

Desperate for More of God - Our Mind

by Shane Idleman

The sermon emphasizes the critical role of the mind in our spiritual battles and the necessity of engaging with God through His Word, worship, and prayer.

Duration: 43:12

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:14, 2 Chronicles 16:9, Psalm 51:10, Psalm 119:11, Matthew 6:33, Hebrews 4:12, 1 Peter 5:8

Topics: "Seeking God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of guarding our minds against the evil influences of the world. He highlights the impact of entertainment and media on our thoughts and actions. The preacher encourages the congregation to prioritize spending time with God and their families, even when it is challenging. He emphasizes the need for spiritual disciplines such as reading the Word, worship, prayer, and fasting to strengthen our minds and draw closer to God.

Transcript

You guys can go ahead and be seated. Just a confession this morning. I can show you my notes later, but this, I just almost rewrote half the sermon this morning.

I got up early and God just put so much stuff on my heart and I was crossing out and moving things and it's ironic that we sung that song, Prone to Wander, Lord I Feel It, because the wanderer within must be crucified. He can't be coddled, he can't be entertained. There's a wanderer within and the Bible talks about the pull of the spirit and the pull of the flesh.

Whatever you choose to obey becomes your master. And that's kind of where I wanted to end this morning. I do have the same problem as two messages ago that I have 30 minutes and I need three hours.

So I'm hoping that I can just with the Lord's help get through what I believe he wants me to say and some changes I made. But this last message is, does God have your mind? Does God have your mind? And it goes along with the proverb, as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. And I will submit to you that the real battle is right here.

Before sin is acted upon, it's conceived in the mind. And you know that the mind is the battlefield where it's either won or lost. So prone to wander, Lord, I feel it.

Where do we feel prone to wander? Here. And this is really, I talked about where the rubber meets the road with obedience. But this final message, I wanna try to tie in everything because I'm sure a lot of people are motivated.

They feel that desire to follow God with all their heart, with all their strength, with all their soul, with all their mind. But Shane, I feel the wander within. This sounds great today, but come tomorrow, I'm gonna have a struggle.

It's gonna be back to life as normal. And I wanna address that this morning, in loving God with all of our mind. And something I heard Chip Ingram talk about a few months ago, I don't know if you've heard of him.

But he said, you can have the perfect seed, but bad soil and the seed will not grow. And that's why many people have the perfect seed. We have the word of God.

And that's why we get frustrated. We have the word of God. People say, I'm not bound by sin.

I'm dead to sin. I read what Paul says, but Shane, why is it still alive in me? There's this contrast. If I'm dead to sin, the Bible says we are dead to sin.

But it means it's no longer our master. It doesn't control us. We've been set free.

But guess what? The influence hasn't left on this side of heaven. There's an influence. There's a prone to wander.

Lord, I feel it. I feel that influence pulling me. And that's what we need to talk about.

You can have the perfect seed, but bad soil and the seed will not grow. We have the perfect seed. We have the word of God.

And I've told the story before, but when I was younger, we used to eat watermelons out on the front concrete. And I never saw a watermelon plant grow from the concrete. But wash those seeds off.

And we had a huge patch just 20 feet away. What was the difference? Not the seed. It was the soil.

And guess where the soil is, folks? Before an affair happens physically, guess where it happens? Mentally. Before somebody begins to walk away from God and drift, guess where that initial thought right here, the battlefield is the mind. That's why the Bible says that you need to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

The problem many times is we allow our thoughts to take us captive. But as believers, you have the power to say, no, I'm taking that thought captive to the obedience of Christ. I'm not going to allow it.

I'm not going to entertain it. I'm gonna bring it captive. And that's really where we're trying to go with this.

And there's a famous quote that I love to quote as often as I can, and it reminds us of this fact. It went something like this. All the water in the world, no matter how hard it tries, can never sink a ship unless it gets inside.

And all the evil influence of this world, no matter how hard it tries, can never sink your soul unless it gets inside. The battle is for our minds. The battle is for our families.

The devil's coming after our faith. And we have to be vigilant in this area. You have to love God with all your mind.

