

Lesson 71 - The Character of Living Righteous

1. Regarding God's kingdom and his righteousness, what action are we to take? **Matthew 6:33, Matthew 5:6**

EGW: We have no enemy without that we need to fear. Our great conflict is with unconsecrated self. When we conquer self, we are more than conquerors through him who has loved us. My brethren, there is eternal life for us to win. Let us fight the good fight of faith. Not in the future, but now, is our probation. While it lingers, "seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things,"--the things which now so often serve Satan's purpose as snares to deceive and destroy,--"shall be added unto you." God's chosen ones must be gold, not wood, hay, and stubble. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." {RH, March 5, 1908 par. 12}

2. When the declaration of those that are righteous and those that are holy, what is it based upon? **Revelation 22:11-12**

EGW: The righteous, like Jacob, will manifest unyielding faith and earnest determination, which will take no denial. They will feel their unworthiness, but will have no concealed wrongs to reveal. If they had sins, unconfessed and unrepented of, to appear then before them, while tortured with fear and anguish, with a lively sense of all their unworthiness, they would be overwhelmed. Despair would cut off their earnest faith, and they could not have confidence to plead with God thus earnestly for deliverance, and their precious moments would be spent in confessing hidden sins, and bewailing their hopeless condition. {1SP 123.1}

Those professed believers who come up to the time of trouble unprepared, will, in their despair, confess their sins before all in words of burning anguish, while the wicked exult over their distress. The case of all such is hopeless. When Christ stands up, and leaves the most holy place, then the time of trouble commences, and the case of every soul is decided, and there will be no atoning blood to cleanse from sin and pollution. As Jesus leaves the most holy, he speaks in tones of decision and kingly authority: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." {1SP 123.2}

Those who have delayed a preparation for the day of God, cannot obtain it in the time of trouble, or at any future period. The righteous will not cease their earnest, agonizing cries for deliverance. They cannot bring to mind any particular sins; but in their whole life they can see but little good. Their sins had gone beforehand to judgment, and pardon had been written. Their sins had been borne

away into the land of forgetfulness, and they could not bring them to remembrance. Certain destruction threatens them, and, like Jacob, they will not suffer their faith to grow weak because their prayers are not immediately answered. Though suffering the pangs of hunger, they will not cease their intercessions. They lay hold of the strength of God, as Jacob laid hold of the angel; and the language of their soul is, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." The saints at length prevail, like Jacob, and are gloriously delivered by the voice of God. {1SP 123.3}

3. When we fear God and work righteousness, what is it towards God? **Acts 10:35**

EGW: What marvelous condescension the Saviour showed in His work. How graciously, without prejudice or partiality, He received all who came to Him, rich or poor, white or black. With Him there is no caste. "God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him." {ST, May 22, 1901 par. 6}

4. We are to put on the wedding garment (Matthew 22:1-14), what is that garment? **Revelation 19:8**

EGW: We must try our character by the moral standard, God's holy law. Day by day we must measure our attainments, to see if we shall be of this number. "Thou hast a few names, even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments, and they shall walk with Me in white; for they are worthy" [Revelation 3:4]. "Let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife (the church) hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" [Revelation 19:7, 8]. {19MR 27.3}

5. Where do we find the understanding of what a righteous life happens to be? **2 Timothy 3:16**

EGW: The word is the great lesson book for the students in our schools. The Bible teaches the whole will of God concerning the sons and daughters of Adam. The Bible is the rule of life, teaching us of the character we must form for the future, immortal life. Our faith, our practice, may make us living epistles, known and read of all men. Men need not the dim light of tradition and custom to make the Scriptures comprehensible. It is just as sensible to suppose that the sun, shining in the heavens at noon-day, needs the glimmerings of the torchlight of earth to increase its glory. The fables or the utterances of priests or of ministers, are not needed to save the student from error. Consult the divine Oracle, and you have light. In the Bible every duty is made plain, every lesson is comprehensible, able to fit men with a preparation for eternal life. The gift of Christ and the illumination of the Holy Spirit reveal to us the Father and the Son. The word is exactly adapted to

make men and women and youth wise unto salvation. In the word is the science of salvation plainly revealed. "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, throughly furnished unto all good works." "Search the Scriptures," for therein is the counsel of God, the voice of God speaking to the soul.--"Special Testimonies on Education," December 1, 1895. {FE 390.3}

