

## **ENTERING IN THROUGH FASTING**

***“So He said to them, “This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.” (Mark 9:29 NKJV)***

**Fasting can break the chains of darkness and help place one’s heart in a position to discern properly including God’s guidance. There are many motives why a Christian chooses to fast. The most common incorrect ones have to do with 1.) justification and 2.) manipulation. Man carries subconscious guilt and tries to purge and purify himself through fasting as a means to “obtain God.” Perhaps some do this unknowingly because their faith level is directly tied to “feeling clean” and accepted by God. This of course is not a proper motive for fasting, but even in our wrong understanding, God honors our desire for Himself. We are accepted only because of Jesus Christ, and Who He is, not because of who we try to be.**

**In the need for guidance and answers, some have a subconscious drive to fast in order to manipulate. They use fasting as a subtle way to persuade God to give them answers. This does not please Him, but in His infinite mercy He may still answer because He knows our desire and need for His guidance.**

**Of course fasting is an acceptable means for discerning His guidance and hearing from Him. (Acts 13:2) But the Lord chose fasting to prepare man’s heart to hear and receive, not to prepare or sway God.**

**The following is a breakdown of the pattern of the Isaiah 58 fast. It can be divided into three descriptions: 1. Its format 2. Its promises 3. Its result.**

# THE FORMAT OF GOD'S FAST

(Isaiah 58)

*"Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens, To let the oppressed go free, And that you break every yoke?" (Isaiah 58:6 NKJV)*

## 1. SHARE YOUR SUSTENANCE WITH THE NEEDY (verse 7)

### *Literal*

- a. Divide your bread with the hungry
- b. Bring the homeless poor into your house
- c. When you see the naked, to cover him
- d. Don't hide yourself from your own flesh

### *Spiritual*

- a. Share God's Words with those in famine
- b. Pray for the captive to come home
- c. Forgive and cover your brother's sin
- d. Pray for your family



## **2. TAKE AWAY OPPRESSIVE HEAVINESS (verse 9B)**

### *Literal*

- a. Remove the yoke from your midst
- b. Remove the pointing of the finger
- c. Remove speaking wickedness

### *Spiritual*

- a. Don't oppress others - not only in deed, but in thought and expectations
- b. Do not criticize or judge your brother's walk
- c. Pray and think kind words

## **3. SPEND YOUR OWN ENERGY FOR THE NEEDY (verse 10 NASB)**

### *Literal*

- a. Give yourself to the hungry
- b. Satisfy the desire of the afflicted

### *Spiritual*

- a. Lay aside your own goals for those hungry for God
- b. Give hope to those in torment





## THE PROMISES OF GOD'S FAST

### 1. LOOSE THE DARKNESS (verse 8 and 10B)

*Physical, spiritual or emotional deliverance from darkness:*

- a. Your light will break out like the dawn
- b. Your light will rise in the darkness
- c. Your gloom will become like midday

### 2. QUICK HEALING (verse 8 NASB)

*Healing for body, mind, soul, emotions, spirit:*

- a. Your recovery will speedily spring forth

### 3. YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM WILL GUIDE YOU (verse 8B, 11, 9)

*He will answer your plea for understanding:*

- a. Your righteousness will go before you
- b. The glory of the Lord will be your rear guard
- c. You will call, and the Lord will answer



d. You will cry, and He will say, Here am I

#### **4. QUENCH THIRST AND STRENGTH (verse 11)**

*In trying times, He will give physical and spiritual strength and refreshment:*

- a. He will satisfy your desire in scorched places
- b. And give strength to your bones
- c. You will be like a watered garden
- d. Like a spring of water whose waters do not fail

#### **5. RESTORATION OF THE FALLEN (verse 12 NASB)**

*You will repair other's brokenness:*

- a. Those from among you will rebuild the ruins
- b. You will rise up the age-old foundations
- c. You will be called the repairer of the breach
- d. The restorer of the streets in which to dwell

# THE RESULT AND PURPOSE OF THE FAST

## 1. DELIVERANCE (verse 6 NASB)

*Break satan's chains that immobilize, restrict, and restrain us from freedom:*

- a. Loosen the bonds of wickedness
- b. Undo the bands of the yoke
- c. Let the oppressed go free
- d. Break every yoke



In today's culture there can be many indulgences. One can have an appetite for that morning cup of coffee, for that TV show, for the closest parking place, for reading the newspaper, being the first in line, or for sleeping in. There are many places of indulgence of the flesh that can be yielded in relation to a fast. The strength of the yielding is totally reliant upon the passion an individual has for whatever is given up.

I describe fasting as a type of purging, cleansing, or emptying oneself of the pampering things that are not supernaturally imparted by God. It is letting go of the "physical" in earnest desire of the "spiritual." The desire for the spiritual, meaning God's spiritual answer or provision over mankind's answer or provision.

The most important key to fasting before the Lord is the heart. A fast is **not** intended to:

1. Manipulate God into responding *"Why have we fasted and Thou dost not see? Why have we humbled ourselves and Thou dost not notice?" (Isaiah 58:3 NASB)*
2. Enter into a tug o'war, battling wills with Him...*they ask Me for just decisions...* (cont) *us 2 NASB*
3. Provide justification of oneself through cleansing *"...as {if they were} a nation that has done righteousness, And has not forsaken the ordinance of their God" (us 2 NASB)*

Rather, the proper response of the heart is the voluntary emptying, pouring out, abasing, humbling of self, IN THE INSIDE, before the Presence of Almighty God. It is letting go of the sustenance of self, yielding to Him. With or without the physical characteristics of a fast, the Lord hearkens to the heart.

When the heart is right before the Lord, one will not oppress others, and seek self-satisfaction, as recorded in Isaiah 58:3. When the true humility before the Lord comes from the heart, it will show on the outside. For instance, how we live and treat others.

In summary, the promises of the fast the Lord chooses in Isaiah 58 are to disperse darkness, quicken healing, provide guidance, quench thirst, restore strength and restore that which has fallen. Results are often deliverance for the fasting one, or for whom he is fasting.

The concepts of how to seek and receive from the Lord are some of what we can personally do to hear more from the Lord. Few people, if any, will comply one hundred percent to any of them. God is a very loving and merciful God. And He understands our weakness. Regardless of our shortcomings, He wants so deeply to reach us on our own personal level. So, do not let guilt or condemnation disqualify you from seeking the Lord to hear more from Him! He loves you exactly the way you are and wants to have fellowship with you. The deeper you crave His fellowship the deeper and more accountable your life will become. The Christian walk is a growing, maturing process from infancy to adulthood. We can't learn to walk until we learn to stand. We can't run, if we haven't learned to walk. And believe me, God is there cheering us every step of the way.

