

# Self Control In An Addicted World

by Shane Idleman

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of self-control in an addicted world, focusing on breaking bondages and dealing with heart issues. It highlights the impact of addiction on worship, relationships with the Lord, and the need to be filled with the Spirit rather than dominated by the flesh. The sermon urges listeners to avoid compromising, use overwhelming force against temptations, and listen to the right voice, preaching the gospel of grace to themselves and continuing to fight regardless of immediate results.*

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**Topics:** "Self-Control", "Overcoming Addiction"

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## Description

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## Transcript

This morning is one that we probably hear from most people on in regarding the subject I'm going to talk about, where God is dealing with hearts and breaking addictions, breaking bondages. And the title is this, Self-Control in an Addicted World. Self-Control in an Addicted World.

I did cover a little bit of this on a Wednesday night a few weeks ago, but I thought it was very relevant and important, especially going into New Year's. Because you know what the number one New Year's resolution is, right? Other than weight loss, it's, I need to stop you feeling the bike. I need to stop this.

I need to remove this from my life. And I believe that this topic is so important because of this reason. It will definitely affect our worship, our relationship with the Lord, because when the flesh is dominating, it's very hard to be filled with the Spirit.

It'll affect your worship. The reason a lot of people don't like to worship, and if you were actually bored during worship, especially that worship, there's a good chance the flesh has been dominating. Because anytime the flesh is dominating in your life, you want to feed more of the flesh.

You want to go to, maybe a better understanding of this word is the things of the world. Loving the things of the, can you love the things of the world and love God at the same time? Shane, do you have any scriptural support for that? He who loves the world does not love the love of the Father. It's not in him.

You cannot serve two masters. So that's my really encouragement to you this morning is not to beat you up with a lot of scriptures, but to convict you that we cannot be filled with the Spirit and the flesh at the same time. They will oppose each other.

And that's why I believe many people, when they give into the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, the pride of life, they don't have God working powerfully in their lives. They've quenched and grieved the Spirit of God. Let me just read some statistics.

And before I do that, you might want to know what the definition of addiction is. I think Webster defines it as giving yourself over to a habit and then becoming dependent upon that habit. In biblical terms, it's actually a lot stronger.

It can become, addiction can become idolatry. It can become a form of idolatry, putting something before God. Have you ever said, I have to have this? I have to have this.

Don't talk to me until I have this. No matter what time I go by a Starbucks, that line is around the corner. Especially in the morning, beep, beep, beep.

I have to have it. I have to have it. Or of course, worse things, right? I have to have this drink or I have to have this pill.

I have to have it. So in biblical terms, it's actually a stronghold. It's not just a habit.

It's a stronghold. It's something that has a strong hold on your life and it doesn't want to let go. That's why it's so hard.

The flesh says, I'm holding onto this, whatever it is, and I don't want to let go, but God wants us to be free of that so we can be filled with the Spirit of God. Did you know that the fruit of the Spirit, the last indication of the fruit of the Spirit is what? Self-control. And sometimes people think that there are different fruits.

Well, I'm good, I have goodness and love and peace, but I don't have these other ones. It's actually not a bunch of fruit that you can choose from. The fruit of the Spirit is complete.

Love, joy, peace, contentment, long-suffering, gentleness, pain, gentleness. There we go. You know what it is.

First Corinthians, gentleness, kindness, self-control. And they all go together, don't they? Because when self is controlling me, I'm not very loving, I'm not very patient, I'm not long-suffering, I'm not gentle. I'm mean, I'm angry.

What is, what most people are mean and angry because self is controlling them. So somebody being filled with the Spirit of God, a byproduct is self-control. It doesn't say perfect self-control or we would all fall off in this area.

But when you fall off, you get back on. You say, Lord, help me, and you submit that area to Christ. So it's a byproduct of being a Spirit-filled believer is to tell the flesh no, to control the flesh.

I know this is hard to believe, but as believers, we are called to discipline the flesh. You can tell the flesh no. You ever hear that from people? I just couldn't say no.

I just can't stop. But as a believer, I believe as a believer, we can do that. Yes, it's difficult.

Yes, it's challenging, but greater is he that's in you than he that's in the world. Now, the context of that scripture I just quoted and John is talking about false prophets and being able to discern what Spirit is of God, what Spirit is of a false prophet. I'll be talking about that in March, or I'm sorry, mid-January and hope maybe into March.

It's just a quick four-week study. But let me just read some statistics that you have in front of you. There are an estimated 15 million alcoholics and 10 million drug addicts in this country.

40%, listen to this, 40% of all family problems brought to domestic court are alcohol-related. 40% in the courthouse that are domestic-related. Over 150,000 teens use cocaine.

500,000 use marijuana once or more per week. And half a million junior and senior high students are weekly binge drinkers. And an estimated 10 to 15 million teens need treatment for abuse each year.

Well, Shane, that doesn't really relate to me. Well, don't worry, I'm still going on this list. I'm getting there.

Five to 10 million people are addicted to prescription drugs. Now, personally, I don't know where they get these numbers because most people aren't honest about their addiction, so I would conservatively add quite a bit to these numbers. 40 to 80 million, 40 to 80 million Americans.

