

III. SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE OF **FASTING**, PT 1

1. Introduction

- What is getting in the way of you seeking God and looking like Christ? Get rid of that!
- It is easy to become so focused on the mechanics that we lose sight of the master
 - i. Focus on the why rather than the how.
 - ii. Handout that covers the how.

2. Why Fast?

We must learn to bring under control that which seeks to control us.

- The sin of Adam and Eve was to exalt their will over God's. This was manifested in the indulgence of their _____

Genesis 3:6

I John 2:15-17

- Subduing Our Will – Prioritizing of God

The Word of God must take precedence over our flesh

Matthew 4:4

We must humble ourselves before God –

John 6:26-27

- Subduing Our Flesh - Mastery of the Physical

Sin of over-indulgence

Luke 21:34

Lordship over appetites

Philippians 3:17-21

Fasting for Spiritual Formation

Introduction

- Fasting should be an act of worship that expresses a sincere desire to draw closer to God.
- Fasting is not religious ritual but a spiritual discipline that brings about spiritual formation – the shaping of a life into the image of Christ.
- Isaiah 58 is a case study on fasting as a tool for Spiritual formation and what hinders it.

Read Isaiah 58:1-12

- I. **God tells the preacher to boldly confront the people about their sinful attitudes (Is. 58:1)**
- II. **God exposes their shallow worship as the reason for his rejection of their worship: They are only interested in *looking* the part (Is. 58:2,3):**
 - False piety
 - Seem delighted to learn about me
 - Act righteous
 - Pray pretending to want relationship
 - The people are complaining that God is not hearing their prayers. They point to the observance of their religious rituals as their right to have their prayers answered
 - ✓ Compare 2 Timothy 3:1-5
- III. **God tells them why they are empty (Is. 58:3b)**
 - Engage in spiritual disciplines as religious rituals without spiritual substance.
 - You are not seeking to know God; you are seeking to meet your own needs.
- IV. **Your religious rituals are having no impact on the condition of your heart and relationships.** God didn't accept their fasting when it wasn't connected with a sincere heart of obedience. **(Is. 58:3b-5)**
 - Exploiting your employees
 - Praying and fasting, but not seeking peace
 - Unlike what Christ would do (Romans 12:14-18)
 - They were engaging in rituals to be seen and praised by others for their piety
 - Unlike what Christ would do (Matthew 6:5-6)
 - "This kind" of spiritual ritualization does not result in spiritual formation and deeper relationship with God.

V. **How does God expect us to engage in spiritual disciplines? (Is. 58:6-7)**

- Being right with God begins with being right with people.
- Spiritual disciplines should bring you into alignment with the heart of God.
 - ✓ Eye for Justice
 - ✓ Heart of Compassion
 - ✓ Commitment to Service
- Most important commandments?
 - ✓ God tells His people, "If you want to fast the way that pleases Me, begin with getting right with your brothers and sisters. Stop oppressing others, and reach out to help others."
 - ✓ How can we say we love God when we fail to love his people and act justly like He would do (Micah 6:6-8)
- Matthew 25:40-45

VI. **Engaging in the spiritual disciplines as an act of worship will result in personal transformation. (Isaiah 58:8-12)**

This passage shows several characteristics of a life right with God.

([source](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/archives/guzik_david/StudyGuide_Isa/Isa_58.cfm) - https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/archives/guzik_david/StudyGuide_Isa/Isa_58.cfm)

- It is an **enlightened** life: *Your light shall dawn in the darkness.*
- It is a **guided** life: *The LORD will guide you continually.*
- It is a **satisfied** life: *And satisfy your soul in drought.*
- It is a **fragrant** life: *Like a watered garden.*
- It is a **freshly sustained** life: *Like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.*
- It is a **productive, healing** life: *You shall build up the old waste places.*