

# Fasting - the Good, Bad, and Hungry

by Shane Idleman

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*Fasting is a powerful spiritual discipline that helps believers starve the flesh and be filled with the Spirit of God.*

**Duration:** 44:11

**Scripture:** Isaiah 58:6, Matthew 6:18, Matthew 26:41, Galatians 5:17

**Topics:** "Fasting", "Spiritual Discipline"

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## Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the significance of fasting as a spiritual discipline that helps believers overcome the weakness of the flesh and grow closer to God. He explains that fasting is not merely about abstaining from food but is a means to starve the flesh and be filled with the Holy Spirit, leading to spiritual insight, power, and victory. Idleman highlights the historical importance of fasting in the lives of early church leaders and encourages the congregation to embrace fasting as a way to deepen their relationship with God and experience His presence more fully.

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## Transcript

This morning, I'm kind of like a kid at Christmas time, or actually a parent with kids at Christmas time, because I want to give you a present. And I want you to unpack that present and be blessed by it. And I titled the message, Fasting, They Found the Secret.

And I know if I would announce this last week, we wouldn't have anybody show up this week. So I just had to throw it in there. Fasting, They Found the Secret.

Matthew 26, 41, we read two weeks ago. Watch and pray. Jesus said, watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.

The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. And I want to help strengthen you in the area of spiritual things.

I'm pretty sure most of you want to be filled with the spirit of God. I'm sure many of you want the word of God to come alive in prayer and worship. And it's what we've been talking about ever since I've been preaching here.

We want that. The spirit over here is willing, but the flesh is weak. And often, this guy pulls us more than the spiritual side should.

And it's interesting. Did you know that the Holy Spirit leads? The Holy Spirit directs. The Holy Spirit guides. The Holy Spirit convicts. The Holy Spirit teaches. The Holy Spirit does many different things.

But you can quench and you can grieve the spirit. And there's a good imagery there I heard of last week and I shared it last night. I'll share it with you today as well.

It's when, I don't know if maybe it's ever happened to you, but have you ever upset your spouse and grieved them? Is there a difference from this loving, joyful household to uh-oh, I'm not coming home later because I've grieved that spouse. And they turn from you. They don't want to be a part of that relationship.

There's a grieving. And that's what we can do with the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit is willing.

The Spirit is willing, but He only acts upon our obedience. I can show you tons of scriptures where God will lead those who are willing. God will lead those who are willing to follow.

And it's an interesting thing because yes, the Holy Spirit will lead, but we have to submit to His work in order to be led. He's not just gonna come on, Shane. No, I don't want to go.

Come on, Shane. No, I don't want to go. I have to turn and say, I want to be filled with your spirit.

You're willing. Let me submit and surrender to what you want to do. And fasting is the hidden secret in this area, I believe.

What shocks me, actually, is many of you know I love to read books written at least 50 years ago. I read contemporary, too, sometimes. But 50 years ago, 100 years ago, 200 years ago, I've got books by the Puritans and the Pilgrims and the Reformers, John Calvin and Martin Luther and early church fathers, and Ignatius and Irenaeus and Polycarp.

You read a lot of these people. Sometimes they have doctrines that aren't quite what Protestants would believe. But it was fasting, and it was fasting, and it was fasting.

Martin Luther would fast. John Calvin would fast. John Knox would fast.

Have you heard of John Wesley? Have you ever heard of the Methodist movement? Methodist. John Wesley founded that. I don't think he'd be too happy today with the direction the majority of that denomination is going.

But they fasted. They prayed. George Whitefield fasted.

They prayed. Amy Carmichael on the mission field fasted and prayed. Fasting was an important spiritual discipline.

And then the last 30, 40, 50 years ago, you don't hear it mentioned anymore. And I'll tell you right up front, the reason is we left food. That's why this is a hard topic, isn't it? I mean, we can talk about prayer.

It's not gonna affect my eating. We can talk about worship. I'm gonna go eat in about an hour and a half.

You can, oh, that was a wonderful sermon, pastor. I'm hungry. Let's go eat at Jack's place.

Right, that's what, but when it comes to fasting, that's where the rubber meets the road. And Jesus said, not if you, not when you, or I'm sorry, not if you fast, but when you fast. When you give, do it this way.

When you pray, do it this way. And when you fast, do it this way. Paul fasted.

