

The Thoughts of God #1 (Go To Meeting)

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We're going to study about the thoughts of God. We're going to start by going to 2 Cor. 10, because there's an instruction here. It's that commandment for all of us of what we are to do with our thoughts and really is what is going on right now; it's going on all the time in our lives.

I want for us to think about not only the thoughts of God, which we'll get to, **but first think about our thoughts and what is the instruction of God for us regarding our thoughts!**

He has wonderful things in His Word regarding our thoughts, regarding the mind. Also, we're going to see what He says about His thoughts. We're going to see a lot of different things about what we are to seek and how we are to seek that and how we are to do these things.

2-Corinthians 10:4—the Apostle Paul says: "For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to *the* overthrowing of strongholds."

This is very important because these strongholds—these things that are in our mind—have to have to be overthrown. These weapons of our warfare are not carnal. If they're not carnal, they're spiritual, and we're going to see what we are to do.

Verse 5: "Casting down *vain* imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ."

It's very important that we stop and think about these couple of verses:

Again, v 5: "**Casting down vain imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God...**"

That goes very close together with the first of the Ten Commandments: *You shall not have any other gods before Me!* That's what God says. Obviously, first He identifies Himself: *'I am the Lord your God Who took you out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage.'* Then it says, *'You shall have no other gods before Me.'*

Here (in 2-Cor. 10) it's talking about those other gods before Him.

- those vain imaginations
- those high things that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God
- those things that exalt themselves in our mind

- those things that are there that sometimes is very hard for us to detect and to understand

*Be aware that those things are exalting themselves! Sometimes it is **against the knowledge of God!** It could be actively or passively.*

- **actively** with things that are directly against the Word of God
- **passively** in the things that are coming against the knowledge of God because they're just consuming our thoughts

They might not be bad things; they might be good things, those thoughts might be okay. This one is *specifically* talking about those that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God. Those are obviously direct. *Those are bad!*

But these vain imaginations; vain just means *empty*, nothing. We have to **overthrow these strongholds** by casting down those vain imaginations that always come into our thoughts. We're going to see how much that is closely linked together with the commandments of God.

Because in the spirit of the Law we're going to see that God wants that obedience in the spirit of the Law, **not only in the letter!**

That's why these vain imaginations are just thoughts that are:

- vain
- empty
- don't profit anything

We're going to see **that perspective that God shares with us of how He would want for us to live and to do!** We are to cast down these vain imaginations; They're empty thoughts, empty things, and also the high things that exalt themselves. There we have :

- the indirect, those vain imaginations
- the direct things that come right against the knowledge of God

It's not just knowledge for knowledge's sake. It's talking about **knowing** God. **IF** we're not meditating in His Word, we're not knowing God as much as we probably could. **The most exciting thing in this world is to get to know God!** These other things, these high things exalt themselves, **exalt itself against the knowledge of God!** Why? *Because:*

- they take our thoughts
- they take us to start thinking about those things

- they can become idols in our mind
- they can be the things that we're pursuing, where we're putting:
 - ✓ our thoughts
 - ✓ our heart
 - ✓ our time
 - ✓ our energy
 - ✓ our efforts

We have to cast down both the vain imaginations and those high things! We have to focus on the knowledge of God, which is the key to bring into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ.

- we can't do this by ourselves
- we have to have that knowledge of God
- we have to be led by God's Spirit to understand how to bring into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ

We're going to see that the key is really ***to do exactly as Jesus did***, which is the obedience of Christ, of what Christ showed:

- He showed in his life
- He did it
- He is our model
- He is exactly not only our coming King and Savior, but He's also our role model

What He did and how He walked ***is how we are to be, how we are to walk!***

Verse 6 tells us a little bit of the Plan of God: "And having **a readiness to avenge all disobedience**, whenever your obedience has been fulfilled"—which is talking about **our obedience being fulfilled!**

It talks about when we're at the end of our race, ***WHEN*** we have finished that line in that race, ***THEN*** we will have a readiness to avenge all disobedience, because let's remember that's what's going to happen.

In this period after Pentecost, after the first resurrection, is going to be the vials of the wrath of God. Then Trumpets is the return of Christ with His saints, specifically it's talking about these verses, with this ***readiness to avenge all disobedience!***

We're talking about those disobedient people that rebel willingly and knowingly against God, the elites and those who destroy the earth. Those are the ones who are going to be avenged. The vengeance is going to come upon them.

But this tells us a little bit about the Plan of God, having a readiness to avenge all disobedience. This ***fulfilled obedience has a lot to do with our thoughts, and to bring into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ!***

Let's go to Gen. 6 because we're going to be talking about the thoughts of God, But first, we have read the instruction of bringing every thought captive.

We're going to keep this in the back of our heads because what we're going to learn is how to do this. What does this mean? But before we get there, we're going to go to Gen. 6 because we have to know and understand, or remember, we've been told this before, that God judges the thoughts.