And I preach on this often. I talk about entertainment. I talk about the media.

The reason is it's captivated your mind. And as the mind goes, so goes the action. I mean, if we look at, and we joke about it, we laugh, but if we look at the number one TV shows that are coming out, Swapping Wives, Desperate Wives, you know, Sex Box, all these things, it's Christians putting it at the top of the list.

It's Christians watching American Horror Story. And on that note, a lot of the people who I counsel dealing with fear and depression and anxiety, you know the number one question I ask them? Tell me about your mental diet. Tell me about your mental diet.

I have yet to find, I'm sure there's somebody, so don't email me, but I've yet to find somebody who has said, Shane, I have a passionate devotional life. I'm praising God in the morning. I'm worshiping him.

And they're still bound by fear and anxiety. Now, don't get me wrong. Depression's real.

Anxiety's real. And it comes upon, and when it comes upon, you can't just tell somebody to get over it because it comes on strong. But in all of the cases, they are watching things that are pulling them away from God.

They're watching, all right, but I just love these things, and I just love American Horror Story. I just love horror films. I just love the media.

I love hearing about terrorism. I love the way it's pulling you away from God because as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. So the question this morning, really, I'm gonna throw out there is how bad do you want it? How bad do you want a passionate relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ? How bad do you want to be filled with the Spirit of God? Because the Bible says make every effort, make every effort to walk in the Spirit.

And I'll never forget, I think I talked about this at the marriage conference. On this point, I'll never forget a conference. It was actually up in the mountains above me, Calvary Chapel Men's Conference.

I think it was Calvary Chapel Menifee, or one of the, no, actually it wasn't, La Habra. I spoke at a lot of different men's conferences, and they all met up at this retreat. And there was a man, he came forward.

He was, I mean, tears were coming down. He said, this is my last hope. My wife, my wife is leaving if I don't change.

Would you pray for me? I don't know what to do. I'm addicted to pornography. I can't break this, I can't.

And so, of course, I sat down with him and talked with him and asked him, tell me about your mental diet. Tell me what, he goes, well, I just, you know, I watch ESPN, and it starts with the commercials and the cheerleaders, and it leads to one thing. And I said, you know, of course, there's a lot of things you need to do.

Don't say, do one little thing, and that'll help. But I told this man, well, I would start there. I would remove the stumbling block.

I would get rid of that television for a month and tell your wife, she's more important, the marriage is more valuable. And I would start there, and you've gotta remove the thing that's pulling you down. I'll never forget what this man said.

He looked at me, and he said, are you crazy? I'm a sports fanatic. I'm not gonna do that. Sir, how bad do you want it? Your wife's about ready to leave.

Your kids are gonna see a dad and be embarrassed about their father, and you have the audacity to tell me you're a sports fanatic? I'm not gonna do that. And I said, you don't want it bad enough. Don't go home up here and cry about it.

Go home and live it out. But that's where the problem is. We don't want it bad enough.

We don't wanna crucify the flesh. That's not a very popular term in churches. You have to crucify sin.

You can't coddle it, because once you coddle it, it grows. And once you say, oh, I have it, no, it has you. And the battlefield is the mind on this area of compromise and getting the mind right.

You'll read about it. I put it in some of the books. But there's a story that's probably been going around 40, 50 years, that up in Alaska, Eskimos, to kill a wolf, you know how they'll kill a wolf many times? Is they'll take this large, razor-sharp knife.

They'll dip it in blood. And then they'll bury the handle in the snow. And then a wolf comes by and begins to lick that blade.

Oh, this is blood here on this blade. It's a dead animal, maybe. And he's licking that blood and licking it.

And what happens as he continues to lick a razor-sharp knife blade? It begins to be his own blood. And his tongue's cut in his mouth. And he tastes that blood.

And he keeps licking and licking. And eventually, they just come and pick up the dead animal. That's what happens.

Folks, that's what'll happen. The devil's not stupid. He doesn't push you over the mountain.

