

Lean, Mean, Fasting Machine

by Shane Idleman

Fasting is a powerful tool for spiritual growth and deepening one's relationship with God, involving giving up fleshly appetites to pursue a deeper hunger for God.

Duration: 51:23

Scripture: Matthew 6:16

Topics: "Fasting", "Spiritual Discipline"

Description

Shane Idleman challenges the congregation to embrace fasting as a means of spiritual discipline, emphasizing that denying the flesh leads to greater spiritual hunger and connection with God. He discusses the importance of humility in fasting, the necessity of prayer alongside fasting, and the need to confront and discipline our appetites for a deeper relationship with God. Idleman warns against the dangers of complacency and encourages believers to be 'lean, mean, fasting machines' in their spiritual lives, actively fighting against the flesh and the enemy. He highlights that true fasting is about seeking God and aligning our hearts with His will, rather than merely following a formula or tradition.

Transcript

The title of the message, if you're ready for this, I don't know if you are, but it's going to be challenging. The title is Lean Mean Fasting Machine. Okay, I'm going to get to the purpose of that in a minute.

We have been in chapter 6 of Matthew. Jesus is saying when you pray, when you give, and when you fast. But I'm going to recap something for those who were not here last week.

I want you to go and listen to the pain of discipline over the pain of regret. It was last week's message. We've got CDs available.

People are emailing us from different states, a few different countries, on how the message is really stirring something in them to focus again on discipline. Because we can kind of wane from where God wants us. I don't know about you, but my flesh is predispositioned to go away from God.

And discipline helps bring me back to where God needs me. Denial produces discipline. Denial, when you deny the flesh, it produces, it creates discipline.

Like training muscles. You do this to train your what? Your calves? No, biceps. And that's what denial does.

Denying the flesh trains the muscle of discipline. However, we are very careful because throughout church history, that's how monasteries started. I don't know if you're aware of that.

Monks and different things. I've got to get away from the flesh. I've got to get away from the world.

And we just go live out in the desert and sing kumbaya and make campfires and hope that flesh does not come after me. You know, deny, deny, deny. It's all about denying and giving up these things.

And that's not healthy either. But the Bible finds a very healthy balance between freedom in Christ, enjoying things, and also disciplining the flesh. The flesh has to be disciplined.

You can't cast it out. And we pray, Lord, cast out this flesh. It's not going anywhere.

It's going to the grave with you. And we have to discipline the flesh. That's why Paul said, like a soldier, I discipline my body.

He said, I beat it black and blue, and I discipline my body so it submits to me. And I don't submit to him. Great example.

We're doing worship this morning. It's 7:20, and my flesh is saying, I wish you would hurry up and finish because you can still get to Krispy Kreme. I'm being honest.

Where's the closest donut shop? Is there one down? I mean, the flesh is just go get that donut. Come on, just rush through things. And you find it, tell the flesh, be quiet.

We're not doing anything. You're not the boss. You're not in control of me.

And when you bring it into submission, you discipline it versus allowing it to discipline you. And if I've learned one thing over the years pastoring, it is this. When you allow the Holy Spirit to take control of your physical appetites, your spiritual appetite for God increases.

It's just a wonderful biblical principle. When the appetites that are controlling us are brought under control and restraint, then our appetites for God increase. The appetite, the hunger for God increases.

As the flesh decreases, the hunger for God increases. I've told you this before, but it fits the sermon. I used to speak at a lot of men's breakfasts.

Breakfasts held by men at different churches, organizations, different things. So for the first year or so, I would come and, Brother Shane, here's some cinnamon rolls. No, great.

And coffee and orange juice and bacon and eggs. And when I'd get up to preach, I was, well, let's see here. I had no zeal, no passion.

I just kind of went through it. And then I discovered something called fasting, where I would starve those appetites. And then not only did I feel like preaching, I was leaping.

I was just ready to give the Word of God because I can't fulfill. See, maybe some good things, right? But a good thing isn't always a great thing. The song we sang, give me more of an appetite for you as I remove lesser things.

So as I was full on these foods, I was drained in the Spirit. As I conquered the flesh and fasted on these areas, the Spirit of God within me felt bold and more alive because I restrained those passions. And you know, it's not just one little cinnamon roll, right? Go up for second or thirds.

And so I would go up there. And, you know, I don't want to use this word too much and out of context, but I would have the tendency to be a glutton. It's not just a little this or that.

Especially if you go to a buffet and you pay for it. I'm leaving there, sushi, I'm leaving there full and way too much. So if I give over to that appetite, and I saw this, and the more I gave into those appetites, my preaching was stifled.

It was weak because of that giving in and giving in. And the day that death surrendered under the mighty weight of the cross was the day of victory. Nothing feels better than victory, does it? When you overcome something, do you not feel better? Let's just be real.

