



—WHY— FAST



Selected Scripture

- The only fast commanded in Scripture is connected with the Day of Atonement and is found in Leviticus 16:29.
- Jesus gave no command to fast and did not mention a particular time, place, or method of fasting (cf. Matthew 4:2; 6:16-18; 9:15)
- Fasting in the New Testament
(Lk. 2:37; Acts 13:2; 14:23; 2 Corinthians 11:27)



Matthew 6:16-18

¹⁶ “And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷ But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”



Some Thoughts to Consider

- “Fasting must forever center in God. It must be God-initiated and God ordained.” (R. Foster, “Celebration of Discipline, 1978, page 48)
- The avoidance of display (Matthew 6:16-18)
- The importance of fasting:
 - As it connects with prayer and repentance (1 Sam.7:5,6)
 - As it reveals our need for self-control (Psalm 69:10)
 - As it is reflected in our lives (Isaiah 58:1ff)



Isaiah 58:1-11

¹ “Cry aloud; do not hold back; lift up your voice like a trumpet; declare to my people their transgressions, to the house of Jacob their sins.

² Yet they seek me daily and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that did righteousness and did not forsake the judgment of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments; they delight to draw near to God.



Isaiah 58:1-11

³ 'Why have we fasted, and you see it not? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you take no knowledge of it?' Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure, and oppress all your workers. ⁴ Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to hit with a wicked fist. Fasting like yours this day will not make your voice to be heard on high.



Isaiah 58:1-11

⁵ Is such the fast that I choose, a day for a person to humble himself? Is it to bow down his head like a reed, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Will you call this a fast, and a day acceptable to the LORD? ⁶ “Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?”



Isaiah 58:1-11

⁷ Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? ⁸ Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.



Isaiah 58:1-11

⁹ Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, 'Here I am.' If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, ¹⁰ if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday.



Isaiah 58:1-11

¹¹ And the LORD will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.





—WHY— FAST

