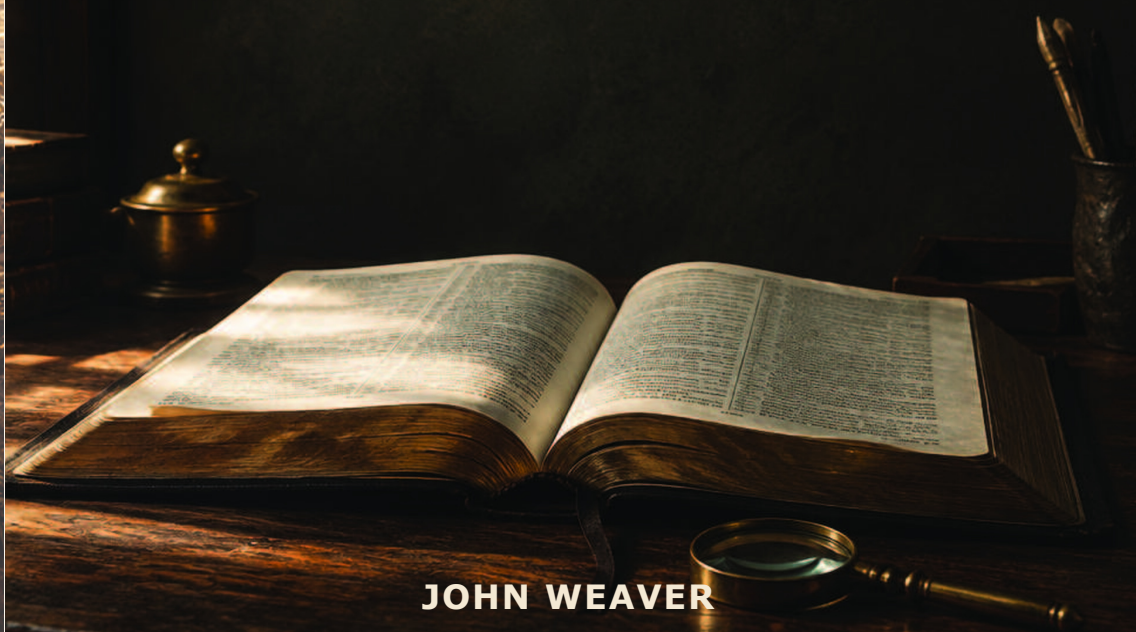
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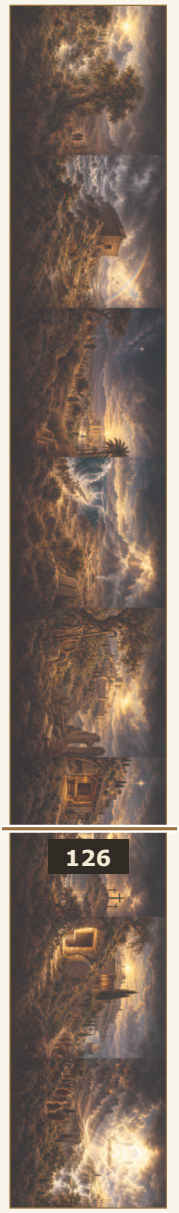
"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path."

PSALM 119:105



JOHN WEAVER

WEAVER BIBLE COLLEGE



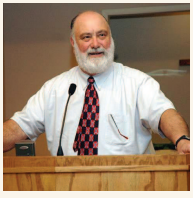
Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.

PSALM 119:18

The parables of Matthew 13 distinguish hearing words from understanding their meaning. John Weaver considers why the same teaching may be received differently and the responsibilities associated with listening to truth. These messages examine spiritual understanding, the condition of the hearer, and the need to judge one's response by Scripture rather than familiarity alone.

“If truth belongs to God and understanding belongs to God, out of His mouth come these things.”

JOHN WEAVER



John Weaver

John Weaver's sermons form the teaching collection presented by Weaver Bible College. This volume gathers his teaching from that collection.

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CHAPTER 1

Why Some do not Understand and Others will Never Understand

Part One of Two

Why Some Do Not Understand and Others Never Will Understand

SCRIPTURE READING - Matthew 13:10-17 (KJV)

This message is part one of two. The title is "Why Some Do Not Understand and Others Never Will Understand." The message next week will be "Why Some Do Understand and Others Do Not."

Matthew 13:10-17:

"And the disciples came and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?" He answered and said unto them, "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever

> hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."

Introduction: The Importance of Truth

> Two statements stand at the very beginning. First, truth is important. In fact, truth is a matter of life and death. The Bible tells you in Proverbs 23 and verse 23, "Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding."
>
> Although that is an excellent proverb, it is good only if we are able to discern the truth and know its value, because no one is going to buy what they are totally and completely ignorant of. No one is going to buy something they think is absolutely worthless. For this proverb to be applicable in our lives, we must be able to know the truth and the value of truth as well.

Our Lord in Matthew chapter 13 and other passages taught in parables. A parable does two things at one time. First, it reveals the truth to those who pay attention. Second, it conceals the truth from those who have no interest in the truth. Thus, in Matthew 13:10, “And the disciples came and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?”

He answered, “Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but

whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath." Then He says, "Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand." He also talks about Isaiah's prophecy, which I am going to cover as well.

What is a parable? A parable is a very short and simple story that teaches what we would call either a moral or a spiritual lesson. It is often described as an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. It uses human characters, human illustrations, or even nature to teach profound spiritual truths.

The word parable comes from the Greek word parabolē, which literally means a comparison, an analogy, or juxtaposition. In the Bible, parables are narrative comparisons that convey moral or spiritual lessons. The word parable means "to cast alongside." A parable takes one truth and casts it alongside another truth so that you can compare them, see them, or receive an illustration through which the truth becomes visible.

It is much like the old days, especially the days of the pirates, when ships came side by side and fired their cannon until they either ran out of cannonballs or everybody missed. Then the ships came together, and the crews boarded and fought. That is what a parable means: to cast alongside of.

