

Lesson 76 - Character of Walking After the Spirit

1. If we walk after the Spirit and not the flesh, what will we not receive? **Romans 8:1**

EGW: It is the privilege of every one to so live that God will approve and bless him. You may be hourly in communion with Heaven; it is not the will of your Heavenly Father that you should ever be under condemnation and darkness. It is not pleasing to God that you should demerit yourself. You should cultivate self-respect by living so that you will be approved by your own conscience, and before men and angels. It is not an evidence of true humility that you go with your head bowed down, and your heart filled with thoughts of self. It is your privilege to go to Jesus and be cleansed, and to stand before the law without shame and remorse. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." While we should not think of ourselves more highly than we ought, the word of God does not condemn a proper self-respect. As sons and daughters of God, we should have a conscious dignity of character, in which pride and self-importance have no part. {RH, March 27, 1888 par. 17}

2. What is associated with walking after the flesh that Jesus was made in the likeness thereof? **Romans 8:3**

EGW: This character was revealed in the life of Christ. That He might by His own example condemn sin in the flesh, He took upon Himself the likeness of sinful flesh. Constantly He beheld the character of God; constantly He revealed this character to the world. {ST, September 3, 1902 par. 8}

Christ desires His followers to reveal in their lives this same character. In His intercessory prayer for His disciples He declared: "The glory [character] which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." {ST, September 3, 1902 par. 9}

3. Those that do not believe Jesus was made in that likeness, what spirit do they have? **1 John 4:2-3**

EGW: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every Spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every Spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world." {ST, September 3, 1894 par. 1}

In this age of the world we see every grade and degree of skepticism. There are rank infidels, those who believe in the lying wonders of Spiritualism, and those who reject the claims of divine truth. All these are placed among the class that John has written of, and are controlled by the spirit of antichrist. Ignorance of the character of God, pride of understanding, and the love of sin, are the source of infidelity. Men deny the divinity of Christ, cast away the Bible, and thus seek to free themselves from personal accountability to God. They bring the Bible into conflict with "science, falsely so called." These doubters can start inquiries which the most humble and pious Christian would be perplexed to know how to answer. But because their queries cannot be answered, is no evidence that the Bible is not true. A little child has asked questions in regard to God, the soul, and the future, that the most learned could not answer. The truth of God's word will be revealed to those who are of a lowly heart, who will comprehend its duties and obey its precepts. It is pride of opinion that leads to skepticism, and to the denial of the divinity of Jesus Christ. Skepticism has its origin in love of sin, love of ambition, and self-exaltation. {ST, September 3, 1894 par. 2}

4. In that state, what did Jesus do to it while in the flesh? **End of Romans 8:3**

EGW: Jesus, the Prince of life, took the battle field to meet and to contend with the prince of darkness, and to dispute his claims. From the time of his birth until he hung on Calvary's cross he warred with the evil one in our behalf. His purity of character was a rebuke to the world, and men hated him because of his divine and holy character. He did not come to our world as an angel of glory, but as a man. He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, and condemned sin in the flesh. With his human arm he encircled the race, and with his divine arm he grasped the throne of the infinite, linked man with God, and earth with heaven. Oh, who are there who are colaborers with Christ, who are feeding the starving flock of God? {ST, April 16, 1894 par. 5}

5. What is fulfilled if we walk after the Spirit and not the flesh? **Romans 8:4**

EGW: Satan placed before the world that the only hope of salvation was in getting rid of the law of God. But Christ came to make it plain that it was sin, the transgression of the law, that was to be abolished, in order that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. {14MR 84.1}

