. The great heart of Infinite Love is drawn toward the sinner with boundless compassion. "We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." Ephesians 1:7. Yes, only believe that God is your helper. He wants to restore His moral image in man. As you draw near to Him with confession and repentance, He will draw near to you with mercy and forgiveness. {SC 55.1}

6. Compassion upon the helpless should be a character trait of Christians especially when exemplified by a non-Christian like who? **Exodus 2:5-6**

EGW: Angels were also watching that no harm should come to the helpless infant, which had been placed there by an affectionate mother, and committed to the care of God by her earnest prayers mingled with tears. And these angels directed the footsteps of Pharaoh's daughter to the river, near the very spot where lay the innocent little stranger. Her attention was attracted to the little strange vessel, and she sent one of her waiting-maids to fetch it to her. And when she had removed the cover of this singularly-constructed little vessel, she saw a lovely babe, "and behold, the babe wept; and she had compassion on him." She knew that a tender Hebrew mother had taken this singular means to preserve the life of her much-loved babe, and she decided at once that it should be her son. The sister of Moses immediately came forward and inquired, "Shall I go, and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go." {1SP 162.2}

7. What can God turn from to show compassion, which is an example for us to follow? **Deuteronomy 13:17**

EGW: (no comment)

8. In general, what do we need God to have compassion upon us for? **Beginning of 1 Kings 8:50, Psalms 78:38**

EGW: Wherever in Israel God's plan of education was carried into effect, its results testified of its Author. But in very many households the training appointed by heaven, and the characters thus developed, were alike rare. God's plan was but partially and imperfectly fulfilled. By unbelief and by disregard of the Lord's directions, the Israelites surrounded themselves with temptations that few had power to resist. At their settlement in Canaan "they did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the Lord had commanded them: but were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works. And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them." Their heart was not right with God, "neither were they steadfast in his covenant. But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not; yea, many a time turned he his anger away. . . . For he remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again." Fathers and mothers in Israel became indifferent to their obligation to God, indifferent to their obligation to their own children. Through unfaithfulness in the home, and idolatrous influences without, many of the Hebrew youth received an education differing widely from that which God had planned for them. They learned the ways of the heathen. {RH, October 5, 1911 par. 10}

9. When we sin, we ought to die right there on the spot, but with God showing compassion, what does He not do to us right there then but allows time for repentance? **Lamentations 3:22**

EGW: It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness." {SW, February 14, 1905 par. 1}

In the days of Malachi God gave his people words of reproof, warning, and instruction, but those who should have profited by these messages, seemed to continue their violation of right principles. Patiently the Lord dealt with them. "Even from the day of your fathers," he declared, "ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you." {SW, February 14, 1905 par. 2}

It would seem that every heart would have responded to this invitation. The God of heaven pleaded with his erring children to return to him, that they might again co-operate with him in carrying

forward his work in the earth. But they remained impenitent. Self-vindication is apparent in their response, "Wherein shall we return?" {SW, February 14, 1905 par. 3}

10. What is the expected result when God has compassion towards us regarding our sins? **Jude 1:22**

EGW: By earnest, Christlike efforts, men will be convicted and converted, and God will speak pardon to them. Let no one turn away a soul who leaves the service of Satan and asks Jesus for pardon. "Of some have compassion, making a difference." When they give evidence that the Spirit of God is striving with them present to them every encouragement for entering the Lord's service. Do not discourage them by indifference, by drawing away from them with an air of, "I am holier than thou." {12MR 97.1}

Those who act as Pharisees may not be guilty of exactly the same sins they condemn in others, but they may be guilty of sins much greater in the sight of God. Each will be rewarded according to his work. Let those who condemn others take heed to themselves, lest they be condemned by God for Phariseeism.--Ms 37, 1902, pp. 7, 8. ("Of Some Having Compassion, Making a Difference," March 9, 1902.) White Estate Washington, D. C. July 15, 1982 {12MR 97.2}

11. And if that fails to have the desired effect, what is the next step that God exercises that is a bit more severe? **Jude 1:23**

EGW: All are not fitted to correct the erring. They have not wisdom to deal justly, while loving mercy. They are not inclined to see the necessity of mingling love and tender compassion with faithful reproofs. Some are ever needlessly severe and do not feel the necessity of the injunction of the apostle: "And of some have compassion, making a difference: and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire" (Jude 22, 23).--3T 269, 270 (1873). {1MCP 80.1}

12. In having compassion upon us regarding our iniquities and sin, what does God try to do with our connection to them? **Micah 7:19**

EGW: But there is a brighter side to the picture. "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted." Let this thought be kept uppermost. In labor for the erring, let every eye be directed to Christ. Let the shepherds have a tender care for the flock of the Lord's pasture. Let them speak to the erring of the forgiving mercy of the Saviour. Let them encourage the sinner to repent, and believe in Him who can pardon. Let them declare, on the authority of God's word, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9. All who repent have the assurance, "He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities; and Thou wilt

cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." Micah 7:19. {DA 806.1}

13. What can we come to Jesus to receive? **Matthew 14:14**

EGW: Jesus, precious Saviour, never seemed to become weary of the importunities of the sin-sick souls and the sick with all kinds of diseases. "And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them" (Mark 6:34). This means a great deal to the suffering ones. He identified His interest with theirs. He shared their burdens. He felt their fears. He had yearning pity that was pain to the heart of Christ. {TMK 47.2}

