

## **“It’s The Thought That Counts!”**

How often have we heard that expression? It usually comes after someone had good intentions to do something, but somehow came up short of accomplishing what their intention was, because they didn’t follow through to see the end result they hoped for. Thoughts and intentions are very similar words, and here’s something else we might have heard at one time or another, maybe after we’ve promised to do something and not followed through: *“The road to hell is paved with good intentions.”*

David and his men learned this lesson the hard way. David loved the Lord and had good intentions of bringing the Ark back to Jerusalem. With every intention of honoring God, he and 30,000 others, with much praise and celebration, loaded the Ark on a new cart. When they got to a rough spot, Uzzah reached over to steady the Ark and was struck dead! God had explicitly stated that the Ark was to be carried by its poles, period, so David and his followers discovered that it’s more than the thought that counts; even with good intentions, obedience matters!

Thankfully, because of the blood of Jesus, we won’t get struck dead if we mess up, or don’t follow through with our good intentions! But this really is something we need to think about from time to time: are we known as someone with good intentions who follows through with action, or do we continually fail to carry out those intentions? James 2:17 says: *“...faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action (works) is dead.”*(NIV) In the same way, good intentions, if not followed through with actions that bring about the desired results we intended, are useless!

God doesn’t reward good intentions, He rewards commitment. He doesn’t honor good thoughts, He honors good actions. Your spouse, your kids, your parents, your boss, your friends, your church - none of these are impressed with your good intentions if you don’t follow through on them. After James stated that faith without works is dead, he said *...I will show you my faith by what I do.* Our actions speak much louder than our words, thoughts, or intentions, so let your actions demonstrate your good thoughts and intentions! Amen!

And they learned that experiencing the Lord's presence and glory wouldn't be easy or convenient

As my friend Damon Thompson said, "If Christianity was intended to be convenient, it wouldn't have been built on crosses and martyrs." God's presence and glory aren't stumbled onto by happenstance, nor are they found by the casual seeker. They're discovered when sought after, with passion and intentionality.