

Fasting Forum (pt.1): The Spiritual & Physical Benefits

by Shane Idleman

Fasting is a powerful tool for spiritual growth and physical health, and it requires self-discipline and a willingness to follow God's will.

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Scripture: 1 Corinthians 6:19

Topics: "Fasting", "Stewardship of Health"

Description

Shane Idleman addresses the critical intersection of spiritual and physical health, emphasizing the epidemic of unhealthy habits leading to diseases like obesity and diabetes. He argues that while spiritual health is paramount, neglecting physical health can hinder our spiritual lives and effectiveness in ministry. Idleman shares personal experiences of how fasting has transformed his energy and spiritual focus, advocating for a balance between spiritual discipline and physical stewardship. He highlights the importance of fasting as a means to cleanse the body and spirit, encouraging listeners to take responsibility for their health as a gift from God.

Transcript

It's no secret that we are at the crossroads. Opiate and alcohol abuse are leaving a path of destruction in their wake. Obesity is skyrocketing and plaguing the young as well as the old.

It has reached epidemic levels in children as well. Diabetes is plaguing millions and cancer and heart disease are the number one killers of Americans. Now, of course the question comes out, well, big deal.

Spiritual health is what's the priority. And I do agree with that. However, I'm going to hopefully answer that in just a minute because we pray for God to heal rather than help with self-discipline to change harmful habits.

Now, we know that certain habits cause illness, cause disease. And it's sometimes I feel when I'm praying for people that we'll definitely pray. Pray works.

God answers in miraculous ways. He's doing amazing things. But when I pray for somebody on, let's say, heart problems or different issues, how do we know that it's not tied to taking care of this gift that God has given us? Yes, I'll pray for your anxiety and yes, I'll pray for your fear, but you might want to stop drinking a

pot of coffee, right? That's adding to that.

So many times we want God to heal, but we don't want to take responsibility for our actions and stewarding this gift that God has given us. Most are not caring for this wonderful gift of health that God has given us. I'm going to quote now James Morris.

There are multitudes of diseases which have their origin in fullness and might have their end in fasting. So they have their origin in fullness and they might have their end in fasting. Fasting does not kill us.

Overconsumption does. Right? We all think fasting is going to kill me. No, that doesn't kill us.

Overconsumption does. And if you go back two and a half years ago and you watch a video, it's called, I believe, Overcoming Addictions Through Fasting. I was about 45 to 50 pounds heavier.

And just as a personal testimony, my energy is much better. My attitude towards people is much better. I can run.

I can play with my children. I can minister better. I can preach better.

So I think we miss how much our physical affects us spiritually. And also energy levels. And actually when God says, go out and do this.

Minister to others. Be an example. Share your faith.

Go out and help people. I can't. I'm too full.

I'm too bogged down. And I think it really hinders what God wants us to do. Now again, granted, the physical benefits of fasting are secondary.

The spiritual benefits are the priority. But tonight, I'm actually going to focus more on the spiritual. Here's why.

I'm sorry, more on the physical. Here's why. Every single message I've ever given on fasting, I think it's a dozen, always was focused on the spiritual.

So you can go and you can listen to. Let me just give you some examples. Lean Mean Fasting Machine.

It's on our website. Health, what does the Bible say? Fasting over forks, part one. Fasting over forks, part two.

You know, it's a little play on words with forks over knives. A prisoner of appetite. Fasting, the good, the bad, and the hungry.

Fasting, they found the secret. This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting. Fasting breaks enslavement.

Overcoming addiction through fasting. So you can see there's a lot of fasting sermons over the last six years. And I can tell you that fasting has probably made the biggest difference in my life personally in regard to preaching, in regard to studying God's word, in regard to living the victorious Christian life.

It's by far prayer and fasting and worship in the word. That has changed my life more than anything. And I can tell because back many years ago when I would preach, when I would not eat, say the night before, and I would come to a men's breakfast, empty stomach, say no to the gravy, no to the eggs, no to the sausage, and I could feel the presence and power of God.

And then when I would choose to cave in and eat, I was very sluggish, wanted to hurry up, do my message, and let's get out of here, right, it's nap time. So I could always tell a difference when the flesh was full and when the spirit was full. Now, of course, food isn't bad, right, in many cases.

