

day 1

ISAIAH 58:1-7

DWELL

It is so easy to make ourselves look like we're doing the right thing when really, we're doing the opposite. If we use the "right" words and say the "right" things, we can convince people that we care when we don't, or that we were paying attention when actually, our mind was wandering. That's exactly what the people of Israel were doing. On the surface, they were acting as though they were truly seeking out God's will. But God sees more than just what we want Him to see, and He knew that his people were acting in ways that showed they really didn't care about Him or His Word at all.



How were the people acting in ways that showed they didn't truly care about following God's will?



How should you pray and worship in light of these verses?

MEMORIZE

Ask a friend or family member to memorize Isaiah 58:11 with you this week. Quiz each other several times this week.

PRAY

Ask God to show you the areas of your life where you may be saying one thing but acting differently. Ask Him to help you repent.

day 2

ISAIAH 58:8-12

DWELL

When we worship God by serving and loving others in ways that show honor and glory to Him, we will experience transformation and blessings in our own lives. But we need to be careful that we don't view serving others as some sort of magic ticket to get what we want out of God. The point is that when we have a loving, trusting relationship with God, and act in ways that show we are listening to Him and understand what He values, then we will experience God truly leading, guiding, and strengthening us.



According to these verses, what are some of the blessings of a right relationship with God?



What are some ways that you could serve others today?

MEMORIZE

Break Isaiah 58:11 down into several parts, and work on reciting each part one at a time from memory before trying to recite the whole verse.

PRAY

Pray that God would show you people in your life who you could love and serve this week.

day 3

ISAIAH 59:1-9

DWELL

How were the people of Israel behaving according to these verses?



How were these actions in conflict with a healthy relationship with God?

These verses describe some of the ways that the people of Israel were being hypocrites—saying they cared about God and His will, but acting in ways that showed the opposite. Isaiah told them it wasn't that God couldn't hear them or save them, but that their sins and their hypocrisy had separated them from God. Have you ever had a fight with someone you cared about and left the issue unresolved? Things were probably uncomfortable between you until you made things right again. The same thing was happening here—the people of Israel would not be able to fully enjoy God's blessings until they made things right with Him.

MEMORIZE

Use a dry erase marker to write Isaiah 58:11 on a mirror you use every day or write it on a notebook card and tape it to the mirror. Erase or mark out a few words each day until you've memorized the whole verse.

PRAY

Ask God to help you follow Him with your whole heart: in your words as well as in your actions.

day 4

MATTHEW 6:1-8

DWELL

What things did Jesus say that hypocrites did? Why did Jesus warn His followers to not do these things?



Verses 3-4 and verse 6 repeat similar phrases. What are they? Why do you think these phrases are repeated?

Jesus told His disciples to not act in ways that seemed righteous on the surface, drawing attention to themselves so that people would think they were good. This wasn't true righteousness. Instead, they should do righteous deeds privately—their good deeds should be between them and God. This may seem confusing—aren't we supposed to show Jesus to others through the way we live? The real problem isn't one of secrecy. Jesus was warning His disciples to not show off. We cannot truly serve God if what we care most about is the approval of other people. The One whose approval we should care about is God.

MEMORIZE

Go somewhere quiet and read Isaiah 58:11 aloud several times. Note key words and think of images or hand motions to help you memorize the verse.

PRAY

Pray that God would forgive you for the times you sought approval from humans instead of from Him.

day 5

ROMANS 12:1-2

DWELL

Paul tells his readers to "present your bodies as a living sacrifice" (v.1). The word "sacrifice" brings to mind the Old Testament system of animal sacrifices, but Paul does not mean that we need to do something in exchange for our sin. Jesus' death on the cross and His resurrection has put an end to that system, once and for all! Instead, Paul means that the truest way we can worship God is with our lives—by voluntarily choosing to live in a way that honors Him. Paul also goes on to give two instructions for how to carry out this "living sacrifice": (1) to stop following the ways of this world and (2) to let our minds be transformed through our devotion to God and His ways.



What does it mean to be "conformed to this age" (v. 2)? List some examples from today's world.



What are some ways that you could be a "living sacrifice"? How can you pray for God to help you?

MEMORIZE

Check in with your friend or family member from Day 1 and continue to challenge each other to commit Isaiah 58:11 to memory.

PRAY

Ask God to show you His "good, pleasing, and perfect will."