

**Articles and Sermons :: I Thought... by K.P. Yohannan**

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Naaman was raging with anger. He had traveled all the way from Syria with chariots full of gold, silver and expensive gifts for Elisha—and now the prophet wouldn't even grant him a one-minute audience. And what was worse, Elisha's servant passed a message to him that he should dip seven times in the Jordan River to be healed of his leprosy (see 2 Kings 5:9–12).

It was a simple, inexpensive ritual he was supposed to perform. No one could make fun of him because he was far away from his homeland.

But the mighty captain of the Syrian army was not about to follow these stupid instructions. Why? These instructions were not his own thoughts.

In his fury, Naaman exclaimed, "Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper" (2 Kings 5:11, kjv, emphasis mine).

However, the servants of Naaman realized that their master was about to pass up his only possible chance to get healed. Fearing they had made the long trip with all its hardship and headache for nothing, they pleaded with him. Naaman finally calmed down, obeyed the prophet's instructions and experienced the healing power of the God of Israel (see 2 Kings 5:13).

Here's the frightening truth: Naaman came as a leper and was about to go back as a leper, to live a lonely, rejected, depressed and forsaken life. In the end he would have died of his disease, all because he thought the wrong thoughts.

This can be our experience as well!

Our own thoughts are one of the greatest enemies of a life of faith that honors God.

We may pray, fast, agonize, weep and cry out to God about a matter, but we receive no answer. Why? Like Naaman, we cling to our own thoughts as to how God should go about answering our request. And with our boundaries, we tie the hands of God and prevent Him from moving on our behalf.

Isaiah 55:6–11 gives us a clear picture of how much the Living God wants to abundantly pardon, bless us, answer our prayers and fulfill His wonderful promises. But those who come to Him must give up one thing: their own thoughts. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him" (Isaiah 55:7).

In the following verses, God gives us the reason why it is so important for us to give up our own thoughts: "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says 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).

Then God goes on explaining that His Word (or His thoughts) works just as the rain and the snow that come down from heaven and bring forth fruit: "So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11).

The whole message God wants to tell us is that if we want to experience God, we must first abandon our thoughts and then start thinking His.

Why aren't our thoughts as believers in Jesus automatically in alignment with God's thoughts? The Apostle Paul explains that our natural mind is always in opposition to God and what He thinks: "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be" (Romans 8:7).

You see, when we were born again, our spirit was regenerated by the Holy Spirit, but the house is still the same. That m

eans our body and our mind, left to themselves, will continue in their old ways. That's why the Bible tells us clearly what we must do to bring both of them into subjection to God: " . . . that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God. . . . And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:1-2).

It is our responsibility, not God's, to get our mind renewed. How? We renew our minds by changing our entire thought process through God's Word.

Naaman the Syrian first had to align his thinking with the word of God spoken to him by the prophet Elisha before he could receive God's answer to his problem.

We too must make the same decision. If we want to see victory over the sin with which we struggle, our families saved, our needs met and this world won to Christ in our lifetime, we must consciously choose to abandon all our own natural (and even religious) thoughts and begin to think God's thoughts. All things are possible with God if we believe—as God thinks.

Believe Him!