God has given it to us to enjoy, and I'm going to get to that in a minute. But when it begins to imprison us, and we begin to be prisoners of our appetite, and we start to consume things that are not healthy and they're actually detrimental, that's when it begins to tilt the scale in the wrong direction. So let me just talk about a few spiritual things, then I'll get into the physical benefits.

In Joel 1.14, we see the power of fasting. Joel said, Consecrate a fast, call the sacred assembly, gather the elders and all the people, and cry out to the Lord. So the magnitude of the situation determined the response.

Fasting is depriving the flesh of its appetite as we pray and seek God's will and God's mercy. So that's mainly what it is, spiritually. When I fast, I starve the flesh, and I'm filled with the spirit.

Because fleshly appetites and spiritual hunger do not often go together. We've talked about that before. Is it easy to pray and worship after Thanksgiving dinner? Or is it time for football? So we see this interesting relationship that we have to have food to survive, but when food becomes our God, becomes our idol, and we begin to be filled with the things of the flesh and eating and consuming, it will affect us spiritually.

There's just no way around that. The Bible is clear on that as well, not to mention gluttony and a lot of different things. And again, I'm preaching to you as a fellow sojourner, as a fellow struggler in this area.

I have not mastered it. My daughter just had a birthday party and Krispy Kreme was knocking on the door. I'm going to say, no, I'm not celebrating with you.

I'm fasting forever. Or am I going to have a donut? So I'm there with you. It's not about perfection, right? It's about getting back up and falling forward and at least looking to our health more often than we do.

And here's why. I don't want to take the Scripture out of context. Paul said, I was going to note this, when he talked about the Holy Spirit being, our body being the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Now the context, and I like context because it means you won't take the verses out of context and make them say whatever you want them to say. The context is sexual immorality. He's saying be pure vessels that God can use because your body is actually the temple of the Holy Spirit.

So why wouldn't that apply to other physical parameters? Why wouldn't taking care of, and I don't know how much, I'm trying to really be careful here because I was overweight, I was made fun of, and I know that it sometimes is difficult. So I want to be very sensitive, but at the same time I want to be very truthful. And sometimes that hurts.

And sometimes it steps on toes. I was going in a very bad direction as I was in my 20s, and thankfully God changed that. But I don't want to get on a rabbit trail.

I want to stay on this topic. Remember this. The flesh always wants to negotiate.

Right? Come on. Just a little Krispy Kreme. Well you had one, why not three more? Right? Why do you want to get so extreme? Just invite me in.

And the flesh is always negotiating. So remember that with fasting. The flesh is not your friend.

It's always going to negotiate. Well I'm not supposed to have sugar. Well that big cookie has honey in it.

Well that's God's sugar. I guess I can have that. Right? I'm not supposed to have meat.

Well fish isn't really meat. Let me have that. Your flesh is always going to negotiate with you.

So fasting is really, I think Jenson Franklin wrote about this in one of his books, the power of the made-up mind. That really stuck out to me. The power of the made-up mind.

There is will involved in this. There is self-discipline. There is making up your mind.

Because as soon as you give your mind an inch, it's going to take a mile. Mine is at least anyway. As soon as I start to make excuses, and that's why for me, I know this might sound hard to some people, or difficult to understand, but for me water fasting has actually become easier than a Daniel fast.

Or a juice fast. Because it's simple. Water.

That's it. Not on a juice. Well, can I make a smoothie? Like throw three bananas in there and a whole bunch in.

See, that's a juice, right? Kind of. Or Daniel fast. You know, what about this or that? And vegan cookies.

They have 400 calories and lots of sugar. And I can kind of trick myself into doing things. So remember this.

The flesh always wants to negotiate. So take it to God. Be led of the Spirit.

Matthew 17, 21. Jesus said that a certain evil spirit does not go out of a person except by prayer and fasting. And the Bible students will know that this verse is not in some translations because it's a disputed text.

But as we've taught before, the principle is throughout Scripture. Fasting applies pressure to the spiritual realm. Fasting applies pressure to the spiritual realm.

Think about it. The flesh is always wanting to indulge, right? So fasting says I'm not going to indulge on the flesh. I'm going to focus on indulging on the Spirit and seeking the things of God more than the things of the flesh.

Actually, he's an author, but his name is Arthur Wallace. He said, often pressure has to be maintained before there is breakthrough in heavenly warfare. Are you ever praying for something and it's just not happening? Well, I'm just going to give up.

