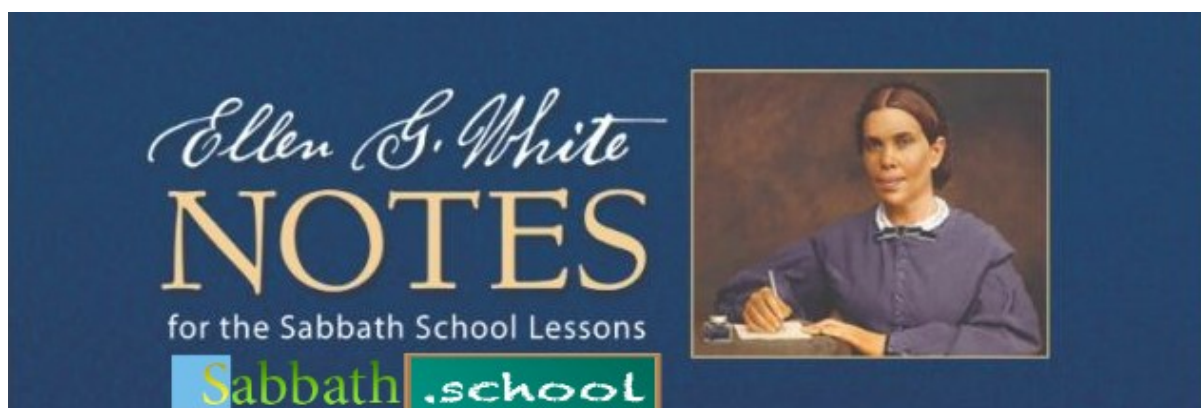


EGW Notes - Lesson 7

A Heavenly Citizenship



Sabbath Afternoon, February 7

Obedience to the laws of God develops in man a beautiful character that is in harmony with all that is pure and holy and undefiled. In the life of such a man the message of the gospel of Christ is made clear. Accepting the mercy of Christ and His healing from the power of sin, he is brought into right relation with God. His life, cleansed from vanity and selfishness, is filled with the love of God. His daily obedience to the law of God obtains for him a character that assures him eternal life in the kingdom of God.

In His earthly life the Saviour gives us an example of the hallowed lives that may be ours if we will devote our days to doing good to the souls that need our help. It is our privilege to bring joy to the sorrowful, light to the darkened, and life to the perishing. The Lord's message comes to us, "Why stand ye here all the day idle; work while it is day; for the night cometh when no man can work." Every word we speak, every act we perform, that conduces to the happiness of others, will conduce to our own happiness, and make our lives like the life of Christ.

Our daily duties are to be cheerfully accepted and cheerfully performed. Our chief duty is to reveal in words and deportment a life which will make manifest the attributes of heaven. The Word of life is given to us to study and practice. Our actions are to be in strict conformity to the laws of the kingdom of heaven. Then heaven can approve our work; and the talents we employ in His service will multiply for greater usefulness. The consecrated life will shine amid the moral darkness of the world, guiding perishing souls to the truth of the Word. . . .

In His Gift to the world the Lord has revealed how solicitous He is that we bear in our lives the marks of our heavenly citizenship by letting every ray of light we have received shine forth in good works to our fellow-men.—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 42.

Let us individually consider what is the record made in the books of heaven concerning our life and character, and our attitude toward God. Has our love for God been increasing during the past year? If Christ is indeed abiding in our hearts, we shall love God, we shall love to obey all His commandments, and this love will continually deepen and strengthen. If we represent Christ to the world, we shall be pure in heart, in life, in character; we shall be holy in conversation; there will be no guile in our hearts or upon our lips. Let us examine our past life

and see if we have given evidence of our love for Jesus by seeking to be like Him, and by working, as He worked, to save those for whom He died.

