

Lesson 63 - The Character of Godliness

1. What teaches us to deny ungodliness and live godly lives? **Titus 2:11-14**

EGW: "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." Christ says: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." What do your prayers amount to while you regard iniquity in your hearts? Unless you make a thorough change, you will, not far hence, become weary of reproof, as did the children of Israel; and, like them, you will apostatize from God. Some of you in words acknowledge reproof, but you do not in heart accept it. You go on the same as before, only being less susceptible to the influence of the Spirit of God, becoming more and more blinded, having less wisdom, less self-control, less moral power, and less zeal and relish for religious exercises; and, unless converted, you will finally yield your hold upon God entirely. You have not made decided changes in your life when reproof has come, because you have not seen and realized your defects of character and the great contrast between your life and the life of Christ. It has been your policy to place yourselves in a position where you would not entirely lose the confidence of your brethren. {4T 332.2}

2. What is living a godly life to give us hope in? **Titus 1:1-2, 1 Timothy 4:8**

EGW: Those who have not moral power cannot stand in defense of the truth; they have not courage to say: "Unless such conversation ceases, I cannot remain in your presence. Jesus, the world's Redeemer, is my Saviour; in Him is centered my hope of eternal life." But this is the very way in which to silence them. If you argue with them, they will have arguments with which to meet you, and nothing you may say will touch them; but if you live for Christ, if you are firm in your allegiance to the God of heaven, you may do for them that which argument will fail to do, and convince them of the fallacy of their doctrines by the power of godliness. {MYP 88.3}

3. What is godliness considered? **1 Timothy 6:6**

EGW: Daniel and his companions were captives in a strange land, but God suffered not the envy and hatred of their enemies to prevail against them. The righteous have ever obtained help from above. How often have the enemies of God united their strength and wisdom to destroy the character and influence of a few simple persons who trusted in God. But because the Lord was for them, none could prevail against them. Only let the followers of Christ be united, and they will prevail. Let them be separated from their idols and from the world, and the world will not separate them from God.

Christ is our present, all-sufficient Saviour. In Him all fullness dwells. It is the privilege of Christians to know indeed that Christ is in them of a truth. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." All things are possible to him that believeth; and whatsoever things we desire when we pray, if we believe that we receive them we shall have them. This faith will penetrate the darkest cloud and bring rays of light and hope to the drooping, desponding soul. It is the absence of this faith and trust which brings perplexity, distressing fears, and surmisings of evil. God will do great things for His people when they put their entire trust in Him. "Godliness with contentment is great gain." Pure and undefiled religion will be exemplified in the life. Christ will prove a never-failing source of strength, a present help in every time of trouble. {2T 139.2}

4. Where do we find how to be godly? **1 Timothy 6:3**

EGW: In Paul's charge to Timothy he warns him of a class who will not consent to wholesome words, but who place a wrong estimate on riches. He says: "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing,..." {RH, March 4, 1880 par. 12}

5. Where is godliness not found? **1 Timothy 4:7, 1 Timothy 1:4**

EGW: It is the grace of God alone which can vitalize and refresh the soul. The precious sure word of prophecy reveals to him who is a searcher for truth, the riches of the grace of Christ. The word of God is a spiritual granary from whence the soul may receive that which will nourish its life. In perusing the word of God we find doctrines, precepts, promises, admonitions, exhortations, and words of encouragement, that will meet the case of emergency in every human mind. Here the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works; for "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." "But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. . . . Keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called, which some professing have erred concerning the faith." "Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith, so do. Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and a faith unfeigned; from which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm." "And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness." {ST, July 31,

1893 par. 6}

6. What are we considered of God when living a godly life? **Psalms 4:3, 1 Peter 2:9**

EGW: The Lord hath set apart him that is godly for Himself; this consecration to God and separation from the world is plainly and positively enjoined in both the Old and the New Testament. There is a wall of separation which the Lord Himself has established between the things of the world and the things He has chosen out of the world and sanctified unto Himself. The calling and character of God's people are peculiar, their prospects are peculiar, and these peculiarities distinguish them from all other people. All of God's people upon the earth are one body, from the beginning to the end of time. They have one Head that directs and governs the body. The same injunctions that rested upon ancient Israel, rest upon God's people now, to be separate from the world. The great Head of the church has not changed. The experience of Christians in these days is much like the travels of ancient Israel. Please read 1 Corinthians 10, especially from the 6th to the 15th verse. {1T 283.4}