When something is taking us captive, when something is beating us down, when something is winning, what do Christians do? Do they get joy filled and shout or they get depressed and lash out? Oh goodness, come on. We know this isn't the church that's ever went through things, right? We've experienced life. And so when the flesh is losing control, and you begin to gain control, victory, and you trust in Christ, you trust in the Holy Spirit, there's victory there.

You've overcome that. There's joy, tremendous joy. Ask somebody who's trying to stop drinking.

And they cave into that, and then they, oh, there's no joy, there's no peace for days, sometimes weeks, until they get the joy back, the victory back. So there's something sweet in victory, and victory was paid on the cross, and I believe we can walk in that victory. Not perfectionism, I don't subscribe to something that came out, I think 1700s out of Methodist, the Methodist movement being perfect.

I think their intent was good, because the Bible says be perfect when you sin, or if you sin, right? If you sin, so the Bible always encourages us to not sin, that you have the ability to say no, that no temptation is overtaking you, nothing that you cannot overcome. But then we realize, like Paul, oh wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of sin and death, right, this constant struggle within, so we aim for following Christ and making the right choices, but we also understand that if we fall, we look to the one who ultimately will hold us together in our weakness. And that's the Christian walk.

I like what Basil said, he was the bishop of Caesarea in 8030, 8379, he said, fasting begets prophets, it means creates prophets and strengthens strong men. Fasting makes law givers wise, it is the soul safeguard, the body's trusted comrade, the armor of the champion, the training of the athlete. That's what fasting is, the early church fathers recognized it, somebody by the name of Jesus, that we read about often in the New Testament, he practiced it, we see that it's clearly throughout Scripture.

So here's the point I was getting to, Matthew 6, 17, we learned last week that Jesus said, when you fast, don't be like the hypocrites, right, making a show of it, and I'm so spiritual and things. He said, verse 17, but you, but you, us, when you fast, so here's the dilemma we are all up against, this one hit me like a block wall, running into a block wall many years ago, either I'm called to fast or I'm not. It's one or the other, I mean, either it's a good idea and Jesus says when you fast, or that was for the early church, and because we have the Bible, we don't need it anymore.

But I tend to think that it's still common, it's still a common practice, especially if you look at church history, if you follow Polycarp or Tertullian, Ignatius, Irenaeus, Christendom, and these early church fathers and you read about fasting, the Didache, I don't know if you've heard of that, the Didache was early church writings, and it talks about even fasting two days before your baptism. You get into, of course, Martin Luther and John Knox, and they talked about fasting and the Reformation period, and Martin Luther actually fasted while he translated the Bible into the German language for weeks sometimes, so it's a common thread throughout church history. Now when we get to this era, something happened.

I don't know what happened, but now it's not mentioned anymore. It's rarely talked about. I try to think of, I don't remember ever hearing a sermon for many years, and I would be guilty of this myself, I wouldn't preach a sermon on it very much, and you didn't hear about it, you didn't preach about it, and it was kind of just, oh yeah, that's interesting.

Boy, I'm sure glad Jesus fasted, not me. And I think it has something to do with this, in America, right, you don't touch the flag, you don't touch my guns, and you don't touch my meat. Right? Proud America, you've got the flag flying, you've got the shotgun in the backseat, and you've got the chicken on the barbie, even though it's from Australia.

So it's this concept of, why would we ever do that? So Jesus said, when you fast, when you fast. So the point is, we are to do it, and he's going to say, when you fast, here's how to do it. Now, it's very interesting, because we want the formula, right, okay, and this is the number one question I get, what type of fast? One day, two day, meals, water only, Daniel fasts, vegetable, juice fasting, can I just take out TV, is that still fasting? I'm just gonna avoid sugar, I'm just gonna avoid sugar all week, is that fasting? When is fasting? There's so many different tricks out there.

The bottom line is this, we want the formula, God wants your heart. Because I want a formula too, just, what do you, what, how, how, how many days, what does it look like? God's not interested in the formula, but the heart. So the heart of fasting is really this, I'm giving up fleshly appetites to pursue a deeper hunger for God.

It's really not drudgery and, oh, why am I doing this, there should be a delight, I'm giving up appetites of the flesh to pursue God. Let me give you an example I thought of yesterday. If you've ever lost a child, right, I admit to, I've kind of did at the fair for just a few minutes, where did they go, right? And if you're at Disneyland or wherever you're at, can you imagine losing the child? Let's say you, let's say you lose the child on the way to lunch.

Let's go get lunch, we're starving, have you ever said that, you're really not starving, it's just your flesh is saying, feed me, feed me. Nobody's starving in this audience, I'll tell you that right now. Or in this country, basically, unless you get to certain areas that are more difficult, but we're going to lunch, we're starving, and the child is gone.

