

Lesson 73 - Character of Having Discretion

1. What does having discretion do for us? **Proverbs 2:11**

EGW: Those who keep in a prayerful frame of mind, will be able to speak a word in season to those who are brought within the sphere of their influence; for God will give wisdom whereby they may serve the Lord Jesus. "When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee." You will open your mouth with wisdom, and in your tongue will be the law of kindness. If those who claim to be Christians will heed the words of Christ, all who come in contact with them will acknowledge that they have been with Jesus and have learned of him. They will represent Christ, and eternal things will be the theme of thought and conversation. The realities of eternity will be brought near. They will watch for souls as they that must give an account. To watch for souls means more than many seem to think; it means to go out and search for the lost sheep of the house of Israel. {RH, July 14, 1891 par. 10}

2. In what manner does discretion do that for us? **Luke 17:33, Psalms 86:2**

EGW: To all, old and young, the word of the Lord is: Let the truth of God be inwrought in mind and soul. Let your prayer be, "O Lord, preserve my soul, that I shall not dishonor thee." Let your prayers ascend to God, that he may sanctify the soul in thought, in word, in spirit, in every transaction. Plead with God that not one thread of selfishness shall be woven into the fabric of your character. Let the prayer be offered: "Sanctify my heart through the truth. Let thy angels keep my soul in strict integrity. Let my mind be impressed with the simple, searching maxims in thy Word, given to guide me in this life as a preparation for the future, eternal life." {RH, July 19, 1906 par. 21}

3. What is one way we are preserved if we have discretion? **Proverbs 19:11**

EGW: "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. What does having discretion mean in regards to God, specifically, His Word? **Titus 2:4-5**

EGW: The apostle James, inspired by Jesus Christ, lays down our duty in clear lines. "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." We are Christ's witnesses, Christ's representatives. In his epistle to Titus, Paul charges him to set in order things that are wanting in the church. "Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine," he says. The teacher of truth is to educate all, both old and young. He is to exhort aged men to be "sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." When those who profess to be servants of Christ do not walk circumspectly, God is dishonored and the truth is reproached. {1888 137.2}

5. Who needs instruction of how to be discreet, showing that is not something automatically developed? **Proverbs 1:4**

EGW: (no comment)

6. Who teaches a person to be discreet? **Isaiah 28:26**

EGW: It is when we come into difficult places that He reveals His power and wisdom in answer to humble prayer. Have confidence in Him as a prayer-hearing, prayer-answering God. He will reveal Himself to you as One who can help in every emergency. He who created man, who gave him his wonderful physical, mental, and spiritual faculties, will not withhold that which is necessary to sustain the life He has given. He who has given us His word--the leaves of the tree of life-- will not withhold from us a knowledge of how to provide food for His needy children. {MH 199.4}

How can wisdom be obtained by him who holds the plow and drives the oxen? By seeking her as silver, and searching for her as for hid treasure. "For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him." Isaiah 28:26. "This also cometh forth from Jehovah of hosts, who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in wisdom." Verse 29, A.R.V. {MH 199.5}

7. What act of God makes Him the perfect instructor of discretion? **Jeremiah 10:10-12**

EGW: By causing men to violate the second commandment, Satan aimed to degrade their conceptions of the Divine Being. By setting aside the fourth, he would cause them to forget God altogether. God's claim to reverence and worship, above the gods of the heathen, is based upon the fact that He is the Creator, and that to Him all other beings owe their existence. Thus it is presented in the Bible. Says the prophet Jeremiah: "The Lord is the true God, He is the living God, and an everlasting King. . . . 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." "Every man is brutish in his knowledge: every founder is confounded by the 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." Jeremiah 10:10-12, 14-16. The Sabbath, as a memorial of God's creative power, points to Him as the maker of the heavens and the earth. Hence it is a constant witness to His existence and a reminder of His greatness, His wisdom, and His love. Had the Sabbath always been sacredly observed, there could never have been an atheist or an idolater. {PP 336.1}

8. What two things assist in learning to be discreet? **Proverbs 5:1-2**

EGW: (no comment)

9. What is a fair woman without discretion compared to? **Proverbs 11:22**

EGW: (no comment)