Of the zealous, self-sacrificing disciples of Christ, it is written that Jesus was not ashamed to call them brethren, so fully did they manifest His Spirit, and bear His likeness. By their works they constantly testified that this world was not their home; their citizenship was above; they were seeking a better country, even a heavenly. Their conversation and affections were on heavenly things. They were in the world, but not of the world; in spirit and practice they were separate from its maxims and customs. Their daily example testified that they were living for the glory of God. Their great interest, like that of their Master, was for the salvation of souls. For this they toiled and sacrificed, counting not their lives dear unto themselves. By their life and character they made a bright track heavenward. Upon such disciples, Jesus can look with satisfaction as His representatives. His character will not be misrepresented through them.—*Lift Him Up*, p. 325.

Sunday, February 8

Role Models

The people of God—the true Israel—though scattered throughout all nations, are on earth but sojourners, whose citizenship is in heaven.

The condition of being received into the Lord's family is coming out from the world, separating from all its contaminating influences. The people of God are to have no connection with idolatry in any of its forms. They are to reach a higher standard. We are to be distinguished from the world, and then God says, "I will receive you as members of My royal family, children of the heavenly King." As believers in the truth we are to be distinct in practice from sin and sinners. Our citizenship is in heaven.

We should realize more clearly the value of the promises God has made to us, and appreciate more deeply the honor He has given us. God can bestow no higher honor upon mortals than to adopt them into His family, giving them the privilege of calling Him Father. There is no degradation in becoming children of God.

We are strangers and pilgrims in this world. We are to wait, watch, pray, and work. The whole mind, the whole soul, the whole heart, and the whole strength are purchased by the blood of the Son of God. We are not to feel it our duty to wear a pilgrim's dress of just such a color, just such a shape, but neat, modest apparel, that the word of inspiration teaches us we should wear. If our hearts are united with Christ's heart, we shall have a most intense desire to be clothed with His righteousness. Nothing will be put upon the person to attract attention, or to create controversy.

Christianity—how many there are who do not know what it is! It is not something put on the outside. It is a life inwrought with the life of Jesus. It means that we are wearing the robe of Christ's righteousness.

Citizens of heaven will make the best citizens of earth. A correct view of our duty to God leads to clear perceptions of our duty to our fellow men.—*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 57.

We cannot afford by our example to seem to sanction wrongdoing. There is a heaven to win and a hell to shun. In large churches of believers . . . there is special danger of lowering the standard. Where many are gathered together some are more liable to grow careless and indifferent than they would be if isolated and made to stand alone. But even under adverse circumstances we may watch unto prayer and set an example in godly conversation that will be a powerful testimony for the right. . . . We cannot afford to speak words that would discourage our fellow pilgrims in the Christian pathway. Christ has given His life in order that we might live with Him in glory. Throughout eternity He will bear in His hands the prints of the cruel nails by which He was transfixed to the cross of Calvary. . . .

We are now fitting up for the future, eternal life; and soon, if faithful, we shall see the gates of the city of our God swing back on their glittering hinges that the nations who have kept the truth may enter in to their eternal inheritance.—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 299.

Monday, February 9

“Stand Fast in the Lord”

The truth of God obeyed, the living by every word of God, is alone sufficient to make any of us stand in these evil times. Satan is playing the game of life for the soul. . . .

There are opportunities and advantages which are within the reach of all to strengthen the moral and spiritual powers. The mind can be expanded and ennobled and should be made to dwell upon heavenly things. . . . Unless it flows in a heavenward direction it becomes an easy prey to the temptation of Satan to engage in worldly projects and enterprises that have no special connection with God. And all zeal and devotion and restless energy and feverish desire are brought into this work, and the devil stands by and laughs to see human effort wrestling so perseveringly for an object that it will never gain, which eludes its grasp. . . . Schemes and projects which Satan invents ensnare the soul, and poor, deceived human beings go on blindfolded to their own ruin. . . .

