

Chapter 1 Ending ■ Fasting –The Secret to Spiritual Power

by Shane Idleman

This sermon emphasizes the importance of fasting as a spiritual discipline to strengthen the spirit and sharpen discernment. It highlights the battle between the flesh and the spirit, urging believers to starve the flesh by fasting and prayer. The message underscores the need to control desires, prepare oneself through fasting, and break the cycle of defeat by aligning with God's will through prayer and fasting.

Scripture: Matthew 26:41, Galatians 5:17, 1 Peter 2:11, John 7:38, Proverbs 13:4, Philippians 3:13, James 4:7, Psalm 51:10, Ephesians 6:12

Topics: "Fasting", "Spiritual Discipline"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of fasting as a spiritual discipline to strengthen the spirit and sharpen discernment. It highlights the battle between the flesh and the spirit, urging believers to starve the flesh by fasting and prayer. The message underscores the need to control desires, prepare oneself through fasting, and break the cycle of defeat by aligning with God's will through prayer and fasting.

Transcript

Fasting the secret to spiritual power. Feasting and fasting. Feasting and fasting what works what doesn't and why.

Matthew 26 41 reminds us to watch and pray so that we will not fall into temptation. Jesus said that the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak so fasting strengthens the spirit and sharpens the sword of the spirit. What many people don't realize is we're not a robot you know on autopilot doing the things of God.

We have a spirit, we're body soul and spirit and the spirit as a believer as a Christian the Holy Spirit in you wants to do what God wants us to do. The spirit is willing there's no problem there's no excuses there but the flesh in us is often stronger than the pull of the spirit if we're feeding the flesh too much. See whatever you choose to obey becomes your master but also whatever you feed becomes stronger.

I remember that story I think it was by Billy Graham but a young man came to a pastor and he said pastor I've got I'm losing this battles of sin and darkness and it's like I've got two dogs battling within me one dog this dark dog keeps winning and this other white dog and nice dog it keeps losing it's like I have this battle and what am I supposed to do and the pastor looked at him and said whatever dog you feed the most wins

you need to starve this dog to death the dark dog you need to starve that dog to death because whatever you feed is fueled and it becomes stronger so if you're feeding the things of the flesh the flesh is pull is going to become very strong and you're going to quench and grieve the spirit and that's why you're going to not be sensitive to the things of God you're probably gonna make poor decisions you're gonna be anxious and fearful especially in this world what's going on because you've questioned and grieved the fire within you the Holy Spirit and so it's so important to fight the flesh with prayer and fasting because although eating is good thank God for it the more we eat the more we consume the more we feed King's stomach you know I've got to go to Starbucks in the morning I've got to get this I've got to get Krispy Kreme I got to get this I got if we just listen to the flesh it becomes strong and that voice becomes dominating in our lives so fasting and even minimizing I'd even I'd say even when you're not fasting minimize that appetite intermittent fasting control those desires of the flesh the Bible says we can there's really no way around that so Jesus said the Spirit is willing but the flesh is weak so fasting strengthens the spirit and sharpens the sword of the Spirit a story I've heard numerous times I remember even Jensen Franklin telling this story he's got some great YouTube videos on fasting if you want to get motivated there were two lumberjacks and they decided to compete to see who could cut down the most trees as the clock wound down the younger man noticed that as they kept hammering away at the trees the older lumberjack kept taking breaks oh what's wrong with this guy I'm gonna beat him for sure he thought surely I will win this man is lazy and weak but when the day was over the old lumberjack had chopped down more trees so perplexed perplexed he asked how did you do that how did you do that and the older man replied son what you mistook for unnecessary breaks were actually very necessary I sharpened my axe each time Wow Wow Wow Wow Wow what a great point so fasting sharpens spiritual insight it gives us wisdom and it gives us discernment as I said before you're either controlling your body or your body is controlling you we drive a certain way to pick up our addictions let me pass by my favorite whatever to get my addiction and we go to certain places because of our addiction and we schedule things around our addiction do we realize just how much our addictions are controlling us versus us controlling them on another note imagine heading to lunch in a crowded mall and you and your family are famished from running errands just before leaving you notice that your three-year-old is no longer with you panic sets in you must find your child at any cost are you going to eat first I hope not of course not the passion to find your child is far greater than the desire to eat and that's exactly what fasting is it's the desire to seek God and that desire is greater than the desire to eat that is really what it boils down to now some may argue you know I hear this a lot Shane fasting is too extreme where it's just too extreme I don't know if you know if that's if it's if it's something I want to do well are we not living in extremely difficult times as the saying goes desperate times call for desperate measures as dr. Caldwell Esselstyn reminds us about the other side of the coin he made a great point half a million people a year think about this half a million people a year 500,000 500,000 each year year are going to have their chests ripped open and a vein taken from their leg and sewn into their coronary artery he calls that extreme and so do I we reap what we sow now again there might be a time and a place for this but I would estimate that most surgeries medical procedures do not need to happen recent statistics reveal that the opiate crisis another example is killing tens of thousands of people and that alcoholism continues to ravish homes and bodies how many people are walking around just sick and miserable because of type 2 diabetes so millions are walking away from their faith each year marriages are in shambles families are deteriorating and suicide is an epidemic I call that extreme it's time that Christians get extreme in their warfare if they truly desire victory Jesus said when you fast not once a year take it to the Lord but somehow make fasting part of your lifestyle hey can I pig out all month and then start next month I don't know if pigging out I don't know if that's a good idea I don't know if you want to have that into your it worked into your lifestyle I mean it's already hard enough I'm prone to eat more than I

