

Affair–Proof Your Marriage & Hope For Singles

by Shane Idleman

This sermon emphasizes the importance of prayer and fasting in strengthening marriages and seeking God's will. It highlights the significance of waiting on God, engaging in spiritual warfare through prayer, and the transformative power of genuine repentance and belief in the gospel.

Scripture: Isaiah 40:31, Matthew 17:21, Ephesians 6:12, James 5:16, 2 Chronicles 7:14, Mark 9:29, 1 John 1:9, Romans 12:12, Psalm 51:10, Philippians 4:6

Topics: "Prayer and Fasting", "Strengthening Marriages"

Description

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Transcript

This morning is the PG version, or maybe G version. I'll go easy. It's in 1 Corinthians chapter seven.

1 Corinthians chapter seven. I went back and forth on many different titles, but we ended up with this one, a fair proof your marriage. A fair proof your marriage.

And then I know half the audience will be tuning out, so I added hope for singles. How's that? So it hits everyone here. So if you're single, if you're young adult, if you're disgruntled in your marriage, don't tune me out.

Listen up. This is very important here. So Paul is writing to the church in Corinth, and it's interesting.

He says, now concerning the things of which you wrote me. So the church actually wrote Paul some questions, and they wanted answers to. So he said, it is good for a man not to touch a woman.

So I'm assuming they were asking about sexual immorality. Hey, is this okay now that we're saved? And he said, it's good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, in other words, if they're caving into their lusts and into their passions, and it's just happening, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.

So he's saying, hey, it's better to remain single if you can. Obviously, that's not a blanket statement to everyone, or we would not have any of us here. God did not design everyone to be single.

What Paul is saying is if you can remain single, do it. Why? Because you can do a lot more for God, plain and simple. And me and my wife would be the first to tell you that when we were single, our single years were incredible in that we were able to follow God wholeheartedly.

And I heard something, I think it was on the radio, where a lady, as soon as they were married, said, you know what, you came between me and Jesus. I was doing fine with Jesus, you came in between that. And that actually is what happened.

So if you're single, thank God for it right now, and look to God and say, Lord, how do you want to use me? Those are invaluable years. Those are incredible years if God has you in that spot, to be content in that spot. The Bible actually says, we'll get into it later in this study, is that God cares, a man who is married cares for the things of the world, how he might please his spouse, but a single person cares for the things of the Lord, how he may please God, or she could please God.

And I kind of find this ironic, is I've talked to a lot of single people, and a majority, oh, I can't wait to be married. And then I've talked to a lot of married people, and they can't wait to be single again. Or they complain, oh, back when I was single, back when I was single, it's that constant battle of thinking a person will fulfill us, and they will not.

Only God can fulfill us. But what we do learn here is this, marriage is a safe haven. That's why God created it.

Marriage is a safe haven. God created between a man and a woman, the passions, the desires, God created those things. And marriage is that boundary line, think of a fireplace, I've used that analogy before.

You build your fire in the fireplace, don't build it on the living room floor. That's what our culture's actually doing. They have fires in the living room floor, in the bedroom, the house is burning down.

So God says keep it within the boundaries. For each desire, see, it's interesting, for each desire that a person has, a good desire, there is a fulfillment there. So a person has a desire for food, thank God.

Aren't you glad for taste buds? Can you imagine if everything tasted like broccoli? So there's a desire or hunger, so God gives us a sense of fulfillment. What about anger? Well, Shane, that's not good. Well, righteous anger is good.

I'm very angry about the direction of our nation, and that's why I'm praying, that's why I'm seeking God, that's why I'm surrendering my life to God, because I have righteous indignation with what we are doing in our culture. See, so God says I will fulfill that in my calling for you. If you put that in the right direction, you can be like an arrow at the target.

What about to be loved? We have that desire, God fulfills that. There's a godly desire for sex, intimacy, that God has given, because without that, there would not be any little ones. We would not continue.

God desires godly offspring. So that's what marriage is here. He's saying because of sexual morality, it's better to just marry than burn with passion.

And then he also says, let each one have their own. Isn't this interesting? There are so many proof texts. If people would open their ears and say, the Bible doesn't say anything about gay marriage, and it's wrong, it

doesn't say anything.

