

Purity – Your Past Doesn't Scare God

by Shane Idleman

This sermon emphasizes the importance of not letting your past scare God and the need to persist in the face of discouragement and defeat. It highlights the dangers of living without power and the enemy's desire for us to quench the Spirit. The sermon addresses the destructive nature of secret sins like pornography and the impact on relationships, urging repentance and the fight for purity.

Scripture: Matthew 26:41, Psalms 119:147, Mark 14:38, Proverbs 22:3, 1 Corinthians 10:13, James 4:7, Galatians 6:9, Philippians 3:14, Ephesians 6:18

Topics: "Overcoming Past Mistakes", "The Fight for Purity"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of not letting your past scare God and the need to persist in the face of discouragement and defeat. It highlights the dangers of living without power and the enemy's desire for us to quench the Spirit. The sermon addresses the destructive nature of secret sins like pornography and the impact on relationships, urging repentance and the fight for purity.

Transcript

is your past doesn't scare God. Amen. Your past doesn't scare God.

And why I think that is so important. If you're like me, anytime you get discouraged and defeated, you want to give up. You don't want to you don't want to continue.

You don't do much for God. You just kind of exist. You go through the motions, you'll go to church, you might turn on Christian radio, you might look at the Bible.

But there's, there's not a lot of power there. And that's actually where the enemy wants us to live. And I think most men are living there.

We've lost that vibrant relationship with God if we've ever had it in the first place. We don't we don't want to do things for God. And that's called the quenching and the grieving of the spirit.

And there's nothing more damning and dangerous than this area of purity, where when we walk away from God in this area, and that's why I think pornography is so destructive. Yet people don't realize it is because, well, I'm not really having an affair. You know, it's my personal life, but it quenches and grieves the spirit.

It'll hurt your marriage. Most people, most men, when the marriage starts to decline, and they just don't love their spouse anymore, they have no desire for the spouses because they're giving their desire somewhere else. And it is adultery.

Let the pin drop. It is adultery for those who are married because there's a lusting after someone who's not our wife, and it needs to be repented of and, and you need to get back up and you need to fight again. And that's my encouragement for you is to get back up and to fight again.

The enemy wants to keep you down. He wants to keep you from not witnessing, from not sharing your faith. Have you ever been there? Maybe I'm talking to those who, maybe not everyone here, but you've ever been to that spot where you're so filled with the Holy Spirit? So full of God.

When you go to places, you want to minister. You want to be alert. You want to pray for people.

You want to make a difference in your home. You want to put on worship. You want to pray with your spouse.

You want to, everything is on fire for God. And then things start to come in and we start to fall in this area, especially this area of sexual purity or addiction. And that flame is gone.

And I don't know about you, but there's no more miserable place to be than just going through the motions. So on one hand, I want to convict, but on the other hand, I want to encourage because most people that have done anything significant for God have fallen many times over. The difference is they get back up and they fight again.

Like David said, renew within me that strength, God. Renew within me that the joy of my salvation. Create in me a clean heart, God.

And it's back to the altar. It's back to repentance. And so I'm not giving permission to sin and repent.

Sin and repent because God knows our heart and He will not bless that because I believe that's hypocritical. That's taking advantage of God's grace. Like Paul said, well, should we sin more? So grace abounds more? No.

But God sees the fight in a person. He sees the heart of the person. Isn't it interesting that God said, David was a man after my own heart.

That joker killed people. And he committed adultery and he killed the husband. And you know the story.

But he was a man after God's own heart. Because see, David would get back on track. David would fight again.

So if you've been in that state of losing the battle and losing the fight and just going through the motions, I believe that can change this morning as long as repentance takes place and the things we talk about take place. Because I also believe that God, when He hears a repentant heart, you have to remember repentance isn't just coming to the altar. It's not just saying, oh God, I'm sorry.

Oh God, help me. It's actually then living that out. You have to have the fruit that backs up repentance or it's not repentance.

Because many people are sorry, but not repentant. Because a person can say, oh, I'm sorry, wife, please forgive me. That will never happen again.

It sounds good. And the guy probably could be genuine about that. But it's when the emotions put feet to their emotions.

Meaning, okay, now I'm going to walk out repentance. Because it's not just a change of mind. Repentance actually is a change of action.

And I'll just give you many examples. Not many, but just a few examples. You've heard me talk about this before.

But in the past, I spoke mainly at men's conferences. I'm doing another one in Michigan. I'm flying there.

