

## Lesson 70 - The Character of Avoiding Unrighteousness

### 1. What is unrighteousness? **1 John 5:17**

**EGW:** The world's Redeemer declares, "I have kept my Father's commandments." "I counsel thee," saith the True Witness, "to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." Christ's righteousness will not cover the unrighteousness of any one. "All unrighteousness is sin," and "sin is the transgression of the law," therefore, those who are breaking the law of God and teaching others to break it, will not be covered with the garments of Christ's righteousness. He came not to save men in their sins; but from their sins. "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in him." These utterances are weighty, and should be duly considered. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned [transgressed the law], we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." "My little children, these things I write unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." We need an advocate with the Father, because it is the Father's law that we have broken. We need to repent of our transgression, and return to our allegiance to God. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins: and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not; whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him." Here it is plainly stated that whosoever abideth in Christ will not be a transgressor of the law of God. {RH, July 24, 1888 par. 12}

### 2. What are those that do unrighteousness considered before God? **Deuteronomy 25:16**

**EGW:** No man who is dishonest with God or with his fellow-men can truly prosper. The most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, says, "Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small; thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small; but thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have: that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. For all that do such things, and all that do unrighteously, are an abomination unto the Lord thy God." Through the prophet Micah, the Lord again expresses his abhorrence of dishonesty: "Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure that is abominable? Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weights? For the rich men thereof are full of violence, and the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth. Therefore also will I make thee sick in smiting thee, in making thee desolate because of thy sins." {RH,

December 17, 1889 par. 7}

3. What are people resisting so that it does not interfere with their pleasures of unrighteousness? **2 Thessalonians 2:10-12**

**EGW:** Says the prophet Isaiah: "When they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony. If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." [Isaiah 8:19, 20.] If men had been willing to receive the truth so plainly stated in the Scriptures, concerning the nature of man and the state of the dead, they would see in the claims and manifestations of Spiritualism the working of Satan with power and signs and lying wonders. But rather than yield the liberty so agreeable to the carnal heart, and renounce the sins which they love, multitudes close their eyes to the light, and walk straight on, regardless of warnings, while Satan weaves his snares about them, and they become his prey. "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved," therefore "God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." [2 Thessalonians 2:10, 11.] {GC88 559.2}

4. What is the motive of people towards God regarding wanting to be unrighteous? **Romans 1:28-32**

**EGW:** For some time the two classes remained separate. The race of Cain, spreading from the place of their first settlement, dispersed over the plains and valleys where the children of Seth had dwelt; and the latter, in order to escape from their contaminating influence, withdrew to the mountains, and there made their home. So long as this separation continued, they maintained the worship of God in its purity. But in the lapse of time they ventured, little by little, to mingle with the inhabitants of the valleys. This association was productive of the worst results. "The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair." The children of Seth, attracted by the beauty of the daughters of Cain's descendants, displeased the Lord by intermarrying with them. Many of the worshipers of God were beguiled into sin by the allurements that were now constantly before them, and they lost their peculiar, holy character. Mingling with the depraved, they became like them in spirit and in deeds; the restrictions of the seventh commandment were disregarded, "and they took them wives of all which they chose." The children of Seth went "in the way of Cain" (Jude 11); they fixed their minds upon worldly prosperity and enjoyment and neglected the commandments of the Lord. Men "did not like to retain God in their knowledge;" they "became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." Romans 1:21. Therefore "God gave them over to a mind void of judgment." Verse 28, margin. Sin spread abroad in the earth like a deadly leprosy. {PP 81.2}

5. Those that do not want to obey the truth, what are they considered? **Romans 2:8**

**EGW:** Is not the reward of obedience rich and full? What more can we ask? Has not the Lord Jesus opened for us the gates of paradise? Has he not, in doing this, given the faithful seeker all the treasures of the eternal world? "But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth [the commandments of God], but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first [for he has the greatest light, and his guilt will be proportioned to the knowledge which he might have had, had he followed on to know the Lord], and also of the Gentile; but glory, honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; for there is no respect of persons with God." {ST, November 16, 1891 par. 5}

6. Who are we not to bond our lives with be it as business partners or marital? **2 Corinthians 6:14**

**EGW:** The Lord's injunction, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," refers not only to the marriage of Christians with the ungodly, but to all alliances in which the parties are brought into intimate association, and in which there is need of harmony in spirit and action. . . . {Ev 617.4}

Even in business relations we cannot, without involving principle, connect ourselves with those who are not loyal to God. What the one party feels that conscience forbids, the other allows. And this not merely in regard to religious matters, but in business transactions. The one acts from selfish motives, regardless of God's law or the salvation of the soul; and if the other sincerely loves God and the truth, there must be either a sacrifice of principle or frequent and painful differences. It will require a continual struggle to resist the worldly influence and example of his ungodly associate. He has great difficulties to meet; for he has placed himself on the enemy's ground. The only safe course is to give heed to the inspired injunction: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean; and I will receive you." {HS 215.4}