6. What are we to do with that instruction? **Romans 6:16**

EGW: Very many who profess to be servants of Christ are none of His. They are deceiving their souls to their own destruction. While they profess to be servants of Christ, they are not living in obedience to His will. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" Many, while professing to be servants of Christ, are obeying another master, working daily against the Master whom they profess to serve. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." {2T 442.1}

7. What are we to avoid listening to when people poke fun at the desire to live a righteous life? **1 John 3:7**

EGW: "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," and for this reason the Lord has provided a remedy for sin: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "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." The true test of religious experience is here given. He that abideth in Christ is perfected in the love of God, and his purposes, thoughts, words, and actions are in harmony with the will of God expressed in the commandments of his law. There is nothing in the heart of the man who abides in Christ that is at war with any precept of God's law. Where the Spirit of Christ is in the heart, the character of Christ will be revealed, and there will be manifested gentleness under provocation, and patience under trial. "Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous." Righteousness can be defined only by God's great moral standard, the Ten Commandments. There is no other rule by which to measure character. "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning." It was the refusal of Satan to obey the commandments of God that brought sin and apostasy into the universe. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." {ST, June 20, 1895 par. 6}

8. If we do not do righteousness, what is declared? **1 John 3:10**

EGW: "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." Every character must be brought to the test of this measurement; but it has been the determined purpose of Satan to tear down the standard of the law of God, and erect in its stead a lower standard, a finite measure by which men may measure themselves among themselves; and thus their ideas as to what constitutes righteousness have become lowered and confused. This is the reason that so large a number who profess to be followers of Christ, claim to be perfect and sanctified when they are sinners in the sight of God. {ST, January 9, 1896 par. 6}

9. Those that do righteousness, what are we considered? **1 John 2:29**

EGW: "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him." God has tested the character of men from the time of Adam unto the present time, and he has always blessed the loyal and obedient. But those who keep the law of Jehovah are not in favor with the world, or with professed Christians who are making void the law of God. Abel kept the commandment of the Lord, and was hated by his brother Cain, and from the time of Abel's persecution and death at the hands of his brother, there have been two classes upon the earth who have manifested the same characteristics as were displayed by these two brothers. Righteous men have always been the objects of the combined assaults of evil men and evil angels. Christ himself was betrayed, insulted, mocked, scourged, and crucified through the instigation of evil angels working through a class of men who, while they professed great sanctity, were the worst of hypocrites and deceivers. {ST, November 14, 1895 par. 1}

10. When we are born again into righteousness and holiness, what have we to put on? **Ephesians 4:24**

EGW: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Corinthians 3:18. The glory he mentioned is character, therefore by thinking and talking of Jesus we become charmed with His character, and by faith we become changed from character to character. "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." "Ye are the light of the world . . . Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." We must practice the example of Christ, bearing in mind His Sonship and His humanity. It was not God that was tempted in the wilderness, nor a god that was to endure the contradiction of sinners against himself. It was the Majesty of heaven who became a man--humbled Himself to our human nature. {6MR 342.2}

11. Just because a person lives a righteous life, how easy is it to be saved? **1 Peter 4:18**

EGW: The question is asked, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?" "And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" {RH, March 27, 1894 par. 11}

God graciously grants a day of probation, a time of test and trial. He gives the invitation: "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." If this invitation is disregarded, if the solemn scenes of the judgment make no impression upon the obdurate heart, if there is no repentance and confession and reformation, then the consequence will surely follow that fearfulness shall surprise the hypocrite. {RH, March 27, 1894 par. 12}

12. Why is it so difficult to know if a person is Heaven bound or not, especially when we see people doing all of the right things, living to what appears to be a righteous life? **Matthew 23:28**

EGW: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. . . . Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." {RH, August 29, 1899 par. 11}

These fearful denunciations were made upon the Jews, because, while teaching the law of God to the people, they were not doers of the Word. Had they kept the law of God, they would have discerned Christ and his mission. So it is in our day. There are those who walk in darkness when light shines from every page of the written Word. They study the Scriptures that they may interpret them to suit themselves. They sink the Scriptures to their own perverted ideas. They are not honest. They doubt that which they have every reason to believe. They become reasoners in doubt, experts in finding fault. God's word is misinterpreted, misstated, misapplied, and has no power upon the life and character. {RH, August 29, 1899 par. 12}

If professed Christians really believe in God, they will not disregard his commandments. Christ says: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: 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 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." {RH, August 29, 1899 par. 13}

