

How to Strengthen Your Marriage

by Shane Idleman

The sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual leadership and mutual submission in strengthening marriages through biblical principles.

Duration: 48:10

Scripture: Ephesians 5:15

Topics: "Marriage", "Spiritual Leadership"

Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the importance of spiritual leadership in marriage, urging men to walk circumspectly and be filled with the Holy Spirit to foster a loving and respectful environment at home. He highlights that men set the spiritual tone of their families and must prioritize purity, passion for God, and mutual submission in their relationships. Idleman encourages husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church, which requires humility, accountability, and a commitment to personal holiness. He also stresses the need for men to surround themselves with uplifting influences and to actively seek God's will in their lives. The sermon concludes with a call to action for men to take steps towards reconciliation and spiritual growth in their marriages.

Transcript

This morning I'm going to speak briefly on marriage, because that's where we're at in the book, Disciples, I'm sorry, Disciplines. I always get that word wrong. Disciplines of a Godly Man.

It's a great book. I think we have copies, if you need to get a copy. We're going through that book the last Saturday of every month, so let your friends, family know.

Last Saturday in February, February 29th actually, that's easy to remember, it's a leap year. And then March and April, and we're going to keep doing that the last Saturday, and it's really meant to complement. We already have a Saturday morning group, Phil leads that, you can talk to him or Rick on a Tuesday night.

We already have men's groups, so this is mainly just to come together once a month, fellowship, and then go back out and do what we do. So I'm going to talk briefly from Ephesians. I don't know if you have your Bibles.

I'm just going to read to you Ephesians, and wouldn't you know, I forgot to put down the chapter. I believe it's chapter 5 though, Walking in Wisdom. If anybody can find that, let me know.

I'm starting at verse 15, it's a context of marriage. So let me start there. I think I forgot water this morning, that's okay, I'll be alright.

See then that you walk circumspectly, is that an interesting word? See that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil. Now you might say, what does this have to do with marriage? It has everything to do with marriage. Because the context is going to go right into marriage, number one.

Number two is, we need to walk, this word circumspectly. Here's what you can think of, I've thought of this, when I studied this 10 years ago or so, I taught on this. Think of walking in a desert trail, knowing there's rattlesnakes.

And I've seen them on my walks before, and you start, I'm thankful for rattles, because that has saved me a few times. And you hear that, and as I'm walking, I'm looking, I don't care what's 100 feet away. I'm walking circumspectly.

And what the Bible definition means is to walk cautiously, and to look around. So Paul says, especially as men, we are to walk in these days, carefully. Oh, you got water, Gabe? Thank you.

We're to walk carefully and cautiously, we're to look around. Now what are most men doing? We're looking around in the wrong spots. Looking around on the internet.

Listening to ungodly advice. I'm shocked, the more I pastor, and I know young men that come here and I talk to them, often, and they can't break away from these friendships that are not friendships. I've had a young man, I've invited him here many times, probably late 20s, and he says, it's hard to go to church, man, none of my buddies do.

I've got eight friends, they like to drink, and I just can't get to church, and I can't get in the Word. And after a year of telling him the same thing, you have to wonder how bad do you want it? You have to break those relationships off. Come to Saturday mornings, it's by his house.

Come to Tuesday night, come to Wednesday, come to Sunday. Get plugged in with guys who can build you up, not pull you down. And as men, we look often to the wrong source of strength, the wrong source of influence.

If you're being influenced by YouTube, and the media, and Facebook, and Instagram, you might want to shut that off for a season. It's okay to do that, did you know that? I'm doing it, very soon. Disconnecting from those influences.

So as most men, even Christian men, they walk through life, not circumspectly, they're looking at porn, they're addicted to porn, they're flirting with sin, where they shouldn't be flirting with sin, they have the wrong influences, and they're being hit by the enemy. Their kids are being led astray, their wife and their marriage is falling apart. And I know we don't like to hear this, but we set the spiritual condition of our home.

We set the tone. We set the spiritual climate. And people do come up, and they say, but Shane, you don't know my wife.

And I don't. There are challenging marriages. But God calls us to do certain things regardless of how the spouse and family are acting.

And I've noticed often they don't act the right way right away. It's a season, it's pressing in, it's a consistent pattern of faithfulness to God's word. So that's the key right here.

Walk cautiously. Look around. Don't look around.

