

SERMON NOTES

From *In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley*



The Rocky Road to the Will of God

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE: 1 John 1:9

► SUMMARY

Unbelievers scoff at the idea of God's will, and believers often ignore it.

However, it's a reality that affects our lives every day. Either we are living in the will of God or outside it. Usually when we think about His will, our focus is on trying to discover it, but a more important issue is whether we decide to obey His revealed will or not. The road may be rocky at times, but we should not let the obstacles stop us from living according to God's plan.

► SERMON POINTS

Obstacles to God's Will

To successfully navigate the path of God's will, we need to understand the obstacles that could trip us up.

- **Self-Will.** The biggest stumbling block is a determination to have our own way rather than following God's path. Our pride and selfishness keep us from even asking God what He would have us do. Therefore, we make up our minds and then come to the Lord asking Him to bless our chosen path. This is a foolish approach because God doesn't operate this way, and we are not sufficient within ourselves to determine or accomplish His will.
- **Influence of Others.** Following other people's advice can be another obstacle in our walk with the Lord. Some are quick to tell us exactly what we should do and how we should live, but their opinions may not agree with

God's plan. The best option is to first turn to Him rather than relying on fallible human beings.

- **Ignorance of God's Principles.** We can't walk in God's will if we don't know what He desires. Biblical principles help us understand how He wants us to live. Here are a few of them:
 - **Wait on the Lord.** We need to know not only what He would have us do but when. God's timing is essential in the Christian life.
 - **Trust God and leave all the consequences to Him.** Despite obstacles, we should keep moving in the direction of obedience to God. He is capable of handling whatever happens as a result. Our job is to walk by faith and trust Him.
 - **Allow God to supply all our needs.** The Lord will provide everything we require to obey His will.
 - **Take one step at a time.** The Lord will not show us the entire picture of our lives so we know exactly what will happen. Instead, His light shines as far as the next step. This means we must trust Him for whatever lies ahead that we cannot see.
- **Willful Known Sin.** We must not believe the lie that a little sin won't hurt anyone. Just consider what sin does.
 - **It deafens our ears to the voice of God.** Disobedience clogs our spiritual ears.
 - **Sin blinds our eyes to the vision of God.** We won't be able to perceive His will or understand what He is doing in our lives.
 - **It hardens our hearts to the awareness of God.** Disobedience makes our hearts hard, and sin draws us away from the Lord. We become distracted, disobedient, and indifferent to Him.

- **Sin dulls our conscience to the Word of God.** When we read the Bible, we will get nothing from it. We won't sense God's conviction of sin or hear Him speak through His Word.

- **Doubt.** This is another obstacle to walking in the will of God, and it's manifest in several ways.

- **We doubt that God has a personal will for our lives.**

We may believe He's working out His plan for the world in general but not for us individually.

- **We doubt that the Lord will make His will known.**

Perhaps we don't understand that He loves us, or we're not sure we are actually hearing from Him.

- **We doubt that we can do what the Lord requires.**

This is often the point at which we step out of God's will. We look at our own inadequacy and question whether He will enable us to obey Him.

- **We doubt God because we don't have all the facts.**

Instead of looking at all the unknowns, we need to focus on what we know to be true. God loves us each individually and will walk with us through whatever He has planned for us. Although we may experience difficulty, suffering, or loss, the Lord promises to work it all out for good. His desire is to use these situations to mature us, increase our trust in Him, eliminate things that should not be in our lives, and shape us into the likeness of Christ. Our goal should be to follow His leadership and trust Him to guide us every step of the way.

- **Feelings of Unworthiness.** Sometimes this is the reason we refuse to follow in God's will, but we should never underestimate what He can do through us. We must be careful to make decisions based on what the Lord has said, not on what we are feeling or thinking. If the reason for our sense of unworthiness is our failures, we have a promise of forgiveness and cleansing if we will confess our sins to God (1 John 1:9). Although we may have to endure the consequences, the Lord never walks away from those who belong to Him but always seeks

to restore us to Himself. Even His discipline is an act of love by which He brings us back into His will.

- **Busyness.** If we don't have time for God's Word, church, or prayer, we cannot expect to know or obey His will. Busyness is often used as an excuse for our sin—we just don't have time for God. Living in this world doesn't help because it's opposed to the way God wants us to live.

Although the Christian life is not an easy road, it has an awesome, eternal end. In heaven we will enjoy the Lord's blessings forever. For now, we have the Holy Spirit, the presence of God, and the promises of His Word to encourage and enable us to live according to His will. If we neglect these divine resources, we could easily become fearful and reject God's plan.

Fears in the Christian Life

- **Fear of God's Requirements.** Following His will may seem too costly.

- **Fear of Failure.** We may let past sins keep us from moving forward.

- **Fear of Criticism.** Other people's disapproval may cause us to falter.

► RESPONSE

- Are you presently living in the will of God? How do you know if you are or aren't?

- Does it seem like something is missing in your Christian life? If so, could it possibly be related to how much time you spend with the Lord in His Word and prayer?

- What, if anything, is keeping you from obeying what God wants you to do?

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