Genesis 6:5 *this is where it's talking about Noah*: "And the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, **and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.**"

This says *mankind*, this is everybody. This is to a level that is to the maximum. That's why it says *every* imagination. It doesn't say some, it doesn't say most. It says "...**every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.**" So this is pervasive. This is everywhere, in everything. ***Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart, of mankind, of everybody!***

Verse 6: "And the LORD repented that He had made man on the earth, and He *was* grieved in His heart"—***because God did not create us with that intent or with that purpose***, that there would be evil, or that it would be evil continually.

I mean, He didn't even intend for us to have evil at all, if Adam and Eve would have chosen of the Tree of Life instead of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

But God also did not expect that he would come to this point, that "...**every imagination—everything that occurs to man—of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.**"

Verse 6: "And the LORD repented that He had made man on the earth, and He *was* grieved in His heart. And the LORD said, 'I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the crawling thing, and the fowl of the air; for I repent that I have made them'" (vs 6-7). ***Those are very, very strong words!***

Verse 8: "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD."

We know what happened. But I would like for us to think about that He didn't only say...

He did say it in the beginning of v 5: "**And the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth...**"

But it wasn't just the wickedness of man. He was then pointing at the root: "...**and every**

imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” *That’s why the wickedness was great!*

Because of *the imagination of the thoughts of the heart, because that’s where sin begins!* That every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil.

God judges not only the actions, like it says the wickedness, but also the thoughts. And **He sees**

- the thoughts
- where we’re going
- what we’re thinking

We’re going to see something very important.

Psa. 10 is talking about the evil, the evil people, the evil ones, and what happens. This is a Psalm where the Psalmist is saying, is asking the question to God:

- Why are you so far?
- Why are all these things happening?
- Why are the proud pursuing the poor and oppressing them?

We could say that today about the things that are going on!

Psalm 10:3—*says what’s happening:* “For the wicked **boasts of his heart’s desire, and blesses the covetous** but despises the LORD.”

That’s exactly what we saw in 2-Cor. 10. It boasts of the heart’s desire, which is vanity. Those are those high things that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God!

“...**blesses the covetous...**” (v 3)—*in direct opposition to the commandments of God!* Commandment #10, *they shall not covet!*

“...**but despises the LORD**” (v 3). *That’s how we can see that it exalts himself!*

2-Corinthians 10:5—*those are:* “...high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God...”

Psalm 10:3: “...and blesses the covetous but despises the LORD” (v 3).

That’s what happens if you covet and you have a lot of things and you’re coveting and you are with a club of people that that’s what they’re doing, just showing their wealth and all of this. That’s what happens! That’s the wicked!

“...**boasts of his heart’s desire, and blesses the covetous...**” (v 3).

- Oh, that’s great!
- You’ve done well for yourself

- You’re like me!
- We can hang out!

But what is it?

- that’s coveting
- that’s going against God
- that’s going against the knowledge of God

“...**but despises the LORD**” (v 3).

Knowingly, to a degree, perhaps, depending on who it is and what’s going on. We do not know that because:

- we do not know the heart
- we do not know the thoughts

but God does!

Verse 4: “**Through the pride of his countenance the wicked will not seek God...**”

- they will not seek Him
- they’re despising Him

“**Through the pride...they will not seek God...**”—*because that pride is:*

- I have everything
- I know everything
- I’m self-sufficient.

There are little sayings that are very true that says:

1. everybody’s a communist until they get rich
2. everybody is a feminist until they get married
3. everybody’s an atheist until the plane starts to fall down

And that’s true!

But when through the pride of that countenance and in all these hard desires are fulfilled, the wicked will not seek God ***until the plane starts to fall down!***

“...**in all his thoughts there is no place for God**” (v 4). *I think we have to ask ourselves:*

- In how many of our thoughts is there a place for God?
- Are we thinking about God?
- Are we coming to that knowledge of God?
- How many?

Because this is talking about the wicked, “...in all his thoughts...”

For them, He doesn’t exist in their mind. They deny Him. Many of them are atheists or agnostics! But others, even though they may believe there is a God or they may even be part of a religious group. But:

- How many of their thoughts are in God?

- How many of our thoughts have a place for God?

This is important that we think about this, because there are some things that are very, very important for us to remember when it comes to our thoughts and to be self-aware of our thoughts.

- Where do our thoughts automatically go?
 - ✓ when we're not watching
 - ✓ when we're not purposely focused on something
 - ✓ when we're doing something
- Where do our thoughts go?

Because the definition of the wicked is that in all their thoughts:

Verse 4: "Through the pride of his countenance... [they will not seek God and in all their thoughts] ...there is no place for God."

I think it's for each one of us to just think about that.

- How many of our thoughts is there a place for God?
- How much are we meditating on God?
- How much are we praying?
- How much are we thinking about His Word and what He says?

Let us be guided by the Holy Spirit. Letting God guide us through his Holy Spirit.