There is one safeguard against Satan’s deceptions and snares, that is the truth as it is in Jesus. The truth planted in the heart, nourished by watchfulness and prayer, nourished by the grace of Christ, will give us discernment. The truth must abide in the heart, be felt in its power in spite of all the alluring enchantments of Satan, and your experience and mine must be that the truth can purify, guide, and bless the soul. . . .

The enemy is on the track of every one of us, and if we would resist temptations which assail us from without and from within, we need to make sure we are on the Lord’s side, that His truth is in our hearts, that it keeps watch in our souls, ready to sound an alarm and summon us to action against every enemy. Without this defense amid unseen foes we shall be like the willow bending to the blast, driven of the wind and tossed. But if Christ abides in the soul we may be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.—*That I May Know Him*, p. 301.

Strength comes by exercise. All who put to use the ability which God has given them will have increased ability to devote to His service. Those who do nothing in the cause of God will fail to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. A man who would lie down and refuse to exercise his limbs would soon lose all power to use them. Thus the Christian who will not exercise his God-given powers not only fails to grow up into Christ, but he loses the strength which he already has; he becomes a spiritual paralytic. It is those who, with love for God and their fellow men, are striving to help others that become established, strengthened, settled, in the truth. The true Christian works for God, not from impulse, but from principle; not for a day or a month, but during the entire period of life. . . .

O that each one would place a proper estimate upon the capabilities that have been given him of God! Through Christ you may climb the ladder of progress, and bring every power under the control of Jesus. . . . In your own strength you can do nothing; but in the grace of Jesus Christ, you can employ your powers in such a way as to bring the greatest good to your own soul, and the greatest blessing to the souls of others. Lay hold of Jesus, and you will diligently work the works of Christ, and will finally receive the eternal reward.—*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 306.

Tuesday, February 10

Rejoice in the Lord—Always

To the Christian is granted the joy of gathering rays of eternal light from the throne of glory, and of reflecting these rays not only on his own path, but on the paths of those with whom he associates. By speaking words of hope and encouragement, of grateful praise and kindly cheer, he may strive to make those around him better, to elevate them, to point them to heaven and glory, and to lead them to seek, above all earthly things, the eternal substance, the immortal inheritance, the riches that are imperishable.

“Rejoice in the Lord alway,” says the apostle, “and again I say, Rejoice.” Wherever we go, we should carry an atmosphere of Christian hopefulness and cheer; then those who are out of Christ will see attractiveness in the religion we profess; unbelievers will see the consistency of our faith. We need to have more distinct glimpses of heaven, the land where all is brightness and joy. We need to know more of the fullness of the blessed hope. If we are constantly “rejoicing in hope,” we shall be able to speak words of encouragement to those whom we meet.

. . .

Not alone in daily association with believers and unbelievers are we to glorify God by speaking often one to another in words of gratitude and rejoicing. As Christians, we are exhorted not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, for our own refreshing, and to impart the consolation we have received. In these meetings, held from week to week, we should dwell upon God’s goodness and manifold mercies, upon His power to save from sin. In features, in temper, in words, in character, we are to witness that the service of God is good. Thus we proclaim that “the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.”

Our prayer and social meetings should be seasons of special help and encouragement. . . . This can best be done by having a fresh experience daily in the things of God, and by not hesitating to speak of His love in the assemblies of His people. . . .

If we thought and talked more of Jesus, and less of ourselves, we should have much more of His presence. If we abide in Him, we shall be so filled with peace, faith, and courage, and shall have so victorious an experience to relate when we come to meeting, that others will be refreshed by our clear, strong testimony for God. These precious acknowledgments to the praise of the glory of His grace, when supported by a Christlike life, have an irresistible power, which works for the salvation of souls.—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 220.

Wednesday, February 11

Think on These Things . . .

