



**FAST FOCUS, FRIDAY, AUGUST 4, 2017
FASTING INSTRUCTIONS**

WE WILL FAST from 6pm FRIDAY night until 6:00 am SATURDAY morning

PLEASE DEVOTE THIS TIME TO READING YOUR BIBLE AND PRAYER AS TIME PERMITS

We will observe the fast by abstaining from all foods except WATER and JUICE

Please consult your physician if you are insulin dependent, an expectant or nursing mother or if you have a pre-existing medical condition. While fasting is a spiritually fulfilling exercise, God would not command a physical exercise that would harm His people physically or emotionally.

**Getting Through The Hard Times
Proverbs 3:5-6**

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths. – Proverbs 3:5-6 (KJV)

The Bible clearly states that we will have hard times. John 16:33 tells us that “in this world we will have trouble”. Isaiah 43:2-3 tells us that we will “pass through rivers and walk through fire”. Job 14:1 tells us that “our lives are but a few days and those days are full of trouble”. It is safe to say that in hard times are unavoidable.

An example of hard times is when someone loses a job and the income they depended on to pay bills and feed their family is gone. Another example of hard times is when s spouse walks out on

his or her spouse and leaves the person heartbroken and uncertain about their future. An example of hard times is when we experience the death of a loved one and we have to work through our grief and pain. An example of hard times is when there is too much month and not enough paycheck. Another example of hard times is when we get an unexpected diagnosis that changes the course of our lives. Lastly, an example of hard times is when our children are wayward and stepping out of the will of God. These are examples of hard times that many of us have been through, are going through or will go through.

The good news of going through hard times is that God has given us words of wisdom on how to come out of our difficult situations! God inspired people to create a written word to help us during difficult times. King Solomon was known as the wisest king that ever lived and many of the proverbs in the Bible were attributed to him. A proverb, by definition, is a general truth or piece of advice. It is believed that King Solomon wrote over 3,000 proverbs and about a fourth of them were recorded in the Bible.

In Proverbs 3:5-6, the writer tells us three things we can do to get through hard times. The first thing the writer tells us to do is to “trust in the Lord with all thine heart”. It doesn’t matter what our situation looks like, how big it is or how long we’ve been in a particular situation, we can never go wrong by trusting God. When we trust God, we show God that our faith is real. God’s Word gives us many promises and we have to believe what God is saying is true.

The second thing the writer tells us to do in Proverbs 3:5-6 is to “lean not to thine own understanding. We have to get out of our own heads! The Word of God tells us in Isaiah 26:3 that “thou will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee”. The enemy will try to control our minds. The enemy will have us thinking things that aren’t real or true. The enemy will have us focusing on things that we shouldn’t focus on and will set up shop in our minds to discourage, dissuade and divert us. The Word of God says in Isaiah 55:8, “for my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways”. During hard times, we have to focus on God Word, ways and wisdom and lean not to our own understanding.

The third thing the writer instructs us to do in Proverbs 3:5-6 is to “acknowledge God in all our ways”. This passage of scripture does not only tell us to recognize God, but to live like God, act like God, think like God and submit to God in EVERY area of our lives. Acknowledging God in every area of our lives will keep us in the center of God’s will and give us a deeper understanding of how to handle life in general and difficult situations.

This pericope of scripture tells us that if we trust in the Lord with all our hearts, lean not to our own understanding and acknowledge God in all our ways, that God will direct our paths! This is good news for the person who is going through hard times. God will never leave us nor forsake us, and God certainly will not lead us down the wrong path! In acknowledging God we clearly show God that we trust God and we are willing to put God’s will and ways above our own.

Action Steps:

1. Meditate daily on the goodness of God and the Word of God daily.

2. Reflect on hard times that God has brought you through in the past.
3. Continue to trust in the Lord, lean not to your own thoughts and ways, and acknowledge God in all areas of your life so that God will direct your path.

Prayer

Thank you God for being our Heavenly Parent! Thank you for Your written scriptures and stories that remind us that You are always present and available. Thank you for Your willingness to direct our paths daily. Thank you for hearing us and delivering us when we call You during our times of trouble. Heavenly Parent, we know that the hard times are coming, but thank you for giving us a word to help us prepare for those times and to get through them. It is because of you that our tests will become testimonies! It is in the mighty and matchless name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

Scriptures

Proverbs 3:5-6, Psalm 37:5, Psalm 25:4, Numbers 14:24, Isaiah 45:13, Isaiah 26:3

Submitted by Pastor Chuck Lester