Right now I'm counseling a few people who have really messed things up financially. Because they're not looking around. They're being scared into this, or they're investing into things that, why would you invest in it? Well, so-and-so told me.

And they're not looking around. They're not looking at what's going on in our world. They're not looking around, and what does God's word say? They're not walking cautiously.

And it's okay as a man to be cautious. I think there's a lot of wisdom there, because many times we are reactionary. Right? What happens when you get slapped? I often pray to God, God help me, because I haven't been hit in a while.

You know, it's been 25, 28 years. But I'm often wondering, if somebody in a crowd, and I'm ministering, and they just slap me, am I going to be able to respond in love? Or bam! Right back. It's that instinct, you know, that fight.

Now, it's different if you're defending your family or something, because it will go down if that happens. But when I'm talking about me individually, am I going to respond in love? Is my heart prepared to do that? And a lot of times we are reactionary. That's where anger comes from.

Anger in our hearts, anger in our homes. We've been, we've maybe felt disrespected. Anyone felt disrespected? I don't know why that's such a big deal for men.

But God created it that way. He even says in his word, wives, respect your husband. Now, what I think, you know, there's not a lot of teaching on, as far as the Bible teaching, you know, you can read into things.

But I think God has given us this ability to lead our family. And we're already fractured. We're already broken.

Anybody have low self-esteem issues? I mean, I was raised, I love my dad, but it was a hard environment. Always trying to measure up. Always trying to please him.

Always trying to work hard. And dad, did I measure up? Did I measure up? So we are boys growing up now in men's bodies. And so we want that respect, meaning not forced respect, but trust my decisions.

Let me make this decision. Let me, you know, there's nothing worse than saying this or doing this, and you feel like you got disrespected. A little thing last night is just funny.

I never thought of this. But I left my wife a note, like at 12 o'clock. Hey, make sure you cook the turkey I left out at four, because I'll be coming home from a meeting.

I've got to eat, and then I've got to go to Lowe's. And guess what happened? Oh, she didn't see the note. You know, it's 420.

I walk in the house. I'm starving. Which I'm not starving, you know, but you're hungry.

And I'm like, I had a bad mood for a minute there. And I said, you know, it's no big deal. And so I just, I did it myself.

But sometimes when we're challenged or people, you know, our spouse don't really take what we say seriously, it can really demean men. I think it can knock us down, because we're called to lead, and when that leadership is not respected, you can really, men can become real passive. And we've seen it.

Men either become explosive and angry, and they rule their home with a rod of iron, or they become very passive and a doormat. And the kids walk over them, and their spouse walks over them. So what's the answer? I believe the answer is getting back into God's word, walking circumspectly, and even telling your spouse, hey, listen, I need to make some changes, but so do you in this family.

We need to walk according to God's word, and they might not accept it at first. It might be difficult, but God is faithful. And you regain that leadership, not by anger, not by forcing it.

Let them watch your character, not this. I'm learning to just be quiet and let my character speak, let my actions speak. And a lot of times we know that sin is not lacking when there is a lot of words going out of our mouth.

The Bible says that. In the multitude of words, sin is not lacking. So it's wonderful advice here.

Be careful. The days are evil. When have we ever lived in a time where we have to be more cautious than now? When have we ever not been able to trust the news? Do you know there's fake news out there? The majority of journalists now have an agenda.

They don't care if they lie. They don't care if they give you wrong information. They will just, whatever their agenda is, and for men now to walk circumspectly, to be cautious, and then Paul says, therefore, do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

See, you can understand what God's will is. And I know many men wonder, I pray, Lord, what is your will during this season? I need to know, especially when we purchase these radio stations. That was a hard couple months for me because, Lord, what is your will? This doesn't make sense.

What is your will? Now it makes complete sense. But when you're in the middle of something, it doesn't make any sense. What is your will? What's your will for the church? What's your will, maybe you're asking, Lord, what's your will for my marriage, for my ministry, for my employment? I need to know, God, do you want me to move? Many people are dealing with that right now.

The number, probably on the top ten list of emails we get, are people wanting to move out of California. How do I know it's not fear? How do we know to stay and fight? What is God's will in this area? What is God's will? And I usually say, you need to seek Him. Don't seek me.

Seek what God says and what God is leading you to do. I will say this, don't make decisions based on fear. For example, yes, it's getting difficult here, but are you sure that's why we're supposed to move? I know people that move from their neighborhoods because they don't like their neighbor.