I don't even know, what is our population now, 350 million? Are we talking 25%, 30% of our population suffer from compulsive overeating? And five to 15% will die from its consequences in any given year. There are an estimated 2.5 million pathological gamblers and another three million compulsive gamblers in the United States. It's a \$500 billion a year industry, and the suicide rate for this population is 20 times higher, 20 times higher than any other people group that struggle with something.

To me, these are serious issues. Why is that so high? Because fortunately, I've never dealt with this. I'm not gonna give somebody money and just hope it works out.

But gambling is huge, and you begin to lose things. You begin to go thinking, I'll bet on that and lose that. And if I could just borrow some money, and then now that's gone, and maybe take a note out on my house, and maybe the devil let you win a few hands.

Put a roulette ball, landed on black, I knew it. Try it again, it's gonna be red every single time until he gets what he wants. And you begin to lose everything, your marriage, your family, your job, your house.

You say, I just can't quit. So what happens? Suicide is the only way out for many people that don't have a relationship with the Lord. There are currently 300 million, catch this, 300 million pornographic websites.

Websites. I've gotta check this, I'm thinking three million. I mean, what is going on here? 300 million, because people scream, give me more.

What do they give you? More, more, more. This is alarming too. 30%, 30% of minors, think about all the kids in our church, all the kids you know, 30% of them have admitted or have agreed to meet someone they know only through the internet.

And I didn't wanna get too convicting on these last points for those of us who have kids, but the newest addiction now that they are concerned about is what? Little five-year-olds, give me that phone. Look, there's a demon in them, in their eyes. Give me that phone and they walk around like zombies.

Give me that phone, give me that iPad, give me YouTube. I have to watch something. They are addicted at a very young age and they're saying that addiction only increases as they get older.

What you're instilling in them now at 15 will have huge ramifications because the little five-year-old who couldn't put that down at five is not gonna give it up at 15 when pornography begins to grab them and gambling online begins to grab them and bowling, all these things begin to grab them and it's an addiction that is weaving its way through our families. Now, I know it's hard. I cave in sometimes.

Pick the phone and be quiet. Oh, I need some sleep. I need some peace, I need to get things done, but you can't regulate it.

Your Wi-Fi has an off button. Off. Mom, the internet's not working.

I think it's a power outage this week. God forbid, let's go outside and play. I mean, I would go outside and climb trees and make stick forts and stuff for, and then Atari came along.

I'm dating myself, I know, but. So here's the hope, though, folks. There's hope, there's always hope.

And I was reading this week, and it gave me some encouragement I wanted to give to you that when David defeated Goliath, we have to remember that Goliath still had relatives. Some say he had brothers, some say he had sons, but those relatives of Goliath eventually came and went out David again and almost got him when he was wore down. Another man had to come and kill this giant.

And there are things in your life that the enemy will throw at you. You might conquer it, you might overcome it, but it might come back. And you'll say, I dealt with this years ago.

I thought, what happened, what's wrong with me? Welcome to the battle. Welcome to the warfare. If it's a struggle in your life, the enemy's often going to come back and look for that again.

The same point of entrance that he had on you, he's gonna come back and try it again. I remember when the enemy tempted Jesus, the Bible says that he waited, he withdrew his temptation, and he was going to wait for an opportune time. Waiting, and so be encouraged in that.

Yes, you've defeated Goliath before, but he might come again. And it might have to fight the battle again. And the reason I'm telling you that is because we become discouraged.

And we say, what is wrong with me? As a Christian, I thought I've overcome this. I'm not giving you permission to run back to something, right? But I'm telling you, I thought I overcame this. What's happening here? I must be losing my faith.

I must be losing my mind. God must not love me. What's going on? No, it's the attack of the enemy.

He's using the same thing. And what he uses against you, he might not use against me, correct? What he uses against me, he might not use against you. We all have areas where he knows the opportune times.

And he will use those. And you have to know yourself. We need self-control in an addicted world.



And I share with the first service, this is not an area where I've never struggled. Obviously, I like to eat too much. Thanksgiving dinner, oh, these little portions, give me a second plate or a third plate, right? One stick of gum, I want the whole pack.

One little donut, give me six. It's the flesh wanting more. And a few commentaries that might be helpful are these.

Ellicott said, use the strongest methods to keep your appetite in check. The strongest methods. Barnes, and these guys wrote commentaries hundreds of years ago.

He said, restrain thy appetite. Eat as if the knife were at thy throat. And the Septuagint.

The Septuagint is interesting. It was the Hebrew Old Testament. The Old Testament you have was written in Hebrew.

70, it also has, I think, LXX. It's often called LXX 70. Because they had 70 translators translating it into Greek for the Greek-speaking world.

Hundreds and thousands of, I don't know exactly. I'll come back on that one. A long time ago, I believe it was even before Jesus' time, around there, they said this.

The reader is encouraged not to attend parties of the wealthy where every temptation imaginable is there. So all of the commentators see this as well. Restrain your appetite.

Restrain that appetite because your flesh says this. Always remember this. We think the flesh is our friend, don't we? The flesh says, feed me so I can destroy you.

Feed me, feed me, feed me so I can destroy you. This gets me in trouble sometimes, but I've committed to speak the truth in love. It's this.

The problem with our healthcare system is not more money. It's what we're doing to our bodies. It's what we're putting in our mouth and what we're eating, what we're consuming, what we're not doing.

That's just the truth, the honest to God truth. For everyone, of course not. I'm not naive.

