

SERMON NOTES

From *In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley*



Standing on Your Convictions

KEY PASSAGE: Proverbs 14:34 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: Psalm 33:12

► SUMMARY

As you look at the state of our nation today, what do you see?

The Bible says, “Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD” (Ps. 33:12), but this is not a popular belief in our society. However, it’s the only way our nation can flourish. Further support for this truth is found in Proverbs 14:34, “Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people.” Abandoning the Lord leads to disgrace and the loss of His blessings.

► SERMON POINTS

Contrary to popular belief, what actually protects a nation is not military strength but the righteousness of its people and government. When the Lord is honored in a nation, He is exalted, and the people are protected. Therefore, we should look at our nation today and ask ourselves whether we as a country are honoring God. Our future depends on the answer.

Today there’s an inner struggle to divide and bring down our nation and the Christian faith. Freedom doesn’t come cheaply, and it’s always under attack by our enemy, the devil. His ungodly and unbiblical influences fight against our beliefs, and we must be willing to stand for our convictions.

Our nation has faced dangerous aggression in the past. Shortly after being attacked by the Japanese Imperial Navy and Air Force, people all over the country signed up to serve in the military. They were willing to give their lives to protect their country and its freedoms.

In the same way, we as Christians must hold to our biblical convictions as we face a different kind of enemy—one of ideas. As believers, we are under the divine guidance of our Commander, the Lord Jesus Christ, and we do not fight with weapons but with the Word of God—the only message that can transform lives and influence the world for good.

When our convictions are strong, we are so thoroughly convinced something is true that we’re willing to take a stand for it regardless of the consequences. Convictions are unaffected by the times, the values of the culture, or the popularity of current ideas. Christian beliefs are presently so unpopular that they are under attack, and we are the only ones who can uphold them. The Lord is our defense as long as we exalt and obey Him as Lord and honor His Word as our compass for life.

As followers of Jesus, we are His representatives, and there is no room for compromise with an immoral, disrespectful, self-indulgent culture. In contrast, we are called to live according to God’s Word and in obedience to Him. Although the forces of evil are coming against us from every direction, we must be careful not to get caught up in wrongful attitudes and behaviors.

Many today would like to remove the cross from churches and reinterpret the Bible. The cross of Christ is an obstacle to those who want to live as they please because it points out their sin and need for a Savior. They find the Bible offensive because it speaks of holiness, righteousness, obedience, and reverence for God.

How are we to respond to this world in which we live? Instead of the exaltation of the Lord, there’s an attempt

to remove Him. As a result, our nation is being torn down and undermined by forces who don't believe in Jesus Christ. Religions and ideologies criticize and stand against Christianity, but we who love the Lord must stay true to Him. We can't afford to let ourselves be lulled into thinking that because we live in a free and prosperous nation, nothing bad is going on or could happen to us in the future.

A Description of America Today

- **Immoral.** Our society is driven by sexual lust. The sexual relationship that God designed to be pure and holy has been twisted into a means to gratify sinful lusts in ways that God has forbidden. Immorality has inundated our culture and found its way into our homes through television. Although the media is a wonderful avenue by which we can spread the gospel, it is also being used to promote sin.
- **Greedy.** People are driven by a desire for wealth and are willing to do whatever it takes to acquire it—even stealing, lying, cheating, or killing.
- **Proud.** Instead of thanking God for all He's given us, some in our country take the credit and boast in their wealth and accomplishments.
- **Indulgent.** Many are driven by the desire for happiness and will do anything to feel good. But though the devil lures people into sin with promises of pleasure, he eventually fails to deliver. His deceptions are so pervasive that many people are convinced their sinful behavior is fine, yet sin can never be redefined in order to make it acceptable to God. Although people won't want to hear it, we must stand firm on what the Word of God says about sin and disobedience to His law. The Lord is good; and therefore, He hates unrighteousness and will judge sin.
- **Slothful.** Some people don't want to be committed, accept challenges, and work hard to achieve their full potential. But God wants us to provide for ourselves if possible and work diligently in whatever job He's given us to do.

- **Ungrateful.** We should be grateful to God for the truth of the gospel and for His goodness to us in this country. He has opened doors of opportunity to share the message of Christ throughout the world via missionaries and the media. Beyond this, He has provided every good thing in our lives. Yet all around us people are ungrateful for all the blessings He has given and for the benefits they have received from others.
- **Irreverent.** There is little respect for God and His Word in our country today.

Despite the sinful condition of our culture, we should not be discouraged. Our God is greater than the world's knowledge and wisdom, and His purposes are not thwarted by sin. He is sufficient and adequate to guide us through whatever we face. Our responsibility is to believe, trust, obey, and follow Him, modeling the Christian life for those around us.

Christ's church will not be overpowered, and He will be faithful to raise up believers in every generation. We have been commanded to proclaim the gospel throughout the world, and this commission is not just for those trained as missionaries but for each of us in our own places of influence. However, this means we must be willing to firmly stand for our convictions when they are challenged.

► RESPONSE

- How do you respond when you are challenged by people with an anti-Christian, anti-God attitude? Are you tempted to keep quiet, or are you willing to speak the truth gently?
- Knowing how to respond to those who are antagonist against our faith is difficult. What advice is given to us in 1 Peter 3:13-18?

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