Okay, is fear prompting you? Now, sometimes it's good to move, and God calls us to provide safety for our families. There are some areas in town I do not want to live in. It would be a hard area.

So there's wisdom there. But overall, we want to understand, Lord, what is your will? And that's interesting. He just switches.

And do not be drunk with wine in which is dissipation. In other words, don't be drunk with wine which is debauchery, which is drunkenness. But be filled with the Spirit.

Now, this is interesting because statistics in the church, more people drink than you realize. I've had a couple people tell me recently they stopped. One lady stopped in November.

It's just because it was too much. What happens, unless you're very careful, there's a few people, you know, they can have a beer once in a while, once every month. Okay, well, I mean, the Bible doesn't prohibit it, that's for sure.

But if you have to have it every week, and maybe a couple, and you want that feeling, there's a different spirit that begins to control us. The more we take in of the substance, the more we begin to be controlled by it, and less that we are filled with the Spirit. I have never met anyone personally that drinks often who is also filled with the Spirit.

There's two conflicting things going on. And we run to alcohol to relax and to get rid of the pain. If I could just have a couple.

But it's funny, for an hour of pleasure, there's a day of regret. The enemy doesn't show you the regret. He shows you the immediate satisfaction.

So even for people not drinking, Paul is using this idea of don't be drunk with wine, don't be influenced by this worldly system, but be filled with the Spirit. And that's an interesting topic and an interesting word, because if we had time, if you look at how the Greek, and that's why when people study for sermon preparation, they usually look at the original language, and you can look, is a verb, is that in an active tense? Or is that something that has happened a long time ago, it's not going to happen again? But this is an active, it's like being filled with the Holy Spirit on a daily basis. So there's a choice that's made, there's a decision that's made.

And I can go from being filled one day to being quenching and grieving the Spirit of God the next. I know it, I've lived it. And Paul's command, therefore, is to be filled with the Spirit.

Why, Paul? Well, there's no period, there's a comma, and he says this, speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. It doesn't mean you go around singing, necessarily, but your words are filled with grace and love, and there's a joy, there's a happiness about you singing, making melody in your own heart to the Lord. Have you ever done that before? I have, and I love it.

But usually what comes in is grumbling and complaining. Instead of singing to the Lord, it's being Spirit-filled, it's being joy-filled. I'm going to tell you what hit me hard this week, so hold on.

Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God. Now, submission is mutual, correct? In the church setting, you know, many people submit to the leadership, but I have to actually submit to Pastor Abram on Thursdays, Fridays, and

Saturdays. My son's on his basketball team.

Hey, Shane, get up, help with this. Okay, there's a mutual submission. Hopefully he doesn't do that because I just want to relax.

I've coached enough baseball in my years. And people don't understand this, but there's a time where I submit to the needs of my wife and kids. I don't just walk around, I'm the man, and here's what you do.

I submit to those needs. Hey, the kids aren't feeling loved, you're always busy, you seem moody, and you submit to those needs. So that's what a real man does.

He knows when to submit and when to lead. And didn't Jesus submit to the will of the Father? So this whole word of submission has really been twisted because we think they're always supposed to submit to us. And actually, even leading this church, I submit to the needs of the body more than people realize.

They need me at early morning worship. They need me to do this. And submitting, what are the needs of the church? And it's a mutual submission in the fear of God.

So it's this wonderful picture. Do not be drunk, but be filled with the Spirit in marriage. Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns.

You're joy-filled. You're making melody in your heart. And this is difficult, isn't it? Some of you guys are already checking me out and going, I can't do that.

I don't want to sing melodies in my heart. Well, you're not singing a song necessarily, but there's a joy about you. I mean, there's so much to be worried about, but how much more is there to be thankful about? Look at the house you live in.

Look how God has blessed you, your spouse, your children, the career, the money, the finances that God has blessed us. Just go visit a third-world country, and you'll come back very joy-filled and thankful and filled with tears because of what God has given us. Now here's what hit me.

I always read this. I mean, I read through the New Testament at least once or twice a year for 20 years now. And speak to one another in hymns.

Let's be joy-filled and treat each other this way. But what really struck me this week as I was reading this, Paul just goes right into husbands, wives. So what really hit me was this.

This should be happening in our homes as well as in the church. Because sometimes we apply this to the church and fellowship, but we forget our homes should be filled with joy and melodies in our heart. And coming home, instead of grumbling and complaining and upset, we usually take it out on our wife and kids, don't we? Come on, don't act spiritual now.

