

KEYS TO UNDERSTANDING ONE ANOTHER (Part 2)

Proverbs 2:1-9 *Seven Keys to Understanding One Another* **—Bill Turner**

1. **Yrs Ago We Planned a Trip to Stay in a Cabin in the Sierra Mts for a Week...**
 - a. Lisa's Parents and her sister were with us and we packed the car and drove up...
 - b. But Half way there I Realized I Had Forgotten the Key to the Cabin
 - c. We Drove over an hour and then had to drive over an hour back—
 - d. we got back to the house exhausted and hadn't even left yet!

2. **Sometimes Trying to Understand One Another can be Exhausting...**

Especially if we've lost the keys to understanding.

Last week we looked at WHY we need understanding—This week we look at HOW

I. **Seven Keys to Understanding One Another**

A. TO ACHIEVE UNDERSTANDING WE NEED TO WANT IT

1. **The U.S. Army Survival Manual used to begin ch. 1 with survival skills...**

But Now it Begins ch. 1 w/ the Psychology of Survival—the will to live

- a. Skills to Survive don't mean anything without the Will to Live
- b. It's the Same with Spiritual and Relational Understanding—

2. **you have to want to Understand Before You Can Begin to Understand**

- a) **QUEEN OF SHEBA** Crossed Barren Deserts to Find Understanding from Solomon.

"I went in through the treasury of wisdom and I drew for myself the waters of understanding."

—Queen of Sheba, inscription 10th century B.C.

- a. ***"Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water, But a man of understanding will draw it out."* (Proverbs 20:5)**

2. **First You Need to Want it—And Know Where to Find it...**

- a) True Understanding is From God (**Proverbs 2:1-9**)

3. **Word UNDERSTANDING: Used in English and in Scripture two ways**

- a. 1st: **Intellectual Understanding**—What the Bible Calls Spiritual Understanding
- b. 2nd: **Relational Understanding**—What the Bible Calls, Living with Understanding

Such as the Lord Instructs for Marriage (1 Peter 3:7**)**

B. TO ACHIEVE UNDERSTANDING WE NEED TO LISTEN

1. **We Would Call This ACTIVE listening ... (**James 1:19**)**

- a) Inside your Brain is a Volume Knob Labeled ME and it's usually Pegged to 11!
- b) ACTIVE, or REFLECTIVE Listening Requires Us to Turn Down the Inner Volume Knob Labeled 'ME' Way Down
- c) To Turn off the ME switch and FOCUS on WHAT the other person is saying

2. **Some People Can't Do This—So Everything You Say is Taken Personally Through their ME Filter.**

- a) No Matter what you say—it Filters through their Prism of SELF

- b) So Even if Your NOT Talking About Them—You ARE Talking About them

3. Active or Reflective Listening is so powerful that people Actually feel better after talking, even though you didn't do anything but listen!

- a) Your Choosing to Suspend Critical Judgement and Suspicion
- b) And Choosing to Enter this person's Pain or Concern
- c) And You Are Choosing Agape Love—what is best for this person
- d) And You Are Asking God to Help Them and Help You Understand

4. This Would Be Listening With Your Heart, Not Just Your Head

"Give others a piece of your heart, not a piece of your mind" (Anonymous).

C. TO ACHIEVE UNDERSTANDING WE NEED TO COMMUNICATE

1. The Word Communication

- a) Root: "Commune" means "to share" —> Communicating is sharing
- b) Sharing Hopes and Dreams, sharing fears and doubts, worries and concerns
- c) The Ability to Express our thoughts and feelings with one another

2. Communication Can Get Confusing

- a) FIRST: There is **WHAT I SAY...** What **I MEANT** to Say; and What **I THINK** I SAID...
- b) There is **WHAT YOU HEARD** Me Say... What **You THOUGHT** You Heard... and **WHAT YOU THINK I MEANT!**
- c) Researchers find that the words we speak only make up about 7 percent of the communication process. Real communication is seven percent words, 38 percent tone of voice, and 55 percent non-verbal (facial expression, gesture, posture).

