

Twenty-One Day Fast: Day Five

"Is this not the fast I have chosen..." by Bud Carrier

To begin today, please read Isaiah Chapter 58.

There are many passages in both the Old and New Testaments about God's desire that His people fast and pray. The spiritual benefits of a sincere fast are obvious and important in terms of drawing close to God and increasing our sensitivity to His voice. None of these passages are contradicted by God's statement in Isaiah 58:6 *"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 to break every yoke."* I believe that God's warning in this entire chapter is directed toward two temptations that can pull us off track as we fast:

1. Fasting, as with any other spiritual discipline, can become just an empty religious ritual, drawing us into the self righteous, prideful attitude of the Pharisees.
2. Fasting, as with any other spiritual discipline, can so consume our attention that we become blinded to the needs of others around us.

Let us pray that, during this 21 day period of fasting and prayer, we will become not prideful, but more humble, as we come closer to God and behold His greatness and majesty. Also, let us pray that we will understand, better than ever before, God's passionate, overwhelming love for people, a love so great that He sent His only Son to die for us and those around us. If we really grasp this love, we will be motivated to express His love in service to family, friends, and all with whom we come in contact. Then our fast will be *"the kind of fasting I (God) have chosen."*