Understanding Is a Gift of God

The truth I want to emphasize right now is found in verse 11. They ask Him in verse 10, "Why do you speak unto them in parables?" And He answered and said unto them, "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given."

Here is something that you and I need to grasp and understand: everything that we see, everything that we hear, everything that we know, everything that we understand about truth, and especially biblical truth, has been given unto us. It is the gift of God. Look again at verse 11: "Because it is given unto you to know..." The Greek word for "given" is didōmi, which actually means a gift. It means something that has been given to you.

In other words, it implies that the understanding is not yours. It did not originate with you. It did not initiate with you. It was something entirely outside of you, and it was given unto you. The same word is used in the latter part of verse 11, when He says, “But unto them it is not given.” There is a negative in front of the word didōmi, which means “not given.” In other words, God has given truth to some, and to some it has not been given.

So let me explain it like this: truth may be taught, presented, and explained very plainly, openly, clearly, and specifically. Some will understand it and some will not. You have to ask the question, why is that so? The answer is because truth is a gift of God. Just as God is absolutely sovereign and gives His grace and His mercy to whomever He pleases, whenever He pleases, it is the same way with His truth.

Natural Blindness: The Inability of the Unsaved

In light of that, let me show you two verses. Hold Matthew chapter 13, but turn first to 1 Corinthians chapter 2 and look at verse 14. Many of you may quote this verse, but here it is: “But the natural man”—that would be the unsaved man—“receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” The natural man is the unsaved man, man by nature. He does not receive the things of the Spirit of God; they are absolutely foolishness unto him. “Neither can he know them.”

"Can" is a term of ability. "May" is a term of permission. In other words, man does not have the ability or capability of understanding them because they are spiritually discerned.

The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God. Very plainly, they are foolishness unto him. Neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned. Now look at 1 Corinthians chapter 4 and verse 7, where the Apostle Paul asks some questions. Here is the first one: "Who maketh thee to differ from another?" Stop and answer that question for yourself. Who maketh thee to differ from another? Obviously, it is God.

Think about your family and extended family, and think about your friends. Practically every family has individuals who are

unsaved. They are not only unsaved; they are not interested in the truth. They do not want the truth. They do not mind fellowshipping with you as a cousin or some relative, but they do not want to sit down and listen to you witness to them. Neither do they want to hear you talk about spiritual things and the Bible. So he asks, "Who maketh thee to differ from another?" Of course, that would be the Lord God in His sovereignty.

Everything We Have Is Received from God

Watch the next question: "And what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" Everything that you have, God gave you. It does not matter whether it is faith, repentance, truth, or understanding. Everything that you have, God gave you. "Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"

Man by nature is incapable of receiving or understanding the things of God. But I will go farther: as Christians who have been regenerated, converted, and drawn to Christ, we still must be enlightened and illuminated by the Spirit of God to understand, because everything is a gift. Whatever we understand has been given to us in the grace and mercy of God. If you grasp this principle, first of all, it should make you extremely grateful and thankful that you have truth, that you know some truth.

You don't know all truth. That is obvious. Neither do I. No one knows all truth. But at least we know some truth. And God has opened our eyes to that. And we should be thankful to him. And we should praise him for the truth that he's given us.

The second thing it should do is this: it should make us humble. It should make us humble in the fact that we realize that God condescended in his grace and mercy to give us truth. God's truth does not make us proud, arrogant, haughty, heady, high-minded, belligerent, demanding. God's truth does not do that. So if God has given us truth, we should first be thankful. And secondly, we should be humble. That is for sure.

And proud, vain, arrogant men and women think that somehow they can acquire all the knowledge they want just simply by their own study and their own efforts. Well, let me tell you something. You

may study the Bible for a thousand years incessantly without ever stopping. You may memorize this thing left and right, upside down, inside out, backwards. It doesn't matter. But you would never ever understand it unless God opens your eyes, unless God gives you enlightenment. It's just that simple. There's a vast difference between being able to quote the Bible and understand the truth.

Now, let me give you a good illustration. I want you to think about this. I'm going to ask you a question and I'll explain the question. My question is this: would you recognize Jesus Christ if you saw him? Think about that. The question has to be explained. So first of all, would you recognize Jesus Christ physically if you saw him? Well, you're going to say, "Ha ha. Sure I would, because look at all the pictures we have of Jesus Christ." But all those pictures are absolutely worthless because all they are are man's imaginations.

Where I went to the university, there was a tremendous art gallery. It would take you hours just to go through that art gallery. And a lot of the paintings there were absolutely priceless. They were not replicas. They were originals. And a lot of them had pictures of Jesus Christ. And what's interesting, most of these pictures were painted during the Renaissance period. And if a Flemish artist painted a picture of Christ, Christ looked Flemish. If a Spanish artist painted him, he looked Spanish. If an Italian artist painted him, he looked Italian.

Would you recognize Jesus Christ if you saw Him physically? Most people think they would because of all the pictures they have seen, but Jesus Christ did not have long hair. How do I know that? The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 11 and verse 14, "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?" The word "shame" happens to be atimia, and it literally means a dishonor, a reproach, or a disgrace. You mean to tell me that, since God the Father said for a man to have long hair would be a reproach, a disgrace, and a dishonor, Jesus Christ would then turn around and dishonor and disgrace His Father by having long hair? Obviously, He did not.

When you look at the context, long hair on the woman is her glory. Why? Man was created in the image of God, and the woman was created in the image of man, according to 1 Corinthians chapter

11. So the glory of the woman is her long hair, but it is a shame for a man to have long hair. Someone may smile and say, "But they did not have barber shops back in those days." Well, they did. It may not necessarily have been a barber shop the way you and I think about it, but they certainly knew about barbering. In Ezekiel chapter 5, verse 1, God tells Ezekiel, "And thou, son of man, take thee a sharp knife, take thee a barber's razor, and cause it to pass upon thine head and upon thy beard: then take thee balances to weigh, and divide the hair." God speaks not only of a sharp knife, but specifically of a barber's razor. I am not splitting hairs when I ask you: Would you recognize Jesus Christ if you saw Him physically?