Do you say, well, let's get lunch first, and then we'll look for the child. See why, what's the difference? The hunger to find the child is greater than the hunger and the desire to fulfill my appetite for food. So that's all fasting really is.

The desire to pursue God is greater than my desire to fulfill the lust of the flesh on an hourly basis almost it seems like. I mean, do you remember when I was little it was breakfast, lunch, and dinner? Now it's breakfast, a snack, Starbucks on the way somewhere, a pre-lunch something, and then after lunch we're

hungry, want yogurt, want ice cream, and then now it's before dinner, and then after dinner we're hungry, and we go to the refrigerator at midnight and get up and, oh, what happened? It's almost like it's a continuing growing of these things. So that's what I want you to picture as fasting.

Not drudgery, but delight. It's exchanging one passion, desire, God-given, one for food, that's God-given, right? Without that desire we would start, we wouldn't eat. So there's a desire for that, and it's good, and God-given in the right context.

So when Jesus said, here's how to fast, He's not lining out the Daniel fast for you. He's not saying juice only. He's not doing any of that.

He's saying, here's how you fast. When you fast, anoint your head and wash your face. Oh, how does that apply to us today? It basically means don't give the appearance of fasting, right? Like if I came in here, one part of my shirt tucked in, the other tucked out, in shorts, right, in cowboy boots.

You ever seen those shorts? I don't, yeah. But, and you're just, ugh, guys, I've been shaved for two weeks, I've been fasting. Look at me, I'm a mess.

And it's, oh, wow. So it's drawing attention to yourself. He's saying when you fast, you don't have to let people know.

Some people you should let know, obviously, but don't have the heart of self-exaltation. When you fast, anoint your head and wash your face so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

Now I'm going to read something that's very interesting. Have you ever heard sermons or different topics about not laying up for yourself treasure on earth, where moth and rust can destroy, but laying up your treasure in heaven, right? I mean, that's Christianity 101. How many sermons are on that? Do you know that that flows right after this next verse? And when this was written, there wasn't chapter and verses.

It was just a letter. I don't know if I've ever made the connection with this, don't lay up yourself treasure on earth, with fasting, even though it follows right after it. Now granted, in your Bible, it will section it off for you, and obviously this has far-reaching principles above and beyond fasting, just the truth itself of laying up treasure in heaven and not hoarding and being self-indulgent and saving, saving, it's all about me, me, me, me, me, me, me, me, me, money, money, money, and not putting things and helping others so you have a reward in heaven.

That is true as well, but the context is this. Fast in secret, your father who sees in secret will reward you openly. Do not lay up for yourself treasure on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourself treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

For where your treasure is, your heart will be also. So wherever I put my treasure, what's your treasure? Well, where do you spend your time and your money? That's your treasure. Where is our time, our money going? That's what we value.

So let's look at the first thing here. Private seeking has public reward. Private seeking has public reward.

God who sees in private will reward you openly. But don't think of an award ceremony at school, right? Oh, look, here's an award, yay. There's an award ceremony.

God doesn't necessarily exalt people. Oh, you fasted, now I'm going to exalt you. Now you're on CNN News and now you've got an Oprah and all these things.

Not necessarily. There's a reward that happens. He will reward you openly, sometimes as promotion or increase in job, but what about answer prayers? I like that reward a little better than a pay increase, right? Or a job opportunity.

Or what about God rewarding us because of our fasting? And could this treasure be our relationship with God? Treasures on earth that damage us, lusting, buying, consuming, gathering, hoarding. When we fast, we give up those earthly treasures that we think are treasures, and then we receive from God. So to me, in context, this also applies with fasting.

And God is in the secret place. God is in the secret place. Now, He's not playing hide and seek, right? You play that with your kids, or other people, maybe, if you're adults.

I hope you don't. But God's not like, where's God? Where's He at? God is in a place where most of the world can't find Him. They'll go to a dark place, but not a holy place.

So God's not in secret hiding. He's in secret because most people don't do what it takes to find Him. I mean, if you believe the Bible, and I know most of you do, it says, if you seek me with just a little bit of your heart, you'll find me.

Or did I misquote that? If you seek me with all of your heart, all of your strength, all of your mind, all of your soul, if I surrender, if it's a wonderful thing to say, Lord, I'm going all day, I'm not consuming food, earthly food, I'm consuming heavenly food. And the reason why I think this is a huge benefit too is, and I'm going to get to that in a minute, though, I don't want to skip ahead too much, is the time we take to prepare to eat, is that time could be spent with God. Because even fast food now, right, that's pretty, pretty quick.

But by the time you drive, consume, drive, feel guilty, you know, full, you know, there's a half hour there. Now if you make something, you're an hour, and it's giving that time to God instead of, because when I, even healthy, I make something, make a salad, chicken breast, you've got 45 minutes, and even that took some time, right, where that time could have been given to God. So God, I don't have time for you, but I have time to sit here.