I prayed for five minutes today. That's enough. Often when you're breaking through, when you're breaking down strongholds, when there's spiritual warfare, it's not a quick process.

Sometimes there is pressure applied. When Paul says pull down strongholds, that doesn't mean that stronghold's coming down that minute. Right, Lord? Take away this stronghold during worship and you leave here.

Boy, that was easy. I don't want alcohol anymore. I don't want to smoke anymore.

I don't want coffee anymore. I don't want sugar anymore. Boy, Lord, you are... Man, that was so good.

Or is it a stronghold? And that is not coming down easily. It's coming down one brick at a time, one sledgehammer hit at a time, and you're applying pressure to the spiritual realm. That's what fasting does.

It applies pressure to the demonic influences and to our own flesh, and it takes time. One of my hopes is that you don't get defeated because I haven't done too many fasts perfectly. Right? Just, oh, that was easy.

That was perfect. You know, in a moment of weakness, you grab some walnuts, or you take some juice. Like, oh, forget it now.

I'm going to just forget it. I'm starting over. No, you just say, oh, well, I'm learning from that.

I'm going to move forward. So you don't allow a little tiny step back to become a long-term setback. And most people don't fast perfectly because, really, God's not looking at caloric intake.

He's looking at the condition of your heart. That's what He's... Some of the biggest breakthroughs I've ever had were fasts that I just blew it miserably. Now, I'm not giving you permission to fast, right? Because some people say, why do you tell me that? Now I'm just going to blow it all the time.

Well, I'm trying to encourage you that when you do mess up, you get back on track. What I'm speaking from as well, maybe I should have told you this. I did a fast.

I had no idea how long it was going to be. It ended up being 22 days. It just ended about two weeks ago.

Out of 22 days, 14 days were water only. And I was trying to go, and nine of those days in a row were water only. And I was trying to just be led of the Lord.

And one time was when I had to speak, and I was not feeling good. I was either going to cancel or eat something. So I had a little bit of almond milk and a few walnuts, and I was able to come to church and speak.

So am I going to let that detour me from my commitments? So I kind of struggled through it. But perfectionists would say, oh, you blew it. You've got to start all over.

I'm like, I'm not starting all over. There's been 19 days. There's no way I'm starting all over.

That's impossible. But you see, God honors that because it's a heart striving, not perfect. So I wanted to encourage you in that because most people, you know, I can't do this anymore, Shane.

I got an email from a guy. I can't do this. I've tried 12 hours, and I cannot do this.

I said, you've got 12 hours, though, right? He's like, yeah, Mike. Well, that's an accomplishment. Look at that.

Mike, you think I started just by going a week? I mean, my first full day was I was going to hit somebody, right? It was 24 hours, and I actually caved in and had some orange juice before I was going to speak on a Saturday night. I'm not going to go, oh, I had orange juice. I can't believe it because it's the heart.

God's looking at the heart. So you're struggling. God sees that.

He honors that struggle. I think it was Jonathan Edwards when he preached his famous sermon, Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God, that sparked revival. He actually had a commitment not to eat or drink water for three days.

I don't, unless the Lord tells you to do that, I don't promote that. But he was able to speak, and he had to have some water. Now, he might be getting too extreme.

I don't know. My point is that sermon still sparked revival, even though he didn't quite honor what he wanted to honor with God. Anybody ever fell short? Say, Lord, I don't want to do this.

So the enemy wants you to keep beating yourself up so you stay in a cycle of defeat. That's usually why most addicts never come out of their addiction because they stay in that cycle of defeat and failure, and they just stay in that versus God says, hey, you fell. Come out.

Let me pull you up. Let me guide you. Let me lead you.

Fall forward into God's arms. So here's the thing. Four things that really affect our health.

Our fallen nature. Right? Our DNA. The curse is in the body.

It is going to deteriorate. We're going to get sick. I've had to pray for kids that have died at three, five, six years old from leukemia.

I vividly remember first getting into ministry, my pastor took me to a 19-year-old girl who was dying. I think it was leukemia. And I'll never forget that.

Just how her body looked like a skeleton and just going through a lot of things before she finally died while we were at the house. And just some things we can't explain, but we know that deterioration, sickness is relayed to our fallen nature. We also know there's demonic oppression.