I take a hard day out on my spouse and kids more than I should. I get home and I'm very frustrated with things going, and I take it out on them. Of course, I try to get my heart right before I go into the home because all hell breaks loose, you know, when you have little kids, you guys know, or teenagers.

Now I have two teenagers and three little kids. But our home, see, it's a choice. Being filled with the Spirit is a constant choice.

It's not just, I'm filled and now I'm good this week. It's a choice to submit to others. It's a choice to humble myself.

It's a choice to ask for forgiveness. It's a choice to say, I was wrong. It's a choice to say, God, I'm not going to watch that anymore.

I'm going to seek you. It's a choice to hang out with people who build me up and strengthen me instead of those who pull me down. It's a choice to say no to, like what Paul said, to alcohol or things that dumb our spirit or dumb our mind.

Now, marijuana is a big deal. I smell that stuff every week now. I'll go on a walk and I'll, who's smoking in their backyard? My Lord.

People right next to me, out in their car. It's legal now. I smell it, my kids smell it.

We are numbing ourselves and it's not improving. Now, marijuana, medicinal use, got it. But how many of those people really need it for medicinal use? Very, very, very small minority.

Same with alcohol. Same with all these things. We're numbing our minds to the things of God.

Also, mindless entertainment. I did. I spent a few hours.

I was at my in-laws. And I said, I did not watch anything edifying. Nothing necessarily bad.

I don't watch HBO or The Junker. But just nothing. Nothing.

It's all about food and cars and, you know, these sitcoms. And this is just nothing edifying. So, man, our homes.

We have to go back and we have to sing psalms. We have to, not necessarily sing, because I'm not a singer either. But do you put on worship music in your home? Do you have the big screen with worship on? Pandora and nothing but just worship.

Bringing in the blood of Christ and asking God to. Or you have junk on there. Are you just grumbling? See, it's a choice.

It's a choice how we act in our homes. Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church. Anybody master that yet? Love to meet you afterwards.

But here's what you have to remember. God wants us to raise the standard. And it's okay to miss it.

But you don't want to lower it and hit it. See, I read this. I'm like, that's impossible.

He says it absolutely is impossible. But that's your goal. Shane, that's your goal until the day you die.

Or I take her, I take you. That's your goal. Is to love her as Christ loved the church.

Man, you'll see the whole environment of your home change if you do that. Now, I know there's problem marriages. I know we have to use wisdom.

Because sometimes, you know, I've talked to people. If they submit to a wife and they just love them and all this. But she's going to use him as a doormat.

And take advantage. And we actually then enable our spouse to continue in a destructive pattern. And that's different too.

Sometimes you have to address and say your heart is wrong. Your attitude is wrong. And you have to lovingly point out those things as well.

That's why I don't give a blanket approach to this. But we do know that God calls us to love our wives as Christ loved the church. And I'm going to just conclude here shortly.

He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of the water by the word. One of the things I'm looking forward to now when I take a break. Is instead of getting up and spending time sermon prep, sermon prep, sermon prep.

I'm just going to have my wife come in whenever she's up, 637. And we're going to pray. We're going to pray for our families every morning.

I'm going to wash her with the word. What I learned and study. What I think God is speaking to us.

Because remember, God's called you to lead. God's called you to lead in that area. And I believe he will speak to us in these areas of leadership.

And, of course, it goes on to say, so husbands, love your own wives as you love your own body. That's hard, isn't it? I made a great salad the other night and I did not want to give it up. Like, okay, you can have it.

But see, love yourself. Isn't it funny how the flesh just wants to always just rise up? Sometimes I wonder, where is that at? God, can't you just get rid of this flesh? Not yet, not yet. We have to keep being submitted to the filling of the spirit.

So, again, my closing point. You set the spiritual temperature of your home. If I could sum it up, I would encourage you to work on passion, purity, and peace.

What I mean by passion. Passion in your home is passion for God. That is contagious.

That is contagious. When you're passionate for God, it's contagious. For example, when you walk into a worship service, if you see everybody just sitting around, some falling asleep, some looking at their phone, are you as motivated? Or what about if you see two dozen men up here? Worshiping, weeping, getting their hearts right with God.

See, it's contagious. The contagious. It maybe shouldn't be that way.

