

Lesson 61 - The Character of Truly Repenting

1. What two actions allows us to be part of the Kingdom of God? **Mark 1:15**

EGW: Some have treated the Spirit as an unwelcome guest, refusing to receive the rich gift, refusing to acknowledge it, turning from it, and condemning it as fanaticism. When the Holy Spirit works the human agent, it does not ask us in what way it shall operate. Often it moves in unexpected ways. Christ did not come as the Jews expected. He did not come in a manner to glorify them as a nation. His forerunner came to prepare the way for him by calling upon the people to repent of their sins and be converted, and be baptized. Christ's message was, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand; repent ye and believe the gospel." {1888 1540.1}

2. What is the mission of Christ, even through His followers today? **Luke 5:32**

EGW: No matter who you are, or what your life has been, you can be saved only in God's appointed way. You must repent; you must fall helpless on the Rock, Christ Jesus. You must feel your need of a physician, and of the one only remedy for sin, the blood of Christ. This remedy can be secured only by repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Here the work is yet to be begun by many who profess to be Christians, and even to be ministers of Christ. Like the Pharisees of old, many of you feel no need of a Saviour. You are self-sufficient, self-exalted. Said Christ, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." The blood of Christ will avail for none but those who feel their need of its cleansing power. {RH, November 18, 1909 par. 5}

3. Why are we to repent? **Matthew 3:2, Matthew 4:17**

EGW: In this parable the father represents God, the vineyard the church. By the two sons are represented two classes of people. The son who refused to obey the command, saying, "I will not," represented those who were living in open transgression, who made no profession of piety, who openly refused to come under the yoke of restraint and obedience which the law of God imposes. But many of these afterward repented and obeyed the call of God. When the gospel came to them in the message of John the Baptist, "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," they repented, and confessed their sins. (Matthew 3:2.) {COL 275.2}

In this age, just prior to the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, such a work as that of John is to be done. God calls for men who will prepare a people to stand in the great day of the Lord. The message preceding the public ministry of Christ was, Repent, publicans and sinners; repent, Pharisees and Sadducees; "repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." As a people who

believe in Christ's soon coming, we have a message to bear,--"Prepare to meet thy God." [Amos 4:12.] {GW 55.2}

4. When a soul repents, what happens in Heaven? **Luke 15:7, 10**

EGW: "I say unto you that likewise joy shall be in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance." "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." If God and Christ and angels rejoice when even one sinner repents and becomes obedient to Christ, should not man be imbued with the same spirit, and work for time and for eternity with persevering effort to save, not only his own soul, but the souls of others? If you work in this direction with whole-hearted interest as the followers of Christ, discharging every duty, improving every opportunity, your own souls will be gradually settling into the mold of a perfect Christian. The heart will not be sere and unfeeling. The spiritual life will not be dwarfed. The heart will glow with the impress of the divine image; for it will be in close sympathy with God. The whole life will flow out with cheerful readiness in channels of love and sympathy for humanity. Self will be forgotten, and the ways of this class will be established in God. In watering others, their own souls will be watered. The stream flowing through their souls is from a living spring, and is flowing out to others in good deeds, in earnest, unselfish effort for their salvation. In order to be a fruitful tree, the soul must derive its support and nourishment from the Fountain of Life, and must be in harmony with the Creator. {RH, January 2, 1879 par. 7}

5. When we become a Christian, we shall constantly unlearn the ways of society and start learning the ways of God, but while in this ignorance with God "winking" at it, when we discover the ways that are pleasing to God, what does He say about our repentance? **Acts 17:30 [Hint: it makes repentance not an optional thing.]**

EGW: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." In the ages of darkness that had preceded the advent of Christ, the divine Ruler had passed lightly over the idolatry of the heathen; but now, through His Son, He had sent men the light of truth; and He expected from all repentance unto salvation, not only from the poor and humble, but from the proud philosopher and the princes of the earth. "Because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." As Paul spoke of the resurrection from the dead, "some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter." {AA 239.1}

6. When we repent of our past sins, or our past lifestyle, what are we expecting God to freely do? **End of Acts 8:22, Acts 5:31**

EGW: Just here is a point on which many may err, and hence they fail of receiving the help that Christ desires to give them. They think that they cannot come to Christ unless they first repent, and that repentance prepares for the forgiveness of their sins. It is true that repentance does precede the forgiveness of sins; for it is only the broken and contrite heart that will feel the need of a Saviour. But must the sinner wait till he has repented before he can come to Jesus? Is repentance to be made an obstacle between the sinner and the Saviour? {SC 26.1}