I'm hoping I can get to that a little bit on Sunday in talking about spiritual warfare. We know that the woman that was bent over for so many years, Jesus said, Woman, thou art loosed from your infirmities. Why should this daughter of Abraham be bound by Satan? So we know that that is sometimes linked.

How many of the people in the Bible that had demonic possession and had diseases, epileptic in the Bible. So we know that as well. And again, I just go from what the Bible says.

Toxic thoughts. Do you know unforgiveness? Bitterness? I just talked to a pastor today in Lancaster. He's fasted 21 days before on water many years ago.

And I want to ask him a few things about this. He said he knows of people where they've been set free as soon as they release unforgiveness. If you don't forgive others, how is your father going to forgive you? And sometimes we might have that hold on us.

And I don't know how, but we know that anger. Ask any cardiologist. It's not even a Christian.

Anger is very bad on the heart because it releases certain stress hormones that are detrimental to good health. So we know that our thoughts, the way we think, unforgiveness, bitterness, all these things. You ever just walk around when you're like that? And you can tell it's not good for the body.

But when you're worshipping and there's peace and there's joy and you're filled with the Spirit and you're loving people, you feel that. It affects us physically. And the fourth point is failing to steward this gift that God has given us.

Now that is my main focus this evening because I've just given you a dozen other sermons that are about 10 hours on the spiritual benefits. So the main focus, though, is fasting and what it does to the spiritual. I'm sorry, the physical.

See, the spiritual is on my mind, though. That's a priority. But here's the question.

Here's the question I've been thinking about all month as I've been writing the book. And actually it was this 22-day fast that allowed me to finish the book. Because when you're not eating, you know you have a couple extra hours each day? And I told Morgan, I'll be home later while you're having dinner because I'm going to work.

And it gave me the opportunity to work on this. But here's what I kept thinking. I teach, pastors teach stewardship.

Why stewardship on finances? We teach stewardship on your marriages, right? And our marriages. How do we steward our walk with our Lord and Savior? Why is it then not important to steward our health? Because it affects everything. How a person, how our body, is it healthy? Is it not? Now there are people, I'm going to go visit hopefully one this week that's in a bed in a convalescent home.

Another lady we talked to on Facebook who's in a wheelchair, bed bound. So I'm not talking about those things. Because it's not like, well, you must not be doing good spiritually.

That doesn't always happen. There's very spiritually mature people that are dealing with health issues. But for the majority of people, why shouldn't we steward our marriages? I mean, why shouldn't we steward our health? Can you pray and seek God better? I know I said this a few weeks ago, but I want to repeat.

Can you pray and seek God better with a headache, tight pants, and sluggish, lethargic body strug out on your favorite addictive substance? Oh, that wasn't very encouraging. Let me ask that. Can you seek God better, right, when your pants are tight and you're sluggish, hungover? Oh, there we go now.

Wow, I guess we got the right crowd in here. But you can't. You can't.

I remember, I don't have a problem with pain meds. But a couple years ago, the dentist, I've told you a story. He gave me a month's supply of Vicodin for a root canal.

I still have it. It's expired. I need to throw it away somehow.

But I've told you, you're not supposed to just throw it in the trash because it gets in the water supply and all that. But anyway, that's a rabbit trail. I took it, right, and it got me to sleep because it was a bad one.

The whole next day, I was trashed. Like, why am I so tired and grumpy? This stinks. I'm depressed.

I don't ever want to touch that again. See, it affected my whole day. I didn't read the Word.

I didn't worship. I wasn't nice to people. Oh, side effects.

Oh, well, there you go. And so you see how the physical will affect us spiritually many times. So that's what I'm truly trying to get at.

That's what I believe God has put on my heart. Granted, this is a unique calling because not many pastors focus on the physical. Or you have the people who focus on the physical, like Dr. Colbert and Jordan Rubin, Dr. Axe.

Maybe those sound familiar. And they focus on that. But there's not too many trying to see the correlation or bring it together.

Or maybe it's not their calling. And different things. God will call us to certain things.

The Maker's Diet, I've told you that before, about 15 years ago. I presented my book to a publisher. And I backed out of it and just did it on my own.

And then they took Jordan Rubin's book, The Maker's Diet, which 2 million copies now sold, right? But people are like, oh, don't you regret that? I'm like, not at all. I don't want to be that guy. I don't want to be selling products and doing organic farming.

And I'm called to preach. So God knows what he's doing. But I see the health benefits.