Really, what Bible are you reading? The politically correct version? Because Jesus often says God made them male and female, that they be joined together. Adam and Eve joined together. Many scriptures like this, nevertheless, because of sexual morality, let each partner have his own partner.

Let each man have his own wife. And I was just reading this week in Billy Graham Decision Magazine. I don't know how many of you received that.

But we have presidential candidates in 2020 who are going to gay pride parades and celebrating these things. And again, in case you don't know where I come from, I come from a loving, broken heart for all people stuck in sin. But I will not remain silent when God's word is crystal clear.

But people say that. They say, but God doesn't care. God doesn't care.

One of his names is Holy. Think about that. Let that just sink in.

One of God's names, yes, his attribute is love and this and faithful, but his name is Holy, Holy, Holy is our God. God says, I am holy for my people shall be holy. Come out from among them.

Be holy. There's a separation that occurs. You don't look like the world.

There's a distinction. His name is Holy. Of course he cares.

His name is Holy. And it's interesting, one of the top emails we get, I shared this with you many times in the past, but it's always, where can we find churches preaching the truth of God's word? Just this week, Arizona, Florida, Oregon, where, where, where people are hungry for truth, hungry for someone to say, listen, this is not right. And what I think we need is a good dose, especially in this area of the fear of the Lord again.

And the fear of the Lord doesn't come naturally. It must be taught. It must be preached.

What happens? The fear of the Lord vanishes when God is removed from things. When you remove 10 commandment monuments, when you remove prayer, when you remove praying in Jesus' name. Do you know in our state capital right now, when somebody offers a prayer at one of their gatherings, they cannot pray in Jesus' name.

They make that crystal clear. There's no fear of God in our land. And the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and understanding.

You want to fix the homeless situation in LA? You want to fix the deficit? You want to fix the borders? You want to fix it? Fear God. Fear God and let Him give us wisdom and discernment. So fair-proofing our marriage, what is the first thing we can glean from this? The first thing we can glean is keep your commitment.

Keep your commitment. When you say, I do, it means I don't to everything else. And that's why many people are worried about marriage.

Oh, I don't want to say I do. And then, you know, but that's what commitment is. And Paul's saying, commit, come together, husband and wife, come together, and that's a commitment.

And in that, you fear the Lord. Why? Because I made a commitment before God. We fear God.

We keep that commitment. When we go back to that commitment, do you have anything posted in your home that reminds you of that commitment? More than just this? I mean, we have half of the Bible verse that Morgan, with the vows we did, right in our room. We can read that and a reminder of the commitment that we made, a commitment that you've made.

It's a good reminder, so keep that. Because what happens if you follow the culture, not God's words, you'll begin to start thinking differently. Like, hmm, this model's not working.

Maybe it's time to trade it. We trade in cars. We trade in cell phones.

And if we're not careful, that mentality will slip in, a commitment, even if they end up in a wheelchair. Even if they lose their mind as they get older. There's a commitment there.

And then verse, that's the first way to keep your, fair proof your marriage. Because if you go into life saying, I'm keeping my commitment, what do you think might happen? You might keep it. But if you start allowing these thoughts come in, that well, we should have never married in the first place.

I mean, we were young. Now, I know there's biblical grounds for divorce. I'm not minimizing the pain and the suffering and the hurt that a lot of people go through.

But the overarching principle here is that we have to stay committed to the vow we made. And that keeps, that's one way. Not the only way, that's one way.

And then verse three. Are you ready to get controversial? Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise, also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her body.

And I don't wanna see any of this going on in the audience. You know what that means? See, see, really listen. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does.

And likewise, the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Whew, where are you gonna go with that one, Shane? Well, hmm. I will tell you this up front, though.

I have seen this misused and abused. This is, the context is not some husband just coming home and he's gonna steamroll his spouse, and I'm the man of this house, look what the word of God says. No, no, no, that's abusive.

That's not what, this is a mutual relationship of love and respect where we realize in this intimacy that God has given us, it's actually not selfishness, it's the body's for the other spouse and vice versa. You come with unselfishness into the relationship. Authority over, that's interesting.

Likewise, the husband does not have authority over. Well, what does that word mean? Well, if you look it up in the language that this was written, it basically means the right to make decisions, the right to make decisions. So if somebody, a spouse, either side, maybe the wife is saying, hey, I'm not connecting with you, I need intimacy, I'm dying here, then she has the right to pursue the husband and the husband not hold back on that and vice versa.