Jer. 6—because we're going to see something again that goes with what we read in Gen. 6 about God judging the thoughts. He doesn't only judge the actions; He also judges the thoughts.

This is very important. When we're thinking about our thoughts and the vain thoughts, there are vain imaginations that come upon. Because that's the warfare that we're fighting, as Apostle Paul says.

Because there are these high exalted things that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God, *we have to be aware that God actually is judging those thoughts, not just our actions!*

Jeremiah 6:19: "Hear, O earth, behold, I will bring evil on this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, **because they have not hearkened to My words, nor to My Law, but have rejected it.**"

So, our thoughts bear fruit, because what we're thinking is what we speak or what we do. There's the fruit of our thoughts.

God is saying that He's going to bring evil on these people, because they have not hearkened to His words. That is the opposite end of the spectrum. We can hearken to His Words and have those words in our thoughts. That is what God really wants. He

wants for us to have His Words and His Law in our thoughts. It's part of the New Covenant that He will describe in our minds and in our hearts.

Verse 20: "To what purpose does frankincense come to Me from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country? Your burnt offerings *are* not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet to Me."

I would like for us to also think about this in the context of our lives now. That we're fighting this warfare. We're going up against these strongholds and these vain imaginations and everything that exalts itself. Those high things that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God. *All of that!*

Knowing that God judges the thoughts, and what He says here, "...Your burnt offerings *are* not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet to Me." ***This also can be a warning for us today!***

- yes, we have to keep the laws of God
- yes, we have to keep the Sabbath
- yes, we have to keep the Feast Days of God and the Holy Days and the offerings

Everything that He has commanded as we understand it! *We have to!*

But the thoughts! Where are our thoughts? Because if we reject His Words or His Law. Or if it's very, very little. Just enough that we're not the wicked, ***because with the wicked there's no thought for God!***

But how much *are we* thinking about God? It is important for us to meditate and to remember, because the frankincense and the sweet cane and all the burnt offerings, God is telling them ***because they reject My Law, they reject My Word!*** Those things are not acceptable.

But with us, we are to worship in Spirit and in Truth, and our offerings are those prayers; our frankincense and all of that. It says that they are the prayers of the saints that are before the Throne of God.

But also the obedience, if it's detached from our thoughts, How acceptable is it to God if it's just outside, if it's only in the letter? ***This should challenge us to think more:***

- about God
- about His Word
- about His Law

God knows that our thoughts by ourselves, human nature is evil. Our thoughts are evil.

This is an amazing thing when we think about how Jesus walked and talked, doing His

ministry and the things that He did. Can you imagine if somebody had the power to know your thoughts?

But Jesus did. He was with the people and He let them know. He actually spoke about the things that they were saying and thinking. Not even saying, the things that they were *thinking!* We're going to see that our thoughts are also evil, They tend toward evil.

Matthew 9:1: "And after going into the ship, He passed over and came to His own city. And behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a stretcher. Then Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the paralytic, 'Be of good courage, child; your sins have been forgiven you'" (vs 1-2).

I love this story because it's amazing when He says that. We know He was the Son of God and He had authority to forgive sins. He actually said that to the paralytic.

To see the reaction and for them to understand something about the thoughts and to understand something about the reality of Jesus Christ.

We have to think about the reality of Jesus Christ in our lives. He's our Lord and Savior. There's nobody more amazing than Him and God the Father. There's nobody that has more intelligence.

Sometimes you meet some people and they're very intelligent. You're think: WOW, how did they come up with this? Or I love the way they think: the strategy and how they frame it. Or very eloquent people on YouTube or whatever. It is amazing! You can get enveloped in what they're saying and the charisma and all of these things.

Well, Jesus Christ is so much more than all of them combined. I mean, He created them; He created all of us.

When you think about how awesome Jesus Christ is and what He came and did, it just blows your mind.

Verse 3: "And immediately some of the scribes said within themselves, 'This man blasphemes.'" *They didn't say it aloud.*

In v 4 He makes it very clear. His disciples knew. They knew because they heard the reaction. Obviously they were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write these things.

Verse 4: "But Jesus, perceiving their thoughts, said, 'Why are you thinking evil in your hearts?'"

They were thinking evil and Jesus knew it, and He could know it right away, which none of us can do.

Verse 5: "For which is easier to say, 'Your sins have been forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk?'"

It's just an amazing thing because the scribes were there, and they set themselves up as the authority—the scribes, the Pharisees and the Sanhedrin, 'Oh, you're guilty'—like the judgment seat of Moses.

Verse 5: "For which is easier to say, 'Your sins have been forgiven you'..."—*because that's what they did!* They set themselves up as the authority. And they almost, maybe they didn't come to this to: "...Your sins have been forgiven you'..." But they declared the righteous and the wicked—the one that was right and the one that was wrong—in matters of judgment.

