

SERMON NOTES

From *In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley*



Before You Step Out of the Will of God

KEY PASSAGE: Colossians 3:23-25 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: Numbers 32:23 | Galatians 6:7 | 1 John 1:9

► SUMMARY

God has spoken very clearly in His Word regarding His will for our lives.

In addition, He has given us the Holy Spirit to help us discern what He desires and to enable us to obey Him. However, we must each decide whether we are going to follow Him or go our own way.

► SERMON POINTS

Life at its best can only be experienced by living according to God's will because He alone knows what is best.

At times we may question why the Lord allows certain difficulties and struggles in one person's life, while another may never have to go through such trials. From an earthly perspective, afflictions may not look like the best plan, but God alone knows what He desires to accomplish in each person's life through various situations. However, when someone follows the Lord obediently in difficult circumstances, He is able to accomplish amazing things in that person's life. God promises to work out every event for the good of those who obey Him.

In contrast, those who live outside God's will reject the best possible life, which only He can offer. Although they think they are choosing a good course of action since it promises to give them what they want, they end up paying a costly price for their disobedience to almighty God.

Many people will not discover this truth until later in life, but it is never too late to submit to the Lord. The

past cannot be changed, but God can forgive and change the direction of the life of anyone who turns to Him in repentance. All believers have the Holy Spirit within them who transforms their thoughts, habits, and way of life to help them live obediently according to God's will.

Serving Christ Is God's Will.

The apostle Paul gives the following explanation of what it means to walk in God's will.

■ **Colossians 3:23-24** "Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve."

Some people think that after salvation, they can then do as they please, but that is not true. Paul says that once we are saved, we become servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our Master, and every day of our lives is to be spent serving Him, knowing that one day we must all stand before Him to give an account for how we lived.

Warnings to Those Who Don't Obey God's Will

If we go through life without thinking about the Lord, reading His Word, or praying, this is evidence that we are living for ourselves rather than for Christ. Before we continue going down this path, we should stop and heed God's warnings in Scripture so we won't have to suffer the consequences of rebelling against Him.

■ **Colossians 3:25** "For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality."

- **Galatians 6:7** “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.”
- **Numbers 32:23** “You have sinned against the LORD, and be sure your sin will find you out.”

The Consequences of Stepping Out of God’s Will

Before foolishly disobeying God and ignoring or rejecting His will, we must consider the consequences. The Bible provides many examples from which to learn.

- **Adam and Eve.** Although they lived in a perfect environment, had every need met, and enjoyed intimate fellowship with God, they chose to disobey Him. As a result, the entire creation suffered the consequences of sin.
- **Those in Noah’s day.** The wickedness of the human race became so great that God decided to destroy everything on the face of the earth with a flood. But Noah was righteous and obeyed the Lord by building an ark. Therefore, he and his family were rescued from the flood and that evil society.
- **Israel.** The Lord God chose the nation of Israel to be His people. After 400 years of living in slavery to the Egyptians, He miraculously rescued them, gave them His law by which they were to live, provided for their needs, and promised to give them the land of Canaan as a home. But they continually disobeyed Him in the wilderness and refused to enter the land because they were afraid of the giants who lived there and didn’t trust God to do what He’d promised. Consequently, an entire generation was not allowed to enter the land but was sentenced by God to wander in the desert for 40 years until they all died.
- **Samson.** God called Samson to live a holy life and gave him supernatural strength to overcome Israel’s enemies. However, he yielded to temptation when a woman named Delilah begged him to tell her the secret of his strength. In a moment of weakness he forsook God’s will and revealed his secret. As a result, he lost his strength and

his eyesight, was captured by the enemy and confined in prison where he was forced to grind grain, and eventually lost his life.

- **David.** David was the shepherd boy who killed Goliath and became the king of Israel. But when his kingdom was established, he yielded to temptation, committed adultery and murder, and suffered the consequences for the rest of his life.
- **Jonah.** When the Lord told the prophet to preach repentance to Israel’s enemies in Nineveh, Jonah rebelled by boarding a ship sailing in the opposite direction. As a result of his refusal to follow God’s will, Jonah was thrown overboard in a storm and swallowed by a great fish. Finally, at the point of death, he cried out to God, was rescued from the fish, and obediently went to Nineveh.
- **Peter.** As one of Christ’s inner circle of disciples, Peter had the privilege of spending three years with Him, seeing His miracles and hearing His teaching. But on the night that Jesus was arrested, Peter’s loyalty was replaced by fear, and he denied knowing Him three times. When Jesus turned and looked at Peter, the disciple was overwhelmed with remorse.

► RESPONSE

- To the best of your knowledge, are you walking in God’s will? This doesn’t mean you have to be perfect, but by His grace and the power of His Spirit, do you desire to live in obedience to Him? How often do you stop to consider the consequences of disobedience?
- Are you living as a servant of Christ and doing all your work for Him? Where do you need to make some changes in order to be a more faithful servant?
- Have you surrendered your life to Christ? Are there any areas you want to keep under your control? How confident are you that His way is best?

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