7. Who is an example of living an unrighteous life and yet was a servant of God most of his life? **2 Peter 2:15**

**EGW:** There is no such thing in the Word of God as unconditional election--once in grace, always in grace. In the second chapter of Second Peter the subject is made plain and distinct. After a history of some who followed an evil course, the explanation is given: "Which have forsaken the right way, ... following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness." 2 Peter 2:15.... Here is a class of whom the apostle warns, "For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy

commandment delivered unto them." 2 Peter 2:21.... {FLB 157.3}

8. What is placed upon those that try to make it in this world by use of unrighteousness even if it is for a short period of time? **Jeremiah 22:13**

**EGW:** The liquor-dealer will not hesitate to collect the debts of the drunkard from his suffering family, and will take the very necessities from the home to pay the drink bill of the deceased husband and father. What is it to him if the children of the dead starve? He looks upon them as debased and ignorant creatures, who have been abused, kicked about, and degraded; and he has no care for their welfare. But the God that rules in the heavens has not lost sight of the first cause or the least effect of the inexpressible misery and debasement that have come upon the drunkard and his family. The ledger of heaven contains every item of the history. The world and the church may unite in eulogizing the man who has tempted the appetite, and answered the craving of the appetite he has helped to create; they may look with a smile upon him who has helped to debase a man who was formed in the image of God, until that image is virtually effaced; but God looks with a frown upon him, and writes his condemnation in the ledger of death. The world may have approval for the man who has gained wealth by degrading the human soul, by leading him down step by step in the path of shame and degradation; but God notes it all, and renders a just judgment. He may be termed by the world a good business man; but the Lord says, "Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbor's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work; that saith, I will build me a wide house and large chambers, and cutteth him out windows; and it is ceiled with cedar, and painted with vermilion. Shalt thou reign, because thou closeth thyself in cedar?" {RH, May 15, 1894 par. 8}

9. What action does Congress do along with the leadership in the White House that causes God to place a woe upon their unrighteous ways? **Isaiah 10:1**

**EGW:** An idol sabbath has been set up, as the golden image was set up in the plains of Dura. And as Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, issued a decree that all who would not bow down and worship this image should be killed, so a proclamation will be made that all who will not reverence the Sunday institution will be punished with imprisonment and death. Thus the Sabbath of the Lord is trampled underfoot. But the Lord has declared, "Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and write grievousness which they have prescribed" [Isaiah 10:1]. [Zephaniah 1:14-18; 2:1-3, quoted.] {14MR 91.3}

10. What will the unrighteous miss out on? **1 Corinthians 6:9**

**EGW:** Said the apostle Paul, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? ... And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. The absence of devotion, piety, and sanctification of the outer man comes through denying Jesus Christ our righteousness. The love of God needs to be constantly cultivated. {6MR 147.3}

11. "[Is there] unrighteousness with God?" **Romans 9:14, Psalms 92:15**

**EGW:** Your experience should not be ten, twenty, or thirty years old, but you should have a daily, living experience, that you may be able to give to each his portion of meat in due season. Look forward, not backward. Never be obliged to tug at your memory in order to relate some past experience. What does that amount to today to you or to others? While you treasure all that is good in your past experience, you want a brighter, fresher experience as you pass along. Do not boast of what you have done in the past, but show what you can do now. Let your works and not your words praise you. Prove the promise of God "that those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; and they shall be fat and flourishing; to show that the Lord is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him." {RH, April 6, 1886 par. 6}

12. If God's vengeance were considered an unrighteous act, what would not be conducted? **Romans 3:5-6**

**EGW:** (no comment)

13. Why can the unrighteous not claim ignorance of God's will? **Romans 1:18-19**

**EGW:** "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" (Hebrews 3:1). Study Christ. Study His character, feature by feature. He is our pattern that we are required to copy in our lives and our characters, else we fail to represent Jesus, but present to the world a spurious copy. Do not imitate any man, for men are defective in habits, in speech, in manners, in character. I present before you the Man Christ Jesus. You must individually know Him as your Saviour before you can study Him as your pattern and your example. Said Paul, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith...."

Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them" (Romans 1:16-19). {12MR 190.1}

14. How do we fight unrighteousness? **Romans 6:13**

**EGW:** "Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." [Romans 6:12, 13.] Professed Christians, if there were no further light given you than that contained in this text, you would be without excuse in suffering yourselves to be controlled by base passion. The word of God is sufficient to enlighten the most beclouded mind, and it can be understood by those who have any wish to understand it. But in order to give men and women every possible warning, God has sent plain, direct testimonies, pointing them to the word they have neglected to follow. Yet the light is often rejected. Those who serve their own lusts, continue to take pleasure in unrighteousness, notwithstanding the vengeance threatened against those who do such things. {CTBH 129.1}

15. Seeing we cannot change unrighteous people and have to deal with unrighteousness being conducted towards us, what can we do? **Psalms 71:4**