I told you it's gonna be the PGG version. Right, it's not you to say, no, no, no, my terms, my terms. No, it's about how I feel.

I have a headache, I don't feel, you know, and of course, there's, I don't want emails. What about this, what about this, what about this? You use wisdom and what God shows you, but the whole point here is to kill selfishness before it kills your marriage. You serve the spouse, it's about them, not you.

That's how you fair proof your marriage. Every affair that I have ever heard about, people close to me that I've seen, I've witnessed, some of them are still caught in that relationship, it all began with selfishness. I'm not, you fill in the blank, I'm not in love anymore.

I don't feel anything for them anymore. I met this person and now I'm happy and it's always self-focus. Render to one another, it's a reminder that marriage is not built on selfishness.

And again, I'm hoping you could talk this out and you work it out. Don't come home from church and say, Pastor Shane said, buh, buh, buh, buh, buh, and there's timing and there's just, you know, common courtesy, but there are people, there are people, there's no intimacy. In months, years, I know people who have not been intimate in years, six, seven, eight, nine years.

And what happens, the marriage can really die in those situations. Render to one another does not mean take advantage of, amen, you can highlight that, it does not mean take advantage of, it's mutual respect. The whole point is saying, hey, listen, it's not up to you on your time or on your schedule how you feel, it's about the other person as well.

Allowing them to be assertive and going off of their needs as well. So that was number two. Kill selfishness before it kills your marriage, amen? Kill it, what does that look like? Kill it.

Well, what about, you know what selfishness is, come on, do we need to go through all the different ways we can be selfish in our homes? No, we know, we have to kill selfishness and serve. And don't look at me as an epitome of this because it is in all of us to not, to be selfish. And we have to work in this area.

And this, I'm gonna transition real quick, this is a little bit heavy, and I don't know why, but God has had me keep this in the sermon because I think it's important, I'm seeing this so much in the church, our church, other churches. And without reading scripture, I just wanna jump to number three. Number three, third way to affair-proof your marriage is to remove the assassins.

Remove the assassins. Most of us, if not all of us, there's a Delilah out there somewhere. There's a Delilah, she doesn't have to be a woman, it could be anything that's going to come against you, your spiritual strength, and your marriage.

And it's a poem I often read when I talk about addiction or assassins. Because here's why, often, you won't render the affection to her because you're rendering the affection elsewhere. It's a big pornography epidemic.

That's why this is such a big issue on this rendering and intimacy, is because many people are rendering their affections elsewhere. Pornography's growing among women, 30, 40% now, I think, and men, and novels, and movies, and their affections are being drawn away from your spouse. So be careful, you have to remove the assassins.

And sometimes we need sober warning. So let me read this, it pertains more to somebody who's maybe addicted to something, and I know that's a vast majority of those listening online, listening later, maybe listening here this morning. There's something possibly in your marriage that is an assassin waiting to

destroy.

And here's what the young girl said. She actually died of a heroin overdose, who wrote this. I destroy homes and tear families apart.

Take your children and that's just the start. I'm more costly than diamonds, more costly than gold. The sorrow I bring is a sight to behold.

Just try me once and I might let you go, but try me twice and I'll own your soul. I take kids from parents and parents from kids. I turn people from God and separate from friends.

I'll take everything from you, your looks, your pride. I'll be with you always, right by your side. I'll take and I'll take till you have nothing more to give.

When I'm finished with you, you'll be lucky to live. You knew this would happen many times you were told, but you challenged my power and chose to be bold. You could have said no and just walked away.

If you could live that day over now, what would you say? I'll be your master, you will be my slave. I'll even go with you when you go to your grave. Now that you have met me, what will you do? Will you try me or not? It's all up to you.

I can bring you more misery than words can tell. Come take my hand, let me lead you to hell. That is powerful because it's true.

And that's not just heroin. That is any type of destruction. Right now there are marriages I know of that are in the midst of an affair and it's leading to suicidal thoughts.

It's leading to the destruction of their home. Their kids are being hurt and their kids are being just running from God because they can't trust in God. Because their marriage is falling apart.

Little girls, little boys, people being addicted to certain things, the opiate crisis, the alcohol crisis. You name it, it's just destroying our home. If something is doing that, remove it immediately.