Verse 5: "For which is easier to say, 'Your sins have been forgiven you,' **or to say,** 'Arise and walk?'" *It's a trick question:*

- **What is it to say?**
- **What's easier to do?**
 - ✓ arise
 - or*
 - ✓ arise and walk

Because there is a proof; what He said in Deuteronomy: If there's a false prophet and he comes, and he tells you a prodigy or something, if it doesn't come to pass, he's a false prophet. You shall not be afraid of him; he must be put to death.

Here Jesus is saying, "...Arise and walk?'" *Meaning, If what you see is what is about to happen, if it happens you have no excuse!*

Verse 6: "But I speak these words so that you may understand... [that's in the mind] ...that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins." *That is an amazing thing!*

Basically He's saying, 'By this smaller little thing, physically, I'm going to show you the bigger thing, the authority that I do have.'

"...Then He said to the paralytic, 'Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.' And he arose and went away to his house" (vs 6-7).

It's something incredible when you think about it. Like nothing. "he arose and went away to his house" I mean, the miracle that Jesus had just performed in their eyes, that He said to the paralytic first, 'Your sins have been forgiven.' That is part of the healing process, being forgiven and then the

healing. But it says that he arose and went to his house.

Verse 8: “Now, when the multitudes saw *it*, they were amazed and glorified God, Who had given such authority to men.” ***Because they didn’t understand that he was the very Son of God, The Messiah that was to come!***

Imagine if you were there. What would you have done if you’ve seen this paralytic just arise, taking his bed and going to his house? After he had been told, “...Your sins have been forgiven you.”

But here we come back to Jesus perceiving their thoughts, and Jesus perceives our thoughts, too. That’s a good thing because:

- Jesus is for us
- God the Father is for us
- Jesus is working in us
- He is a Good Shepherd
- He is leading us:
 - ✓ to Himself
 - ✓ to the Father.
 - ✓ to the Kingdom of God
 - ✓ to New Jerusalem

That’s what They’re doing; both of Them!

- Jesus can see our thoughts
- He could see their thoughts

But we have to be careful that we are not thinking evil in our heart! That is something that we read in 2-Cor.:

- those strongholds
- those vain imaginations
- those high exalted things
 - What are the thoughts of God?
 - What does God say about that?

Because this is very deep when it comes to the thoughts, very deep, and Jesus is being very, very clear. He used this opportunity to teach this thing. You can read the beginning of this chapter for the sake of time we’re not going to do it. But this is when His disciples were eating with their unwashed hands.

The Pharisees were like, what are they doing? They didn’t wash their hands. Well, obviously they’re ceremonially unclean. Maybe they didn’t wash them at all. But Jesus is explaining what happens.

Mark 7:14: “And after calling all the multitude to *Him*, He said to them, ‘Hear Me, all of you, and understand.’”

This is for us, too; we need to hear this and understand.

Verse 15: **“There is nothing that enters into a man from outside, which is able to defile him; but the things that come out from within him, those are the things which defile a man.”**

It is very important that we stop and think about it. We have this nature, we have this heart *that is desperately wicked!* That’s what the Bible says!

Then from within are those things that defile a man and a woman, defile mankind. That’s what Jesus is saying.

Verse 16: “If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.” *So, He just said it to the multitude.*

When he went into a house away with the multitude, His disciples asked Him concerning this parable. So, they didn’t understand, and it’s not easy to understand. What is it that comes out from within Him? *Because He just said it that way!*

Verse 18: “And He said to them, ‘Are you likewise without understanding? Don’t you perceive that **anything that enters into a man from outside is not able to defile him?**”

What were they used to? *They were used to everything ceremonially!* If you touch a dead body, all these things, all these ceremonial things could make you unclean or defile you. In fact, it does say that about unclean meat.

“...anything that enters into a man from outside is not able to defile him?” (v 18).

I’m not saying that we should not keep those laws. Obviously, God’s perfect design, He created them; we have to keep those laws. What Jesus is talking about is something deeper, and that’s the point that He’s trying to make.

Verse 19: “For it does not enter into his heart...”

If you eat something with unwashed hands it’s not going to defile you, because it doesn’t go into the heart.

“...but into the belly, and *then* passes out into the sewer, purging all food” (v 19).

Again, we want to make sure that we clarify this. This does not mean that anything that moves or whatever, it’s all clean to eat. *That’s not true!* It’s purging the food that goes in. But God did design certain things for human consumption. That’s why those other things that we’re not to eat and God says not to eat, they’re not food.

What He's talking about here is food! It's the things that are actually good and that **God designed for human consumption!** Because not everything that is around us should be eaten. But here it says purging all food, meaning clean food that is actually food. Not the things that were not designed for food:

Verse 20: "And He said, 'That which **springs forth from within a man, that defiles the man.** For from within, **out of the hearts of men go forth evil thoughts...**'" (vs 20-21).