Peter fasted. They fasted before they chose elders. Peter fasted and received a dream from God to go to Cornelius' house.

We have fasting throughout early church history. You can look at the Tertullian and Justin Martyr and a lot of those early, fasting and fasting. But see, it's not to be spiritual, it's to be filled.

That's where we miss it. Many people wanna be, oh, I'm just fasting, brother. Look at me.

I'm fasting and aren't I spiritual? No, that's not, what you should be doing is, by fasting is you're killing the flesh in order to be filled with the spirit of God. Because these two people do not get along. The spirit, you guys can be the spirit today.

Holy Spirit, right here. Good, right? This side, Mike, I'm sorry. This side's gonna represent the flesh and the balcony or sit in the middle.

But these are not, they're two opposing forces and I'll read that in a minute. They do not like each other. The carnal mind, the fleshly mind is at enmity with God.

And enemies can be reconciled. They can come together, peace treaties, but not this. This is enmity with God.

It is actually hates God. And the spirit says, no, come, come, come to this, be filled with the spirit of God. That's why throughout, one of the concerns I have with the church is we've missed this element of obedience now.

I mean, I talk about obedience. People say, oh, legalistic. Really? Well, a lot of scriptures have to do with obedience.

Why? Not to please God and not to show off, but to be filled with the spirit. See, you're either filled with this or you're filled with this. And most people who are filled with this, they're either not in church or they're grumpy at church and they wanna hurry up and leave church and get home and say, see, I went to church.

And that's what the scripture is talking about. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. Matthew 6, 18, paraphrased.

Don't let it be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your father who sees what is done in secret. There's that word. He will reward you openly.

God will reward you openly when you fast in secret. And fasting, I'm gonna hopefully you'll understand a lot better here. There is from, I mean, there's tons of teachers I can mention that you would know and they just don't fast.

They don't think it's really for us today, but nobody has ever given me a scripture that says don't fast anymore. That was back then for them. You don't need that now.

It's consistent. It's a given, if you would. It's a given that his disciples would fast.

Jesus said, when the bridegroom is here, don't fast. But when the bridegroom leaves, my disciples will fast because it's a time to starve the flesh. And this flesh needs to be starved.

Here's, hopefully if you take anything away from this, you can post this on Facebook, whatever you want. You're either disciplining your body or your body is disciplining you. Have you ever thought about that? But we think we can live right here.

This is extreme, Shane. No, you're either disciplining your body and bringing it up under subjection or your body is controlling you. And that's why we're not free from these choices.

Let me talk a little bit about fasting, what it does. It gives you spiritual insight. It gives you spiritual insight.

And we don't have time, but if we did, we could turn to the book of Daniel. Read about, you've heard about the Daniel fast, right? He basically removed everything that tastes good. Let's put it that way.

Meat, delicacies, sweets, pastries, he removed everything and he was still able to eat what I call God-given food that grows on a tree or in a bush or in the ground. God-given, and people say, oh, well, he's still eating. You try that for 21 days.

You won't get through day one. Where's my coffee? Where's my sugar in my coffee? Where's my, can I stop by A.M. P.M. and get that Coke to pick me up? Can I stop by and get that Snickers? And what about in Albuquerque? Nothing, so it's difficult, very difficult. And because he starved the flesh in this area, God revealed things to him.

Very interesting thing. I'm glad I'm transparent and I can share this with you, but I started a Daniel fast, and it's gonna really stink at the barbecue because I'm gonna be carrying around vegetables. But I committed to that last night, of course.

What happens this morning? Let me just give you a quick, from 5 A.M. to 6 A.M., just go get some coffee and a donut. No, I'm not gonna go get some coffee and a donut. No, come on, you deserve some coffee and a donut.

You're really tired right now. You need to go over your sermon. I'm not going there.

And I had to just sit and fight that for an hour. I'm like, where is this coming from? I can't study the Bible, my eyes are tired. Just go get some coffee.

No, I'm not going to do that. I'm committed to, I'm just gonna lay down and pray. The devil doesn't like that either.

So after, right around 6.15, oh my Lord, the word of God is just coming alive. Now I already have next week's message done on Saturday. I'm speaking at Hume Lake.

I already have the first message in my mind, the concept, I've gotta speak next Saturday morning in Sun Valley on the Holy Spirit and be back in time for this service. I already have that outlined within 30 minutes. I couldn't stop writing.

