

HIGHER AIM WITH DR. CURT DODD

Standing Strong In Opposition

Becoming A Passionate Disciplex | Part 4 | 1 Thessalonians 3

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever watched someone you care about walk through a difficult season and felt a deep, almost painful longing to help them? You want to know that they are holding up, that their faith is intact, and that they are not alone. This is the exact emotion the Apostle Paul reveals in his letter to the young church in Thessalonica. After spending only a short time with them, he was forced to leave, and his heart ached with concern for their well-being in the face of intense persecution.

This passage does more than just show a pastor's love for his people. It reveals a profound truth about the Christian life. God has not only called us to endure trials ourselves, but He has called us to become passionate disciplers who come alongside others to strengthen and encourage them. As we explore Paul's words in *1 Thessalonians 3*, we discover the characteristics of a person God uses to help others stand firm in a world that is often hostile to faith.

KEY POINTS

1. We Are Destined For Trials

Paul reminds the Thessalonians of a truth he taught them from the beginning: opposition is not an accident but an expected part of the Christian journey. In this world, we will face tribulation. Dr. Dodd notes these trials come in many forms. They can be physical, such as health challenges that come with age. They can be financial, like the fear and uncertainty of losing a job. And they can be relational, from painful estrangement within families to the growing tensions in our culture over deeply held values. The most pointed opposition, however, comes when we take a stand for Christ. We should not be surprised when the world pushes back.

2. A Disciplex's Goal Is To Help Others Stand Firm

Paul's greatest joy came not from his own comfort, but from the news that the Thessalonians were "standing firm in the Lord." His deepest fear was that the tempter might have unsettled their faith and that his labor would be in vain. This reveals the heart of a passionate discipler. Our goal is to help others develop roots so deep in Christ that they cannot be shaken when the winds of opposition blow. We are not called to ensure they have an easy life, but to encourage and equip them so they can remain immovable in their trust in God, even when life comes undone.

HIGHER AIM WITH DR. CURT DODD

Standing Strong In Opposition

Becoming A Passionate Discipler | Part 4 | 1 Thessalonians 3

3. Our Past Struggles Equip Us To Disciple Others

Paul's encouragement was so powerful precisely because he was also experiencing "distress and persecution." He was not speaking from a place of detached theory but from shared experience. In the same way, God intends to use the trials you have walked through as a point of connection and a source of real encouragement for someone else. No one can speak to a person battling cancer like a cancer survivor. God does not waste our pain. He redeems our past struggles, whether physical, financial, or relational, and transforms them into a powerful ministry. He uses our story to make us a gift to another person who is walking a path we have already traveled.

When God brings someone into your life who is struggling, you become His chosen instrument of grace and encouragement. Being a passionate discipler in these moments is not about having all the right answers, but about having the right heart. It is a ministry of presence, patience, and prayer.

HIGHER AIM WITH DR. CURT DODD

Standing Strong In Opposition

Becoming A Passionate Discippler | Part 4 | 1 Thessalonians 3

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Think about a difficult season you have walked through. In what specific ways did God use another person to encourage you and help you stand firm in your faith?
2. Dr. Dodd outlines several practical ways to help someone in pain, such as listening and avoiding clichés. Which of these comes least naturally to you, and what is one step you can take to grow in that area?
3. God does not waste our experiences. In what area of your life, good or bad, has God given you a specific story that He might want to use to strengthen someone else's faith?