7. What are we on in this world regarding being godly? **3 John 1:6**

EGW: Christ came to our world to set his followers an example of perfection of character, that in his strength they might become Christlike, building for time and for eternity. I am bidden to give all our workers, men and women, a most solemn charge; if you (923) are not truly converted, God can not use you. In word, in spirit, and in all your works you are to bear testimony to the truth, making straight paths for your feet lest the lame be turned out of the way by your walking in strange paths. {LLM 559.2}

"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren and to strangers which have borne witness of thy charity before the church, whom if thou bring forward on thy journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well, because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth." {LLM 559.3}

8. When Jesus returns, what shall happen to all the things that we had interest in that is of the world, encouraging us towards developing a godly character instead? **2 Peter 3:10**

EGW: "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in

all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." {ST, February 10, 1888 par. 1}

The day of the Lord is at hand, when the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and all the cities of the earth shall be destroyed. Christ, escorted by ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of angels, shall come in the clouds of heaven. The righteous dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and rise from their graves to immortal life, and we that are alive and remain shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air and so be forever with the Lord. In view of these great and solemn events we are exhorted to be diligent that we may be "found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." {ST, February 10, 1888 par. 2}

There are attractions on every hand to draw the mind away from the contemplation of the coming of our Lord and Saviour; but it is absolutely necessary to bear in remembrance that "the great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly." The God of Heaven has multiplied warnings, entreaties, and instructions, that we may be prepared to stand in the time of the overwhelming destruction. We are not left in darkness. Those who meditate and act upon the instructions that God has given will cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit. They will keep in mind the command to "be diligent," to be holy in all their conversation and life. An infinite price has been paid for our redemption that we might have an opportunity to turn to God and perfect characters that will meet the approbation of Heaven. And we should inquire as did the lawyer, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Christ answered, "What is written in the law? how readest thou?" The lawyer replied, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." And Jesus said unto him, "Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live." {ST, February 10, 1888 par. 3}

9. When trying to live a godly life and strong temptations come, where should we turn to so as to resist those temptations? **2 Peter 2:9**

EGW: Will this tempted brother fail with all the encouragements of the Word of God to sustain him in heroic endurance? "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man" (1 Corinthians 10:13). Every trial is weighed and measured by the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is not beyond man's ability to endure through the grace given unto him. "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 of escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (Ibid.). Will this dear brother, who is so young in the faith, lay hold upon the promise? "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations" (2 Peter 2:9). This means that, while everything may appear overwhelmingly dark, the Lord will bring forth the tried one with firmer faith and a richer experience. {12MR 81.1}

10. What does God provide for us to live a life of godliness? **2 Peter 1:3**

EGW: To none will it be granted to enjoy the presence of Christ in the paradise of God if they do not enjoy his presence and love in this probationary life, if they do not have a likeness of character to him on earth. Since nothing short of Christlikeness is expected of the followers of Jesus, God has left abundant promises whereby this expectation may be fulfilled. The apostle says: "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue; whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." The storehouse of unlimited resource is opened to all who knock in faith. {ST, September 12, 1892 par. 5}