Now had I went and caved in to that pulling of the flesh, I guarantee that would have not happened because I would have been irritated that I gave in and I would have came here in a bad mood because I opened the door. Come on in. That's what the flesh does.

It's a constant pull and I hate the flesh. And that's what it does. But fasting will give you spiritual insight when you starve the flesh.

And I wish God made it the other way around. I honestly do. I wish you would have revelation after In-N-Out Burger.

Double, double French fries and a chocolate shake. You sit down, but I've actually never prepared a good sermon on a full stomach. I will not preach when I eat.

I will at least go four, five, six, seven, eight hours, 10 hours before eating anything before I preach often. Come up empty with just full of the Spirit of God because I've starved that competing element. So we have spiritual insight.

We have spiritual power. You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, but you also will receive power when you fast it. Oh, Shane, come on.

Well, is Jesus himself not a great example? Do you think the Bible just says he fasted 40 days just to fill in some scripture? The Bible clearly says a man, nobody knows, one years old, we find out 12 years old, he goes in and teaches or listens in the temple. They're amazed at his questions. Nothing for 30 years.

And then it says the Spirit of God led him into the wilderness for 40 days of fasting. And it says that when he came out of that time of fasting, that he was filled and clothed with power from on high. That's when he began his ministry.

That's when people heard of Jesus Christ. After a season, and I believe, personal opinion, that it was like, have you ever seen, you watch those discovery channels and just be careful because a lot of them are into evolution and the earth is 10 billion years old. Really? Anyway, that's not the point.

You'll see two lions maybe fighting, and this one will just devour this other lion. It kind of goes away. It knows not to mess with that lion again, right? It's okay, you've wrestled, you've overcome.

We know who you are. And that's what fasting is. That's what I believe Jesus did.

He fasted, the flesh had to come under submission. At that point, he says, now I have dominated the flesh. I'm going to begin my ministry.

And obviously it's hard to compare us with him because he was a son of God. There was no sin in him. He was tempted like we are, but he did not have sin in him.

But I think the same applies to us. Once you put the, now the flesh is quiet. He hasn't bothered me all morning.

And he's coming back later, I'm sure. And he'll come around tonight when I crave chocolate. And it's ongoing, but the more you submit to the work of the Holy Spirit, the more you will be filled with spiritual power.

Because spiritual power comes from being filled with the Spirit. Does it not? I would be scared to try to preach without ever fasting and just kind of wing it. It would alarm me.

Spiritual wisdom. Paul and Barnabas prayed and fasted for the elders of the churches before they committed them to the Lord. Spiritual protection.

Do you need protection in your home? Ezra prayed and fasted and God allowed Ezra. We don't, gosh, there's so many sermons in this one point. But if Ezra was taking all of this gold and silver and everything to rebuild a portion of Jerusalem there, Nehemiah came over to rebuild the wall.

Ezra was coming over to rebuild the temple. And they brought all this gold and silver through the wilderness, robbers, all these things. And Ezra said, we cannot go back and ask the king for protection because we just said that God will be our protection.

So let us pray and let us fast. And they got there, they arrived. Spiritual victory.

Israel lost 40 men in battle in just a few days. Judges 20, the people went to Bethel and sat weeping before the Lord and fasted that day until evening. Then the next day, God delivered them because of fasting.

I can take you to Moses. I can take you to Elisha. I can take you to Joshua.

I can take you to David. I can take you to all the great Samuel. I can take you to all the great men and women of God.

Esther, there we go. What happened there? The Jewish people were going to be destroyed. What did she say? Proclaim a fast.

And I honestly can't quite get my hand around the concept other than you're starving the flesh. You're saying, you're basically humbling yourself. You're saying, God, I'm gonna go without food and I humble myself and I fast before you.

Now I wanted to share before I get into more of the message, the physical benefits of fasting because what I love about God, if there's a spiritual benefit, guess what? There's a physical benefit. When the Bible says let all bitterness, anger, wrath, evil speaking, clamor, all this stuff be put away from you. You're filled with the spirit, but also you remove all these toxic emotions.

They link heart attacks to anger. Mental illness to bitterness and resentment. If you hold all this all the time and you never let it go, it will hurt you physically.

Same thing with fasting. It's a tremendous benefit. Anti-aging effects.