Big Iron Sharpens Iron conference. And that's mainly what God called me to initially. But I would talk to so many guys afterwards.

And they're like, man, I know. Oh, this is such an issue. And I would tell them about accountability software on their phone or in some cases, you know, and I don't think there's anything wrong with getting rid of the phone and getting a flip phone.

Whatever it takes. And the amount of men that told me, oh, man, I can't do that. Oh, I don't know if I want to get that serious.

That's hardcore. They'll never finish the battle well. Because see, you can want to do something.

But it's putting feet to that that really matters. The application of God's Word is where the power comes from. And isn't it true that when men lead, the family flourishes? When men lead, the family flourishes.

And I don't, of course, believe in Santa. But I heard a story at this Christmas time, and I don't promote it with our kids. But this little boy in a homeless shelter came up to Santa.

And he said, I want a very, very good dad. Can you do that too? And it's this yearning desire for our kids, whether you're single, and maybe marrying someday, or you're married now, you don't have kids now, or your kids have grown. There's, there's still a yearning, a desire for kids and our wives to want us to lead, especially in this area.

But the enemy of our soul wants to give you a certificate of non operation. Have you, do you know what that is at the DMV? You fill out the form and say, this vehicle is out of operation, take off the registration, get rid of this record on your records, and the enemy wants to do that. And what he does primarily is he'll go after this area, because sexual sin, we don't quite understand exactly why, but it's a sin against our own body.

It somehow seems to be at a deeper level and more destructive than say, you told a white lie, or you, you know, you did, again, all sin is sin, but sexual sin, it's a sin against our own body Paul talks about. And there's something that dynamic that happens. And there's something dynamic that happens when you consecrate yourself.

And when you set yourself apart, and when you fight in this area, there's, there's, there's a filling of the Holy Spirit that I haven't felt before in this area of sexual purity. And this anointing that comes from God.

Oh, thank you.

I thought you went and got yourself a coffee. I'm like, you should share that with us. Thank you, Pastor Abram.

I normally it's up here. Yeah. There's no ladies here to remind me to, to put water up here.

But here's a verse that I want to just unpack for a minute. Proverbs 22, 3. Proverbs 22, 3, a prudent man. What is a prudent man? Wise man, cautious, discerning, a prudent man foresees evil, and he fights it.

A prudent man foresees evil, and he hides himself. That's interesting. Interesting.

It's like duck and cover. Here comes Delilah. I'll see you later.

Hides himself. And I think many times as men, maybe, maybe not in your case, but my case, I'm accustomed to fighting. I'm accustomed to, you know, holding my ground.

I'm, I'm, I'm, I'm, you can't fight. You have to flee. Because fighting it means the temptation is still there in front of you.

If you got 36, 24, 36, and you're sitting there wanting to fight that, how's that going to work? Because God has made us visual. So the only way to really fight well in this area is to flee. And if you're feeding what you're supposed to flee, the battle is going to be very difficult.

And that's why we do talk about being selective in entertainment choices, being selective on what you watch, what you view. And you just, you can't, you can't fight this. You have to flee from it.

I've told you this. I've given examples of this before too as well. But on my computer, do you ever go check spam? You know, just once in a while I get emails.

I'm like, how's that going spam? You know, I need to, but usually it's just, you know, hit the whole delete, make sure there's nobody I know and then hit delete. I'm fleeing. I'm running.

I don't want to see, look at me. Here's my pictures. I'm in your area.

You want to chat? I don't want any of that. But you have to, you can't just sit there and, and fight that. And I wonder who, this might be legitimate.

Am I expecting pictures? Do I know this person? And we begin to fight when we're called to flee and hide ourself. But the simple, this word simple, I did a study on it while I was preparing this week. It's like this, this, this good old boy just walking around.

What's, you know, just, just kind of a stupid, simple, just gullible, believing everything. And he's just, but the simple, they pass on and are punished. Now what this, the example probably is of prostitutes would be in the square of a city or be in the area where they're visible.

Kind of like Hollywood Boulevard. I'm going to keep driving on the freeway. I'm not getting off.

But the simple, oh, I wonder, let me, let me just, they, they, they walk into it. They walk into Delilah's camp. They walk into things and they don't, they don't flee it.

They actually walk into this area that they should be running from because men are not strong enough to sit there and fight sexual temptation. But what I mean by that is put it in front of you, put the nudity or whatever in front of you. And okay, I'm just going to fight this, thinking baseball, good thoughts here.