But they wanna throw more money at it. That's not the problem. And one of my big, I don't even know what to do with it, but I see when people genuinely need help, assistant living and also food, food stamps, why can't we get them the best food instead of the garbage? And I tell people, I'll tell you now, they drop off food for our food pantry, please bring healthy things.

I don't wanna see Captain Crunch in a box for their kids that are already starving of malnutrition, food coloring, poison, all this stuff, and we're not giving them life. So we're hurting the system by not helping more in this area. And I'm gonna talk about this on Saturday.

Let me just do a rabbit trail for a minute. When you consume food, you're either taking life-giving food that gives life to the body, or you're consuming dead food from a factory that gives death. There's nothing in a box that's in process, chemicalized, and that can last 10 years.

Twinkie lasts 10 years. I have a problem with that. And you're gonna consume that.

See, you're supposed to eat that carrot, that apple that has enzymes, fiber, all the enzymes that digest you, and all these things that are wonderful for the body, you eat that, that gives life to the body, that rejuvenates your cell at the microchondria level, the basic element of the cell, it begins to grow and thrive in this healthy environment. You give it junk, and you are going to create some type of disease, some type of inflammation, some type of diabetes, some type of health-related illness. So how is throwing money at a system going to fix it? It has to be fixed from within.

Not a lot of amens. I know it hurts a little bit. But that is the truth.

That is the, that's exactly what's happening. Do you know one of the biggest, there's a lot of rabbit trails on the second service here, that one of the biggest increases right now is a type two diabetes. You're well aware of that.

Do you know why it's called type two, not type one? Type one is nothing you can do about it. You don't have insulin. Type two is it's diet-related.

Diet-related, meaning you can get rid of it by changing your diet. Instead of doing that, give me more insulin. Insulin is not a friend to fat loss.

Insulin is a hormone that does what? Signals the body to take the glucose that was broken down from your food, the sugar, and store that as fat. More insulin, more fat. Glucagon would be the opposite hormone that would help in fat loss.

And so these are health, diet-related diseases. Somebody goes to the doctor and they say, oh, high cholesterol, this, okay, let me get you on a statin drug. 30, \$40 billion a year industry.

The statin drug, that drug tells your liver to stop producing cholesterol. Cholesterol's not the problem. God gave us cholesterol because it has many good functions.

The LDL, the high-density lipoids, and the low-DL, low-density lipoids. The balance there is God-given. It's what we're consuming.

It's what we're putting in our bodies. That's the problem. So how do you stop this? Self-control in an addicted world.

Have you, is it just me or I drive, I'm like, there's a Panda Express, there's an In-N-Out burger, there's the El Pollo Loco, there's a Carl's Jr., where is the organic garden vegetable salad on the corner? You guys, you all need to be here Saturday because you know it's true. And I know you feel better when you take care of yourself. The reason we don't serve in ministry is because we don't feel good.

The reason we can't make it all the time is because we don't feel good. The reason we can't function well in life is because we don't feel good. So instead of running and doing the things that will help us feel better, we run back to the addiction.

Isn't it funny how that works? You run back to the bottle. Oh, I feel better for two hours, but now I've got two days of hell. So I just took two hours of feeling good for two days of hell.

And addiction tricks us. Proverbs 23, do not join with those who drink too much or gorge themselves on meat for drunkards and gluttons become poor. Gluttony basically means to gulp down.

Their God is their belly. So he's telling us to stop in this area. 1 Corinthians 9, 27, Paul said, I discipline my body, what? Like an athlete.

How many of you, I'm wondering, look at the Christian life as you should look at athletics? The Bible always uses examples of athletics, farming, or a soldier. Those are how we're viewed, how the illustrations throughout the Bible, an athlete, a farmer, or a soldier. There's warfare, there's farming, there's planting, there's reaping, there's sowing, but there's also an athlete, trained.

You've gotta be in your best condition because it affects how you live spiritually. If you don't believe me, next Sunday, I'm just throwing it out there, I'm not gonna do this. I wanna have a six pack before I come up.

Let's see if it affects, let's just try this out. No? Two Xanax, Xanax? Let's see if I can get through this. I'm tired.

What's going on here? Oxy? Vicodin, see, it affects, it affects. I'll even take this further. Six donuts and a venti coffee, I would be your worst nightmare.

It's like Christian crack. I just, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, hurry up, hurry up, hurry up, hurry up, hurry up, get through this. See, because the flesh, it affects you in a very, who you are all week is who you are when God calls you to do spiritual things as well.

Being an athlete, being prepared. Another translation says, I discipline my body and bring it into subjection. I control my body.

And a loose translation says, no sloppy living for me, I'm staying alert and in top condition. When was the last time we looked at the Christian faith as being in top condition? Here's why we, here's the mistake I make, and I even hear from pastors, and boy, it really makes me mad. The reason most pastors don't talk about all this stuff, I'm talking about food and them, because they themselves are addicted to food and things, and it's hard to talk about what you've never been set free from.

And they said, brother, we just need to be concentrating on spiritual things. I just, I can't exercise, I have to pray. I've got some ocean, oceanfront property in Arizona to sell you, right, George Strait? No, that's not true.

You actually pray better when your body isn't disciplined. Because disciplining the flesh leads to a disciplined prayer life, leads to a disciplined devotional life, leads to a disciplined worship life. Some of the best times I've ever had in prayer and putting sermons together is when I spent an hour and a half, two hours in the desert with nothing but God and the road ahead of me.