Don't play patty cake with Delilah. Don't let her in the house and have dinner. What does the Bible say we learned last week? Flee, flee whatever is pulling you down.

Whatever is coming against your family. It comes in subtly. See, that's temptation.

Oh, the longer I live, the more I realize the subtlety of temptation. It comes in, it comes in like a morning dove and then it turns into a dragon years later after it has you and it holds you and it binds you and it won't let you go. This little thing you used to control is now controlling you.

And it will destroy the marriage. Oh, Shane, that's heavy. Oh, it's time to get heavy.

It's time to get heavy. I just prayed with a nurse last week that witnessed a young child brought into the emergency room who died because of the parents. Beat that child, molested that child.

Folks, we live in very evil, wicked times. We have to wake up. Yes, let it break our hearts.

Let it break our hearts, that's the point. Brokenness, there's too much pride and arrogance. People walking around not doing anything.

I talked to a young man yesterday who witnesses on the streets and in front of Walmart and prays for people. And I said, do you realize how many Christians do that? Probably 1.1, 1.1, 1.1% of the church. What do we do outside the church? I was convicted.

We come to church, we go have lunch, we listen to our podcast, we read our Bible. We don't do anything out there. And I actually look at Jesus' ministry, you'll be very convicted, because he was out there ministering to the people.

This is serious stuff. However, don't be too discouraged. They forgot one line in this poem.

It's with God, it's never too late. With God, it's never too late. You can beat this.

You can beat whatever it is that's pulling you down. Who or what is trying to kill you physically or spiritually? Is there anything? I know I'm not talking to everyone, but is there something trying to kill your marriage? You need to kill the assassin this morning. It's okay to go Jason Bourne.

Some of you will get that. You can do that on this type of assassin, this type of thing that's coming against your marriage. I don't even know if I should say this, so I'm gonna try it the first service, but a few of us, some of you are here, we met with one of the state representatives yesterday, and we prayed for him and his wife.

You would be alarmed at what's going on in Sacramento. You would wanna move quickly because of the satanic, demonic things they're trying to do to our children and to our families and to our marriages. Parental rights, goodbye if they get their way.

From vaccines to euthanasia to you name it. Every, why are you saying that, Shane? So you pray, so you get serious. I'm tired of the flip-flop Christianity.

You need to put on some work boots. We need to pray and fast for our nation. Maybe it's just me, I'm in my fifth prayer meeting was this morning, this week, and I'm feeling the power of prayer that we need.

That's what's gonna make a difference. That's what's gonna persevere, and I just see so many people. Yes, we love sermons, we love worship, but then nothing changes.

Nothing changes. We have to be empowered to do something. Number five, verse five.

Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time that you may give yourself to fasting and prayer. So Paul's saying with intimacy, do not deprive one another, it's a context, unless you agree on doing a season of fasting and prayer. People say, well, that's kinda weird.

Well, what happens when you're fasting is you're trying to starve all types of fleshly appetites, even good ones, food. You're starving fleshly appetites. The more you starve fleshly appetites, the more you can be filled with the Spirit of God.

Obviously, you don't just starve yourself, and fasting really isn't starving yourself. Did you know that? It's not starving. It's going into fat reserves as fuel.

That's not starving. That's changing your fuel source. But fasting and prayer, he said, then come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

So, number four. I know you're not gonna like this point, but that's okay. Fast often as the way to discipline the body.

Fasting often. Because what happens is everything's out of control. My diet's out of control.

I just eat all the time. And God says, fast. Begin to tell your body what to do.

You don't let your body control you. You control your body. Fasting kills the bodily appetites.

Is there something you've been dealing with that you can't break? Is there something, a stronghold? Do you believe the words of Jesus, everyone in this room? Okay, here we go. Matthew 17, 21, you know. This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.

So don't take my word for it. I'm gonna go to the pulpit commentary, one of the best commentaries that was ever made, I believe. It says, this kind can mean only this kind of evil spirit or demons in general.

The apostles had already exercised successfully their power over devils without special prayer or fasting. The words point to a truth in the spiritual world that there are different degrees in the satanic hierarchy. At least if you read the scripture at face value, that's what it says.

This kind, this kind of deliverance that the disciples were trying to cast out, this type of freedom, this kind of bondage does not come out of a person except through prayer and fasting. Why? Because it's spiritual warfare. It's the sledgehammer of God.

