

Third Quarter 2023

EGW Notes - Lesson 9, 19 – 25 August

Living Wisely



Sabbath Afternoon, August 19

The apostle [Paul's] desire for those to whom he addressed his letters of counsel and admonition was that . . . for those who were followers of Jesus in heathen communities not to walk “as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God . . . because of the blindness of their heart,” but “circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time.” Ephesians 4:14, 13, 17, 18; 5:15, 16. He encouraged the believers to look forward to the time when Christ, who “loved the church, and gave Himself for it,” would “present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing”—a church “holy and without blemish.” Ephesians 5:25, 27.

These messages, written with a power not of man but of God, contain lessons which should be studied by all and which may with profit be often repeated. In them practical godliness is outlined, principles are laid down that should be followed in every church, and the way that leads to life eternal is made plain.

— *The Acts of the Apostles, p. 470.*

Christ had foretold that deceivers would arise, through whose influence “iniquity” should “abound,” and “the love of many” should “wax cold.” Matthew 24:12. He had warned the disciples that the church would be in more danger from this evil than from the persecution of her enemies. Again and again Paul warned the

believers against these false teachers. This peril, above all others, they must guard against; for by receiving false teachers, they would open the door to errors by which the enemy would dim the spiritual perceptions and shake the confidence of those newly come to the faith of the gospel. Christ was the standard by which they were to test the doctrines presented. All that was not in harmony with His teachings they were to reject. Christ crucified for sin, Christ risen from the dead, Christ ascended on high—this was the science of salvation that they were to learn and teach.

— *The Acts of the Apostles, p. 473.*

The apostle Paul describes the fruit which the Christian is to bear. He says that it “is in all goodness and righteousness and truth” (Ephesians 5:9). And again, “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance” (Galatians 5:22, 23). These precious graces are but the principles of God’s law carried out in the life. . . .

As we look into the divine mirror, the law of God, we see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and our own lost condition as transgressors. But by repentance and faith we are justified before God, and through divine grace enabled to render obedience to His commandments.

— *The Sanctified Life, p. 80.*

Sunday, August 20 “Instead Let There Be Thanksgiving”

In his letter to “the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse,” written while he was a prisoner in Rome, Paul makes mention of his joy over their steadfastness in the faith, tidings of which had been brought him by Epaphras, who, the apostle wrote, “declared unto us your love in the Spirit. For this cause,” he continued, “we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord

unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.”

Thus Paul put into words his desire for the Colossian believers. How high the ideal that these words hold before the follower of Christ! They show the wonderful possibilities of the Christian life and make it plain that there is no limit to the blessings that the children of God may receive. Constantly increasing in a knowledge of God, they may go on from strength to strength, from height to height in Christian experience, until by “His glorious power” they are made “meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”

– *The Acts of the Apostles, p. 471.*

“Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.” Christians must be like Christ. They should have the same spirit, exert the same influence, and have the same moral excellence that He possessed. The idolatrous and corrupt in heart must repent and turn to God. Those who are proud and self-righteous must abase self and become penitent and meek and lowly in heart. The worldly-minded must have the tendrils of the heart removed from the rubbish of the world, around which they are clinging, and entwined about God; they must become spiritually minded. The dishonest and untruthful must become just and true. The ambitious and covetous must be hid in Jesus and seek His glory, not their own. They must despise their own holiness and lay up their treasure above. The prayerless must feel the need of both secret and family prayer, and must make their supplications to God with great earnestness.

As the worshipers of the true and living God we should bear fruit corresponding to the light and privileges we enjoy. Many are worshiping idols instead of the Lord of heaven and earth. Anything that men love and trust in instead of loving the Lord and trusting wholly in Him becomes an idol and is thus registered in the books of heaven.

—Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, pp. 249, 250.

Monday, August 21 Walking as Children of Light

Surrounded by the practices and influences of heathenism, the . . . believers were in danger of being drawn away from the simplicity of the gospel, and Paul, in warning them against this, pointed them to Christ as the only safe guide. . . .

“And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. . . . As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him: rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. 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. For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power.”

—*The Acts of the Apostles, p. 473.*

To walk in the light means to resolve, to exercise thought, to exert will-power, in an earnest endeavor to represent Christ in sweetness of character. It means to put away all gloom. You are not to rest satisfied simply in saying, “I am a child of God.” Are you beholding Jesus, and, by beholding, becoming changed into His likeness? To walk in the light means advancement and progress in spiritual attainments. . . .

When the light of heaven shines upon the human agent, his countenance will express the joy of the Lord within. It is the absence of Christ from the soul that makes people sad and of a doubtful mind. It is the want of Christ that makes the countenance sad, and the life is a pilgrimage of sighs. Rejoicing is the very keynote of the Word of God for all who receive Him. Why? Because they have the Light of life. Light brings gladness and joy, and that joy is expressed in the life and the character.

