

SERMON NOTES

From *In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley*



When God Says Wait

KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 27:11-14 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: Joshua 1:5, 9 | Psalm 37:1, 7-8 | Matthew 7:7

► SUMMARY

Knowing biblical principles is essential for living the Christian life as God desires.

Perhaps the most important one to learn is to obey God and leave all the consequences to Him. And alongside it is another one that's very important—learn to wait upon God for His timing. Obeying the Lord doesn't just include doing what He desires, but doing it when He says and how He says.

► SERMON POINTS

To keep in step with God's perfect will, we must guard against jumping ahead of Him.

Although waiting on the Lord is not always easy, we can never go wrong by patiently letting Him lead us according to His timing. When we step ahead of Him, trouble awaits us, but if we trust His guidance, He will lead us into His will and accomplish more than we had in mind.

When we are in a hurry to make a decision and move forward rather than seeking God's timing, we need to heed the words of Psalm 27:14, "Wait for the LORD; be strong and let your heart take courage; yes, wait for the LORD."

God's timing isn't just good; it's perfect.

He is omniscient and knows all things in the past, present, and future. The Lord sees every aspect of our lives, including our needs and desires. In His great wisdom, He understands what's best for us. His divine schedule for our lives is always perfect and achieves His good purposes.

In contrast, we are often in a hurry to get what we want. Since we have limited knowledge and understanding, we should pray about the situation and wait for God to unfold the path He has for us. But in our haste to move ahead, we often make big decisions without asking the Lord to show us His perfect timing in the matter.

Yet God has provided everything we need to obey His will. When He saved us, He gave us His indwelling Spirit to be with us forever. One of the tasks of the Holy Spirit is to guide us according to God's will and Word. He cautions us regarding wrong directions and quickens us to do what's right because we are not sufficient in ourselves to make wise decisions.

When God says "Wait," that's exactly what He means for us to do.

Therefore, we need to learn to listen to Him and follow His directions rather than trying to figure out a course of action and plunging ahead. If we make it a habit to listen to God throughout our lives, then we will be ready to hear Him when we need direction in pressing situations. The Lord promises in His Word that He answers prayer and will direct our path, but sometimes we must wait for Him to show us the way. Even though we may want the answer immediately, God in His loving omniscience knows what's best for us both now and tomorrow because His perspective is eternal.

What are the requirements for waiting upon God?

■ **Trust.** If we understand who God is, we can trust Him because He knows so much more than we do, and His timing is always right. He is not depriving us of anything but is doing what is best for us according to His wisdom

and knowledge. He invites us to ask, seek, and knock in prayer and promises to answer according to His divine timing and purpose (Matt. 7:7).

Therefore, we must not think that if the answer doesn't come immediately then God will never provide what we've requested. Instead, we should remember God's power, wisdom, love, and knowledge, and trust that He controls every circumstance and will provide what is good. If His provision doesn't come immediately, it's because we really don't need it, it's not good for us, or it's not the right time to have it.

- **Patience.** Psalm 37:7 says, "Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him; do not fret." Waiting could cause us to be anxious and impatient because it seems like God isn't doing anything. However, we must remember that He loves us and gives good guidance, provision, help, and strength during the wait.

When David was anointed king of Israel as a teenager, he had no idea that he would have to wait over 12 years before the promise became a reality. What may have seemed like a waste of time was actually God's perfect plan for his life being worked out. God wasn't acting against David in the delay, but for him.

- **Courage.** When an offer or opportunity looks good and seems right, it takes courage to wait on God because we may have to say no. Even if others don't understand our decision and urge us to go ahead, if it's not according to God's will or timing, it's the wrong choice. We can't fathom all the difficulties and problems that could come if we move forward in disobedience instead of waiting patiently and courageously for God to make the way clear before us.
- **Determination.** Because the influence of others has a powerful effect on us, it takes fortitude to wait on the Lord. While the situation may look right on the outside, if the Holy Spirit is cautioning us, we must make up

our minds to obey Him rather than give in to others' opinions and advice.

- **Strength.** When we are tempted to jump ahead of God, we must remember that almighty God is the source of our strength, and He will provide the power we need to wait patiently. And beyond this, He can even change the desires of our heart to align with His will and give us a strong passion to obey Him.
- **Endurance.** If the Lord calls us to wait, we need endurance to stand firm when other people give their opinions and offer suggestions regarding what we should do.

Although the world is full of tempting offers, and people readily share their thoughts regarding how we ought to live, there is only one supreme Person to whom we should listen, and that is the Lord. Our responsibility is to obey and leave all the consequences to Him. Walking within the will of God is the safest, best, wisest, and happiest place to live. Although we will not receive everything we desire when we want, we will never miss out on the good things God has for us that are according to His will and timing. Therefore, we should always seek God's wisdom in prayer, wait for His guidance, and watch how He works.

► RESPONSE

- What requests are you still waiting for God to answer? Which of His attributes assure you that He is working on your behalf?
- Do you want the Lord's will above all else, even if He doesn't give you what you want when you desire? If not, what is keeping you from trusting Him?

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