

# Isaiah 55:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

## Analysis

**Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.** This verse specifies the response required to seeking God (v. 6): repentance. Two parallel commands address external behavior ("forsake his way," *ya'azov...darko*, יַעֲזֹב...דַּרְכּוֹ) and internal attitude ("forsake...thoughts," *machshevotav*, מַחֲשֵׁבוֹתָיו). Both outward conduct and inward mindset must change. "Return" (*veyashuv*, וַיָּשָׁב) is the classic Hebrew term for repentance—turning back to God from wandering.

The dual promise motivates repentance: "he will have mercy" (*viyerachamehu*, וַיִּרְחַמֵּהוּ) and "will abundantly pardon" (*yarbeh lisloach*, יִרְבֶּה לְסַלֹּחַ, literally "multiply to forgive"). *Racham* (רָחַם) means compassion; *salach* (סָלַח) means pardon/forgive. The abundance—"multiply to forgive"—emphasizes unlimited divine forgiveness. No sin is too great, no repetition too frequent for God's pardoning grace.

From a Reformed perspective, this verse presents both human responsibility (forsake, return) and divine initiative (mercy, pardon). True repentance involves both outward reformation and inward transformation—not merely behavior modification but renewed thinking (Romans 12:2). The abundant pardon grounds assurance—believers don't earn forgiveness by adequate repentance, but receive

superabundant grace. This verse refutes both cheap grace (no repentance needed) and works-righteousness (repentance earns forgiveness).

## Historical Context

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The call to forsake wickedness and return addressed Israel's idolatry and covenant violations that led to exile. Prophets consistently called for repentance (Jeremiah 3:12-14, 18:11, Ezekiel 18:30-32). The return from exile required spiritual renewal, not merely physical relocation. Ezra 9-10 and Nehemiah 9 record post-exilic repentance movements.

The New Testament picks up this language: John the Baptist called for repentance (Matthew 3:2), as did Jesus (Mark 1:15) and the apostles (Acts 2:38, 3:19). Church history shows genuine revivals always involve repentance—Reformation confessions of sin, Wesley's holiness emphasis, modern awakenings. The abundant pardon becomes practically experienced when believers genuinely forsake wickedness and return to God, discovering His mercy exceeds their sin.

## Related Passages

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**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

## Study Questions

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1. What specific ways and thoughts does God call you to forsake?
2. How does 'abundantly pardon' address your fears about repeated sins or serious failures?
3. What prevents you from returning to God—pride, shame, unbelief in His mercy?

## Interlinear Text

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יַעַזֵב	רָשָׁע	וְאִישׁ דֶּרֶךְ	אִן	מַחְשַׁבֹתָיו	
forsake	Let the wicked	his way	man	and the unrighteous	his thoughts
H5800	H7563	H1870	H376	H205	H4284
וְיָשׁוּב	אֵל	יְהוָה	וַיִּרְחַמֵּהוּ	וְאֵל	
and let him return	H413	unto the LORD	and he will have mercy	H413	
H7725		H3068	H7355		
אֲלֵהּ וְעַל	כִּי	יִרְבֶּה	לְסִלּוֹתָם		
upon him and to our God	H3588	for he will abundantly	pardon		
H430		H7235	H5545		

## Additional Cross-References

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**Proverbs 28:13** (Grace): He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

**Luke 15:10** (References God): Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

**Isaiah 44:22** (Parallel theme): I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.

**Jonah 3:10** (Evil): And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

**Isaiah 43:25** (Parallel theme): I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

**2 Chronicles 7:14** (Evil): If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

**Acts 3:19** (References Lord): Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

**Jeremiah 4:14** (Evil): O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?

**Ezekiel 33:11** (Evil): Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

**Matthew 9:13** (Grace): But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

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