

What Is the Difference Between Revelation and Understanding?

"I got a word from the Lord, but I don't understand it." "I'm feeling called in this direction, but I'm waiting for full understanding before I act on it."

These and statements like them are common during that all-too-familiar waiting time between a word being given and its fulfillment. We hold on to words and wait for the pieces we don't see—the gaps in our understanding—to become visible.

While this comes from a great place (and we certainly don't want to act rashly and without prayerful consideration), sometimes in our wait *for* understanding we *miss* understanding. We treat understanding and revelation like they are one and the same, but there's a distinct difference between the two: experience.

Revelations are wonderful gifts from the Lord. They are those instantaneous "Aha!" moments in which God downloads into our hearts and minds an understanding or vision that we could not have possibly arrived at on our own. While these revelations happened in the Bible, they weren't the only way God chose to communicate. In fact, far more often we see God use life experiences. He had prophets live their prophetic words. Jesus taught in parables. God used dreams with symbols that related to things they understood in the natural. God hasn't changed.

What if I told you that sometimes God needs us to move with Him *in order to gain understanding* instead of *waiting on understanding in order to move*? As a parent, I find myself parroting the phrase I heard from my parents growing up, "When you're a parent, you'll understand." While this was the last thing my teenage self wanted to hear, I recognize from the

other side that it was truth. There are certain elements of wisdom and understanding that *only* experience can impart. So what wisdom are we missing by remaining stuck? What understanding is there to gain from recognizing what God is teaching us right now through our experiences?

The only way to know God's answers to those questions is to ask Him. Think of the understanding that you're waiting to receive from the Lord. Ask Him, "What are You teaching me through what I am experiencing?"

Also ask, "In what areas do You need me to move forward in faith in order for me to gain understanding?" After all, faith is the substance of what's hoped for and *not yet seen*. If understanding comes by experience, then something not yet seen is also not yet experienced. Let us be willing to be led by the Lord by faith, even when our understanding is not yet complete.

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