First thing, ***evil thoughts***, because all of these other things that He's going to mention come from there. *They come from evil thoughts; sin originates in the mind!*

"...go forth evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickednesses, guile, licentiousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness" (vs 21-22).

All of these things go against the Ten Commandments and go against the Commandments and Laws of God. All of these things, and those are terrible, ***but they start with evil thoughts!***

Adultery starts in the mind. That desire starts in the mind, same with fornications. Same with murder with that hate; same with theft—*everything!*

Verse 23: "**All these evils go forth from within, and these defile a man.**"

It's important that we think about these things, because these are the things that defile us, as well. We have a desperately wicked heart and deceitful. And from out there come out all these things that we are fighting against. We're in that warfare that we read in 2 Cor. 10. So, ***it is the warfare!***

But those are the thoughts; the evil thoughts generate all of these things. It's not like, for example, guile, or, just a lie. It's not because of a benefit. It's because we think we're going to get out of something, an apparent benefit. That's where it comes from.

That's a thought, an evil thought; 'I'll just lie about it to get out of this one.' ***But that's not what God wants!*** These are the things that defile us. Those evil thoughts generate all of these sins and all of these evils. That's what they're called.

Verse 23: "All these evils go forth **from within**, and these defile a man."

These are the things that defile us; ***our thoughts defile us!*** We're going to see what is,

we're going to see in this example—Matt. 16—where they come from.

One of the places where they come from. Obviously, our nature. Obviously, because our forefathers, Adam and Eve, took from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, it comes from there. But we'll see where else they come from. We're going to see what God says about it, what Jesus said about these things.

Matthew 16:21: "From that time Jesus began to explain to His disciples that it was necessary for Him to go to Jerusalem, and to suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and to be killed, and to be raised the third day.

So, all these things He was going to suffer from the elders, the chief priests and the scribes, and that He was to be killed and to be raised the third day, ***because that was what He came to do, to give His life!*** It's a ransom for many. When they're receiving these things, this is what happened.

Verse 22: "But after taking *Him* aside, Peter personally began to rebuke Him, saying, '*God will be favorable to you, Lord. In no way shall this happen to You.*'"

Imagine those are good intentions. Those are seemingly good things. He's deciding that, because He's the Messiah. He's going to liberate Israel. Is that right? These are good things, apparently.

"...In no way shall this *happen to You*"—and I [*Peter*] will give my life for You, at least Peter did it privately.

Verse 23: "Then He turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, because your thoughts are not *in accord* with the things of God, but the things of men.'"

This is an amazing thing that He knew where they were coming from. He knew they were coming from Satan. Even into one of Jesus' disciples, Satan was influencing Peter to say that, ***because human nature plus Satan is so dangerous!*** That's what happened here.

There's human nature, well-intentioned, well-meaning, loving Jesus. One of His disciples, "In no way shall this *happen to You.*"

Jesus immediately knew where that was coming from. He called Satan out on it. He didn't call out Peter, ***He called out Satan!***

Then Jesus said why Satan is the adversary, ***and why he is leading this war against all of us, the saints!***

Jesus says, "...You are an offense to Me... [to all of us too] ...because your thoughts are not *in*

accord with the things of God, but the things of men” (v 23).

- What are our hearts inclined naturally to go?
They go to the things of men!
- Why? *Because we’re mankind!*

That’s what it is! They go to the vain things! They go to the exterior things, our everyday, whether it’s people or things or activities, things to do, good or bad.

*Everything takes up our mental space!
Where are our thoughts for God? Then we’re going to see what are God’s thoughts toward us!*

But He clearly said the reason “...You are an offense to Me, [is] **because your thoughts are not in accord with the things of God,** but the things of men.’

Here I want for us to also pause. There have been several things that we are now starting to think about and meditate, and those are our homework. This is another one:

- How much are our thoughts in accord with the things of God?
- How many of our thoughts are in accord with the things of men?

Not only in time, in percentage, *but in intensity, in depth!*

It’s important to take stock of our thoughts, because as we will see, we have a part to play in this. God calls us and He leads us and guides us, **but He expects our active participation beginning in the thoughts, in the mind, loving Him actively!**

When you love someone, you think of that someone, you think of that someone very, very often. That’s what happens. Then Jesus said to His disciples, and this is no coincidence:

Verse 24: “And Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and let him take up his cross and follow Me.

- What is that?
- Why?
- Why did He say that immediately after saying that *the thoughts of Satan are not in accord with the things of God,* but with the things of man?

He said that we are to deny ourselves; we are to deny our thoughts of man, the things of man. That’s what He said. That’s what denying self means! Just looking after our own things:

- the things that we like

- the things that we need
- the things that we are concerned with all the time
- the things that consume our thoughts

That’s what we have to deny ourselves. We have to take up our cross and follow Him. What does it mean to take up His cross?

- to walk in His example
- to do what He did
- to be proactive like He was so that His thoughts would be on the things of God

That was diametrically opposed between the thoughts of Jesus Christ and the thoughts of Satan!