You know, you, you just, just flee, just leave. Just, that's what Joseph did. That's what the Bible talks about.

You just, you just flee the area. For example, when you go into a computer, you know, if you're feeling this urge, you know, and you're, you're, you're, here it comes again. Don't go get on a computer.

You go in your car and you drive or go do something or pray or you, you flee from the thing that is causing the harm. Here's what's interesting though. Wisdom and folly.

You know what folly is? It's, it's a foolish person. It's a person who keeps falling. Wisdom and folly are often found in the same location and they're offering you alternative choices.

So wherever you go, there's wisdom, there's folly. Both are there and we have to present, we have to choose the door of wisdom. Foolish and simple.

Here's what it means. Turbulent, noisy, and demanding, hasty, gullible, ignorant, and they know nothing referring to moral, not mental knowledge. So it's this person who's not well grounded in the Word.

If they are, they don't want to obey the Word. And what he means by noisy and demanding, have you ever, you know, just, just kind of this, just doing things hastily and, and the, the images of a woman, a loud woman who's, who's demanding and noisy, but that can also apply to men as well. Here's the key on this point.

Small choices lead to big victories or big defeats. Many men that I know, Christian men, are not going to just go meet someone later today. Not going to probably not go down to the strip club or pull over and get a prostitute.

What, where does this begin? The small choices, the small decisions, going online, talking to this, it's the little choices, it's the little steps that eventually lead to the bottom. That's how the enemy works in stealth mode. But what is the target? Well, we all know the target is the mind.

Why is that? Because this is where God's will is revealed. This is where we make decisions. This, where, where this goes, our feet go.

So the target is the mind. And Warren Wiersbe said this, and if you want to read a good book, I believe it's called *The Strategies of Satan* by Warren Wiersbe. It's a very good practical book.

He said, if Satan can make you ignorant of God's will, he will rob you of all the glorious blessings that God has planned for your life. You will lose the enjoyment of God's peace and his power. Now this is ironic because most of us in this room are not ignorant of God's will, but it doesn't have to necessarily mean head knowledge.

It can mean the application of it. So if we are failing to apply God's will, ignorant of God's will, it will rob us of many of God's blessings. I truly believe that.

I believe that to the degree God blesses us is to the degree, often, of our obedience. Now I'm not promoting works-based, okay, I do this, God does this. I go on a fast for a week, I twist God's arm.

And I'm doing these things, God's like, okay, well all these brownie points on Shane, I'm really going to bless him. But God blesses an obedient vessel, a humble and teachable person who can be used by God. The power comes through the humility.

So when God blesses, it's a blessing to be to others. God's power flows through an empty, broken vessel who's holy and set apart for his glory. That's just scripture.

And those people crack me up and say, well, that just works. No, that just means you don't want to do what I'm saying. Anytime we don't like something in the Bible, what Leonard Ravenhill said, we call it legalism.

I'm going to talk about this tomorrow at church, but doing this fast for the church, we're calling it Corporate White Fast. I've been, of course, studying a lot on fasting. And I'm not going to mention his name.

Many of you would know who it is, the prominent teacher here, about an hour here from here. But he is so against fasting, it's funny to read where they come up with this stuff. Like, well, Jesus is kind of silent on it.

It doesn't, you know, and I'll read some of the things tomorrow, but it's like, what? Jesus did it. He said, when the bridegroom is gone, they'll fast. It was a spiritual discipline passed down.

It was throughout scriptures. Paul said, shipwrecks and many fastings. But because they don't like it, we'll say, well, it doesn't apply to us now.

So it's very interesting to understand, at least for me, that the target is the mind. That's it. The target is the mind.

So what is the weapon that Satan uses? This is important to know. He uses lies that we entertain, not lies that we discard. So the fiery darts of the enemy are often lies.

That's how Satan got Eve. That's how Satan gets most people, through lies. In this book, I talk about, I'm helping with some people right now through alcohol, say, for example, or opiates.

And you'd be amazed at how many people go back to their addiction, believing a lie. It's been a while. Now I can just have one, hooked.

I'm fine now. It's been a year. My back's hurting a little bit.

Maybe the doctor can prescribe some oxy, cotton, some Vicodin, some opiates. See, here it is. Justification.

Is that how he works in your life? You begin to compromise. Well, it's not that big a deal. I've been good for a while.

