



### Part 3: Getting it Right

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**Fasting:** The spiritual discipline of going without food for the sake of prayer focused on of spiritual breakthrough.

#### **Isaiah 58:1-5** (*underline the word "seem"*)

"Shout it aloud, do not hold back. Raise your voice like a trumpet.

Declare to my people their rebellion and to the descendants of Jacob their sins.

For day after day they seek me out; they seem eager to know my ways, as if they were a nation that does what is right and has not forsaken the commands of its God.

They ask me for just decisions and seem eager for God to come near them.

'Why have we fasted,' they say, 'and you have not seen it?'

Why have we humbled ourselves, and you have not noticed?'

"Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers.

Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife, and in striking each other with wicked fists.

You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high.

Is this the kind of fast I have chosen, only a day for people to humble themselves?

Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed and for lying in sackcloth and ashes?

Is that what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD?

**Assumption:** Godly discipline should bring about godly outcomes.

**Issue:** Spiritual discipline with the wrong motivation is beneficial but not optimal.

**Rehash:** Matthew 6:16-18

**Disconnect:** Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices – mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law – justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. – Matthew 23:23

#### **Isaiah 58:6-7**

"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:

to loose the chains of injustice  
and untie the cords of the yoke,

to set the oppressed free  
and break every yoke?

Is it not to share your food with the hungry  
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—

when you see the naked, to clothe them,

and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

*(Continues on back)*

## Challenge: Aligning my heart with the heart of God

**Result:** What happens when I align my heart with the heart of God:

**Isaiah 58:8-14** (*underline the word "will"*)

Then your light will break forth like the dawn,  
and your healing will quickly appear;  
then your righteousness will go before you,  
and the glory of the LORD will be your  
rear guard.

Then you will call, and the LORD will answer;  
you will cry for help, and he will say:  
Here am I.

"If you do away with the yoke of oppression,  
with the pointing finger and malicious talk,  
and if you spend yourselves in behalf of  
the hungry  
and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,  
then your light will rise in the darkness,  
and your night will become like the noonday.

The LORD will guide you always;  
he will satisfy your needs in a sun-  
scorched land  
and will strengthen your frame.

You will be like a well-watered garden,

like a spring whose waters never fail.

Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins  
and will raise up the age-old foundations;  
you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls,  
Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.

"If you keep your feet from breaking  
the Sabbath  
and from doing as you please on my  
holy day,

if you call the Sabbath a delight  
and the LORD's holy day honorable,  
and if you honor it by not going your own way  
and not doing as you please or speaking  
idle words,

then you will find your joy in the LORD, and  
I will cause you to ride in triumph on the  
heights of the land  
and to feast on the inheritance of your  
father Jacob."

For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

### Practical Ways to Put this Into Practice

• **Participate in the Season of Service opportunity.** (see details in today's program)

• **Fast and meet a need where God has placed you**

*Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as you can.*

— John Wesley

• **Do the right thing for the right reason**

*"By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*

—John 13:35

### Small Group Questions



- 1) What has been the highlight of your summer so far?
- 2) Can you think of a time when you found yourself doing the right thing for the wrong reason?
- 3) Take some time and analyze your prayers. How many of them have to do with you and your personal protection? What is one big God-sized prayer you can add that is "other-centered" and will take a miracle to answer? Make that your request today!
- 4) Read the promises from the last portion of Isaiah. How do those promises change the way in which you will pray?
- 5) Read the last verse of Isaiah 58. What day is your Sabbath? How is it different than any other day?
- 6) How can we pray for you today?