I mean, we shouldn't let others affect our worship. But I know if I walk into a dead church, and I used to, I've spoken at dead churches. And I've walked into living, vibrant churches.

And that atmosphere is contagious. Same thing with our homes. And, of course, I can't skip this point of purity.

You must fight for purity in your homes. The reason many marriages are falling apart. The reason your wife might feel like a friend.

You don't love her anymore. It's because of pornography. And giving our hearts to the media and different things.

And women that were getting satisfied online. And then, as a result, it kills the marriage. And if you're not yet married, it doesn't improve when you get married.

You don't just instantly become a man of character. You have to get to that point now. And then passion, purity, and peace.

Peace has to be fought for. Peace in your home. You don't always have to say the last word.

Amen? I've had to put the zipper on many times. I'm going to take the trash out, and I'll be back. And there's been times I'll say, you know, I'm going to run to the store.

I'm going to go check the PO box, and I'll be back. Just put on worship. You put on music, and you foster an environment.

I think our homes should be places of peace. Don't you? We should have, they call it a man cave. There's something to that.

Where our home should be a place of, to me, it's a sanctuary. It's a place where I go and rest. It's where I go and be built up.

Not discouraged. Not beat down. Not fighting again.

But you set the tempo of that place often. You set the temperature of that place. And I think Abram can confirm, but we're going to have some roses that we picked up.

They're going to be here after the service here. And we're going to take these back, for those who want to, take them back to your wife, and just say, listen, I want to recommit. I want to recommit to the marriage.

I want peace in our home. I want to love you as Christ loved the church. I need help.

I need prayer. I want to commit to that, for those who are open to this. And let me just give you a tip.

Don't say much. Just do it. Just do it.

That's how we're going to influence. Because our wives and our kids, they watch our words. But boy, do they watch our actions.

I just thought of this. I didn't write it down. I hope I get it right.

But there's a poem that ends like this. Dad, the lessons you give me may be very wise and very true. But I'd rather get my lesson by observing what you do.

For I may misunderstand you and the high advice you give. But Dad, there's no misunderstanding how you act and how you live. That speaks volumes to us, our character.

So I'm going to have Pastor Abram come up, and he's going to share a little bit about marriage from his side of things. And I think it's just good that we hear from different people and be encouraged by different people. So are you going to risk this one? Yeah, it works pretty good.

Thank you. Well, you can stay right there in Ephesians Chapter 5 because I'm going to be there too. I didn't ask Pastor where he was going to be.

But I would say marriage for me has been the most humbling and revealing of my lack of spirituality. I remember sitting in premarital counseling with my wife and, you know, just being so in love and just being excited to be married. And I remember the counselor, a good, godly man, and he gave us some practical tools, you know, for marriage.

And, you know, we were very thankful. I remember we met three times, you know, and maybe 45 minutes each time, and they gave us a book to read. And I just remember just premarital counseling being, you know, a lot to take in.

But, you know, one of the things that I think about often, I remember, is that we didn't even talk about the need to be led by God's spirit. And this was a, you know, he was a pastor. And, you know, I went into marriage, and let me just say this, I went into marriage not having any framework other than maybe observing people from afar in their marriages.

And I went to a seminary where we'd have speakers come through, and they would talk about how they and their wives never argued how much were they lying. You know, talked about how they had this perfect marriage or this facade, really. And so I put these men on, you know, pedestals and thought, you know, marriage, you know, is going to be the same for me.

Me and my wife were never going to argue. You know, I'm a great catch. She's going to be so happy.

And my wife told me the other day, she was like, yeah, I thought when I married you, I won the jackpot. But then very soon afterwards, I learned the truth. She told me that.

You know, she's very gracious how she said it. But, you know, this week I've been doing things, you know, last couple weeks since the baby's been born, I've tried to step up. And God's been so good to, you know, allow me to be more present in their lives, you know.

And so I cooked dinner for like a meal, a full meal for like the first time. And, you know, I saw a tear in her eyes. She's been, you know, asking me to maybe learn to do that type of stuff for a long time.

And she was like, finally, after all this time, I'm starting to see that jackpot. But anyways, marriage for me revealed a lot of things about me, my lacking. I didn't realize, you know, how egotistical, how prideful, how thin-skinned I was, how easily offended I was.