Oh, bell peppers. Cucumbers. Right? Avocado.

I have this time to make this meal, but I don't have time for you. So it's an exchanging of time, exchanging of priorities. So here's step one on this whole idea of fasting.

Lean, mean, fighting machine. Humility is the access code. Okay, I'm talking computer lingo nowadays.

Humility is the access code. Humility is the disappearance of self. So if you want to fast in this area, if you want to fast at all, if you want to draw closer to God, humility is the disappearance of self.

Self has to disappear, and you say, Lord, what do you want me to do? And this would be a good point to remind you, because not everyone was here last week, that fasting, and this whole topic, doesn't make God love you more. Okay? He's not going, Shane fasted yesterday, and he's not, hasn't eaten, and I love

him a lot more than that person who just had a big breakfast. He doesn't love us more, but I love him more.

The more you restrain the flesh and fill it with the Spirit, the more your Spirit cries, Abba, Father, and you love him more. You can have, there's a, do we, have you ever been to where you're not loving God much? Prodigal son, or, you know, or, yeah, I'll come to God when I need to, but you don't love him that much, but there's an all-consuming passion that takes over, and you love him with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, when you begin to restrain these areas that are taking you down. Isn't that true? If we, if we don't give in, if we just continually give in to all of our appetites, we will so quench and grieve the Spirit of God that we've lost our passion for him.

We've lost our zeal for him. And also, fasting involves prevailing prayer. Fasting involves prevailing prayer.

We go from asking to seeking to knocking. And I have to remind you that this is really not about fasting, it's about seeking God. Because fasting without prayer is, you might as well go to Weight Watchers.

Right? It's just weight loss. It's just, it's just detox. It's okay for the physical, but not, no, no benefit for the spiritual.

When you fast, the power really comes from the praying. So I'm just going to, because this question has come up all the time, let me just show you some examples. When you fast, Jesus said when you fast, so there's a lot of creative ideas out there, right? A lot of creative ideas.

And I've, I've went through a lot of them myself, right? Okay Lord, I'm going to, I know you're calling me to fast, I'm going to give up junk food. Not too bad. Okay, I know you're calling me to fast, Daniel fast.

Now that's a hard one if you've never tried. Right? No meat, no dairy, no good stuff, no junk, just veggies all day. Right? There's all creative ideas, but I've noticed, maybe it's me, just personal confession here, I always want to take the easy route.

Even juicing. Right? Get tons of juice all day long. Fructose, it's a sugar.

So I'm looking for the easy route. But let me just give you something to start with. The bottom line, when you fast, the bottom line is sustenance, is food, any type of food.

Juicing, wonderful fast, do it if you want. Daniel fast, it's a great fast, it had supernatural benefits. But the bottom line with fasting is, it's denying that sustenance, that food source.

Macronutrients, protein, carbohydrates, whatever it is. And even juicing, you're getting a thousand calories a day. You're getting, you're getting some type of meal source, or I'm going to fast from junk food, or you're still, the idea behind fasting really is nothing, just water.

That's the concept. That's what people, but you work into that, you don't just start off in that direction. But I want to at least tell you that's what fasting is.

Now Daniel was the exception to the rule, I believe, because of this. The Bible says he abstained from flesh foods. Isn't that interesting? Flesh foods.

Our body desires flesh foods. Chicken, beef, pork, right? Flesh foods. Have you ever craved broccoli? Okay, good, somebody has.

Not me. Like, I got to get out of here, I need some bell peppers dipped in hummus. Never, right? So there is, I'm going to go on a rabbit trail for a minute, because this is the number two question.

Plant-based meat, plant-based meat, plant-based meat, I taught on this before. The Bible clearly teaches that meat in the right forms is okay. But I'm wondering if that lusting for even meat, the flesh foods, it's part of that lust.

So what Daniel was doing, he said, I'm not going to defile myself with the king's food. There was probably sacrifice to idols, the wine, the delicacies. He said, I'm not going to defile myself.

I'll still consume, just vegetables, and you can look at me, and ten days later I'll look better than the other people. So that was a valid fast, but for us, and that's a good one too if you want to try it, but fasting, at some point you should get to the spot where it's just water, and you're seeking God, and you're not having any food at all. The reason I think Daniel Fast 2 was successful is because junk food has zero life-giving benefits.

Zero life-giving benefits. It gives death, not life. And it feeds lust and addictions.

As a result, it hurts us spiritually. This is so funny. As many of you know, I was open last week.

I was scared to death to give last week's sermon, talking about this kind of stuff. The emails that are coming in, the people, why aren't the pulpits talking about this? Why is the church silent? Why don't I ever hear things about this? It is so important. This is so important.

