



Part 1

Our Ways

April 30, 2017

ICEBREAKER: What is the most extravagant thing that God created in your opinion? Why? What does that tell you about His thoughts and ways?

MAIN POINT:

**God's Thoughts and Ways are
Above and Beyond Our Thoughts and Ways**

EXPLORATION:

1. **Read Isaiah 55: 8-9. What do you think this passage means? How have you seen that God's thoughts and ways are above and beyond our thoughts and ways?**

(Context Clues- The word "ways" means really everything about what you do. The word "thoughts" means really everything about what you think .

דָּרָךְ [*derek /deh·rek/*] way, toward, journey, manner, direction, habit, course of life, moral character. **What You Do**

מַחְשָׁבָה [*machashabah, makh·ash·aw·baw/*] thought, device, purpose, work, imaginations, plan. **What You Think**

Discuss how thoughts and ways are related.)

2. **What do you think about this thought: “What you think will lead to what you do” Do you agree with this or disagree? Why?**

3. **Read Genesis 1:26-27, Jeremiah 17:9, Romans 3:10, 23; and Romans 7: 15-25. According to these verses, what was mankind like before the fall, and as a result of the fall? How does this put us in conflict in our daily lives now?**
(Context Clues- We were made in His image before the fall, the fall cursed bound us under the power and influence of sin. Our original nature, sin nature and redeemed nature are in conflict with each other on a daily basis.)

APPLICATION:

1. **Because our thoughts and ways are marred by sin, our fleshly minds will always pick the path of least resistance. Share about a time when you settled for a cheap imitation instead of reaching for what God had for you.**

2. **Because our thoughts and ways are marred by sin, we often settle for short term pleasure or results instead of holding out for long term good that God may have for us. Discuss how that has been true in your life. Give an example of how this has worked out in your life.**

3. **Read Isaiah 55:6-7. Identify the following steps in that passage. Describe how these steps could help you not settle for your thoughts and ways.**
 - A. **RESPOND** to His availability Isaiah 55:6
 - B. **REPENT** of your thoughts and ways Isaiah 55:7a
 - C. **RETURN** to your maker Isaiah 55:7b
 - D. **RECEIVE** His plan Isaiah 55: 7b

4. **Pray for the new series Above and Beyond. Pray that as a church we would seek God’s thoughts and ways and not settle for our own thoughts and ways.**