11. But when people put on godliness on the outside, what are they really denying? **2 Timothy 3:5**

EGW: The class represented by the foolish virgins are not hypocrites. They have a regard for the truth, they have advocated the truth, they are attracted to those who believe the truth; but they have not yielded themselves to the Holy Spirit's working. They have not fallen upon the Rock, Christ Jesus, and permitted their old nature to be broken up. This class are represented also by the stony-ground hearers. They receive the word with readiness, but they fail of assimilating its principles. Its influence is not abiding. The Spirit works upon man's heart, according to his desire and consent implanting in him a new nature; but the class represented by the foolish virgins have been content with a superficial work. They do not know God. They have not studied His character; they have not held communion with Him; therefore they do not know how to trust, how to look and live. Their service to God degenerates into a form. "They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as My people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness." Ezekiel 33:31. The apostle Paul points out that this will be the special characteristic of those who live just before Christ's second coming. He says, "In the last days perilous times shall come: for men shall be lovers of their own selves; . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." 2 Timothy 3:1-5. {COL 411.1}

12. What typically comes upon those that live a godly life? **2 Timothy 3:12**

EGW: The same enmity is manifested toward Christ's followers as was manifested toward their

Master. Whoever sees the repulsive character of sin, and, in strength from above, resists temptation, will assuredly arouse the wrath of Satan and his subjects. Hatred of the pure principles of truth, and reproach and persecution of its advocates, will exist as long as sin and sinners remain. The followers of Christ and the servants of Satan cannot harmonize. The offense of the cross has not ceased. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." [2 Timothy 3:12.] {GC88 506.4}

13. What are we to flee from and turn to godliness, among other things? **1 Timothy 6:10**

EGW: The love of money is the root of all evil. In this generation the desire for gain is the absorbing passion. If wealth cannot be secured by honest industry, men seek to obtain it by fraud. Widows and orphans are robbed of their scanty pittance, and poor men are made to suffer for the necessities of life. And all this that the rich may support their extravagance, or indulge their desire to hoard. The terrible record of crime daily committed for the sake of gain, is enough to chill the blood and fill the soul with horror. The fact that even among those who profess godliness the same sins exist to a greater or less extent, calls for deep humiliation of soul and earnest action on the part of the followers of Christ. Love of display and love of money have made this world a den of thieves and robbers. But Christians are professedly not dwellers upon the earth; they are in a strange country, stopping, as it were, only for a night. They should not be actuated by the same motives and desires as are those who have their home and treasure here. God designed that our lives should represent the life of our great Pattern; that, like Jesus, we should live to do others good. {ST, December 20, 1883 par. 10}

14. People look for modern day miracles, signs and wonders, but what is a godly character considered? **1 Timothy 3:16**

EGW: In giving us His word, God has put us in possession of every truth essential for our salvation. Thousands have drawn water from these wells of life, yet there is no diminishing of the supply. Thousands have set the Lord before them, and by beholding have been changed into the same image. Their spirit burns within them as they speak of His character, telling what Christ is to them, and what they are to Christ. But these searchers have not exhausted these grand and holy themes. Thousands more may engage in the work of searching out the mysteries of salvation. As the life of Christ and the character of His mission are dwelt upon, rays of light will shine forth more distinctly at every attempt to discover truth. Each fresh search will reveal something more deeply interesting than has yet been unfolded. The subject is inexhaustible. The study of the incarnation of Christ, His atoning sacrifice and mediatorial work, will employ the mind of the diligent student as long as time shall last; and looking to heaven with its unnumbered years he will exclaim, "Great is the mystery of

godliness." {COL 133.4}

15. What can we be and still be godly? **2 Corinthians 11:2**

EGW: The great sin of ancient Israel was in turning from God to idols. This is also the great sin of modern Israel. The apostle Paul said to the Gentile churches that he had raised up, "Ye turned from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from Heaven." He could truly say to many of them, "In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." When he saw them becoming indifferent, the ardor of their faith chilled by backslidings, he exclaimed, "I am jealous over you with godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." He entreats them to be followers of God as dear children, and to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God. Again, he exhorts them to walk in Christ Jesus, even as they had received him, that they might be rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith. He reminds them, "Ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory." To the Thessalonians he writes, "We beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us [the ministers of Christ] how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more." {RH, June 3, 1880 par. 2}

16. What does godly sorrow lead to? **2 Corinthians 7:9-10**

EGW: It could be said of them: "Ye sorrowed to repentance." "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this self-same 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! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter." [2 Corinthians 7:9-11.] {GC88 462.2}

