

Lesson 67 - The Character of Avoiding Evil Speaking

1. What is our conversation supposed to be like? **1 Peter 1:15, 2 Peter 3:11**

EGW: While we can have only humble views of self, as we behold the purity and completeness of the character of our Redeemer, still God is not well pleased to have his followers bowed down in sadness and gloom. His arm is mighty to save, his grace is strong to deliver. He would have us wear a cheerful face, and bear hearts full of rejoicing. But we are not to indulge in jesting and joking, and in trifling conversation. For "as he which has called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." The sharper the assaults of the enemy, the nearer will Jesus draw, and the more will his grace be bestowed upon us. In place of yielding to discouragements, and gathering about us the gloom of unbelief, we should take advantage of our high privilege, and come into the sunshine of the presence of the Lord. We should ever press forward to meet a higher standard of excellence in our life and deportment. {RH, August 7, 1888 par. 12}

2. What is considered inappropriate conversation? **Ephesians 5:3-4**

EGW: "Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks." {TSA 80.3}

Let this entire chapter be studied by those who claim to believe the truth for this time. Open the heart to the grace of Christ. While we lament deplorable errors, let us receive the precious lessons of instruction the Lord Jesus has given us. God requires every heart to be filled with pure, clean, sanctified, Christlike love. The love of Christ must not be lost out of our humanity. We are labourers together with God. Ye are God's husbandry; ye are God's building. Christ declares, "Without me ye can do nothing." Then open the door of the heart and let Jesus in. He is the great worker as well as the lawgiver. The members of our churches need to awake to the realization that they must have none of self and all of Jesus. We must co-operate with the Lord Jesus. The soul is to be awakened to cry aloud with every aspiration for the living God. Let your swelling, struggling heart break for the longing it has for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Let every one who has had an experience in their life in Christ show an earnest faith in God as the true worker. Show that you realize that you are only a channel through which God works. Appreciate the fact that God is our efficiency. We do not remember this, and therefore we lose much in religious experience. We work ourselves in place of being worked by the Holy Spirit's power. We forget to regard ourselves as merely agents. {TSA 80.4}

3. When someone's feelings get hurt, what is a typical phrase spoken by the one doing the offending?
Proverbs 26:19

EGW: God's word condemns also the use of those meaningless phrases and expletives that border on profanity. It condemns the deceptive compliments, the evasions of truth, the exaggerations, the misrepresentations in trade, that are current in society and in the business world. "Let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one." Matthew 5:37, R.V. {Ed 236.1}

"As a madman who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, so is the man that deceiveth his neighbor, and saith, Am not I in sport?" Proverbs 26:18, 19. {Ed 236.2}

Closely allied to gossip is the covert insinuation, the sly innuendo, by which the unclean in heart seek to insinuate the evil they dare not openly express. Every approach to these practices the youth should be taught to shun as they would shun the leprosy. {Ed 236.3}

4. What is another title applied to evil speaking? **Psalms 34:13, Psalms 32:2, Revelation 14:5, John 1:47**

EGW: Trial will come to you. Thus the Lord polishes the roughness from your character. Do not murmur. You make the trial harder by repining. Honor God by cheerful submission. Patiently endure the pressure. Even though a wrong is done you, keep the love of God in the heart. "Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry." {MYP 97.2}

5. What is evil speaking also known as? **Psalms 38:12**

EGW: (no comment)

6. What is the heart studying for those that speak of mischief? **Proverbs 24:2**

EGW: (no comment)

7. When speaking evil of something, what do they do to themselves? **Jude 1:10**

EGW: (no comment)

8. When people want to continue sinning, who do they speak evil of? **Jude 1:8, 2 Peter 2:10**

EGW: The Bible specially teaches us to beware of lightly bringing accusation against those whom God has called to act as His ambassadors. The apostle Peter, describing a class who are abandoned sinners, says, "Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord." 2 Peter 2:10, 11. And Paul, in his instruction for those who are placed over the church, says, "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses." 1 Timothy 5:19. He who has placed upon men the heavy responsibility of leaders and teachers of His people will hold the people accountable for the manner in which they treat His servants. We are to honor those whom God has honored. The judgment visited upon Miriam should be a rebuke to all who yield to jealousy, and murmur against those upon whom God lays the burden of His work. {PP 386.1}

9. What do many people speak evil of that in reality is stupid, especially when salvation is involved? **2 Peter 2:12**

EGW: The apostle Peter distinctly points out the class which will be manifested in these days. 2 Peter 2:10-14: "But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. But these, as natural brute beasts made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption, and shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the daytime. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls; a heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children." {RH, April 15, 1875 par. 2}

God, in his word, has placed his stamp upon the heresies of spiritualism as he placed his mark upon Cain. The godly need not be deceived if they are students of the Scriptures and obedient to follow the plain path marked out for them in the word of God. {RH, April 15, 1875 par. 3}

The boastful spiritualist claims great freedom, and in smooth, flowery language seeks to fascinate and delude unwary souls to choose the broad path of pleasure and sinful indulgence, rather than the narrow path and the straight way. Spiritualists call the requirements of God's law bondage, and say those who obey them live a life of slavish fear. With smooth words and fair speeches they boast of their freedom, and seek to cover their dangerous heresies with the garments of righteousness. They would make the most revolting crimes be considered as blessings to the race. {RH, April 15, 1875 par. 4}

