



SERMON NOTES

From In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley

WISDOM FOR LIFE'S TRIALS

KEY PASSAGE: James 1:1-12 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE: 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 | 1 Peter 1:6-7, 4:12

► SUMMARY

When facing trials, have you ever asked, “God, why did You allow this?”

While it is natural to question the difficult and painful circumstances that you endure, you will only find a truly fulfilling and comforting answer when you seek wisdom from the Father. When you ask for God’s viewpoint on your situation and respond to it using the scriptural principles He teaches, you will be able to endure your circumstances and grow through them.

In fact, James 1:1-12 tells us that God uses trials to accomplish His purpose in our lives. Through them, He strengthens our faith, makes us more Christlike in character, and demonstrates His great love and power in personal and impactful ways.

Understanding this can change our viewpoint on hardship. And instead of feeling like victims, we can face difficulties with joy, peace, and expectancy—confident in God’s promise to reward our faithfulness and to bring something worthwhile from our pain.

► SERMON POINTS

Understanding the Sources of Trials

More often than not, we want to point fingers and immediately place blame when trials come our way. However, it is always wise to ask, “What is the true source of this trial?” The answer will most likely be different for each one we face. Many difficulties are simply those you and I bring on ourselves because of poor decisions, but some troubles can be caused by other people.

For example, a young believer may face certain difficulties over and over again because he has only begun to walk with Christ and requires further refinement. Or he may see his troubles increase because of rejection or persecution by others. Peter warned believers not to be surprised or disheartened by such trials and explained that God will always work them out for good (1 Peter 4:12).

Still other pains happen simply because the world we live in is fallen. Ever since creation was corrupted by sin, sorrow has been one of the many consequences. And, of course, the Devil himself instigates a great deal of our suffering to make us question our faith.

Does God ever send trials Himself? Yes, He does. He also allows them, especially if they result from choices we’ve made that were not in His will. The Lord will even send trials when we are living obediently because our Father loves us too much to leave us where we are spiritually. His greatest desire is for each of us to grow closer to Him and to walk in the center of His will.

Regardless of the source, the Father promises to use each one of our trials for good. Knowing this should change our attitude toward them. Therefore, we should consider every challenge we encounter as a reason to rejoice rather than give in to feelings of helplessness and defeat.

As children of a sovereign God, we are never victims of our circumstances; our heavenly Father is in absolute control of everything that concerns us. With this in mind, trials should no longer be a source of anxiety or frustration for us because we understand they are His way of accomplishing His will in our lives.

Understanding God's Purposes

In any trial, God has an opportunity to:

- **Test our faith.** In 1 Peter 1:6-7, the testing of our faith is compared to the refining of gold. Both are purified by fire and are of great worth—faith even more so because of its eternal value. If it is this precious, isn't God's testing of it worthwhile? After all, untested faith is weak and unreliable, so exposure to trials is what best strengthens it.
- **Test our devotion to Christ.** Trials can help us discover just how obedient we truly are. Sometimes, we have to go through difficult things. However, these moments give us the choice to obey, and doing so helps us grow.
- **Purify us.** During trials, certain negative attitudes such as prejudice or scorn hidden deep inside of us will rise to the surface. God uses these moments to show us what is in our hearts—not to condemn us, but to cleanse us of those things that keep us from receiving His best blessings.
- **Demonstrate His love.** If life was always easy and all our desires were met, God would be taken for granted. People never pray more than when they are in the midst of a trial, and it allows the Father to display His love and grace most abundantly.

For instance, someone who is in desperate need of a job may receive one in such a way that reveals God's kindness, or someone who is struggling with illness may find his or her only relief through His healing.
- **Produce a Christlike spirit in us.** God knows us individually—where we are, where He wants us to be, and how to get us there. He is at work in our lives to make us more like Jesus.
- **Equip us.** In 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, Paul teaches that trials prepare us to comfort those who are experiencing

similar struggles. That means the pain we endure will grant us the opportunity to bless others and to be stronger witnesses for the gospel.

Believe and Rejoice

In order to have the proper response to trials in our lives, we must always remember:

- **God controls their length and intensity.**
- **The Father has specific purposes for everything we experience.**
- **The Lord designed each challenge to meet a specific need in our lives.**
- **God will cause our trials to produce good, positive results in us if we respond in obedience.**
- **Through trials, God strengthens our faith.**
- **Difficulties are opportunities for us to demonstrate perseverance under pressure.**
- **Through challenges, God develops Christlike character within us.**
- **The hardships we face help us measure our spiritual walk with God.**
- **The Father will be with us through every situation to accomplish His good.**
- **God will always help us overcome our circumstances if we trust Him.**

► RESPONSE

- Hurt and pain are inevitable while we are here on this earth, but we can always choose how we respond to them. We can blame others, turn to drugs and alcohol for relief, and throw our hands up in frustration. Or we can respond in the right way and view our trials from God's perspective. This helps us realize our difficulties are opportunities for spiritual growth. We know that life will not always be easy, but because we have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, He will see us through.

To purchase this message on CD or DVD, please visit store.intouch.org or call 1-800-789-1473.
To download these Sermon Notes, visit intouch.org/sermonnotes.

