

## (1) An Opening THOUGHT

[Jesus] taught that the purpose of the traditions was to guide and warn, never to dominate or enslave (Matt. 23:3-4)... what counts are relationships of love and justice, which spring from a new heart (Jer. 31:33), not a conformity to codes of practice which may hide hatred, exploitation, deceit and violent intentions (Mark 7:14-15, 20-3).

J. Andrew Kirk | *What is Mission?*

## (3) Key POINTS

- God doesn't want your religious duty if he doesn't have your heart... he wants your heart
- A changed heart leads to changed attitudes, leads to changed actions, leads to changed lives.
- Jesus invites us to walk in these things with Him, through the Spirit.

## (2) Read the TEXT Together

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

Isaiah 58:1-5

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Do you have questions or comments about this resource?  
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**GROUPS RESOURCE**

A WEEKLY GUIDE TO HELP GROUPS FOLLOW JESUS TOGETHER

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## (4) Looking to the WORD

Read Isaiah 58.

- What do you notice about this passage? What is taking place?
- What is God upset about and what is His solution?
- What does this passage reveal about God's character?

Read Luke 4:18-21

- How does this passage relate to Isaiah 58? What significant parallels are being drawn?

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## (5) Looking at our WORLD

In Isaiah 58, the Israelites are criticized for missing the main values in their religious duties.

- Today, are there religious practices that seem to be missing the main value God intended them to have?

God desires us to follow him in practical ways, such as alleviating the struggles of the hurting.

- Are there things in our culture that make it difficult or draw us away from following God's heart in these ways?

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## (6) Looking at our LIVES

Brenton and Alaina shared with us about their experiences with foster parenting: the challenges, rewards, how God has changed their hearts through this experience, and more.

- What were some things that stood out to you in their interview?

Using the church body analogy, Brenton challenged us to think and pray about how God wants us to be part of His mission to the orphan, the widow, and the oppressed.

- How is God prompting you to be involved? Are there ways that your GROUP could move on this together?

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## (7) Looking AHEAD and PRAYING Together

Here are this week's On-Ramps:

- Ask Jesus to speak clearly to you about how this warning needs to rattle you today.
- Do you experience an intimacy with the Father that fills you with life and leads you into His heart and following Jesus on His mission? If not, ask for it!
- Ask Jesus to fill you with His Spirit and lead you into following Him on His mission.

In what ways might you act on these? Include this in your prayer time.