13. To live a righteous life, what are we to be dead to, even avoid? **1 Peter 2:24, Hebrews 1:9, Titus 2:12, 2 Timothy 2:22, 1 Corinthians 15:34**

EGW: God has so loved the world that he has given his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Christ has borne our sins, forgiven our trespasses. He bore "our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." Then will any of God's children to whom he has forgiven so much, act as did this merciless servant unto his fellow-servant? Will the youth for whom Christ has died, be anything but pitiful? Will they cherish anything but the meekness and lowliness of Christ? Will they not from the heart forgive those who trespass against them? Will you not, if any one has done you a wrong, and is too proud and stubborn to say to you, "I repent," go to the offender and say, "I love you for Christ's sake, and I forgive you the injury you have done me"? Jesus will witness and approve of this deed of love; and as you do to others, it shall be done again to you. {YI, June 1, 1893 par. 7}

14. When we sin, what do we not have? **Romans 6:20**

EGW: "When ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" [Romans 6:20-23]. {13MR 222.1}

These are not the words of Sister White, but the words of the Lord, and His messenger has given them to me to give to you. God calls upon you to no longer work at cross purposes with Him. Much instruction was given in regard to men claiming to be Christian when they are revealing the attributes of Satan, counteracting in spirit, word, and action the advancement of truth, and are surely following the path where Satan is leading them. In their hardness of heart they have grasped authority which in no way belongs to them, and which they should not exercise. Saith the great Teacher, "I will overturn, overturn, overturn." Men say in Battle Creek, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we" but they are using common fire. Their hearts are not softened and subdued by the grace of God. {13MR 222.2}

Many claiming to obey the truth are captives to Satan's rule. And they have no power from his snare

to go, [for] they have submitted to his way so long. How long will they act on the principles of the power of darkness? I am instructed to say to you, my brethren in every place, "It is high time that ye awake out of sleep. Put off the works of selfishness and darkness. No longer abuse the sacred principles of heaven by your unrighteousness, lest in your experience the history of the children of Israel is repeated. Take heed lest ye fall after the same example of unbelief. We are now a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. Satan has linked your arm, who have given him opportunity, within his arm." {13MR 222.3}

15. How is the fruit of righteousness sown? **James 3:18**

EGW: He who places himself unreservedly under the guidance of the Spirit of God will find that his mind expands and develops. He obtains an education in the service of God which is not one-sided and deficient, developing a one-sided character, but one which results in symmetry and completeness. Weaknesses that have been manifested in a vacillating will and powerless character are overcome, for continual devotion and piety bring the man in such close relation to Christ that he has the mind of Christ. He is one with Christ, having soundness and strength of principle. His perception is clear, and he manifests that wisdom which comes from God. Says James, "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom." "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace." This will be the wisdom manifested by him who takes the cup of salvation and calls upon the name of the Lord. This salvation which offers pardon to the transgressor, presents to him the righteousness that will bear the scrutiny of the omniscient One, gives victory over the powerful enemy of God and man, provides eternal life and joy for its receiver, and may well be a theme of rejoicing to the humble, who hear thereof and are glad. {ST, January 2, 1907 par. 6}

16. To understand righteousness, what must we get off of regarding the Word of God? **Hebrews 5:13, Isaiah 28:9-10**

EGW: If we look to self, and trust in self, we shall surely fall from our steadfastness. The terrible tempest that is gathering will sweep away our sandy foundation, and leave our house a wreck on the shores of time; but the house that is built upon the rocks will stand forever. We must be "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." The apostle spoke some plain words to his Hebrew brethren, that meet the condition of many of those who profess the truth for this time. "We have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. [They were not quick to discern the things of the Spirit of God.] For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the

word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." It is positively necessary for those who believe the truth to be making continual advancement, growing up unto the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. There is no time for backsliding and indifference. Each one must have a living experience in the things of God. Have root in yourselves. Become grounded in the faith, so that, having done all, you may stand with unwavering confidence in God through the time that will try every man's work and character. Exercise your powers in spiritual things, till you can appreciate the deep things of God's Word, and go on from strength to strength. {RH, September 22, 1910 par. 1}

17. It is so easy to point to our righteous works for salvation, but what must we keep in mind in being saved? **Titus 3:5**

