

# HIGHER AIM WITH DR. CURT DODD

## A Heart For Ministry

*A Heart For Ministry | Part 2 | 1 Thessalonians 2*

### INTRODUCTION

You are very important to God. It does not matter who you are or what you have gone through, God has a plan to use you as a key part of His kingdom. Many of us may not see how everything unfolds, but we can trust that He knows our past, present, and future, and He knows how to put us in the right place at the right time. Your life has a destiny, and God wants to use everything about you to accomplish His will.

In his letter to the church in Thessaloniki, the Apostle Paul encourages believers to develop a heart for ministry. This is not a call reserved for pastors or missionaries; it is for every person who follows Christ. As we explore 1 Thessalonians chapter 2, the Holy Spirit will give us clarity on how to apply God's Word to our lives today, reminding us that we are deeply significant to His eternal plan.

### KEY POINTS

#### 1. Your Pain Can Become Your Ministry

Paul's life was filled with immense suffering, from beatings and shipwrecks to constant danger and pressure. Yet, these difficult experiences were the very things that equipped him for ministry. God does not waste our pain. Some of the greatest ministry you will ever do comes not from your successes, but through your failures and brokenness. Those who have walked through addiction, prison, or physical suffering are uniquely equipped to help others in similar situations. God can take your deepest wounds and use them to bring healing and hope to someone else. Your past does not disqualify you; it prepares you.

#### 2. Your Motives Must Be Pure

When sharing the gospel, Paul was clear that his appeal did not come from error, impure motives, or trickery. He was not using flattery or a mask to cover up greed. In a culture where religious practices were often corrupt, Paul's ministry stood apart because his goal was not to please people, but to please God, who tests our hearts. Our service to God must flow from a pure heart. It cannot be about gaining praise, building a following, or seeking personal benefit. Ministry is about faithfully delivering the message God has entrusted to us, with a heart that longs only for His approval.

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### 3. Your Reward Is Eternal

Paul concludes the chapter by asking what his hope, joy, and crown will be when Jesus returns. His answer is simple: it is the people whose lives were changed by the gospel. Your ultimate success is not measured by earthly standards, but by your eternal impact. The little things you do, the sacrifices you make, and the generosity you show may go unnoticed on earth, but they are proclaimed in heaven. God sees your faithfulness, and your greatest reward will be standing before the Lord and seeing the people whose lives were touched because you were willing to be used by Him.

### APPLICATION

God has a plan for your life, and it is a plan that lasts for all of your life. He wants to use everything you have gone through, especially your pain, for His kingdom. The Bible teaches us that God's power is often perfected in our weakness. Your struggles are not a sign of God's absence but can be the very places where His strength is most clearly seen.

As believers, we must regularly examine our hearts. God calls us to a ministry of faithfulness, not performance. This means our primary focus should be on pleasing God rather than seeking the approval of others. This is a call to endurance. True ministry is not a short sprint but a lifelong journey of steady obedience. We are called to remain faithful where God has placed us, trusting that He is at work even when we cannot see the results.

Ultimately, this perspective shapes our legacy. What will remain when we are gone? It is the people our lives have pointed toward Christ. Your faithfulness in the small, unseen moments can create an eternal ripple effect. Do not waste your pain or discount your experiences. Offer them to God and allow His power to be seen through your life for His glory.

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### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Dr. Dodd teaches that God often uses our greatest failures for ministry. What past pain or struggle in your own life could God be preparing to use for His glory?
2. Reflecting on 1 Thessalonians 2, why is it so important that our service to God comes from pure motives rather than a desire for praise or recognition? In what areas can you check your own heart?
3. The sermon ends by focusing on our eternal reward being the people we impact for Christ. How does this eternal perspective change the way you view your daily interactions and the "little things" you do for others?

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