On one hand we have Satan, and we saw the wicked; there’s no thought for God. Satan is the adversary and there’s no thought for God. Their thoughts are not in accord with the things of God, but with the things of men.

On the other extreme, we have Jesus, where His thoughts were in accord with the things of God.

- He said that
- He proved it

That’s why we are to deny ourselves! ***Take up our cross and follow Him!*** That’s why it says in:

Verse 25: “**For whoever desires to save his life shall lose it...**”—*if you want to be in your thoughts of men, that’s where you’re going to end up!*

- you’re going to end up in vanity
- you’re going to end up in emptiness and loneliness
- you’re going to be detached from God

You’re not going to know Him *because those high exalted things rose above against the knowledge of God, and you have no knowledge of God!*

- that’s what happens by nature to human beings
- that’s what happens to mankind

Verse 25: “For whoever desires to save his life shall lose it; **but whoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it.**”

And that’s what it really feels like. You say, I’m not going to think my thoughts. I’m not going to be concerned about my work and my days. *It’s like God is saying:*

- Where are your thoughts?
- Are they with the things of men or they with the things of God?

- **IF** you lose your life
- **IF** you dedicate your life
- **IF** you give up your life to be dedicated to the things of God and the thoughts of God

you shall find it! You shall find that it is the most amazing life that could ever be. It's the closest thing to the life that Jesus Christ lived on the earth, because, that's what He was saying, those were His words:

- that is My meat and that is My drink
- that is to do the will of My Father

Those are My brothers and My mother:

- the ones that are doing the will of my Father
- the ones that are obeying Him

He said all these things:

- I do nothing of Myself
- I speak nothing of Myself

Jesus gave His life perfectly, completely! That means that all His thoughts were on God! That's exactly what God wants to do with us.

- He wants to show us
- He wants to give us His thoughts

Isa. 55—a very familiar Scripture. We cannot have a message about the thoughts of God without going to Isa. 55. God points out big, big differences between the thoughts of God and the thoughts of men. This is what God wants us to do.

This is an instruction from God to us, and this is to everybody, anybody that has a Bible.

Isaiah 55:6: "**Seek the LORD** while He may be found... [right now He may be found] ...**call upon Him** while He is near."

- we have to search for Him
- we have to call Him

But it's not just calling and it's not just invoking the name of the Lord, because a lot of Christians invoke the name of the Lord, but they don't follow through with:

Verse 7: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts..."

Not only his actions, but his thoughts. Why? *Because we've seen that our thoughts are evil!*

- we've seen that
- we've seen that God judges those thoughts
- we've seen that we're in a warfare ***and the weapons of our warfare are not carnal***
- they're spiritual
- they're in the mind
- they have to do with our thoughts

*We have all been wicked, and we have been called to do this, to forsake our way, and we've all been unrighteous **until we were baptized!** By the blood of Jesus Christ, we are cleansed!*

Then we have the righteousness of our Savior Jesus Christ, *not our own!* But before that, we were unrighteous also. We are to continue to do this. "...and the unrighteous man his thoughts..." ***We also have to leave our thoughts behind!***

"...and let him return to the LORD, **and He will have mercy upon him...**" (v 7).

But the unrighteous man needs to leave those thoughts, those wicked thoughts. 'Out of the heart they come; and they come flowing like a spring all the time. That's our nature.

"...and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (v 7). *Just like He pardoned the paralytic and the stretcher. **Abundantly pardoned!***

It doesn't even say that the paralytic asked for his sins to be forgiven. His friends wanted him to be healed, and when he saw their faith, Jesus said, 'Your sins are forgiven.' ***Abundantly pardoned!***

All the friends, they brought him to Jesus. We have to come to God, and God will have mercy; He will abundantly pardon. We have to do this every day. Because that's what Jesus taught His disciples ***every day***: 'Forgive us our debts,' ***every day***, and He will ***abundantly pardon every day!***

We have to forsake our way and forsake our thoughts continually, because that's the process of conversion. That's the process of cleansing that God is taking in our lives. It's an amazing thing when we think about it: that process of understanding, but first we have to identify them, based on the Light of the:

- Word of God
- His Commandments
- His Laws
- His Judgments
- the Holy Spirit of God that He has given us

So the two combine together so we can see those thoughts. We cannot forsake things that we cannot see. ***We have to forsake those thoughts! Because we want to have the thoughts of God!*** That's what we really want to have. God tells us that in:

Verse 8: "'For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, nor your ways My ways,' says the LORD."

But He doesn't say it you're over there and you're never going to be like Me. *No!* That's not

what He wants. He's just stating a fact. He's just basically putting us in our place.

“For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, nor your ways My ways...”—*but they should be!*

- My thoughts *should be* your thoughts
- My ways *should be* your ways

That's what God would want, and we're going to see that.

