



# SERMON NOTES

From In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley

## WHEN WE FEEL FRUSTRATED

KEY PASSAGE: Philippians 4:10-13 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: Isaiah 14:27; 43:18-19

### ► SUMMARY

#### What happens when you encounter an aggravating obstacle you can't control or change?

Oftentimes the immediate response is frustration. The good news is that believers don't have to stay in that condition. Even though the situation may not change, God can change our response to it, replacing our annoyance with His peace and joy. One of His goals for our times of frustration is to reveal to us how loving, kind, gentle, and faithful He is. But we may need to make some changes to fully receive the contentment He provides.

### ► SERMON POINTS

The apostle Paul gives us hope for overcoming frustration in Philippians 4:10-13. He was in a very challenging situation that was beyond his control to change. God had called him to preach the gospel and establish churches, but now Paul found himself in a Roman prison, with no indication he would ever be released. He had every reason to feel frustrated, yet he wrote this amazing passage about the strength and peace God gave him in those very difficult circumstances.

“But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity. Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”

We all experience momentary frustrations in everyday life—lawn equipment breaks, babies cry, and cars break down on expressways. But there are also seasons of frustration that last for a long time. They can lead us to think we're victims of our circumstances, but that attitude doesn't help us overcome them.

#### God is sovereign.

We'll never have lasting peace until we come to grips with who God truly is. Isaiah 14:27 says, “For the LORD of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?” This is a clear statement asserting God's sovereignty over everything—including your exasperating situations. They have not made you a victim; whatever you're going through is part of His plan for your life. And you can be certain that He will work it out for good.

Frustration is the feeling of being hindered in what you want to accomplish by some barrier. It comes in two different forms.

#### 1. Frustration That Exhausts Us

This type of aggravation wears us down. It might be the ordinary annoyances of daily life, or it could become chronic frustration with life.

##### The Root of This Frustration

It's not caused by external circumstances. They are just the triggers. It actually comes from inside us.

##### • An Inability to Accept Ourselves as God Made Us

Some people live in a constant state of frustration. It can be a low-level frustration that results in general dissatisfaction, or it could be so aggravating that

it interferes with life and makes interactions with others especially difficult. Ultimately, it's the result of dissatisfaction with themselves. They compare themselves to others and come up short in their own eyes and are upset that God didn't make them as they desire to be.

- **A Reluctance to Deal With Past Issues**

If not dealt with, a difficult childhood, disastrous errors in judgment, or past sins can lead to frustration. It seems easier to deny, bury, or ignore these issues, but if we don't face them, they'll keep hindering us.

- **A Refusal to Deal With Present Ungodly Attitudes or Habits**

As long as a person continues in patterns of sin, they will not be able to escape frustration. Bitterness, resentment, and an unforgiving spirit always result in dissatisfaction and aggravation. The only way out is to admit and repent of sin instead of trying to justify ungodly responses.

## 2. Frustration That Excites Us

God is the source of this kind of frustration. When the Lord plans something, no one can hinder Him from accomplishing it (Isa. 14:27). Isaiah spoke these words when Assyria had surrounded Jerusalem, and the people had no hope of survival. But God frustrated the Assyrians' plans overnight. In the morning the Israelites woke up to discover that the Assyrian soldiers were completely defeated.

God can also frustrate our plans in order to redirect our lives as He desires. Sometimes He puts up a barrier to hinder us, and we can't get past it. At other times He gives us a feeling of frustration that has no explanation. We can't find the source; it's simply a sense of uneasiness.

## God's Purpose in Frustrating Us

- **To Draw Us Into a Deeper Relationship With Him**

We're often so busy that having uninterrupted time alone with the Lord is rare. God uses an obstacle or sense of restlessness to get our attention, so we can focus on an area of our life that He wants us to address. When this happens, we need to read His Word and seek to understand what He wants to do in our lives. His purpose is to develop us into the fullness of who He created us to be. It's a purifying process that by degrees and in time conforms us into Christ's likeness.

- **To Make Us More Fit for Service**

Most of us like to settle into a particular location, church, ministry, or job. We get comfortable and are often reluctant to make a change. But when the Lord wants to move or redirect us, He may use a sense of frustration to start the process. What began as frustration can quickly change to excitement as we anticipate what He will do next in our lives.

Whether the source of your frustration is God or the exasperating events in your life, the path to peace is the same. First, acknowledge His love for you. Then determine to trust Him, which means depending on and surrendering yourself to Him to do whatever He chooses in your life. He's a sovereign God with all power who knows you perfectly. He will always guide you on the right path.

### ► RESPONSE

- What are your frustrations today? Are they triggered by circumstances or by God? How can you tell the difference?
- Since the root of frustration is within you, what feelings, thoughts, or attitudes do you think trigger your aggravation?

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