

Series: Why We Do What We Do

Lesson: Why We Fast

1co 9:25 And every man that **striveth for the mastery** is **temperate** in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

- Temperance is an important part of our witness

1co 9:26 I therefore so run, **not as uncertainly**; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

1co 9:27 But **I keep under my body**, and **bring it into subjection**: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be **a castaway**.

Spiritually, fasting:

- Increases spiritual **sensitivity** [makes hearing God easier]
- Repositions the spirit man to **life-leadership**
- Gives us **advantage over principle** demons [some cometh out by]
- Empowers us to break **besetting sins**

Emotionally fasting:

- Brings the mind under control
- Kills sinful emotional desires [self-will, self-centeredness, self-righteousness]
- Calms the emotional “chatter”
- Gets your feeling off your sleeves

Physically fasting:

- Cleanses the body from toxins
- Takes food off the throne of our lives [helps to develop **temperance**]
- Kills unhealthy desires of the fleshly man
- Helps you to get the extra people from around your waist

2 Different kind of fasts: Partial & absolute

- In a partial fast “something” is given up in a demonstration of temperance and humility towards God.
- In an absolute fast “everything” is given up, as an extreme act of humility and hunger for God

Fasting is about the **denial of oneself in an act of humility** towards God [not a formula]

Most who “**wrangle**” about how we fast don’t even fast themselves

Military discipline [drop your gun during training?] pick it up!

Isa 58:3 Wherefore **have we fasted**, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast **ye find pleasure**, and **exact all your labours**.

- Irreverent / ignorant fasting will not work [**complaining**]
- Fasting is a time of mourning and brokenness
- During Absolute fasts-no pleasurable thing should be done [off work if possible]

Isa 58:4 Behold, ye **fast for strife and debate**, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high.

- You do not fast to boast of spirituality!
- Fasting is an act of humility [boasting makes it an act of pride]
- This was Jesus' reasoning:

Mt 6:16 **Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.**

Mt 6:17 **But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;**

Mt 6:18 **That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.**

•

Isa 58:5 Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to **afflict** his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?

Isa 58:6 Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to **loose the bands of wickedness**, to undo **the heavy burdens**, and to let the **oppressed go free**, and that ye **break every yoke**?

- Fasting looses the believer from besetting sin
- Removed burdens and spiritual weights [worry, fear, etc]
- Free those under oppressions of devils [explain]
- Breaks yokes [controlling spirits] bondages in works [patterns]

Isa 58:7 Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

- Fasting softens the heart to reposition us in acts of love and a life of love
- It gets you out of self
- It breaks your heart and will over the condition of others

Isa 58:8 Then shall thy **light break forth** as the morning, and **thine health** shall spring forth speedily: and **thy righteousness** shall go before thee; the **glory of the LORD** shall be thy rereward.

- Fasting enlightens the countenance
- Brings forth health where there was illness
- Makes righteousness easier to walk out
- Positions us for the manifested presence of God

Isa 58:9 Then **shalt thou call**, and the **LORD shall answer**; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, **Here I am**. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;

- Fasting gives you back “confidence” in calling
- Makes you quicker to hear
- Makes locating God easier [GPS]

Why is it a corporate mandate [and encouraged privately]:

2Chron 20:3 Jehosephat proclaims a fast that includes all the people of God

Ezra 8:21 Ezra proclaims a fast for all the people

Jer 36:9 Johoikim proclaims a fast for all the people

Jonah 3:5 King of Ninevah and people proclaimed fast

1. Humility during times of growth and transition
2. Corporate victory!
3. An atmosphere where people are true to themselves
4. Following the biblical example of success with God [Paul-fasting often / David]
5. To keep “leaven” out of the fellowship
6. To keep the partners from underneath [witchcraft etc...]