I think if you're consuming death, and it does nothing to the body that is good, but brings death, why should we not be vocal at some point, and explain, here's how God created us. God created you to take a strawberry off the vine that has tons of enzymes, life-giving vitamins and minerals, life-giving, life-sustaining. You take that, you ingest that, that food, the life in the food is giving life to the body.

That's how God created us. But we go to a store buy something that can sit on the shelf for 14 years, grab a Diet Pepsi with aspartame, which is, I don't even want to get into what that junk is, and you just, you consume that, and why? What's going on here? That's death. It brings no spiritual life.

We are so fearfully and masterfully made that I'm not, I'm surprised all of us are just not falling over every day from all the just junk that has no sustaining force. So that's why the Daniel fast is a benefit. Junk food, yeah, I mentioned all that, but this is an area we don't want to touch, especially men's breakfasts, right, when I used to go to.

Go to men's breakfasts, full of this stuff. Why don't we have a men's breakfast where they don't break the fast? That's what breakfast is, right? Break fast. And here's, and I've fasted before, and here's what people say, not as many men will show up.

And I say I'd rather have 10 men on their face before God fasting and seeking Him than 100 full of their appetites. It goes back to our desire. What are we desiring? Here's the key though, I want to, now that I've thrown in a few right and left hooks and an uppercut, the key is this, and thank God, because I need this key.

Does God bless you when you're perfect? No, right? We all know the answer. Does He sustain you only after you've completed a long fast? Like you're lost until you complete that fast. He sustains me even

when I fail.

Even when I fail, He sustains me. Does He beat you up and kick you when you're down? You know, everybody goes like this, we know. So see, don't beat yourself up.

Don't say I can never measure up. I'm still praying, my wife would tell you, I'm still praying about a, I want to do a, and people think I fast all the time. I don't fast all the time.

I try to and I try to do the Lord's leading, I don't want to get too weird about it. But I'm like, Lord, if 40 days has been on my mind, I don't know why, I'm praying, I'm seeking God, what do you want to do? And just for fun, right, I'm getting ready for the sermon today, thought I'd just fast yesterday. I brought some, there's a lazy tea ranch, the kids were there for three hours, four hours for a birthday party.

I'm like, Lord, I'm just going to fast today and seek your will. I even had a Kavita drink, you know, those probiotic drinks and some water, it was really good. I'm going good until El Pollo Loco shows up, right? I mean, I'm doing great, and what is that? What is that? I thought we were just asking him to party, I can say no to a cake.

I won't tell you what happened, but it was not good. So there you go, I'm preaching on it today, and look what happened yesterday. But see, a lot of it was due to the power of the made-up mind.

My mind was not made up. I'll try it, you know. Jensen Franklin, have you ever listened to any of his sermons? He's got good books on this topic.

He has a chapter on the power of the made-up mind. When I decided to do seven days in August, and I did seven days water, the power of the made-up mind and seeking God is the only thing that kept me. And to get easier, I talked about that before, I'm not going to do that now, but I want to just offer hope.

Me, going to fasting yesterday, that's the plan. I'm going to fast, I'm going to... And they just bring it out, here's the chicken breast, here's the... I'm like, you've got to be kidding me. See, the pull, come on, compromise, compromise.

So it's not about always being perfect, because if it was, I wouldn't even be up here. But boy, did I get my heart back on track. I'm not eating dinner then, I'm just having a snack, I'm going to prepare this, and God poured into me on the sermon, and He didn't... If He held me to that yesterday, I'd be in trouble this morning, right? See, it's not about perfection.

It's not about perfection. Oh, Shane, you blew it, you might as well close down church. The people aren't going to benefit from your sermon.

No, what I say is, God, I need your help. Sustain me, carry me on your shoulders. Hold me, guide me, lead me, Lord, Father, I fall into your arms.

Then He says, now you're ready to preach. Now the heart's ready. Don't go by what happened yesterday.

Get on track and let me speak boldly through you as you submit and humble yourself to me. That's where it comes from. So you get back on track, right? You get back on track, and one of the benefits of water only, I don't know about you, and maybe this is just, I'm just being too honest this morning, but when I come up with some schemey little diet thing, okay, Daniel, but only dairy if it's this, I just compromise everywhere, right? I know no sweet, right, no junk food, but that's a vegan cookie with chocolate,

chocolate chips, and it's got good... Well, let me just have that.

Now, is that organic chicken? Okay, I'll have that then, and you start to just kind of, you know, you'll alter that. When it comes to fasting, you just say, I'm laying down the appetite for you, God. The second step will be this.

It's gonna be pretty easy. Just begin with a meal. Begin somewhere.

I've got a video. I'm thinking of sending it out. I don't know yet, but I gave my first message on fasting.

In 2011, I was 40 pounds heavier. And the title was Fasting to Overcome Addictions. And I have it on video.

