

Receiving God's Ways and Thoughts



Agreeing With God (Part 2)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, sharing with you precious truths out of Scripture.

My theme this week is Agreeing with God. It deals with one of the basic requirements for success in life.

In my introductory talk yesterday I pointed out certain scriptural principles that relate to our theme. First of all, the New Testament extends an invitation to us to share and fellowship with God, and this fellowship is pictured frequently in the Bible as walking with God.

Secondly, in order to walk with God, we must agree with God. This is put before us in Amos, chapter 3, verse 3, which says: "Can two walk together, unless they be agreed?" And the implication clearly is, "No, they cannot." Now to agree I would define there simply as to harmonize in ways and thoughts.

So, in order to walk together with God, we have to learn to harmonize with God's ways and God's thoughts. However, by nature, the Scripture makes it very clear, God's ways and God's thoughts are different from ours. They're not in harmony with ours. And, furthermore, God does not change. He says that so emphatically in Malachi 3:6: "I the Lord do not change. So, logically, there's only one option left to us if we're going to accept this invitation to walk with God and meet the conditions: We have to change our ways and our thoughts.

Today I'm going to share with you how God has made provision for us to do this.

That's what I love about the Bible, it not merely tells us where we're wrong, but it also tells us how we can put things right. Its ultimate thrust is always positive, not negative. It brings out the negative only to show us our need for the positive.

Now I'm going to turn back to a passage that I read yesterday in Isaiah, chapter 55, verses 6 through 9. Just by way of refreshing our memories, this is the passage in which God says so emphatically that His ways and thoughts are not like ours. Isaiah 55:6 through 9:

> "Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near. [That's a certain urgency in that.] Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. [Notice our basic problem is not just our outward actions, but it's our inner ways and thoughts.] Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon. [Thank God for that promise. And then the Lord goes on:] 'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,' declares the Lord. [That's very clear, very emphatic. God's ways and God's thoughts are not like ours. And then God goes on to measure the gap between His ways and thoughts and ours, and I would have to say, it's a measureless gap.] 'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts then your thoughts.'" (NIV)

So the gap is as great as that between heaven and earth, and the Scripture tells man that he cannot measure the height of the heavens which we know today, scientifically, as well. So there's a measureless gap between God's ways and thoughts and ours. How can we bridge that gap? The answer is, God provides the solution in the verses that follow. And I want to emphasize, the solution originates with God, not with man. Man does not have the solution in himself. And this is what God goes on to say in Isaiah 55, verses 10 through 13:

> "As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, [Notice the solution comes down from heaven, it doesn't rise up from earth.] As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands. Instead of the thornbush will grow the pine tree, and instead of briers the myrtle will grow. This will be for the Lord's renown, for an everlasting sign, which will not be destroyed." (NIV)

Now let me point out some of what's implied in that beautiful picture of how God brings His ways and His thoughts down from heaven to us on earth. Let me point out, as I've said already, the solution originates with God; it comes down—it does not go up. Left to ourselves, we have no solution.

Second, it is God's Word that brings His ways and thoughts down to us. As the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do these various things on earth that God speaks about, so is His Word that goes out of His mouth. So the solution that brings God's ways and thoughts down to us is the Word of God coming down from God.

And then, taking the picture that God gives, of rain and snow, we need to see that God's Word can come in either way. It can come as rain or it can come as snow. Now rain immediately soaks into the earth, waters it, starts to make it fruitful. But snow lies on the hard surface of the earth and does not immediately do anything for it. In fact, the temperature has to change. The sun has to come into operation in order to melt the snow and make the earth capable of receiving it, but then they tell us that snow melted is even more beneficial for the earth than ordinary rain. Well, God's Word is like that. Sometimes it comes as rain and we can receive it immediately. It comes right into our heart. Sometimes it seems very hard and difficult to receive. The disciple said to Jesus at one point, "This is a hard saying; who can receive it?" Well, that's snow. And I want to give you a word of counsel. When God's Word comes as snow into your life, don't reject it, just let it lie on your heart and wait for the sun of God's love and grace to arise and melt it, and then your heart will be able to receive it. So, sometimes it comes as rain; sometimes it comes as snow, but always, if we respond aright, it ultimately brings God's ways and thoughts down to us.

