

Isaiah 58:1-12 (NIV)

¹ 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.

² 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.

³ '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. ⁴ 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.

⁵ Is this the kind of fast I have chosen, only a day for people to humble themselves? Is it only 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?

⁶ 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?

⁷ 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?

⁷ 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. ⁹ 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, ¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ 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.

¹² Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, and Restorer of Streets of Dwellings.

Isaiah 58:2 “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.”

ARTIFICIAL WORSHIP

1. Trying to MANIPULATE God for personal benefit.

Isaiah 58:3a “‘Why have we fasted,’ they say, ‘and you have not seen it? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you have not noticed?’ ...”

2. Trying to SEPARATE my private life from my spiritual life.

Isaiah 58:3b-4 “³ ...Yet on the day of your fasting, **you do as you please** and exploit all your workers. ⁴ 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.”

RESULTS:

A. I will ABHOR others.

Isaiah 58:4a “Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife, and in striking each other with wicked fists ...”

B. God will IGNORE me.

Isaiah 58:4b “... You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high.”

AUTHENTIC WORSHIP

1. Serving the LEAST.

Isaiah 58:6-7 “⁶ 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? ⁷ 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?”

2. Putting my needs LAST.

Isaiah 58:10 “... 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.”

RESULTS:

A. God will BLESS His people.

Isaiah 58:7-11 “⁷ **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. ⁹ **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, ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ 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.”

B. God's people will be a BLESSING.

Isaiah 58:12 “Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, and Restorer of Streets of Dwellings.”

BOTTOM LINE: Authentic worship is really about LOVING God by LOVING other people.

COMMUNION

Ephesians 4:16-19 “¹⁶ I pray that out of HIS glorious riches HE may strengthen you with power through HIS Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that CHRIST may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established IN HIS LOVE, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all of the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the LOVE OF CHRIST, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fulness of God.” (NIV)

BENEDICTION

Ephesians 3:20-21 “²⁰ Now to Him who is able to do immeasurable more than all we ask or imagine, according to HIS POWER that is at work within us, ²¹ to HIM be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.” (NIV)