



## **iFast58**

### **Summary:**

iFast58 is a grassroots movement to see believers all across the world “Spend themselves on behalf of the hungry” through dedicating one day a week to pray and fast for the poor, hungry and oppressed around the world as well as those who serve them. At the same time, we are memorizing Isaiah 58.

### **What we believe:**

Our motto is “Let Justice and Praise Become My Embrace” from the song “Inside Out” by Hillsong United. We want to be passionate about HIM and have that overflow into changing us from the inside out, turning us into people of compassion that identify with the poor and needy as well as act to “loose the chains of injustice”

### **Rules:**

There are none! Fasting is a personal decision. We are not listing out what fasting may or may not be for you. You can choose what you want to give up. The basic idea is go without so that you hunger in some way and can use that physical ache to both remind you of others across the world who experience that everyday as well as turn you to Jesus. Some people fast 1 meal a day, some all meals.. .still others fast a specific food or even activity. What you fast is up to you!

We encourage you to fast something and let your hunger turn you towards HIM.

We encourage you in following Isaiah 58 and the reprimand that is given there and starting your day with confession.

We encourage you to FEAST on His word, it is there that our hunger is filled. Spend time in Isaiah 58 to start and then go from there filling up throughout your day on HIM.

We encourage you to be aware of your need. Allow that need to urge your spirit to intercede for those in need across the world. Don't ignore the physical pain, use it!

We encourage you to, if at all possible, join with others for corporate prayer.



**Resources:**

[www.iFast58.org](http://www.iFast58.org) is a site that allows you to join the community. You can subscribe to the group and get a prayer request list every Tuesday with requests from organizations across the world!

We have set up a conference call time for corporate prayer as well for those who would like to participate on Wednesdays at 9:30 am EST. (details are found at [www.iFast58.org](http://www.iFast58.org))

For many, the call to pray and fast for the poor, hungry and oppressed throughout the world may be a new idea. While reading Isaiah 58, you will see that God calls our hearts to be moved and also for us to ACT. There is a list of organizations that have been a part of iFast58 from its inception and we would love to encourage you to check these organizations out if you are looking for a way to ACT OUT what you are learning!



## **Week 1: Harsh Reprimand**

### **Read Aloud Isaiah 58**

This chapter of God's word starts out with some fairly harsh words to a church. Truthfully, I'd like to skip over the "declare to my people their rebellion" and head straight for the "and you will be like a well-watered garden" part. This week, however, we are going to camp out right in the midst of the reprimand.

### **Re-Read verses 1-5 as a group**

At first glance this people group seem to be a great church! They seek after God and even ask Him for just decisions. . .yet Isaiah paints a different story in the next lines.

- Do we see people or even ourselves who "seek after God and seem eager to know His ways" and assume that they are ok?
- Does the characterization of them as a nation that has forsaken the commands of it's god cause me to pause and reflect "is this me?"?
- Discuss "seem eager" – how can we "seem eager" and not really BE eager

### **Identify the Rebellion**

Identify what this chapter lists as possible "commands" that have been forsaken and then go to scripture to prove that they involved sin. Have the group find verses that match up to the rebellion.

1. Do as you please
2. Exploit all your workers
3. Quarreling and strife
4. Striking one another with wicked fists



### **Discuss**

Have you ever felt like the people listed in this chapter.~like you were doing the right thing but felt unnoticed or unseen by God. In view of this scripture can you think of reasons this may have been?

### **Introspection**

Read Psalm 139:23-24 and Play the song “Empty Me” by Chris Sligh.

Allow time for quiet introspection asking God to reveal to your heart where you have “seemed eager” but have not been following the commands of your God.

Specifically ask about the commands we have discussed today.

Ask the group if they’d like to share specific areas the Lord brought to their minds. Remind each one as they confess of 1 John 1:9 and the cleansing that comes.

Dismiss with the challenge to memorize the first 5 verses.

Challenge them to fast one meal this week and spend that time in prayer, actively seeking out how to pray and fast not as a religious activity, but one that connects them to the Father’s Heart.



## **Week 2: I Have Chosen!**

### **Recap**

Last week we looked at verses 1 – 5. Isaiah started with a reprimand saying, “Fasting like yours this day will not make your voice to be heard on high.” And he also says, “Will you call this a fast, and a day acceptable to the LORD?”

