

Understanding

Proverbs 2:3-5 — For if you cry for discernment, lift your voice for understanding, if you seek her as silver and search for her as hidden treasure then you will discover the knowledge of YHWH... Understanding seems to be a rather distant term as if it is something that a wise sage will sit and meditate for in order to gain great insight into the universe. But actually it is the means by which a man will be able to function in this life in peace.

It is easy to react to people who are merely operating in their natural way. But if you *understand* the way people are you will have mercy upon them and not react. This is really the only way you can respond to men like our Master did. For He understood men (Jn 2:23-25). If you just go by what they say or what they do they will only make you angry, or frustrated, or disgusted, or offended.

In Isaiah 11:3 it is speaking of a leader not making his judgements by just what he sees or hears. But every man must be this way in his dealings with his brother. He must *understand* that there is much more behind a man's words and actions. He must look deeper to see his motive, his heart, why the man said it or did it, taking on the mind of Messiah.

If we *seek* for understanding we will be able to see beyond what is visible. We will be able to stop ourselves from becoming angry by reacting to words that seemed obviously intended to get to us, provoke us. If we understand the way people are we will not take personal offense at their words. Without understanding we function more on the level of mere animals. One barks, the other barks back. This is what humanity has been reduced to through the Fall. The man on the street is one who reacts on the basest level to his fellowman. He has no understanding (Pr 17:4; 2 Cor 10:12).

We must cry out for understanding in order for peace to reign in our midst. A peacemaker is a man of understanding. He will be called a *son*.

Proverbs 2 stresses the importance of putting all our attention toward seeking for understanding. We must (verse 2) "incline our heart for understanding," (verses 3-4) "seeking after it as if it were the most precious treasure." And there is a promise that we will come to know our God if we will do this (verse 5). We will actually know His mind, for we will *understand* (Pr 18:4; 20:5).

Understanding is beyond the superficial realm where most people's minds habitually dwell. We will not just gain understanding by sitting back passively and waiting for it.