

## ***God's Ways Are Not Our Ways***

See Isaiah 55:8-9

God is the eternal, holy Creator. Man is mere creation. We often ignore how vast the difference is. The biggest difference is sin. Sin is anything that is not in line with the ways of God. Every human has this problem. The work of God in our life is to move us from man's ways to the ways of God, transforming us into His likeness. His ways are revealed in the Bible. It is critical for us to know God's ways. It is our life!

Man's ways are usually contrary to God's. See Matthew 16:21-24. Peter reasoned that Jesus should not have to die. Peter couldn't see the whole picture. He didn't see that God was redeeming the world through the death of Jesus. Imagine the tragedy if Peter had his way. We would have probably agreed with Peter. We would have been agreeing with Satan. Rationalizing often sets us against God.

Mercy is one of the ways of God. Mercy always humbles us. Grace does not. For that mercy to be manifested toward us, the just price had to be paid. Every time we say the word mercy, we should say it humbly and reverently, realizing what it cost and that it was our hearts that made it necessary for that price to be paid. God's willingness to forgive is one of His ways. We focus on the grace, but it is more humbling for us to focus on the mercy of God. Grace follows mercy, and mercy follows repentance. Confessing sin is agreeing with God about our need for mercy. Repenting invites the mercy of God expressed in forgiveness. Forgiveness is one of the ways of God.

Consider God's ways of mercy and forgiveness as seen in the life of the Apostle Paul. He was a killer of Christians. In mercy, God jarred Saul to his senses. Saul did it in ignorance, and so God had mercy on his life. Saul's life before his encounter with Jesus was religion without the ways of God. It was a religion of rules and formulas. It was critical and harsh and cold. God uses the most unlikely instruments so that the credit will go to the right source and His mercy will be more clearly seen. How can we manifest the same mercy and forgiveness in our own lives?

God's ways are ways of faith. Faith is the confident expectation that God will do what He has said He would do. Faith is not doubting it will come to pass simply because God said it. It is based on what we know about God. If we choose to live in the ways of faith, it will affect everything we do. Consider how your day would be different if you accepted God's way of faith. What would a more confident faith have looked like in your life today? How would it have changed things?

Abraham was the father of the faithful. Man's way of having children was to trust in physical strength. God's ways are ways of faith. That is why God waited until Abraham was nearing 100 and Sarah the age of 90 before bringing the son of promise. Abraham abandoned man's way and chose to believe God. That is why he was considered righteous. When asked to sacrifice his son, He believed what God had said. He believed that through his son the world would be blessed, so if he

obeyed and his son died, he believed God would raise him from the dead. Do you see how Abraham accepted God's way of faith? He had total confidence in what God said. See Romans 4:19-22; Hebrews 11:9-19.

Holiness is another way of God. Isa 6:1-3 His presence defines what is holy. The ground before the burning bush was holy because of the presence of God in the bush. When we are aware that God has taken up his residence in us, wherever we are becomes holy. We must recognize that we are the temple of the living God. We should be aware of God's presence when we come together with other believers to worship, or when God places us with those who are hungry for the truth He brings.

Our holiness is from Him. (1Peter 1:15-16) It is not the spiritual maturity to which we have attained, but His very own presence. That is why we have the power to bless lives. If we allow His holiness to touch the lives we come in contact with, God will pour His life through us.

See Isaiah 65:16. God's ways are ways of truth. Whenever we find ourselves skewing the facts, leaving out details to shade the meaning, we will find we are leaning on the ways of man. God is by nature true. Everything He says, promises, and does is true. Truth is the way of God and leads to life. John 8:31-32; 14:6

God's word is truth. We often find declarations in the word of God that are contrary to the way we think and see the world. We must let go of man's way of thinking and accept God's revelation as truth. How can our rational minds get in the way of truth?

See Psalm 25:2a, 4-5, 12-14. God teaches His ways to the one that fears Him. We can trust God in a deeper way than we can trust humans. He never fails. The nature of God is something we can fully trust. Why would God want show His ways to those who fear Him?

Read Psalm 103:7 Because Moses knew the ways of God, look how he responded to their rebellion against his leadership in Numbers 16:22. List the ways of God we have gone over in this lesson. How would walking in the ways of God have changed this last week?

If there is time, discuss Exodus 33:13; Proverbs 10:29.

How can knowing God's ways give you discernment and help you to be available to serve? Close with sentence prayers asking God to reveal His ways to us and help us as a group to walk in them.