He takes you down one step at a time, one compromise at a time, one wrong choice at a time, until you're at the bottom saying, how did I get here? He doesn't come dressed in red, holding a pitchfork. He comes blonde hair and blue eyes. Or women at the gym, he comes as this nice man who will listen to me and talk to me.

He understands me. I think God is leading me to this person. No, no, he's not.

It comes as a nice, cold six-pack, a shock top on a hard day after work. That's how he comes. Make no mistake about it.

Your adversary is smart. He's clever. He goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

He looks for that open door. That's how he gets us, through small compromises that lead to the big decisions. So you might say, well, Shane, wonderful.

What do we do? Well, I'm glad you asked. Here's where we win the battle in the mind, and this is nothing new, but I wanna focus briefly on these four areas. You've gotta have the word of God.

You've gotta have worship. You've gotta have prayer, and I believe you've gotta have fasting. I wanna talk about that briefly.

It's not a popular thing, but prayer opens the hand of God. Worship secures the truth in our minds and renews the heart. Worship brings heaven down to our hearts.

Obedience opens the door to God's blessing, and fasting starves the flesh and moves the hand of God in ways other spiritual disciplines cannot. And I said that yesterday, woe be to the church who is in a hurry to burn through a sermon, scurry through worship, and head for the nearest restaurant. We're in such a hurry.

We're such a hurry, and there's a famous scripture we all love to quote. I've heard it many times actually up here this weekend. God actually says if we want change, if we want renewal in our land, if we want revival, if we want him to restore, very simple principle in the Old Testament, if my people who are called by my name, notice the call's not to Hollywood.

It's not to Washington. We're not gonna pass laws that change this. God says you, me, if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and I will heal their land.

That same principle, people say, oh, that's where the Old Testament, Israel, they were under the, yeah, and contextual. I love contextual consistency. That's who it did apply to.

But you cannot tell me that that principle does still not apply today. If my people will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from what they know to be wrong, then I can heal their marriage. I can heal their land.

I can heal their family. If, if, if it's conditional, if it's conditional, people get so mad at the Holy Spirit. Why haven't you taken this addiction away? Why haven't you taken this anger? Why haven't you done this? Why haven't you done this? If, if, if, if there, if my people, if you turn, let this mind be in you, which is also in Christ Jesus, if you make no provision for the flesh, if you flee, if, if, if.

That's how we win the battle, is getting back to these basics. So let's start with, with number one, the word of God. Don't say that God is silent when your Bible is closed.

We cannot say that our God is silent when our Bible is closed. Just this morning. It's, it'll speak, it'll, it'll minister to you in ways unlike anything you've seen before.

Everybody has time for the media, but nobody has time for the word of God. Why? Because we are dying spiritually. We need spiritual resuscitation.

And that's the only way to revive that heart. I just, just reading in Psalms this morning, I was being encouraged. I was turning to scripture such as, who may ascend into the heel of the Lord or stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart and who's not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor has he sworn deceitfully.

I said, thank God, Lord, I need more of you. And then I turn and I read the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord. And though he falls, he will not be utterly cast down because the Lord upholds him with his right hand.

And then I turned again and said, oh Lord, that the bones you have broken, that I may rejoice in their Lord, create in me a clean heart, renew a right spirit within me. And you guys don't know it, but I'm up here just as much for myself as you are for yourself. I need to come home a better pastor.

I need to come home a better husband. I need to say, Lord, create in me a clean heart, renew a right spirit within me because the wonder within wants to take me down. Lord, I need you.

I need you as much on this side of the cross as I did on that side. I need you, I need him. And the word of God directs, the word of God encourages, the Bible says that the word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any double-edged sword.

And any theologian will tell you, yeah, but Shane, that's dealing with the spoken word of God. Actually, correct. But it's also dealing with the written word of God that becomes alive as you apply it to your life.

How long does it take to get through the Bible in a year? 12 minutes a day. 12 minutes a day. For me, it takes about 20 minutes a day.