It puts the body back closer. It begins to repair the body, better attitude, better resistance to disease, better sleep, change of habits, creativity, drug detox, improved senses, vision, hearing, taste, joint relief. Does anybody need some joint relief? Your neck, your lower back? And I could just explain on that what happens when the toxins in your body and your lower back and your neck, and if you move, you can hear that cracking.

Well, that cracking isn't healthy. It's not supposed to be there. There's things that the body needs to cleanse itself.

More energy, more relaxation, reduced allergies, rejuvenation, revitalization, rest for the digestive system. What about a Sabbath for our body? You ever thought about that? We want a Sabbath not to work, right? It's good to take that and do that, but what about a Sabbath for our body? Giving our body a time to rest and rebuild. Spiritual awareness.

Well, we've been talking about everything. That's why I believe John said, I pray that you be in good health and prosper just as your soul does prosper. So our soul, when our soul is healthy, often our body's healthy too.

Not all the time, right? I'm not naming it and claiming it. You know, you should never be sick. Well, that's not biblical either.

You will struggle with sickness, and so why, and disease, but that's no excuse to let just the body go. Why? Because the spiritual side is built up and strengthen the health of the body often when the spiritual side is built up and strengthened, the health of the body often returns. Here's the interesting thing about fasting.

We all know what hunger is, right? Hunger is a strong desire or craving. And what we do when we fast, we put that hunger and craving toward God, toward the spiritual side. And what we do is we starve this side.

Fasting is directly related to our spiritual appetite. Hunger for God outweighs hunger for food. And I love what John Piper said.

He said, the absence of fasting in our life is in measure to our contentment with the absence of Christ in our life. Ouch, but true. When we remove fasting, you do remove an element of being closer to Christ because any time you can starve the flesh, you will be drawn closer to God.

There's no way around that. As I said earlier, there are two competing hungers, the spirit and the flesh. Galatians 5.17, I'm gonna read from a commentary.

The sinful nature wants to do evil, right here, which is just the opposite of what the spirit wants. And the spirit gives us desires that are opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other so that your choices are not free from them.

It's like that, you've heard that story maybe from Billy Graham. It's about this young man who came to him and he felt as if there's two dogs fighting within him. Have you ever felt that? This, you know, angel, devil, whatever you wanna do, and there's this constant, you know, and the man came to the pastor and he said, there's two dogs fighting within me, this good dog and this evil dog, and I can't, the evil dog keeps winning.

And the pastor looked at him and he said, then that's the dog you need to starve to death because whatever dog you feed the most wins. Same thing with the spirit and the flesh. Whatever you feed the most will be the prevailing influence in your life.

And that's why we see a lot of the church, which the word compromise is used. Have you ever heard the word lukewarm from Jesus? Why is that? It's because that group of Christians, all of us, I can fall in this camp too, is if I give into those things, they have been dominated by the flesh. The flesh is controlling them.

They've actually starved the Holy Spirit, which is called quenching and grieving, and they've filled up on the things of the world. So they look just like the world. The flesh is dominating their life.

So whatever you choose to obey becomes your master. It's our choice. Why do you think I talk about prayer, humility, and brokenness, and repentance all the time? Because that's the key.

That's fully surrendering, be filled with the spirit, and worshiping, and praying, and getting rid of all that stuff that pulls us down. That's where victory is found. And that's exactly what fasting is.

They found the secret. Fasting starves the flesh. I mean, if you incorporate prayer and worship, that's powerful.

There's not much the enemy could do with that. This, oh, wait a minute, what about the verse? This kind does not come out except by prayer and fasting. The disciples couldn't cast out this demoniac.

Why? Well, it's not in some translations. Well, I don't care. The principle's still there, that this kind does not come out except by prayer and fasting.

It's almost like prayer is the left hook, and fasting's the right hook. It's a combination. Because you can't pray very well on a big, full stomach.

If I just had a big pizza and a pitcher of Coke, and I said, brother, let me pray for you. Oh my goodness, so let me sit down. I'm tired, I pray that this spirit would leave and I would get a nap.

And I'm just, oh, I'm so full. You can't, that doesn't work. You empty yourself.

So now you can, you're empty. The flesh is starved. I feel clean of the flesh and filled with the spirit.

Now when I pray, there's spiritual power because God honors that fast. It's like prayer on steroids. Fasting illuminates the word of God.

When we give into the desires of the flesh, this side, it results in anger and addiction, depression, guilt, shame, anxiety, fear, and disappointment, all from giving into the flesh. So the good thing about it is fasting will help to remove these things. If what causing it is due to feeding the flesh, then removing that pull of the flesh will help to alleviate those things.