6. Those that want to enjoy a little sinning, a little of the world, what is on their minds? **Beginning of Romans 8:5**

EGW: Self-righteousness is the danger of this age; it separates the soul from Christ. Those who trust to their own righteousness cannot understand how salvation comes through Christ. They call sin righteousness, and righteousness sin. They have no appreciation of the evil of transgression, no understanding of the terror of the law; for they do not respect God's moral standard. The reason there are so many spurious conversions in these days, is that there is so low an appreciation of the law of God. Instead of God's standard of righteousness, men have erected a standard of their own by which to measure character. They see through a glass darkly, and present false ideas of sanctification to the people, thus encouraging egotism, pride, and self-righteousness. The doctrine of sanctification advocated by many is full of deception, because it is flattering to the natural heart; but the kindest thing that can be preached to the sinner is the truth of the binding claims of the law of God. Faith and works must go hand in hand; for faith without works is dead, being alone. The prophet declares a truth by which we may test all doctrine. He says, "To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Although error abounds in the world, there is no reason why men need remain in deception. The truth is plain, and when it is contrasted with error, its character may be discerned. All the subjects of God's grace may understand what is required of them. By faith we may conform our lives to the standard of righteousness, because we can appropriate to ourselves the righteousness of Christ. In the word of God the honest seeker for truth will find the rule for genuine sanctification. The apostle says: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. . . . 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. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally-minded is death; but to be spiritually-minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." {ST, July 21, 1890 par. 9}

7. Those that want to be godly, what do they mind? **End of Romans 8:5**

EGW: In the Word of God the honest seeker for truth will find the rule for genuine sanctification. The apostle says: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. . . . 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. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you"

(Romans 8:1-9). {FW 97.2}

8. What does the flesh or carnal mind lead to? **Beginning of Romans 8:6**

EGW: For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. Romans 8:6, 7. {HP 160.1}

The natural mind leans toward pleasure and self-gratification. It is Satan's policy to manufacture an abundance of this. He seeks to fill the minds of men with a desire for worldly amusement, that they may have no time to ask themselves the question, How is it with my soul? The love of pleasure is infectious. Given up to this, the mind hurries from one point to another, ever seeking for some amusement. Obedience to the law of God counteracts this inclination and builds barriers against ungodliness. . . . {HP 160.2}

9. If we serve the flesh, what does it reap? **Galatians 6:8**

EGW: The harvest is a reproduction of the seed sown. Every seed yields fruit after its kind. So it is with the traits of character we cherish. Selfishness, self-love, self-esteem, self-indulgence, reproduce themselves, and the end is wretchedness and ruin. "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Galatians 6:8. {Ed 109.1}

10. What two things does the spiritual mind lead to? **End of Romans 8:6, Romans 8:13, John 6:63, End of Galatians 6:8**

EGW: "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Galatians 6:8. Love, sympathy, and kindness yield fruitage of blessing, a harvest that is imperishable. {Ed 109.1}

11. What is the carnal mind unable to do? **Romans 8:7**

EGW: Jesus continued: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." By nature the heart is evil, and "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." Job 14:4. No human invention can find a remedy for the sinning soul. "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." Romans 8:7; Matthew 15:19. The fountain of the heart must be purified before the streams can become pure. He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law is attempting an impossibility. There is no safety for one who has merely a legal religion, a form of godliness. The Christian's life is not a modification or improvement of the old, but a transformation of nature. There is a death to self and sin, and a new life altogether. This change can be brought about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit. {DA 172.1}

12. What can the people of the flesh not do towards God? **Romans 8:8**

EGW: Your case is similar in some respects to Naaman's. You do not consider that in order to perfect a Christian character you must condescend to be faithful in the littles. Although the things you are called to do may be of small account in your eyes, yet they are duties which you will have to do just as long as you live. A neglect of these things will make a great deficiency in your character. You, my dear boy, should educate yourself to faithfulness in small things. You cannot please God unless you do this. You cannot gain love and affection unless you do just as you are bidden, with willingness and pleasure. If you wish those with whom you live to love you, you must show love and respect for them. {2T 310.1}

13. What do we become if we walk after the Spirit? **Romans 8:14, 16**

EGW: We build on Christ by obeying his word. It is not he who merely enjoys righteousness, that is righteous, but he who does righteousness. Holiness is not rapture; it is the result of surrendering all to God; it is doing the will of our Heavenly Father. Religion consists in doing the words of Christ; not doing to earn God's favor, but because, all undeserving, we have received the gift of his love. Christ places the salvation of man, not upon profession merely, but upon faith that is made manifest in works of righteousness. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Not those whose hearts are touched by the Spirit, not those who now and then yield to its power, but they that are led by the Spirit, are the sons of God. {RH, December 31, 1908 par. 9}