Stop, I'll start writing down stuff, or the sermon notes. You think I just sit down and put this together? Over the whole week of God just doing, and it's awful when I'm out, moving, praying, seeking God. And you're training your body for what, you're prepared.

How am I gonna get, if I'm dying, cardiology, a cardiologist will tell you this, but cardiovascular activity, you know, bike riding, swimming, all these things, that's how we are designed. We weren't designed to sit at home, watch a TV and stay on a computer all day. We are designed to walk and to move.

And most times, especially preaching, I can't stand up here for an hour. Service, I used to preach twice sometimes on Saturday night and then I'd come fill in for pastors twice on Sunday morning. And being able to endure that length of time, it's like an athlete.

That's how I view it. When I go to the hospital homes and minister, do you know how many times I would stop and eat something big and say, I'm not going there. I need to go home and take a nap.

Come on, let's just tell the truth. Let's just tell the truth. The flesh affects more than we think.

We want to do more for God, but it's got us in a holding pattern. For example, if I said, listen guys, after this service, we're just gonna let the worship team loose. This might be a good idea.

I'm praying about this. We're just gonna let the worship team loose an hour after the service. We're just gonna worship.

Half of you be going, oh my Lord, I'm getting hungry. See, so instead of getting a breakthrough from God, you would be heading out the door to fill King's stomach, to feed King's stomach. You see, it stops more, it influences more than we think.

Some don't, I can't go to church. I've got to go watch a pig skin, go a hundred yards for three and a half hours and watch my, and drink this and eat this. And you just missed a move of God's spirit.

See, it begins to control what restaurants we go to because they serve certain drinks. What friends I hang out with because they'll smoke with me. They'll drink with me.

They'll put out the crystal myth, a nice big line right here. And I could do it with them and then go to church and act as if I'm good. And that addiction begins to control us and pull us away from the things of God.

Come on guys, I'm just telling the truth this morning. You know, it's a truth. If we abuse the temple, it will affect everything from prayer and worship to our relationship with God.

Oh, this is going to be hard. I just, just for fun, I looked up the effects of added sugar, high blood pressure, inflammation, weight gain, diabetes, increased risk of heart attack, stroke, cancer. And the reason they're saying is we've went from six teaspoons.

I think it don't give me, I didn't quote, don't quote me on this. Teaspoons or tablespoons, one or the other. Let's say six teaspoons in the 1850s of sugar.

Now up to 57 a day. 140 pounds a year. And don't take my word for it.

Google this. The similarities of sugar and cocaine on the brain. Oh, that's impossible.

No, it's not. The way they affect the neurotransmitters is the same. The dopamine, the pleasure hormone, these things, it affects it the same way.

So you coming off sugar is not a lot different than a person coming off of cocaine. Now the withdrawals are going to be a little bit more severe, but if you ever tried, try it. Just try it later.

Just say, I'm not having any more sugar later today and tomorrow. Watch out because you'll become the devil. You'll twist and contort like what is going on? Feed me sugar.

Feed me. But see that controlling aspect and that's killing the body. What about energy drinks? Mixing caffeine and sugar and more caffeine and more sugar.

And I actually did a memorial service for a friend of mine. And some are contributing it. He's 40 years old to energy drinks.

And I knew he had an issue 20 years ago. I didn't know it was still 15 years ago. And see we're giving, the body says, feed me so I can destroy you.

And of course we know alcohol. Proverbs 23, who has woe? In other words, who has problems? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who tarry long over wine. So if this is an issue for you and you're saying, why do I always have problems? Why do I always have sorrow? Why is there always strife in my life? What is wrong? Could it be? Could it be that we need self-control in an addicted world? Even Proverbs 25, if you find honey, eat just enough, too much of it, and you will vomit.

So let me give you this picture, word picture. Self-discipline is like a dam and your flesh is the water behind it. You ever see those big dams full of Hoover Dam? The self-control is that dam that regulates that water.

It'll let out now and then. It'll let out, you know, so it doesn't overflow. It lets it out a little bit, but the self-control is like the dam.

So here's what I've been building up to. Five points. That was a pretty long introduction.

How'd we do? I'm gonna have to get my introductions down. But hopefully you'll make it Saturday. I'll talk a lot more about this area.

And again, just as a word of encouragement, I haven't mastered this area. For some, me and my wife just laugh all the time. Oh, Shane's here.

Hi, the snicker. Like... Or I'll run into people at this grocery store. Hi, how are you doing? They'll push their cart out of the way.

Like, I'm not here. I've had a donut recently. Fast food.

You know, it's not about perfection. And it's not about God. I mean, I've known people that eat much healthier than I do, and they've died of cancer.

So there's not a, you know, one-size-fits-all approach. But we do know that we are called to be good stewards of what God has given us. Look at the Christian walk as warfare, and you're an athlete, not a couch potato.

But we think that it's spiritual. It's spiritually. You're too earthly-minded, Shane.

No, I'm trying to be spiritually good. I'm trying... When I'm focused on training the body, disciplining the body, then the spiritual benefits are huge. So number one, take control and take full responsibility.

Did you catch that? Take control and take full responsibility. Here's some verses I want to share with you. I've read them before, but I want you to see them on the screen.

