

GOD'S THOUGHTS VERSUS MAN'S

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Isaiah 55:6-9 says, "*Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.*" This passage declares both the superiority of God's thoughts and ways, as well as man's responsibility to turn from his own thoughts and ways to God's.

God's unsearchable thoughts

Man is certainly incapable of searching or understanding the depths of God's thoughts and His wisdom. Psalm 40:5 says, "Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, *and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.*" And Psalm 92:5-6 declares, "O Lord, how great are thy works! and *thy thoughts are very deep.* A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this. Isaiah 40:13-14 asks, "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counselor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?" Isaiah 40:28 states that "*there is no searching of his understanding.*" In the New Testament, Romans 11:33-36 says, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! *how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!* For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." It is the Holy Spirit that "searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (1 Cor 2:10-11).

Conforming our thoughts and ways to God's

Yet, according to Isaiah 55:6-9, man *is* able and also is *duty bound* to turn away from his own thoughts and ways and seek after God's thoughts and ways. The whole purpose of man is to become like God (Matt 5:43-48; 10:25; 16:24; Luke 6:40; John 13:15; 2 Cor 3:18; Eph 3:19; 4:11-13; Php 2:5; Col 1:27-29; 1 Pet 1:15-16; 2:21; 4:1), which comes by keeping His commandments (Eccl 12:13; 2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:3-4; 1 John 2:5). We

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can be *like* God, though never to an equal degree. In Isaiah 55:6-9, God is speaking to the *wicked*, calling upon them to seek the Lord and call upon Him. God tells the *wicked* (Isa 55:6-7) that *their* thoughts are not His thoughts, nor their ways His ways (Isa 55:8). They are just not the same. The degree of difference between the thoughts and ways of God versus that of the wicked is as vast as the height of the heavens above the earth (Isa 55:9). The simple fact is that man by his wisdom cannot know God. 1 Corinthians 1:19-21 says, "For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God *the world by wisdom knew not God*, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." And 1 Corinthians 2:12-14 likewise says, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." The world by its own wisdom does not know God (1 Cor 1:21), and cannot know spiritual things (1 Cor 2:14). Jeremiah 10:23 famously says, "*O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walks to direct his steps.*" Though man tries to do what is right in his own eyes (Deut 12:8; Judg 17:6; 21:25; Prov 21:2), man does not have the right, nor the ability to guide himself spiritually. God says, "*The way of a fool is right in his own eyes*" (Prov 12:15), because what *seems* right to a man will lead him to spiritual death (Prov 14:12; 16:25). That is why God says, "let the wicked forsake *his* way, and the unrighteous man *his* thoughts" (Isa 55:7). God calls man to put away his own thoughts, wisdom, and ways, and instead to seek after God's thoughts and ways. Similarly, Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "*Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*" God says, "*Cease from thine own wisdom*" (Prov 23:4). Only God has the right, the authority, the wisdom, and the ability to establish the way that man should walk in. Therefore, our thoughts and ways need to be like His (2 Cor 10:3-5).