

Spirit-Filled Pastor: Change Your Life Before It Changes You

We are at a crossroads: Obesity is an epidemic, plaguing the young as well as the old, reaching alarming levels in children. Diabetes is affecting millions, and cancer and heart disease are the number-one killers in America.

Are there answers? Yes; but we must speak the truth in love.

Change Your Life Before It Changes You

Although I believed that I was healthy and fit, my 6-foot-2-inch frame recently skyrocketed to over 230 pounds (my ideal weight is 170-190). My blood pressure and cholesterol levels were high, and my health was rapidly deteriorating. I was shocked! I knew that if I didn't change my lifestyle, my lifestyle would change me.

Like most Americans, I was killing myself to live – living in a fast-paced and stressful environment that can lead to unhealthy lifestyle choices. If you need additional help, please see my resources at the bottom of this article.

Doing the Same Thing Expecting Different Results

One definition of insanity is doing the same thing while expecting different results. Not only can the health care system not sustain it but also our quality of life is on the line.

Instead of grandparents playing with their grandkids, many of them are barely able to get around. Instead of parents being productive, we are tired and worn out, and our families pay the price. Instead of kids enjoying life, they are battling many health-related illnesses. We cannot continue down this

path.

Thank God for physicians standing in the gap, especially during COVID! But we also need more physicians who understand how the body works and who can help their patients from the inside out by treating the cause, not just the symptom.

For instance, I cringe at the number of Type 2 diabetes patients who are sent home with even more medication, or the countless overweight individuals who leave their doctors' offices with high blood pressure drugs instead of real solutions that work.

They are told that these are progressive diseases and there isn't much that can be done. In most cases, disease is only *progressive* if we continue down the wrong path – the unhealthy path.

Please don't misunderstand – I'm not suggesting that we don't need medication from time to time. But shouldn't that be the last resort rather than the first?

Be Diligent With Your Due Diligence

It's been estimated that nearly 75% of U.S. clinical trials in medicine are paid for by private companies that benefit. For example, "Take this drug to feel better," never mind the fact that side effects include internal bleeding, seizures, suicidal thoughts and panic attacks. We must be diligent and use wisdom.

A few years ago, a local doctor wanted to send me home with two different high blood pressure medications. Before leaving, I asked if he had used the large cuff when he took my pressure. He hadn't. When he did, the blood pressure reading was normal.

Another example involved my young daughter, who was not breathing well at night. The physician said that her tonsils

and adenoids were inflamed and needed to be removed ASAP. Knowing that tonsils and adenoids help with our immunity, we tried a different route first: We completely changed her diet by removing all sugar (except light fruit). We focused on life-giving food and a daily nap.

Within a week she was breathing well, and a lingering ear infection healed as well. A quick diet change often results in the body healing itself. Why do we rarely talk about this?

The right nutrition, along with deep sleep, creates a powerful environment for healing. Are you receiving both?

A Few Questions for Consideration

Why are statin drugs always the “go-to” for those with elevated cholesterol levels instead of helping people lower their cholesterol levels naturally?

Why is cholesterol always the problem when we know that both LDL and HDL play major roles in health and vitality – from communicating with cells and regulating hormones?

Could the buildup of cholesterol in the arteries be caused by LDLs running to the rescue to repair inflammation caused by poor dietary choices?

Why is there little mention of treating what *causes* chronic inflammation? For more, read “Evaluating the Association Between Low-Density Lipoprotein Cholesterol Reduction and Relative and Absolute Effects of Statin Treatment” from JAMA Internal Medicine.

Why is blood pressure medication always recommended instead of also addressing the root cause?

Why is chemotherapy usually recommended without looking at diet and lifestyle choices?

If you’re ready to take back your health, it’s not as

difficult as it appears. The key is to focus on direction rather than perfection and to get back up when you fall.

To help you get started, I've listed five tips below. These five areas made an incredible difference in my life, including getting my weight down to a healthy level. (Tip 3 was key because it put everything else in order.)

As always, make sure to consult your physician before starting any nutritional program, including fasting.

