

SERMON NOTES

From *In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley*



Walking in the Favor of God – Part One

KEY PASSAGE: Genesis 6:5-8 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: Psalm 32:8-9 | Isaiah 30:21
Luke 1:28 | Galatians 5:17

► SUMMARY

According to Genesis 6:5-8, the ancient world was so filled with wickedness and evil that God was grieved and sorry He had made mankind.

Therefore, He decided to blot out every living creature on earth. But in the midst of all the corruption, Noah “found favor in the eyes of the LORD” and was rescued from the destruction of the flood (v. 8). Our world today is also filled with sin and corruption, and as Christians, we are called to walk as Noah did—in the favor of God.

► SERMON POINTS

The favor of God is expressed by His approval, acceptance, support, provision, power, and joy. This is what He showed to Noah and to Mary, the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:28), and it’s also what He has manifested to everyone who has been saved by Jesus Christ.

God’s favor was poured out on us at salvation when our sins were forgiven, and it is further displayed by the indwelling presence of His Holy Spirit who seals us as His children. His favor is a fact, but it’s also something we can experience on a daily basis as we walk in it.

After salvation, we should see the evidence of God’s favor working in our conversation, character, and conduct as we walk in the fullness of His Spirit. Our lifestyles and habits should indicate to those around us that we have the favor of God. Instead of fretting over the circumstances in our lives, we can have confidence in His presence with us and His faithfulness in answering our prayers.

One of the evidences of God’s favor is His willingness to communicate with us.

And our willingness to learn to listen to Him is essential for our obedience to His will. One of the first lessons we learned as children was to listen to our parents, and that’s exactly what we need to do in our relationship with our heavenly Father. If all we do is talk to Him in prayer without listening to Him, we won’t know His will for us.

In Psalm 32:8, God makes these promises:

- **“I will instruct you.”** The Lord gives us insight and understanding of His Word so we will know how to live our daily lives.
- **I will “teach you in the way which you should go.”** We don’t know what a day holds, but God does, and He will guide us throughout the day.
- **“I will counsel you with My eye upon you.”** Every day we make decisions and encounter situations that challenge us because we don’t know what to do. What we need is personal direction from the Lord, and He will be faithful to provide it if we will listen. Because He loves us and wants us to obey His will, God continually gives us counsel through His Holy Spirit who is our internal guide and director.

We must learn to listen to God.

This is a basic lesson for anyone who wants to live a godly life. The Lord doesn’t save us and leave us to do the best we can, but desires to communicate with us if we’ll listen.

- **Listening to God demands our time and attention.**

The Holy Spirit who directed and led the apostles is the same one who indwells and guides us. We have been tremendously blessed, yet we often think we're too busy to listen to Him. Our minds are so crowded with other concerns that we can't hear Him, but there is nothing more important than heeding His voice and operating under His control.

■ **To listen to the Lord, we must learn to identify His voice.**

• **God's voice will be consistent with the scriptures.**

The Holy Spirit will never say anything in violation of God's Word. The Bible is always our standard of measure.

• **God's voice may be in conflict with human reason.**

Because the Lord is infinitely wise and omniscient, His ways are higher than ours and may not seem logical to us.

• **God's voice will clash with fleshly desires.** The desires of the Spirit are in opposition to those of the flesh (Gal. 5:17). Therefore, the inner conflict we feel when we're tempted is the Spirit leading us in the opposite direction.

• **God's voice will challenge us.** Sometimes the Spirit leads us to do something we feel incapable of doing.

• **God's voice calls for courage.** Obedience is not always easy, but God's commands are always accompanied with His power and strength.

• **God's voice will speak quietly.** He doesn't shout but speaks softly through our conscience and into our minds, whispering, "This is the way, walk in it" (Isa. 30:21).

• **God's voice will speak clearly.** He wants us to know what He is saying, and has been speaking to us since the day of our salvation. First, His voice clearly convicted us of sin and moved us to repentance and salvation. Now He continues to communicate with us to bring us to obedience and surrender in our daily lives.

• **God's voice will speak personally.** He loves and cares for us individually and guides us in every situation or concern.

■ **God is always speaking, but we must listen.** We won't hear His voice if we fill our lives with other things. Although we may become hard of hearing, we can never silence the Lord. However, the Spirit of God may withdraw to some degree, and as His children, we'll then find ourselves under His discipline.

How does God get our attention?

■ **Restlessness.** This is an inner sense of unease for which we cannot readily identify the cause. It is meant to drive us to the Lord so we can hear from Him.

■ **A message from someone else.** God may use another person to speak to us. However, we must be careful to consider the person's character and lifestyle in order to avoid being led astray.

■ **A supernatural blessing.** Sometimes the Lord abundantly blesses us to remind us how good He is.

■ **Unanswered prayer.** If the Lord isn't responding to our prayers, He may be in the process of humbling us so that we'll be willing to wait for His guidance.

■ **Disappointments.** The Lord uses disappointments to get our attention so we'll turn to Him.

■ **Failure.** Any failure that drives us to our knees is good.

■ **Financial problems.** The Lord wants us to turn to Him with our need.

■ **Sickness or injury.** God may use illness to stop us from going the wrong way and to teach us to follow Him.

► RESPONSE

- As you look at your life, are you walking in the favor of God? If so, what is the evidence of His favor in your life?
- What practices and habits help you listen to the Lord? What hinders you from hearing His voice?

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