

Lesson 66 - The Character of Avoiding Wrath

1. What are we to do with wrath and what are we to do with anger showing that they are separate items? **Psalms 37:8**

EGW: "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil, for evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth." While we desire to know the way of the Lord, let us examine ourselves critically and see wherein we refuse to walk in the light when our ideas and plans are thwarted. Do we behave like foolish, disobedient children because the Lord, seeing the peril that threatens the prosperity of His cause, deprives us of some seeming good? Is not the Lord He who searcheth the heart? Will He not reveal the mistakes made in planning and handling His own work? Will He allow the work that is not being carried forward symmetrically to remain imperfect? {Ms109-1899}

2. Who is our example regarding wrath showing that not all wrath is wrong? **Jeremiah 10:10**

EGW: Those who claim to be Christians, who profess to believe the truth, and yet drink at the polluted fountains of infidelity, and by precept and example draw others away from the cold, snow-waters of Lebanon, are fools though they profess themselves to be wise. "Hear ye the word which the Lord speaketh unto you, O house of Israel: Thus saith the Lord, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. . . . But the Lord is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting King: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation. Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens. He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion. When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasure. Every man is brutish in his knowledge; every founder is confounded by his graven image; for his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them. They are vanity, and the work of errors: in the time of their visitation they shall perish. The portion of Jacob is not like them: for he is the former of all things; and Israel is the rod of his inheritance: The Lord of hosts is his name." {RH, November 10, 1891 par. 10}

3. When a person is slow to wrath, what do they possess? **Proverbs 14:29**

EGW: You have repeatedly said: "I can't keep my temper." "I have to speak." You lack a meek, humble spirit. Self is all alive, and you stand guard continually to preserve it from mortification or insult. Says the apostle: "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Those who are dead to self will not feel so readily and will not be prepared to resist everything which may irritate. Dead men cannot feel. You are not dead. If you were, and your life were hid in Christ, a thousand things which you now notice, and which afflict you, would be passed by as unworthy of notice; you would then be grasping the eternal and would be above the petty trials of this life. {2T 425.1}

"The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity." "The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression." "He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly." "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." "He that hath knowledge spareth his words: and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit." Margin, "a cool spirit." {2T 426.1}

4. Who does God direct His wrath towards? **Job 21:30, Romans 1:18**

EGW: Spiritual idleness means spiritual unfaithfulness. Could every idler in the market-place understand the penalty of slothfulness, he would be up and doing. The Word declares that he which is unfaithful in that which is least is unfaithful also in much. All his work bears the impression of unfaithfulness. None will be pleased to meet their unfaithfulness in the judgment; for the "wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and godhead; so that they are without excuse; because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." These words represent the case of the servant who hid his Lord's treasure, in the place of using it to the glory of God. {ST, August 18, 1898 par. 13}

5. When God turns His wrath upon His people, what is it over? **2 Chronicles 24:18**

EGW: (no comment)

6. What specific commandment breaking draws God's greatest amount of wrath? **Nehemiah 13:18**

EGW: At the restoration of Jerusalem, in the days of Nehemiah, Sabbath-breaking was met with the stern inquiry, "Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath." Nehemiah 13:18. {RH, November 6, 1913 par. 14}

Christ during his ministry on this earth emphasized the binding claims of the Sabbath, in all his teaching showing reverence for the institution he himself had given. In the days of Christ, the Sabbath had become so perverted that its observance reflected the character of selfish and arbitrary men, rather than the character of God. Christ set aside the false teaching by which those who claimed to know God had misrepresented him. Although the rabbis followed him with merciless hostility, he did not even appear to conform to their requirements, but went straight forward keeping the Sabbath according to the law of God. {RH, November 6, 1913 par. 15}

In unmistakable language he testified to his regard for this law. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets," he said; "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:17-19. {RH, November 6, 1913 par. 16}

7. To cause God's wrath to cease, what are we to become, setting an example for us to follow when others do the same? **2 Chronicles 12:12**

EGW: "So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house; he took all: he carried away also the shields of gold which Solomon had made. Instead of which King Rehoboam made shields of brass, and committed them to the hands of the chief of the guard, that kept the entrance of the king's house. And when the king entered into the house of the Lord, the guard came and fetched them, and brought them again into the guard chamber. And when he humbled himself, the wrath of the Lord turned from him, that he would not destroy him altogether: and also in Judah things went well." {RH, July 10, 1913 par. 11}

But as the hand of affliction was removed, and the nation prospered once more, many forgot their fears, and turned again to idolatry. Among these was King Rehoboam himself. Humbled as he had been by the calamity that befell him from Egypt, he failed to make this experience a decisive turning-point in his life. Forgetting the lesson that God had endeavored to teach him, he relapsed into the sins that had brought the judgments of God on the nation. {RH, July 10, 1913 par. 12}

8. What is another word for proud that we ought to avoid lest we bring upon ourselves God's wrath?
Exodus 32:9, Acts 7:51

EGW: As Stephen spoke of Christ and referred to the temple, he saw that the people were rejecting his words; and he fearlessly rebuked them: "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost." While they observed the outward ordinances of their religion, their hearts were corrupt and full of deadly evil. He referred to the cruelty of their fathers in persecuting the prophets, and declared that those whom he addressed had committed a greater sin in rejecting and crucifying Christ. "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers." {EW 198.1}