And we start to believe the lies. Instead of discarding those lies, we begin to embrace the lies. And you don't have to embrace them right away.

When you begin to start to entertain them, you dwell on them. Here comes a lie. You're like, no, no, no.

But then, hmm, wait a minute. It has been a while. I deserve this.

My wife is disengaged emotionally. She's not talking to me. She's mad at me.

And we start to entertain. Oh, I see some guys laughing. You know, we start to entertain those lies.

And then that lie that is entertained, it comes to fruition. What about the lies that we're too busy to put God first? We're too busy to read and pray. I can't read or pray that much.

I'm not a pastor, so I don't have to do that. See, these lies, we start to entertain. It's my personal vice.

I heard that recently. Shane, it doesn't affect anybody. My wife doesn't know.

It doesn't affect anybody. Lie. You're entertaining that lie because it's affecting you spiritually.

Not only that, we give the enemy a foothold. It means, have you ever tried to close a door and your foot's in front of it? You can't close it. That's a foothold.

The enemy has an opening there. So the target's the mind. The weapon is the lies that we entertain.

But again, a prudent man foresees evil and hides himself. Hides himself. How do you hide? You get out of sight.

This is not hard. My little kids like to play what? Hide and seek. Do they stand right out in the open? They hide.

They hide themselves. So I see this analogy of getting out of the way of sin. Hiding.

I'm going to hide myself from Delilah. Is anybody in this room attracted to women you know? We all raise our hand. You too, pastor? Oh yeah.

Oh yeah. I just don't get to know them. I go hide myself.

Morgan, would you counsel them? Direct them to someone? And you hide yourself. Don't even put myself in that position. You're mean.

That's rude. You're arrogant. I don't care, but I'm not falling.

And you hide yourself from the sin. For example, there's computers in our house. I don't even know if I could get on the pornography side if I wanted to.

Because the security, the covenant eyes, and the settings we have on it, and things pop, you know, it's like won't even sometimes go on YouTube pages. I hide. I don't want that.

I don't want to even have that ability. I'm sure you can. There's ways around things, but you hide from it.

What's your trigger in this area? Maybe YouTube or movies. I mean, if I read a movie, it says sexual content high. Am I going to hide myself? Because you know, you can't just go and see these things and not have it affect you somehow, some way.

It creates that lust that is good and God given in the right place. I mean, a fire is wonderful in my fireplace. But if you put that on the living room floor or in your bedroom, what's going to happen? See, it's out of

place.

It's out of context. And that's what the enemy usually does. He takes what is good and perverts it.

And we begin to take that perverted bait. So do you hide yourself? Do you go to places? This is interesting, too. I know people, they'll keep falling and they'll keep falling.

And I'll say, stop going to the place where you keep falling. Well, my friends take me there to the bar, to the nightclub, to the whatever it is. And you hide yourself.

Well, that doesn't sound too manly. Well, it is. It is very manly to hide yourself.

I mean, let's just be honest. I don't even want to go to the beach in the summer. We took a beach trip at the church.

I told my wife, we're not doing that again. People can go if they want to, but I don't need to be sitting next to g-strings. I'm not that strong.

I can look at the ocean for only so long. I got to hide myself. I got to get away from that.

But see, and people say, well, that doesn't affect me. You're lying. You are a liar.

I've honestly had pious people tell me that, oh, I can go to Santa Monica and walk around. Doesn't even affect me, Shane. I'm so spiritual.

You are a liar. You are so, you see 36, 24, 36 in a g-string and you just, you're just Jesus Christ. Even he was tempted in all points as we are, but without sin.

So you hide yourself. Well, that might look foolish. Yeah, you might look a little foolish.

You will look a little, when you, if you want to protect your holiness, you're going to look a little bit different. You're not, some of your friends aren't going to like you and you maybe need to get rid of those friendships. How bad do you want a relationship with God? How bad do you want to be filled with his spirit? Because the people I know, mightily used of God, mightily filled with his spirit, look a little odd to their secular friends.

They don't fit the mold. You can't put a square peg into a round hole. You come out from among them and you look different.

There's a difference about you. You just, you hide yourself. I remember I was in, when I was in construction, they would bring pornography magazines to the job site.

And I knew what they were doing. And I would just go hide myself. I'm going to go work over here.

Because once you start to, well, maybe I'll be an example. Maybe I can lead them to the Lord. Maybe I'll witness to them with the, with the, with the full thing open.