And I told my congregation a few weeks ago, if we could imagine that the God of the universe has spoken and is speaking to that, if we could truly grasp that, you would live in the word of God as a fish lives in the sea. To borrow from Tozer. If we truly believed it, do we truly believe it? Or is it just some book written over thousands of years? If it's inspired word of God, it changes you.

The word of God changes the heart. It crushes pride. It crushes hypocrisy.

It goes straight to the issue. But then it builds me up. And then it comforts me and it brings me along.

That's the word of God. It will shape you. If my people humble themselves, the process of renewal must begin with humility, allowing the word of God to change your heart.

Pride must die in you or nothing of heaven can live in you. Andrew Murray, folks, you must get back into the word of God. Guess what? It's gonna be difficult.

Nobody wakes up, very few people wake up just hungry for the word of God. Do you wanna know why? Because they're putting a bunch of garbage in at night. And what you put in at night is what you're gonna wake up into the morning.

That's why they wake up. Whatever you, and I would encourage you, get EM Bounds, get Tozer, get Andrew Murray, get Oswald Chambers, get a lot of these men and women who came before us. Get into their counsel at night.

Get into the word of God. And then you wake up with the same hunger you put in. Either as a man thinketh so is he.

It's true or it's not. So it must begin with the word of God on a daily basis and making a time of devotional. Many people make it a time of knowledge so they can tell people off.

If the truth be told. If I deal with another abusive counseling appointment where the man says, woman, you need to submit with me. I'm gonna, I'll leave it at that.

How in the world, what makes us think we can throw scriptures at people while denying 12 others? Have you ever read husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church? Oh yeah, but, well you need to remove the but, sir. Have you ever heard let unforgiveness and bitterness and wrath and anger and all these things be put away from you? Yeah, but, no buts. The reason the word of God loses its power is not the word of God, it's in the application.

You have to apply it for the power to take place. Try putting out a fire with the fire hose not connected to the hydrant. You're gonna be saying, what's going on here? Let's hook it up.

No, no, but, but. No, hook it up. You gotta have the power is in the hookup.

That's in the same thing with the word of God. Number two, my favorite topic, worship restores. Worship restores your heart.

Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. If my people seek me. We have a form of microwave Christianity.

Service times are cut to just over an hour. Prayer is glanced over and worship is designed to entertain the masses. People are bored, they say, so our services need to be more appealing.

But church is boring because the power of God has vanished for many congregations. There is a lack of desire to pursue him in the pulpit as well as the pew. And like Samson, they know not that the spirit of the Lord has departed from them.

I'm gonna make a rather bold statement. But I truly believe that many churches in this nation are not aware that the spirit of the Lord has departed. You can keep a bunch of people together through social gatherings.

Cults do it. And it was Samson, you know the story of Samson, right? He falls in love, Delilah takes all of his strength, and the Bible says that he woke up like other times. He woke up like at other times and said, Samson, the Philistines are upon you.

Slay them, kill them. And the Bible said, actually the King James says he wist not, he knew not that the spirit of the Lord had departed from him. He knew not.

And that's a place we can get ourselves into. And again, folks, I make no apologies for this. This is what changes us.

This is what changes us. I truly believe that one of the biggest problems is we're not being confronted. We're not being challenged in these areas because there's just no motivation to do more.

And on this point of worship, I've talked about this and I really wanted to get this point across when I talked about what seeking means. I don't think we mean if seeking God with all your heart, with all your soul, seek him and you will find him. It's that word there that we talked about two messages ago where it's like finding something that's lost.

And when I told my wife this last year, she was a little upset, but I lost my son at the fair for a few minutes. And I'll tell you what, I've never felt anything like that in my life. A nice, wonderful day just turned into a nightmare.

I didn't care what time it was. I wasn't hungry anymore. I didn't care who was around.

I didn't care how weird I looked running around and looking. And I didn't care, I had to find that child. So take that seeking into what the Bible talks about seeking.

Because I've tried that, it doesn't work. No, then you haven't sought God because you will find him. God is not a liar.

This promise is true. If you seek me with all of your heart, you will find me. You will find me.