The Bible does not teach that the sinner must repent before he can heed the invitation of Christ, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28. It is the virtue that goes forth from Christ, that leads to genuine repentance. Peter made the matter clear in his statement to the Israelites when he said, "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." Acts 5:31. We can no more repent without the Spirit of Christ to awaken the conscience than we can be pardoned without Christ. {SC 26.2}

Christ is the source of every right impulse. He is the only one that can implant in the heart enmity against sin. Every desire for truth and purity, every conviction of our own sinfulness, is an evidence that His Spirit is moving upon our hearts. {SC 26.3}

Jesus has said, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." John 12:32. Christ must be revealed to the sinner as the Saviour dying for the sins of the world; and as we behold the Lamb of God upon the cross of Calvary, the mystery of redemption begins to unfold to our minds and the goodness of God leads us to repentance. In dying for sinners, Christ manifested a love that is incomprehensible; and as the sinner beholds this love, it softens the heart, impresses the mind, and inspires contrition in the soul. {SC 26.4}

7. What are the two types of repentance? **2 Corinthians 7:10**

EGW: The apostle Paul describes true sorrow when he says: "Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge!" {ST, February 4, 1897 par. 15}

This is genuine repentance. It will lead to a transformation in the life. It is the absence of this true sorrow that makes many of the conversions of this time superficial. Reformations are not made in the life. But when sin is viewed in the light of God, and its true character realized, it will be put away from the heart and life. {ST, February 4, 1897 par. 16}

We who were dead in trespasses and sins, God has quickened and renewed by his own power. He has elevated and ennobled us, not because we were worthy, but because goodness and mercy are

the attributes of his character, because of the great love wherewith he hath loved us. {ST, February 4, 1897 par. 17}

This love, which is without a parallel, brought the Son of God from the courts of heaven, to suffer and die that we might live through him. The horror of darkness that enshrouded the Saviour in Gethsemane, and forced from his pores great drops of blood, was experienced by him on account of our sins. Here, indeed, we have reason to mourn, that our sins have caused such inexpressible agony to God's dear Son. {ST, February 4, 1897 par. 18}

True sorrow for sin brings the penitent soul near to the bleeding side of Jesus. There he may effectually plead for pardon, and obtain grace to conquer; there his darkened understanding may be enlightened, and the stony heart transformed to a heart of flesh. There the rebellious sinner is subdued, and his will brought into conformity to the will of God. {ST, February 4, 1897 par. 19}

8. What does godly repentance lead a person to do (2 answers)? **Acts 26:20**

EGW: What would become of the churches if there were no special seasons when the Spirit of Christ was sought for with earnestness and fervor, and the cold hearts were warmed by the rays of divine light? God wants to be inquired of by his people, before he pours out his Holy Spirit upon the church. How earnestly should every member pray and labor, and labor and pray for the deep movings of the Spirit of God! There is solemn work that must be done to enlighten souls now sitting in darkness. The fallow ground of the heart must be broken up. The indifferent and back-slidden must have personal efforts made for them, and each member of the church should do works meet for repentance, in carrying with solemn, earnest zeal to all within reach the Master's gracious invitation. {RH, June 26, 1888 par. 8}

Take up the work that lies nearest to you. Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in, that the Lord's table may be supplied with guests. A sleepy, Christless church, quarreling and surmising evil, will have no reward, and need look for no revival, unless its members repent, and do the first works. {RH, June 26, 1888 par. 9}

9. What are we to become after truly repenting? **Acts 3:19**

EGW: A solemn responsibility rests upon those who know the truth, that all their works shall correspond with their faith, and that their lives shall be refined and sanctified, and they be prepared for the work that must rapidly be done in these closing days of the message. They have no time or strength to spend in the indulgence of appetite. The words should come to us now with impelling earnestness: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." Acts 3:19. There are many among us who are deficient in spirituality and who, unless they are wholly converted, will certainly be lost. Can

you afford to run the risk? {9T 154.3}

10. What do truly repentant people bring forth? **Luke 3:8, Matthew 3:8**

EGW: John exhorted these men to "bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance." That is, Show that you are converted, that your characters are transformed. . . . Neither words nor profession, but fruits--the forsaking of sins, and obedience to the commandments of God--show the reality of genuine repentance and true conversion (MS 112, 1901). {5BC 1077.5}

11. What ought we to repent from, even in a spiritual sense? **Ezekiel 14:6**

EGW: God would have us encourage the young to seek earnestly for a deeper experience in the Christian life. By appropriate words from the Scriptures we are to help them to know him who is their peace, their joy, their strength, their shield, their Guide and Counselor, the source of their comfort, their all and in all. Have you turned from your idols to God? Those who come to Jesus with true purpose of heart, surrendering themselves to his service, will know the blessedness of perfect trust. If they have in truth enlisted in his service, they will find in him all that is required for the perfection of Christian character. By his fulness their soul-hunger will be satisfied. It is the privilege of all to follow on to know the Lord, that they may know that his goings forth are prepared as the morning. {RH, January 31, 1899 par. 8}