If the mind is educated to contemplate heavenly things, the appetite will not be satisfied with that which is cheap and common. We must bear in mind that the Lord is prepared to do great things for us, but we must be prepared to receive these things by emptying from the heart all self-sufficiency and self-confidence. The Lord alone is to be exalted. “Them that honour me,” He says, “I will honour” ([1 Samuel 2:30](#)). We need not be on the strain for recognition, for “the Lord knoweth them that are his.” Those who do not put confidence in themselves, but look with distrust upon their own work, are the ones to whom the Lord will reveal His glory. They will make the best use of the blessings received. All who drink of the pure streams of Lebanon, will have the water of life springing up in them, and this cannot be repressed. . . .

The Lord knows that if we look to man, and trust to man, we are leaning on an arm of flesh. He invites our confidence. There is no limit to His power. Think of the Lord Jesus, and His merits and His love, but do not seek to find the defects and dwell upon the mistakes that others have made. Call to your mind the things worthy of your recognition and your praise; and if you are sharp to discern errors in others, be more sharp to recognize the good and praise the good. You may, if you criticize yourself, find things just as objectionable as that which you see in others. Then let us work constantly to strengthen one another in the most holy faith.

In Paul’s epistle to the Philippians, he says, “Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” ([Philippians 1:1–6](#)). Let us all make this spirit ours.—*This Day With God*, p. 300.

Thursday, February 12

Keys for Contentment

Pure religion brings peace, happiness, contentment; godliness is profitable to this life and the life to come.

That unrest and discontent which ends in fretting and complaining is sinful; but the discontent with one's self which urges on to more earnest effort for greater improvement of the mind for a broader field of usefulness is praiseworthy. This discontent does not end in disappointment but in gathering force for a higher and more extended field of usefulness. Only be ever balanced by firm religious principle and a sensitive conscience, having ever the fear of God before you, and you will certainly prosper in becoming fitted for a life of usefulness.

We should live for the next world. It is so wretched to live a haphazard, aimless life. We want an object in life—to live for a purpose. God help us all to be self-sacrificing, less self-caring, more forgetful of self and selfish interest; and to do good, not for the honor we expect to receive here, but because this is the object of our life and will answer the end of our existence. Let our daily prayer go up to God that He will divest us of selfishness. . . .

I have seen that those who live for a purpose, seeking to benefit and bless their fellow men and to honor and glorify their Redeemer, are the truly happy ones on the earth, while the man who is restless, discontented, and seeking this and testing that, hoping to find happiness, is always complaining of disappointment. He is always in want, never satisfied, because he lives for himself alone. Let it be your aim to do good, to act your part in life faithfully.

Be anxious and earnest to grow in grace, seeking for a more distinct and intelligent understanding of the will of God concerning you, striving earnestly for the mark of the prize before you. Christian perfection alone will win the spotless robes of character which will entitle you to stand before the throne of God among the blood-washed throng, bearing the palm branch of everlasting victory and eternal triumph.—*Our High Calling*, p. 242.

The soul that is brought into personal contact with Christ becomes a holy temple unto the Lord; for Jesus is made unto the believer wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. He who has fully surrendered to God has a consciousness of Christ's saving presence. He is a possessor of spiritual patience, and has the rest of soul that comes from learning of Him who is meek and lowly of heart. Trusting in Jesus to be his efficiency and righteousness, his soul is filled with a pleasant contentment.

What is the joy of the Christian? It is the result of the consciousness of the presence of Christ. What is the love of the Christian? It is the reflection of the love of Christ. It is the effect of the operation of the Holy Spirit. Looking to the cross of Calvary, we see Jesus dying for the sins of the world, in order that by His death, life and immortality might be brought to light in behalf of the contrite soul. Jesus is all in all, and without Him we can do nothing. Without Christ, spiritual life would be impossible.—*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 83.

Friday, February 13

For Further Reading

That I May Know Him, "Qualifications of Heavenly Citizenship," December 13, p. 353.

God's Amazing Grace, "To Bring Comfort," April 24, p. 122.