And that's why one reason I think we need to stop being so critical of worship. Because when God breaks a person's heart, worship flows out of that. I remember a few weeks ago we had a man, he was just weeping during worship and crying and just, and somebody came up and said, well, what's wrong with this guy? I said, oh, you didn't know the Department of Child Services just returned his kids.

That's something to weep about. And you see that lady over there who's acting a little, maybe emotional for you folks? Do you know she's just went 30 days without crystal meth? Do you understand that she's getting her family back? I mean, you're not gonna worship? Last year we had a gentleman, it was at the altar, they came from a live again, it was a recovery home. And this guy was just up at the altar, and he was on his knees just bawling.

And we were back and kind of, you know, people are, oh, geez, hysterical, emotional, and get the Pharisees in all churches. You didn't know that, right? They're everywhere. They like to pick apart every little thing.

And a man came up and he said, Shane, would you go pray for him? He just, I almost wanted to skip this point, but I think it's important because we judge worship. We judge the heart, we judge where people are at. Man.

He said he cut his son down in the garage, he hung himself, and the father had to cut his son down from a suicide. And I thought, what am I gonna pray with this guy? I couldn't get any words out. I just wept with him.

And that's worship. That's worship. The blessing of brokenness.

You have to worship. And see, and you can bring that in other areas of life. And that's why many people are just dead during worship.

And I'm really not a charismatic type of worshiper. I'm more conservative. You'll see me just, but we've gotta get back into the heart of worship and not get through the few songs.

No, hurry up, let's get through these few songs. I need two or three just to get the junk out. And then I need three or four to get my heart right with God.

Don't discount powerful worship. You need, it's my firm belief, you need to have worship in your home. Make time in the morning where you can worship God and hear that song, Amazing Grace, how sweet the

sound.

And then I hit rewind and rewind and rewind and rewind until my heart is right. And then last night they sang that wonderful song, break every chain, break every chain. I've gotta rewind that one too as well.

You might as well throw in the prone to wander and how about some other songs that bring us back? It is well with my soul, it is well with my soul. You remember that old hymn? Anybody know the background? Five kids, he lost his son right before the Chicago fires, lost a lot of real estate, and then he sent his wife and four daughters across the sea, which ended in a collision, an accident. He lost all four daughters at sea, got a telegraph from his wife that said they're gone.

And he goes back to the same spot, the same spot where his daughters are buried under the sea and writes the famous line, when sorrow like sea billows roll, it is well, it is well with my soul. That might change, when you know the background, that might change the way you worship. I don't know about you, but it sure changes the way I worship because I don't think I could write those lyrics.

I'd have to fight off anger and bitterness and frustration, but it's only because of the grace of God through worship that you can get through life. I don't know how some of you get through life without Christ at the center, without worship flourishing through, without being in the word of God, without prayer. How do you do it? Because I sure can't.

The prone to wander, the wanderer's gonna win. The wanderer's gonna win every time because as a man thinketh in his heart so is he, the only way to kill that wander is with the word of God through worship and through prayer and through fasting. It's the only way.

That's the only way that God has given us. And really what you're doing is you're emptying yourself and allowing the word of God to change your heart. And then worship begins to shape it and form it as well.

And then prayer, prayer moves the hand of God unlike anything I've seen before. Anything I've seen before. Think about this.

Do you spend more time in prayer or on social media? Folks, our gun safes are full but our prayer closets are empty. If I hear somebody else tell me again, oh, you better buy a whole bunch of ammunition, order the AR-15. Really? When was the last time you prayed for your family? You're scaring them to death, sir.

Get into the prayer closet. Now, am I against self-defense? Of course not, but you better not rely on that. If you're relying on that, oh, there's trouble coming because we rely on God.

Let the nations know that they are but men. Nations, entire nations are but men in the hands of God. So do we take that to prayer and seek him? If my people, if my people pray, and I really want, I wish I had time just on this topic.

I've preached sometime just on prayer. But this is, five-minute devotionals aren't gonna cut it. Praying on the run isn't gonna cut it.

