

## The Discerning Researcher | The Discipleship Spiral, Part 3

**I. The Nature of Understanding**

- **Understanding can be good.** Proverbs 30:12, 3:5, 12:15, 21:2; Judges 17:6, 21:25
  - Though knowledge of the truth is always good, understanding can be good or bad.
  - Though understanding does involve being acquainted with additional facts that support and expand on the original fact, there is also a level of interpretation to understanding.
  - There's a personal aspect to understanding in that interpretation and synthesis are part of the process of understanding.
- **Understanding is power.** Proverbs 3:19, 24:3, 28:11, 20:5
  - If knowledge is power, you'd better believe that understanding that knowledge is even more power.
  - Understanding doesn't just help us better comprehend truth, it helps us reveal things in people that they – perhaps – didn't even know were there.
- **Understanding can save.** Proverbs 28:2, 19:8, 1:5, 11:12, 17:27, 15:21, 16:21-22
  - The more we understand about God, His Word, and ourselves, the better our chances will be that we won't fall into the destruction of sin.
  - Understanding can save us from the relational carnage of sinfully tearing people down with our words.
  - If you want to avoid the pitfalls of life, share God's understanding of life.
- **Understanding is valuable.** Proverbs 3:13, 16:4, 16:16, 23:23, 14:33, 17:24
  - Whether it will show up on a test or not, we need to strive to understand the knowledge God gives us.
  - Understanding is good when it agrees with God. Understanding is powerful, it can save us from all sorts of destruction, and it's valuable.

**II. The Source of Understanding**

- Proverbs 21:30, 8:14, 2:6
- There is no knowledge, understanding, or application of that knowledge and understanding that can ever be used against God because all true knowledge, wisdom, and understanding belong to God.
- God is the source of understanding. We will never find true understanding outside of Him.
  - The world is impotent to help us understand the cure for racism. No earthly politician can give us a better understanding of government than God can. The world does not understand identity better than the God Who created us.
  - Friendship, love, emotions, worship, parenting, shame, fear, anger . . . the world is completely impotent to help us understand these concepts correctly. Even our own sinful heart will misunderstand these realities better than it will understand them.
- Do you really grasp the fact that true understanding of any subject can only be had as we look at it through the lens of the Scriptures?

**III. The Rejection of Understanding**

- Proverbs 18:2
- The fool doesn't care to understand the truth about an issue. They're too busy leaning on their own understanding and trying to convince everyone else that their understanding is right.

- Proverbs 10:13, 13:15, 14:29, 28:16, 21:16, 10:21
- If we don't understand how to safely use a firearm, we're increasing our risk of injury and death. If your kids don't understand how to safely live this life in the will of God, they are greatly increasing their risk of spiritual injury and death.

#### IV. How to Acquire Understanding

- **We need to want understanding.** Proverbs 7:4, 10:23
  - We need to want understanding as much as we want to spend time with a dear friend.
  - For a man of understanding, using that understanding in a wise way is as enjoyable as playing a sport.
- **We need to work for understanding.** Proverbs 2:2-11, 4:1, 5, 7, 5:1, 8:1
  - True attention takes work.
  - We must learn to incline their minds to learning knowledge and understanding.
- **We need to embrace discipline.** Proverbs 15:32, 17:10, 19:25
  - If you truly value understanding, you're going to engage with discipline.
  - Discipline is the four-stage process of teaching, reproof, correcting, and training. But the word "discipline" is often used specifically for the reproofing step.
  - Reproof is the step where someone has to inform us that we're wrong. We were believing a lie, we were leaning on our own understanding, we were interpreting the situation incorrectly. And because we did wrong there are consequences in our lives.
  - Well, when we learn from these interactions, we will increase in understanding.
  - You probably don't like being reproofed. You may even hate being told you're wrong. And you definitely don't like receiving the consequences for your sin. But there is hope for every disciple of Christ to learn the value of reproof. All throughout the Bible God illustrates the blessed rewards of those who value reproof.
  - We must all learn to appreciate reproof and learn to grow in our understanding as we're reproofed.