

# SERMON NOTES

From *In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley*



## When Facing Storms in Our Life

KEY PASSAGE: 2 Timothy 1:1-9 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: Deuteronomy 31:6 | Isaiah 41:10-13

### ► SUMMARY

**Because we live in a fallen world, storms are a part of life, and they come in three different forms: physical, emotional, and spiritual.**

It has been like this ever since Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. Given that there is no escape from pain and trouble, our only alternative is to adjust to them. If we don't learn how to respond and endure, we'll be defeated by them and forfeit the blessings God has for us. But if we'll learn how to respond as the Lord desires, we'll come out of our storms victorious and stronger as a result.

### ► SERMON POINTS

Paul wrote to Timothy because he was facing a storm. As a young pastor, he was dealing with various problems in the church at Ephesus and needed some encouragement and direction. Paul advised him to "kindle afresh the gift of God" that was in him (2 Tim. 1:6). In the face of adversity, Timothy was becoming discouraged, and his spiritual zeal was waning.

The same thing happens to us when our Christian life starts to grow cold. Perhaps it begins with doubts about the truths of God's Word, when at one time we would have boldly defended them. Then we withdraw, refusing to admit anything is wrong, but in our hearts and minds we know we are drifting from the Lord. Or maybe the coldness is simply the result of troubles and heartaches that cause us to grow weak and lose our passion for God.

Some of the signs of a dwindling fire in our spiritual lives are a loss of joy and hope, not reading the Bible as much as

before, and a lack of enthusiasm for prayer. In addition, we may begin listening to and relying on the advice of people who are not well-versed in Scripture.

Because Paul was very familiar with persecution, heartache, and trouble, he understood how Timothy felt. He offered him this sound advice: "For God has not given us a spirit of timidity but of power and love and discipline" (v. 7). We have this same assurance today when we feel overwhelmed by the storms of life. But if we give in to fear, we can expect the following results:

### Responding to Life's Storms With Fear

- **It stifles our capacity to think and act wisely.** Then we'll begin to yield to other people's ideas about what we should do.
- **It causes us to be indecisive.** Fearing what might happen, we won't be able to make up our minds on a course of action.
- **It diminishes our capacity to be productive.**
- **It undermines a sense of self-confidence.** If we don't know how to respond, we'll question whether we're truly listening to God and become uncertain regarding what's right and wrong.
- **We are tormented by our emotions.** As we vacillate emotionally, we'll become weaker instead of growing stronger in the storm. In desperation, we may ask for other people's guidance. However, our first response should be to seek understanding from God regarding what is happening in our lives. This is why our personal, private time with the Lord is our first priority. That's where we are more sensitive to His purposes and come away emotionally settled.
- **We may panic because of hurt and disappointment.**
- **We could become enslaved by feelings of**

**disappointment.** If we are afraid to trust in the Lord, we may begin to look for an alternate solution instead of continuing in prayer and reading God's Word.

But nothing we face is too difficult for the Lord, and sometimes He allows these situations in our lives to grow us up and increase our trust in Him. Jesus is our Prince of Peace, but He's also a reason for conflict in our relationships with those who don't believe in Him.

## God-Given Resources for Dealing With the Storms of Our Life

After Paul admonished Timothy not to be afraid, he then informed him of three divine resources that would make him adequate for any situation: power, love, and discipline (v. 7).

■ **Power.** Every believer receives the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation. He comes to seal us as children of God and empower us to live a godly life. Therefore, when troubles and suffering come, we have His divine strength to help us face and endure them in a manner that glorifies Him.

We also have the power of God's Word. Our first response to trials should be to open the Bible and find out what God has said. For example, Deuteronomy 31:6 affirms, "He will not fail you or forsake you." And Isaiah 41:10 says, "Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." When we focus our attention on the Lord and His promises, it's like throwing wood on the fire of our spiritual lives, enabling us to face whatever challenges come our way.

■ **Love.** Storms may leave us feeling discouraged and unloved, but when we walk in the spirit of God, we have His love in our hearts. If other people fail us, we need to remember that God's love for us never ends. In addition,

this love goes two ways. It enables us to love Him no matter what He allows in our lives.

■ **Discipline.** Being self-controlled and having a sound mind result in a disciplined life that stands unmoved even in the face of difficulties, troubles, and conflict. It's a life committed to God, which will not waver in the storms or the winds of false doctrine. When we are grounded in Him, He makes us adequate to handle every situation.

Although storms have many origins, there is only one answer for all of them. When everything around us comes unglued and falls apart, we must go to our knees in the Word of God trusting Him to give us a sense of assurance and boldness to stand firm in obedience. A disciplined life which is settled in God's Word, open to His work within us, and made adequate in the Holy Spirit's love and power is immovable in the storms of life.

## ► RESPONSE

- Where do you go for help when storms come into your life? Are prayer and the Word of God your first response, or do you turn to other sources for help?
- What role does fear or timidity play in your response to trouble? What has been the outcome when you have responded in fear?

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