Verse 9: “For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways...” *He puts us in our place!*

When you get in an airplane and you look down and you see that first you're a tiny little dot and then you're nothing. You really can't see a person.

- that is how different our thoughts are from the thoughts of God
- that's how much higher His thoughts are; ***the thoughts of God!***

He instructs us to seek His thoughts. It's an amazing thing. It really is when you think about it. Just think about the dimension of the height of the heavens.

It doesn't say *heaven*; it says *heavens!* But we know there's different heavens. But it says ***the heavens are higher than the earth!***

Verse 10: “For as the rain comes down, and the snow from the heavens, and does not return there, but waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, and gives seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My Word be which goes out of My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall certainly do what I sent it to do” (vs 10-11).

- **Are we fertile ground, brethren?**
- **Are we receiving that Word?**

Because it will accomplish what He said. His Word is really what is going to give us the thoughts of God. The ways of God is:

- through His Word
- through the Bible
- through Jesus Christ

Who was the Word and became flesh and tabernacled among men, and He set ***the perfect example*** of how to do it. That's how we're going to do it. Then it will do this.

This is one of the thoughts of God. One of the thoughts of God that we're going to see is that

His Word will not return to Him void, but it will actually accomplish what He pleases!

Are we willing to give up our life? ***Because if so, you're going to be blown away by what God is going to do:***

- in your life
- in transforming you
- in changing your thoughts
- in teaching you the ways
- in being one with Him, Him dwelling in you

Because that is what God has promised and that's what God desires! These are the thoughts of God. One of the thoughts of God is ***it will not come back empty!***

- He will actually do
- He will accomplish what He said

“...it shall accomplish what I please...” (v 11).

- He's speaking His mind
- He's speaking His thoughts
- He's declaring it

those are His thoughts!

“...and it shall certainly do what I sent it to do” (v 11).

- Are we going to yield?
- Are we going to cooperate?
- Are we going to deny ourselves to the point:
 - ✓ where His thoughts are in our mind all the time?
 - ✓ where His ways are in our heart?

That is the thought of God!

Verse 12: “For you shall go out with joy... [this is a promise] ...and be led out with peace...”

- this is *true* peace
- this is in the future

“...the mountains and the hills shall break out before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap *their* hands” (v 12).

This is the thought of God: ***that the earth itself is going to rejoice at the manifestation of the children of God!*** How amazing is this? These are the thoughts of God! They're so much higher than our thoughts; He's judging our thoughts!

Our thoughts are evil by nature. That's why we have to ask Him to give us His thoughts and to give us more of His Holy Spirit. This is going to be incredible when we go out with joy and let out with peace:

Verse 12: “For you shall go out with joy, and be led out with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break out before you into singing...”

- Can you imagine?
- Have you ever heard a tree sing? *It says that that’s what’s going to happen!*

“...and all the trees of the field shall clap *their* hands” (v 12).

Maybe it does happen, but we just don’t hear it that way, or understand it that way in our tiny human mind. But it says that that’s what’s going to happen.

Verse 13: “Instead of the thorn, the fir tree shall come up; and instead of the brier, the myrtle tree shall come up; **and it shall be to the LORD for a memorial**, for an everlasting sign *which* shall not be cut off.” *These are the thoughts of God:*

- He is calling us
- He is perfecting us
- He wants for us to do this

Not only that ‘His thoughts are not our thoughts and His ways are not our ways,’ *He wants them to be, that’s what He wants!* That’s why He says, ‘*Seek the Lord that He may be found!*’ *But we first have to forsake all these other stuff!*

- forsake your wicked ways
- forsake your wicked thoughts

Our thoughts are evil!

- we have to be on guard
- we have to remember that that’s our nature
- we cannot deny it

Because this is not a religion! We don’t come here and play church! We know that ***this is about a true relationship with God!*** This is about really understanding our nature, and really understanding what God is doing in our lives!

If you haven’t heard the message from Fred, I would highly recommend the message that he gave this year the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, to understand our wickedness.

{*The Sin Within & How to Overcome It* (First Day of Unleavened Bread—2024—truthofgod.org)}

Because that’s what we’re talking about here, the evil nature of our thoughts. Then in comparison to the thoughts of God that are good and righteous and perfect; that we are to seek all the time:

- to seek the thoughts of God
- to forsake our thoughts

- to forsake our ways
- to seek His thoughts and to seek His way

That’s what we just read. It says that ***His Word that goes out of His mouth shall not return empty!*** Jesus talks about that. Talks about specifically those things:

John 15:7: “**If you dwell in Me, and My words dwell in you...**”

The same one that He said, ‘My Word will not return to Me empty; it will not return to Me void.’

“...you shall ask whatever you desire... [Why?] ...and it shall come to pass for you” (v 7).

This is not like just a magic formula or something to be. *No!* It really is the fullness of forsaking those evil thoughts and those wicked ways. The fullness of that and wanting the mind of Christ, and wanting the thoughts of God, and understanding that.