SCRIPTURE READING - Luke 24:13-18 (KJV)

Illustration: Cleopas on the Road to Emmaus

There were two men walking with Jesus Christ on the road to Emmaus. One of them's name was Cleopas, or Clopas in the Greek. He is named specifically: "And one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?" So Jesus Christ now has joined himself to these two men.

"And they talked together of all these things which had happened." That is, these two men. They were going to the village called Emmaus. "And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them."

"But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? And one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things?"

"And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we

> trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done."
>
> "Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!"

"Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." As they drew near to the village, "he made as though he would have gone further." They constrained him, saying, "Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." He went in to tarry with them. "And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them... He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight." They said one to another, "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?"

The first question is this: Who was Cleopas? The second is: Did he know Jesus Christ personally? If he knew Jesus Christ personally, why would he not recognize Him?

John Gill gives this brief explanation: "And one of them, whose name was Cleopas"—or Clopas in the Greek, or Alphaeus, for it is the same name—"he was one of the seventy disciples, and father of the Apostles James and Jude. Brother to Joseph, the husband of Mary, the mother of Christ, as before observed."

Look in your Bibles at Mark chapter 3, verse 18. Cleopas was not only one of the seventy sent out by Jesus Christ; he was Joseph's brother, and he married the sister of Mary, whose name also was Mary. Mark 3:18 lists the apostles: "And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of

Alphaeus"—which would be Cleopas—"and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Canaanite."

Now turn to John chapter 19, verse 25: "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene." Thus Cleopas, Clopas, or Alphaeus was Joseph's brother. Jesus Christ would have been his nephew, and he would have known Jesus Christ since He was a child. Why, then, did he not recognize Him? Return to Luke chapter 24, verse 16. The Bible says very plainly:

“But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.” The Greek word for “holden” is krateō, literally, “I have power.” The noun kratos is power, but they had no power because their eyes were holden. Literally, Cleopas, who had known Jesus Christ all his life, was kept from recognizing and fully knowing Him. God by His providence restrained the eyes of these two men. Although they saw a man and knew that he was a man, they did not recognize Him. Here was a relative, Clopas, and he did not even know Him.

Matthew Poole says, “God by his providence restrained their eyes, that though they saw a man, yet they could not discern who he was. We may learn from hence that the form or figure of Christ’s body after His resurrection was not changed. His body had the same dimensions, the same quantity, color, and figure, and was itself a proper object for human eyes, for otherwise there had been no need for their eyes to be held. From hence also we may learn the influence which God hath upon all our members and senses, and how much we depend upon God for a daily power to exercise our natural faculties.”

“Our Lord had no mind that these two disciples should at first discern who he was, that he might draw out their following discourses, and from them take occasion to prove from scripture the certainty of his resurrection.” Calvin, dealing with the same issue, says, “The evangelist expressly states this, lest anyone should think that the aspect of Christ’s body was changed and that the features of his countenance were different from that which had formerly been.”

Though Christ remained like Himself, He was not recognized because the eyes of the beholders were held. This takes away all

suspicion of a phantom or false imagination. Here we learn how great is the weakness of all our senses, since neither eyes nor ears discharge their office unless power is incessantly communicated to them from heaven. Our members possess their natural properties, but God retains in His own hand the use of them, so that we ought always to reckon it one of His daily favors that our ears hear and our eyes see. If He does not every hour quicken our senses, all our power will immediately give way. Everything we are and everything we have is restrained and retained by God and remains in His power.

Calvin says, "The proper discrimination between truth and falsehood, therefore, does not arise from the wisdom of our own mind, but comes to us from the spirit of wisdom. But it is chiefly in the contemplation of heavenly things that our stupidity is discovered. For not only do we imagine false appearances to be true, but we turn the clear light into darkness." If it is left up to us, we would turn light into darkness. We would see things and say things that cannot possibly be true. The proper discrimination between truth and falsehood does not arise from our own wisdom, smartness, or ability; it comes to us by the spirit of wisdom. Here is an absolute truth: We are blind to that which is right before our eyes unless God opens our eyes and allows us to see.

Clopas knew Jesus Christ probably from His birth and was sent out by Jesus Christ, yet he did not recognize Him. Seeing and hearing are the gifts of God. Proverbs 20:12 says, "The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the LORD hath made even both of them." Why is it that some do not understand—and others never will understand? Think about that. Why is it that some do not understand and others never will understand?

Natural and Judicial Blindness

First of all, you have to remember that there is what we would call a natural blindness. I quoted that from 1 Corinthians 2:14: “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” Our Lord is saying that man, by nature and in and of himself, does not have the ability or capability to discern truth

or to see truth. If he did see truth, it would be nothing but foolishness to him.

Ephesians 4 amplifies this for us. “This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind.” He is speaking of the unsaved, who walk in the vanity of their mind. When we talk about vanity, we refer to that which is useless and worthless, but it is more than that. Again, “This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind.”

Here is what the vanity of the mind is: “Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.” What is God telling us? Fallen man is ignorant of God, alienated from God, and blind toward God. He does not see God spiritually and does not desire God. The only thing fallen man by nature wants is his own filthiness, his own fleshliness, and his own lusts. That is it. There is what you and I would call a natural blindness.

There is, secondly, what is known in Scripture as a judicial blindness. This is why some will never see and never understand. We can understand natural blindness and natural hardness; that is why some do not understand. But judicial blindness is why some never understand. So go back in your Bibles to Matthew 13 and look again at verses 14 and 15. In fact, let us begin reading at verse 13.

Judicial Blindness: Why Some Never Understand

Our Lord says it like this: "Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."

Our Lord quotes in verses 14 and 15 from Isaiah chapter 6, verses 9 and 10. In Isaiah chapter 6, God calls Isaiah to be a prophet and sends him to his own people. Isaiah says, "Hear ye indeed, and understand not; and see ye indeed, and perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed."

Isaiah asked God, "How long? How long am I to go?" And God answered, "Till the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate."