Praying, Jesus actually said, when you go into your secret place, in your closet, in private, and shut the door, that tells me there's gonna be some time there. And people say, well, really, Shane, it's not about quantity, it's about quality. It's really about quality.

Well, give your kids a quality minute every week and see what they think. You're trying to lose weight and get in shape? Try to eat a quality meal once a week. It's quality and quantity.

Because, again, back to prayer, the first 10, 15, 20 minutes, and I'm not trying to be legalistic. I'm just trying to say, if your heart's on fire for God, these are the actions that will follow. The flesh will say, no way, but the spirit says, yes.

And I think it was Jesus who said, my house shall be called a house of preaching. My house shall be called a house of music. Wonderful things, but he said, my house shall be called a house of prayer.

My house shall be called a house of, my house will be called a house of prayer. When God's people pray, God moves. I love what E.M. Bound said.

He said, when faith ceases to pray, it ceases to live. Let me have a word, I have a word for something. I don't get in that prophetic kind of style.

I'm just preaching, but word meaning in general sense that many of you are dying spiritually because your prayer life is dead. When faith ceases to pray, it ceases to live. The heartbeat of the Christian is prayer, prayer, not ministry, and that's one of my concerns for even conference centers like this, my church, is we can get so involved in ministry that we forget ministry's not worship, ministry's not prayer, ministry's what we do as a byproduct of our devotional life.

If my people pray, if they pray, I will heal their land. I will forgive their sins. Al Whittinghill said this, without the heartbeat of prayer, the body of Christ will resemble a corpse.

The church is dying on her feet because she is not living on her knees. And trust me, I haven't mastered this area. If anybody has, come see me afterwards because it's difficult, it's hard.

Lifestyle changes have to be made, they have to be. God has to be center. You try to schedule him in sometime, it will not happen.

If Jesus, the son of God, would take extended nights on the mountaintops alone, a deserted place, oh, the need for a deserted place? If Jesus needed a deserted place, how much more do we need a deserted place? And actually, as firemen, you're very fortunate to have what people call downtime. You know how many of us would love to have 10 hours of downtime? You could put the word of God in you like nothing ever you've ever had before. Prayer and worship, while the guys at the station will think I don't give a darn what the guys at the station think.

That goes back to the problem, we're more concerned about being firemen than prayer warriors. I'm not talking about being weird, I'm just talking about standing up for what is right and using your station time, your downtime for that. And then the final area I wanted to talk about, I don't wanna make this big emphasis, but fasting, fasting, we've missed this.

Jesus actually said when you give and when you pray and when you fast. Now here's the key with fasting that I'm just gonna shoot you straight about. What you're doing is you're starving the flesh to feed the spirit.

You're starving the flesh. And I don't know how the dynamics quite work, but it works very well. You're starving that flesh at once and you say no flesh, you're submitting to me.

I'm tired of submitting to you all week, you're submitting to me. I'm gonna fast and I'm gonna be filled with the spirit of God because of that. That's one thing I did coming up here, the first day I just had nothing for 24 hours and missed breakfast and lunch the last couple days.

And I don't say that because it's super spiritual, I say that guys because I have to, I have to. I have to come up here and I have to say, Lord, I'm just emptying myself, you better use me, you better speak through me, because I can't do it on my own. I can't do the power of fasting.

Jesus did it. When you fast, Shane, Jesus fasted? Do you ever hear of 40 days in the wilderness? He fasted. And it's very interesting that when he went into his baptism, the Bible says that the father spoke, the spirit descended, and the son came out of that filled with the spirit of God.

And then after the fasting period, very interesting, I think it's Luke, he says, and Jesus being empowered by the spirit, and Jesus being filled with the spirit. Because as you deny the flesh and you crucify the flesh, you can't but be filled more with the spirit of God. And we only have a certain amount of appetite.

And when we consume and consume and consume, consume, the flesh prevails. Is there anything wrong with eating? Of course not. But it's good to fast.

And it's good to, trust me, try it. Try it, and you watch how irritated you get. Try it and watch how hard it is.