10. What was Pharaoh told he ought to do with a discreet person before the coming crisis? **Genesis 41:33**

EGW: "The dream of Pharaoh is one," said Joseph. "God hath showed Pharaoh what He is about to do." There were to be seven years of great plenty. Field and garden would yield more abundantly than ever before. And this period was to be followed by seven years of famine. "And the plenty shall

not be known in the land by reason of that famine following; for it shall be very grievous." The repetition of the dream was evidence both of the certainty and nearness of the fulfillment. "Now therefore," he continued, "let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine." {PP 220.4}

11. Who did Pharaoh find to be discreet? **Genesis 41:39**

EGW: The appointment was decided upon, and to Joseph the astonishing announcement was made, "Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou." The king proceeded to invest Joseph with the insignia of his high office. "And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee." {PP 221.2}

12. What is something specifically we ought to be discreet about? **Psalms 112:5**

EGW: (no comment)

13. If we exercise discretion, what will we do with wisdom, understanding, and knowledge? **Proverbs 3:19-21**

EGW: (no comment)

14. Who exercised discretion, giving careful thought in answering a question, and then was praised for that thoughtful answer? **Mark 12:32-34**

EGW: The wisdom of Christ's answer had convicted the scribe. He knew that the Jewish religion consisted in outward ceremonies rather than inward piety. He had some sense of the worthlessness

of mere ceremonial offerings, and the faithless shedding of blood for expiation of sin. Love and obedience to God, and unselfish regard for man, appeared to him of more value than all these rites. The readiness of this man to acknowledge the correctness of Christ's reasoning, and his decided and prompt response before the people, manifested a spirit entirely different from that of the priests and rulers. The heart of Jesus went out in pity to the honest scribe who had dared to face the frowns of the priests and the threats of the rulers to speak the convictions of his heart. "And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, He said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." {DA 608.1}

15. What is a person considered if they do not have discretion? **Ecclesiastes 5:2**

EGW: (no comment)

16. When a rash person sees the Word of God and harkens to what they hear, what will convert their heart into a person of discretion? **Isaiah 32:4**

EGW: (no comment)

17. Who, being a non-Christian, counselled a riotous group of people to not act rashly, showing that if he can do it, we can do it too? **Acts 19:35-36**

EGW: At last, from sheer exhaustion, they ceased, and there was a momentary silence. Then the recorder of the city arrested the attention of the crowd, and by virtue of his office obtained a hearing. He met the people on their own ground and showed that there was no cause for the present tumult. He appealed to their reason. "Ye men of Ephesus," he said, "what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshiper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter? Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly. For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess. Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another. But if ye inquire anything concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly. For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse. And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly." {AA 294.2}

18. The word "heady" is also a synonym for being rash, being without discretion, but who thinks that they have no power to stop being so? **2 Timothy 3:2-5** [The answer is at the beginning of verse 5.]

EGW: The same reasoning will be heard today from worldly-wise men, from the unfaithful watchmen in the pulpits, "My Lord delayeth his coming, all things remain as they were from the beginning. You have no need to be alarmed, there is to be a thousand years of temporal millennium before Christ will come. All the world will be converted. Peace, peace; you should pay no regard to these fanatics, who are only alarmists." The world generally will despise prophecy and abuse those who speak to them the words of God, rebuking their sins and calling them to repentance. Timothy writes: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof. What a picture is here drawn by the apostle in regard to the days, just prior to the coming of the Son of man." The millennial glory that is predicted by the false shepherds of today does not harmonize with the words of the inspired apostle. The question is asked, When the Son of man cometh shall he find faith on the earth? {ST, January 3, 1878 par. 10}

19. When does this belief in the lack of power to stop being "heady", among other awful character traits, seem to be most prevalent in the church? **2 Timothy 3:1**

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}

20. And what type of time is it described as, implying that people are left to perish in their sins by huge numbers seeing that the church is no help? **2 Timothy 3:1**

EGW: Looking forward with prophetic vision to the perilous times into which the church of Christ was to enter, the apostle exhorted the believers to steadfastness in the face of trial and suffering. "Beloved," he wrote, "think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you." {AA 524.1}