It was when the church first started. It was 40 pounds heavier, but that started my course. And I began to fast, and with a meal, with half a day, and it grows, and God begins to lead and guide in this area.

And again, it's not about racking up points. One point for each meal, right? It's about holy hunger. That's what it's about.

It's about holy hunger. I'm denying myself in this area to seek you more fervently. Just like the child.

Now you understand the analogy. If the child is gone, my hunger for food is gone. So when I'm hungering for God, that becomes the priority.

Begin with a meal or two. Begin somewhere. And I would even throw in there, fast from anything that detours you.

In other words, if you're fasting, you've got to be praying, and you'd better get off the internet junk. Right? The news, whatever, it's just all that, fasting is body, soul, and spirit. You're cleansing the mind, you're cleansing the body.

But on this thing, I don't want to leave you hanging on this area of meat and lusting and different things. I love the King James. I think we're going to put it up there in numbers.

Numbers 11.4.6. King James, here we go. And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting. You've got to love that language.

And the children of Israel also wept and said, who shall give us flesh to eat? And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people. And the Lord smote the people with a very great plague. And He called the name of that place, Kibroth-Hadavah, because they were buried, there they buried the people that lusted.

Is that interesting? Now you all know the story. This is where the children of Israel were complaining. Give us something to eat.

We want to go back to Egypt. We want to go back to bondage. Have you ever said that? I just want to go back to my place of bondage, back to the old way.

Lord, following you is too hard. Give us meat that we may eat. These cravings.

So it would have been different if they said, Lord, can we have some meat? We're just desiring that. We love you. Lord, could you? He loves those prayers.

But when your craving now switches from God to give us meat or we will die, why did you rescue us from the Egyptians? Let us go back into bondage. It was better there. I'm grumbling and I'm complaining.

Why don't you give us meat? We're starving for that thing in the wilderness. Yes, you sustained us. Our sandals aren't even growing old.

The water, the food. Manna from heaven. Can you imagine food from heaven? I mean, it's just, and the people are complaining and grumbling.

God says, you want it, you got it. Quell. This high.

And they were just, they're stuffing. They're just stuffed. They're gluttonous.

And they're so consumed by these passions for meat. It's interesting. The Kibroth Haravah.

The place that they were buried. In the Hebrew, it means the grave of the lusters. The grave of the lusters.

Those who are lusting were buried in this area. It just began to remind me how deep these passions go. And maybe that will help somebody in this area of fasting.

We do have to be careful, I believe, in the area of meat. Because there's a lusting there for these things. Now let me get to the point I wanted to get to.

Lean, mean, fasting machine. Lean, mean, fasting machine. You know where that saying comes from, right? Probably the military.

But lean. What does lean biblically mean? Remove every weight and sin that so easily ensnares us. Remove.

So what you're doing, you're fasting, you're removing the weight and the sin that so easily ensnares us. What about if a marathon runner, it's coming up, 26 mile marathon, LA. What about if they had to carry a 20 pound, 30 pound pack? Are they going to even come close to winning? So lean, mean, fighting machine.

To be lean, we remove every weight, every sin that ensnares us. Hebrews 12.1. And the irony is, here's the irony for me. We lose weight for vacation but not victory.

We lose weight for the Caribbean but not to conquer. And we lose weight for the Bahamas but not to battle. My goodness, we want to be lean for everything in the world but not for God to remove the weight that ensnares us.

These things that are holding us captive. The flesh screams, give me comfort, give me convenience. Doesn't it? Why in the world do you think churches across our nation have service times at certain times? I don't see any churches 6 a.m. and 8 p.m. services.

They're convenient, right? If I said there's bed and breakfast next Sunday and a masseuse at every pew, you know what they're, right? Massaging your shoulders. I'll come to that service. Right? Bed and breakfast.

Can you make it 11 not 9.30? See, the flesh is always wanting convenience and comfort. Now, that's not bad sometimes. Right? Who doesn't want some convenience and comfort? The hammock that's out back under the shade tree? Amen.

Right? But there's a point though when it begins to control you that you have to go back and be lean in this area. I'm not talking about physical weight. I'm talking about removing weight and sin that so easily ensnares us.

And then mean. Okay, Shane, you're not going to be able to get away from this one, right? Christians aren't mean. You're calling us to be something you're not.

We can't be that. We can't be mean. What does mean mean? Well, we all know.

Malicious. Right? Unkind. That person is mean.

And let me remind everyone in this room, you better be very mean to the kingdom of darkness. It is not your friend. You don't play patty cake with the devil.

You don't compromise. I am very mean. I am very nasty.

I don't play by the rules when it comes to the enemy of my soul. You have to fight and expose the unfruitful works of darkness. No peace treaties can be signed.

