



# SERMON NOTES

From In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley

## SURVIVING OUR PRESENT CULTURE

KEY PASSAGE: 1 Corinthians 3:1 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE: Psalm 119:11 | Isaiah 40:8 | Titus 1:5-16

### ► SUMMARY

#### Our culture today is not a friend to Christians.

Therefore, we must learn to live in a world that's opposed to our beliefs, values, and lifestyles without being overcome by it. That's what happened to the church in Corinth. They compromised with the culture around them and couldn't receive Paul's message to them as spiritually mature believers, because they were still like infants in Christ (1 Cor. 3:1).

The same thing can happen to us today. Some believers are committed to Christ and growing in spiritual maturity, dependent on the Holy Spirit, obedient, and trusting in the Lord. But there are others who are lustful and immature because they've compromised with the culture and adopted its ideas, values, and practices.

### ► SERMON POINTS

After Paul left Crete, he wrote a letter to instruct Titus, a local pastor. The culture in Crete was similar to ours today—filled with rebellious people, empty talkers, and deceivers. Paul told Titus to appoint elders in the churches who'd hold "firmly the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict it" (Titus 1:9).

Holding fast to the faithful Word is the key to living in this world without becoming conformed to it. Ours is a secular culture dominated by materialism, immorality, sensuality, and perversions of every sort. People live in defiance of God's law, believing they can do whatever they please without any consequences.

The danger we face is the subtle influence of the culture. It seeps into our minds through the media, doing its damage in our lives, families, and churches with its corrupting philosophies, ideas, and values. The only way to combat this is to cling to God's Word and let it influence us more than anything else.

#### Why should we hold firmly to God's Word?

##### ■ The Nature of the Bible

- **This Book is unique because God is the author.** His Spirit worked through men to record His thoughts in written form. The Scriptures reveal God to us—His power, works, character, truth, plan of redemption, and instructions for mankind.
- **The Bible is the foundation for our beliefs and truth.** We don't live by opinions, but by the principles from God's Word that shape our conduct, conversation, and character.
- **The Scriptures are eternal.** Human beings, along with their philosophies and ideas, are like grass that withers and flowers that fade, "but the word of our God stands forever" (Isa. 40:8). The culture thinks the Bible is outdated and inadequate for our times. Some people even think it's a hate book because they don't want to be convicted regarding their sinful lifestyles. But no matter how much God's Word is reviled and attacked, it cannot be destroyed. The Lord has preserved it throughout human history because it's His eternal Word.

##### ■ The Purpose of God's Word

- **The Lord gave us His Word so we could be saved.** The gospel is His plan of salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ. It tells us how to receive forgiveness of sins through faith and be reconciled with our Creator.
- **God's Word is given so we can live godly lives.** As

we cling to it, we'll be transformed by it. But this won't happen if we hold it loosely.

- **The Lord gave us Scripture so we could understand the truth and be able to defend the faith.**

### ■ The Power of God's Word

Because the Lord is almighty, His Word is too. It has the power to change lives and help us live as God desires.

- It provides hope and help during hardship.
- It gives guidance and wisdom.
- It lifts burdens.
- It brings us joy, peace, confidence, and courage.
- It keeps us from sin. "I have treasured Your word in my heart, so that I may not sin against You" (Ps. 119:11).
- It brings us back to God when we stray.
- It equips us to identify and refute error so we can guard ourselves from false doctrines and ideas.
- It gives us assurance.
- It equips us to serve God in various ways.

### God's Word is our anchor in a corrupt culture.

The world does its best to drag us away from the Lord. It can't steal our salvation, but it can deceive us and tempt us to let go of our anchor. That's why we must be diligent to hold fast to God's Word by:

- **Having Unwavering Faith.** Doubts regarding the truth of God's Word usually arise when we dismiss the verses and passages that forbid what we want to do or command what we don't want to do. Before long, we rewrite the Bible by holding onto only the parts we find acceptable and rationalizing away the rest. Although there is much in Scripture we don't understand and may not like, the proper response is to rest assured that all of God's Word is trustworthy.
- **Applying Scripture to Our Lives.** Biblical truths are not just the foundation for our beliefs, but the message in our hearts and minds, on our lips, and before our eyes. If we want pure lives, we must fill our minds with the purity of God's Word. Every decision we make should be guided by biblical principles.

### What are some practical ways we can hold firmly to God's Word?

1. Read it carefully.
2. Meditate on it daily.
3. Study it seriously.
4. Believe it wholeheartedly.
5. Obey it consistently.
6. Apply it personally.
7. Share it confidently.

### What happens if we don't cling to Scripture?

- The culture gets our attention.
- Other things begin to influence us.
- The world wins our affections.
- Our focus is redirected from the Lord to the culture.
- Cultural topics dominate our conversation.
- The world influences our dress.
- Our choice of music is influenced.
- The culture steals the money we once gave to the Lord's work.
- We alter agendas to make time for worldly pursuits.
- We fill our minds with sensual, immoral thoughts.
- Our witness is ruined.
- We're led into idolatry.

The tragedy for believers who compromise with the world is that even though their souls are saved, their lives are wasted. The only solution is to repent by turning away from the culture, back to the Lord and His Word.

### ► RESPONSE

- What influences you more—the Bible or the culture?
- Do you accept things today as normal, or can you see how corrupt the culture has become? How has it changed during your lifetime?
- What effect is the media having on your thoughts, attitudes, emotions, and practices? How much does it occupy your time and focus compared with God's Word?

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