It's breaking down strongholds. We can't sometimes just say a little prayer and fill our mouths with food and hope that this breaks. Sometimes we have to press in.

I mean, if I had my way, I wish that the way to press in was to eat chocolate and peanut butter and take lots of naps and watch TV, right? I wish that was the way to press in. But it's not. It's to refrain from natural appetites and to show God how serious we are.

So if you're interested in this, I just wanna give you some fasting tips. You can read about my fasting experience. We handed it out.

Take it to prayer. Ask God for confirmation in Scripture. Lord, do you want me to do this? Also, I've talked about this before.

Get your body ready. Fasting is impossible for most people because when they fast, they are actually withdrawing. They're withdrawing from sugar and nicotine and alcohol and caffeine and processed foods and chemicals.

I can't fast. Right, you're withdrawing, just like a heroin addict in recovery. Get off of that so the body can run clean and more efficient and also the power of the made-up mind.

Set a timeframe, even if it's for the day. I do that often for the whole day and then I'll eat in the evening and just fasting and praying throughout the day. And then number four, plan for difficulties.

Plan for difficulties. We don't know how Jesus felt during his 40-day fast, but we do know that he, what, came out in the fullness and the power of the Spirit of God. So verse six, but I say this as a concession, not as a commandment.

Paul, what are you doing? Is this your opinion now? He says, well, I say this as a concession. It's not a commandment. So I think many are confused on the context of what he means but verse seven, I think, sheds some light on it.

It says, for I wish that all men were even as I myself am. He's single. But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that.

So we see here, it could be Paul's opinion about singleness. He's saying, I wish that all people were single like me, that's my opinion, but it's not a command. God gives each person their own gift.

Also, we have to remember, in Paul's time, there was great persecution, great persecution. He talks elsewhere about saying, because of the current distress, he believes that a person should remain single. Don't go seek a wife, don't go seek a husband, don't have children in this distress.

They were being persecuted. Did you know that Christians were persecuted? They would be put on poles, and I think it was Nero would light them on fire to light the streets. Thrown to the lions in the Colosseums because of their faith, because of who they believed in.

They would not bow to King Caesar, they would bow to King Jesus, and it cost them their lives. There's a rich heritage here that we should be thankful for, that we should appreciate, we should hold it like a precious jewel. But he's talking here about remaining single, so that's why I wanna just touch base on that.

The beauty of singleness, serve God with all your time. First Corinthians 7:34, we're gonna skip ahead. An unmarried woman is concerned about the Lord's affairs.

Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit, but a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world, how she may please her husband. So see, both are good, don't beat yourself up. Oh, if I was just single, see God, I could serve you more, but God says, no, your calling now is your family.

I'm first still, God says, I'm first still, but now your time has to be split and has to be split with your family as well. So either, God appreciates either. It says, Paul would go on to say, if you have a husband, don't seek to be loosed.

And if you have no one, don't seek to be bound. Don't seek marriage, be content in where God puts you. And I know you're saying, easy for you to say, that's all the single say, that's easy for you to say.

Well, I just know that God uses all different situations and seasons in life to build us and shape us. In verse eight, but I say to the unmarried and to the widows, it is good for them if they remain even as I am. But if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

So Paul is saying, it's better to remain single. But if you're not a single, if God didn't create you to be a single, and you have a desire and a passion, and you gotta keep that fire in the fireplace, then it's okay to marry, instead of burn with passion your entire life. So there must have been some questions coming up about marriage that he wrote to them.

And that's what I read earlier, I commented on earlier, but I actually have the verse here, verse 27. Are you pledged to a woman? Don't seek to be released. Are you free from such a commitment? Don't look for a wife.

But if you do marry, you have not sinned. So he was clarifying this for the church in Corinth. So again, it goes back to marriage as a safe haven.

But you know what? Let me just throw this out there for singles. Don't let the burning with passion pick your partner. Just kind of absorb that for a minute.

Paul said, if I'm burning with passion, I can marry. No, no, don't let the passion choose your mate. Don't let the emotion, the impulse, choose your mate.

Because most people, unless they thoroughly vet the person, I mean, get to know them is what I mean, get to know them, ask, where are they at with God? And don't just go, don't fall for the, I'm a Christian too. I'm a Christian too, really. Look for the fruit.

