

Lesson 78 - Character of Avoiding Being Deceitful

1. Where does deceit come from? **Mark 7:21-23**

EGW: Objections are listened to, received, and this leads to the arising of still more difficulties and the forgetting of the inherent evidence which comes with the message from God. Therefore we do not receive the support and divine grace which God is ready to impart. The light is refused and darkness and unbelief accepted, and as the result he will bring forth fruit of that which is in his heart, which is evil fruit, "for . . . out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness" [Mark 7:21, 22]. {21MR 158.2}

2. What is most deceitful yet is recommended by society to follow, especially in movies and TV shows? **Jeremiah 17:9**

EGW: The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Professors of religion are not willing to closely examine themselves to see whether they are in the faith; and it is a fearful fact that many are leaning on a false hope. Some lean upon an old experience which they had years ago; but when brought down to this heart-searching time, when all should have a daily experience, they have nothing to relate. They seem to think that a profession of the truth will save them. When they subdue those sins which God hates, Jesus will come in and sup with them and they with Him. They will then draw divine strength from Jesus, and will grow up in Him, and be able with holy triumph to say: "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." It would be more pleasing to the Lord if lukewarm professors of religion had never named His name. They are a continual weight to those who would be faithful followers of Jesus. They are a stumbling block to unbelievers, and evil angels exult over them, and taunt the angels of God with their crooked course. Such are a curse to the cause at home or abroad. They draw nigh to God with their lips, while their heart is far from Him. {1T 188.2}

3. What is deceitful to deal with? **Hebrews 3:13**

EGW: The seed sown by the wayside represents the word of God as it falls upon the heart of an inattentive hearer. Like the hard-beaten path, trodden down by the feet of men and beasts, is the heart that becomes a highway for the world's traffic, its pleasures and sins. Absorbed in selfish aims and sinful indulgences, the soul is "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Hebrews 3:13. The spiritual faculties are paralyzed. Men hear the word, but understand it not. They do not discern that

it applies to themselves. They do not realize their need or their danger. They do not perceive the love of Christ, and they pass by the message of His grace as something that does not concern them. {COL 44.2}

Nothing is more treacherous than the deceitfulness of sin. It is the god of this world that deludes, and blinds, and leads to destruction. Satan does not enter with his array of temptations at once. He disguises these temptations with a semblance of good. He mingles with amusements and folly some little improvements, and deceived souls make it an excuse that great good is to be derived by engaging in them. This is only the deceptive part. It is Satan's hellish arts masked. Beguiled souls take one step, then are prepared for the next. It is so much more pleasant to follow the inclinations of their own hearts than to stand on the defensive, and resist the first insinuation of the wily foe, and thus shut out his in-comings. {MYP 83.1}

4. What can be used in a deceitful manner and mistaken as genuine kindness when it is not? **Proverbs 31:30**

EGW: Do not receive flattery, even in your religious life. Flattery is an art by which Satan lieth in wait to deceive and to puff up the human agent with high thoughts of himself. {FE 304.1}

5. What two things do people use philosophy and vain deceit to cause others to chase after? **Colossians 2:8**

EGW: I was directed to this scripture as especially applying to modern spiritualism: Colossians 2:8: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." Thousands, I was shown, have been spoiled through the philosophy of phrenology and animal magnetism, and have been driven into infidelity. If the mind commences to run in this channel, it is almost sure to lose its balance and be controlled by a demon. "Vain deceit" fills the minds of poor mortals. They think there is such power in themselves to accomplish great works that they realize no necessity of a higher power. Their principles and faith are "after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." Jesus has not taught them this philosophy. Nothing of the kind can be found in His teachings. He did not direct the minds of poor mortals to themselves, to a power which they possessed. He was ever directing their minds to God, the Creator of the universe, as the source of their strength and wisdom. Special warning is given in verse 18: "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshiping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind." {1T 297.1}

6. What are we to put off to avoid being deceived back into our own lusts, and what are we to change into? **Ephesians 4:22-24**

EGW: How many there are who retain wrong habits because they think they cannot overcome them. They do not make determined efforts to overcome. They cherish their sins as if they were precious jewels. If they are reproved, they murmur against the one who is watching for their souls as he that must give an account. Some, when reproved, act disrespectfully toward the one who, in the fear of God, showed them that they were misrepresenting their Saviour. They need to learn the meaning of true conversion. Paul writes, "If so be that ye have heard Him, and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 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. . . . 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." {RH, June 11, 1901 par. 14}

7. What can deceitful workers transform themselves into? **2 Corinthians 11:13-14**

EGW: Some men have no firmness of character. They are like a ball of putty and can be pressed into any conceivable shape. They are of no definite form and consistency, and are of no practical use in the world. This weakness, indecision, and inefficiency must be overcome. There is an indomitableness about true Christian character which cannot be molded or subdued by adverse circumstances. Men must have moral backbone, an integrity which cannot be flattered, bribed, or terrified. {5T 297.1}

I greatly fear for the church. As Paul expressed it: "I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." Paul then explains that it is by means of corrupt teachers that the enemy will assail the faith of the church. "For such are false apostles," he says, "deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness." {5T 297.2}

The more we learn in reference to the early days of the Christian church, and see with what subtlety Satan worked to weaken and destroy, the better we shall be prepared to resist his devices and meet coming perils. We are in the time when tribulations such as the world has never yet seen will prevail. "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." But God has set bounds that Satan cannot pass. Our most holy faith is this barrier; and if we build ourselves up in the faith,

we shall be safe in the keeping of the Mighty One. "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." {5T 297.3}

8. What do deceitful Christians still use but in a deceitful manner? **2 Corinthians 4:2**

EGW: Let us now wake up to earnest work. Watchmen who do not know the time of night, watchmen who feel no burden to lift up the danger signal, and give the warnings for this time, will not be intrusted with the light which God has to give. "Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." {RH, March 24, 1896 par. 8}