And people are set free when the health is in alignment, when they're taking care of their gift that God has given them. For example, next door, I pray for heart trouble. But the same person stops by McDonald's and Colston's on the way home.

We'll pray for MS, Parkinson's, and Alzheimer's. But can those be caused by neglect? They often can be. There's fasting retreats where they'll deal specifically with multiple sclerosis and put somebody on water only for a month.

And the results are amazing. Why? Because the body is repairing. The body has time now to repair instead of it's constantly getting rid of the toxins.

Now it has time to repair. We pray for cancer, but are we consuming the things that are fueling it? Now, I have two or three people right now that are friends of mine that I'm praying for them in regard to cancer every morning. So I'm not just saying, well, you need to eat carrots.

I mean, I'm not naive. I know that sometimes we just don't have answers. Sometimes this isn't bulletproof.

This isn't something that always works like a magic wand because God wants us to seek him. God wants us to put him first. We just don't have answers many times.

But we do know, just like they know smoking causes, we all know that now. How do we know that? Well, a hundred years ago they thought it was great. They thought tobacco was wonderful.

Get some tobacco. Really get your lungs going. Well, now what do we know? Same thing with this area.

We know that cancer and disease often is fueled by neglect of the body. And fuel, like cancer needs oxygen to survive. It needs sugar.

It needs a fuel source. So if you starve that fuel source, usually primarily sugar or toxins, then that will begin to starve that disease. Now, there's a YouTube video I want to recommend.

I normally don't. Just listen to the audio because I wasn't able to look at the pictures. That's why I didn't share it.

I don't know if they're bad pictures. Anybody ever recommend something to you and you go, whoa, what were you thinking? But anyway, it was just called this. What if you stop eating sugar for one week? And I could not believe that everything from heart issues to eyesight to bad breath to skin to cancer and the research that backs it, it's amazing.

So this is why fasting is so important because it begins to change even the health of our body. Now, let me just interject. Fasting does not heal the body.

It gives the body the optimal environment for healing. See, people think, well, fasting heals me. No, fasting doesn't heal you.

Fasting, to me, is giving your body a Sabbath. Isn't it interesting that we're supposed to take one day to rest, but why not rest the body, the digestive tract? So that's all fasting does. It gives the body optimal environment for healing.

This might be as a shocker, but I think most of you know this. We all have cancer. You know that.

All of us have cancer. We get cancer. Cancer, they are cells that send the wrong signal.

You have leukemia in the blood or you have it in the tissue. The cell no longer understands the signal and then a mutation forms. So a cancer cell begins to form.

My immune system destroys it. The microchondria in the center of the cell there with the atom and protons, and we could get real technical, but I'm not going to go there. Suffice it to say is your body is designed to go and, like Pac-Man, get those cells and those damaged disease.

But if we feed our body with toxins, we're overweight and stressing it out. Then we're taking all these stimulants and throwing in tons of sugar. The body's barely, let alone the immune system is shot, let alone trying to go and kill disease because it is just taxed.

It's overburdened. So fasting allows all that to heal itself. Interesting statistic.

I don't know if I have it in here or not, but one pound of fat requires an extra mile of blood vessels. So for every pound, so when I was 45, 50 pounds heavier, I had 50 miles. I still can't get over that.

50 miles of, and the blood vessels, right, you know, are so small and they're running in different veins, but you stretch those out, so you wonder if the heart's working harder. The body's working harder. There's more toxins to remove, so it's all connected.

Now, let me show you, well, let me throw this out there. If our body could not fight disease, we would die at birth, right? A child, dead, dead, dead. But our body is so efficient on going and destroying the immune,

the immune system is so efficient going and destroying the toxins and the free radicals, the oxidation and all these big words you hear.

Our body's so designed to do that. Now, as we get older, though, more toxins come in. It gets harder.

We get overweight, myself included, and the body gets sluggish and run down, so we get sicker much easier because the body's not allowed to go back and restore and replenish. Let me see. Do we have that clip up there, the first one of the, I think it's the atoms.

Atoms, Jason? Oh, there we go. Okay, let me show you this real quick. Atoms are surrounded by electrons.

Okay, this is going to go somewhere. Don't worry, this isn't a boring chemistry class. Now, these atoms are surrounded by electrons, right? They keep circling the atom.