Bill Bright, have you heard of him? Founder of Campus Crusade for Christ. Boy, you guys are quiet this morning. I think last night really liked the subject of fasting.

Everybody's mad at me this morning. Dr. Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, wrote the following, fasting was an expected discipline in both the Old and New Testament. Fasting and prayer can restore the loss of the first love for your Lord.

And I know a lot of people are hanging out right here of losing their first love. They've lost that passion. They've lost that zeal.

I can watch you during worship and tell you if you still love your first love. I can watch you, how you conduct yourself in the things of God. Have you left that first love? Yeah, okay, you got the Bible down.

But does the Bible have you? You talk about Christ, but do you really have that passionate relationship with him? Because that's what fasting does. It renews that relationship. It's like, I'm gonna stop dating the

flesh and stop having an affair and stop that and just give my heart back to the Lord.

And it rebuilds and it renews. Fasting is a biblical way to truly humble yourself in the sight of God. Fasting enables the Holy Spirit to reveal your true spiritual condition.

And it, boy, does it ever. Because here's, when you fast, you're humbling yourself, are you not? And as a result of humbling yourself, you're open to the work of God. And God begins to show you areas that we need to work on.

He begins to illuminate the Word of God. And areas of brokenness and areas of pride and arrogance begin to come to the surface as we fast. Fasting will encourage the Holy Spirit to quicken the Word of God in your heart.

And His truth will become more meaningful to you. Fasting can transform your prayer life into a richer, more personal experience and a dynamic, personal revival in your own life. Fasting is really the difference maker.

And this is the point where I was gonna say you're either disciplining your body or your body is disciplining you. One or the other is controlling you. And yes, you can just pray.

You can just read the Word of God and you can just worship. There are people who get by doing that. And you notice how I used a couple words in there, get by.

But I'm talking about a vibrant, passionate relationship with God when you starve the flesh. And if you're not sure on this topic, ask yourself this question. Why did Jesus, the Son of God, have to fast? Why? If there's nothing to it.

Or if we say, well, we don't have to today. Jesus had to, but we don't have to today. How arrogant.

There's nothing to support that. Isaiah 58. If you have your Bibles, you can turn to Isaiah 58.

Beginning in verse three. This is the people of God, children of God speaking. Isaiah wrote in a critical time of Israel's history.

The northern, the kingdom were divided in Israel. They had succumbed to pagan worship and to idolatry and to drifting away from God. So here comes Isaiah on the scene, right? We know Isaiah, this bold preacher.

He said, the people are asking God, why have we fasted? Why have we fasted, they say, and you have not seen? Why have we afflicted our souls and you take no notice? So the people are mad at God. We're fasting, we're giving up food, but God, you don't see us. We're afflicting our souls and you don't take any notice.

So the main context of this, Isaiah 58, verse three, the main context is acting spiritual. The people are acting spiritual. God, we are going through the fasting motions, but you're not taking notice.

So I wanna just throw that out there. You can't go through the fasting motions and say, God, take notice. Hey, I'm fasting here, take notice if the heart's not right.

We see this in other areas. Hey, I'm reading my Bible, but you're not taking notice. Have you ever read your Bible and prayed and read your Bible and prayed, but God, you're not taking notice? What is going on? Because your heart's not right.

And he convinced you, your heart's not right. That's what happened here. A.W. Tozer said that prayer will become effective when we stop using it as a substitute for obedience.

But that's, oh, it didn't stick very good. Let me read it again. Prayer will become effective when we stop using it as a substitute for obedience.

Let me say it this way. Fasting will become effective when we stop using it as a substitute for obedience. See, nothing substitutes obedience, nothing.

You obey God, and as a result of obeying him, the heart is changed, then you fast, and he'll hear your fast. But these people were still continuing in their sin and fasting. There's nothing worse than fasting and continuing in blatant, unrepentant sin.

God says, is my ear not heavy that I cannot hear, or my hand short that I cannot save? But your sins, your iniquities have hid my face from you so I won't even see you. So it goes back to this area of obedience. In fact, verse three, in fact, in the day of your fast, you find pleasure.

