

SERMON NOTES

From *In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley*



Walking in God's Plan

KEY PASSAGE: Colossians 1:9-12 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: Exodus 20:1-17 | Psalm 16:11; 32:8
Proverbs 3:5-6 | 1 Thessalonians 4:1-5

► SUMMARY

After salvation, some believers are left wondering what's next. Are they simply to attend church regularly and wait to go to heaven?

Perhaps they weren't taught what the Bible says about living the Christian life, or they may have never considered what God desires for them as His children. But by reading Scripture, believers can discover that God has plans that He desires to work out in their lives today.

► SERMON POINTS

The Lord wants us to know His will.

Colossians 1:9-12 makes this very clear and explains God's goals for all believers.

[9] "For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

[10] so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

[11] strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously

[12] giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light."

This passage describes what God wants for us, and first among them is the knowledge of His will. Every day of our lives is to be lived for Him rather than simply going

through the motions of being baptized, joining a church, and then living as we please.

We are individuals created with unique personalities, abilities, and opportunities, and as such, God has specific plans and desires for each of us. His will can be defined as that which He approves and determines to bring about in our lives. It concerns His good and wise choices regarding what we are to do and not do.

None of us can make excuses, claiming we don't have the right background or abilities to serve the Lord according to His plan. He knew each of us and designed His plans for our lives before we were born. Therefore, we should never underestimate what the Lord can do in us, even when we think we have little to offer.

There are three aspects of God's plan.

■ **His Predestined Will.** This is God's overriding sovereign will by which He operates in this world and in our personal lives. These events are irresistible, unchangeable, and unconditional because they have been ordained by almighty God. A good example is the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. This event was predestined before the creation of the world.

■ **His Moral Will.** These are God's moral standards by which we are to live. They are exemplified in the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:1-17) and explained and enlarged in the New Testament in passages such as 1 Thessalonians 4:1-5, which speaks of the believer's sanctification.

■ **His Desired Will.** This encompasses God's desires for His people and includes aspects of our salvation such as baptism, service, prayer, wise decisions, and a character that displays the fruit of the Spirit.

Why should we seek to obey God's will?

How we conduct ourselves in the Christian life is important because we are responsible to live according to God's will. Scripture tells us that we will each stand before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account of our lives.

All of us who claim Jesus as Savior and hold to God's Word are under the spiritual law of Christ who lives within us. Therefore, we must strive to be obedient to Him in every area of our lives. God's responsibility is to enable, strengthen, guide, and help us make wise choices in accordance with His will.

One of the reasons we sometimes doubt that God could have a plan for our lives is because we compare ourselves with others who seem to have greater abilities, intellects, and opportunities. However, God is the one who gives life and determines what He will entrust to each one.

We may not understand why some people seem to have more benefits in life while others have an abundance of suffering, but we know that all God's judgments are according to His good and perfect will. Our task is to simply be faithful and obedient in using the abilities, opportunities, and even the hardships He has given us.

We can all begin to live in God's will today.

Even if we haven't been living as the Lord desires, He is willing to pick us up right where we are and begin guiding us into His will if we'll submit to Him. This has always been His desire for those who are in Christ—that we “may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding” (Col. 1:9).

It's amazing what the Lord can do in a life that is fully surrendered to Him. Although our past cannot be changed, when we come to Him in repentance, He enables us to walk in His footsteps and follow His will as He lives His life in and through us.

Even people who have hated God and rejected His Son are invited to turn to Him and find new life. Saul of Tarsus is a great example of this. He was a persecutor of Christians until the Lord appeared to him, blinded his eyes, and transformed him into His own apostle. No one is so evil that God cannot save him if he will turn to Christ in faith.

God delights in showing us His will.

- **Psalm 16:11** “You will make known to me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; in Your right hand there are pleasures forever.”
- **Psalm 32:8** “I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you.”
- **Proverbs 3:5-6** “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.”

What hinders us from discovering and doing God's will?

- **Self-Will.** We want our own way.
- **Influence of Others.** We listen to them rather than trusting God.
- **Ignorance of the Word of God.** We don't know His promises.
- **Doubt.** We question God's ability.
- **Feelings of Unworthiness.** We question that God could use us.
- **Fear.** We question our ability.
- **Willful, Known Sin.** We don't want to change.

► RESPONSE

- What hinders you from living according to God's will? Are you willing to submit to Christ and begin living in the fullness of His good and perfect will for you?
- Is the mess you have made of your life keeping you from believing that the Lord can forgive and transform you if you will repent and turn to Him in faith?

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