Let me put that in proper perspective. God says they are not going to listen to you. I am going to judge them. I am going to destroy them. Here is a judicial blindness where their eyes were shut, their ears were shut, and their minds were shut. They did not see; they did not understand.

This passage in Isaiah chapter 6, verses 9 and 10, is quoted six times in the New Testament. We will first look at Mark, chapter 4, verses 11 and 12, while holding Matthew 13, where we will return.

SCRIPTURE READING - Mark 4:11-12; Luke 8:9-10; John 12:39-41; Acts 28:25-27 (KJV)

> "And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them." Still the quote from Isaiah 6.
>
> Luke 8:9-10 says: "And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be? And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand."
>
> Now John 12:39-41: "Therefore they could not believe." Think about this: a judicial blind—it was impossible for them to believe. "Therefore they could not believe, because that Isaiah said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand

> with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Isaiah, when he saw his glory, and spake of him." That would be in Isaiah 6.
>
> In Acts 28, Paul is speaking to the Jews that had come together. The Bible says, "And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word." Notice what he quotes: "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Isaiah the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." So he quotes from Isaiah 6.

Romans 11, verses 7 and 8, says, "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day."

Returning to Matthew 13, verse 15, the sixth occurrence—actually the first, though I am considering it lastly—Jesus says, "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." Matthew is ascribing this judicial blindness to his hearers. He is saying that they are responsible for this judicial blindness being inflicted upon them.

You cannot separate what we would call a blinded mind and a hardened heart. The blinder you are, the harder your heart. Stop and think about a hardened heart. No one in this room has ever physically murdered anyone, but consider individuals who murder on a regular basis and go home and have supper. It does not bother them. Look at the people who work for the cartels, who just as soon kill an individual they do not even know. They are not only blind; they are hardened.

Remember Romans chapter 1. The Bible said that because they became vain in their imaginations and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things, and because they did not like to retain the knowledge of God in their minds, God gave them over to a reprobate mind. They were accountable and responsible for that reprobate mind because they did not want God, the truth, or his knowledge. God hardened Pharaoh's heart, but Pharaoh also hardened his own heart. When God states that their heart is waxed gross, it means that their heart is enclosed with a big gob of fat.

Nothing can get in it. Their ears are dull of hearing. That means they are heavy, weighty, violent, and cruel. The Greek word is barus. They have shut their eyes that they see not. All of this makes it impossible for someone with a gross heart, dull ears, and closed eyes to receive truth. It is impossible. So they will never ever understand truth.

Judicial blindness, or judicial hardness, is a term employed to express what you and I would call moral and spiritual incorrigibility. The people afflicted with judicial blindness, which they brought upon themselves in the righteous judgment of God, will never understand truth. Period. They are just lost. They will remain lost. There is no reaching them.

I have thought about this so many times. There is a line that people cross. I do not know when that line is or where that line is, but there is a line that people cross, and here is what God does: “Ha ha, I will just withdraw myself from you since you do not really want me. And what you want is your will and your way. I will let you have it.”

There is a passage in Hosea 5:6: “They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the LORD; but they shall not find him; he hath withdrawn himself from them.” These people were rejected by God. They think they are going to offer sacrifice; they are taking their flocks and their herds and seeking after God, but they will not find him. Why? He has withdrawn himself.

In Matthew 15:12, the disciples said, “Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?” In other words, “Lord, you have upset these Pharisees. You said things they did not like. You made them angry. They probably will not come back and hear you anymore.” Look what our Lord said: “But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both”

The Terrifying Judgment of 'Let Them Alone'

“Let them alone.” I have news for you: there are three words there that are terrifying. What did He say in verse 14? “Let them alone.” They are going to be destroyed, and anyone who follows them is going to be destroyed. If our Lord says to someone, “Let him alone,” he will never, ever understand truth. Never.

In Jeremiah 44, God had already judged Judah and Jerusalem, and only a small number remained. They were afraid that Nebuchadnezzar would return because someone had murdered his soldiers and the governor he had appointed. So they came to Jeremiah and said, “Pray for us. We want to know God’s will. We are just a little remnant.” They truly wanted to go down into Egypt, but they told Jeremiah, in Jeremiah 42, 43, and 44, “You pray to God for us, and we will do whatever God tells us. We want to obey Him.”

Jeremiah said, “I’ll pray for you.” Finally, God came to Jeremiah and said, “You tell them not to go down into Egypt. Do not go there. They are afraid of Nebuchadnezzar; I will protect them. They are afraid of famine; I will feed them. Do not go into Egypt.”

When Jeremiah told them that, do you know what they said? “God did not tell you to say that. Baruch set you upon us. You just want us to be killed by Nebuchadnezzar. You want us to starve to death.” Then they kidnapped Jeremiah and Baruch and took them into Egypt. God told Jeremiah, “You put some stones right around here, because Nebuchadnezzar is going to set his throne on these stones.” The very thing they feared, they ran directly into by disobeying God.

They said, “We are going to continue to pour out our drink offerings to the Queen of Heaven. We are going to continue to do whatever we have done before.” God said in Jeremiah 44:28, “Yet a small number that escape the sword shall return out of the land of Egypt into the land of Judah, and all the remnant of Judah, that are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall know whose words shall stand, mine, or theirs.” You will find out who is speaking the truth.

Now look at Psalm 106:15. This is what God does: “And he gave them their request; but sent leanness”

“He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul.” Do you realize that when people do not want the truth, do not want God, but want their own will and their own way, God says, “OK, I’ll let you have it”? That is when He said concerning those Pharisees, “Let them alone.”

The first application is this: one of God’s absolute worst judgments that He could inflict upon anyone is when God simply withdraws Himself and leaves us to ourselves. When He gives us that which we want, when He allows us to have our will and allows us to have our way, that is the same thing as our Lord saying, “Let them alone.” You want it? You can have it. You will find out that the way of the transgressor is hard. You will find out that you reap what you sow. You will find out that there are consequences to your sins. The worst judgment that can be inflicted upon any individual is when God withdraws Himself and leaves them alone.