14. What condition may a person be in that we ought also to show compassion towards? **Matthew 15:32**

EGW: The feeding of the five thousand is an illustration of Christ's tender solicitude. The multitude, forgetting the wants of nature, had listened with deepest interest to His ministry of truth; but He, like a pitying father, was mindful of their needs. Often hungry Himself, He was awake to the necessities of others. Calling His disciples to Him, He said, "I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with Me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way." The Saviour remembered that after His long fast in the wilderness of temptation, He had fainted, and that angels had ministered to Him. Without hesitation He wrought a miracle to feed the thousands who had followed Him in order that they might hear the gracious words proceeding from His lips. {ST, September 23, 1908 par. 8}

15. What other condition may people be in that we ought to show compassion towards? **Matthew 18:23-27**

EGW: Then He showed the true ground upon which forgiveness is to be granted and the danger of cherishing an unforgiving spirit. In a parable He told of a king's dealing with the officers who administered the affairs of his government. Some of these officers were in receipt of vast sums of money belonging to the state. As the king investigated their administration of this trust, there was brought before him one man whose account showed a debt to his lord for the immense sum of ten thousand talents. He had nothing to pay, and according to the custom, the king ordered him to be sold, with all that he had, that payment might be made. But the terrified man fell at his feet and besought him, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. {COL 243.2}

16. And if we do not show compassion, especially when we have been forgiven of much sin (debt is symbolic of sin), what may we find ourselves receiving symbolically? **Matthew 18:34**

EGW: When the debtor pleaded for delay, with the promise, "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all," the sentence was revoked; the whole debt was canceled; and he was soon given an opportunity to pattern after the master who had forgiven him. Going out, he met a fellow servant who owed him a hundred pence. But he who had been so mercifully treated dealt with his fellow laborer in an altogether different manner. His debtor made an appeal similar to that which he himself had made to the king, but without a similar result. He who had so recently been forgiven was not kind, and tender-hearted, and pitiful. The goodness, mercy, and love shown to him he did not exercise in dealing with his fellow servant. He heeded not the request to be patient. The goodness shown to him only hardened his heart. The small sum owed him was all that the ungrateful servant could keep in mind. He demanded all that he considered his due, and carried into effect the sentence which had been so graciously revoked for him. {RH, January 3, 1899 par. 4}

The lesson to be learned is that we must have the spirit of true forgiveness, even as Christ forgives the sinner, who can in no case pay his enormous debt. We are to bear in mind that Christ has paid an infinite price for the souls of men, and we are to treat them as Christ's purchased possession. {RH, January 3, 1899 par. 5}

17. What are we really lacking when we do not have compassion? **1 John 3:17**

EGW: "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" The love of Jesus in the heart will always be revealed in kind-heartedness and tender compassion for those for whom he paid so dear a price. The beloved disciple continues: "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. . . . And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." We cannot be loveless Christians; the thing is simply impossible. {RH, October 6, 1896 par. 13}

18. When we receive God's compassion, what ought we to do then? **Mark 5:19**

EGW: The first missionary that Jesus sent to the region of Decapolis was the man out of whom he had cast the legion of devils. The man had begged to accompany Jesus constantly, but Jesus "suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." This man bore in his own person the

evidence that Jesus was the true Messiah. He related his own experience, telling how great things God had done for him, and thus the way was prepared for the message of truth from the lips of Jesus himself. {ST, October 12, 1891 par. 3}

We all have an important work to do for God, and we should watch for opportunities of presenting Jesus to those who know him not. And opportunities will not be lacking if we are prepared by the grace of Christ to be workers together with God. Your example in living for Christ, in showing that you have the mind of Christ, will be far more impressive than any words you may utter, any profession you may make. {ST, October 12, 1891 par. 4}

19. What are we "one in" if we exercise everything that Peter lists including compassion? **1 Peter 3:8**

EGW: It is the will of God that union and brotherly love should exist among His people. The prayer of Christ just before His crucifixion was that His disciples might be one as He is one with the Father, that the world might believe that God had sent Him. This most touching and wonderful prayer reaches down the ages, even to our day; for His words were, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word." John 17:20. While we are not to sacrifice one principle of truth, it should be our constant aim to reach this state of unity. This is the evidence of our discipleship. Said Jesus, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." John 13:35. The apostle Peter exhorts the church, "Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing." 1 Peter 3:8, 9. {PP 520.3}

20. What is the higher connection when we are all one? **Philippians 2:5, 1 Corinthians 2:16, Romans 15:6**

EGW: With every consecrated human agent, who is free from all selfish partiality, from guile and hypocrisy, heavenly intelligences will co-operate. None need to err, none need to lose the golden moments of time in their short life history through seeking to weigh the imperfections of professed Christians. Not one of us has time to do this. If we know what is the manner of character Christians should develop, and yet see in others that which is inconsistent with this character, let us determine that we will firmly resist the enemy in his temptations to make us act in an inconsistent way, and say, "I will not make Christ ashamed of me, I will more earnestly study the character of Christ in whom there was no imperfection, no selfishness, no spot, no stain of evil, who lived not to please and glorify himself, but to glorify God and save fallen humanity. I will not copy the defective characters of these inconsistent Christians; the mistakes that they have made shall not lead me to be like them. I will turn to the precious Saviour, that I may be like him, follow the instruction of the word of God, which says, 'Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.'" {RH, August 8, 1893 par. 6}