

Quick Studies

Words from the Bible

THOUGHTS

What do we mean when we tell someone they are in our thoughts.

- ◆ Is it a passing thought?
- ◆ Is it a thought to pray for them?
- ◆ Is it a thought concerning their well-being?

Our thoughts have power. They are an act or product of thinking something in the mind. But what does the Bible have to say about the thoughts of God and man? In the Old Testament, the same Hebrew word is used to describe the thoughts of God and the thoughts of man. The meaning is "*to devise, plan, purpose*". This means that as God thinks of us, it is always with a plan and purpose for our good in mind. This bears asking ourselves the question; *when I think of others, is it with a plan and purpose in mind for their benefit and for their good?* Knowing the answer to that question requires searching our heart. It requires prayer asking God to reveal to us the intentions of our heart and mind.

*Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.*

PSALM 139:23-24 (NIV)

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YOUR STUDY QUESTIONS

For personal observation, read the following scriptures and write the encouragement you see from the thoughts of God toward you.

- ◆ Psalm 139:1-6
- ◆ Isaiah 55:8-9

What instruction do you find in Isaiah 55:6-7 regarding the thoughts of one who is not right with God?

Now read the following verses to determine if the thoughts of mankind are private.

- ◆ Psalm 139:2
- ◆ Matthew 12:25
- ◆ Luke 9:47

According to Hebrews 4:12, what does God's Word do?

If God knows your thoughts (and He does), and His word discerns your intent, how will knowing this change your thought process?

THINK ON THIS

O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you discern my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD, you hem me in—behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.

Psalm 139:1-6 (NIV)

“Thoughts reveal the plan, purpose and intention of the heart—whether good or bad.”



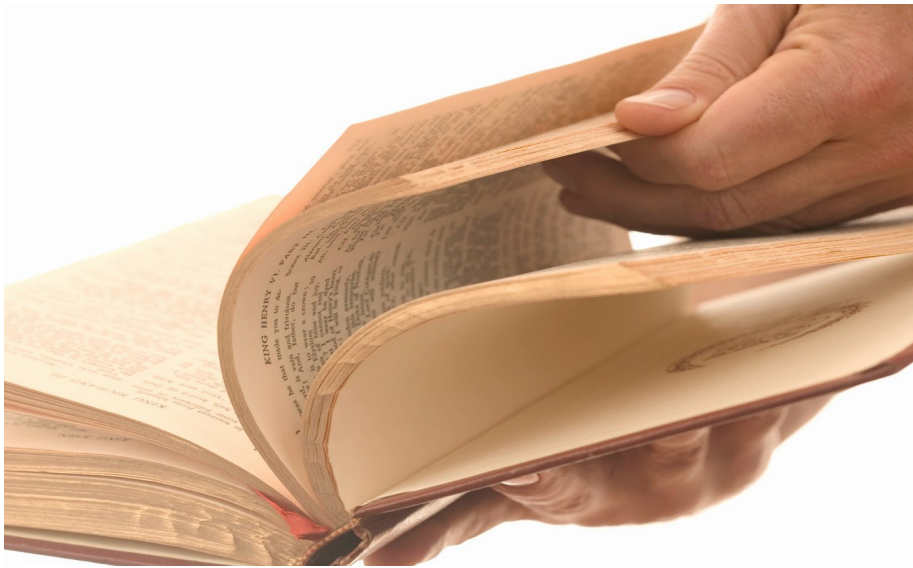
KEY VERSES

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares 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.

Isaiah 55:8-9 (ESV)

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12 (ESV)



THE EFFECT OF NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

Even though our thoughts of others should always be an encouragement to them, there are times when our thoughts can get us into trouble. Disappointment and anger can occur when we think we know what God will do and He doesn't. Such was the case with Naaman in 2 Kings 5:10-12. Unmet expectations led to negative thoughts causing anger and doubt.

When thoughts are negative, they feed emotions. It does not take long for emotions to drag us down into a pit of despair through anger, resentment and jealousy toward others. The thoughts become strongholds making the negative emotions difficult to overcome on our own. We need help.

Strongholds of the mind can be torn down. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 tells us how. Strongholds of the mind can be broken down by holding our thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ. In other words, what would Jesus do. How would he respond to those whom we have negative thoughts toward.

When asking God to reveal our heart to us, and to keep our thoughts accountable to Christ, we are then able to say as the Psalmist did, "*How precious to me are your thoughts O God. How vast is the sum of them*".

Read Psalm 40:5 in the sidebar. Write what you learn about God's thoughts toward you and be encouraged.

THINK ON THIS

*Many, O LORD my
God,
are your wonderful
works
Which you have done;
And your thoughts
toward us
Cannot be recounted to
You in order;
If I would declare and
speak of them,
They are more than
can be numbered.
Psalm 40:5 (NKJV)*

THINK ON THIS

*Finally, brothers,
whatever is true,
whatever is noble,
whatever is right,
whatever is pure,
whatever is lovely,
whatever is admirable,
if there is any
excellence, if there is
anything worthy of
praise, think about
those things.*

Philippians 4:8 (NIV)



THOUGHTS IN ACTION

The thoughts of God are far too many for us to count or know, yet they are precious to us because they are for us and about us. His thoughts are for our good. They are delivered through His Holy Spirit to the Spirit of Christ within us. Yet we cannot begin to comprehend them all. If we fall asleep trying to count them, God's faithful promise is to stay with us even when asleep, and He is there when we awaken.

Thoughts reveal the plan, purpose and intention of the heart—whether good or bad. They are that upon which anyone meditates. Thoughts are what we deliberate on and consider. Our thoughts will determine actions as well as the words we speak.

What we put into our minds will impact our heart, our thinking and our actions. In other words, what goes into the mind comes out in word or deed. We act upon what we think. Therefore, if we want our words and deeds to be pleasing to the Lord and an encouragement to others, careful consideration is to be given to what is fed into the mind.

How do we hold every thought captive to the obedience of Christ? When a thought enters our mind that is negative, doubtful or sinful, We can stop it immediately by praying. Ask God to capture that thought and remove it from your mind. Ask Him to replace it with the thoughts of what is good, right and just.

Memorize Philippians 4:8 and live with that manner of thinking. When you do, there is a promise for us from verse 9. *"...and the God of peace will be with you"*.

"Replace my thoughts O LORD with what is good, right and just."