



Understanding God's Word

1 Cor. 13:12

*For now we see through a glass,
darkly;*

A Teaching Outline

Compiled By Dr. Harold Bollinger

Understanding brings light to a darkened world.

1 Cor. 13:11-12

When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

When Paul wrote of "full understanding," he was referring to when we must see Christ face to face. God gives believers spiritual gifts for their lives on earth in order to build up, serve, and strengthen fellow Christians.

The spiritual gifts are for the church. In eternity, we will be made perfect and complete and will be in the very presence of God. We will no longer need the spiritual gifts, so they will come to an end.

Then, we will have a full understanding and appreciation for one another as unique expressions of God's infinite creativity. We will use our differences as a reason to praise God! Based on that perspective, let us treat each other with the same love and unity that we will one day share.

Their minds were open to understanding.

Luke 24:45

Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.

Jesus opened these people's minds to understand the Scriptures. The Holy Spirit still does this in our life today when we study the

God gives wisdom, counsel and understanding.

Job 12:13

"With Him are wisdom and might; To Him belong counsel and understanding.

Job affirmed that no leader has any real wisdom apart from God. No research or report can outweigh God's opinion. No scientific discovery or medical advance takes him by surprise. When we look for guidance for our decisions, we must recognize that God's wisdom is superior to any the world has to offer. Don't let earthly advisers dampen your desire to know God better.

God's lovingkindness is everlasting.

Psalm 136:5

To Him who made the heavens with skill, For His lovingkindness is everlasting;

The repetition made this important lesson sink in. God's love includes aspects of love, kindness, mercy, and faithfulness. We never have to worry that God will run out of love because it flows from a well that will never run dry.

God's understanding is infinite.

Psalm 147:5

Great is our Lord and abundant in strength; His understanding is infinite.

Sometimes we feel as if we don't understand ourselves—what we want, how we feel, what's wrong with us, or what we should do about it. But God's understanding has no limit, and therefore he understands us fully. If you feel troubled and don't understand yourself, remember that God understands you perfectly. Take your mind off yourself and focus on God. Seek to become more and more like him. The more you learn about God and his ways, the better you will understand yourself.

Your ears are open, but you do not fear.

Isaiah 42:20

You have seen many things, but you do not observe them; your ears are open, but none hears.

How could Israel and Judah be God's servants and yet be so blind? How could they be so close to God and see so little? Jesus condemned the religious leaders of his day for the same disregard of God (John 9:39-41). Yet do we not fail in the same way? Sometimes partial blindness—seeing but not understanding, or knowing what is right but not doing it—can be worse than not seeing at all.

The Almighty gives Understanding

Job 32:8

"But it is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty gives them understanding.

"The breath of the Almighty within them, that makes them intelligent." It is not enough to recognize a great truth; it must be lived out each day. Elihu recognized the truth that God was the only source of real wisdom, but he did not use God's wisdom to help Job. While he recognized where wisdom came from, he did not seek to acquire it. Becoming wise is an ongoing, lifelong pursuit. Don't be content just to know about wisdom; make it part of your life.

By Understanding, God established the heavens.

Proverbs 3:19

The LORD by wisdom founded the earth, by understanding He established the heavens.

In our troubled world, living wisely usually results in obvious blessings—but not always. Sometimes sin intervenes, and some blessings must be delayed until Jesus returns to establish his eternal Kingdom. That is why we must "live by believing and not by seeing" (2 Corinthians 5:7). We can be sure that wisdom ultimately leads to blessing.

Some do not understand God's purpose.

Micah 4:12

"But they do not know the thoughts of the LORD, and they do not understand His purpose; For He has gathered them like sheaves to the threshing floor.

When God reveals the future, his purpose goes beyond satisfying our curiosity. He wants us to change our present behavior because of what we know about the future. Forever begins now; and a glimpse of God's plan for his followers should motivate us to serve him, no matter what the rest of the world may do.

The disciples did not understand the miracles of Jesus.

Matthew 16:8

But Jesus, aware of this, said, "You men of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves that you have no bread?"

Many people, like these Jewish leaders, say they want to see a miracle so that they can believe. But Jesus knew that miracles never convince the skeptical.

Proper Understanding is important.

Isaiah 52:15

Thus He will sprinkle many nations, Kings will shut their mouths on account of Him; for what had not been told them they will see, and what they had not heard they will understand.

The people of Israel were foolish to act as if they knew what God was thinking and planning. His knowledge and wisdom are far greater than any human's. We are foolish to try to fit God into our mold—to make his plans and purposes conform to ours. Instead, we must strive to fit into *his* plans

God reveals the Scripture to the simple.

Psalm 119:130

The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.

The writer asked God for discernment. Faith comes alive when we apply Scripture to our daily tasks and concerns. We need discernment so we can understand, and we need the desire to apply Scripture where we need help. The Bible is like medicine: It goes to work only when we apply it to the affected areas. As you read the Bible, be alert for lessons, commands, or examples that you can put into practice.

They did not have spiritual understanding.

Hebrews 13:12-13

Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate.

Lasting changes in conduct begin when the Holy Spirit lives in each person.

Understanding God's Word

Psalm 119:73

Your hands made me and fashioned me; Give me understanding, that I may learn your commandments.

God's Word makes us wise—wiser than our enemies and wiser than any teachers who ignore it. True wisdom goes beyond amassing knowledge; it is *applying* knowledge in a life-changing way. Intelligent or experienced people are not necessarily wise. Wisdom comes from allowing God's teachings to guide us.

An invitation is given to open your heart's door to Jesus

Rev. 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart, please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

New American Standard Bible

Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print