All this is, you know, something that, you know, when you get into a relationship, when you get into marriage, when you're living with another sinner like yourself, it's revealed. And so, you know, I remember the premarital counselor telling us, you know, go into Ephesians chapter 5, reading to me Ephesians 5.25, the husbands love your wives. And me, in my own mind, I thought, yeah, I'll be great at that, I can do that.

But little did I know that without the Holy Spirit of God, I would never be able to do that. And so what I want to focus on with us this morning is how do we love our wives? And Pastor Shane pretty much hit on this, but the first thing I want us to understand, man, if we're going to have marriages that glorify God, that represent a piece of heaven on earth, and that's what our marriages should be. It should be, like Pastor said, our home should be a place of peace, of joy, of a safe space for our spouses and for our children.

And what I've seen here in the text in Ephesians is that the only way that we're going to love our wives, have that type of atmosphere in our homes, is if we are spirit-filled men. That's the baseline. Ephesians 5.18, the Bible says, And do not be drunk with wine, which is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.

Now, this is right in context with marriage. This is right in the verses. And the Apostle Paul, of course, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he understood that the only way that we're going to live out what we're called to be as husbands, as fathers, is through the leading of the Holy Spirit.

You see, the verb used there in the Greek for being filled with the Spirit is present tense. And this means that we are to keep being filled. It's a continual thing.

As Pastor mentioned, we cannot be filled one time and expect everything to go great from there. You see, the filling of the Spirit is something that we should see constantly and that we should enjoy constantly, and not something that we experience only on special occasions. You know, I know God brought me back here to Westside to learn this.

You know, I was married, you know, we were early on in our marriage, and I just, I was just so filled with the flesh. It was just so evident. I remember one night I was downstairs studying for a sermon.

It was a Saturday. And the next morning we're going to get up, go to church. I'm the pastor.

I'm going to preach. And my wife is cooking upstairs and I'm smelling it. You know, I'm getting hungry.

I hadn't eaten much that day. And I just remember just being so excited to have dinner that evening. So I come up the stairs after studying and just get out the Word of God, right? And I sit down and there's burgers.

My wife, she'd made burgers and some homemade fries. And, you know, I love a good hamburger. And so I get excited and I sit down and we pray, we say grace.

And I take a big bite out of this burger, right, and find out that it's a black bean patty burger. And we're early. I mean, we're maybe two weeks married.

And I'm like, what is this? That's my reaction. What is this? I looked at her like, she was like, it's a black bean burger. You've been talking about how we should get a little healthier.

And I saw this recipe and she starts to just, she starts bawling. And I was not spiritual. You see, I was not filled with the spirit.

I was filled with my flesh. And I got up. I said, I can't eat this.

And I get in my car and I go to Carl's Jr. And I come back and she's still crying. And just to give you a little insight of the man that I was, thank God I'm no longer there. But just I was filled with myself.

Didn't really have the fruit of the spirit because I was not filled with the spirit. And the only way that we're going to love our wives in a way that glorifies Christ and that sanctifies them and sets the tone in our home is if we're filled with the spirit. And it's something that we have to see constantly.

It's not something that we get once and we are constantly in that. Also, when it speaks of being filled with the spirit, it's a passive. The verb is also passive.

It means that we do not feel ourselves, guys. But we position ourselves so that we can be filled. And, you know, a lot of men have asked, and probably you've been thinking this, as we are constantly being presented with this truth, because I believe it's very neglected in most churches.

But we're blessed here to hear it often. But we ask these questions. And I know I did when I first came.

How do I know if I'm filled with the spirit? How do I continually stay in that state of being filled with God's spirit? Well, as I studied this chapter and the chapters prior to Ephesians, I saw a common thing, a common theme of those who are walking in the spirit and its personal holiness. You see, if we're filled with like this cup here is empty, right? If it were filled with, let's say, some water, some liquid, could it be, could you, it cannot be filled up with something else, another thing. If it's already filled to the top of you, we would, it would spill out.

It would not contain inside of this cup. Well, unfortunately, many of us men, we're filled with the worldliness, carnality. We're filled with all other, so many other things.

And we're not living in a pure manner. You see, Paul, he admonished these believers in Ephesus to live holy lives, to position themselves so that they are fillable in a sense. And so he talks about it all in Ephesians chapter four and the beginning of chapter five, how we ought to live and walk in holiness.