Now, here's what happens. I'm going to show you. Each shell needs to be filled with a select number of atoms.

Okay, you got it? So, atoms, they need this, each shell around it needs to be filled in order to be healthy. So, this full outer shell, right, is stable. It's a stable atom.

Now, you heard the word free radical before? Let me show you what happens. But if an atom has a shell that is not full, let's say it's missing one. Let's go to the next screen.

See, this is a nice, happy atom. This free radical goes and begins to cause trouble. He starts pulling off of the atoms, this one.

Or they start grabbing from the DNA. They start grabbing from your protein. They start grabbing from your fat.

And now, this is a free radical. It's dangerous. So, here's the antioxidant, right? Like you've heard that.

Berries. All God-given food. I'm just going to tell you a tip right here.

The top three antioxidant foods are Captain Crunch, Krispy Kreme, and McDonald's. Opposite, right? Isn't it interesting? Berries. God-given food are antioxidants.

They'll go, hey, free radical, don't bother this good atom. Let me give you what I have. I'm antioxidant.

I'm going to stop the free radical. I'm going to give you this good thing I have, and then we can all be healthy atoms. But if you've got too many free radicals running around, and not enough antioxidants, the body starts to break down.

And then we can get in deeper to where the microchondria, that's actually the fueling system of the cell, that gets distorted. And cancer starts to mutate. It forms another cell.

Another cell divides. Another cell divides. And it keeps growing, and you have a tumor.

So, fasting, though, you might say, because here's what the free radical is also doing. It's stealing electrons. These things right here.

It's stealing those things from the DNA. He's taking from DNA. He's taking from proteins.

He's taking from fats. Now, free radicals are somewhat important because they can help kill bacteria. So, we need them, but in abundance, they will start to destroy the body.

So, fasting repairs. We can take all that off now and put it on the fasting screen. Fasting repairs.

Here's how. It helps the body get back to a healing state. So, although it's not an antioxidant per se, it gives the body the ability.

So, when you fast, your cells go, uh-oh, emergency mode. And they begin to consume, then, the free radicals and the bad things. It begins to clean house.

But if it's always digesting, always cleaning house, always trying to fight toxins, always fighting disease, it just gets run down. So, fasting begins. It's actually how we are created.

We were created to feast and famine. 2,000 years ago, you show me Taco Bell in the Bible. Or anything on the corner.

And I know this gets convicting. I know most of you are excited about this, but not everybody is. They don't like what I'm telling you about right now.

You know, leave my food alone. Oh, okay. I'm just telling you how it affects your body.

So, free radicals can be created by poorly functioning mitochondria, the powerhouse of the cell. Fasting tells the cells to remove the unhealthy cells and replace them with healthy ones. So, fasting plus stewardship is what we're looking at.

Here's the thing. If the underlying problem, poor health, isn't dealt with, illness will return with vengeance. See, many people, here's the mistake we make.

Getting sick, give me that antibiotic, okay? I'm getting sick. Okay, well, that doesn't cure the underlying problem of what's getting you sick. So, why does it return again? I mean, I must have had strep throat 12 times 15 years ago.

And on amoxicillin. Amoxicillin. What is going on? Now, fasting, and I hate to say this, but in the last year and a half, I haven't had any nasal issues, congestions, cold, flu.

Nothing. At all. Because the body's able.

Now, when I get sick, I'm sure I'll hear from everybody, right? And then the charismatics will go, don't speak death into yourself. Words have power. But I'm just saying, as of now, it's been very beneficial in regard to how I used to get very sick.

Sore throats, nasal congestion, sneezing, coughing. In fact, you probably remember four or five years ago in Saturday services, I was always coughing a lot. And it became, you know, it was just always sick sometimes.

So, keep that in mind as well. So, if the underlying problem, which is poor health, isn't dealt with, illness will return with vengeance. This is why many people are chronically sick.

They are always medicating and never healing. Now, this isn't just pie-in-the-sky Christian stuff. I actually have, this is a DNA book from the college, Understanding DNA.

I read it. I study it. I want to see what atheists and PhDs say about the body, but also how it corresponds with what God has created.

So, this isn't just, you will not, you will look at any serious study on fasting, and you will see many advocates from cardiologists to neurologists to different areas. If they truly understand it, they will promote it. There's actually something, The Miracle of Fasting, I don't know exactly if that's the correct title, on Amazon Prime.