No, you won't. You'll be led down. Use wisdom.

They see that's a simple man. That won't affect me. Stupid.

Get out of dodge. Run and strengthen yourself. See when I run, I strengthen myself because every choice you make against temptation is a choice to be filled more with the spirit of God.

Did you know that? That's how a person is filled often with the spirit of God, by rejecting sin and turning from temptation. And once they turn from temptation, they're filled mightily. If they go into temptation and succumb, they're drained and they quench the spirit of God.

This is not rocket science. And I'm not a rocket scientist. This is very practical.

So again, we're going through that book, Disciplines of a Godly Man. I'm going to go through what he recommends here, but here's what we have to do. You have to change your physical environment and you have to change your spiritual environment.

Do you not? Both are very important. I mean, there's been seasons, you know, we're all being a certain environment and it's difficult. Example, summertime down in a place.

Oh, this environment is difficult and you can't always avoid. I'm not talking about living in your house like a hermit. I mean, you can't always avoid these things.

You do have to strengthen yourself. And sometimes you will go to places that are not good and not godly. And you just have to be careful.

I mean, I know a ministry, they actually go into porn conventions and minister. And one of the guys asked me, do you want to go next year? I'm like, no, I do not want to go. I have no desire.

Bless you. I hope you're fasted and prayed up and you should probably just send women in there. But if you can do it, okay, I'm not going to say you can't, but you got to be careful.

It's just amazing sometimes what the environment will provide. So our physical environment and the environment of your heart. And I like to ask these questions, who, what, where, when, why, and how, right? So who makes me fall? What makes me fall? Where do I fall? Why do I fall? And when do I fall? So when you start to understand the what, where, why, when, and how, how do I fall? You can begin to be prepared because to be forewarned is what? To be forearmed.

Because there's often triggers, correct? What keeps triggering you? Sitting at home, bored when your wife leaves? Well, when she leaves, you leave. Stop the trigger and start praying and asking God to help in this area. But again, I'm not naive.

I know just, you know, if my wife leaves and I leave, that'll fix the problem. No, it won't. It's just one solution of many.

Again, it's not about work. It's about putting nothing wicked before our eyes. It's about making no provision for the flesh to fulfill the less thereof.

These are scriptural truths lived out in our lives. So practical application, again, from disciplines of a godly man. It's a process.

Do not give up in the war even when you lose the battle. We get up and we fight again. So he talked about, number one, accountability.

Accountability. Now, what is this all about? Well, accountability is interesting because there's two sides of this, two extremes. On one side, accountability.

It's these guys say, you just gotta have accountability. You gotta have accountability. You gotta have accountability.

You gotta have accountability. And it's all about accountability. And if you know as well as I do, you can monkey around accountability.

You can sidestep it. You can, you know, if you're trusting in that and that alone, you're in trouble. Because I don't believe that someone else should keep you accountable.

I don't. I don't believe you can go to someone and say, hey man, keep me accountable. Unless you keep me accountable, I'm falling.

Unless you call me and pray for me and are right there. So we put too much emphasis in it. But then the other side is the lone ranger.

They don't, they're just gonna do it on their own. They're not gonna involve anyone else. They're not gonna use accountability to their advantage whatsoever.

And as all things, we need to find that middle ground often. So what is the middle ground? Well, I believe that when a person is accountable, meaning, here's what I mean by that, there's somebody maybe you trust, someone you know, someone you can go to and say, hey, listen, I am struggling with this. Ooh, that was hard, wasn't it? Just to say.

Isn't that a little humiliating? I'm struggling with this. Can you pray for me? Ask me how it's going when I see you on Tuesday. Oh, now you just upped it a little bit, didn't you? Because you don't want to fall and keep falling and have this person, a Christian, you know, think what's wrong with you? You know, why do you keep falling, keep falling, keep falling? So what the accountability can do is it can bring the sin to the light.

So now I've exposed this sin. I've said, I have a struggle with this. Would you help me? Would you pray for me this week? I struggle in this area.

I'm attracted to whoever or I'm stumbling here. And you bring in that accountability. So there's an extra layer there of precaution.

Some websites such as Covenant Eyes does allow your spouse to see your website history. Talk about making you a little bit more careful with what you look at. That will really help, don't you think? What about if all the questionable websites you visited went to your mom? Or make it broader.