12. Upon truly repenting, what shall we receive? **Acts 2:38, John 16:8, John 16:13**

EGW: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." The glorious promise is unto us who live in the last days: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you; whom

the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." {ST, November 16, 1891 par. 14}

13. What does God show to lead us to repentance? **Romans 2:4**

EGW: The Spirit of inspiration addresses those who refuse to be drawn to Christ, "Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" How is this? Divine agencies are constantly at work to bring men into harmony with God. Every means in heaven and in earth is employed to draw men to the great Center of the world's hope. And as they fasten their eyes upon the dying Man of Calvary, they are led to exclaim, "Why, oh why, is all this suffering?" And the answer comes, "It is the revelation of the goodness of God, to lead thee to repentance." {ST, November 16, 1891 par. 1}

14. What does God use to lead us to repentance? **Revelation 3:19**

EGW: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent." Has there been a departure from God? then there must be a returning unto him; there must be a doing of the first works; there must be a close examination of the life. The state of the character must be compared with the great moral standard of righteousness. There must be a searching out of the peculiar sins which have been offensive to God, which have dishonored his name, and quenched the light of his Spirit, and killed the first love from the soul. Whether it has been pride, sensuality, or turning the grace of Christ into lasciviousness, it must be thoroughly repented of, and forsaken. {RH, July 24, 1888 par. 8}

15. Repenting is one choice with God, so what is the other? **Revelation 2:16**

EGW: If they will make Christ their pattern, he will give them wisdom and knowledge and understanding; they will grow in grace and aptitude in Christ's way; their characters will be molded after his similitude. If they fail to keep the way of the Lord, another spirit will control the mind and judgment, and they will devise plans without the Lord, and will take their own course, and leave the positions they have occupied. The light has been given them; if they depart from it, and follow their own course, let no man present a bribe to induce them to remain. They will be a hindrance and a snare. The time has come when everything is to be shaken that can be shaken, that those things that can not be shaken may remain. Every case is coming in review before God; for he is measuring the temple of God, and the worshipers therein. "These things, saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works. . . . I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast lost thy first love; remember therefore from

whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove the candlestick out of his place." "Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against thee with the sword of my mouth. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving him that receiveth it." {1888 1116.1}

16. If we do not repent, what is the result? **Luke 13:3, 5; Ezekiel 18:30**

EGW: Christ's message to the people was, "Unless ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." And the apostles were commanded to preach everywhere that men should repent. The Lord would have His servants preach today the old Gospel doctrine, sorrow for sin, repentance, and confession. We want old-fashioned sermons, old-fashioned customs, old-fashioned fathers and mothers in Israel, who have the tenderness of Christ. The sinner must be labored for perseveringly, earnestly, wisely, until he shall see that he is a transgressor of God's law, and shall exercise repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. When the sinner is conscious of his helpless condition, and feels his need of a Saviour, he may come with faith and hope to "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Christ will accept the soul who comes to Him in true repentance. A broken and a contrite heart He will not despise. {ST, December 27, 1899 par. 4}

17. Despite the different attempts of God, both gentle and in chastising ways, what will many people insist on not doing? **Revelation 16:9**

EGW: (no comment)

18. What will such people not be willing to repent of or stop, revealing that mere words are worthless? **Revelation 16:11**

EGW: (no comment)

19. God is waiting for as many to come to repentance, but what do the unsaved think God is regarding the promise of the second coming? **2 Peter 3:9**

EGW: We have long been looking and waiting for the coming of the Lord; but are we doing all in our

power to hasten his coming? "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." While the Lord is ever working, while all heaven is engaged in the work on earth to draw men to Christ and repentance, what are the human agents doing to be channels of light, that they may co-operate with the divine agencies? Are they daily inquiring, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Are they practicing self-denial, as did Jesus? Are they deeply stirred, their hearts drawn out in prayer to God that they may be receiving of his grace, the Holy Spirit of God, that they may have wisdom to work with their ability and their means to save souls that are perishing out of Christ? {RH, May 16, 1893 par. 12}

20. What should repentance lead people to acknowledge? **2 Timothy 2:25**

EGW: Will you to whom I now address these words, take heed to the instruction given you? Let the youth take warning; let them not be forward in conversation, but be modest and retiring. 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." {YI, July 11, 1895 par. 3}