Watch who's really in control. I tell people all the time, you wanna see really how addicted we are? Here's a test, go tomorrow without coffee. Just go tomorrow without any caffeine whatsoever.

Trust me. You'll turn into somebody you never thought existed. You know what it's called? Withdrawals.

It's interesting, this is a side note, I don't know why I'm going here, but my mom's a marriage and family therapist, and she showed me in the diagnostic manual for mental disorders that above a certain amount of caffeine, they start to experience mental disorders. I think it's 400 or 500 milligrams. The body begins to go into this mental state because we were never created to consume this much.

It's a fight or flight. I know I'm upsetting everybody in here because we all enjoy coffee. But the truth is, just try to do it.

Try it just for a day and we'll see how addicted we are. The point I'm getting at is how much the flesh controls and how much the flesh says, give me, I want it. Give me, I want it, give me, I want it.

So fasting says, no, now you're submitting to me. And if anybody ever wants to do that, I would encourage you to wean off half, half, half until you get to nothing. We've talked to many people with anger and depression, and often in their lives, they're having high levels of this, and the only reason I'm talking about it is I have a background in health and fitness.

And I know that it's a central nervous stimulant. It runs the same chemical, run the brain waves as opium and heroin and cocaine in the way it affects the body and the dependency. So as we start to have more and more and more, and why are you so frustrated? Why are you so angry? Why are you so antsy? Why do you hate traffic? Why are you snapping everybody? Well, take a look at also your physical diet because it does affect us in many different ways.

So after we just upset everybody in here, let's get back on track. Fasting is often tied to humility, to afflict the soul, to afflict the soul. We need to feel the pain that we cause and mourn over sin.

Here's a good scripture in Joel. Therefore, saith the Lord, turn to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and with mourning. Fasting was often a sign of mourning.

It was often a sign of Lord, I need you to change something and I need you to change it quick. And often he would bring revival through prayer and fasting. If you need revival of your heart, I would encourage you to look at this.

There's good books out on it. And then the final thing that we don't wanna talk about, which I've mentioned this many times, if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and turn from their wicked ways. Turn from their wicked ways.

Isaiah says something interesting in quoting the Lord. God says, is my arm not heavy? Is my arm not short that it cannot save or my ear heavy that I cannot hear you? But your sins, your iniquities have hid my face from you that I won't even hear your prayer. Is it possible that God might not be hearing some of our prayers because we're hiding? The psalmist says, if I hide iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.

Husbands, if you don't treat your wife in a gentle understanding way, guess what the New Testament says? Your prayers will be hindered. Hindered, this is huge. The battle is won or lost in the mind.

But I do wanna offer hope. There is hope. You can once again position yourself to seek God.

See, there's always a hope at the end of this dismal tunnel. It's oh gosh, what's going on? Look at what scripture says. You will seek me and you will find me when you seek me with all of your heart.

Isaiah 26, you will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you. All who trust in you and whose thoughts are fixed upon you. Remember, God hurts us to encourage us.

The whole point of this, in my opinion, a lot of my messages were to draw out of you what is already inside. It's already inside the heartbeat of God, the Holy Spirit crying, Abba, Father. Many people know it and they feel it, but they're prone to wander, and they need sometimes messages to draw that out and say, you can do it.

You can do it. Coaches are not popular, they're confrontational. And pastors sometimes need to be less comfortable and more confrontational to truly help people.

I know we're low on time, so let me just believe something else got put on my heart that I wanna share with you is this final verse. Many of you are familiar with it. I actually didn't have time to find the reference, just this morning writing out all these things down.

The Bible talks about the Lord going to and fro throughout the whole earth to show himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are loyal to him. Isn't that interesting? God is going back and forth, to and fro, looking for those whose hearts are loyal to him. But on the flip side, guess who else goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

So you've got the eyes of the Lord going to and fro, looking, looking for those. Is your heart loyal to me? Is your heart, are you gonna turn? Are you gonna repent? Are you gonna break? Are you gonna worship me? He's going to and fro, looking for those whose hearts are loyal to him. And the adversary goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.

