

Fasting—The Physical Affects the Spiritual

Through fasting, the body becomes a servant instead of a master. When Jesus directs us to do something, the outcome is always beneficial, both spiritually and physically. He said, “when you fast” (Matt. 6:16). Scripture doesn’t say, “When you sin and if you fast,” but rather, “If you sin and when you fast.” The obvious goal and benefit of fasting is spiritual, but the physical benefits as well. Can you pray and seek God better with a headache, tight pants and a sluggish, lethargic body strung out on your favorite addictive substance? Of course not. But keep in mind that fasting is not about self-reliance but reliance on God. However, when the flesh is restrained, anxiety, fear, unbelief, doubt, lust, jealousy, bitterness and anger are also minimized.

What you put in your mouth (body) and the mind (soul) affects the spirit—and when you feed the spirit, it affects the body and the soul. I’m often asked to pray for panic attacks, angry outbursts and anxiety. That can be done, and God honors prayer, but are we opening the door by not halting highly addictive caffeine, sugar, opioid or nicotine habits? Are we renewing our mind by meditating on the Word and spending time in prayer? The physical affects the spiritual, and vice versa. We also know that many emotions such as anger, bitterness and jealousy are toxic to the body.

Much of the healing I have witnessed over the years was the result of good, or renewed, stewardship of the body. Health also involves healthy emotions. Having a forgiving, loving, joy-filled heart does wonders for the body. Serotonin, for example, is increased when the heart is right. This crucial chemical impacts our mood at a very deep level, and contributes to an overall state of well-being. Serotonin is also affected by diet and exercise. But again, I’m not

suggesting that health replace God and prayer, but that it complement it, that we steward the gift of health. No one is perfect, but we are called to discipline our bodies and use wisdom. God does heal miraculously, even in our ignorance, but that shouldn't cause us to neglect our health.

With more than 12 million U.S. children being obese and millions more being malnourished, the need to address this topic has never been greater—caffeine, soft drinks and junk food are fueling the disease epidemic. We pray for God to heal rather than for help with self-discipline to change harmful habits. What's wrong with this picture? "There are multitudes of diseases which have their origin in fullness, and might have their end in fasting" (James Morrison).

We hear a great deal about free radicals and antioxidants these days. In short, if an atom is not complete, it may pull resources from other atoms. These atoms are known as free radicals. They are dangerous because they steal electrons from DNA, proteins and fats. God-given food and fasting both attack free-radicals, but toxic food fuels them.

The myth that fasting is bad for you is unfounded and has been disproved numerous times. Be careful when getting advice from those who profit from the advice, or from those who know little about how the body heals itself. I vividly recall the story of a man who had colon surgery and may not have needed it had his diet been changed. The hospital fed him a greasy Sloppy Joe after he awoke. A lack of wisdom has been our downfall.

Additionally, it's been estimated that nearly 75 percent of U.S. clinical trials in medicine are paid for by private companies who benefit. For example, "Processed sugar is good for you—the more the better," paid for by sugar manufacturers. Or "Take this drug to feel better," never mind the fact that side-effects include internal bleeding, seizures and panic attacks. Or "Eat this kids cereal," but ignore the harmful

GMOs, food coloring, additives, preservatives and toxins. America, wake up! You are what you eat. Fasting doesn't kill us; overconsumption does. No one profits from fasting except the faster.

Dr. Joel Fuhrman noted, "The body's wondrous ability to self-digest and destroy needless tissue such as fat, tumors, blood vessel plaque and other nonessential and diseased tissues, while conserving essential tissues, gives the fast the ability to restore ... youth to the system." Most research on cancer and fasting supports the healing process as well. For example, chemotherapy's goal is to stop or slow the growth of cancer cells, but it's been said that the body has a natural, God-given way to do this without harming the healthy cells—fasting. Fasting is not a cure-all; it simply provides an environment for healing.

Disease is often a problem of toxicity created by what we consume, ingest, or breathe—fasting is the detox solution. Granted, spiritual health and wholeness is the goal when fasting, but the physical benefits are worthwhile. Dr. J.H. Tilden said, "After 55 years of sojourning in the wilderness of medical therapeutics, I am forced to declare ... that fasting is the only reliable, specific, therapeutic eliminant known to man."