What about if every questionable website you went to, went to all those people you know who are close to you? So you can see how that would. Would you choose a little differently? Every head in this room should be saying, yes, I would. Because there's an embarrassment.

There's accountability. Or people have it go to your wife like I do. If anything comes up that the red flag triggered, it will go to her email.

And it even says, here's what was searched for. Will go to her email. Frederick's a Hollywood? Why'd you search for that? Or whatever it is.

It's controversial or it's questionable. So see, that does add a little bit of layer of accountability. And I think that's wise.

I don't think there's any issue with, I don't think there should be an issue. Because the enemy's strategic. The enemy's smart.

The enemy wants to take you down. And I want to put as much ammunition into my gun as possible. I don't need an AR-15.

I need a prayer closet. I need accountability. I need things that fight the enemy on his ground.

So that's what accountability does. It brings the struggle to the light. You tell someone, I'm struggling in this area.

And someone prays with you. They ask how you're doing. And there's an accountability there.

But that in and of itself is not the answer. It's just one piece of the puzzle. And as Kent Hughes also mentioned, and number two, memorization and application of the Word of God.

Did you know that you can retrain your mind? And here's where I really want to encourage you. Because I remember years ago, and I've talked to people a lot, that they are so deep in this that they see no way out. They're looking at something every day.

They've got lust for this every day. The lusts are actually becoming not natural anymore. And they're lusting after things that are not good.

And there's this monster. They don't know how to break free of it. They're in so deep.

But you take that same Christian, and you talk to a Christian who hasn't looked at pornography in six months. What's the difference? The mind has been retrained. And this person is filled with the Spirit.

This person is quenching and grieving the Spirit. So you can become that person. It's a retraining of the mind.

Even psychologists note, I don't remember the exact term again, but cognitive behavioral changes and neuroplasticity. That was the word I was looking for. Where you can change your mind.

But that's actually, they're just teaching what the Bible teaches. Be not conformed to this world, but be what? Transformed by the renewing of your mind. So the more you renew your mind, that's why with entertainment, I would cut the stuff off.

I would get into the Word. I would get in worship. And when you start to feed your mind on the things of God, it starts to retrain and refocus.

Now lust begins to dwindle. Lust begins to die. You wake up different.

Boy, I'm really changing because you're renewing your mind. And that's one of the great things about a word I'm going to use here. It's an F word.

Can you guys handle it? Fasting. Oh, I should have said it's a four letter word. Four letter F word.

F-A-S-T. Fast. Fasting is a wonderful spiritual discipline that actually starves the flesh.

I mean, it takes a little while. You'd think all hell's breaking loose and there's a demon coming out of you the first day or two, because the flesh is like, no, give me. King's stomach wants more food.

And it's a spiritual discipline, that fasting. I don't know too many people when they're lusting, when they're fasting. But I know a lot of people after that big steak and that meat, there's something, there's animalistic appetites.

I've seen it myself. I've experienced it. And you feed this lust.

That's why they often tie drunkenness and gluttony together. Gluttony and sexual sin together. They're often tied in there because it's a giving up of the body appetites.

So when we fast, you starve that appetite and you take away its power and its authority. I know this might seem weird to some people because they've never done it. But I remember when I did a nine-day fast a while back, I want to do something again here real shortly.

But after a couple days, the lust is just gone. Now, I don't think a person needs to live there. That's not healthy, especially if you're married.

Plus, you can't. You got to eat or you'll die. But there's a point where you get where your lust has died.

You have no desire for the other sex whatsoever. It's gone because the body has been so starved of those fleshly appetites that it's amazing. And you're so filled with God's Spirit.

So memorization and application. The reason I put application in here is because we have to apply what we memorize. So here's this picture so far.

Do you see this person conquering sin? In other words, they brought it to the light. If your spouse can be your accountability partner, some of you, yes. Some of you, that's not a good idea.

But we can tell our spouse, some of us, hey, I'm struggling in this area. Can you pray for me? And bring in accountability, memorization of Scripture, and the application of it. And then he mentioned maintaining hedges.

What's a hedge? It's a border of protection. This is what I already talked about this mainly earlier. But putting up a border of protection.

There's some type of protection. Not getting close to those you're attracted to. Not falling in this area that you know you're going to fall in.

Not going to the place that you go to if you're going to fall. Anybody have those places? When I came back to the Lord, there are some places I had to avoid. Maybe I could go back now.

I don't know. But there are some places. I haven't been to Las Vegas in 20 years.