The second application is this: we must learn that unless God opens our eyes, opens our ears, and opens our hearts, we will never see, we will never hear, and we will never obey. Some do not believe because of natural blindness or natural depravity. Others will never believe because of judicial blindness, because of their own stubbornness, their own incorrigibility, and their own hatefulness.

Now, if you remember that passage that I read in Ephesians 4 earlier, it is the judgment of God when one becomes past feeling and walks in the vanity of the mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them because of the blindness of their hearts. What happens when

someone becomes past feeling and does that? They live their lives, and God says they have given themselves over unto lasciviousness. That is nakedness. That is lustfulness. In other words, He leaves them to fulfill their own lusts.

They never will have any concern for the truth. They will never really desire God or want to be saved, because they have been judicially blinded and judicially hardened.

Truth is important; truth is a matter of life and death. Proverbs 23:23 says, “Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.” Since truth is God’s gift, we are responsible to buy it. How can we buy it if it is a gift? Obviously, regardless of the cost, we must cry unto Him to give us truth. It does not matter how much study it takes or how many sermons we listen to. We need to cry to God for truth. That is buying it.

Application: Cry Out for Truth

Proverbs 2 gives a good illustration. “My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.” Then verse 6 says, “For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.”

God does not give it willy-nilly. You have to receive, hide, incline your ear, apply your heart, cry after knowledge, lift up your voice, seek it as silver, and search for it as hidden treasure. Then you will understand; He will give it to you. That is buying the truth. You are not spending money for it; you are searching, begging, and asking God for truth.

You see truth and value it. We need to be like David, who prayed in Psalm 119:18, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." We need to cry that God would give us His truth: that He would open our eyes to see, our ears to hear, and our

minds to understand. Truth is absolutely worthless unless you apply it.

It is not enough to buy truth, nor is it enough to cry for it. We have to obey it. Some do not understand because of natural depravity and natural blindness. Some will never understand because they have been judicially blinded in the judgment of God because of their sin, their lack of seeking, their lack of repentance, and their lack of concern. They have no desire for God or His truth. There is a line. When our Lord says, "Let him alone," or "Let them alone," you will never understand truth. You had better cry while you can cry and beg while you can beg: "Lord, open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask for enlightenment, illumination, and understanding. We realize, Lord, that truth is Your gift. Just like Clopas was blind to someone he had known all his life until You opened his eyes, we can be blind to that which we read every day in our Bibles. We need the illumination and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. Teach us Thy truth. Help us, Lord, to understand and to apply. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

Why Some do not Understand and Others will Never Understand

Part Two of Two

Introduction: The Question of Understanding

Why is it that some understand and some do not understand? I pointed out last week that there is a natural blindness, or a natural depravity. The Bible tells you in 1 Corinthians 2:14, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." So the unsaved man has no ability to perceive, receive, or understand the things of God.

The Unsaved Cannot Understand

I also quoted Ephesians 4:17-19, where the apostle Paul said, "This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that henceforth you walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the

understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them because of the blindness of their heart, who being past feeling," walk after lasciviousness and all filthiness. In other words, God says that, by nature, men are blind, they are dumb, they are darkened, they are alienated from God, and they understand nothing. Of course, I also showed last week that there is a judicial blindness that comes from God.

Jesus' Question in John 8:43

But let me show you another verse. In John 8:43, our Lord asked these Jews, "Why do you not understand my speech?" Then He says, "Even because you cannot hear my word." Look at that question: "Why do you not understand my speech?"

They were speaking the same language. They knew the language He was speaking, yet He was a barbarian to them in the sense that they did not hear and really did not understand.

They heard with their physical ears. They heard audibly, but they certainly did not hear spiritually. They heard the sound of His words, but they did not understand their impact, importance, or spirituality. After He says, "Why do you not understand my speech? Even because you cannot hear my word," He explains it in verse 44: "You are of your father the devil, and the lust of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there's no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar and the father of it." Now here is a short quote from John Calvin on these two verses.

Calvin explains Christ’s question: “What is the reason why my speech appears to you barbarous and unknown, so that I gain nothing by speaking to you, and so that you do not even deign to open your ears to receive what I say?” He says that Christ reproves their stupidity and, in their refusal to hear, their obstinance and ungovernable hatred of His doctrine. He then assigns the reason for both when He says that they sprang from the devil. Christ asked, “Why is it that you do not understand my speech? Even because you cannot hear my word.” Thus, the unsaved cannot understand. But why is it that many Christians do not understand? Why do some understand while others do not?

The truth is that we must be taught by the Holy Spirit. He must open our eyes, our ears, and our minds, and grant us understanding.

There are plenty of Christians who can quote and memorize verses and read the Bible. But being able to quote or memorize a verse does not mean that one understands it. I know people who follow a reading schedule and read through the Bible every year, and I am thankful for that; I am certainly not against it. But I would much rather read one chapter and understand it than read twenty chapters without understanding what I have read. Why do some understand and some do not?

Illumination vs. Revelation

The answer is illumination. Illumination is the act, work, or ministry of the Holy Spirit whereby He enlightens our minds to the truth God has already revealed. There is a difference between illumination and revelation, and most people confuse the two. Godly individuals have said, “Let me share with you what God just revealed to me.” But God did not reveal something new to them; He opened their eyes to understand what He had already revealed.

Revelation is God’s act of revealing things previously unknown to humanity. Revelation has ceased because we possess the totality of the Word of God, and Jesus Christ is the full and final revelation of God.

You can read that in Hebrews 1:1–3. Anytime someone claims additional revelation, they are denying that Jesus Christ in the Bible is the fullness of God, His Word, and His truth.

What is revelation? How did Moses know what happened at creation? He was not there. How did he know what happened to Noah in the flood? He was not there. How did he know what happened to Abraham? He was not there, but he wrote and told us everything that happened, or at least that which we need to know. The way he knew was that God revealed it to him, and the Holy Spirit inspired him to write it, so that we have the infallible, inerrant Word of God. We have the Word of God without error, and we have it where it will never, ever fail. What God does in illumination is

simply open our minds to understand that which He has already revealed to us.