And he spoke about it in four, in chapter four, in verse 22, he says, that you put off concerning the former, your formal conduct, the old man, which grows corrupt according to deceitful lusts and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, that you may put on the new man, which is created according to God in true righteousness and holiness. So Paul is telling these believers, you have to take off that old life, that old man, and put on the new man like you put on your clothes this morning. We ought to daily put on the new man, change our mind about the sinful patterns of our old life.

And so what Paul was saying to these people is if you want to be filled with the spirit, if you want to continually walk in the presence and the fullness of the Holy Spirit, there is a part that you are responsible for. You see, if we walk in holiness, God will do the filling. If we walk in purity, if we obey his word, obedience is necessary in order to see the filling of the Holy Spirit.

He goes on, he says, if you lied before, if you're a liar, now tell the truth. If you stole before, still no more and give to the needy. If you had corrupt communication, now use your words to edify and give grace.

And he says in Ephesians four and verse 30, and do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God. You see, when we say when we walk not in purity, we grieve the Holy Spirit in our lives. And so we when we're not walking in the fullness of the spirit, we're being led by our flesh, guys.

And that's why when our wives point out something to us, I don't want to hear that. You know, I'm cool. Yeah, I was in Costco the other day.

I saw this gentleman right next to me, maybe in his 50s, and he's with his wife. And you just his wife was trying to tell him, hey, look at this line over here. Oh, no, no, no, be quiet.

You know, just grumbled at her. I'm going to stay right here in five minutes. I'm going to be out of here.

This line is a move. And and I'm looking at a line. And you just see her cower away.

See, men, we're not filled with the spirit. We're not gentle. We're not loving.

We're not long suffering. And we use our power, our God given power to oppress and to demean. We use that.

We use our God given authority to hurt and injure rather than protect and to nurture. And that's where I live many years. Honestly, before we were moving here, our marriage was in shambles.

And it was because I was not filled with the spirit. And even though I was in ministry, even though I was ministering to others, even though I knew the word of God, even though I, you know, I graduated from a seminary, even though I had the the knowledge, I was puffed up. I was I would use the word of God in my home.

I would always be very critical with my wife. Just just no fruit of the spirit, no love, no, no meekness, no gentleness. And, you know, we were at our wits end.

But, you know, God's grace is amazing. And my wife said something to me about two weeks ago. Pastor saying she said last year was the best year of our marriage.

And she cried and said, I'm so thankful for what God is doing in our family. And the only thing that I can attest that to is the grace of God. And him bringing me here and breaking me and making me seek out his his spirits leading.

And then the Bible goes on to say here, guys, and I won't be much longer. There's there's some signs that show if we are really being filled with the spirit of God, I see the first time would be that we will be worshippers. In verse 19, it talks about how we are speaking to one another in songs and hymns and spiritual songs, seeking and singing, shooting and making melody in your hearts to the Lord, giving thanks for all the things got to all things to God, the father, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And and what I see there is a man, I feel what the spirit is going to. He's going to worship God from his heart. He's going to he's going to be speaking hymns and psalms and spiritual song.

He's going to have a heart to worship and he's going to be a thankful man. And you know what? I want you guys to know the reason why we got roses this morning is because the Bible says whosoever find the wife, find it a good thing. Are you thankful for the gift that God has given you? If I'm honest and if you're honest, the greatest thing that you have in your life other than your salvation, your relationship with God is that wife.

And I know some of you, you may say, oh, she's difficult and all that things. But I understand that that too. But let me say this for the most of us here.

We have been blessed. We've married above our class and we and we've been blessed by God in that. And the Bible says whosoever find the wife, find the good thing and obtain it the favor of the Lord.

And so I hope that each one of you, you know, God puts it on your hearts, takes one of those roses and you go and you tell your wife you love her. And then some of you need to go home and apologize to her. And admit to your lack of spiritual leadership, admit to your shortness with her, admit to your bitterness and and and things in your heart that you've been harboring against her.

And I'm telling you, when you start to walk like Pastor Shane said, it's not about what you say is how you live. I'm telling you, the spiritual atmosphere in your home will change. Your marriage will change.

If you're filled with the spirit of God, you'll be a worshiper. If you're filled with the spirit of God, we will be submissive. The Bible says submitting to one another in the fear of God.

We if we are filled with the spirit, we will submit to our wives and we will be. Oh, we will hear them out. We will be attentive to them.

Many, many times my wife has. She's had insight on things spiritually. She's been in tune with things more emotionally.

Like the kids, you know, oh, you've been moody. You've been you haven't spent time with with a child in particular. One on one.