3. Communication Has Levels: At least 5 major levels of communication.

- a) **Level 1: Surface level** cliché conversation—"How's it going? Fine. See you later."
- b) **Level 2: Reporting facts:** "Are you going to pick up the kids? Yes. I'll be home at 5."
- c) **Level 3: Ideas and Judgments-** "What do you think about that? Let me get your opinion on this."
- d) **Level 4: Feelings and Emotions:** is where we go deeper; sharing Feelings and Emotions, and it's here that true growth begins to happen.
- e) **Level 5: Open and Honest Understanding:** goes even beyond sharing emotions to open mutual understanding, and total honesty. Sharing our heart even though it is vulnerable to criticism and rejection. (Roy & Sue Milam)

4. The Bible Calls Us to a Depth of Communication called:

Speaking the Truth in love (Ephesians 4:15–16)

- a) Jesus said: *"You Will Know the Truth and the Truth will Set You Free"*

5. Only When We Can Be Honest With Ourselves, Honest With God,

Honest with the Truth—Can We Be Truly Free!

- a) If We Aren't Embracing the Truth—They We Are Still Blinded in Denial by Lies
—*"We never lie louder than when we lie to ourselves"*

D. TO ACHIEVE UNDERSTANDING WE NEED COURAGE

1. **Communication, Understanding, Encouragement, EVEN TRUTH Can Be Blocked By Our Own Self-Protection Layers**
2. **In the Garden Adam & Eve Had Close Fellowship w/ God and One Another**
 - a) There Were No Barriers, No Walls, No Tension or Distance—No Fear
 - b) There was Love, and Relationship, and Honesty, and Close Companionship
3. **But Sin Against God Immediately Brought Terrible Consequences—
one of Which was a New Emotion: FEAR**

- a) **In Response to this new emotion, They Fled From God and Went into Hiding**

Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, “Where *are* you?” So he said, “I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.” (Genesis 3:9-10)

- b) When God was asking them where are you?
- c) It wasn’t because He didn’t know where they were—

It’s because He wanted THEM to know where they were...

4. **As If Saying—I Know Where You Are—Do YOU Know Where You Are?**

- a) God wanted them to realize where they were in relation to Him
- b) and Step out of Denial into God’s Grace!

Notice Adam’s Response to God...

- c) **I Was Afraid: His Core Emotion**
- d) **Because I Was Naked: His Core Motivation**
- e) **So I Hid: His Core Strategy** *(Larry Crabb; Encouragement, p.30-42)*

5. **Sin Resulted in Rejection > Rejection > in Fear > Fear > in Hiding from God**

- a) **This is Why FEAR is the CONTROLLING EMOTION of The Lost World...**
- b) As a Result of Sin—We All Have Fears, Fear of Rejection, Fear of Condemnation
- c) So When We Try to Communicate or Encourage—we are doing so through the Defensive Layers We Have Covered Ourselves with
- d) Like Think Winter Coats to Protect Us from Fear and Rejection
- e) **GRAPH: FEAR > FEAR — LOVE > FEAR**

6. **WE NEED COURAGE**

- a) **Courage to Be Honest With Ourselves** (*Ecc. 7:20–22; Proverbs 20:9*)
- b) **Courage to Be Honest with God** (*Isaiah 64:6*)
- c) **Courage to Step Out of Denial Into God’s Grace!** (*Isaiah 61:10*)

Blaise Pascal: “We can only know God well when we know our own sin. And those who have known God without knowing their wretchedness have not glorified Him but have glorified themselves.”

7. **We Need Courage to Have FAITH in God** (*Philippians 3:9*)

E. TO ACHIEVE UNDERSTANDING WE NEED EMPATHY

1. **Empathy Means:**

- a) Define: “*to suffer with another person; to suffer or feel pain together.*”
- b) *Empathy has been called “the imaginative transposing of oneself into the thinking, feeling and acting of another person.”*

2. **Empathy is Actually a Form of Self-Sacrifice...**
 - a) Because You Are Allowing Yourself to be Vulnerable to Feel the Pain of Another.
3. **(Romans 12:15) Rejoice w/ those who rejoice, and weep w/ those who weep**
 - a) It's been said, "It is much easier to weep with those who weep than it is to rejoice with those who rejoice." (Barclay)
 - b) In the fourth century, **John Chrysostom** wrote on this passage:
 'It requires more of a high Christian temper to rejoice with them that do rejoice than to weep with them that weep... There is none so hard-hearted as not to weep over him that is in calamity; but the other requires a very noble soul, so as not only to keep from envying, but even to feel pleasure with the person who is in esteem.'
4. **In Other Words: It's more difficult to congratulate others on their success, especially if their success involves disappointment to us, then it is to sympathize with their sorrow and their loss.**
 - a) Saul Couldn't Be Happy For David's Success...
 Because it Took Attention Away From His Own Status (**1 Samuel 18:7-12**)
 - b) Pride, Envy and Fear eventually drove Saul insane
"It was pride that changed angels into demons; It is humility that makes men as angels." (Augustine)