Our Lord was the greatest teacher that ever lived. He not only could communicate truth, but He Himself was and still is truth. He spoke with absolute authority and with clarity, that is for sure. Yet many people did not understand what He said when He preached. Even His own disciples did not understand.

Matthew 15:17 records Jesus speaking to His twelve disciples: “Do not you yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?” Note that He says to His disciples, “Do you not yet understand?” He had just taught them. Do you not understand? Matthew 16:9 says, “Do you not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?” And in Matthew 16:11: “How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?”

Even the Disciples Needed Understanding Opened

How about Mark 8:21? “How is it that ye do not understand?” Even His own disciples did not understand some of the things that He taught. If the disciples, who were with Him constantly and consistently, did not understand, how much more do you and I need Him, illumination, and enlightenment to understand? Now, here is my question: What did it take for the disciples to understand what Jesus Christ taught? Did it take more concentration?

I've got to think harder. Did it take more education? I have to get my PhD. Did it take more determination? I'm gonna sit here and study this until I figure it out. What did it take? Well, let me show you. In Luke chapter 24, verse 44, Jesus said, "These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me." Then verse 45 says, "Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures."

The word "open" is very important and informative. The Greek word is dianoigo, which literally means to open by dividing or by drawing asunder. It means to open thoroughly that which has been closed. This word is used of the opening of the womb of a woman with her first child. In other words, the womb is opened so the child may actually be delivered. When the Bible says that He opened their understanding, He did so thoroughly and completely, so that they could grasp and understand.

The word "understanding" is the Greek word nous, referring to the mind, the intellectual faculties. It is in that area that we grasp the truth. The word "understand" is suniemi, which literally means to bring together, to cause to stand together in the mind. It is only when things come together in our minds that we thoroughly and completely understand.

Casey is an electrician. He could stand up and tell us all about electricity, giving us fact after fact. But until we put these things together in our minds, we are not going to understand them. Steve could tell us all about mechanics, including combustion engines and pistons. I'm not a mechanic; I have no mechanical ability whatsoever, and I still would not understand it. But if I took all the facts and were able to put them together in my mind, then I would understand exactly what he was talking about. No one can understand anything until he puts it together, until he is able not just to repeat it but to apply it.

God Gives Wisdom and Understanding Sovereignly

Our Lord opened the minds of His disciples so thoroughly, so completely, so totally, that they understood His word. The Bible tells us in Proverbs 2:6, “For the Lord giveth wisdom, out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.” The Lord giveth wisdom, out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. Proverbs 9:10 says, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.” So I want you to think about this. I have just given you two verses that tell us very plainly that the Lord has to give wisdom. The Lord has to give understanding. Those are His gifts. He may dispense them as He

pleases, to whom He pleases, when He pleases, and wherever He pleases.

Now, hang on to that. This is why many Christians do not understand the same truth at the same time. I may be ahead of Steve in some areas, while Steve may be ahead of me in others. Casey may be ahead of both of us, or I may understand far more than all of us put together. You see what I am saying? God does not give the same truth at the same time to the same people.

If truth belongs to God and understanding belongs to God, out of His mouth come these things. Here is a good question: Is God obligated to give you truth and to give you understanding, or are you obligated to seek God for truth and understanding? Of course, you know that you cannot bring God into obligation to you. Therefore, it is your obligation, duty, and responsibility to seek after God and His gifts. In Matthew 6:33 our Lord said, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these other things shall be added unto you.” So why do some Christians understand truth while others do not?

Now, I am not going to sit here and say, “If you do not understand everything I understand, then you are lost.” That is hogwash. You know, like I pointed out, God is sovereign in giving wisdom, understanding, and truth. But remember that in 1 John chapter 2, John divided Christians into three categories: babes, young men, and fathers. A babe does not understand what a young man understands, and a young man certainly does not understand what a father understands. In 1 Corinthians chapter 3, the apostle Paul told the Corinthians, “I had to write unto you as babes.”

"Are you not yet carnal?" He asked this question and said, "I had to feed you with milk and not with meat." He said the same thing in Hebrews chapter 5: "You have become dull of hearing, and you have need of milk again instead of meat."

So there are different stages in the Christian life. Obviously, a baby is not going to understand what a young man does, and a young man is not going to understand what the father does. I am not saying that someone is lost because he does not understand everything.

There is a period of growth, with what you and I would call spurts in our life, because that is when we grow.

God commands us in Proverbs 23:23, "Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, instruction, and understanding." When it comes to wisdom, instruction, and understanding, the price is not negotiable. We are to buy them regardless of how much they cost.

So how do we buy the truth? The word "buy" is qanah in Hebrew, and it means to get, acquire, create, buy, possess, or obtain. He tells you to buy the truth—to obtain it. Do not worry about the cost; just get the truth. There are three main ways to acquire and understand truth, wisdom, and understanding.

Three Ways to Acquire Truth and Understanding

The first way is exceedingly hard and difficult: acquiring truth and understanding by experience. Experience comes mighty costly at times. Every father and mother tries to spare their children the heartache and hard lessons they learned by teaching them, but oftentimes the children will not listen or learn, and they have to experience the school of hard knocks themselves.

How many times do you have to put your finger in the fire before you understand you are going to get burned? How many times do you have to stumble and fall flat on your face, perhaps breaking your nose or your arm, until you realize, "I need to pick up my feet. I do not need to scrub my feet"? For those who will not listen and will not receive truth, there is the school of hard knocks—the university of experience—and they will be hurt over and over. I can assure you of that.

Proverbs 9:6 says, "Forsake the foolish and live, go in the way of understanding." If you are not going in the way of understanding, you are going in the way of foolishness, and you will die. You will get hurt. It is just that simple. Proverbs 12:11 says, "He that tilleth the land shall be satisfied with bread, but he that followeth vain persons is void of understanding." In other words, there is no work ethic. Note what he said: "He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with"

Proverbs 12:11 says that he that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread. It is difficult many times to get up at five o'clock in the

morning, go work in the fields, and do whatever is needed to make a crop. But there are some people who say, "I'm gonna follow vain persons. We will beg, we'll borrow, we'll steal, we'll do whatever." God says you do not have any understanding. You do not have a work ethic. You are not going to work, and you are not going to eat. You will learn the hard way.