The flesh cannot be negotiated with. It must be crucified and conquered. Have you ever tried to negotiate with the flesh? Have you? Negotiate? You know, it threw me off course a thousand times until I said, oh, I can't negotiate with the flesh.

Getting off alcohol. Oh, just have one beer today. One's okay.

You're past that now. Just have one. Or, or what? Right? Just just have one.

Fasting, right? Just just have breakfast. You can start tomorrow. See, we negotiate with the flesh, don't you? He even had me thinking O'Doul's was okay.

Right? Tried to drink 12 of them to get a buzz. But see, the flesh wants to negotiate. You don't negotiate with the flesh.

You're a mean, lean fighting machine. You tell the flesh, no, because you're not playing by the rules, you little stinker. You're trying to trap me and trick me.

But we all we all compromise with the flesh. I know that relationship is bad. And it's been a month since I talked to that person.

The flesh is come on, maybe they've changed now. Maybe you can be a good witness. Maybe it'll be different.

That's right. Negotiate. It's always wanting because that's how you step in the wrong direction.

You think you're going to jump off a mountain if you see the bottom or is he going to take you down one step at a time? So yeah, you have to be mean. Lean, no more nice guy Christian when it comes to the unfruitful works of darkness. We expose them.

And then a fighting machine. I love this one. This is war and you have to put on the gear.

Jesus said, I have given you authority over the enemy. Luke, cross reference Luke 10. I have given you authority over the enemy.

What is authority? The power to enforce something, right? If a sheriff walks in here dressed up nine millimeter ready to go and says, Shane, you must stop this service. He has the authority, right? To tell me I have to stop because obviously something is going on. So you as a child of God, you are a lean, mean fighting machine.

You are called to fight. You have the authority. See, that gets me worked up because I have the authority to tell the flesh.

No, I have the authority said, get behind me saying he's not stronger than God. The authority in you is enough to cast out the demonic realm and take your family back. Take your life back in this area.

Listen, I'm just preaching this morning. Those are interested. If you're not interested, just go like the blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

I'm T I'm talking to those who want to be a lean, mean fighting machine in this area. And again, as appetite decreases, prayer must increase. It has to.

We just shared with a few people, we received an email from Iraq this week. She said, I'm confused and saddened by binge eating and I feel like it'll always be a deterrent to my spiritual life since I tend to disconnect from God during and after a binge. I plan to continue to fast and to end the week in a 24 hour only water fast.

Is this type of fast pleasing to God? Any type of dying to self and saying, Lord, help me. God, this, this, her attitude is pleasing to God. She's humbling herself.

She's relying dependence upon him. God, I need you. I'm struggling in this area.

See, we have to get this concept out that when I've mastered everything, when I'm this perfect soldier for Christ, then that would be pleased with me. He's pleased now. Daughter, son, I'm pleased with you now.

Let me help you through the journey. Let me help you with the struggle. So fasting is not like getting bonus points.

It's like getting me deeper into the heart of the father. So what is pleasing to God? Here's what's pleasing to God. Psalm 51 17, the new living translation.

I say that because it's not a verse by verse comment. It's more of a commentary in the Bible, but it outlines as well. The sacrifice you desire, oh God, is a broken spirit.

You will not reject a broken and repentant heart. Oh God. And I was going to go over Isaiah 58, but we don't have time.

Read Isaiah 58. It really, Isaiah 58 sums it up to this. The key to fasting is again, like I said, humility.

The releasing of appetite must correspond with the releasing of sin. Isaiah 58, they were fasting and God was not answering. God said, get the heart right.

Get your heart right and then you will seek me, you will find me. That's why Isaiah in verse 9 of that chapter said this, you shall call and the Lord will answer. Listen, this is important.

You shall call and the Lord will answer. The context is hinder prayers. Have your prayers ever been hindered? Come on 9am.

Yeah, you guys are awake. Come on. Have your prayers been hindered? So the context is hinder prayers.

So God says, when you get this area in check, then you shall call on the name of the Lord and he shall answer. Prayers are hindered because hearts were not aligned with him. Now let me give you a point of clarification.

God still hears your prayers when you're not fasting. We started a church and I started administering God on the radio without ever fasting. God will do that.

I don't want you to be left with the impression he's not listening, he doesn't hear you. But fasting draws us closer to God. It makes us more sensitive to his will.

The door of possibilities is enlarged and the power of the Spirit is magnified. Do you want the Holy Spirit in you magnified? Not to be weird, but to be bold and powerful. I think the Bible said somewhere that when Jesus was done fasting, he returned in the power of the Holy Spirit.

It goes on to say, this kind cometh not out except by prayer and fasting. That's the loaded weapon right there. This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.

Let me just show you. Here's what prayer does. You've got some concrete.

That's what prayer does. You're breaking down the strongholds. You're crushing arguments, high things that exalt itself.