This is the result of the work of the Spirit of God. There is no evidence of genuine repentance unless it works reformation. If he restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, confess his sins, and love God and his fellow-men, the sinner may be sure that he has found peace with God. Such were the effects that in former years followed seasons of religious awakening. Judged by their fruits, they were known to be blessed of God in the salvation of men and the uplifting of humanity. {GC88 462.3}

17. What are the godly to pray about so that it does not come nigh to the dwelling? **Psalms 32:6**

EGW: Constantly we are to press upward and forward to the light. It is the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit that is of value with God. Ornaments of gold and silver are of value only to please the eye and to be commented upon. "Looking unto Jesus," is the motto we are ever to keep in mind. "Men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed" (Psalm 72:17). "Great shall be the peace of thy children" (Isaiah 54:13). "Blessed are the people whom Thou choosest" (see Psalm 65:4). "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. . . . For this shall every one that is godly pray unto Thee in a time when Thou mayest be found: Surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him. Thou art my hiding place: Thou shalt preserve me from trouble: Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. . . . I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye" (Psalm 32:1, 2, 6-8). These promises are the assurance of God. {10MR 243.4}

When as God's peculiar people we take heed to His words, then will every one of us be able to say, "Our soul waiteth for the Lord: He is our help and our shield. For our heart shall rejoice in Him, because we have trusted in His holy name" (Psalm 33:20, 21). "I will bless the Lord at all times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together. I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. They looked unto Him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed" (Psalm 34:1-5). "Blessed are the people who hear the joyful sound" (see Psalm 89:15). I will "create Jerusalem a rejoicing and her people a joy" (Isaiah 65:18). {10MR 244.1}

18. Godly people seem to cease in existence when people seek to live after, imitate, and fit in with who? **Psalms 12:1**

EGW: If all that appears to be divine life were such in reality; if all who profess to present the truth to the world were preaching for the truth and not against it, and if they were men of God guided by His Spirit,--then might we see something cheering amid the prevailing moral darkness. But the spirit of antichrist is prevailing to such an extent as never before. Well may we exclaim: "Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men." I know that many think far too favorably of the present time. These ease-loving souls will be engulfed in the general ruin. Yet we do not despair. We have been inclined to think that where there are no faithful ministers there can be no true Christians, but this is not the case. God has promised that where the shepherds are not true He will take charge of the flock Himself. God has never made the flock wholly dependent upon human instrumentalities. But the days of purification of the church are hastening

on apace. God will have a people pure and true. In the mighty sifting soon to take place we shall be better able to measure the strength of Israel. The signs reveal that the time is near when the Lord will manifest that His fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor. {5T 79.4}

19. What do we need to develop before developing a godly life? **2 Peter 1:6**

EGW: But while the servant of Christ should seek with all patience and love to save sinners, he should on no account give license to sin. He must not allow his perceptions to be dulled by contact with iniquity, or his judgment to be perverted by the world's opinion. By excusing and palliating sin, we lose a sense of its heinous character. Compassion for the erring should not degenerate into indulgence for transgression. In order to preserve the safe mean, the Christian must add to patience godliness. Then he will see as God sees. {RH, December 20, 1881 par. 19}

20. What will a godly character lead to eventually having? **2 Peter 1:7**

EGW: There are still additional steps to take. Add "to godliness brotherly kindness." Thus there will not be merely a profession of Bible religion, but a sincere, earnest practice of godliness. We must be partakers of the divine nature before we can represent the Christlike character and practice the works of Christ. The climbing Christian will not sit passively, claiming the promises, enjoying the grace given him of God, but will work from principle. He is a worker together with God. The grace given him of God teaches him how to be kind and tender and helpful to his brethren. There is no waiting for an overpowering, magical change to be wrought into the conversion of others without any action of our own. Life becomes a humble but earnest working out of salvation with fear and with trembling, knowing that God worketh in us both to will and to do of His own good pleasure. The very exercise of brotherly kindness assimilates the soul to Christ and brings him into sympathy with Christ. {19MR 347.2}