

What to do when People Misunderstand Your Intentions

Written by admin

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“Do not hurry yourself in your spirit to become offended, for the taking of offense is what rests in the bosom of the stupid ones.” Ecclesiastes 7:9 (Online Bible)

There are times when you aim to help others and people impute ulterior motives. This can be very distressing. In 1 Chronicles 19:1-19 we read that when Nahush the King of the Ammonites died, David decided to reciprocate the kindness he had shown him and sent a delegation to his son Hanun to convey his condolences. However Hanun listened to his advisers who told him that David's envoys had come to explore and spy out the country so that they could overthrow it. *“So Hanun seized David's envoys, shaved them, cut off their garments at the buttocks, and sent them away”.*(verse 4). As a result of this misunderstanding war was declared and more than fifty seven thousand people died.

Many relationships break because of misunderstandings: family, marriages, friendships and alliances.

When others misunderstand, we should seek for a chance to explain and make amends. However, this is not always possible. You cannot force people to understand you. If they put

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themselves in your place they might understand, but many people are led by their preconceived notions about you and selfish regard for themselves. Sometimes they have hidden motives and were looking for an excuse to blame you. Their experiences may also not have opened them up to understand or sympathize with your position.

Do not be unduly worried that you are misunderstood. Do your best. It is only important that God understands. Jesus' message is plain and simple yet many people misunderstand it. If they listen with a discerning heart instead of closed minds, they will understand it but it is their choice, Jesus does not force. *"When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly."*

When others misunderstand you, always leave a door open so that people can explain their side of the story if they feel inclined to do so. Sometimes people are hot tempered and judge hastily. In Joshua 22:10-34 we read that some tribes of Israel built an imposing altar which others mistook for an idol and wanted to cause war with them, lest God's curse fall on them all. However they sought for an explanation first and were pleased that the building was only a monument so that future generations could be reminded of God's goodness. War was averted.

When you are misunderstood remember also that you are not perfect and may have misunderstood others many times, and deemed them evil when they had only good intentions towards you.

God calls us to forgive others without any reservations. This is also for our own good because bitterness destroys the soul.

"People are often unreasonable and self-centered. Forgive them anyway. If you are kind, people may accuse you of ulterior motives. Be kind anyway. If you are honest, people may cheat you. Be honest anyway. If you find happiness, people may be jealous. Be happy anyway. The good you do today may be forgotten tomorrow. Do good anyway. Give the world the best you have and it may never be enough. Give your best anyway. For you see, in the end, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway."

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Mother Teresa