So here's the question, who finds you? Who finds you? Who finds me? One or the other will prevail. Listen, sometimes we think we can sit right here in the middle. I know, I don't wanna get this hyper weird fanatic, I don't wanna be like that guy Shane up there.

But I know, I don't want the devil to get me either. No, one or the other will prevail. There's no middle ground.

There's no gray area. Now let me encourage you that nobody does this perfectly. God is just looking.

He's not looking for a perfect heart. He just says, I'm looking for a heart. I'm just looking for a heart that's loyal to me, a heart that'll pray.

And even if you don't get it right, you just say, Lord, we wanna start tonight. I wanna get home, I wanna pray with my kid. And with four little kids under 10, you think devotionals are easy? You think praying with them is easy? You think me and my wife, well, let's just sit down and pray for a half hour.

No, a lot of times, oh, I just don't feel like it, oh. But you press through. That's why it's called perseverance.

That's why it's called self-control and perseverance and commitment, these spiritual disciplines that the church is now wanting to remove. Let's just love everybody and not talk about these difficult things. Let me just have the worship team come up where they're gonna close with just the two last thoughts, or two, that's my last thought, two more songs.

But I just wanna encourage you. This is a time where the rubber meets the road. Start applying these four spiritual disciplines, seeking God, reading his word, and praying and fasting.

And you watch, you watch the transformation that takes place. When God has your mind, this is about having our mind, love God with all your soul, with all your strength, with all your heart, and with all your mind. Because as a man thinks, so is he.

It's very interesting. One of the reasons I've seen atheists turn from being atheists is they look at the human body. They look at the mind.

They look at the two planets hit, and here we are. We came from pre-mortal ooze over billions of years. So was that first person, was it a man? Was it a little baby? And then the little baby grew all by itself in darkness.

I mean, come on, folks. And then the second person, was it a female? And then somehow, over billions of years, the reproductive system puts all these things in the lungs and the oxygen. Creation screams creator.

Creation screams creator, and that demands worship. A creator created me. And all he says is, I will guide you.

I will lead you. I will sustain you. I will be your Sabbath rest.

I will be the beginning and the end, the alpha and the omega. I will be the lion of the tribe of Judah. I will be the king.

I will be the conqueror. I will uphold you with my hand. Even though you fall, I will pull you up.

I will be everything, and then once I do that, I will redeem you. I will buy you at a price. I will sustain you, and then I will lead you.

Through all these things we just talked about, and the people say, I don't want any of that. And we wonder why God is distant. We wonder why the Bible's boring.

It's because we have rejected, we have rejected his call to holiness, and to love him with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, with all of our strength. Folks, that's the answer. I just could've came up here Friday night and said that, and been done.

That's the answer. So I just encourage you, during this time of worship, to just think about that. And I don't wanna lose this opportunity.

I'm not gonna close it out. I think Chuck or Jason can, or the worship team. But I'm gonna be in the back.

I'll just be in the back, and I wanna pray with you for anything that there is going on in your life. Just use this time of worship, because this is where, like Mark said earlier, this is where the heart opens up. This is where the heart opens up.

You wanna know why many people can't receive from God is they're grabbing things like this. Could you hand me that water? Could you hand me that? I can't open anything. So here's what worship does.

And then the message just comes and complements what God is already doing in your heart. That's where change takes place. Let me pray.

Lord, I thank you so much, Lord, for this opportunity, and even renewing me up here tonight, or up here this weekend. Lord, I pray that you would minister to people right now during worship. There's people dealing with depression.

There's people dealing with suicidal thoughts. There's people dealing with hopelessness. There's people here wanting to divorce.

There's people here, marriage is on the brink of ruin, on the brink of having an affair. There's people here handling and going through demonic attack. Their children are rebelling.

All hell is breaking loose. But Lord, Lord, it is well with my soul. Lord, it is well with my soul.

Would you encourage these people? Lord, show them that you're in control. Show them that you might be using this brokenness to draw them closer to you. Lord, we are prideful people working on humility on a daily basis.

Lord, help us and guide us. And we pray this in Jesus' name, amen, amen.

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