EGW: It is thus that every sinner may come to Christ. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us." Titus 3:5. When Satan tells you that you are a sinner, and cannot hope to receive blessing from God, tell him that Christ came into the world to save sinners. We have nothing to recommend us to God; but the plea that we may urge now and ever is our utterly helpless condition that makes His redeeming power a necessity. Renouncing all self-dependence, we may look to the cross of Calvary and say, -- "In my hand no price I bring; Simply to Thy cross I cling." {DA 317.1}

18. How are we made righteous? **2 Corinthians 5:21**

EGW: Christ is a risen Saviour; for, though He was dead, He has risen again, and ever liveth to make intercession for us. We are to believe with the heart unto righteousness, and with the mouth make confession unto salvation. Those who are justified by faith will make confession of Christ. "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24). The great work that is wrought for the sinner who is spotted and stained by evil is the work of justification. By Him who speaketh truth he is declared righteous. The Lord imputes unto the believer the righteousness of Christ and pronounces him righteous before the universe. He transfers his sins to Jesus, the sinner's representative, substitute, and surety. Upon Christ He lays the iniquity of every soul that believeth. "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). {1SM 392.2}

19. When we put on righteousness as a piece of armor, what main body part does it protect that is connected to the mind merging both thoughts and feelings? **Ephesians 6:14**

EGW: "Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all,"--having obeyed the instruction given by the Lord,--"to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace." Let the peace of Christ rule in the heart and express itself in words and works of praise and thanksgiving. Christlike words and deeds are the fruits which the Saviour loves to see in His followers. There is no excuse for dearth in the soul. The peace of Christ, which passeth understanding, is provided for all. {ST, July 11, 1900 par. 11}

20. What does that body part to do for righteousness' sake? **Romans 10:10**

EGW: We come unto God in the name of Jesus by special invitation, and he welcomes us to his audience chamber, and imparts to the humble and contrite heart that faith in Christ by which he is justified, and Jesus blots out as a thick cloud his transgressions by the bright sunshine of his love, and the comforted heart exclaims, "O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me." [Isaiah 12:1.] He will understand in experience the words of Paul, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." [Romans 10:10.] He then becomes a sanctified agent that God can employ to work out his noble purposes. He then represents Christ, holding forth to the world his mercy and love. He has a testimony that he is desirous that others should hear, and in the language of the psalmist, he says, "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercy." [Psalm 103:1-4.] {CE 128.1}

Many think that they must wait for a special impulse in order that they may come to Christ; but it is necessary only to come in sincerity of purpose, deciding to accept the offers of mercy and grace that have been extended to us. We are to say: "Christ died to save me. The Lord's desire is that I should be saved, and I will come to Jesus just as I am without delay. I will venture upon the promise. As Christ draws me, I will respond." The apostle says, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness" (Romans 10:10). No one can believe with the heart unto righteousness, and obtain justification by faith, while continuing the practice of those things which the Word of God forbids, or while neglecting any known duty. {1SM 396.2}

21. What is to be avoided when trying to keep a strong relationship with God, where righteousness and unrighteousness are contrasted? **2 Corinthians 6:14**

EGW: 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}

22. In being righteous, what are we to do with the law? **Romans 8:4**

EGW: The character of the Lord Jesus Christ is to be reproduced in those who believe in him as their personal Saviour. They will be "rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." Our acceptance with God is not upon the ground of our good works, but our reward will be according to our works. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." {ST, May 30, 1895 par. 1}

23. If we are filled with the Holy Spirit, what three things are we to be convicted of? **John 16:8**

EGW: Jesus said to his disciples: "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." The Comforter is to come as a reprover, as one who is to lay open before us our defects of character, and at the same time to reveal to us the merit of Him who was one with the Father. Jesus says, "He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." In Christ dwelt all the fullness of the God-head bodily, and we are to be complete in him. With all our defects of character, we are to come to him in whom all fullness dwells. {ST, May 9, 1892 par. 7}

24. What do the righteous receive in the end? **Matthew 25:46**

EGW: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." {RH, September 20, 1898 par. 7}

When God's people are clothed with white robes, and crowned as true subjects of his kingdom, those who have been disloyal will see the inconsistency of their uniting with the loyal to honor and magnify the law of God, which they have educated themselves to disregard. They have regarded the law of God as null and void, and should they be trusted to come through the gates into the city? They then find that they have no passport, nothing in them that can change their life sentiments. They have made their choice of false sentiments in the place of truth, and holiness, and righteousness, and they can not change them. Every man who, by his actions, has declared, I will not have this Man to reign over me, will no longer have the privilege of being under that rule. {RH, September 20, 1898 par. 8}