Dr. Yuri Nikolayave, a psychiatrist at the University of Moscow, treated schizophrenics with water fasts for 25 to 30 days. This was followed by eating healthy foods for 30 days. Seventy percent of his patients remained free from symptoms for the duration of the six-year study. The health benefits of fasting are incredible.

Did you know that Type 2 diabetes is nearly eliminated with proper diet when you stop fueling the disease? It doesn't have to be a progressive disease—there is hope if you starve the fuel source and incorporate fasting. The reason you may find it nearly impossible to fast is because you may be withdrawing

from poisons and addictive substances. Begin by eliminating junk food and educate yourself by reading the recommended resources. Seek medical support and consultation if need be, but keep in mind that most are not supportive of fasting simply because they are trained to ease the pain rather than eliminate the problem.

Drugs often don't cure the underlying problem, and they are toxic. Granted, there may be a time for certain ones, but they should be the last resort, not the first. Antibiotics, for example, wipe out harmful bacteria as well as good bacteria, and some antibiotics can be harmful. For example, check out the side effects on WEBMD for Ciprofloxacin (Cipro). There are even black-box warnings. Not only is it prescribed, it's over prescribed and given to kids and the elderly. If the underlying problem (poor health) isn't dealt with, illness will return with vengeance. This is why many are chronically sick—they are always medicating and never healing.

When I write about medicating, the question often arises about vaccines. Do your own research. Read what the . says about results as well as the toxicity levels of vaccines. Some of the ingredients such as aluminum, mercury and formaldehyde are neurotoxins that harm the brain, not to mention other toxic ingredients. Those who say we shouldn't worry about ingredients because there is also formaldehyde in an apple, truly have not done their homework. Is it wise to inject a virus directly into the bloodstream? Is vaccination truly about helping people or generating income? You be the judge. For those desiring more information, read pro-vaccine literature and books showing the other side, then come to your own conclusion. One thing is certain, children are receiving way too many shots. If the immune system is already taxed because of poor health and bad eating habits (e.g., GMOs, food coloring, additives and chemicals), injecting harmful bacteria into the system could escalate things.

And fasting also lowers blood pressure and sugar levels. If

you're taking medication for either, you may find yourself over-medicating because the fast is working in conjunction with the medication, albeit naturally. Medicine often takes the credit when it was God's design that did the healing.

Again, fasting does not heal the body, it gives the body the optimal environment for healing. This is a process that God created. Additionally, God-given food promotes life; man-created food does not. A recent example of this involved my youngest daughter. She was not breathing well at night. The physician said that her tonsils and adenoids were inflamed, and that they need to be removed soon. We completely changed her diet by removing all sugar (except light fruit and minimal dark honey). We focused on life-giving food and a daily nap. She was breathing well within a week; an ear infection that kept lingering was gone as well. The right nutrition, along with deep sleep, creates a powerful environment for healing. Are you receiving both?

I have friends who are doctors, and I deeply respect them, they are well trained in easing symptoms. But most in the health care industry are not educated in fixing the cause. Many men, for example, are told to take Androgel because of low testosterone levels, but often, they can increase testosterone by changing their lifestyle (e.g., avoiding alcohol, exercising, eating God-given healthy food, lowering stress and so on.). I knew a man who's testosterone level went from 225 to 530 within eight months by changing his lifestyle. The side effects of testosterone therapy should be motivation enough to make changes.

A few years ago, a doctor almost sent me home with two different high blood pressure medications. Before leaving, I asked him if he used the large blood pressure cuff for men. He didn't. When he did, the blood pressure reading came in normal. I can list many more examples such as a sign at a cardiologist's office that said in big letters right above the coffee pot: DON'T CONSUME BEFORE A STRESS TEST. Let's wake up!

Our health is on the line.

We need more physicians who understand how the body works and can help the patient from the inside out. They need us and we need them. But I cringe at how many Type 2 diabetes patients are sent home with more medication, or how many overweight individuals leave with high blood pressure medication instead of real solutions that work. But please don't misunderstand, I'm not suggesting that we bypass prayer or disregard the advice of physicians, or that we don't need medication. We must use wisdom. But again, I have seen God heal primarily through fixing the toxic state of the body. It reminds me of the person who prayed, "Lord, please heal my heart disease" while driving to McDonald's.

Fasting Forum (FULL 2 Hour Program) – Pastor Shane Idleman from Westside Christian Fellowship on Vimeo.