



Are You Stuck in a Rut?

You've been a Christian for years and by Christian I mean you've confessed Jesus as your Lord and left your sinful life behind and gotten born again. Slowly over time you may have gotten busier and busier with work, home, or other commitments and it seems like your schedule is full, the energy is low, and you want to spend your free time just unwinding with the computer, television, or some hobby. You realize that you don't pray as much anymore and you're not involved with outreach projects, or go to prayer meetings as often.

Could it be possible that you've back-slidden but how do you know and what do you do? Your determination is renewed, so you begin some time in prayer and even some fasting but it doesn't seem like you're getting anything from the Lord. You suddenly feel distressed because you shudder at the thought of feeling any type of distance between you and the Lord so you start crying out to Him when you pray. You start fasting even more and crying out for God to speak to you. Why won't He answer you?! Have you crossed too far over a spiritual line? What now?

There is an answer in the Bible somewhere. Let's look at Isaiah 58:

¹"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins. ²Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God."

The verses above talk about God's people who approach Him but they have some type of sin against them. What sin? The people think they're not in sin.

³"Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? *wherefore* have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge?"

They seek God with fasting, focusing on self. Why hasn't God responded?

"Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours. ⁴Behold, 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. ⁵Is 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?"

The fast has become a religious expression of self. A spectacle. A contest of who is holy enough to get God's attention. To be holier than their neighbor, with the most points.

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? 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?"

God finally shines the light on what the problem is: focusing on self and not focusing on others who are less fortunate. God has put the power in His people to make a difference in other people's lives and it has not been put to use.

If a Christian who is in the rut of isolation from God will go out and do the simple work of the Lord, there will be breakthrough as the verses below illustrate:

⁸Then 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 reward. ⁹Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am."



The “sin” God’s people were guilty of was playing religion and not doing the simple work of the Lord. If you need a breakthrough, get back to the fundamentals. Don’t judge the less fortunate as lazy or whatever. Go minister to them. Show them Jesus in action. Don’t preach to them. If they wanted a sermon they could go to church where they could feel like everyone was judging them. That’s why most won’t go to church. It would be like going to a country club.

“If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; ¹⁰And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness *be* as the noonday:”

If you take care of God’s “least ones” then He will take care of you.

¹¹And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. ¹²And *they that shall be* of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.

The spiritual sabbath is a place of peace not to be disturbed with self. Spread the peace of Jesus.

¹³If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, *from* doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: ¹⁴Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken *it*.”

The equivalent New Testament scripture is from Matthew 25:

³¹When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: ³²And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats: ³³And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. ³⁴Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: ³⁵For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. ³⁷Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed *thee*? or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink? ³⁸When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee*? ³⁹Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? ⁴⁰And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me. ⁴¹Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: ⁴²For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: ⁴³I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. ⁴⁴Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? ⁴⁵Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me. ⁴⁶And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”

P.S. The spiritual manna of God’s word would be very fine cuisine for those who are spiritually hungry and not just physically hungry. (serve both hungers)