Proverbs 18:2 says, "A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself." All he wants to do is party and play. I told you before, the word "muse" in the Bible means to think. When you put the alpha, or the "a," in front of it, it is "amuse," which means not to think; it negates the word. Amusement, then, is that in which you do not have to think. You do not have to think when you are watching television or movies. You can get subliminal messages, but you do not have to think. That is what God says a fool is: he has no delight in understanding. All he wants to do is play.

Proverbs 21:16 says, "The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead." God says you are dead if you have no understanding. Do you realize how dangerous it is to live without understanding, to live and do something absolutely stupid? For instance, how about handing a loaded pistol to a four- or five-year-old child? Would you not call that dangerous? He has no understanding. He does not know the danger of that pistol or that it could end up killing him or someone else. This is what God is saying.

Proverbs 13:15 says, "Good understanding giveth favor. But the way of the transgressor is hard." This is what you learn by the school of hard knocks. Everything is difficult when you refuse to listen and refuse to be taught. Those who will not listen will discover that experience without counsel and without truth will always take them to the school of hard knocks. The second way to acquire truth, understanding, and wisdom is simple and easy: ask for it. Pray, seek the Lord's blessings, and ask Him specifically for His truth, understanding, and wisdom.

You remember David did that. In Psalm 119:34 he said, "Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law. Yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart." Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law. Do you realize that? There is no way in the world that you can really

understand the totality of God's law. There is no way that you can understand the totality of God's Word unless He enlightens your mind and illuminates your mind concerning what that Word actually means. You cannot keep it unless you understand it.

In Psalm 119:104, David said, "Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way." How do you know what the false way is if you do not know what truth is? It is only through God's Word that we get understanding. In Psalm 119:125, David said, "I am thy servant; give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies." I am Your servant; give me understanding. Then, in Psalm 119:169, David said, "Let my cry come near before thee, O Lord: give me understanding according to thy word."

You remember what our Lord said in Matthew 7:7: "Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." The truth is that most Christians never ask, never seek, and never knock when it comes to truth, understanding, and wisdom. Consequently, we do not have either of them. Look around today at all the immorality going on, even among professing Christians. Look at the adultery and fornication. Proverbs 6:32 says, "But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul." God says that if you do that, you lack understanding. Anytime we sin against God in any way whatsoever, it is a demonstration and manifestation of a lack of understanding. If we really understood that the way of the transgressor is hard, and understood the consequences of our sin, we would not be doing it. That is for sure.

The second way is to ask. The third way to acquire truth, understanding, and wisdom is to be combined with the second way. We are not only to pray and ask and seek for it; we are also to consider the Word of God. David mentioned this: "Through thy precepts I get understanding." Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:7, "Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things." Understanding is God's gift. Truth is God's gift. Wisdom is God's gift. Yet God does not give those gifts willy-nilly. He does not give them to the slothful, the indolent, the lazy, and the unthoughtful people.

The Command to Consider

It is absolutely impossible to go to bed dumb and wake up smart. It is impossible to go to bed ignorant and wake up intelligent. Yet that is what a lot of people think will happen. They think they acquire knowledge through osmosis: “Put the Bible under a pillow, and I’ll get it through osmosis.” No, you will not.

We have to consider. Paul said, “Consider what I say.” The Greek word is noeo. Literally, it means to think upon, to heed, to ponder, to consider, and to perceive with the mind. We would probably use the English word meditate for consider. Meditation is when we think about something, turn it over and over in our minds, and consider it from every possible angle.

Another good illustration is how a cow chews her cud. She eats the grass, lies down, and chews that cud, getting what she thinks are most of the nutrients out of it; then she swallows it. A little while later, she may think she did not get everything out of it, so she regurgitates it, chews it some more, and swallows it. Later, she regurgitates it and chews it again.

That is what we are talking about: “Consider what I say.” We turn it over and over in our minds. Something may come up to distract us, but later we return and say, “You know, I never finished thinking about that. Let me see if there are any more implications or applications.” Then we begin chewing it over and over in our minds. We are meditating upon it.

When the Apostle Paul said to Timothy, “Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things,” consider is a present active imperative. An imperative is a command; active means that we are actively involved in it; and the present means it is being done consistently and continually. Thus, he is commanding Timothy to consistently and constantly consider what he says.

So why is it that some understand and others do not? Here is one answer: not only because God is sovereign and dispenses His gifts as He pleases, but because some use the means God has ordained to acquire truth, knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. Most people do not have these things because they do not pray and ask God for them. They do not seek Him for His gifts.

They do not meditate or consider His word. The problem is this: we are like the Pharisees. You remember what the Pharisees were concerned about? You can read it in Matthew 15 and Mark chapter 7. They came to our Lord and asked Him, "Why do thy disciples transgress the traditions of the elders?"

We all have our traditions, our little ceremonies, and our little rituals that we go through. We tend to value those many times over and above the word of God, just as those Pharisees did. I have been in churches explaining things and have had someone say, "But we've always done it another way." Just because you have done something traditionally one way does not mean that it is a biblical way, the right way, or the correct way.

We do not want to be wrong. We do not want our families or our friends to be wrong. We are often afraid that if we really learn truth and get understanding, it will take us out of our comfort zone. It will change us. It will make us more obedient in areas where we have never been obedient, or perhaps where we do not want to be obedient.

Consequently, we do not really study or pray, because we do not want to be changed. Yet the truth is, you cannot live without change. There is change in all of us—in our lives and in our homes. Things change for you. You cannot live without change, but so many people are uncomfortable with it. We do not want to get out of our comfort zone.

The truth of the matter is this: when Paul said, "Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things," he was not only giving a command; he was telling us a way to get understanding: praying, seeking, and considering what God has said.

David said it like this in Psalm 119 and verse 130: "The entrance of thy word giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple." When we perceive the Word of God, grasping its impact, implications, and applications, that is what gives us understanding. David also said in Psalm 119:144, "The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting: give me understanding, and I shall live." He had said that he who does not understand walks in the ways of death and destruction.