I haven't been to Laughlin in 20 years. I haven't been to Schooners in 20 years. I probably could now.

I don't want to find out. But there are some places where I'm putting up the hedge. And there are some friends I had to disconnect from.

I had to put up the hedges because they pulled me down. For example, is it easier for me to pull someone up to where I'm at or for them to pull me down? Much easier for them to pull me down. Even a smaller person.

So we have to, you have to know where you're at spiritually. If a person is pulling you down, cut that relationship. Well, they're a friend.

No, they're not. I don't think a person is a friend who's causing you to reject God and walk away from God. I don't think that's a friend.

I think that's a companion in sin. I think it's an excuse to keep indulging. But it's not a friend.

A friend sticks closer to a brother. A friend will draw you closer to God. And then four, reality check.

Reality check. He foresees evil and he hides. A reality check is not believing the lies and looking at where, let me give myself a reality check.

What is this going to mean? And you guys should play the whole picture through in your mind. Okay, where Satan is drawing you. Let me see how this is going to play out, Satan.

Okay, for my case, let me see here. Okay, that choice is going to lead to that and lead to that. Now, I lose my family.

Now, I lose the respect of my wife and my kids. Now, I have to step down from pastoring a church. Now, I've got tremendous shame and guilt that will probably lead to suicidal thoughts or an addictive nature.

I'm going to lose everything. Self-respect. How many people am I going to hurt in the process? So you play out the whole tape in your mind.

You don't just, how temptation gets you is that immediate impulse. We make a decision based on the immediate impulse without playing it out in our mind to see where is this going to lead. What is this going to cost me? So there's a reality check that takes place.

And then he also noted, again from Kent Hughes's book, Disciplines of a Godly Man, divine awareness. Divine awareness. What is that? Well, this is good because when you begin to realize that the power and presence of the Holy Spirit is in my heart, in my life, right now and in yours if you're a believer, there's a divine awareness.

There's a fear of the Lord because often we forget about that, don't we? Before we sin, we forget about that. We don't have that divine awareness. That's why it's very hard to go directly from church and into sin.

It's usually a process. Days go by, we lose that divine awareness of God's power and presence in our life that he's watching, that the fear of the Lord should keep us away from sin. So you bring back that divine awareness.

You remember, remind yourself that the Holy Spirit is in you, dwelling. And then finally he talks about prayer, setting the guard in place. Prayer is what sets the guard in place.

And I'm convinced that this is why it's so hard for men to pray. This is why it's so hard for men to pray. Because it's so powerful.

That's the weapon. Because that gets our mind refocused, that gets our mind trained again on God. Mark 14 38, watch and pray.

Why? So that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. So it's this thought of guarding, keeping a watch, and spiritually alert.

Watch and pray. Watch and pray. Watch and pray.

That should be the heartbeat of our day. I'm going to watch and pray all day long. Shane, how are you going to do that? You have things to do.

No, it's not just sitting somewhere watching and praying all day. It's an alertness. It's a spirit of prayer.

When Paul says, I do not cease praying all day, it's a spirit of prayer, meaning there's an atmosphere of prayer. You can go shop, you can still work, but your heart's set on the things of God. Your heartbeat is still with God.

You're praying in your heart and your spirit when you can. There's a praying without ceasing. It's a life of prayer.

And that's what it means, guarding, keeping a watch, and spiritually alert. So as soon as you put down your guard, you're not keeping watch, and you're no longer spiritually alert. That's when we are open for the attacks of the enemy.

That's when we fall. So Jesus said, watch and pray. Psalm 119, I rise before dawn and I cry out for help.

I wait for your word, God. I like that one. So all you late-nighters, I want to challenge you this morning.

Get up early. I rise before dawn and cry out for help. I rise before dawn and cry out for help.

Let me tell you, that has been probably one of the biggest changes in my life over the last 20 years, is this verse. I rise up early and I cry for help. God hears the cries of his people.

If you get up early and you seek God, you open his word, you say, God, I want to obey you today. God, I need your power. I need your strength.

Remove Delilah out of my path before she even enters. God, would you strengthen me and encourage me? God, fill me with your spirit. I want to fight less.

Lord, keep the enemy at bay. I don't want to watch things that draw me away. Lord, I want to be filled with your spirit this morning.

God, would you please hear the cry of your servant? You think that day is going to go much better than you popping on YouTube and watching something you shouldn't watch? What day do you think is going to be better for you? Where you get up, you look at your phone. Who texted me? Go on Facebook. Oh, what is that? Or Instagram.