This child is going through this. And sometimes in the past when I was not filled with the spirit, I say, oh, you know, you're just making a, you know, a mountain out of a molehill. You know, I just calm down.

I mean, you're always you're so emotional. You know, that's that's how we think, you know, when we're not filled with the spirit. But when we are filled with the spirit, we will submit to that.

You say, you know what? I'm you're right, babe. I need to spend more time with him or her. I need to be more patient.

I could have handled that differently. And many times this last year I've had to go in and apologize to my kids, you know, for being short or. And in the past, I was not that way.

I was hard, rigid. I would not apologize. And so, man, we just want to encourage you.

You know, we're being transparent because some people think because you're a pastor, you have it all together. Your family looks good. We have all these kids, you know, it must be Nirvana in their home must be perfect.

No, we go through the same battles. It's chaos. Many days.

And but what I have learned is that when I walk with God. When I wake up and put on Christ. When I'm a worshiper.

My kids come. My wife comes right alongside. My kids fall right in tow.

And it's a beautiful. Peace within the home where the presence of the Holy Spirit is. So, man, I want to encourage you in your marriages.

Seek the filling of the Holy Spirit. So you can love your wife. The way that Christ loved the church.

And so that our homes could be that place of refuge. Amen. All right, Pastor Shane, you want me to just go ahead and close in prayer? Yeah, it's funny.

I wanted to add, you know, when I did reach out to Pastor Abram, it's been a while, but God put on my heart. I was driving down Avenue N by 50th West and and just, hey, reach out to Pastor Abram and see if he'd want to speak for you. It's about a year and a half ago.

And I haven't talked to him in months. And so I just emailed him out of the blue. And that's when it all started that, you know, he wasn't doing too good.

And God kind of used that to prompt that. Something else I'll close with this, but he didn't mention, but I think it helps a lot, too, is there's a season of fasting. You know, you can ask him about this intermittent fasting or fasting in general.

It starves the flesh instead of just giving into our appetites, giving into our appetites, giving into our appetites. The Bible, it's pretty clear that fasting, when you give, when you pray and when you fast. And I have a book on that.

You can just take that for free if you need that. But I would encourage you to maybe begin to remove some things. Fasting really helps with addictions as well.

Addictions to things that are harming our body. And that fasting with the right motives and being filled to spirit go hand in hand. Living holy lives, removing things, addictive substances that are really hindering our walk with God.

So I'm going to go ahead and close in prayer. And Brant and Gabe are going to come up and close out in worship. And I want to just maybe encourage you, if during worship you need to come to the altar, that's a good thing.

If you need to take that step of humility. And I know it feels uncomfortable for me bringing a rose home. I'm like, whatever, this is cheesy.

But really it's not. Because it's a step of humility. That's why I had her pick them up.

To humble ourselves. And we need that encouragement to humble ourselves. So the altar is going to be open.

If you guys want to come to the altar and just say, okay God, I need to renew my strength. And you have to remember, guys, you're not going to be perfect. Just keep fighting.

Be faithful. Get up and fight again. Even if you have to apologize 700 times before you die.

That's okay. It's about finishing well. God gauges us on faithfulness.

He doesn't really look, you can't find perfection on this side of the cross. And I don't want to excuse sin. Please don't misunderstand.

I don't know, maybe you're different. But I can beat myself up if I don't live perfectly. When really the command is to be faithful.

Get up, Shane, and fight again. Why was David a man after God's own heart? That's interesting. He said, David's a man after my own heart.

Because he fell forward. He got up and he fought again. He committed his life to God again.

It's just being filled with the Spirit. Getting up and not being defeated. Because when we get defeated, when we fall into sin, we usually stay there.

That's why people can't break out of pornography. Is they're doing good for a day or two, and then they blow it, and then they stay there. When the command is to get up, give me clean hands and a pure heart.

God, I don't want to lift up my soul to an idol. I don't want to swear deceitfully. I want to worship you in the power.

The Bible says, worship God in the beauty of holiness. There's a beauty about being holy and cleansed and set free. Even if you sinned last night or this morning, the altar is still open.

Isn't that wonderful? God doesn't say, okay, in a week from now, or actually a month from now, you've really blown it. In a month from now, you can come to the altar. You can begin to worship me.

God says, immediately return to me. Return to me immediately, and I will restore the joy of your salvation.

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