—*Sons and Daughters of God, p. 200.*

And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. Ephesians 5:2.

This is the oblation of a life-gift in our behalf, that we may be all that He desires us to be—representatives of Him, expressing the fragrance of His character, His own pure thoughts, His divine attributes as manifested in His sanctified human life, in order that others may behold Him in His human form, and . . . be led to desire to be like Christ.

—*God’s Amazing Grace, p. 174.*

Tuesday, August 22 “Awake, O Sleeper!”

Many are deceived as to their true condition before God. They congratulate themselves upon the wrong acts which they do not commit, and forget to enumerate the good and noble deeds which God requires of them, but which they have neglected to perform. It is not enough that they are trees in the garden of God. They are to answer His expectation by bearing fruit. He holds them accountable for their failure to accomplish all the good which they could have done, through His grace strengthening them. In the books of heaven they are registered as cumberers of the ground. Yet the case of even this class is not utterly hopeless. With those who have slighted God’s mercy and abused His grace, the heart of long-suffering love yet pleads. “Wherefore He saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, . . . redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” Ephesians 5:14-16.

—*The Great Controversy, p. 601.*

Immorality of every kind and degree is striving for the mastery, working against the manifestations of the power of the Holy Spirit. The commonest of conversation, and low, perverted ideas are woven into the texture of character and defile the soul.

The low, common pleasure parties, gatherings for eating and drinking, singing and playing on instruments of music, are inspired by a spirit that is from beneath. They are an oblation unto Satan. . . . For in these gratifications the mind becomes besotted, even as in liquor drinking. The door is opened to vulgar associations. The thoughts, allowed to run in a low channel, soon pervert all the powers of the being. . . . All these things are having their effect upon the character.

—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, p. 367.*

When we are united to Christ, we have the mind of Christ. Purity and love shine forth in the character, meekness and truth control the life. The very expression of the countenance is changed. Christ abiding in the soul exerts a transforming power, and the outward aspect bears witness to the peace and joy that reign within. We drink in the love of Christ, as the branch draws nourishment from the vine. If we are grafted in Christ, if fiber by fiber we have been united with the Living Vine, we shall give evidence of the fact by bearing rich clusters of living fruit. If we are connected with the Light, we shall be channels of light, and in our words and works we shall reflect light to the world. Those who are truly Christians are bound with the chain of love which links earth to heaven, which binds finite man to the infinite God. The light that shines in the face of Jesus Christ shines in the hearts of His followers, to the glory of God.

—*Selected Messages, book 1, p. 337.*

Wednesday, August 23 Snapping Up the Bargains

Christ came to our world to engage in singlehanded combat with this enemy of man, and thus to wrest the race from Satan's grasp. In the accomplishment of this object He withheld not His own life. And now, in the strength that Christ will give, man must stand for himself, a faithful sentinel against the wily, plotting foe. Says the great apostle, "Walk circumspectly"—guard every avenue of the soul, look constantly to Jesus, the true and perfect Pattern, and seek to imitate His

example, not in one or two points merely, but in all things. We shall then be prepared for any and every emergency. He whose mind loves to dwell upon God has a strong defense. He will be quick to perceive the dangers that threaten his spiritual life, and a sense of danger will lead him to call upon God for help and protection.

– *That I May Know Him, p. 240.*

If we mistake the wisdom of man for the wisdom of God we are led astray by the foolishness of man's wisdom. Here is the great danger of many. . . . They have not an experience for themselves. They have not been in the habit of prayerfully considering for themselves, with unprejudiced, unbiased judgment, questions and subjects that are new and that are ever liable to arise. They wait to see what others will think. If these dissent, that is all that is needed to convince them that the subject under consideration is of no account whatever. . . . Unless these become sensible of their wavering character and correct it, they will all fail of everlasting life; they will be unable to cope with the perils of the last days. . . . They are not wise in those things which relate to the kingdom of God. . . . A noble self-reliance is needed in the Christian experience and warfare.

– *Testimonies for the Church, vol. 2, p. 129.*

Mere intellectual knowledge, aside from the great truths that center in Christ, is as nothingness. "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom: . . . but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth." Jeremiah 9:23, 24. . . .

Before men can be truly wise, they must realize their dependence upon God, and be filled with His wisdom. God is the source of intellectual as well as spiritual power. The greatest men who have reached what the world regards as wonderful heights in science are not to be compared with the beloved John or the apostle Paul. It is when intellectual and spiritual power are combined that the

highest standard of manhood is attained. Those who do this, God will accept as workers together with Him.

