



# SERMON NOTES

From In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley

## THE PRIVILEGE CORRUPTED

**KEY PASSAGE:** Romans 1:18-32 | **SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES:** Genesis 1:26; 3:4 | Exodus 32 | Psalm 19:1  
Jeremiah 9:23-24 | John 3:19; 14:7-10 | Acts 14:11-12, 15 | Romans 2:14-15

### ► SUMMARY

#### The greatest privilege in life is to know God through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Through the natural world, our conscience, the life of Jesus Christ, and the written Word of God, we can know who God is. Amazingly, He even invites us to boast about it (Jer. 9:23-24). Unfortunately, sometimes we allow sin to influence our understanding of God and His ways. When we choose to turn away from the truth we know about the Lord, there will always be spiritual consequences.

### ► SERMON POINTS

In his letter to the Romans, Paul explained that humans often deny the obvious proof of God's existence and thus become spiritually blind (1:18-32): "Since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, that is, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, being understood by what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their reasonings, and their senseless hearts were darkened" (vv. 20-21).

#### The heavenly Father has given us knowledge of Himself.

Let's look at four of the ways God communicates about who He is:

■ **Natural revelation.** Creation itself declares that there is an intelligent and infinitely powerful Designer of the universe (Heb. 11:3). Things like the seasons, the incredible variety of fruits and vegetables, and the

diverse types of animals all point to a thoughtful, wise Creator. Even the heavens, full of stars and galaxies, declare God's glory, His power, and His perfect order (Ps. 19:1).

In his evangelistic sermons, Paul referred to God as the Creator to help his audiences relate to God's message of the need for repentance through Christ (Acts 14:15). Even apart from the Bible, people have no reason to doubt God exists—creation is adequate testimony.

■ **Our conscience.** God has given each person an internal sense that He exists (Rom. 1:19). Even people who have never been taught God's law instinctively know what is right (Rom. 2:14-15). For example, it's common across cultures to forbid murder, rape, and stealing. Our hearts confirm that certain behaviors are morally wrong.

■ **Jesus Christ.** Creation and human conscience can testify that there is a God, but they can never give a complete picture of who He is or how He interacts with us.

God's best revelation of Himself is through Jesus. In Him, God took on human flesh and walked among humanity. Jesus perfectly revealed the character and nature of the Father (John 14:7-10). He loved unconditionally, forgave sins, healed disease, taught His disciples how to live, and assured them of eternal life. He's the same today, and we can experience an intimate friendship with Him.

■ **The Bible.** The best way for us to discover who God is, is to open the Scriptures, His divine revelation. This Book shows us the Lord's will, and tells us of His attributes that aren't easily seen in nature, such as His holiness or mercy.

The stories of the Old Testament inspire and challenge us. In the gospels, we learn about Jesus Christ. The book of Acts and the letters from the early church leaders, such as Paul, explain salvation and life as believers. The Bible is a gift that clarifies who God is and how He operates in this world.

## Man has turned away from the knowledge of God.

Every human being has basic knowledge of the existence of God (Rom. 1:20). But when individuals, churches, organizations, or societies stop acknowledging the sovereign rule of God over their lives, they begin a path to destruction. In the past, many people acknowledged the Lord and had respect for Him and the Bible, even if they didn't have a personal relationship with Him. But now, fewer people even agree God exists, much less that He should be honored.

Such changes don't happen instantaneously. Four stages progressively take a person or nation downhill, from knowledge of God to complete depravity.

- **Intelligence.** Everyone begins with a partial knowledge of God through their conscience and the witness of creation. Although people have the capacity to understand that He exists, they often close their eyes to the truth so they can avoid changing their behavior.
- **Ignorance.** When people begin to suppress the truth in their minds, they dishonor God, and He gives them over to darkness of heart (Rom. 1:21-22). Those who deny the truth eventually come to the point where they are spiritually blind and can't recognize right from wrong. The apostle John put it this way, "People loved the darkness rather than the Light; for their deeds were evil" (John 3:19).
- **Indulgence.** Searching for something to fill the void caused by refusing to acknowledge God, people freely engage in earthly pleasures. When we willfully choose to worship idols—whether that's popularity, or money,

or some other poor choice—God will give us over to the lusts of our hearts (Rom. 1:23-24). Sin eventually leads to nothing but more emptiness and sorrow. Earthly pleasures can't satisfy our God-given hunger for a fulfilling relationship with the Savior.

- **An impenitent heart.** Eventually, as people move further away from God, He gives them over to a depraved mind (Rom. 1:18). Some people's judgment becomes impaired because they have suppressed spiritual truth to such an extent, they are "filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, and evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unfeeling, and unmerciful" (Rom. 1:29-31). These people are so immoral that they not only deny God's laws for themselves, but they also heartily approve of others who openly rebel against God's law (Rom. 1:32).

Thankfully, no one is beyond the reach of God's redemption. No matter how far down the path of spiritual darkness someone is, there is always the hope of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. When we turn to God, we can be assured He will accept us into His spiritual family and give us assurance of eternal life.

### ► RESPONSE

- We can easily put other priorities and goals above our devotion to God. Ask the Lord, "Father, is there anything in my life that I am allowing to take Your place of honor in my life? Is there anything I am devoting myself, my time, and my resources to, more than to You?"
- How can we intercede for individuals or groups who are living in spiritual darkness? Ask God to break through their ignorance and reveal His love and goodness to them.

To purchase this message on CD or DVD, please visit [store.intouch.org](http://store.intouch.org) or call **1-800-789-1473**.  
To download these Sermon Notes, visit [intouch.org/sermonnotes](http://intouch.org/sermonnotes).