Be a fruit inspector. What I've noticed over the years, if they're not concerned about purity before marriage, they're not gonna be concerned very much with purity and keeping the marriage together after marriage. See, you can gauge a person.

If a person, I spoke at a singles conference, actually, I think it was Greg Laurie's church, many years ago, it was a privilege to speak at the Harvest Church there. I had his pulpit there and everything. It was a little intimidating for a single conference.

But one of the main points was that you have to get to know the person and don't go off of emotion or, well, I just love them. Well, are you lusting or are you loving? Because love is a process. You're compromising.

Many people compromise and they say, well, they're a Christian, they say they're a Christian, but is there fruit? And the point I was getting at is this. If you're wanting to remain pure before marriage, which is a godly thing to do, there's so many benefits. I could preach a whole sermon just on that alone, how it changes the commitment after marriage.

Now, don't worry. If that didn't happen before marriage, thank God for God's grace. I'm not wanting people to feel bad in this room.

But if that person is not sharing that same desire with you to remain pure and do things right and they're trying to force something on you, like, come on, come on, we've known each other a month, come on, we love each other, be careful. That's a big red flag. That's a huge red flag because you're not even on the same page with that.

And then you think marriage is gonna fix it? No, it doesn't. They take that dishonesty still into marriage. And I regularly talk to men who, single men, big issues with pornography, especially single with no accountability.

It's just a daily struggle. And they honestly think that marriage is going to fix that. Shane, when I get married, that will fix this problem.

No, it won't. It will carry right into your marriage and it'll become a fire that you cannot put out. You get accountability now.

You get software now. Yes, it's a fight, it's a struggle. But what happens is who you are when you say I do is who you are in the marriage.

So if there's issues, if you see, well, I know he's got, I've had people tell me, well, I know he's got a really bad temper. He breaks things, he hits things. I know he drinks sometimes.

And I know he doesn't wanna remain pure. And he says he's a Christian. I think he was raised Jehovah Witness.

But I really love him. I really love him. Run.

Well, I'm supposed to minister to him. Let somebody else minister to him. The Bible says do not be unequally yoked.

That's what that means. How can light and darkness come together? Now again, if this is your situation, once you say I do, it changes now. Now you have a commitment.

Now it falls under other guidelines in 1 Corinthians to remain with that spouse. God will see you through. God's grace and God's mercy.

If you cry out to God in a bad situation, he will be your rear guard. He will be your strength. He will see you through.

So don't get discouraged and say, oh, I blew it. I should have done things better. Take it to God.

Take it to God. So the fourth thing I said earlier was incorporate some type of fasting. And I don't think that's odd or weird because it helps to discipline the body.

And yet what I found is a person who fasts, and you're probably going, what does that look like? Well, if you want copies, I wrote a book, Feasting and Fasting. They're free. I think ushers can find them in the book closet.

And you can just have one. I talk about all the different things. But you can start easy by throughout the day.

I'm not gonna eat. I'm gonna pray. I'm gonna seek God.

What happens is if you arrest the appetites of the flesh in regard to food, it also affects other appetites. It's often when men or women give in to gluttony and other things that sexual sin is more prevalent because if they lost it in this area, they're gonna lost it in this area. If they're not self-controlled in this area, they're not gonna be self-controlled in this area.

If they can't control their diet and their food in this area, they're gonna more easily fall in this area. Does that make sense? It's all connected. So you can't be real self-disciplined in this area and fall in all these other areas.

They go together. We fall like dominoes when we fall, don't we? And that's why this is all connected. And that's why Paul talks about fasting and prayer.

Because to really keep a marriage together, that is a one-two combination punch, fasting and prayer. And let's say what I did this week, if I don't, I get up, I don't eat, I don't eat until evening. I still go throughout the day, but when that hunger comes, I'm like, just God, I want more of you.

I'm praying, I'm fasting for my kids, and it changes the dynamic. The prayer meetings change, and being filled with the Spirit of God changes because you're starving one appetite and exchanging it to be filled with God's Spirit. I don't know how it works, I just know it works.