1 Peter 1 through 4. Look at these. And you tell me if we're not supposed to discipline our body. As obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance.

1 John. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure. Romans 6.19 tells us to present our bodies as slaves to righteousness.

2 Peter. What sort of people ought you to be? In gluttonous activities? In overcoming by your addictions? What's he say? In holiness and godliness. Matthew Henry said, the more we follow that which is good, the faster and the further we shall flee from that which is evil.

So take control and take responsibility. What that means? No excuses. Let's just get rid of the excuses.

There's times before I've helped people in this area. Even in the fitness industry, but recently different people. Let's just say, for example, they're struggling with a lot of anxiety.

I pray with somebody at the first service for this. Anxiety. And you find out that they're having a lot of caffeine.

Say, okay, well, let's start with that. Oh, no, that doesn't affect me. I go right to sleep with it.

You go right to sleep because you're passing out. Your adrenal glands have been fatigued. You're about ready to have a nervous wreck.

Of course you go right to sleep. But you're not getting the good REM, rapid eye movement, deep sleep where the body heals itself. Where disease is fought.

Where your cells are rejuvenated. And where your body, you wake up feeling good again. That's addiction and that's hurting your sleep.

Sleep is so important for the body to actually sleep. And that's when it rebuilds and repairs itself. That's when it does.

It doesn't do it throughout the day. Actually, it's breaking down right now. Even when you go to the gym and you lift weights, you think I'm building muscle.

No, you're not. You're tearing it down. It rebuilds when you sleep.

The muscle tissue has been broken down. Has been strained when you sleep. When you eat that protein.

And the protein and carbohydrates and fats and different things. But it begins to rebuild the muscle through sleep. Same thing with your mind.

Just look at how many, they're linking Alzheimer's. They're linking brain diseases often to what? Sleep, deprivation, what we're putting in our body. Aluminum, aspartame, all these chemicals.

See, there's something called a blood brain barrier. And some of these things get through that. And your fat will hold on to some of the toxic waste.

Your body doesn't know what to do with all these toxins. Monosodium glutamate, MSG. Number one ingredient in Doritos.

Not to mention the food coloring. Artificial food coloring. Not to mention corn from GMO.

Genetically modified organisms that are Roundup ready. Sprayed and the genes are spliced with Roundup type genes. Where they can spray Roundup on the corn and it won't die.

And we're consuming this. Here kids, here's some Doritos. And while we're at it, here's Gatorade.

That has more food coloring. Has a petroleum solvent in there that they use in antifreeze. My God, we've got to wake up, people.

It's silent. If you hear a pin drop. Hear a pin drop.

That's just the truth. And again, not angry. But I see so many people, little Johnny.

ADD, that was not around when I was little. We had a big paddle for that. Now of course, I'm not mocking, I'm not having fun.

Because some of these are real diagnosis that doctors make. And these are genuine. There's nothing, I got it.

But watch all these studies where they change the diet of these children. You can find them. They were like, we can't control them.

We'll get rid of the nuggets. The chicken nuggets. Get rid of the food coloring.

Get rid of the aspartame. Get rid of the partially hydrogenated oils. Get rid of the chemicals.

Get rid of the BHTs. Get rid of the MSG, monosodium glutamate. Get rid of all, get rid of them.

Get them on a healthy, natural diet. And they're like changed people. This is going to hurt, but this needs to be said.

It's because of sheer laziness that we do not do these things. If not for us, why not for our children? A three-year-old should not be walking around with a Mountain Dew. Oh, I'm not smiling on that one.

Serious one. I'm like, you're killing me. What are you doing? Oh, it's no big deal.

Caffeine. Do you know caffeine, a certain percentage will kill you? The FDA wants to outlaw the white caffeine that's sold online because kids are starting to die from five grams, I think, of it. This is serious stuff.

Take control. Take full responsibility. Many people make, well, Shane, I need it for work.

How many people, I know people have stayed on prescription drugs, have ruined marriages, have, I need it for work. I need to do, I need to be there 12 hours a day. I can do something for 12 hours a day and I don't need a drug.

See, it's an excuse. We have to get rid of the excuse mentality. It has to go.

Take control. Take responsibility for the love of God. Own it.

There are, there are, I'll be careful in case he ever listens to this, but I've got friends who will not give alcohol up because they say it's a disease. It's a disease. It's my spouse's fault.

It's a disease. Shane, don't you know that the American Association of Medical, whatever, says it's a disease? Well, the reason they did that 100 years ago was because they didn't want addicts to feel bad. So they declassified it from an addiction and sin to disease.

I like what Greg Laurie said in a sermon. I mentioned his name so you'll get mad at him, not me. If it's a disease, it's the only disease without germs or virus.

If it's a disease, it's the only disease that is self-inflicted. If it's a disease, it's the only disease that is contracted by the act of the will. If it's a disease, it's the only disease that is bottled and sold over the counter for profit.

If it's a disease, it's the only disease that will cause a father to go home and beat their children violently. If it's a disease, it's the only disease that will cause a mother to desert her children. If it's a disease, it's the only disease that will take the clothes off of their back and shoes from their feet and bread from their table.

If it's a disease, then it's the only disease that will keep one out of heaven and send that soul to hell. That, sir, is not a disease. It's an addiction called sin.