“If you dwell in Me, and My words dwell in you...” (v 7).

- if His Words dwell in you
- if His Words dwell in us
 - ✓ that’s what we’re speaking
 - ✓ that’s what we’re thinking
 - ✓ that’s what we become

“...you shall ask whatever you desire...” Why? *Just as in the model prayer:*

1. ‘Thy Kingdom come
2. ‘Your will be done’

‘You shall ask whatever you desire,’ ***because we’re going to desire exactly what God desires!***

“...**and it shall come to pass for you**” (v 7).

This is not to satisfy our own desires, because those are evil thoughts. Those are those vain imaginations. That we want more health or more money or more this.

Obviously, who wouldn’t enjoy those things? *But that’s not what God has in mind!* **What He has in mind is the mind of Christ in us! And that is absolutely priceless, brethren!**

There is no comparison to having the mind of Christ, the mind of the Creator Himself. Nothing like that. *Nothing!* Just sit and think on that for a moment. That we are to have the mind of Christ now, and at the resurrection, perfected, complete, where our thoughts are gone! **We have to desire that! We have to desire:**

- our thoughts to be gone

- our evil ways to be gone
- all these things that defile us to be gone *completely*

That implies an abhorring of self!

Another time we'll talk about that. But we have to abhor ourselves because our nature is evil. The Bible says that. Our nature is evil!

Verse 7: "If you dwell in Me, and My words dwell in you, you shall ask whatever you desire..."—*because those desires will be the desires:*

- aligned to the will of God.
- aligned to those thoughts that are higher than the heavens from the earth

It will be the thoughts of God ***IF*** His Words dwell in us. And ***IF*** we dwell in Jesus Christ it says here:

"...it shall come to pass for you" (v 7).

- it will not be for our glory
- it will not just be for our benefit

It will be to the glory of God the Father and Jesus Christ, because They have done all things!

- it will not return to Him void
- it will accomplish what They send it to do

All the credit and all the glory will go back to God!
And that's an amazing thing.

Verse 8: "In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be My disciples."

These are the thoughts of God. God wants for us to dwell in Jesus Christ and His words to dwell in us.

- to want what They want
- to think like They think
- to speak like They speak

They really want that; that's the goal! The goal is nothing short of that.

We are not going to be kings and priests just because, or just because it's better than what we have today. Well, certainly we'll be. *No!* He wants that because we will be transformed to the very image of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

These are the thoughts of God, ***that in this the Father will be glorified!*** You see the thoughts of Jesus Christ where they were:

Verse 8: "***In this is My Father glorified...***"
That's all He was seeking!

- He was seeking to glorify the Father

- He was seeking that His disciples would bear much fruit

He was preparing at this time; He was probably just tilling the ground!

They didn't even have the Holy Spirit within them. It was with them but not within them. But He was stilling the ground and preparing it to bear that seed and to give much fruit.

Look at all the things that the disciples accomplished after that. Amazing! But it was not only for them, because He prayed in John 17 for us, too. For those who will believe through their word, and through their example.

These are the thoughts of God: That the Father would be glorified; that's all Jesus cared about.

- How much do you and I care that the Father be glorified?
- How much do you and I care that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is glorified and He's praised?

It says, "***...so shall you be My disciples...***" ***IF*** we bear much fruit! *That's what we are to do!*

Those are the thoughts of God! And there's so many more. Next time we'll continue with this topic because we only got about halfway there.

We have to talk about how do we actually do this in practice. We're going to see these thoughts of God in more detail. There's many other Scriptures that talk about the thoughts of God. We're going to study them together next time.

But it's an amazing thing when we think about the thoughts of God, and what God has for us today. Not for later; ***today!*** To start or continue giving us His thoughts. He has already given us:

- His Laws
- His Commandments
- He's called us
- we've been baptized
- we've been able to see more
- we're growing in grace and knowledge and understanding

But that will never finish in this life!

Who knows if it will ever finish, because it even says that Jesus Christ, 'by what He suffered, He learned obedience,' and He was God in the flesh. So, we don't know if this learning process ever ends, because God will never cease to amaze us. ***Never!***

Forever and ever He will have the glory.
His thoughts will be accomplished, like He said,
'His Word will not return void.'

Those are the thoughts of God!

Scriptural References:

- 1) 2-Corinthians 10:4-6
- 2) Genesis 6:5-8, 5
- 3) Psalm 10:3
- 4) 2-Corinthians 10:5
- 5) Psalm 10:3-4
- 6) Jeremiah 6:19-20
- 7) Matthew 9:1-8
- 8) Mark 7:14-23
- 9) Matthew 16:21-25
- 10) Isaiah 55:6-13
- 11) John 15:7-8

Scripture referenced, not quoted: John 17

Also referenced: Message:

The Sin Within & How to Overcome It (First Day
of Unleavened Bread—2024—**truthofgod.org**)

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