HIGHER AIM WITH DR. CURT DODD

Pleasing God With Your Mind

Living To Please God | Part 2 | 1 Thessalonians 4

INTRODUCTION

What does it really mean to please God? In *1 Thessalonians 4* and *5*, Paul turns from his concern for the young church to a single, practical theme: how to live a life that pleases the Lord. "We instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more" (*1 Thessalonians 4:1*). If we do not understand what pleases God, we will simply do our own thing.

In earlier messages, Dr. Dodd taught that we are to please God intentionally, authoritatively, and sexually. In this message he takes the next step: we are to please God intellectually. Many people treat the Christian life as mostly a matter of feelings, but God never asks us to set our minds aside. Our faith rests on truth that can stand up to honest examination, and God calls every believer to know what they believe and why they believe it.

KEY POINTS

1. Pleasing God Begins With A Choice

Every day we decide whether we will live for ourselves or live to please God. Dr. Dodd reminds us that pleasing God is intentional. It also means living by His authority, following His instructions, and, when in doubt, reading the manual. God's Word is not a list of do's and don'ts but a guide for how to live, think, and honor Him. That is why the pulpit stands at the center of the church: the teaching of Scripture is central to how we live. In a dark and confused culture, it also means choosing a life of sexual purity, honoring God's design for marriage between one man and one woman for life.

2. Faith Engages The Mind, Not Just The Emotions

In verses 6 through 8, Paul tells the Thessalonians, in effect, "You know what is right, so do it." The Christian life is lived emotionally and physically, but it is also lived intellectually. Some believe they have not truly worshiped unless they feel something powerful, but our emotions rise and fall. Some mornings we wake up saying, "Good morning, Lord!" and other mornings, "Oh, good Lord, morning." God wants our faith anchored in what is true, not in how we feel. Don't throw your mind out the window.

HIGHER AIM WITH DR. CURT DODD

Pleasing God With Your Mind

Living To Please God | Part 2 | 1 Thessalonians 4

3. God's Word Can Stand Up To Scrutiny

Dr. Dodd tells of Mike Hudek, a geologist with a PhD who was afraid to examine the Bible scientifically for fear it might shake his faith. When the Lord prompted him to take a hard look, he discovered that Scripture is completely reliable. Later he said it takes more faith to believe in the Big Bang or the evolution of the species than to take God at His Word. Everyone lives by faith in something. Some trust in theories; we trust in the Father of realities. While many classic works survive in only a handful of copies, we have thousands of manuscripts of Scripture. We can stand on God's Word with confidence.

4. Share The Facts And Trust The Spirit To Draw

As a seminary student, Dr. Dodd met Tom, a Baylor basketball player who called himself an atheist. Tom agreed to read Josh McDowell's *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, and each weekend they talked through it. Weeks later, Tom was angrily defending the Bible while listening to a radio debate with a famous atheist. That same week, he gave his life to Christ. Salvation is God's work. "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them" (*John 6:44*). Our part is to lovingly present the facts, give people time to process them, and trust the Holy Spirit to do the drawing. As long as someone is breathing, their story is not over.

Theologian W.T. Conner once said, "The Holy Spirit has an affinity toward the trained mind." Enthusiasm is wonderful, but God calls us to be prepared. When we know what we believe and why, God can use us in the life of a child, a friend, or someone He places in our path for just a moment, to point them to Jesus.

HIGHER AIM WITH DR. CURT DODD

Pleasing God With Your Mind

Living To Please God | Part 2 | 1 Thessalonians 4

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Do you tend to measure your walk with God more by your feelings or by the truth of His Word? How might your faith grow stronger if it rested more firmly on what is true?

2. If someone asked you why you believe the Bible is reliable, how would you answer? What is one step you could take to better understand what you believe and why?

3. Like Tom, many people need time to process the truth. Who in your life needs you to patiently share the facts and trust God to do the drawing?