Now David said, “Give me understanding, and I shall live.” Life, real, genuine life, is understanding God and His Word. It is true that we will never understand it perfectly in this life, but we can understand to the degree that God gives us His truth, wisdom, and understanding. We can also understand to the degree that we study, ask, and seek for those things.

Two Things Necessary for Understanding

Applications: Disposition and Desire for Truth

The very first thing you need to receive understanding is a disposition to believe God. God is right. He is always right. Our traditions are wrong. We are wrong. Our family is wrong. Our friends are wrong. Whatever God says is right. We are going to believe Him and put Him first and foremost. The second thing you need is a strong and overwhelming desire for truth. Most people do not want truth.

When I discovered years ago that most everything I was taught in school was a lie or half-truth, and when I discovered that a number of preachers, when I was a young boy who had just been saved and called to preach, had taught me certain things that were wrong—although they themselves were genuine and sincere—it upset me greatly. It made me angry because I had wasted my time and part of my life listening to them and believing what they said, only to find out it was totally, completely wrong. I found out that old black preacher was right when he said that their Bible showed us shed a whole lot of light on them commentaries. That is a fact.

When you stop and think about history, it is the same thing. I know what I was taught, and then I find out that everything I was taught was totally, completely wrong. The victor gets to write the history, and of course they write it to please themselves and praise themselves, when in reality history is something totally different. When I found out I had been lied to, I was not only angry, but it gave me a strong desire to really know the truth in every area.

What I initially thought hurt me turned out to be a big help to me. Years ago, I mentioned this when our church was attacked by the state—absolutely stupid. They wanted to give us a license to drink

water out of our own well. The well had been in the ground over forty years. There had never been a complaint, and no one had ever been sick. Do you know what a license is? You can find it in Bouvier's Law Dictionary and Black's Law Dictionary. Here is the definition.

Permission from a competent authority to do that which otherwise would be unlawful to do. You mean to tell me I have to have your permission to drink water out of my own well? I don't think so. One of my men asked me, “Can they do this?” My answer was, “I don't know, but I'm going to find out.” So that's what got me studying Romans 13. That's when I wrote my first book. That's what got me studying the Constitution and studying law. We need to know the truth in every area.

Anytime we are told a lie, it destroys us. It enslaves us. Our Lord said, “You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free.” Now, here's another truth. Listen carefully. We must learn the truth of Proverbs 21, verse 30: “There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the Lord.” There is no wisdom or understanding or counsel against the Lord.

So let me put it to you very plainly. You can fight against Him all you want, and you can deny His Word all you want. It does not do you one little bit of good. It does not change reality. God is the determiner of reality, not you.

I know wives who fight against their husbands when I say that. The husband is supposed to be the head of the house according to the Word of God. The Bible does say, “If any woman, any wife, wants to learn anything, let her ask her husband.” He is supposed to be the one teaching her. Yet I can tell you wife after wife who fights against her husband, saying, “No, no, no, I'm not gonna listen to you. I'm not gonna believe that. I know how I was raised.” May I tell you something else? Children do the same thing.

They rebel against their parents, and it is the mama and daddy who are responsible to teach children. Many times, parishioners rebel against the pastor. I know that not every pastor is a godly man, and not every preacher has been called to preach. But the truth is that most of us want comfort. We do not want to be disturbed or

pushed out of our comfort zone. Consequently, we would rather fight than submit to the truth.

So, look at two passages. I will quote one final verse, but turn in your Bibles to Jeremiah chapter 3 and verse 15. God is telling His people that when they repent and become obedient, He will give them this promise: “And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.” You can be fed with knowledge and understanding if you will listen to the Word of God expounded, explained, and applied.

Now look at 1 John chapter 5 and verse 20: “And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.” Notice: “And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true.”

What is that understanding? Go back to John chapter 17 and verse 3: “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” What is the understanding? The understanding is that we know God the Father through

Eternal Life is Knowing God Now

Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Redeemer, the Savior, and the Lord. He has come to give us understanding, and we know that we are in Him. Although Christians may be divided into little children or babes, young men, and fathers, every true Christian knows the Father in truth through the Lord Jesus Christ. Whatever your stage in the Christian life—whether babe, young man, or father—you know the Father.

Let me point out one other thing. Jesus Christ said in John 17:3, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." You do not get eternal life when you die; you have it now. It is an intimate relationship with God the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ. If you do not have eternal life now, if you do not have that relationship with God the

Father through the Lord Jesus Christ now, you are not going to get it when you die.

We will enjoy and experience our intimate union and communion with God the Father through Jesus Christ now, in time and history; when we enter eternity, it will be magnified. Who would think that you could ignore God, hate God, despise God and His Word, never pray, never study, never go to church, and never hear preaching, yet suddenly love those things when you die? It does not work like that. If you love those things now, you will enjoy them much more in eternity. If you despise them now, I am afraid you will be disappointed in eternity. Eternal life is a personal, intimate knowledge of God the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Conclusion: Use the Means to Seek Understanding

Why is it that some understand and some do not? Some use the means God has ordained, seek Him, and ask Him for truth, while others do not. Do not fail to pray and seek Him for wisdom, understanding, and truth. Consider His Word. Meditate upon it. Contemplate it. Chew the cud of it over and over in your mind while seeking God for understanding.

What did He say again to Timothy? “Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.” But God does not give that understanding without your consideration.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to thee this day. We thank you for your word and your truth, and we pray, Father, for understanding. Give us, Lord, a heart that seeks thee, that knocks upon thy door, and a heart that asks continually for wisdom, understanding, and truth. Lord, enable us to consider, to meditate, to chew the cud of thy word. Enable us, Heavenly Father, to bring that word to bear in our lives through obedience and its application. We pray that you would make us holy, godly, and obedient. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, in whose name we ask and pray, amen.

Source Notes

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Chapter 2: Why Some do not Understand and Others will Never Understand - Part 2 of 2
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