F. TO ACHIEVE UNDERSTANDING WE NEED HUMILITY

1. **EXAMPLE: Grandpa was still trying to clean out gutters at 90 yrs old**
 - a) And it scared Grandma Every Time—so she told my Aunt: Get Rid of that Ladder!
 - b) She gave it to a Neighbor and No One Told Grandpa!
 - c) But one day on his walk he saw his neighbor using his Ladder (w/o permission!)
2. **(Romans 12:16) Humility is Not Looking Down on Yourself...**
 - a) It is the Courage to See Yourself Honestly in a TRUE Proper Perspective
 - b) Not Looking Down on Yourself—or Thinking too Highly of Yourself
 - c) The Ability to look after your own needs—but also the needs of others as well
3. **Christians in Corinth were going to Court Against One Another**
 - a) Probably Greek Christians who tended to go to Law Courts to Resolve Conflicts
 - b) But Notice the Instructions from the Lord through Paul (**1 Corinthians 6:1-8**)
 - c) They were taking their Conflicts Before Worldly Courts and Judges!
 Airing all their dirty laundry to the world!
4. **Paul: Is there not a wise man among you? who can solve these problems?**
5. **A Christian w/ Even the Remotest Hint of the Love of Christ in their heart**
 - a) Will Seek Peace for What is Best for Both Sides—not just self (**Rom 14:19; 15:1**)

"The widest thing in the universe is not space; it is the potential capacity of the human heart. Being made in the image of God, it is capable of almost unlimited extension in all directions. And one of the world's greatest tragedies is that we allow our hearts to shrink until there is room in them for little besides ourselves" (A. W. Tozer).

G. TO ACHIEVE UNDERSTANDING WE NEED TO LOVE

1. Notice How Paul shines love through the Divine PRISM of Inspiration

to show the Component Elements of Agape Love (1 Cor 13:4–8)

- a) Love is PATIENT, love is KIND, It does not ENVY, or BOAST, is Not PROUD. (Etc.)
- b) Love takes the time to listen, love cares how you feel, love seeks what is best

2. Agape Love wants what is best for that person... it cares...

- a) “People don’t Care How Much You Know,
until they Know How Much You Care”
- b) Especially if someone’s feelings are hurt and they have closed up

3. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another (John 13:35)

- a) Love is the Defining Mark of God’s People
- b) The World Notices It—Because the World Doesn’t Have It
- c) It is one of the Fruit of the Spirit—only of Those Who HAVE the Spirit!

H. THERE ARE OTHER KEYS TO HELP US UNDERSTAND ONE ANOTHER

1. Recognizing Our Natural Differences...

- a) Natural Differences of Personalities and Temperaments
- b) Some are Internal Processors—and others External Processors
- c) Some are Task Oriented—Others are People Oriented
- d) Some Want to be Alone—Others Can’t be Alone

2. Recognizing We All Have A Different Past...

- a) Broken Families or Broken Relationships that Never Healed
- b) Rejection, Abandonment, or Divorce
- c) Grief and Loss or the Pain of Trauma

3. Recently it was reported that suicides in Japan exceeded Covid-19 deaths

- a) People are Struggling Without Hope—Hope is the Last Thing We Give Up
- b) Without Knowing the Love of God Demonstrated at the Cross
- c) How Are We Going to Tell People There is Hope! There is Forgiveness!

CONCLUSION:

1. (1 John 5:19–20) God Has Given Us an Understanding, that we may Know Him

- a) **How Will You Help Someone This Week?**
- b) **How Will You Give Someone Hope This Week?**
- c) **How Will You Share the Good News of Grace This Week?**

(some points adapted from “To Understand Each Other” by Paul Tournier, 1967)