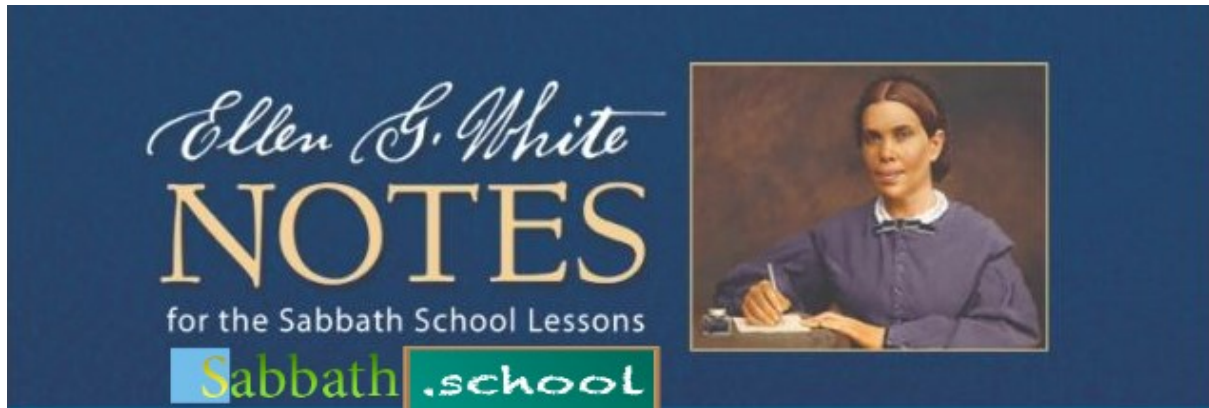


EGW Notes - Lesson 2

Teach us to Pray



Sabbath Afternoon, January 6

Daily prayer is as essential to growth in grace, and even to spiritual life itself, as is temporal food to physical well-being. We should accustom ourselves to lift the thoughts often to God in prayer. If the mind wanders, we must bring it back; by persevering effort, habit will finally make it easy. We cannot for one moment separate ourselves from Christ with safety. We may have His presence to attend us at every step, but only by observing the conditions which He Himself has laid down.

Religion must be made the great business of life. Everything else should be held subordinate to this. All our powers, of soul, body, and spirit, must be engaged in the Christian warfare. We must look to Christ for strength and grace, and we shall gain the victory as surely as Jesus died for us.—*The Sanctified Life*, p. 93.

Christ came into the world to save it, to connect fallen man with the infinite God. Christ's followers are to be channels of light. Maintaining communion with God, they are to transmit to those in darkness and error the choice blessings which they receive of heaven. Enoch did not become polluted with the iniquities existing in his day; why need we in our day? But we may, like our Master, have compassion for suffering humanity, pity for the unfortunate, and a generous consideration for the feelings and necessities of the needy, the troubled, and the despairing.

Those who are Christians indeed will seek to do good to others and at the same time will so order their conversation and deportment as to maintain a calm, hallowed peace of mind. God's word requires that we should be like our Saviour, that we should bear His image, imitate His example, live His life. Selfishness and worldliness are not fruits of a Christian tree. No man can live for himself and yet enjoy the approbation of God.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 113.

The temptations to which we are daily exposed make prayer a necessity. In order that we may be kept by the power of God through faith, the desires of the mind should be continually ascending in silent prayer for help, for light, for strength, for knowledge. . . .

We must live a twofold life—a life of thought and action, of silent prayer and earnest work. . . . The soul that turns to God for its strength, its support, its power, by daily, earnest prayer, will have noble aspirations, clear perceptions of truth and duty, lofty purposes of action, and a continual hungering and thirsting after

righteousness. By maintaining a connection with God we shall be enabled to diffuse to others, through our association with them, the light, the peace, the serenity, that rules in our hearts, and set before them an example of unwavering fidelity to the interests of the work in which we are engaged.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 459.

Sunday, January 7

Fostering the Use of the Psalms in Prayer

In God's Word we behold the power that laid the foundation of the earth and that stretched out the heavens. Here only can we find a history of our race unsullied by human prejudice or human pride. Here are recorded the struggles, the defeats, and the victories of the greatest men this world has ever known. Here the great problems of duty and destiny are unfolded. The curtain that separates the visible from the invisible world is lifted, and we behold the conflict of the opposing forces of good and evil, from the first entrance of sin to the final triumph of righteousness and truth; and all is but a revelation of the character of God. In the reverent contemplation of the truths presented in His Word the mind is brought into communion with the infinite mind. Such a study will not only refine and ennoble the character, but it cannot fail to expand and invigorate the mental powers.—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 115.