And then, the Lord says, it will produce two different products—bread for ourselves, seed for others. Bread is what we need to eat for our own strength and health, but seed is that which is left over to give forth for others, and God's Word will produce both in our lives; bread and seed.

Now I want to speak about the ongoing results that are produced in our experience when we receive God's Word as rain and snow and let it do its work in our hearts and minds. We are, through it, receiving God's ways and God's thoughts, and these are some of the beautiful results that it will produce. In verse 12, God says: "You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, all the trees of the field will clap their hands." What beautiful language that is. Let's analyze what God is promising us. First of all, He's promising us joy—"You will go out in joy." Secondly, He's promising us peace—"You will be led forth in peace." Third, He's promising us spontaneous exuberant praise—"The mountains, the hills will start to sing; the trees will clap their hands." So those are three results of God's Word bringing His ways and His thoughts down into our

hearts and minds—joy, peace and praise.

And then in the next verse, God pictures fruitfulness. He says, “Instead of the thornbush will grow the pine tree, and instead of briers the myrtle will grow.” So, there’ll be a change in what’s produced. It used to be the thornbush and the brier, now it will be the pine tree and the myrtle. The thornbush and the brier are barren, unfruitful; they have no real beneficial use. On the other hand, the pine and the myrtle are beautiful shade trees that begin to transform the nature of the desert. So our ways and our thoughts produce the thorn and the brier. But when God’s ways and God’s thoughts come, then in place of the thorn and brier will grow the pine and the myrtle. In other words, good fruitfulness will take the place of barrenness and unproductiveness.

Let’s look then at those four immediate results of God’s Word coming into our hearts and lives. First of all, joy; second, peace; third, praise, and fourth, fruitfulness.

And one final thought in that connection. At the end of verse 13: “This will before the Lord’s renown, for an everlasting sign, which will not be destroyed.” It’s important for us to see, and I’ll be emphasizing later in my talks, the ultimate purpose of what God does is His glory. This will be for the Lord’s renown. The Lord will be glorified through it. It will be an everlasting sign. It will be a manifest token of what God has done and it will be everlasting. It will never be undone and it will not be destroyed. So the results that God produces this way in our hearts and lives are permanent, they cannot be undone, and therefore His glory.

All right, our time is up for today. I’ll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I’ll be explaining more fully what’s involved in this process of changing the way we think.

Radio Program

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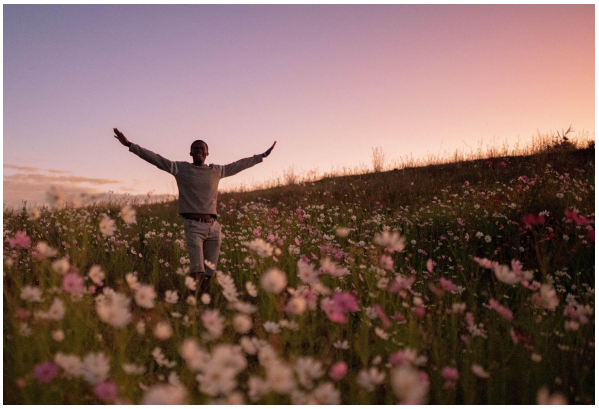

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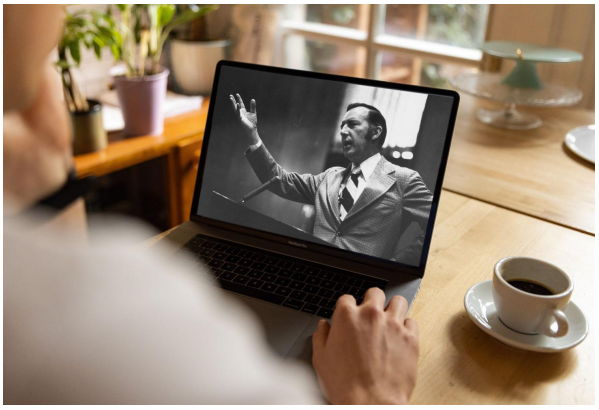

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