And people are saying, if I drink, am I going to hell? No, that's a struggle, not a lifestyle. But the Bible does say, not drunkards, not thieves, not adulterers, not homosexuals, not thieves, nor covetous, the whole list. See, it's not the isolated sin.

It's that the person said, I love my sin and my sin has become my lifestyle. It's who I am. I'm going to drink.

I don't care what you say. I don't care what God's word says. It's who I am.

It's my lifestyle. That person is on the broad road to destruction. Like the old ACDC song, I'm on a highway to hell.

I used to listen to that and drink. Oh my Lord, God's grace. I would sing that.

I'm on a highway and I would be drinking. My friends would pull out a bong and then we put down a line of cocaine. How in the world am I here? Singing that song, mocking God, blaspheming.

You're not beyond hope. No matter what situation, God says, I love you. I love you enough to die for you and I will wait.

I will wait for that prodigal son to come home. But do not confuse God's patience with his approval. Because there is a time when the hammer of God falls, the judgment of God falls.

That was not planned. Jesus said, deny me. I'm sorry, deny them.

Pick up your cross and follow me. Deny yourself. Pick up your cross and follow me.

Number two, you have to listen to the right voice. If I could plead with you, I'd be on this point. Listen to the right voice.

One of the biggest things we see happening with young people nowadays is they're listening to the wrong voice. Stop calling them a friend. If they're taking you back to bondage.

Stop calling them a friend. If you go back to sin, stop calling them a friend. If they take you away from God, that's not a friend.

That's an enemy. That's an enemy of the cross. That breaks my, I'd say, you've got to end that relationship, but they're friends.

So who cares? That's not a friend. You've got to make some hard decisions. The world says the heart is good.

The Bible says the heart is deceitful. The world says you just need to unlock your inner strength. Scripture says, no, willpower is not enough.

Christ must be your foundation. The world says, and I love this one. I hear it too.

I get emails about this. Don't lay a guilt trip on me. Don't lay a guilt trip on me.

But the Bible says conviction is good. Conviction is good. Guilt's not good.

Don't feel guilty and condemned. That's the work of Satan. But the Holy Spirit says conviction, conviction alert.

Wake up, listen. The world says it's not really your fault. It was your abusive father when you were three.

He set this course for you. It's not your fault. The Bible says confess your sins and repent.

The world says therapy is the answer. The Bible says Christ is the answer. Amen, amen.

But it's interesting. Those who are clapping will still run to hear some of them, but some still run to hear. The world's, tell me, tell me that again.

The world, the world's advice. The world, what does the world say? What does God's word say? Now, if you add prayer to this in worship and to the word of God, that reinforces listening to the right voice. So listen to the, here's a very easy test.

Will this build me up spiritually and increase my relationship with the Lord? Or will it pull me away? Will it pull me away from God? Number three, use overwhelming force. Pastor Skip Heisig talked about this. I've mentioned that before on a Wednesday night.

You have to use overwhelming force. This enemy is sent to kill, to steal and destroy. Stop playing games with him.

Use overwhelming force. If you've got to set up accountability software, if you have to have accountability partner, if you need to throw your phone in the trash and get old school flip phone, do it. Get rid of the friends that are pulling you down.

Get the TV out of the house. Do whatever it takes. Out of sight, out of mind.

People say, that's too extreme. And I say, no, that's biblical Christianity. To remove an eye if it's causing me to sin seems a little extreme.

Jesus, we's too extreme. No, we wasn't. Because the opposite of extreme is lazy.

I'm not gonna worry about it. And we leave the door open. You leave Satan a foothold.

We've talked about that before. You ever put your foot in front of the door? My little five-year-old throws a tenter tamper and runs. I don't know.

Nope, my foot's right there. You're not slamming this door. You give the enemy a foothold.

And I just open up. Whatever it takes to get out of your house, get rid of your friends that are pulling you down, get accountability. I'm gonna use overwhelming force.

Devil, I might even fast. Uh-oh. I'm gonna turn off the media and get into God's Word.

See, overwhelming force. You have to starve the fuel source. And isn't that true? Everybody loves now Red Bull sponsoring extreme snowboarding, extreme mountain biking, extreme kayaking, extreme whatever, extreme makeovers.

Then why can't we have an extreme and intense passion for God? Why not? Why do they mock Christians and say, He's too extreme. He's too radical. He's too hardcore.

No, that's biblical Christianity. I read about people like John the Baptist said, I'm so extreme. I'm gonna eat wild locusts and honey.

I'm gonna preach repentance. I'm gonna preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. I'm gonna call out sinners.

And I'm gonna call out saints who think they are, but they're modern day Pharisees. I'm gonna be extreme wearing the clothing of the day that was rugged. The prophets of the old, they were rugged.

They were extreme. They listened to no man but God. That's it.

You have to be extreme. That should be a sermon title. You have to be extreme.

Wake up. I've told you this before, but it seems to fit. The reason most people don't come back to this church is what I just said.

Half hour worship, fasting. God is the priority. Where's my life gonna go? I've got Cinemark.

I've got friends. I've got to be in Santa Monica. I've got to go hit Vegas.

I've got to do all these things. I've got a week's stay down in San Diego on that island. What's that called? By the Navy SEAL training.

Yeah, I've got, I mean, he's ruining my, this guy's too extreme. Because you want to enjoy the pleasures of Christ, but not die to self. That's not possible.

Jesus said, pick up your cross. Fulfill the flesh and then follow me. Nope.

