

SERMON NOTES

From *In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley*



The Believer's War Room

KEY PASSAGE: Matthew 6:5-6 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: Proverbs 3:5-6 | Isaiah 54:17 | Ephesians 6:10-18

► SUMMARY

What are we to do with our trials, heartaches, and burdens?

Although many people try to bear them on their own, Jesus has given us the solution in a passage from His Sermon on the Mount. He says to go into an inner room, close the door, and pray to our Father in heaven. All of us need to learn how to talk to the Lord in private about whatever concerns us. And sometimes that inner room becomes our war room as we fight our battles with sin, conflicts, decisions, and difficulties until we fully surrender in obedience to our God.

► SERMON POINTS

According to Ephesians 6:10-13, believers are in a struggle—not with people—but against rulers, powers, world forces of darkness, and spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places. Because spiritual battles require divine protection, we are told to put on the full armor of God.

The armor of God (Eph. 6:14-18)

- The helmet of salvation protects our thinking.
- The breastplate of righteousness guards our emotions.
- The girdle of truth allows us to walk in the light.
- Our feet must be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.
- We are to take up the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.
- We need the shield of faith to completely cover us and extinguish all the enemy's flaming arrows.
- Finally, we must pray at all times.

Satan is our enemy, and he's a murderer, liar, deceiver, schemer, tempter, and destroyer. But as believers, we do not have to become his victims. God has given us the key to living in a manner that pleases and honors Him. And that key is prayer. In the war room of prayer, we fight our battles on our knees, coming confidently and boldly to our heavenly Father, sharing the innermost thoughts of our hearts, knowing that He hears and intervenes on our behalf.

Jesus spoke of a place of prayer.

Because He lived an itinerant lifestyle, Christ's place of prayer changed as He traveled, but prayer was always a priority in His life and should be in ours as well.

■ **It's a private place.** Jesus said to go into an inner room and close the door (Matt. 6:6). If we are really serious about finding a quiet area to be alone with the Lord in prayer, He will provide one. It may require a little creativity and adjustment on our part, but God wants to meet with each of us privately so we can develop an intimate relationship with Him.

■ **It's a holy place.** When we habitually meet with the Lord in the same place each day, it becomes holy because it is set apart for worship and communion with Him. We soon adjust to the setting and are immediately ready to talk to the Father because this is what we always do here. Whatever He accomplishes in our lives is the result of the relationship we have with Him in that secluded place of prayer. As we depend upon Him in faith, He works in our lives in ways we could never predict.

■ **It's where our battles are fought.** Every time we go through difficult situations or conflicts with people, we should bring our concerns to our heavenly Father and engage Him in helping fight our battles. We need His guidance, assistance, and wisdom to know how to respond and what to do. There will be times when no one else can help us, but He is always there to comfort, strengthen, and encourage us. As we humble ourselves before Him in worship, crying out to Him, He aids us in overcoming temptations and enduring trials.

■ **It's where we get our instructions for the day.** We never know what awaits us each day, but God does. If we'll start the day in a quiet place, surrendering ourselves to Him and asking for direction and strength for whatever lies ahead, He'll walk with us through the day as our companion, guide, and protector. The Lord promises to direct our path if we'll trust Him with all our heart and acknowledge Him in all our ways instead of relying on our own understanding (Prov. 3:5-6). In the Scripture, He gives us His instructions and directions for every circumstance we may face. But if we're not listening to the Lord, we won't know His battle plan, and will lose the fight. We can't live a godly life if our Bibles are closed.

■ **It's where we deal with our sins.** As we open His Word and our hearts before Him, we have an opportunity to confess our sins and ask Him to convict us of anything in our lives that is contrary to His desires for us. As we pray, we must give the Lord time to speak to our hearts. Sometimes He uses a passage of His Word to convict, encourage, or direct us, and at other times His Spirit communicates inaudibly with us in our hearts. He may even use hardships and trials to get our attention.

■ **It's where we develop an intimate relationship with the Lord.** If we're too busy to spend uninterrupted time with Him in prayer, we won't grow deeper in our relationship with Him. God loves us and wants to have

us all to Himself for a while. There are times when we pray with others or together as a family, but it's only in our private times with the Lord that we come to know Him intimately and have the freedom to honestly and openly share our hearts with Him. This is the most important activity of our lives—communing and fellowshiping with the Lord Jesus Christ.

■ **It's where we lay down our burdens.** God daily lifts our burdens, carries our concerns, and forgives our sins when we confess them.

■ **It's where we weep over our trials and heartaches.** When we go into our prayer room and cry out to God, He understands and mends our broken hearts.

■ **It's where we forgive others.** The Lord not only forgives our sins but helps us battle through our hurts so we can forgive others.

■ **It's where we are strengthened.** In this holy place we have the privilege of discussing every area of our lives. As we pour out our hurts, sorrows, and burdens, the Lord comes to strengthen us.

► RESPONSE

- Where do you go to pray in private? If you have a specific place, how has it become your holy place? If you haven't yet found a place, what can you do to find one?
- Has a daily prayer time become your habitual pattern? If so, how has this practice benefited you and deepened your relationship with Christ? If you struggle with consistently meeting in private with the Lord, what is hindering you? What can you do to overcome these obstacles?

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