And I know the more I'm filled with the flesh, let's just think about this for a minute. Don't do this, but for example, if you stop by McDonald's and get two, whatever they're called, quarter pound, whatever they're called, two big ones, and you watch something you shouldn't be watching on Netflix, are you gonna feel like going to prayer meetings? Are you gonna pray right after that? See, that's why the majority of the church is not at prayer meetings, they're not at worship mornings, they're not at church, because they're filled with all the lust of the flesh. When you begin to starve those things, the Spirit of the living God begins to fill you with His plans, with His purposes, with His anointing, with just the fire of God, because we've starved these other areas that come in against us.

Add to that a lack of Bible study, add to that a lack of worship, and you can see how the flesh is dominating. Don't you see a trend? Do you know the big trend in churches now is most people come once or twice a month. When I grew up, it was a staple.

I mean, that's what we did on Sunday. Most things came after that, unless we were out of town. But now the culture has kind of infiltrated the church and we don't go to church as much, we don't wanna go, I mean, don't raise your hand, but why does a prayer meeting sound boring to most people? I can tell you, you've been fasting all day and you've been worshipping God, you've been living in the Word, you're hungry for the prayer meeting.

You're hungry for the worship mornings, why? Because you've been feeding on spiritual food. So that's what fasting is, you begin to deny the food that comes in and takes really, what it does is you can't have competing appetites. So you begin to fulfill the lust appetite and the spiritual appetite begins to diminish.

It's just straight across the board. There's fasting all throughout the Bible. So number five, we can also, we just read on fasting, but also, I don't wanna forget this, pray as if your marriage depends on it.

Did you know that it does? You show me a praying couple and I'll show you a marriage that's staying strong. You show me a couple that's distant and growing apart and prayer's not part of their life, Bible study's not part of their life, and it is growing apart. I don't wanna say this in case I misquote it, but I'm gonna say it anyway, because it's close.

They found, Focus on the Family did an interview probably 20 years ago, they found that the divorce rate between those who read together or pray together, come together spiritually, is one out of 1,500. One divorce out of 1,500. Not one out of two, which is the norm.

In the church they say too, and I haven't studied that, I just take their word on it, but I would tend to agree. I don't think it's 50% in the church, at least not this church, it's not close to 50%. But overall, I mean, people claiming to be Christians, there's no different than the world.

So pray as if your marriage depends upon it. So let me ask you this, this is really what's so important about this message. Is your marriage difficult or dying? If you're listening this now, listening later, here this morning, is your family falling apart? Are you confused, are you depressed? Well, number one, I wanna make sure you're at the August prayer conference, because that's what we're addressing.

We're gonna cover you, we're gonna pray for you. But let me just talk about this, and I'm gonna close with this issue on praying as if your marriage depends upon it. Singles, pray as if knowing God's will depends upon it, because it does.

So no matter what your situation is, prayer is so important. And you hear me talk often about waiting, waiting on God. Anyone heard me talk about that? Nobody's heard me talk about waiting? Oh, there we go, there we go.

Waiting on God, you know what this word is? Waiting is entrenched. Waiting is entrenched, waiting with patience, waiting with confident expectation. You are dug in, that's what waiting on the Lord means.

You're dug into God, you're entrenched to God. It's like this, I'm entrenched to this pulpit and I'm not letting go. I'm holding on to you, God, and I'm not letting go.

Those who wait upon the Lord, those who are entrenched, those who are hereto like glue, they shall renew their strength. They shall mount up like wings, like eagles. They shall run and not grow weary.

Why? Because they are waiting on God, they're entrenched in God, and they can feel the power and presence of God. How do you pray for long periods of time, people ask? How do you pray for long periods? You worship, you're broken before him, you meditate, you're not in a hurry, you're entrenched, you're holding on to God, holding on to the cross, and you're saying, God, I must hear from you. Do you know the old saints used to do that? I'm not leaving this prayer room until you answer.

And it could be six, seven hours later. They're holding on to God, they're waiting, they're travailing, now we're bored after 10 minutes. Oh God, I give you all the glory, all that you have brought me through.

God, I give you all the glory, all that you've brought me through. I'm preparing Sunday, next week's message in the evening, and I'm gonna share it with you. Just a quick thing that God, I believe, just poured into my heart.

So encouraging last night. Some of you were here, some of you at the second or some of the first, but we, Christine Clark and her husband, Jamie, did something incredible last couple months. They brought families together, like eight families together and their kids, and we just prayed.

There were tears, you could hear kids praying. We prayed for an hour and a half, seeking God. And God just began to pour this into my heart.