What? Deny the flesh. Deny the flesh. And on that note, fasting strengthens the spirit and quenches the flesh.

That's why we're going on a fast for those who are interested. Fasting literally starves the flesh. You get to the source.

The source of all sin is the flesh. And when you begin to starve the flesh through fasting, all other sins from things of bondage of nicotine, of caffeine, of sugar, of alcohol, all these things are silenced. Now, get ready though for hell.

It's called withdrawals. And most people don't fast because of these withdrawals. And I hear excuses on this too.

I heard it this week. Fasting is not biblical. What? That just means you don't want to fast.

Okay, let's just come out and say it. Just say, just repeat after me. I don't want to fast.

Don't make a ridiculous, idiotic statement that it's not biblical. It's biblical from Ezra to Nehemiah to Esther to the prophets to a guy named Jesus to Peter to fasting, starving the flesh and being filled with the spirit of God. The truth, it's hard before the reward comes.

There is pain before the blessing and there are withdrawals before there is freedom. I'm going to just sum up these last two real quick. You have to avoid compromise.

Avoid compromise. Jenson Franklin wrote about this in his book on fasting, *The Power of the Made-Up Mind*. I've learned over the years that this is crucial.

The power of the made-up mind. Here's how this works. I'm going to fast.

Come hell or high water. I'm going to fast. And then I start compromising because chocolate chip cookies sound good about eight hours from now.

Well, one doesn't. It's a little thing. 200 calories.

My glycogen storage are already down in my liver and my muscle because I've been fasting. So I can just, this won't really hurt anything. Compromise.

Compromise. Most people that go back into addiction, whatever that addiction is, you name it, it's because they thought to themselves, ah, it's been a year. It's been four, it's been five years.

I can celebrate. I can have one now. If something ever brought you down before, it's going to bring you down again.

Okay, just know it. And the next time it might not be as gracious. It might bring seven demons and find that house swept out.

And now the last state of that man is worse than the first state. Be careful when playing with addiction because whatever brought you down will bring you down again. And most people go back into that.

Just this week, I've tried to, last week I tried to get somebody into a recovery home. They're all full, they're all full. Majority of them are back in because why? I can have, I can have one.

I can just have one to relax. I can go back to that. Excuses.

I remember Miley Cyrus. I do. 2017 came out and said, I am never touching marijuana again.

People were excited. Oh, what a great role model she's going to be. Now I read a recent interview and she said, well, just every now and then I'll smoke some.

So you can't go back. You can't, no compromise. The power of the made up mind.

There's no compromise. Russell Moore wrote, the demonic powers not only give us what we crave, but they will assist us in covering up for a while. That's precisely the irony.

Often you are fueled on from one temptation to the other because you haven't been caught. This gives you an illusion of a cocoon protecting you from justice. The powers though, don't want you caught yet.

Not this early in the march to the slaughterhouse. They don't have a mere 70 or 80 years to live. They're ancient and patient, quite willing to wait until your downfall will bring with it the most catastrophic consequences for you, for your family, for the kingdom of God and the image of Christ that you carry.

So they'll help you cover it up. Then they'll expose you mercifully, mercifully, mercilessly. Thank you, a lot of S's in there.

But isn't that what the enemy does? He'll help you cover it up, cover it up until that opportune time. And the bottom line is, when we plan on sinning, we usually do. Compromise is often the first step back into bondage.

To compromise. That's why I love 2 Corinthians. Casting down arguments and every hyphen that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

You know what that word means? Casting down, it means throw down. Remember that, those words? 25 years and 30 years ago, I remember that word, let's throw down. You upset, let's throw down outside.

It's this throwing down, this thought comes in, you cast down, you throw down every thought that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. Go back to that addiction, no, not today. Today we fight.

See, at some point, I'm gonna name a sermon, I think next week, this title, Today We Fight. You have to come to a point in your life, say, no, no, no, today we fight. We're fighting for my family, we're fighting for my marriage, we're fighting for our health.

Today we fight, devil, devil, you should've killed me 25 years ago, but now I'm ticked off, and now I'm coming at your kingdom. Now you're going to be on the defense. Now I'm chasing you.

Now the armies of hell are not going to be able to prevail because heaven is behind your back. You are proceeding. Today we fight.

What about if you got up with that attitude? Today we fight, not today we cave in. That's the mentality, today we cave in. Today we cave in.

Oh, woe is me. Today the enemy's got me, and we just walk around defeated. Sometimes you have to just, okay.

Today we fight. Today we fight, and the devil hates when you make that statement, and when you honor that commitment. I was going to talk about this a little bit, but I just need to say this.

Continue to fight regardless of immediate results. Continue, continue to fight regardless of immediate results. Because sometimes you won't see the breakthrough.

So this isn't working. My family's getting worse, not better. And we go right back into it.

We have to continue the fight regardless of the results that you see right now. And always remember to preach the gospel of grace to yourself. Preach the gospel of grace to yourself.

What does that mean? It means don't leave here defeated. Don't go, oh, I can never measure up. That guy is too extreme.

This is crazy. I don't know what I signed up for. Oh, Lord, this is a bunch of rules.

This is legalism. No, it's not. It's biblical Christianity, and you preach the gospel of grace to yourself.

The Lord, I need your grace. I need to get back up. I need to fight.

I need your help. And preach the gospel of grace to yourself that God is good. He holds you.