—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, p. 66.*

Thursday, August 24 Spirit-Filled Worship

God is glorified by songs of praise from a pure heart filled with love and devotion to Him. When consecrated believers assemble, their conversation will not be upon the imperfections of others or savor of murmuring or complaint; charity, or love, the bond of perfectness, will encircle them. Love to God and their fellow men flows out naturally in words of affection, sympathy, and esteem for their brethren. The peace of God rules in their hearts; their words are not vain, empty, and frivolous, but to the comfort and edification of one another. . . . The gratitude which they feel, and the peace of God ruling within, cause them to make melody in their hearts unto the Lord and by words to make mention of the debt of love and thankfulness due the dear Saviour, who so loved them as to die that they might have life. No one who has an indwelling Saviour will dishonor Him before others by producing strains from a musical instrument which call the mind from God and heaven to light and trifling things.

—*Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, p. 509.*

The followers of Christ were instructed not to pray for the purpose of being heard of men. . . . Christ [showed] that He did not regard with approval that kind of piety so prevalent among the Pharisees. His teachings upon the mount show that deeds of benevolence assume a noble form and acts of religious worship shed a most precious fragrance when performed in an unpretending manner, in penitence and humility. The pure motive sanctifies the act.

True sanctification is an entire conformity to the will of God. Rebellious thoughts and feelings are overcome, and the voice of Jesus awakens a new life, which pervades the entire being. Those who are truly sanctified will not set up their

own opinion as a standard of right and wrong. They are not bigoted or self-righteousness; but they are jealous of self, ever fearing lest, a promise being left them, they should come short of complying with the conditions upon which the promises are based.

— *The Sanctified Life*, pp. 8, 9.

We do not pray any too much, but we are too sparing of giving thanks. We are the constant recipients of God’s mercies, and yet how little gratitude we express, how little we praise Him for what He has done for us. . . .

The soul may ascend nearer heaven on the wings of praise. God is worshiped with song and music in the courts above, and as we express our gratitude we are approximating to the worship of the heavenly hosts. “Whoso offereth praise glorifieth” God. Psalm 50:23. Let us with reverent joy come before our Creator, with “thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.” Isaiah 51:3.

— *Steps to Christ*, pp. 102, 104.

Friday, August 25 For Further Reading

Lift Him Up, “Steadfast unto the End,” p. 355;

This Day With God, “A Thankful Heart,” p. 45.

Steadfast Unto the End

Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. 2 Peter 3:14. {LHU 355.1}

Looking down through the ages to the close of time, Peter was inspired to outline conditions that would exist in the world just prior to the second coming of Christ. “There shall come in the last days scoffers,” he wrote, “walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.”

But “when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them” (1 Thessalonians 5:3). Not all, however, would be ensnared by the enemy’s devices. As the end of all things earthly should approach, there would be faithful ones able to discern the signs of the times.... There would be a remnant who would endure to the end. {LHU 355.2}

Peter kept alive in his heart the hope of Christ’s return, and he assured the church of the certain fulfillment of the Saviour’s promise, “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself” (John 14:3). To the tried and faithful ones the coming might seem long delayed, but the apostle assured them: “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. {LHU 355.3}

“Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. {LHU 355.4}

“Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you.... Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:9-18) (The Acts of the Apostles, 535-537). {LHU 355.5}

A Thankful Heart

Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Ephesians 5:20. {TDG 45.1}

It would please the Lord if you would make an effort to forget yourself. Begin to thank the Lord for your home and your pleasant surroundings, and the many temporal blessings He gives you. By returning thanks to the Lord for His goodness, you can do something for the One who has done everything for you. Contemplate the depths of the compassion that the Saviour felt for you. For you He gave His life, suffering the cruel death of the cross. Can you not praise the Lord for this? If you will hide your life in Christ, He will receive you. {TDG 45.2}

If you will show that you have a working faith, by trying every day to exercise your will power, your faculties will gain strength. I know this by experience. I remember in my own case how my faculties recovered their pliability as I tried to exercise them. Will you try to move about, and be cheerful in spirit? Put your trust in Jesus. Have faith in Him, and be pliant in His hands. You will receive great blessing by making a change in your habits.... {TDG 45.3}

For eleven months after going to Australia, I suffered from inflammatory rheumatism. I was unable to lift my feet from the floor without suffering great pain.... {TDG 45.4}

During those eleven months of suffering ...I would not give up. My right arm, from the elbow down, was whole, so that I could use the pen, and I wrote twenty-five hundred pages of letter paper for publication. During this period, I had the most terrible suffering of my life.... {TDG 45.5}

But to all this there is a cheerful side. My Saviour seemed to be close beside me. I felt His sacred presence in my heart, and I was so thankful. These months of suffering were the happiest months of my life, because of the companionship of my Saviour.... His love filled my heart. All through my sickness, His love, His tender compassion, was my comfort... {TDG 45.6}

Look unto Jesus, your pitying, loving Saviour. If you cast your helpless soul on Christ, He will bring joy and peace to your soul. He will be your crown of rejoicing, your exceeding great reward.—Letter 34, February 6, 1907, to the wife of a conference administrator in Australia. {TDG 45.7}