

HIGHER AIM WITH DR. CURT DODD

Dances With Detours

Dances With Detours | Part 3 | Isaiah 41:13

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever considered where your first image of God came from? For many, that initial picture is formed through the grid of the relationship we have with our earthly father. If you had a great dad who taught you what it meant to walk with Christ, you are immeasurably blessed. But for others, that relationship may have been difficult, which can make it a struggle to trust God. It is important to remember that God is not like any earthly father. He is the perfect Father, a good, good Father who wants to guide and direct every one of your steps.

The reality, however, is that our steps are often full of detours. Life rarely goes exactly according to our plans. You may be in one of those detour moments right now, wondering why God has allowed you to be in this situation and asking Him for relief. The truth is, God often uses the detours in our lives to shape us. He is not surprised by them, and He has a purpose in them. As the Lord promises in *Isaiah 41:13*, He takes hold of our hand and says, “Do not fear; I will help you.” This is our anchor when the path forward is unclear.

KEY POINTS

1. Find a Positive Perspective in the Detour

God often allows detours in our lives to help develop how we think. It is easy to adopt a mentality that if God really loved us, He would protect us from all pain and discomfort. But Jesus promised, “In this world you will have tribulation” (*John 16:33*). An easy street is not a promise, and a lack of one may be God’s way of developing you for the days to come. Your journey with God is about how you process what you go through. When a detour happens, ask the Lord to give you His perspective. He wants you to discipline your mind to find the good in the midst of the unpleasant, because if you lose the battle between your ears, you will lose in life.

2. Express Your Trust in God

A detour or roadblock might be God’s way of pointing you in the right direction. It is critical to express your trust in Him, especially when you do not understand what is happening. Sometimes the most powerful prayer is simply, “Lord, I’m clueless, but I trust you.” God wants you to learn how to be honest with Him. As you express your feelings, you can also come to a place where you declare your trust in His timing and His future for you. Like a hunter marking a path through an unfamiliar forest, God provides markers of His faithfulness through His Word. We are called to look up for His guidance, not just down at our confusing circumstances.

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3. Examine Your Motives

Sometimes God allows a stop to happen because our motives are tainted. It is human nature to pray for what we want, asking for our will to be done. But when we pray like that, God will often teach us that we are not the one in charge. A detour may be a moment for heart searching, a check from the Lord to see if we are truly open to His will. That stop in your life might be God's hedge of protection. If you are not in the right place with the right attitude, He may be graciously keeping the detour right in front of you until you are ready for the next step.

4. Be Godly When the Detour is a Person

Nothing is more powerful than choosing godliness when a detour has skin on it. When we face adversaries, our first instinct is often to retaliate. But God calls us to a higher standard. Paul describes this picture of godliness: "When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; when we are slandered, we answer kindly" (1 *Corinthians* 4:12–13). God is using these situations and people to develop your character and conform you to the image of His Son. Your response is the only thing you are accountable for, and choosing a godly response is how you faithfully navigate the detour.

God is not going to hold you accountable for someone else's actions, only for your own. He will not hold you responsible for what your spouse does, what your children do, or what your parents did. But He will hold you accountable for how you respond, especially when a detour shows up in your life. Will you lean back and trust the Lord, saying, "My life belongs to you"? Or will you get angry and full of rebellion, demanding your own will?

To be a follower of Jesus means we allow God to take us on the journey He has planned, trusting that every step, even the detours, points us to a deeper relationship with our good Father. God's plan is to conform you to the image of Jesus. The detours are not accidents or punishments; they are divine opportunities to develop Christ-like character. When you are slandered, you have the chance to answer kindly. When you are persecuted, you have the chance to endure with faith. These moments are where your trust becomes real, shaping a legacy of quiet, enduring faithfulness for the next generation to see.

Perhaps the detour you are on right now is pointing you to your greatest need: a personal, born-again relationship with Jesus Christ. True trust begins when you turn from your sin and place your faith entirely in Him.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Dr. Dodd teaches that detours are often God's way of developing our perspective. What is one current detour in your life, and how might your response change if you viewed it as an opportunity for spiritual growth rather than just an obstacle?
2. Reflecting on the story of marking the trail while elk hunting, in what area of your life do you need to stop looking down at your covered tracks and start looking up for the "fluorescent tape" of God's Word to guide you?
3. *1 Corinthians 4:12–13* calls believers to bless when cursed and answer kindly when slandered. Think of a difficult person or situation you are facing. What is one practical, godly response you can choose this week instead of reacting with frustration or retaliation?