9. Who will be inappropriately stirred to wrath or wrathful acts? **Beginning of Revelation 18:3, Revelation 14:8**

EGW: "It is our individual duty to walk humbly with God. We are not to seek any strange, new message. We are not to think that the chosen ones of God who are trying to walk in the light, compose Babylon. The fallen denominational churches are Babylon. Babylon has been fostering poisonous doctrines, the wine of error. This wine of error is made up of false doctrines, such as the natural immortality of the soul, the eternal torment of the wicked, the denial of the pre-existence of Christ prior to his birth in Bethlehem, and advocating and exalting the first day of the week above God's holy, sanctified day. These and kindred errors are presented to the world by the various, churches, and thus the Scriptures are fulfilled that say, 'For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.' It is a wrath which is created by false doctrines, and when kings and presidents drink this wine of the wrath of her fornication, they are stirred with anger against those who will not come into harmony with the false and Satanic heresies which exalt the false Sabbath, and lead men to trample under foot God's memorial. {RH, September 12, 1893 par. 20}

10. Who is the target of their wrath? **Revelation 12:17, Luke 21:23**

EGW: Of those who honor Jesus, and keep the commandments of the Lord, Christ has said, "Marvel not if the world hate you." We can expect no better treatment from the world than the treatment given to the law of God. Those who vindicate the law of God by keeping the commandments, will be targets for the wrath of the dragon, and opposition to righteousness will not end until evil is destroyed; for as long as human nature is under the control of the enemy of all righteousness, enmity to the righteous will be manifested through the children of men. The offense of the cross has

not ceased by any means. Satan has his most efficient batteries masked under pretensions to godliness, and he will cause them to open fire upon the followers of Jesus Christ. The servants of God must expect that they will be reviled, misrepresented, maligned, persecuted, and oppressed; for all who "will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." The people of God will stand firm to the faith only through the grace of God. "The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." The great rebel against God is leading his armies to the conflict; but let the followers of Christ bear in mind the fact that he can bruise only the heel, while those who are loyal to Christ by their fidelity and piety shall bruise the head of the serpent. While men are making void the law of God, we must pray, as did David, "It is time for thee, Lord, to work; for they have made void thy law." Through Christ believers will gain the mastery, and inch by inch they will contest the ground, and obtain the victory. {ST, November 14, 1895 par. 4}

11. Whose character are these wrathful acts reflecting? **Revelation 12:12**

EGW: The apostle John in vision heard a loud voice in Heaven exclaiming, "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." [Revelation 12:12.] Fearful are the scenes which call forth this exclamation from the heavenly voice. The wrath of Satan increases as his time grows short, and his work of deceit and destruction will reach its culmination in the time of trouble. {GC88 623.2}

12. What are we to be careful to not work against? **James 1:19-20**

EGW: Meekness in the school of Christ is one of the marked fruits of the Spirit. It is a grace wrought by the Holy Spirit as a sanctifier, and enables its possessor at all times to control a rash and impetuous temper. When the grace of meekness is cherished by those who are naturally sour or hasty in disposition, they will put forth the most earnest efforts to subdue their unhappy temper. Every day they will gain self-control, until that which is unlovely and unlike Jesus is conquered. They become assimilated to the Divine Pattern, until they can obey the inspired injunction, "Be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (James 1:19). {SL 15.2}

13. Who did Moses not fear wrath from and that shows us an example to not fear what the governments of the world can and will do? **Hebrews 11:24-27**

EGW: The men of the world are dwellers upon the earth. They know no other conversation but earthly. They are blinded by the god of this world. Moles are ever burrowing in the earth. They

cannot see. So is the understanding of world-loving men darkened. Many professed Christians are no better. Their affections are on earthly things. They view the truth and heavenly things from the worldling's stand-point. They mistake gain for godliness, sin for grace, the world for God, and their own wills for the will of God. There are more of this class than many suppose. Moses esteemed "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible." {RH, March 29, 1870 par. 20}

14. What are we to do with unrighteous wrath by the grace of God? **Colossians 3:8, Ephesians 4:31**

EGW: This whole chapter should be carefully studied. What is the charge given us? "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: in the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now [after pledging yourself to serve Christ in truth and verify] ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth" [verses 5-8]. {18MR 104.3}

Notice the next verse: "Lie not one to another." If you have solemnly covenanted with God, in the presence of Christ and the Holy Spirit, to act as a member of the royal family, a child of the heavenly King, you will not in your life lie against the truth you profess to believe. You will not reveal by your works that you are a sinner, while professing to be a saint. If you are sincere in making this pledge, you will not be found nullifying your prayer. "Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven," by acting as sinners act whenever it best suits your convenience to act thus, and when you can advantage yourself and at your neighbor's disadvantage. {18MR 104.5}

15. If we do not control wrath, what shall we not enter into? **Galatians 5:19-21**

EGW: The greatest detriment to our churches, that which brings them into weakness and disfavor with God, is unhappy jealousies and differences. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Then let every soul examine himself, and see if he is approaching the committal of any such sins. {RH, June 28, 1887 par. 5}

16. What shall wrathful people receive? **Proverbs 19:19**

EGW: (no comment)

17. Life is tough enough with the heavy burdens but whose wrath makes it heavier still? **Proverbs 27:3**

EGW: (no comment)

18. When people lose self-control, become wrathful, a person to be feared, what does it bring forth?
Proverbs 30:33, Proverbs 15:18

EGW: (no comment)

19. What does it take to turn people away from their wrath? **Proverbs 29:8, Proverbs 16:14**

EGW: (no comment)

20. What wise action should be taken to deal with a wrathful person? **Proverbs 15:1**

EGW: If impatient words are spoken to you, never reply in the same spirit. Remember that "a soft answer turneth away wrath." [Proverbs 15:1.] And there is wonderful power in silence. Words spoken in reply to one who is angry sometimes serve only to exasperate; but anger met with silence, in a tender, forbearing spirit, quickly dies away. {GW 475.4}