

When You are Misunderstood

Ray Stedman

I. Introduction. Text: I Corinthians 2:12-2:4.

II. Steps to clearing up misunderstanding.

A. One must make sure he has a clear conscience first.

B. One must try to clear up the misunderstanding so that believers can have a kind of mutual pride in each other.

1. Misunderstandings usually do not disappear by themselves.

2. Christians must not let things lie unsettled. (Matthew 18)

3. Some were upset that Paul had a change of plans and Paul agrees that the Christian should not be fickle with his plans even though he was not guilty.

III. If the Christian says yes, he should intend to fulfill it.

A. A yes and no statement are contrary to the nature of God and therefore should be contrary to the Christian.

B. The promises of God are a sure yes--He does not come to reject but to restore.

C. The believer begins to experience God's promises when he says yes to God.

IV. The Spirit of God makes a promise alive to us then helps us to obey.

V. The Spirit of God helped change his plans.

A. He did not come because he wanted to spare them--he wanted to preserve their freedom to act only as the Lord wanted them to act and not only as Paul wanted them to act.

1. Paul demonstrates the importance of spiritual leadership.

2. He wanted the church to exercise the freedom they had in Christ.

3. It is a widespread misconception that leaders in the church are bosses--they are not. (I Peter 5)

4. God is able to transform people into servants that are satisfactory.

B. The Spirit led Paul to see that he had already caused enough pain and that visiting would only add more.

Application questions:

1. What are the steps to clearing up a misunderstanding? Why are these important?

2. When have you been hurt by someone who was fickle with their commitment? How does following through with answers make for a positive Christian witness?

3. What was so remarkable about Paul's leadership in contrast to the world's leadership? Do you see this often in the church today? Explain.