14. What profit is there to walk after the flesh? **John 6:63**

EGW: Even the disciples murmured at these last words of Jesus. They said, "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" The Saviour heard their complaints and answered them: "Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." Thus he instructed them that it was not his human flesh that would give life eternal, but faith in his words and in the efficacy of the sacrifice he was to make for the world. His teaching and example, his life and death, were the heavenly food that was to give them spiritual life and vigor. He reproved them because they had murmured when he said that he had come down from Heaven. If they were not able to receive this truth, how would it be when he ascended before their eyes to that Heaven from whence he came? {2SP 283.2}

15. What do people who are not born-again do in the flesh towards those of the Spirit? **Galatians 4:29**

EGW: With every rejection of truth, the minds of the people will become darker, their hearts more stubborn, until they are entrenched in an infidel hardihood. In defiance of the warnings which God has given, they will continue to trample upon one of the precepts of the decalogue, until they are led to persecute those who hold it sacred. Christ is set at naught in the contempt placed upon His Word and His people. As the teachings of Spiritualism are accepted by the churches, the restraint imposed upon the carnal heart is removed, and the profession of religion will become a cloak to conceal the basest iniquity. A belief in spiritual manifestations opens the door to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils, and thus the influence of evil angels will be felt in the churches. {GC 603.2}

16. If we walk after the Spirit, what shall we not fulfill? **Galatians 5:16, 24**

EGW: Says Paul, "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7:1). He presents for our encouragement the freedom enjoyed by the truly sanctified: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:1). He charges the Galatians, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16). He names some of the forms of fleshly lust -- "idolatry, . . . drunkenness, . . . and such like" (verses 20, 21). And after mentioning the fruits of the Spirit, among which is temperance, he adds, "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (verse 24). {SL 30.2}

17. What is the Spirit towards the flesh and the flesh towards the Spirit? **Galatians 5:17**

EGW: We are on the battle-field today, and two great forces are ever contending for the mastery. The word of God declares, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other." Ever since his rebellion and expulsion from heaven, Satan has been seeking to wrest souls from Christ. It would be well for every one of us who profess to be children of God, to inquire, In which army am I serving? Am I under the blood-stained banner of Prince Emmanuel, or under the black banner of the prince of darkness? {RH, May 5, 1891 par. 3}

18. What advice is given towards relying upon the flesh, the feelings? **Philippians 3:3**

EGW: (no comment)

19. If we are not born again of the Spirit, where will we not go? **John 3:5**

EGW: Again: it is written, "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12, 13). Jesus declared, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (verse 5). It is not a low standard that is placed before us, for we are to become the children of God. We are to be saved as individuals, and in the day of test and trial we shall be able to discern between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not. We are saved as individual believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. {FW 101.2}

20. What two things do we have to do because of our weak flesh? **Mark 14:38**

EGW: God is leading his people out from the abominations of the world, that they may keep his law; and because of this, the rage of "the accuser of our brethren" knows no bounds. "The devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." The antitypical land of promise is just before us, and Satan is determined to destroy the people of God, and cut them off from their inheritance. The admonition, "Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation," was never more needed than now. We are now living in the great day of atonement. In the typical service, while the high priest was making the atonement for Israel, all were required to afflict their souls by repentance of sin and humiliation before the Lord, lest they be cut off from among the people. In like manner, all who would have their names retained in the book of life, should now, in the few remaining days of their probation, afflict their souls before God by sorrow

for sin, and true repentance. There must be deep, faithful searching of heart. The light, frivolous spirit indulged by so many of professed Christians must be put away. There is earnest warfare before all who would subdue the evil tendencies that strive for the mastery. The work of preparation is an individual work. We are not saved in groups. The purity and devotion of one will not offset the want of these qualities in another. Though all nations are to pass in judgment before God, yet he will examine the case of each individual with as close and searching scrutiny as if there were not another being upon the earth. Everyone must be tested, and found without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. {GH, August 1, 1910 par. 5}