So the people, it's almost like I have this picture here of the people, their heart's not right, and they're gonna say, well, we're gonna fast, and they're gonna be mean, they're gonna do all these things, they're gonna head to Laughlin, they're gonna do jet skis, they're gonna drink beer, and say, well, that's not our fast, it's liquid, and there's this pleasure there. There's this pleasure there, right? We're still taking pleasure in life, but we're fasting, Lord, don't you see us? But you exploit all your labors. Indeed, you fast for strife and debate.

If you want to debate and you love strife, you might wanna consider fasting and getting your heart right first. And to strike with the fist of wickedness, you will not fast as you do this day to make your voice heard on high. God's saying, I'm not going to hear your voice, I'm not going to hear your prayers if you don't change your heart, if your heart doesn't change.

Verse five, is it a fast that I have chosen? Is this a fast that I have chosen? In other words, God's saying, I don't care that you limit your food, look at how you're treating people. Is this a fast that I have chosen? A day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head like a bulrush or to spread out sackcloth and ashes? Would you call this a fast, an acceptable day to the Lord? He's saying, this is the type of fast. I want you to bow yourself before me.

I want sackcloth, you put on this clothing that hurts and you put ashes, you show, Lord, I'm serious here. I'm humbling myself, I'm not taking pleasure. I wanna treat people better.

It's as if God is saying, the fast that I have chosen is one in which your flesh feels the pain, your spirit is built up and you treat people the right way. It's not a time to seek pleasure, take advantage of people and get into arguments and debates. So what I wanna do, the reason I've mentioned this topic is I would like to include the church in on a fast.

Now I know I'm not talking to a lot of you because it's in one ear and out the next, but those who are serious, I'm gonna talk about fasting. I'm asking both campuses to fast through July, some type of fast.

You can do it three week or seven day or whatever you wanna do, it doesn't really matter, but the whole time period is through July.

And because what's gonna happen is you're gonna fall and I encourage you to fall forward. You're gonna go on this fast, you'll be good for two days and then you'll fall and you'll say, forget it. No, it's not about perfection or nobody would be in this room.

It's about putting the heart in the right direction and fasting and I wanna talk more about fasting so you know what I'm talking about. Prepare yourself, number one, you have to prepare yourself. Get the body and the mind ready because right now this probably sounds really good, but in about six hours of no food, it doesn't sound good at all.

So you have to prepare your mind, you have to prepare your body. And what you need to do for most people is you have to wean off, get off all the garbage before you change it. Okay, tomorrow I'm starting water only for seven days.

You're gonna die probably of withdrawals and pain and panic. You have to start to get the body ready. You get rid of all the meat and dairy and caffeine and sugar and junk food.

You just, for the next week or 10 days, a Daniel fast would be great. I'm gonna remove all these things. I'm gonna start to clean my body and get rid of these things.

And just to shoot you straight in case you're not already convicted, this stuff is not good for you. The reason we are killing ourselves and dying why heart disease and all these things are the number one killer of America, of Americans, is because we are not taking care of ourselves, of the temple that God gave us. And you might say, Shane, all that sounds extreme.

Well, here's what sounds extreme to me. A half a million people this year will have their chest open and a vein taken from their leg and sewn into their coronary artery. That sounds extreme.

And I'm quoting Dr. Cadwell Esselton. That's extreme. See, I don't think we, God gave us God-given food.

Is it God-given food or stuff that's designed in a factory? I mean, we just, we are well, we have no clue about things because we don't wanna take care of the temple. Just yesterday I was at urgent care with my wife. She was sick and she's feeling better today and we thank you for your prayers.

And I love the medical field. My mother-in-law is a nurse and we need them. Thank God for them.

But I would encourage any nurse to also look at nutrition. Look at how the body operates. You don't just take a bill and fix the problem.

She said, well, just go home and drink a lot of Gatorade. I'm just, no, no, no, no. Food coloring, one of the top ingredients in there is also antifreeze, in case you didn't know.

A lot of this is just junk, it's garbage. They give people who are sick Ensure. Don't take Ensure.

Artificial flavor, artificial covering, red dye, this dye, this, all the most sodium glutamate, all this garbage that we're feeding our body. So there's other healthy alternatives because it's how God created it. How God created food is you take a living apple off a tree, that apple is dying.

That living vibrant apple gives living vibrant energy to your body, refreshes the nutrients, the vitamin, all that stuff you're taking living food and you're putting that life into your body. You don't go grab a Twinkie that's gonna sit on that shelf for 10 years and look the same as it does today. It's not, and we wonder why we're dying.