There must be sleepless vigilance upon the part of every follower of Christ. Every one should look upon himself as a laborer together with God, working in his line to impart light and knowledge to others. God is working, and heavenly intelligences are waiting for the co-operation of human agencies, to work out in life and character a living demonstration of truth before the eyes of men. God has qualified men with the elements of faith, and it rests with them to exercise his intrusted gift and believe the evidences which he presents. They are to accept Christ, submit their will to the will of God, and love God and obey his commandments, that Christ may be formed within, the hope of glory. They must confess Christ, and reveal to the world that they have chosen him as their portion, or they will not be saved, but will be regarded as enemies of truth. Ministers are to present before the people the attractive loveliness of heaven, the glorious prize that Christ holds out before them. Only those will enter the gates of heaven who make Christ their refuge. Let men watch for souls as those who must give an account. {RH, March 24, 1896 par. 9}

9. What do deceitful preachers try doing with God's intentions? **Job 13:7**

EGW: (no comment)

10. What are false preachers in deceit after? **Jeremiah 23:26-27, Jeremiah 14:14**

EGW: (no comment)

11. Who wants prophecies of deceit, especially that of saying that everything is alright when it is not? **Isaiah 30:9-10**

EGW: Many who have known the truth, but who have not cherished its principles in their hearts, will become leavened with evil. This evil they do not discern. In word and act they say, "Speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits." We are now to call things by their right names. No longer are we to look upon unrighteousness as righteousness. Let every one now be prepared to lift up the standard of truth. We are to have no fellowship with the worldly practises that have perverted the faith of some who have enjoyed great privileges, and who should now be standing on vantage-ground. {RH, November 5, 1903 par. 15}

Satan uses some professed Christians to lead souls from the simplicity of the gospel of Christ. Worldly associates and amusements sow the seeds of doubt and skepticism. The sentiment of many worldly professors is, "Cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us." "Speak unto us smooth things; prophesy deceits." Many are daily cheating their souls with a form of godliness without the power; but the Lord has removed his smile and the inspiration of his Spirit from them. His displeasure is against them, because their deeds are evil. He demands decided changes in the life and character. Good intentions, good resolutions, good acts, cannot be accepted as substitutes for repentance, faith, and willing obedience. {ST, March 6, 1884 par. 4}

12. Backslidden Christians are most susceptible to these preachers, and while falling for such smooth teachings, what do they refuse to do when truth is spoken? **Jeremiah 8:5**

EGW: (no comment)

13. What are deceitful Christians seen as in the eyes of God? **Jeremiah 48:10**

EGW: I saw that in the arrangement of systematic benevolence, hearts will be tested and proved. It

is a constant, living test. It brings one to understand his own heart, to see whether the truth or the love of the world predominates. Here is a test for the naturally selfish and covetous. They will put down their possessions at very low figures. Here they dissemble. Said the angel: "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully." Angels are watching the development of character, and the acts of such are carried to heaven by the heavenly messengers. Some will be visited of God for these things, and their increase will be brought down to their figures. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." Proverbs 11:24, 25. {1T 221.3}

14. What object promises a better life but is deceitful? **Mark 4:19, Matthew 13:22**

EGW: I was shown that all who profess the present truth would be tested and tried. Their love for Jesus' coming will be proved, and manifested to others, whether it is genuine. All, I saw, would not stand the test. Some love this world so much that it swallows up their love for the truth. As their treasures here increase, their interest in the heavenly treasure decreases. The more they possess of this world, the more closely do they hug it to them, as if fearful their coveted treasure would be taken from them. The more they possess, the less do they have to bestow upon others, for the more they have, the poorer they feel. O, the deceitfulness of riches! They will not see and feel the wants of the cause of God. {2SG 267.1}

15. What do the remnant of Israel not have in a deceitful manner? **Zephaniah 3:13, Revelation 14:5**

EGW: "The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid." {RH, October 11, 1906 par. 12}

In this our day, some whose tongues are deceitful have been presenting as truth many things that they themselves have originated, -- as if the law of truth were in their heart and coming from their lips. But the Lord will surely punish every deceitful, lying tongue that has caused his people to err and to turn from the righteousness of Christ. {RH, October 11, 1906 par. 13}

16. We are constantly surround by deceit, and with the agendas all around, especially that in the media, what is the end goal of the deceit? **Jeremiah 9:6**

EGW: (no comment)

17. Who fulfilled the Proverb that led to deceit? **Proverbs 27:6, Luke 22:47-48**

EGW: Jesus said to him, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" His voice trembled with sorrow as He added, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" This appeal should have aroused the conscience of the betrayer, and touched his stubborn heart; but honor, fidelity, and human tenderness had forsaken him. He stood bold and defiant, showing no disposition to relent. He had given himself up to Satan, and he had no power to resist him. Jesus did not refuse the traitor's kiss. {DA 696.1}

18. What do we need to avoid dwelling upon, including feeding into it via media like TV and movies, to avoid having deceit in the heart? **Proverbs 12:20**

EGW: (no comment)

19. What still happens to those who just want to live their own lives in quiet manner? **Psalms 35:20**

EGW: (no comment)

20. What leader dealt deceitfully and lost in the end? **Exodus 8:29**

EGW: Moses again proposed to go three days' journey into the wilderness. The king consented, while under the chastening hand of God. "And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away. Entreat for me. And Moses said, Behold, I go out from thee, and I will entreat the Lord that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people, tomorrow; but let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the Lord. And Moses went out from Pharaoh and entreated the Lord. And the Lord did according to the word of Moses; and he removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; there remained not one. And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go." {1SP 189.1}