**EGW:** I have been shown that Satan, transformed into an angel of light, works with all deceivableness of unrighteousness. He who could take up the Son of God, who was made a little lower than the angels, and place him upon a pinnacle of the temple, and take him up into an exceeding high mountain to present before him the kingdoms of the world, can exercise his power upon the human family, who are far inferior in strength and wisdom to the Son of God, even after he had taken upon himself man's nature. In this degenerate age, Satan holds control over mortals who depart from the right, and venture upon his ground. He exercises his power upon such in an alarming manner. I was directed to these words, "Intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind." Some, I was shown, gratify their curiosity, and tamper with the Devil. They have no real faith in Spiritualism, and would start back with horror at the idea of being a medium. Yet they venture, and place themselves in a position where Satan can exercise his power upon them. They do not mean to enter deep into this work, but such know not what they are doing. They are venturing upon the Devil's ground, and are tempting him to control them. This powerful destroyer considers such his lawful prey, and will exercise his power upon them, and that against their will. When they wish to control themselves they cannot. They yielded their mind to Satan, and he holds them captive, and he will not release his claims. No power can deliver the ensnared soul but the power of God, in answer to the earnest prayers of his faithful followers. {4bSG 88.1}

16. To have no unrighteousness in us, who are we to glorify in all that we do? **John 7:18**

**EGW:** We need not be surprised if we pass through a similar experience. Men who do not make Christ their all and in all, but have a superficial faith, will not understand the words of Christ. Many unite themselves with Christ expecting to secure some temporal advantage, but the Gospel requirements offend them. Not having united with Christ to do the will of God, they have no spiritual life. Had they received his word, they would have had understanding. Said Christ: "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him." {ST, July 15, 1897 par. 8}

17. What activity ought we to guard unrighteousness from influencing? **Leviticus 19:15**

**EGW:** The Lord has given instruction to lawmakers, and has said, "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment; thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty; but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor." He that rules over men should rule in the fear of God. The prophet says, "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain." Those who take upon themselves the responsibility of governing men, will have to give an account of all the works they do. {RH, October 1, 1895 par. 6}

18. When called to report something or take action about someone (representative of the hand), what type of person are we to avoid being? **Exodus 23:1**

**EGW:** You shall not circulate a false report. Do not put your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness. Exodus 23:1, NKJV. {BLJ 178.1}

I saw that the Lord still has something to do with the laws of the land. While Jesus is in the sanctuary, God's restraining Spirit is felt by rulers and people. But Satan controls to a great extent the mass of the world, and were it not for the laws of the land, we should experience much suffering. I was shown that when it is actually necessary, and they are called upon to testify in a lawful manner, it is no violation of God's Word for His children to solemnly take God to witness that what they say is the truth, and nothing but the truth. {BLJ 178.2}

Human beings are so corrupt that laws are made to throw the responsibility upon their own heads.

Some men and women do not fear to lie to other people; but they have been taught, and the restraining Spirit of God has impressed them, that it is a fearful thing to lie to God. The case of Ananias and Sapphira his wife is given for an example. The matter is carried from humans to God, so that if one bears false witness, it is not to mortals, but to the great God, who reads the heart, and knows the exact truth in every case. Our laws make it a high crime to take a false oath. God has often visited judgment upon false swearers, and even while the oath was on their lips, the destroying angel has cut them down. This was to prove a terror to evildoers. {BLJ 178.3}

I saw that if there is anyone on earth who can consistently testify under oath, it is Christians. They live in the light of God's countenance. They grow strong in His strength. And when matters of importance must be decided by law, there is no one who can so well appeal to God as the Christian.... {BLJ 178.4}

Jesus submitted to the oath in the hour of His trial. The high priest said unto Him: "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus said unto him: "Thou hast said." If Jesus in His teachings to His disciples referred to the judicial oath, He would have reproved the high priest, and there enforced His teachings, for the good of His followers present. {BLJ 178.5}

Satan has been pleased that some have viewed oath taking in a wrong light; for it has given him opportunity to oppress them and take from them their Lord's money. The stewards of God must be more wise, lay their plans, and prepare themselves to withstand Satan's devices; for he is to make greater efforts than ever before.—Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, pp. 202, 203. {BLJ 178.6}

19. What is Jesus willing to do with all of our unrighteousness? **1 John 1:9, Isaiah 55:7**

**EGW:** "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The conditions of obtaining mercy from God are simple and reasonable. The Lord does not require us to do some grievous thing in order to gain forgiveness. We need not make long and wearisome pilgrimages, or perform painful penances, to commend our souls to the God of heaven or to expiate our transgression. He that "confesseth and forsaketh" his sin "shall have mercy." Proverbs 28:13. {AA 552.1}

20. Once Jesus does that to our unrighteousness, what is it that we have received freely? **Beginning of Hebrews 8:12**

**EGW:** The most striking feature of the covenant of peace that the Lord has made with human beings

is the exceeding richness of the pardoning mercy offered to the sinner if he repents and turns from sin. "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness," the Lord declares of those who repent, "and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Does God turn from justice in showing mercy to the sinner?--No; God can never dishonor His law by suffering it to be transgressed with impunity. Under the new covenant, perfect obedience is the condition of life. If the sinner repents, and confesses his sin, he will find pardon. Forgiveness is secured for him by Christ's sacrifice in his behalf. Christ has paid the demands of the law for every repentant, believing sinner. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, ... full of grace and truth.... And of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace." {ST, June 28, 1905 par. 4}