

HIGHER AIM WITH DR. CURT DODD

Passionate Discipleship

Becoming A Passionate Disciplex | Part 1 | 1 Thessalonians 3:1-13

INTRODUCTION

It is a wonderful gift to be surrounded by family. Recently, Dr. Dodd had breakfast with his son, Jonathan, and his grandsons. Jonathan asked his five-year-old nephew, Sagey, if he had any imaginary friends. Without missing a beat, Sagey said yes, he had ten brothers and five sisters. When asked what happened to them, Sagey explained that three of the sisters got poison ivy, didn't put a band-aid on it, and died. A couple of the brothers also got poison ivy, but they put a band-aid on it, and they lived.

That simple story holds a profound truth. The investment of your life into the lives of your children, your grandchildren, and the people around you means everything. The word "disciple" simply means a "learning one." A discipler, then, is someone who teaches others how to follow Christ. God calls every believer to be a discipler, to invest in others and help them along the way. In *1 Thessalonians 3*, the Apostle Paul gives us a powerful picture of this kind of passionate care, showing us what it looks like to invest our lives for the sake of others.

KEY POINTS

1. A Passionate Discipler Is Willing To Personally Sacrifice For Fellow Believers

Paul's care for the new believers in Thessaloniki was so intense that he was willing to sacrifice his own comfort for their well being. He writes, "So when we could stand it no longer, we thought it best to be left by ourselves in Athens." This was not a casual decision. The language Paul uses reveals a deep anxiety and a willingness to be left alone, or abandoned, so that Timothy could go and minister to the church. Being a passionate discipler means that we may have to sacrifice our time, our energy, and even our resources. Ministry often comes at inconvenient times, because people do not plan their pain. But when someone is struggling, God calls us to be there for them, even when it is a hard thing to do.

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2. A Passionate Disciple Gives Their Best To Others

When Paul sent help, he did not send his leftovers. He sent Timothy, his "brother and co-worker in God's service," his right hand man and son in the faith. Paul was sending someone he trusted completely, the exact person the church needed to strengthen and encourage them through their persecution. This mirrors the heart of our Heavenly Father, who sent His very best, His one and only Son, to set us free. When God gives you a relationship with someone in the church, He is sending His best through you. You are His personal representative to them in that moment. It is a call to be full of Jesus, caring for others with the same passion that Christ has for us.

The church is not just an organization, it is a living organism. It is a community of people who care for each other and invest in one another's lives. This is what it means to "do life together." Think about how you learned a practical skill, like how to swing a golf club, bait a hook, or work on a car. Someone took you under their wing and showed you how to do it. Discipleship is the same. It is more than a Bible study, it is about showing up and walking with someone, teaching them how to live a life that follows Christ.

In his sermon, Dr. Dodd reminds us that there will be two kinds of people we encounter. There are those with "poison ivy," who are walking through a difficult season of struggle. Then there are the "band-aid carriers," who come alongside to offer help and comfort. At different times in our lives, we will be in both roles. If you are struggling today, God has a band-aid carrier for you. Open your eyes and watch for them. And when you pass through that trial, you will remember what they did for you. Then, you can take that experience and pay it forward. That is what discipling is all about. It is a commitment to the local church, a covenant community where we build a legacy of generational faithfulness by simply being present in the lives of others.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Discipling others often requires personal sacrifice. In what specific, practical ways can you rearrange your schedule or priorities this week to be more available for someone God has placed in your life?
2. Paul sent his "best" in Timothy. Who has been "God's best" to you in a difficult season, and how can you, in turn, offer your best, not your leftovers, to encourage someone else on their faith journey?
3. Who is one person in your life right now that God might be inviting you to walk with, and what is one small, faithful step you can take to "show up" for them this week?