And you can watch how they've cured a lot of things through water fasting. So, I'm going to get to a few things here. Here's the takeaways.

Pray for direction and strength. Seek God first. So, I'm sure most people are like, okay, what do I do? I'm excited about this.

I want to do this. You have to pray for direction and strength. You seek God first, because seek Him and everything else will fall in place.

If you don't, then all you are on is a diet. That's what happens. When we put the spiritual on the back burner, and it's all about losing weight, it's all about numbers, it's all about measuring my ketones and the sticks, you know, you measure things.

It's all about numbers and losing weight. We put God out of the equation, then that's all it's going to be. So, Lord, I want to seek you.

Would you direct me? And there's so many different variations. I know people, I've got a book right now. I think it's called Hal Reese.

He was a wonderful intercessor, prayer warrior during World War II. And God spoke to him. He says he felt plainly that he was just supposed to eat dinner only for two years.

Yeah, I put the book down. I said, whoa, God, don't call me to that. No, don't call me to that.

Right? But then you'll see other people that God's put on their heart to avoid all this, especially if you have an addictive personality. Get rid of sugar. Get rid of caffeine.

Get rid of alcohol. God will impress to get rid of everything that is addictive and just feed the body what it needs, not what it wants. So you seek God and see what he, and that's why I didn't know, and that's why the fast was hard for me because I didn't know.

Is this going to be a week, two weeks, three weeks, four weeks? I'm going to get to that in a little bit. But, again, fasting is challenging because the flesh always wants to negotiate. I mean, any time I set out, like Wednesdays I usually set out, okay, I don't want to eat today, and I did.

Right? But it's all, because you'll get through it like, yeah, you're right, flesh. That's right. It's not going to hurt anything.

I'll eat something healthy. You're right, flesh. Thanks for negotiating with me.

And you have to make up your mind and say, okay, Lord, you want me to do this, and you set your sights on God's goal. The second thing is begin cleansing your diet and your lifestyle first. I just had a guy email us this week.

He said, oh, I really blew it. I went out and had, I don't remember what it was, pizza, fast food, alcohol, Starbucks, and a huge thing of ice cream or something the day before he starts his water-only fast. And that's the worst thing you can do because you want to actually have the body going into this.

The best thing is to get on just plant-based initially or start to wean off. Take a week. Just take a week and get off sugar and caffeine, and you're going to be a monster for that week.

So prepare your family. Prepare your people. But doesn't that show you how addictive it is? See, the withdrawals alone will show you the power of the drug.

If you want to know how strong something is, try going off. So take a week. Take 10 days and say, okay, I'm going to use this time to wean off of these things.

I'm going to get my body in a healthy state to fast. That's very helpful. Because usually, here's my thought, fasting usually isn't as hard as people think.

It's because they're withdrawing from things that makes it hard. They're withdrawing from caffeine. They're withdrawing from nicotine.

They're withdrawing from sugar. If you don't think sugar's hard to withdraw from or you don't think there's withdrawals, try having no sugar for the entire day. You will want to beat somebody up when that day's over.

Because it's the body wanting that stimulant. And I don't have the numbers. I wish I would write them down.

They'll be in the book. But I think it was in the 1800s. People had five teaspoons of sugar a day.

Now we're up to 56 teaspoons per person. 56. And McDonald's just came out with their big, I don't know what it is.

It's colored and it's this big and it has foam and stuff. I'm not even going to touch that. It has 93 grams of sugar.

24 teaspoons. So we drive through there and then we say, well, Shane, I can't have too much fruit. I'm a diabetic.

Well, hold on. Hold on. There's a problem here with that thinking.

And I saw it all the time in the gym. All the time. Shane, I can't eat that clean.

I've got to watch this. I can't have fruit and this and honey. Which is true.

You have to be careful. But then they would go to, what's that place that has the big gulp? Yeah, and they would go and buy a big gulp. But it's Diet Pepsi.

But it has aspartame. Your body still thinks it's sugar. It starts assimilating it the same way.

And it's not only that. It's a toxin. I believe a neurotoxin.

A neurotoxin is something toxic to the brain. The brain is something interesting with the brain. It's called the blood-brain barrier.

Most things go in the blood. They're okay. But once they get to the brain, you're in trouble.

So there's a blood-brain barrier there. And that's why you have to watch things like that. Actually, that's why there's a big debate over vaccines, right? You've got formaldehyde.