should and really what gluttony is your body needs a certain amount of food calories and when we consume too many calories units of energy they're stored as fat and then the fat can be burned later through ketones ketosis and ketone bodies are being used as fuel and fasting will do that for sure but you gotta be careful because fasting can slow down your metabolic rate as well you know if you go for a while then you start to eat normally again and you go back to junk food you know it's a yo-yo effect okay let's say hey you know for me I need 2,000 to 2,500 calories a day at my height weight and you know if I'm at that number by 3 o'clock and you know I'm like okay I'm satisfied I ate well but then I you know eat a huge dinner and then I grab some high ice cream I'm gluttonous I'm feeding the desires of the flesh I don't need that those things I want those things and so that's the definition I believe of gluttony it's consuming more than your body needs and your body tells you like hey I'm satisfied that's why I love like huge salads and some chicken breasts because you know six seven or calories in you're like full I can't even finish the salad go out to fast food they've got of course sodium nitrates and food colorings and additives and chemicals that actually especially when you put a lot of sodium on something try this sometime just have brown rice plain and you'll eat it you'll be satisfied but put sodium on it you're gonna eat you know quite a bit more when God moves prayer and fasting have often been the catalyst of that movement preparing yourself is very important right preparation is key so prepare yourself by getting your body and mind ready if possible wean off of everything that is hurting your your health both spiritually and physically most choices lead either to the filling of the Holy Spirit or to the quenching and grieving of the Spirit giving into one area of weaknesses lowers our defenses in other areas I can't tell you how many times I've talked to people and men and women now you know they caved into pornography and you just feel oh they feel bad they they fed the flesh and then now they wanted to they were on a good diet regimen but now they just want to go pig out and they want to eat and I want to grab ice cream and chocolate and the end of the day is over and now they're kind of miserable and then they get up in the morning they don't feel that great man now let's see the flesh is taken over and because I don't feel that great I need to go start back on coffee so let me go grab a vent a coffee and be strung out on caffeine all morning and while I'm there boy those those chocolate cake pops look really good three hours later now my blood sugar is crashing and now I don't feel you know now don't let me just go to Panda Express let me go to Panda Express and let me get a big big chicken kumpau whatever it's called in a and a big Pepsi and a couple hours later I'm now I'm irritated too I'm yelling at my kids and my spouse and I just feel overweight my clothes don't fit good and see you stay you stay caught in that that cycle of shame and defeat and failure and and you got to break out of that you know it takes a little bit of time it takes some resistance it takes some prayers and fasting but you've got to break that cycle of defeat and remember the change happens one step at a time I know it's an old Chinese saying but it's so true you know that the the journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step and that is so true here in this area of fasting as well so prepare yourself get your mind and body ready don't give in to the flesh and if you do you know you get you get back on track and this aligns with first Peter 2 11 which urges us to what abstain from let's say together fleshly lusts which what war against the soul prayer fasting and the word and worship it starves the enemy's influence as the flesh submits we become more in tune with the things of God a stagnant spiritual life turns into flowing waters that's what happens when we fast a stagnant spiritual life will turn into rivers of living water the mind becomes uncluttered and focused the things of God rather than things of the world begin to dominate our thinking for example even as I'm recording this right now I'm getting obviously hungry but just bring some water and I just the the mind is clear that the thinking is clear I'm not sluggish and it really really you know there's a time and season for eating don't get me wrong but there's a time and season to you know fasting in the Bible actually means close the mouth so why wait why wait procrastination keeps the car in neutral isn't that so true procrastination just keeps that car in neutral you can't steer what's not moving so start the

process of change today an incident from the American Revolution illustrates the power of procrastination it was reported that Colonel Rall our a LL commander of the British troops in New Jersey was playing cards when a courier brought an urgent message stating that General George Washington was crossing the Delaware River Colonel Rall put the letter in his pocket and didn't even bother to read it until the game was finished but it was too late his procrastination cost him his victory and his life which is probably good for us so begin today begin today you've probably fallen so many times that you have lost count and so have I I really have don't focus on those past mistakes those past failures okay I'm gonna learn from it I'm gonna turn these these stumbling blocks Lord into stepping stones and I'm gonna get back on track I'm gonna keep fighting I'm gonna keep moving forward yes it might be a hard week it might be a hard month and the fruit of what eventually is going to happen is going to far outweigh what you're going through so as a famous poem declares I'm gonna end on this as a famous poem declares all of life is like a race with ups and downs and all and all you have to do to win is rise each time you fall remember God honors perseverance not perfection he honors perseverance not perfection

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/d2IH9z9NaVk.mp4>

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