



# SERMON NOTES

From In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley

## THE BASICS OF FAITH

**KEY PASSAGE:** 2 Corinthians 5:1-8 | **SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES:** Proverbs 3:5-6 | Matthew 7:7-8  
John 17:21, 23 | Acts 16:30-31, 33 | Philippians 4:19 | Hebrews 11

### ► SUMMARY

#### Two beliefs are absolutely essential for a right relationship with God.

We must believe that He exists and rewards those who diligently seek Him (Heb. 11:6). These are the foundational truths for the Christian life and the method by which we relate to Him and through His Son, Jesus Christ. We either believe that God will do exactly what He's promised and trust Him in every situation by walking in faith, or we let our minds fill with doubt and walk in fear, anxiety, and turmoil.

### ► SERMON POINTS

In the apostle Paul's letter to the Corinthians, he contrasts our present physical reality with our unseen eternal future (2 Cor. 5:1-8). The only way to navigate these two realities is to "walk by faith, not by sight" (v. 7). We must learn to trust God in times of difficulty or need when our eyes tell us the situation is impossible and hopeless.

#### What is faith?

To understand what it means to walk by faith, we must first understand what the Bible means when it uses this word. In the Greek New Testament there are two words for faith:

- The first means to simply believe what someone has said is true.
- The second word implies not only believing and trusting but having a commitment to that statement or person.

Saving faith is the second type. We believe God's Word (the gospel), place our trust in its truthfulness, and respond by committing ourselves to the Lord. Only then can we walk by faith through every circumstance of life, being confident that, no matter what happens, our God is sufficient.

The Bible uses three words to convey this concept—faith, belief, and trust. In the Greek language, they are all action words. There is a nudging from the Spirit that spurs a person to follow God's prompting. In the 11th chapter of Hebrews, 19 people who are commended for their faith did something as a result of their trust in God.

Faith can be defined as a confident conviction that our God exists and that He will keep His promises. It's an immovable, unwavering certainty, based on the reality of His Word. God alone is the object of our faith.

#### What is walking by faith?

Paul uses the word "walk" to denote conduct, lifestyle, and manner of life. Instead of letting what we see, feel, or reason direct how we live, every aspect of our lives should be characterized by trust in the Lord. It includes the following practices:

- **Dependence on the Lord's guidance.** We should begin each morning in prayer with an attitude of dependence, trusting in Him with all our heart, not relying on our own understanding (Prov. 3:5-6).
- **Thoughts dominated by Jesus Christ.** He is the core of our life and the one who dwells within us through His Spirit. Everything we do should be geared toward

pleasing Him, not ourselves or others. He promises to walk with us through every trouble, trial, and heartache.

- **Submission to God.** Walking by faith is a life of surrender to God and His will for our lives. Jesus modeled this for us by walking in complete submission to His heavenly Father, and He prayed that we'd have this same kind of union of oneness with Him and the Father (John 17:21, 23). Submission isn't only relying on God for the things you can't handle but yielding ourselves fully to Him in every area of life. Knowing that the Lord has complete control of every situation we face frees us from worry and stress as we entrust ourselves into His loving care.
- **Freedom from legalistic requirements.** Immediately after salvation, we're often concerned about doing things right, but as we grow in faith, our focus changes. Instead of worrying that we might stumble, we've learned to keep our eyes on Jesus, trusting Him to protect, provide, and direct our lives. Our focus should never be on some philosophy or the teaching of a so-called prophet, but on Christ alone who set us free from fear and legalism.
- **Growth of trust in God.** He's made many promises in the Bible, yet sometimes when we pray, it may seem as if He's failed to keep His Word when He doesn't answer as we expected. But that's not the case. Because He loves us, the Lord knows what's best for us. To put our full trust in God, we must believe three truths:

- **God loves us perfectly.**
- **He is infinite in wisdom and knows us completely.**
- **The Lord is sovereign and has absolute control.**

As we grow in faith, the things that once caused us anxiety will no longer bother us because we've learned from experience that He can handle whatever comes our way. Growing in faith is a process that continues throughout our lives. When we pray according to God's Word, and watch how He answers, our trust in Him increases. As He walks with us through hard times, we learn that nothing is too big for Him to handle.

## How do we learn to walk by faith?

- **By making requests of God.** As we observe how He answers and respond in gratitude, another layer is added to our foundation of faith in Christ.
- **By reading God's Word.** We can't trust God if we don't know what He's said about Himself. As we grow in our knowledge of Scripture, we learn to understand God's nature, ways, will, and promises. Then as we apply what we learn, these truths become the foundation of our faith in Him and guide our understanding of what He's doing in our lives.
- **Through failure.** It's easy to become discouraged by failure, but it's also the path to greater faith if we'll repent, accept God's forgiveness, get up, and by His grace begin walking in obedience again.
- **Through trouble.** The Lord uses trials and suffering to build our faith. We don't gain sustaining faith by reading about it in a book, but by going through God's refining fire as He transforms us into Christ's image. In times of great need, we learn that He is always faithful.

Christians stand on the strong foundation of faith in Jesus Christ. We build on it with the firm conviction that the Lord is the one true God who will always keep His promises and fulfill His Word.

### ► RESPONSE

- How strong do you think your faith in God is? How do your sight, feelings, or reason affect your ability to trust God?
- What things in your life are you unable to handle? What do you need to do to trust God with them?
- What is your first response to challenging situations? How would walking by faith quiet your fears and anxieties?

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