You are breaking it down. That's what prayer does. When you think of prayer, think of this.

Does that help a little bit? Good. Now when you think of fasting and prayer. Oh, what's been hiding over here? Oh, now you're talking.

Now you're talking. 25 pound jackhammer. See, I remember my dad used to, I used to go and get this for my dad in the truck.

He'd say, Shane, not the small sledgehammer. Go get the big sledgehammer. We've got to take out an entire driveway.

That's what you've got to do. If you've got to fight the enemy, if you need to pray for your family, for your marriage, for your granddaughters, for your grandkids, for your health, you've got to grab the sledgehammer sometimes and go to war. That's the difference.

So see, this gets the job done, but it's going to take a little while. But prayer and fasting. See, because you're aligning your heart with God, there's a difference there.

Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, sayeth the Lord. And then Isaiah begins on a, ends on a wonderful area here. Those, those from among you, he says to the people, you shall build the old waste places.

Once your heart is right, you've got a fasting heart, broken heart, then you are going to rebuild the old waste places. You shall raise up the foundations of many generations, and you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in. So think about this.

What is dead in your life that you know God is wanting to resurrect? Listen, Balcony 2, what is dead in your life? Are you dying spiritually? Are you dead spiritually? What dreams have died? What hopes have died? God-given dreams, God-given hopes. What is dying? What is dead? Shane, my kids are going crazy. My marriage, my grandchildren, life is going crazy.

But God says, you will be a repairer of the breach. When that dam begins to break, and all hell is going to break loose, you can begin to come in and be repairers of the breach with the right heart and through fasting. You shall raise up the foundations of many generations.

You shall set the stage for those who follow. I'm going to just conclude by reading some lyrics. Brant will come up and he'll start worship here on this topic of getting our hearts right.

Just reflect on these lyrics. Many of you know this song. I will walk through the fire with my head hit lifted high and my spirit revived in your story.

I'll look to the cross and my failure is lost in the light of your glorious grace. So let the ruins come to life in the beauty of your name, rising up from the ashes, God, forever you reign. See, God says, rising up from the ashes.

Though the life, though your life has been destitute and destroyed and crumbling, everything is falling apart. God says, if you search for me, you will find me. If you seek me, if you grab hold of me, out of the ashes.

Have you ever seen ashes? There's nothing. God says, out of that shame, out of that guilt, out of that brokenness, I will begin to repair and rebuild and restore all these things. Let the ruins come to life in the light of your glorious name.

Let the ashes arise and come out and be lifted up. That's the heart of God. So it's not about fasting and doing this and doing this.

It's about total surrender of everything. God, I give you my fleshly appetites. I give you these.

I give you everything. God, I need you. I'm broken.

I'm hurting. Anybody hurting? No? Try pastoring. And it's not being hurt by others.

It's interceding and filling the pain of so many families. Filling the pain, knowing what the enemy's, he's taking. He's taking.

The enemy's taking marriages. I just Facebooked a lady we haven't seen in a year. She came to the Wednesday night studies.

Said, where are your husband? Where are you and your husband? We're getting a divorce. He has a girlfriend. You set my pew? You set back there, God's pew I should say? You set in Westside and heard preaching? What do the kids think? The kids are a mess.

The families, what happened right back there one year ago? They heard the gospel. They heard the love of Christ. They heard repentance.

But the enemy comes in. And I can give you story after story after story. Back on meth.

Back on crystal. Back on crack, rock cocaine. Back on heroin.

Back on everything. The enemy is having a heyday. So at some point you got to get so upset that you say, not on my watch.

Not anymore. I'm fasting because when you fast, when you fast, when you pray and you get your heart right, the enemy's done. There's nothing he can do.

There's nothing he can do. He can harass. He can taunt.

But his power, his power is in you giving him the power. Do you realize that? The strength of the devil is what you give him. When you give in, when you open the door, the roaring lion can go back and right there's out in Roseman, there's a feline compound.

That tiger who could kill my kids, he's just going to keep going back and forth. He's not touching me. You can roar.

I don't care. You can put your big paws up on the gate. You're not touching me.

But if I see the zookeeper take the lock off and, oh, where's my kids? Let's get out of here. He's opening the gate. So you keep the enemy at bay.

You keep him restrained. He goes about as a roaring lion. Go, go, bye-bye.

But when you open the door, he will come in like a flood and he will destroy you. What kind of preaching doesn't prepare us? What kind of preaching doesn't prepare us? Even yesterday, it was at this event. My cousin is married to a Navy SEAL and he's gone for a month and a half.

Where's he at? I don't know. Where'd he go? They know nothing. But the preparation for that, the preparation to get ready to go fight a physical battle, why don't we fight and prepare to fight a spiritual battle? Shouldn't we be just as equipped to fight spiritually?

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