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**Is There a Bare Minimum and Is It Good Enough?**

Zechariah 7

*Fasting and feasting and flint hard hearts*

While God is anxious to see his people return to the original intention to be a blessing to the nations; some of them are wondering if exile is over and if they can stop their “urgent” fasting.

*“Should I mourn and fast in the fifth month, as I have done for so many years?” 7:3*

When we bear a minimalist approach to our relationship with God, it may be laying bare deeper heart issues…

*Your fasts and feasts (religious activities) may not be renewing your situation, because, in your living, you continue to put your relationships with one another and God at risk.*

**Purpose of fasting** 🡪 “**nazar**”- to deny oneself; to feel what it is to do without; to get serious about sin by teaching oneself how to say no to physical cravings; to tell God you take him seriously.

God questions Israel’s sincerity because of their behaviour—***Religious rituals that grab God’s attention…***

1. ***Affect the way you treat people***
* Justice should be the same for everyone
* In your justice get good at the spirit of the law, and not just the “letter of”
* Stop oppressing the vulnerable
* Stop demonstrating a plot mentality toward your brothers
1. ***Affect the way you treat God***
* A stiff neck becomes pliable
* Stopped ears are open
* Flint hard hearts are softened

**Otherwise…** When you call to God,…

* he will not listen
* he will fling you back out among strangers
* his promises to you will dry up

*God’s passion intersecting with his people’s obedience always means blessing for the world.*