

HIGHER AIM WITH DR. CURT DODD

Your Divine Calling To Ministry

A Heart For Ministry | Part 3 | 1 Thessalonians 2

INTRODUCTION

If you have turned from sin and placed your faith in Christ, you are a child of God. But it does not stop there. God has also called you into ministry. This calling is not reserved for a select few who are ordained; it is for every believer. The local church is a body of individuals who represent Christ to a world that desperately needs Him.

This is not a temporary assignment but a lifelong calling. Your ministry will continue for your entire life, a journey of serving and glorifying God until He calls you home. You have job security, and your job is to serve the Lord Jesus Christ with everything you have.

The Apostle Paul provides a powerful example of what a heart for ministry looks like. His passion and characteristics are a model for us to follow. Let's explore the key qualities that define a true heart for ministry.

KEY POINTS

1. Confidence In God's Approval

A person with a heart for ministry operates with the confidence that they have God's approval on their life. This is a foundational truth that empowers us to serve. In 1 Thessalonians 2:4, Paul speaks of being "approved by God." The original Greek word, dokimazo, signifies a completed state of being tested and approved. When you give your life to Christ, you receive His stamp of approval. You do not need special credentials for God to use you. At the moment of salvation, you are approved.

Many people disqualify themselves from ministry because they feel they are not good enough. They listen to past voices that made them feel inadequate. But the truth is, none of us are perfect; we are all a work in progress. Salvation is a process of being justified, sanctified, and one day glorified. Do not let feelings of inadequacy stop you from answering the call. Embrace the truth that you are approved by God.

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2. Freedom From Seeking Human Affirmation

Someone with a heart for ministry does not look for affirmation from people. As Paul writes, "We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts." When you feel the need to please others, you become susceptible to manipulation and fear. You might avoid ministry altogether, or you might alter the message to gain the applause of others. If you constantly need approval, you will only tell people what they want to hear, not what they need to hear.

Our culture often promotes the idea of not offending anyone. While God accepts people as they are, He loves them too much to leave them that way. To be effective in ministry, we must be more concerned with God's approval than cultural acceptance. We are called to deliver the truth with love and conviction, even when it is difficult. A true minister listens for the applause of heaven, not the applause of men.

3. Refusal To Rely On Manipulation

A heart for ministry is a heart of integrity. It refuses to use manipulation or flattery to achieve its goals. In verse 5, Paul states, "You know we never use flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed." Flattery involves telling people what they want to hear, whether it is true or not, often for personal gain. Paul and his companions did not come to trick or flatter the Thessalonians; they came to tell them the truth.

God wants you to be a truth teller who serves in His power and for His glory. Ministry is not about cleverly persuading people but about presenting the Word of God with authenticity and sincerity. When we stand and deliver the truth without compromise, we become the people and the church God wants us to be.

APPLICATION

God has called you, and He has approved you. The question is, will you answer? You do not need anything more to begin the ministry He has for you. It may not be easy, but you can have the same confidence Paul had, knowing that God's hand is on you. We encourage you to find your place of service and give everything you have for His glory. If you have never made the decision to turn from sin and place your faith in Christ, we pray that today would be your day. True ministry begins with a personal relationship with Him.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. In what ways do you sense God's approval in your life, and how does that affect your willingness to serve?
2. Are there areas in your ministry where the desire for people's affirmation holds you back from sharing the truth? How can you address this?
3. How can you ensure that your actions and words in ministry are rooted in sincerity and integrity rather than manipulation or flattery?
