

Overcoming the Storms of Misunderstanding

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Introduction: We live in a world that gives a low priority to understanding.

- A. When you speak of understanding you speak of the ability to see reality. This is primarily a spiritual issue. **(Prov 1:5-7; 2:2-7)**
 - 1. The foundation of the fear of God causes a man *to want to* see things as they are
 - 2. True understanding is not easy. It requires a spiritual commitment. **(Prov 12:15; 16:2)**
- B. The power of Satan is found in deception. **(Jn 8:44-45; Eph 4:17-19)**
 - 1. Satan knows that lies corrupt the mind to the point you can no longer think!
 - 2. Whatever kind of misunderstand we can think about, it will only be a “sound mind” that can consistently discern and come to understand.
 - 3. Satan is the “ruler of this world” and thus it is rare to find those who put a priority on understanding! **(John 14:30)**
 - 4. Christian, expect to be misunderstood and misrepresented!

I. We must be committed to seek and understand that which is true

- A. Consider the struggles we faced in order to believe in God.
 - 1. Some doubt that the Bible could be God's word because of the different reactions that men have to it. **(Acts 8:24-29)**
 - 2. By design God has given a message that would cause the proud to reject it and the humble to find it. **(1 Cor 1:22-29, Mt 7:13-14)**
 - 3. Jesus plainly stated that God's truth must be carefully pursued. **(Jn 7:17; Mt 13:10-15)**
 - a. Potentially anyone can find the truth of God, but those who do will have to dig deep and not be easily discouraged by the tests God gives them.
 - b. Do you have what it takes? Can you find the truth and keep the truth because you have a love for the truth?
- B. In order to see clearly we must have a pure heart! **(James 3:17)**
 - 1. We must have a commitment to that which is true **(Phil 4:8)**
 - 2. We must have pure motives **(Heb 4:12)**
- C. We must become a people that place principle over relationships. **(John 9:20-22)**
- D. The world has no hope of understanding.
 - 1. Satan blinds them to the gospel. **(2 Cor 4:3-4)**
 - 2. Satan uses these men like dumb cattle. Why did they seek Jesus' death? **(Mk 15:10)**
 - 3. How many get angry over gossip or lies and stop thinking! **(Prov 18:19)**
 - 4. The Romans had a good law but still failed to give justice. **(Acts 25:16)**
 - a. Laws are good but they do not replace morals! Ex. Current markets.

“But when religion loses its voice and the media worship success, when right and wrong become relativised and morality is condemned as “judgmental”, when people lose all sense of honour and shame and there is nothing they won't do if they can get away with it, no regulation will save us. People will outwit the regulators, as they did by the securitisation of risk so no one knew who owed what to whom.” - **Morals: the one thing markets don't make** - No amount of regulation will restore our sense of honour and shame. Economics needs ethics – by Jonathan Sacks

II. How do we respond when we are misunderstood?

- A. Remember, it is not a matter of “if” but of “when” this will happen! **(Jn 15:18-21)**
 - 1. It takes great effort to seek to understand another.
 - 2. Self-centered people will not make the effort.
- B. It is not uncommon to have an enemy without a cause! **(Ps 35:19; 69:4)**
 - 1. How can this be? This is a common tool of Satan!
 - 2. A Christian’s effectiveness can be blocked to one who has listened to gossip!
 - 3. A person can do you wrong and then hate you! **(Prov 26:28)**
- C. Saul became David’s enemy because of envy. **(1 Sam 18:7-9)**
- D. Nothing will test your faith in God as much as dealing with an unreasonable, deceitful, hate-filled person.
 - 1. A hard lesson to learn is that you cannot change another against their will!
 - 2. The Psalms are filled with pleas to God for deliverance from enemies. Let this draw you closer to God. **(Ps 13:2; 25:2, 19; 42:9-11)**
- E. Satan will strongly tempt you to become like your enemy.
 - 1. What does the world say? Some Christians think that once someone ‘fires the first shot’ then all “rules” are off!
 - 2. What did Jesus do with His enemies? **(1 Pt 2:21-24)**
 - a. Jesus responded this way because He trusted God.
 - b. We are greatly challenged to respond in the same way. **(Rom 12:17-21)**
- F. This adversity should cause you to draw closer to God. **(Psa 27:11-14)**
 - 1. The world will scream at you: “Hit him back!”
 - 2. There is a calmness and a strength that come from knowing the battle is God’s and that He will deliver. **(Psa 60:12; 61:2-4; 31:8)**
 - 3. While your enemy frets and plots in his self-defeating bitterness, you can move on and rejoice in the manifold blessings of God. **(Psa 23:4-6)**
 - 4. You also will draw closer to Christians! What a blessing!

III. How can I avoid misunderstanding others?

- A. I must be committed to justice and mercy. **(Zech 7:9; Mic 6:8; Lk 11:42)**
 - 1. I often need to ask the question: “What do I really know?” when I hear a report.
 - 2. I must be committed to “righteous judgment.” **(John 7:24)**
- B. I must walk down the difficult path of meeting difficult people and seeking to find what is true. **(Mt 18:15-17; 5:23-24)**
 - 1. We must do everything we can out of righteousness and fairness. **(Mt 7:12)**
 - 2. What is the common response when you hear a report about another and ask the question: “Have you talked to him about this?”
 - 3. Satan’s most powerful work is done by Christians when they work behind the scenes because they fear the reaction of others.
- C. I will make mercy a foundation of my thinking. **(James 2:13; 3:17)**

Conclusion: The adversities of life should draw us closer to God.