

SERMON NOTES

From *In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley*



Your Life Matters to God

KEY PASSAGE: 1 John 3:1-3 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: Matthew 7:7 | Luke 24:49 | 1 Corinthians 15:20
Philippians 4:19 | Hebrews 13:5

► SUMMARY

At low points in our lives, we may be tempted to believe that we don't really matter to God.

The hardships, difficulties, and suffering we experience may seem like evidence that the Lord doesn't care, but this is not true. Some of the greatest saints in Christian history have endured unimaginable suffering without doubting God's love for them. Although the Lord has not promised us an easy life, even in the middle of our trials we can know with certainty that our lives matter to Him.

► SERMON POINTS

To matter means to be of importance to someone, and that is how God feels about His people. He knows each of us intimately—including our sins, failures, and weaknesses—but still loves and values us. Even in the pain and suffering He allows in our lives, He is still caring for us, and His promises have not failed. God has said that He will never leave or forsake us, and He won't (Heb. 13:5).

When John the apostle wrote the epistle of 1 John, he was an old man between 80 and 90 years of age. His letter was addressed to believers, and in the first three verses of Chapter 3, he encouraged them regarding God's love displayed in their salvation.

“See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be.

We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure” (1 John 3:1-3).

Salvation begins with a realization of our separation from God because of our sin. Then knowing who Jesus is and what He has done on the cross, we trust in Him to save us, forgive our sins, and reconcile us to God. Once we are truly saved, we are forever changed and can never be the person we were before Christ because we are now united permanently to God for all eternity. The guarantee of this assurance is the Holy Spirit who comes to live within us forever.

As God's children, we are sensitive to sin, and desire to read His Word and live an obedient, godly lifestyle. When we do commit sin, we can come back to the Lord for cleansing, but if we continue in it, He will discipline us as a lovingly heavenly Father. Although God allows trials in our lives for a variety of reasons, sometimes He uses them to turn us back to Him in repentance.

The Evidence of God's Care for Us

Although we may feel that we don't matter to anyone in this world, as God's children we matter deeply to Him, and John gives us evidence that demonstrates His care for us.

1. “See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us” (1 John 3:1). The display of His great love is seen in all He has done for us.

■ **In Salvation.** God reached down into our lives through

His Word and opened our minds and hearts to understand the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit convicted us of our sinful condition and our need for forgiveness. Knowing that Jesus was the only one who could save us, we trusted in Him for salvation and the forgiveness of sins.

■ **In Sanctification.** The Lord set us apart for Himself so we could live for Him. His Spirit now sits on the throne of our hearts guiding our lives, giving understanding of His Word, empowering us to obey God, and transforming us into the image of His Son.

■ **In His Provision.** God has promised to provide for all the needs of His children “according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:19). Salvation would have been enough, but God also commits Himself to supply all our needs because He cares for us. His resources are inexhaustible, and our blessings in Christ are abundant.

■ **In the Holy Spirit.** Upon our salvation, the Lord sent His Holy Spirit to indwell us. Without Him, we would be powerless to live the Christian life. He is the one who enables us to become the person God created us to be.

2. **“Now we are children of God”** (1 John 3:2). We all understand the special love parents have for their children, yet this is only a shadow of the great love and care God has for us as His children. He has showered us with spiritual blessings and promises, and nothing can ever separate us from Him.

3. **“It has not appeared as yet what we will be”** (1 John 3:2). What we see now in our world and in our human condition is only temporary. If we look at our society, we could become discouraged because it is worse than it has ever been. Many do not know God or understand us because they have ignored or rejected

Him (v. 1). The busyness, riches, and pleasures of the world threaten to draw our attention away from the Lord and distract us from reading His Word. Yet the scriptures are what we need in order to live as God desires. His commands do not deprive us of anything but give us what our heavenly Father knows is best when we obey them.

4. **“We know that when He appears, we will be like Him”** (1 John 3:2). When Christ returns, we will be raised to be like Him. In the greatest chapter on resurrection, Paul wrote, “But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep” (1 Cor. 15:20). God not only provides everything we need for life and godliness in the present, but even greater provision awaits us in the future when we will be resurrected with glorious bodies. Although we do not know what heaven will be like, we have the promise that our names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life, and we will be with God forever.

5. **“And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure”** (1 John 3:3). Our lives matter because God desires the best for us—that we live pure, holy lives by the power of the Holy Spirit. Knowing our glorious future should motivate us to obey God’s Word and be led by His Spirit.

► RESPONSE

■ Do you ever feel that you don’t matter to God? What circumstantial evidence supports this feeling? What truths of Scripture prove His love for you?

■ How has knowing you matter to God motivated you to live for Him rather than yourself?

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