

# ISAIAH 58

## Lesson 47: "Hypocritical Religiosity versus Genuine Love for God and Neighbor"

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### MAIN IDEA

God exposes hypocritical fasting, calling his people to a genuine fast of loving the poor and delighting in him.

### SUMMARY

#### A. RECIPIENTS

- Possibly the Jews in Isaiah's time
- Possibly the Jews in Babylon or those after returning from the Exile in Babylon
- Possibly all Christians of all times<sup>1</sup>

#### B. THREE ISSUES

- Religious hypocrisy (especially when fasting)
- No mercy ministry (ignoring and oppressing the poor and needy)
- Abusing the Sabbath rest

#### C. TRUE RELIGION

- Love God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength (Deut. 6:5; Mark 12:30)
- Love others as much as you love yourself (Lev. 19:18; Mark 12:31)

## EIGHT WAYS TO TRULY HELP THE HOMELESS

The Central Union Mission offers the following guidelines for truly helping homeless people.<sup>2</sup>

### 1. Never give cash to a homeless person.

Too often, well intended gifts are converted to drugs or alcohol - even when the "hard luck" stories they tell are true. If the person is hungry, buy them a sandwich and a beverage.

### 2. Talk to the person with respect.

Taking time to talk to a homeless person in a friendly, respectful manner can give them a wonderful sense of civility and dignity. And besides being just neighborly, it gives the person a weapon to fight the isolation, depression and paranoia that many homeless people face.

<sup>1</sup> Mathew Henry Bible Commentary (complete).

< <https://www.christianity.com/bible/commentary.php?com=mh&b=23&c=58>>. Accessed January 27, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Central Union Mission, <[http://www.missiondc.org/changing-lives/eight\\_ways/](http://www.missiondc.org/changing-lives/eight_ways/)>. Accessed August 13, 2013.

**3. Recognize that homeless people (and their problems) are not all the same.**

The homeless are as diverse as the colors of a rainbow. The person you meet may be a battered woman, an addicted veteran, or someone who is lacking job skills...the list goes on.

**4. Share God's love whenever you can.**

If Jesus were walking the earth today, He would certainly spend time with the homeless. He would speak with them, heal them, and help them. Today, Jesus chooses to work through those who believe and follow Him.

**5. Pray for the homeless.**

Exposure to the elements, dirt, occasional violence, and lack of purpose all drain years from a person's life. God can use your prayers and the brutality and the futility of life of the street to bring many of the broken to Himself. Pray for them by name.

**6. Take precautions for your own safety.**

Some living on the streets are criminals and fugitives running from the law. Always be prudent while talking with street people. Stay in areas where other people can see you. Don't take unnecessary chances.

**7. Encourage the homeless to get help through your local Missions.**

Rescue missions that are members of the Association of Gospel Rescue Missions offer immediate food and shelter to the homeless through their emergency shelters. Many offer long-term rehabilitation programs that deal with the root causes of homeless. Many also offer "tickets" that can be given to homeless people which can be exchanged at the Mission for a nutritious meal, safe overnight lodging, and the option of participating in a rehab program.

**8. Support your local Mission.**

Most missions receive little or no government funding. They are supported by caring individuals, churches, businesses, and civic groups who see the value of sharing their resources with the less fortunate.

## **Local Missions Needing Your Support**

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River Street Shelter: Provides a 32-bed emergency shelter for homeless adult men and women. 115C Coral St, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, Near the corner of Hwy 9 & Hwy 1, (831) 459-6644.

Pajaro Rescue Mission: 111 Railroad Avenue, Watsonville, Ca 95076. Provides free food, shelter, clothing, shaves, showers and Biblical counseling for those in need. (408) 724-9576.

Valley Churches United: 9400 Hwy 9, Ben Lomond, CA 95005. Provides monthly food distribution for residents of the San Lorenzo Valley, and Scotts Valley. Provides emergency rent assistance, gas, food vouchers, utilities, and medical assistance, (831) 336-8258.

Second Harvest Food Bank: Provides food for those in need. 800 Ohlone Parkway; Watsonville, CA 95076. (831) 722-7110.