

HIGHER AIM WITH DR. CURT DODD

A Passionate Discipler

Becoming A Passionate Discipler | Part 2 | 1 Thessalonians 3

INTRODUCTION

The Apostle Paul was a man driven by a divine purpose: to see others grow in Christ and to equip them to carry the torch of faith forward. He poured his life into people like Timothy and into the churches he planted, knowing God's plan was bigger than his own tenure. This journey of discipleship, of following and learning from Christ, is not just for apostles. God calls every believer to make an investment in the lives of others. It's a journey that has no limits, because the impact of one life poured into another can ripple through generations.

This is more than just sharing information; it is about sharing your life. In *1 Thessalonians 3*, Paul gives us a powerful example of what this looks like. He reveals the heart of a passionate discipler, one whose greatest joy is seeing others stand firm in the Lord. As we explore his words, we discover the key characteristics required to equip others for their walk with Christ.

KEY POINTS

Last time, we saw that a passionate discipler is willing to personally sacrifice for fellow believers and is committed to giving them their very best. This week, we see another vital attitude that must be part of our makeup.

1. A Passionate Discipler Strengthens And Encourages Others In Their Faith

Paul's concern for the believers in Thessalonica was so great that he sent his closest companion, Timothy, for the specific purpose of strengthening and encouraging them. The Greek word for "strengthen" means to establish someone, to make them firm. This is at the heart of discipleship. It mirrors the work of the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, who is the one who comes alongside us. Our role in discipling others is to come alongside them, not to control them, but to help establish them in their faith so they will not be unsettled by trials. A discipler's deepest desire is to see the people around them spiritually and emotionally encouraged, standing firm in the Lord.

HIGHER AIM WITH DR. CURT DODD

A Passionate Discipler

Becoming A Passionate Discipler | Part 2 | 1 Thessalonians 3

Being a spiritual and emotional encourager is one of the most practical ways we can live out our calling to disciple others. It is not about having all the answers, but about being present and attentive. God has placed you in your family, workplace, and community for a reason. You have an opportunity to be the one who comes alongside another person on their journey. Here are two practical ways to cultivate a heart of encouragement.

First, learn to listen with discernment. Some of the greatest ministry you will ever have is simply learning to listen. When you truly listen to someone, you communicate that you care about what they think and what they are going through. This requires listening not just to what people are saying, but also for what they are not saying. Often, the unspoken words reveal the deepest needs of the heart. Many of us are quick to offer solutions, but what people often need is a listening ear without judgment. When we listen, we make space for the Holy Spirit to work, and we encourage others by showing them they are seen and valued.

Second, focus on people with intention. We live in a culture that runs too fast, and it is easy to be distracted. Have you ever spoken with someone who was looking over your shoulder, already searching for the next conversation? It makes you feel unimportant. A passionate discipler learns to slow down and focus on the one person God has placed in front of them at that moment. Your spouse, your children, and your friends need your focused attention. When you give someone your undivided presence, you affirm their worth and model the focused love of Christ. If you are not focused on them, someone or something else will be. Your focused presence is a powerful tool for encouragement and a testament to your love.

HIGHER AIM WITH DR. CURT DODD

A Passionate Discipler

Becoming A Passionate Discipler | Part 2 | 1 Thessalonians 3

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Dr. Dodd emphasized that listening is a ministry. In what relationship has God been prompting you to listen more and "fix" less? What is one practical step you can take this week to listen for what is not being said?
2. Think about your daily interactions at home, work, or church. When are you most tempted to be distracted instead of focusing on the person you are with? How can you intentionally slow down to give others your focused attention?
3. Paul's goal was to strengthen and encourage believers to stand firm in their faith. Who has God placed in your life that needs encouragement today? How can you use the simple tools of listening and focusing to invest in them and help them stand firm?