My Top 5 Health Tips

Many researchers are discovering the *huge* connection between cellular health and productive longevity, and more specifically, healthy mitochondria, the powerhouse of the cell.

Here are my top five ways to restore and rejuvenate our cells, and thus the entire body:

1. **Deep Sleep:** Deep sleep is when healing and restoration take place. How can we expect to be healthy if we miss this important area? Sadly, very few people experience deep sleep because they are addicted to alcohol, sugar and caffeine, which deeply affects REM.

Some argue, "But I fall right to sleep; these things don't affect me." But that's not deep, healing sleep; it's adrenal fatigue and exhaustion. The quality of sleep is deeply affected.

We then repeat the process of self-medicating the following day to balance out sleep deprivation. It's a never-ending cycle that we must break if we are to experience true sleep and rest.

Late-night eating and social media stimuli also prevent deep sleep. Fix this issue and you'll be well on your way to feeling better. Productivity and energy will both increase

substantially.

- 2. Life-Giving Food:** I often wonder how many diseases could be prevented and/or reversed by eating better and being more active. Dead, processed food from a factory does little to sustain life. We were designed to eat living food that contains the building blocks of life. Vitamins, minerals and phytochemicals are deposited into the body to renew, restore and replenish.

The best diet is actually very simple: choose God-given food in *moderation* rather than man-made, processed refined food.

- 3. Feast on Fasting:** Fasting doesn't kill us; overconsumption does. Disease is often a problem of toxicity created by what we consume, ingest or breathe – and fasting can be the detox solution.

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. 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" comes through fasting.

Fasting is not a panacea; it simply provides an environment for healing. Since an enormous amount of energy is used to digest food, the energy is instead diverted to healing when we fast.

Today some top physicians, including Valter Longo (USC), Peter Attia, Alan Goldhamer and countless others, attest to the life-changing power of fasting. Although there are some people who shouldn't fast – from pregnant and nursing moms to those struggling with eating disorders – an overwhelming number of people would benefit from it.

Fasting is hard because we're withdrawing from things such as caffeine, sugar, alcohol and processed foods. To avoid this, wean off of these things and begin with short fasts (more below).

4. **Activate More Activity:** Our bodies were not designed to sit for long periods of time. In 2006, Harvard Medical School put forth the following statement: "Exercise helps prevent atherosclerosis." And it also helps by "improving other atherosclerotic risk factors such as high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, and stress."

Inactivity often leads to weight gain and sluggish blood flow. Every pound of fat requires a few extra miles of blood vessels. That means more work for the body, especially the heart. *Lose the excess and usher in better health.*

5. **Stabilize Stress:** Some stress is needed because it prompts the body to respond to an injury or an illness by triggering an immune response. But chronic stress, over time, can be very destructive. *Imagine an army fighting a battle but never resting. That's chronic stress.*

For one, chronic stress puts the muscles in a constant state of tension, which leads to back and neck pain. This is why it's important to avoid stimulants – they keep the body in a constant state of stress (fight or flight).

Chronic stress is also hard on the cardiovascular system and can lead to elevated blood pressure, shortness of breath and the release of stress hormones. Over time, this toxic state wreaks havoc on the immune system.

So, what's the best way to deal with chronic stress? In short, the four points above are the best way to ward off chronic stress.

First and Foremost

The key to a productive, well-balanced life is spiritual health. To deal with disease, discouragement and stress without a relationship with God is futile. *Productive longevity* is a good goal, but without spiritual health, a healthy body has little significance.

My hope is that readers don't become obsessed only with physical fitness because real health has God at the center. Jeremiah 29:13 is a favorite verse of mine: "You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart" (ESV).

Don't stay caught in the endless cycle of killing the symptom rather than addressing the cause. It all begins with a choice to surrender to the one true and living God and experience the peace that surpasses all understanding. {eo}

Shane Idleman is the founder and lead pastor of Westside Christian Fellowship in Lancaster, California, and now in Leona Valley, California. He also began the Westside Christian Radio Network – – in 2019. His sermons, books, articles and radio program have sparked change in the lives of many people.

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.