

SERMON NOTES

From *In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley*



Living a Life That Counts

KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 32:8-11 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: Matthew 5:14-16

► SUMMARY

If you had to write in one sentence how your life is counting or making a difference, what would you say?

The fact is we all affect other people in one way or another whether it's our family, co-workers, or friends. That's why we should carefully consider what our lifestyles, words, and attitudes are communicating to those around us. How we live should give credibility to the message we have concerning Jesus Christ, which can make an eternal difference in other people's lives.

► SERMON POINTS

God has promised to teach us how to live as He desires.

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you."
(Ps. 32:8-9).

Since each of us has been uniquely created, God's plans for us are individually crafted as well. The Lord has entrusted more responsibility to some people than to others, but this doesn't mean that those with greater influence are more important. The real issue is faithfulness with whatever God has given us.

The Lord's promise of counsel implies that He is personally advising each of us and giving us individualized direction for our lives. We never have to fear that He is an impersonal God who doesn't care or won't help us in our need. His eye is ever upon us, taking note of every circumstance and guiding

us through it. No matter what we are facing, He will show us how to respond according to the principles in His Word.

God's guidance includes warnings and blessings.

"Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding, whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check, otherwise they will not come near to you. Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but he who trusts in the LORD, lovingkindness shall surround him. Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous ones; and shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart" (vv. 9-11).

When we trust in Christ, we are surrounded by God's lovingkindness. However, if we're living in sin and doubt, we won't be able to perceive it. Instead of seeing all His blessings, we'll feel surrounded by troubles, frustration, fear, suffering, and heartache. Sometimes we just need to open our eyes, look around, and give the Lord credit for His protection and provision. That's when we'll experience the joy of the Lord.

God intends for our lives to make a difference.

The determining factor is not education, wealth, position, or location but the Lord alone. He is the one who works in us to make our lives count for His purposes. The people who live around us are watching us and forming opinions about us. Whether we like it or not, we are influencing them, and as Christians we have an opportunity to impact their lives for good by living according to God's instructions.

Jesus told His disciples, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a

lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house” (Matt. 5:14-15). We are reflectors of the living God. Therefore, our aim should be to reflect Him as accurately as possible by the way we talk and behave so that those who observe us will be drawn to our Savior.

Being the light of the world is not a choice we make but a fact based on our relationship with Jesus Christ. We are lights because Jesus, the true Light, is living within us through His Spirit. As His life is manifest in our disposition and actions, His light shines forth for others to see Christ in us.

God wants us to live in a manner that glorifies Him.

“Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (v. 16). Those who watch us should recognize that we are different, not because we’re good in ourselves but because God is working in and through us.

However, if we as believers tolerate sin in our lives, our light grows very dim, and we’re sending a false message regarding God. He is holy, and as His representatives we should be reflecting His righteousness by the way we live before others. Although we are not sinless, we have been declared holy in Christ and should therefore reflect this with our behavior.

In order to glorify God, we must be careful not to be a poor reflection of Him with our lifestyle or to seek glory for ourselves. We should never take credit for what God does through us by the power of His Spirit.

God left the entire church here to accomplish His work, not just a few gifted individuals.

All those who belong to Christ, believe God’s Word, and are indwelt by His Spirit are part of the light. Despite struggles

with sin and occasional falls, those who quickly confess, repent, and keep going shine His light in a dark world and show others the Savior. It’s Christ who makes the difference in people’s lives, not us. We are just the vessels through which He shines.

Being the light of the world is not optional. We weren’t saved to simply have our names written in the Lamb’s Book of Life and then do as we please. Once we’ve trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, we’re under a divine obligation to live as lights by abstaining from sin and pursuing holiness. It’s our responsibility to become the person God desires us to be, knowing that He will empower us through His Spirit to accomplish whatever He has called us to do.

Since Jesus died for our sins, He has the right to live His life through us, and oftentimes it’s in the trouble, heartache, and suffering of life that He shines the brightest. That’s when we realize that He’s always with us, strengthening us, and providing for our needs.

Being a light in the world is a wonderful opportunity and one we should not take for granted since we don’t know when it will end. Our lives are in God’s hands, and we have no control over the number of our days. Therefore, let’s take advantage of the opportunity we have today and live as chosen and holy children of God, empowered by Him to let our light shine before men so they can glorify our Father in heaven.

► RESPONSE

- Think about the people you live and work with each day. What kind of light is your life shining before them? How is Christ reflected in your attitudes, disposition, words, and conduct?
- What things weaken your light? What changes do you need to make to shine brighter?

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