I want it for Sunday night, but I'm just gonna share it here as well. He reminded me that prayer is warfare. You guys, you need to get that.

Anytime prayer is described in the Bible, it's not linked with butterflies and feathers and a dove and bunny rabbits. It just hit me so hard that prayer is warfare. Prayer is battle.

That will change the way you approach prayer. You're like, well, okay, let me just pray. No, that's your warfare.

This is how you fight your battles. It's the trumpet call to battle. It's the battering ram that knocks down strongholds.

It's the hammer that crushes Satan. It's the fire that ignites the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Prayer is the sword that strikes down fear.

It's the weapon that decimates demonic activity. Prayer is what covers your family. It saves your children.

It restores your marriages. And we need to cry out, oh God, bring back heart-searching, soul-wrenching prayer. That's what we need.

And I realize that this week, I realize that this week I've been in more prayer meetings than I have in months, all in one week. And I realize, God, this is the atmosphere that's going to change Sacramento. This is the atmosphere that's gonna change Washington, D.C. This is where Christians need to be.

They need to be on their face before God. I don't care if we have 1,000 people there. Give me 10 people filled with the spirit of God wanting to intercede because God says, I'm looking for intercessors.

I'm looking for people to just stand in the gap. He got so frustrated with Ezekiel's people, the people of Ezekiel's day. He said, I sought for a man from among them.

He said, I sought for a man. Men, think of your family. Think of what's falling apart.

He said, I sought for a man. What would they do? They would simply build a wall and stand in the gap between me and the people, between me and demonic activity. They would stand there, and they would pray, and they would call down heaven.

He said, I looked for them, and I found no one. No one to intercede, no one to stand before me. What can defeat armies? What can overcome kingdoms? What can part the seas? What can close the mouth of lions? What calms the wind and the waves? What seizes God's attention? What calls down heaven? Think about how this, I mean, this is so incredibly radical.

What seizes God's attention? Putting on Christian radio? No, please put it on. Is that what seizes his attention? Exercising? What, what, listening to a sermon? No. What seizes God's attention? Oh, I hear the cries of my people.

I hear the heart cries of my people. I hear, I can't go, I can't go away. I hear, I hear the heart cries of my people.

Shane, do you have proof text? Just start in the Old Testament. And camp out there. God would send a judge.

God would send a deliverer. God would send a praying priest. He would send a praying prophet.

He would send a praying leader. He would send somebody who would pray and contend on behalf of the people for God. I'm convinced, folks, that's what our only hope is in these dire times.

But for some of you, I don't want to leave a question mark somewhere in this area, and that is, do you truly know Christ? Do you truly know Jesus Christ? And I shared a while back, I was able to go to a penitentiary down, ways away from here, and visit a prisoner. And I thought about people on death row. But there's death row here.

People are on death row, spiritually speaking. The walking dead. They're on the road to destruction.

And God wants to wake you up this morning. Have you truly repented and believed in the gospel? Truly repented and believed in the gospel. Well, how would I know, Shane? Is there fruit? Is there fruit? Is there a changed life? Is there a love for God? Is there a selflessness and humility and genuine love? Is there any fruit? I'm not asking for the full watermelon, but is there anything budding? Is there buds? Because so many people, this breaks my heart, in America, they think because they went to VBS or raised their hand or did something, that they're a Christian.

No, has God radically changed your life? Because you've repented of your sin. Let me read that again. We're gonna go into a time of prayer.

The worship team comes up. But this is a trumpet call to battle. So the worship team can go ahead and come up.

This is a trumpet call to battle. Prayer is the battering ram. Think about this.

What do you need in your life? What do you need in your life? Prayer is the trumpet call to battle. You're going to pray for your family. And here's what happens.

People say, well, I don't really feel it. Well, welcome to the club. I rarely feel it.

I rarely feel it. But I know I see the fruit later. Oh, we prayed for that.

It's never on our timetable. It's on God's timetable. The trumpet call to battle.

The battering ram that knocks down strongholds. The hammer that crushes Satan. The fire that ignites.

The sword that strikes down. And the weapon that decimates. That's what prayer is.

And I want you to remember this. As we're singing this song, what you need to do is you need to say the name.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/AkyO0lqNI9w.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/shane-idleman/affairproof-your-marriage-hope-for-singles/>

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