

Walking Away From God - Part 1

by Charles Stanley

Walking away from God's will can lead to a life of separation, detachment, and wandering, but God never walks away from us.

Duration: 8:44

Scripture: Luke 15:11

Topics: "Gods Will", "Spiritual Obedience"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of walking in God's will, highlighting the difference in God's response and provision when we choose to walk in His will versus when we walk outside of His will. It explores the consequences of walking away from God, the dangers of departing from His path, and the gradual steps that lead to separation from Him. The message encourages self-reflection on whether one is truly living a godly life and experiencing the contentment, peace, and joy that come from walking in His will.

Transcript

God always has our best interests at heart. That is, when you're not walking in His will, He has our best interests at heart. When we're not walking in His will, He still has our best interests at heart.

The difference is the way He responds and the way He acts toward us. When you're walking in His will, you have a sense of confidence and assurance. Since He answers your prayers, He has promised to protect us and watch over us and provide for us and so forth.

There's a sense of contentment in a person's life when they're walking in His will. When you choose to walk outside of His will, there's a sense of separation and detachment and many other things that go on in a person's life when they choose to walk outside of His will. And it doesn't make a difference what your possessions are.

What your position is in life, when you're walking outside of His will, you are walking on a level that is far beneath what He intended and provided and made possible for you to walk. So I'm going to ask you the question, which way are you walking? And second of this, have you ever trusted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and surrendered your life to Him? Say, yes, I have. Well, since you have done that, are you living a godly life? Are you walking in His will? Is your life really counting? Can you say that I do have that contentment, that peace, and that joy in my heart? Or would you have to say, well, I used to.

And so I meet people all the time who say, well, I used to be a Christian. I say, well, what do you mean you used to be? Well, I used to be a Christian. I gave my life to Jesus a long time ago, but I quit going to church, and I guess I sort of quit praying and reading the Bible.

Well, how are you doing? I'm doing fine. Not so. Well, why did you do that? I don't know.

You know, somewhere back then I just got tired of going to church and doing these things, and so I just sort of drifted off. Well, there are people who are saved and know that they're saved, and yet somewhere along the way they chose to walk away. Now, listen carefully.

You say, well, how can you walk away from God if you're saved? Listen carefully. You can walk away from the will of God, but God never walks away from you. But as far as His effect in your life, it's minimum.

And so what I'd like to talk about in this passage of Scripture is that simple statement, walking away from God. So I want you to turn to a passage that most of you are familiar with, and you'll hear people talk about this as from the perspective of a lost person. Well, what's true of a lost person is true in this passage, but I want us to look at this the way I believe Jesus intended for us to see it, and that is here's a young man who chose to walk away from God.

So I want you to turn to the fifteenth chapter of Luke, and you'll recall that this chapter begins with what Jesus describes as being lost things. For example, there's a lost sheep, and He talks about when the sheep is found, there's rejoicing, and then there's the lost coin, and when the lady finds her coin, she's rejoicing. And then He comes to talk about when the son who was lost returns home.

And so I want us to read a few verses of this fifteenth chapter, and we'll take the rest of it as we come to that part of the message. So beginning in verse eleven, He says, A man had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, Father, give me this share of the estate which falls to me.

So he divided his wealth between them. And not many days later, the younger man gathered everything together, went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living. Then when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be impoverished.

So he went, hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. Now, why did he say cows or something like that, camels or something? Because the most disgraceful and belittling thing that could happen to a Hebrew man would be to feed swine in somebody's farm. And so this is what happened to him.

This is how it came to this. You say, well, that doesn't apply to us today because we're not out here slopping hogs. That's not what we're up to in life.

I want you to listen carefully. Jesus did not give us stories or parables or statements or principles that just to tell a story. It's always with a principle in mind.

There's always a truth. And whereas you and I live in the twenty-first century, and they live almost two thousand years ago, has nothing to do with this story. The story is the same.

The people involved, as he would imply here, and the circumstances would be different. But as far as the principles are concerned, every single one of them is the same. And so I want to begin by simply saying

this.

God will allow you to walk away from Him. He will allow you to walk away from Him. You say, well, do we have free will? We have limited free will.

When somebody says, well, I have my own free will. No one has absolute free will but God. Only He can do anything and everything He chooses, when and where and how and with whom.

So we do have limited free will. You say, well, now wait a minute. If I walk away from God, what's His response? Well, His response is a number of things, but let's think about it this way.

You say, well, if I walk away from God, what'll happen? Will He put pressure on me? Yes. Well, if I walk away from God, will He allow bad things to happen to me? Yes. Well, if I walk away from God, will He send difficult things into my life? Yes.

Well, if I walk away from God, will He stop me under certain conditions? Will He just allow me to wreck my life if I walk away from Him? And the answer is yes, under certain conditions. So it is a very dangerous thing to place your trust in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, and then, for whatever reason, you decide you're just going to live your life the way you choose to. So when I think about all that, and I think about the steps people go through, here's where it starts.

In other words, sin starts in your thinking, your desires. Then from that desire, there's the deception. It's just simple steps, the deception.

You begin to believe a lie. Then you make a decision, and then you depart. It's always that way.

And this is exactly what happened to the prodigal son. In his thinking, finally made a decision, finally he departed. So that's why it's so very wise to read the Word of God every day.

I say it almost every Sunday because it's that important. Because this is the anchor. This is what keeps our thinking right, keeps our desires under control.

This is the thing that helps us to see things as God sees them. And if I'm seeing things as God sees them, I'm going to be wise in my choices in life. Now, let's think about this whole issue of what to expect when you depart from God, when you just walk away from Him.

And the first thing that happens is this. When a person chooses to walk out of the will of God, they begin to flounder and to wander. Because, you see, it's a relationship that's totally different from which God has created for them.

When the Holy Spirit came into your life, He sealed you as a child of God to live a godly life that is a blessing to yourself and a blessing to others. When you step out of that, you step into a whole another arena over here that doesn't fit who you are. So, first of all, there's that wandering spirit that begins to, you begin to, well, what about this? And what happens is, not just wandering, you begin to wonder, is what I've been taught, is that really the truth? Is what my mom said really the truth? Is what the pastor says, is he really telling the truth or is that just some preacher stuff, is that some sermon? What, in other words, you begin to wonder about what you believe.

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