From the time when the parents of Jesus found Him in the temple, His course of action was a mystery to them. He would not enter into controversy, yet His example was a constant lesson. He seemed as one who was set apart. His hours of happiness were found when alone with nature and with God. Whenever it was His privilege, He turned aside from the scene of His labor, to go into the fields, to meditate in the green valleys, to hold communion with God on the mountainside or amid the trees of the forest. The early morning often found Him in some secluded place, meditating, searching the Scriptures, or in prayer. From these quiet hours He would return to His home to take up His duties again, and to give an example of patient toil.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 89.

We are in constant danger of becoming self-sufficient, relying upon our own wisdom, and not making God our strength. Nothing disturbs Satan so much as our not being ignorant of his devices. If we feel our dangers, we shall feel the need of prayer as did Nehemiah, and, like him, we shall obtain that sure defense that will give us security in peril. If we are careless and indifferent, we shall surely be overcome by Satan's devices. We must be vigilant. While, like Nehemiah, we resort to prayer, taking all our perplexities and burdens to God, we should not feel that we have nothing to do. We are to watch as well as pray.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 1138.

Monday, January 8

Trust in Times of Trouble

Heaven is brought near to earth by that mystic ladder, the base of which is firmly planted on the earth, while the topmost round reaches the throne of the Infinite. Angels are constantly ascending and descending this ladder of shining brightness, bearing the prayers of the needy and distressed to the Father above, and bringing blessing and hope, courage and help, to the children of men. These angels of light create a heavenly atmosphere about the soul, lifting us toward the unseen and the eternal. We cannot behold their forms with our natural sight; only by spiritual vision can we discern heavenly things. The spiritual ear alone can hear the harmony of heavenly voices.

“The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.” Psalm 34:7. God commissions His angels to save His chosen ones from calamity, to guard them from “the pestilence that walketh in darkness” and “the destruction that wasteth at noonday.” Psalm 91:6. Again and again have angels talked with men as a man speaketh with a friend, and led them to places of security. Again and again have the encouraging words of angels renewed the drooping spirits of the faithful and, carrying their minds above the things of earth, caused them to behold by faith the white robes, the crowns, the palm branches of victory, which overcomers will receive when they surround the great white throne.

It is the work of the angels to come close to the tried, the suffering, the tempted. They labor untiringly in behalf of those for whom Christ died.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 153.

The faith that strengthened Habakkuk and all the holy and the just in those days of deep trial was the same faith that sustains God's people today. In the darkest hours, under circumstances the most forbidding, the Christian believer may keep his soul stayed upon the source of all light and power. Day by day, through faith in God, his hope and courage may be renewed. "The just shall live by his faith." In the service of God there need be no despondency, no wavering, no fear. The Lord will more than fulfill the highest expectations of those who put their trust in Him. He will give them the wisdom their varied necessities demand.

Of the abundant provision made for every tempted soul, the apostle Paul bears eloquent testimony. To him was given the divine assurance, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness." In gratitude and confidence the tried servant of God responded: "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." 2 Corinthians 12:9, 10.—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 386, 387.

Fearful tests and trials await the people of God. The spirit of war is stirring the nations from one end of the earth to the other. But in the midst of the time of trouble that is coming—a time of trouble such as has not been since there was a nation—God’s chosen people will stand unmoved. Satan and his angels cannot destroy them, for angels that excel in strength will protect them.—*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 55.

Tuesday, January 9

A Psalm of Despair

I was shown that Satan’s power is especially exercised upon the people of God. Many were presented before me in a doubting, despairing condition. The infirmities of the body affect the mind. A cunning and powerful enemy attends our steps and employs his strength and skill in trying to turn us out of the right way. And it is too often the case that the people of God are not on their watch, therefore are ignorant of his devices. He works by means which will best conceal himself from view, and he often gains his object.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 304.

We must cherish and cultivate the faith of which prophets and apostles have testified—the faith that lays hold on the promises of God and waits for deliverance in His appointed time and way. The sure word of prophecy will meet its final fulfillment in the glorious advent of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as King of kings and Lord of lords. The time of waiting may seem long, the

soul may be oppressed by discouraging circumstances, many in whom confidence has been placed may fall by the way; but with the prophet who endeavored to encourage Judah in a time of unparalleled apostasy, let us confidently declare, "The Lord is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him." Habakkuk 2:20. Let us ever hold in remembrance the cheering message, "The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. . . . The just shall live by his faith." Verses 3, 4.—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 387.

Genuine conversion . . . will teach us to hold fast our confidence in Him who is our only hope. By conversion we join our weakness to God's strength, our ignorance to His wisdom, our unworthiness to His merits, our poverty to His boundless riches, our helplessness to His enduring might.

We must search the Word of God, making it a part of ourselves. A spirit of humility, the spirit of Christ, will help us to know Him who has called us to glory and virtue.

