

God's Plan of Salvation:

1. Hear - Romans 10:17
2. Believe - Mark 16:16
3. Repent - Acts 2:38
4. Confess - Romans 10:10
5. Be baptized - Acts 22:16
6. Live faithfully - Revelation 2:10

Announcements:

Sick: Mr. Brown, Mrs. Carswell, Mr. Dowling, Mr. Hadley, Ms. Donna Law, Ms. Kim (Ashley Law's mother), Lamar Mathis, Mr. and Mrs. Pete Newsome, Mrs. Owens, Ms. Ward, Mr. Winns.

If you would be interested in any of the following ways to study the Bible, feel free to let us know:

- Home Bible Study - We will come into your home or other place you feel comfortable and study the Bible with you. Bible questions are welcome in these studies and we will seek to give a Bible answer.
- Correspondence courses - We will be glad to mail you a correspondence lesson that you can fill out and mail back to us and we will send you the next lesson.
- Call us with your Bible question - #503-707-6014.
- Visit our website: www.oakgrovechurchofchristjenningsflorida.com
- Come and visit - We always strive to have good, practical Bible instruction at each of our assemblies.

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A Lack of Understanding

By Derek Long

When two individuals communicate, there are times where one or the other fails to accurately understand what the other is saying. The goal of communication is in part to express thoughts so the other person is capable of understanding what has been said. God has spoken to us today through His Son (Hebrews 1:1-2). God's expectation is for us to understand what His will is (Ephesians 5:17). When a person speaks to another person, misunderstandings can exist because the speaker does not clearly state what he intends to say. When God speaks, He clearly communicates what He intends to say. 1 Corinthians 14:33 says, "For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints" (NKJV). When you or I fail to understand the word of God, the fault does not lie with God but rather lies with us. People may fail to understand God's word as they ought for a variety of reasons. Here are a few reasons why there is at times a lack of understanding of God's word.

1. People fail to understand God's word at times because they are ignorant of what the Bible says. There exists in this world people who have never heard or been taught the truth and thus lack understanding of God's word. It is the re-

sponsibility of such individuals to “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15, KJV). Such individuals need to “Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all” (1 Timothy 4:15, KJV). Remember God will hold people accountable for being ignorant of His will and thus we must be diligent to study His word (Acts 3:17-19; Luke 12:48).

2. People fail to understand God’s word because although they might be exposed to it often they have failed to be receptive to the truths it teaches. Jesus spoke to people in parables and they failed to understand Him because their attitude toward the truth was not what it ought to be (Matthew 13:10-17). A desire to do God’s will and apply it to our own lives will help us in understanding the truth (John 7:17; Psalm 119:100). It is amazing how often the New Testament quotes Isaiah 6:9-10 and applies it to people in the first century. The problem of people not seeing God’s word because their heart is dull is something which has existed throughout time and still exists today. When we are teaching someone the word of God and they say they do not understand, realize the problem may not be with us and certainly is not with the word of God. Oftentimes the problem may be within the person who is hearing the word of God. God’s word can be presented by a person who is not skilled in speaking and be understood if the listener is wanting to do God’s will. God’s word can be presented by the best speaker and not be understood if the listener is not wanting to do God’s will.

3. People may act like they don’t understand God’s word because it does not align with what they already want to believe about a subject. Elisha gave Naaman some very simple instructions about how to be healed of his leprosy. Naaman was instructed, “Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean” (2 Kings 5:10, NKJV). Naaman initially responded to this command from God the same way some people today respond to some of God’s commandments by essentially saying that doesn’t make sense to me. Notice his response in verses 11-12, “Indeed, I said to myself, ‘He will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leprosy.’ Are not the Abanah and the Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?” (NKJV). We must be careful not to allow our preconceived ideas keep us from understanding what God’s word teaches us is the truth.

When it comes down to it, many people do not understand the word of God and end up deceived because they do not love the truth. 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 says, “The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (NKJV). Will we be unwise or will we understand what the will of the Lord is (Ephesians 5:17)?