### **Read Aloud Isaiah 58: 6-7**

#### **What does Isaiah have to say next?**

He begins verse 6 with a clear directive. Isaiah is saying, “Is this not the fast I have chosen...”

What are the implications of that?

What does your fasting look like (what should it look like)?

We often find ourselves doing our own thing when God wants us to focus in a totally different direction. Look at Paul’s words in Romans 7:15, “For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.”

When have you done things you know God did not want you to do?

What was the result of that in your life?

### **Let’s do an exercise**

1. List the things He desires – you can start with verses 6&7 but feel free to branch out
2. Find every scripture/story from God’s Word that you can find which supports it
3. Make it practical...ask the questions "who are the oppressed?" "how can I help?"



## **Thoughts**

In many cases, God gives us clear direction on what he would have us do in areas of prayer, fasting, and other spiritual disciplines. There is no guesswork!

Consider Romans 12:2, “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

## **Where do you go from here?**

First memorize Isaiah 58: 6-7

Consider your next fast – start with one meal but “HYPER” focus on the things that we know are important to God (if you have experience you can do more than one meal)

Share that experience with the group next week

Know that disciplines don't come easy and don't be too hard on yourself as you begin



## **Week 3: If and Then**

### **Recap**

Last week we looked at verses 6-7 and found out a few things about what GOD cares about. How did the idea of God's heart for the poor, hungry and oppressed impact you this week?

**Read Aloud Isaiah 58, asking each member to notice and underline the uses of the words "if" and "then"**

### **Discuss the implications of these words**

God is clearly laying out promises for those who follow His principles.

Are these promises we want to see in our own lives?

Do the "if" principles scare us more than the "then" principles inspire us?

What is holding me back from seeking this out in my own life?

### **Let's do an exercise**

5. Find every "IF" principle. Pay careful attention to verses 5-7 which do not contain the actual word "if" but imply it by the use of the word "then" in verse 8. Underline every "IF" principle as you find it.
6. Find every "THEN" promise. Circle them as you find them, with an arrow pointing back to the "IF" principle.

### **Choose**

Discuss each of the IF principles asking questions about where we succeed and fall short in applying them. Which ones scare us the most? Which ones seem most costly?

Discuss each THEN principle. Which one would you most like to see in your life?



### **Doctor's Orders**

Just like a doctor would write out a prescription for you IF you want to get better THEN you better take this medicine. Do the same for yourselves. First, identify the THEN that you'd like to see in your life. Now, back it up and determine to see that IF principle incorporated into your life. Write it out and share it as a group. If needed, spend time brainstorming ways to do this

### **Listen to "Solution" by Hillsong United**

Dismiss with the challenge to memorize the rest of the chapter as well as ACT on their prescriptions and spend a day in prayer and fasting for the poor, hungry and oppressed this week.



## **Week 4: The Conclusion**

**Sing the song “Hungry” – Kathryn Scott**

### **Read Aloud Isaiah 58**

Over the past 3 weeks, we have looked at man’s approach to fasting and God’s approach. We have studied the “heart” of God. We have looked through the lens of Isaiah to see that God is passionate about the poor, the oppressed, the naked and the homeless. We have learned that God our natural instinct is to pursue our own desires and selfish motivation even within the context of practicing spiritual disciplines. We have also learned that God is merciful and gives us grace. That grace empowers us to know His heart and to feel His compassion. We get to be part of God’s love for the lost.

### **Discussion**

What were some of the “wrong” beliefs you held?  
How does God’s love show through in my fasting now?  
What was the turning point for you?

### **Reflection**

Take a moment to journal 4 key takeaways from this study

How it has changed your approach to the discipline of fasting  
How has it changed your perspective on God’s heart  
How will you share this experience with others  
What do you still need to give to God

### **Sharing**

Take a few minutes to share with the group what you have learned.



## **The Poor**

There is an unavoidable focus in scripture on the poor. Isaiah 58 is a “spotlight in the eyes” spiritually speaking it is a wake-up call that God wants us to identify and empathize with the poor. The Bible contains over 2000 verses on the poor.

How has this study changed your perspective on the poor and your role with them?

Close in prayer and commit to a weekly group fast