If we brought the truth into the daily life as we should we would advance higher and still higher, gaining a clearer and still clearer understanding of the revelation of God. We would lift Him up in songs of praise. Through the psalmist Christ declared, "In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee" (Psalm 22:22). His voice was the keynote of the universe. His unconfined power, His unsearchable understanding, His wonderful sacrifice for the human race, help us to comprehend the love of

God. We need individually to have Christ abiding in the soul. We need to open our minds and hearts to the indwelling of the Spirit of truth. We need to appreciate our privileges as the possessors of sacred, elevating truth. Think of what this means to us—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ!—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 248.

Wednesday, January 10

From Despair to Hope

The very trials that test our faith most severely, and make it seem that God has forsaken us, are designed to lead us nearer to Christ, that we may lay all our burdens at his feet, and receive the peace he will give us in exchange. . . . When you surrender yourself entirely to God, when you fall all broken upon Jesus, you will be rewarded by a victory the joy of which you have never yet realized. As you review the past with a clear vision, you will see that at the very time when life seemed to you only a perplexity and a burden, Jesus himself was near you, seeking to lead you into the light. Your Father was by your side, bending over you with unutterable love, afflicting you for your good, as the refiner purifies the precious ore. When you have thought yourself forsaken, he has been near you to comfort and sustain. We seldom view Jesus as he is, and are never so ready to receive his help as he is to help us.—*Gospel Workers* (1892), p. 372.

All the fifty-fourth chapter of Isaiah is applicable to the people of God, and every specification of the prophecy

will be fulfilled. The Lord will not forsake His people in their time of trial. He says, “For a small moment have I forsaken you; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.” . . . [This] promise is for those who amid general apostasy, keep the commandments of God, and lift up the moral standard before the eyes of the world who have forsaken the ordinance, and broken the everlasting covenant [Isaiah 54:9-13 quoted].—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1148.

At times a deep sense of our unworthiness will send a thrill of terror through the soul; but this is no evidence that God has changed toward us, or we toward God. No effort should be made to rein the mind up to a certain intensity of emotion. We may not feel today the peace and joy which we felt yesterday; but we should by faith grasp the hand of Christ, and trust Him as fully in the darkness as in the light.

Satan may whisper, “You are too great a sinner for Christ to save.” While you acknowledge that you are indeed sinful and unworthy, you may meet the tempter with the cry, “By virtue of the atonement, I claim Christ as my Saviour. I trust not to my own merits, but to the precious blood of Jesus, which cleanses me. This moment I hang my helpless soul on Christ.” The Christian life must be a life of constant, living faith. An unyielding trust, a firm reliance upon Christ, will bring peace and assurance to the soul.—*Messages to Young People*, pp. 111, 112.

Thursday, January 11

Oh, Restore Us Again

Christ is our only hope. We may look to Him, for He is our Saviour. We may take Him at His word, and make Him our dependence. He knows just the help we need, and we can safely put our trust in Him. If we depend on merely human wisdom to guide us, we shall find ourselves on the losing side. But we may come direct to the Lord Jesus, for He has said: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." It is our privilege to be taught of Him.—
Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, p. 486.

Our Lord Jesus Christ came to this world as the unwearied servant of man's necessity. He "took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses," that He might minister to every need of humanity. Matthew 8:17. The burden of disease and wretchedness and sin He came to remove. It was His mission to bring to men complete restoration; He came to give them health and peace and perfection of character.

Varied were the circumstances and needs of those who besought His aid, and none who came to Him went away unhelped. From Him flowed a stream of healing power, and in body and mind and soul men were made whole.—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 17.

Angels from the heavenly courts stand by all who do God's service in ministering to their fellow men. And you have the co-operation of Christ Himself. He is the Restorer, and as you work under His supervision, you will see great results. . . .

Christ is seeking to uplift all who will be lifted to companionship with Himself, that we may be one with Him as He is one with the Father. He permits us to come in contact with suffering and calamity in order to call us out of our selfishness; He seeks to develop in us the attributes of His character—compassion, tenderness, and love. By accepting this work of ministry we place ourselves in His school, to be fitted for the courts of God. . . .

“If thou wilt keep My charge,” the Lord declares, “I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by”—even among the angels that surround His throne. (Zechariah 3:7.) By co-operating with heavenly beings in their work on earth, we are preparing for their companionship in heaven. “Ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation” (Hebrews 1:14), angels in heaven will welcome those who on earth have lived “not to be ministered unto, but to minister” (Matthew 20:28).—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 388, 389.

Friday, January 12

For Further Reading

The Sanctified Life, “The Testing Time,” pp. 11, 12;

This Day With God, “Shining Christians,” p. 316.