Why is there an epidemic of all these things, health related, you think healthcare coverage is expensive now, give it 10 years. That we can't keep up with the demand because we're just killing the temple of God. Try it sometime, coffee and donut or some steamed broccoli.

I mean, it's a no brainer. And I just, I have this passion to help people in the area because I believe God wants us to be healthy to the degree that it's according to his sovereignty and his will, of course, I understand that, I'm not stupid. But he also believes that we should, I believe, take care of our body.

This is the temple of God. And we know, we know these things don't help. We know that these things are not good for us.

And I ran into recently a diabetic. He said, oh, I can't eat really clean, I've gotta watch this. And I go, well, you might wanna put down that 32 ounce Coke from A.M.P.M. What am I missing here? See, 32 ounces, that's almost 30 teaspoons of sugar.

I could fill that in both my hands. And you're just pouring that into a drink. And you're gonna probably have another one.

I'm surprised we don't just fall over more often. I cannot believe the body, how God designed the body can run off of stuff that is dead. I can't fathom it, it's amazing.

Artificial, all those things. So I would encourage you to just really look at what we are putting in. Because I've seen this many times, you have too.

Every bite we take is either fighting disease or feeding it. You might wanna ponder that one for a minute. Everything you eat is either fighting disease or it's feeding it.

There's records. I mean, you can research all this. Many cancer patients who have went to just on a juice only diet, they starve the cancer.

Literally, you starve that. Not all the time. And sometimes it doesn't, you know, God's will and God's perfect plan doesn't quite work.

But you can take care of the body better than we are today. And that's what fasting helps to do. So back to this point, prepare yourself.

You have to get the body ready. Start hungering for fasting. I've got, there's a good book out there, God's Chosen Fast.

A person by the name of Jensen Franklin has a lot of YouTube videos on fasting. And you start to get that appetite. You start to clean your body and then pray, God, what kind of fast do you want me to do? What kind of fast do you want me to do? Honestly, I'm scared of a water fast.

I've only went two and a half days. And it was up at the Oak a couple years ago. Yvette, you remember, because you told me to fast more often.

Because I came back, I was ready to preach that morning. I haven't eaten in two and a half days. Water only, and it just, the word of God just came alive.

And I still remember that service. But, and you're not gonna die. There's people here, I can introduce you to people who have fasted water only for 30 days.

Ron, I saw you walk in up there on the balcony. So I'll grab you if anybody has any questions. Larry, how many weeks of just juice only? I mean, seven weeks, juice only.

And the health benefits, so you're not gonna die. What the problem is, is this guy over here. He's, open the door.

No, I don't wanna open the door. Come on, remember me? Remember, remember, remember? And it's this fight of the flesh. So you have to prepare your mind and your body.

There's something powerful about the made up mind. If you go into it and say, oh, I'll try it. And I'll try to just tailor it as I go, it won't turn, it won't be anything.

Because you'll make every excuse in the book, knowing a mankind to get what you want. So you have to prepare your body and your mind. And you also have to commit yourself, be specific and realistic.

Say, Lord, I'm gonna take the next two weeks, I'm gonna clean out my pantry. I'm gonna clean out my heart also with things and clutter. I'm gonna clean out my body.

I'm gonna start to eat better. And the reason I know that God is in something like this is because all of us are convicted to eat better. I've never met a Christian, ever, that said, you know what, I feel great with junk food.

I don't think God wants me to do it. I always hear, I know I gotta start eating better. I know I gotta start.

It's a conviction of the Holy Spirit. It's there, so commit it to yourself. Be specific and realistic.

And then what is the fruit of that labor? Isaiah 58, six, is this not the fast that I have chosen to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, that you break every yoke? And some people have said, they teach on this, that that's what a fast does. It looses the bonds of wickedness and undoes the heavy burdens. It lets the oppressed go free, and it does.

But the context right now that Isaiah is talking about, what God is speaking through him, is God is saying, is this not the fast that I have chosen, that you loose the bonds of your wickedness, that you first turn from your evil way, that you begin to undo the heavy burdens that you've put on the people, to let the people you've been oppressing go free, that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out? When you see the naked, then cover him, and hide not yourself from your own flesh. Then your light shall break forth, like the morning. Your healing shall spring forth speedily, and your righteousness shall go before you.

The glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer. You shall cry, and he will say, here I am.

So I'm gonna close with this. Here's what fasting does do. It looses the bonds of wickedness.

If there's something in you that's this anger, this wickedness, this sin, this besetting sin, I just can't seem to stop. Have you ever said that? It just keeps haunting me, this side. There's something there.

This kind cometh not out but by prayer and fasting. There's something there, this wickedness. Fasting will loose the bonds of wickedness.

It'll also undo the heavy burdens. Have you ever been burdened? Are you coming here heavy burdened? It's like you're carrying something, but you're not. Whether it's all this anxiety, or depression, or my job, or my career, or all the interest, this is burden, Lord, I can't seem to lift.

And that's why people a lot of times have breakdowns. It's because of a burden. I can't.

Fasting will undo the heavy burden. It will let the oppressed go free. If you're oppressed by something, break every yoke.

And you know what a yoke is. An oxen used to wear this big yoke around its neck. It would be hooked to whatever they were wanting him to pull.

And he would carry this yoke. And many times Christians carry the yoke around them that could be demonically inspired. And I don't think Christians can be possessed, but I think they can be influenced.

They can be demonized. That's really what the Bible says. The King James translated to demon possession, but it's demonized, inflicted, harassed by a demonic influence.

And you can be, I believe you can. And that's what fasting does. This kind cometh not out, but by prayer and fasting.

It will let the oppressed go free and break every yoke. Then the light breaks forth when we humble ourselves and healing takes place. See what happens.

After you fasted, I wouldn't even minimize, I wouldn't even minimize a day fast or a half day fast. Look at what happened to me this morning. This one hour battle of a nice, hot, strong cup of coffee, dipping a donut into it, right? It was just repeating in my mind, where is this coming from? Yes, it sounds good.

Be quiet, flesh. Do you know you can tell your flesh to be quiet? These two are not competing forces. The devil and God are not co-equals.

He sits under God's sovereignty and God's under control. So anytime you submit to the Spirit, you are in a greater position of authority. The flesh has no power, no dominion.

He has to submit to what the Spirit wants. So the Spirit's saying, I am willing. The Holy Spirit's saying, I am willing, God, I'm willing.

But the flesh is weak. Stop submitting to this horrible master and start submitting to God and the work of the Holy Spirit. And that's what fasting does.

It's a form of submission and surrender to God. That's why it's so hard. And it dawned on me, I can listen to an hour sermon driving.

That's not hard at all. But try to pray and fast. Oh goodness, the flesh hates it.

That's why there's a battle. See, the fact that there's a battle confirms the value of the commitment. No battle, it's no big deal.

But when the enemy knows we're fasting, and you might even wanna be careful. Just pray to God in your mind. Because once he knows your family's gonna fast or you and your spouse are gonna fast, be ready.

Be ready because I believe that there is a demonic realm. We wrestle not against flesh and blood. We wrestle against principalities, against powers, against high things that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God.

That's our battle. So fasting brings out the big guns. And it puts us in a position of victory.

Then the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call and the Lord will answer. You shall cry and he will say, here I am.

It's this picture. See, these people were crying. Oh Lord, we're fasting, where are you? We're being subdued by our enemies.

And God says, that's not the fast I've chosen. Wonderful, you're going without food, but your heart is in a miserable spot. So God said, humble yourself.

Release these things. Release the bonds of affliction. Release this anger and irritability and depression and all these things that are holding you captive.

Release that bitterness and that jealousy. Release it. Then go and fast.

And then when you cry out, when you say, Lord, where are you? He'll say, here I am. Here I am. Back to worship, right? Our God is an awesome God.

And you worship. And the glory of the Lord breaks in and fills your heart. Fasting is the secret.

But it's not really a secret. It's a secret nobody wants to do. And you will have to do business with God.

You'll have to pray. You'll have to do something. But the reason many people don't fast, well, let's just say everybody, is because they don't want to starve this area of their life.

And I was reminded this week that we can't serve two masters. We either love the one and hate the other or be loyal to one and despise the other. And it's hard to try to not starve the flesh and still be filled with the Spirit of God.

And that's what we want. See, by human nature, we want all the flesh has to offer, but we also want what God has to offer, don't we? I mean, if we could find that middle ground, but we can't. There's not a middle ground.

There's no middle ground. We have to submit to the work of the Holy Spirit through prayer and fasting and worship.

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