Avoid that if you can. Or Snapchat. And we go on these things.

We start looking. What's going to strengthen you? I cry out. I rise up before dawn.

I cry out for help. Lord, I wait for your word. What does that mean? He's not in a hurry.

You've heard me say this before. Microwave Christianity is not going to cut it in these dire times. You can't just push two minutes and hope that your little thing is warm and put it on your back.

Or push two minutes and fix your burrito. This is not Microwave Christianity. This is waiting on God and fighting, keeping guard, keeping a watch, staying spiritually alert.

I'm just as concerned for my soul on Monday as I am when I leave here. Because the enemy can come in at any time. Actually, he looks for opportune times.

Opportune times. And this acronym for addiction helps in this area as well. It's called HALT.

It reminds you to be careful when you're hungry, angry, lonely, and tired. Should we review that again? Hungry, angry, lonely, and tired. And if you think about it, that's when he's come in, hasn't he? Usually in those areas.

Hungry. My flesh is hungry. Angry.

Well, fine. I'll just go and do it. I'm mad at God.

He didn't answer my prayer. Men are, many men are mad across our nation today because they believe that God should have taken this away. If God really loved me, I've heard that, if God really loved me, he would take this away.

I'm not going to church. If God really loved me, why doesn't he answer these prayers? Why am I still dealing with this? Why am I still tempted with this? If God really loved me, if he really cared, why doesn't he answer my prayers? Well, sometimes you got to fight. You got to put on your big boy pants, stop complaining, start getting in the word of God and applying everything we just talked about.

Get up and fight again. Rise up early and cry out. I cry for help.

Many men don't like to say that, but you have to cry out for help. So again, your past doesn't scare God. Get up and fight again.

Get up and begin to apply these principles. Even if you've fallen this morning or yesterday or wherever you're at, bring it to the light. Repent.

Let God cleanse you. And the people on fire for God are those who've got up out of temptation and they fought again. They fell forward, falling forward into God's grace and God's mercy.

That's not permission to sin. If you've known my sermons, if you've heard my sermons, you know I would not do that. But I do understand that the battle is real and we have to get up.

I just heard a story. I can't remember the man who did this, but it was really good. He pulled up two chairs.

He pulled up two chairs next to each other and he sat down in one chair and he looked at the other chair. He said, devil, you're going to sit there and you're going to watch me worship. I love that.

I love that. The devil cannot make you do anything. Your enemy is a defeated foe fighting from a position of victory.

He just entices. He just puts a bait on the lure. He can't cause you to do anything.

Stop giving him too much credit. The devil's after my finances. The devil's after my marriage.

The devil's out. He is, but he only presents the bait. He's just the influencer.

He just plants the lies. So who was that? Flip Wilson? The devil made me do it. Remember that guy? Hope I'm not dating myself.

I was real little. I don't know if I was born. How's that? But he, well, the devil made me do it.

Well, the devil made me do it. And in Pentecostal circles, I hear that, well, the devil, the devil's doing this. The devil's trying to, no, you're, you're actually giving yourself into temptation.

He's, he's, he's influencing you, but the devil didn't make you do anything. He presents the bait. He plants the lie.

And it's up to us as believers to watch and fight and persist. I love this word persistence. Here, okay, here's what's happened.

I was going to close, but I've got to tell you this. What's happening in our culture today is we're creating that, you know, the term snowflake comes from, you know, and they don't want to be offended and everybody's so sensitive. And we forget, we've, we have forgotten that words like discipline and perseverance and commitment are battle words.

They are words that are still relevant today. You are called to discipline yourself, to persevere, to fight. All these words are wonderful biblical truths.

We're trying to soften them down. And one of those words is persistence. What does it mean? Continuing a course of action in spite of difficulty and opposition.

I've come here to tell you as a man, until the day you breathe your last breath and are buried six feet under, you better persist. You better fight. There's going to be a continual course of action towards the cross of Christ, no matter how difficult things come, no matter how much opposition, all hell is coming against me.

You are here to fight again and get back up and fight again and get back up and fight again and get back up and fight again and persevere and devil, you got me that time, but I'm getting up again. And here I come and you just keep coming. You turn into Mike Tyson on the devil.

How's that?

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/a7e09cab74M.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/shane-idleman/purity-your-past-doesnt-scare-god-a7e09c/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net