You've got aluminum. You've got mercury in vaccines. And, again, I'm not just reading websites.

I actually got a book on vaccines. What does the Center for Disease Control say about them? What's the results from polio all the way until now? What does the FDA, what does the Disease Center for Control, you know what it is, CDR, whatever that thing is. Those guys, yeah.

What do their own studies say? What do their own research say? How are these things really affecting us? So it's not Christians checking their brains at the door. It's Christians doing research. So that's where you have a lot of problems.

Number one, while I'm on this rabbit trail, the body's not designed to take a virus or a bacteria and inject it into your actual bloodstream. That's a full frontal assault, right? That's what it is. You're meant to get it in your body, in your lungs, or in your cyst, and you breathe it in, and your digestive system begins to break down that bacteria and kill it.

But to actually take a virus and inject it into your bloodstream, you might want to do a little research on it. Okay? I mean, I could really upset people here, so I'm going to stay calm. I've had people unfacebook me because of this topic.

And all I say is do the research. That's all I say. Just look at it.

Understand it. Read it. What's it doing? And the person says, well, yeah, but there's also formaldehyde in an apple.

Well, then you haven't done your homework, because that formaldehyde that occurs naturally is a lot different than that. You're also not putting the formaldehyde, the mercury, the tissue of fetuses, and all these things into your blood. So just use wisdom.

That's all I'm talking about. I'm going to stay away from that one. So also, if I'm abusing the temple, it will affect worship.

Won't it? And I've had my struggles on all different things. You name it. But can an alcoholic truly worship? If I'm high on Vicodin and I grab a Xanax or two, can I truly worship? And, again, I'm sympathetic, but I'm saying it does affect us.

It does affect how we worship. So if we're taking in time. I tell you what.

Ask my wife. True story. If I've had donuts and coffee, she'll say, Would you leave for a few hours? Why? Because it's a jerk.

I'm a jerk. I can't worship. I don't want to worship.

I want to throw my phone. So see how it affects. The physical affects the spiritual.

But in America, we want our guns, our big steak and potatoes, right, and everything else, and we don't want to talk about things like this. So number three, consume God-given food the way he created it. Okay? Consume God-given food the way he created it.

That would really limit things. I actually have something available in my health plan. We have copies of it if you want it as you're leaving.

I don't want to give it to everybody. And then number four, lead by example. Lead by example.

Do you realize most of you in this room are influencers? Right? Lead by example. And I'm trying on this point right now to step on toes. It's something I want to be careful with, but I think as parents we really need to look at what we're allowing in our homes and having our children take.

And they should not be consuming a lot of what, and I'm not going to get technical, but they should not be consuming a lot of the things that we know we shouldn't be consuming as well because it damages their little bodies. What you're seeing in attention deficit disorders, I've never seen more cavities in all my life. A six-year-old has 14 cavities? What's going on here? Attention deficit disorders, illnesses, all these things are related to the toxic body of these little children.

So as parents we should, and trust me, it's hard, right? It's hard, but if all you have in the pantry is good stuff, and when they open the refrigerator, why more carrots? Why more broccoli? Why apples? Guess what they'll be wanting in an hour when they're really hungry? Daddy, would you cut up some apples? I'll now give my daughters carrots. And they'll eat it. Yesterday they had Krispy Kreme.

Right? But we should be the influencers. We should be able to, because they're going to eat bad at friends' houses or different places, and it's not about perfection, but we should be able to help our children in this area and make a difference. Yes, it's a struggle.

It's a lifetime struggle. Something that's always stuck in the back of my mind as I'm working on all this is the fact that in Jesus' time or in the Bible times, they didn't have to encounter a lot of this. The only food, the only restrictions was gluttony and not eating like the king's meats, the king's pastries.

We didn't have all this aspartame, monosodium glutamate, GMOs, additives, coloring, toxins. We've got so many different chemicals out there, and I think now in a cup of coffee that's not organic, they'll say there's up to 200 chemicals in that cup of coffee. Just Google it.

Don't take my word for it. Harmful things. And so the body is so fearfully and wonderfully made that it's amazing how we can actually keep going the way we do.

And the reason I want to talk about this topic is because of, thanks, Emil, is to let you know that there is hope, that you can feel better, that you can do better spiritually, you can overcome more disease and different things.

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