I mean, the last time I checked the Bible, it said that God broke the arms of the enemy. He trains my hands for war. He has dethroned Satan.

He has overcome his kingdom. He has annihilated the works of darkness. It even says that when Jesus was crucified on the cross, he made a spectacle, the spectacle of the demonic powers.

He made fun of. Who is this guy, Satan? A spectacle. So it's interesting.

I can't quite get my head around it, but as Christians, we walk in victory. Who the son sets free is free indeed. You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you.

So I'm walking in victory. Then why the heck is it difficult? What's going on? Because the enemy will entice. I love that song.

We sing it, but it comes on in the morning sometimes. I belong to you. Iron bell, right? I think it's iron bell.

I belong to you. I belong to you. You pulled me out of the darkness.

The enemy can't touch me. The enemy can't do anything to me. He can't.

Do you know that? The enemy cannot pick you up, put yourself in the car and drive you to the liquor store. He cannot go take your hand and put it on the wrong website. He can't do anything.

He just entices. That's why you need self-control in an addicted world. Self-control through the spirit and then relying completely on God.

So I don't want you to be left here. Oh, we got to do this. Got to do this.

Got to do this. No, you rely completely upon God. But then God says, do this and I will do that.

I wish it was the other way. I wish God would say, I'll reveal myself to you and then you can seek me. He says, seek me, then you'll find me.

I'll take away the temptation. Don't even worry about it. No, he says, no temptation is overtaking you, but what is common to man, but God who is faithful will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able to bear.

Bear. I got to, I have to bear something. Come on, Jesus.

I have to fight the good fight of faith. Think about that. This is not passive Christianity.

I want to get that deep into your spirits. Paul even said, the weapons of our warfare, right, are not carnal. Put on the whole cotton, you know, cotton armor and just put on these cozy pajamas.

That's what we want. Cozy pajamas and a fire and movies on Netflix. I shouldn't be watching.

No, he says, put on the whole armor of God. Why? That you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, the trickery of the devil, the deceit of the devil. You put on the whole armor of God.

That is an action where the breastplate of righteousness, Christ, the right standing with Christ and holiness and godliness, the breastplate of holiness, the belt of truth, the sword of what the spirit, the word of God, and you're piercing the helmet of salvation, the feet running quickly to do the will of God, bringing the gospel of peace. This is warfare. And we have to, today we fight.

Today we fight. Hear me through everything I just talked about. Will not even matter if you're already in darkness and you don't know Christ.

This is not, this is applicable to a believer to fight. But if you're already in darkness and you don't know Jesus Christ, repent today, repent and have the light of truth come into your soul. I don't know if you're confused with gender identity.

I don't know if you're confused with life and suicide, depression. There is no hope without the son. There is no hope without the son.

See, everything makes sense in light of redemption, in light of the cross, in light of the son coming and bringing light to this world. That is the hope, the hope of glory. So I want to encourage you, if you don't know who Jesus is, you've never repented and believed.

I'm not saying if you know about him. I'm saying, do you know him? Do you know him? If I say, if you die today, you stand before Christ, you'd actually fall on your knees and begin to worship and cry out. Will he say, well done, thou good and faithful servant.

You haven't been perfect. You've created a mess sometimes, but you love me and I love you and I know you. I die for you, well done, well done.

Get up and enter into the joy of the Lord. Or do you hear, depart from me, I don't know you. Every time I read that verse, I can't imagine because I don't think it's Jesus is angry and I don't know you, get out of here.

I can almost picture just this look of, I don't know what the right word is, but he's saying, I don't know you. Now, of course he knows who they are. He knows everything, but he's saying, I don't have a relationship with you.

You've never embraced me. You never repented of your sin. And asked me to be Lord of your life and let me save you through the redemptive work on the cross.

I don't know you. Listen, this isn't a game. This is life and death.

The sermons in the Bible always had a sense of urgency. Today, today is the day of salvation. Today is the day when you hear my voice, hearken not your heart, harden not your heart.

Today is the day to turn. Today is the day to embrace the God of salvation. Because I know as God is my witness, I know I may never speak to some of you again to this room.

I know on Facebook live, we have over 2000 people watching both services. You think they're going to tune in again next week and next week and next week. Sometimes this might be the only voice they hear, the only voice calling them back before they find themselves six feet under, buried and dead because of their addiction.

Addiction will never answer the fulfillment of your heart. Only Christ does that. And it echoes, the voice of truth goes out as a sharp two-edged sword.

It pierces, it cuts, it convicts to hear you need Christ. You need a savior. You need redemption.

There is only hope in the blood of Jesus Christ. That's the only hope. That's the only hope.

That's why I love some of these guys on the radio and these mega church pastors bless their heart, but they're never pointing people to the cross. They want to be motivational, but not convicting. They want to tickle the ear, but not challenge the heart.

They don't want to offend, yet they're offending Christ. Can you imagine Christ saying, listen, I died for them. You better tell them about me.

You better tell them about the shed blood. You better tell them about redemption. You better tell them about the path to Golgotha and dying to self and that they need a savior.

You better tell them about the judgment that is coming. How dare you silence the voice of truth? How dare you pastor or preacher or teacher who does not preach the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. That's why we are here.

That's why the pulpit is here. That's why the voice of truth is here to proclaim the light into the darkness and dying world.

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