10. What topic is the most misunderstood topic? **Proverbs 28:5**

EGW: (no comment)

11. When riotous people try to entice others to join them but some refuse to join, what will these riotous people do? **1 Peter 4:4**

EGW: (no comment)

12. What will such riotous people specifically describe the non-conformist as being? **1 Peter 3:16**

EGW: "He that sayeth he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." He who professes to be a follower of Christ should set a Christ-like example. Let him not be as those who have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof. When in company with those who are light and trifling, with the scorner and unbeliever, "let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: . . . let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." The following words are to instruct you as to what you shall do and say: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you [mark the manner], with meekness and fear: having a good conscience; that whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing." You are to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; but what kind of fear are you to feel?--It is a holy fear, lest self shall appear, lest feelings of self-esteem and superiority shall mingle with your testimony; for if you would rightly represent Christ, self must be hid in Jesus. {YI, November 10, 1892 par. 3}

13. When brethren speak evil of one another, what are they really speaking evil of? **James 4:11**

EGW: God has forbidden us to think or speak evil of one another. "Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?" Those who act toward their fellow men without mercy will one day themselves feel the need of mercy. {RH, October 29, 1901 par. 3}

14. What is a person considered if they practice speaking evil of others? **Luke 6:45**

EGW: We need a more heavenly atmosphere to surround our souls. We need to have our lips touched with a live coal from off the altar. We need to hear the word from Christ, "Be thou clean." If we have scattered darkness, if we have accumulated rubbish, and hoarded doubts, if we have planted seeds of doubt and discouragement in the minds of others, may God help us to see our sin. We cannot afford to drop a single word of doubt; for it will germinate and grow, and bring forth a bitter harvest. We should take heed to the exhortation, "Be ye holy in all manner of conversation." One seed of doubt sown, and it is beyond the power of men to kill it. God alone can pluck it from the soul. Our words are an indication of what is in the heart. Jesus says: "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." {ST, May 2, 1895 par. 3}

15. What happens to the name of an evil speaker? **Psalms 41:5, Job 18:17, Jeremiah 11:19, Deuteronomy 29:20**

EGW: The Lord can not bear much longer with an intemperate and perverse generation. In days of old, when Moses was rehearsing the desire of Jehovah concerning his people, there were uttered against the drunkard the following words: -- {RH, October 25, 1906 par. 9}

"The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousies shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven." {RH, October 25, 1906 par. 10}

16. What should not be found in our mouth? **Psalms 10:7**

EGW: (no comment)

17. What type of mouth does God hate? **Proverbs 8:13**

EGW: "And let not corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth." "Thus saith the Lord, Pride, arrogance, and a froward mouth do I hate." The end is near. Work unselfishly while the [day] lasts, for the night cometh in which no man can work. To those who are honored in acting a part in the Echo office, in any branch, I would say, You may feel that you are honored. Christ is looking upon the work in its various branches. In a special manner this is the place for you to practice unselfishness, revealing the character of God. Seek to be more and more like Jesus, growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. {Lt39-1898}

18. What should we do to our mouths when thoughts of evil are on the mind? **Proverbs 30:32**

EGW: (no comment)

19. When putting away evil speaking, what are we to practice one towards another as Christ has done towards us? **Ephesians 4:31-32**

EGW: God admonishes his people: "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor." {RH, September 21, 1897 par. 9}

The sin of much talking is not small. Words bitter as gall may be spoken in the heat of satanic passion; but when the sin is realized, why is it not acknowledged? It may be that some have

cultivated a spirit of evil surmising, and have communicated their suppositions to others. But those whose hearts are right with God will say: I cannot hear these evil reports. If you know evil of your brethren and sisters, go to them, in the spirit of Christ, and talk it over with them. Get it out of the way. Let no flaw in your speech, no defect in your spirit, break the friendship and love which Christ has enjoined upon you to cultivate. "A word fitly spoken," says the wise man, "is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." {RH, September 21, 1897 par. 10}

20. What do those that refrain their tongue from evil and speaking no guile happen to love and want to see? **1 Peter 3:10**

EGW: Such dishonor God, and bring the religion of Christ into disrepute. They have not true love for God, nor for their companions and children. Their affections have become morbid. But vain amusements will never correct the minds of such. They need the transforming influence of the Spirit of God in order to be happy. They need to be benefited by the mediation of Christ, in order to realize consolation, divine and substantial. "For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." Those who have an experimental knowledge of this scripture are truly happy. They consider the approbation of Heaven of more worth than any earthly amusement; Christ in them the hope of glory will be health to the body and strength to the soul. {1T 566.2}

21. In laying aside evil speaking, among other things, what is desired? **1 Peter 2:1-2**

EGW: We are to see and understand the instruction given us by the great apostle, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby," in perception, in likeness to the character of Christ. Development of character, growth in knowledge and wisdom, will be the sure result of feeding on the word. {MM 124.2}