



**FAST FOCUS, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2017
FASTING INSTRUCTIONS**

*****WE WILL FAST FROM DURING OUR LUNCH HOUR!**

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

**WE WILL OBSERVE THE FAST BY GIVING UP ONE MEAL (LUNCH)
AND PRAYING FOR OUR “REVIVE US AGAIN” FALL REVIVAL!**

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.

Closer Than You Think

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”

Psalm 46:1 New International Version

When placing your car in reverse or while attempting to change lanes in traffic, out of habit you will glance into your side mirror. You are given a warning that is etched in the right side mirror on the exterior, the outside, of the car. It reads, “**Objects in the mirror are closer than they appear.**” The purpose of the warning is to help the driver see areas behind the vehicle, areas that are outside the driver's peripheral vision (the 'blind spots').

The statement, permanently affixed to the mirror on the passenger side, is a constant reminder to be aware of the closeness of objects in your immediate surroundings. It helps us to prevent collisions when we are moving in reverse or making an effort to change lanes in our navigation through traffic.

The statement written on the mirror is provided to the driver by the automobile manufacturer as a warning. However, as Saints of God, we could apply this written statement to our daily living.

In the written word of God, particularly in the book of Psalms there are writings that are didactic (dual in nature). Applying the statement on the mirror to our lives as Christians, it can also have a two-fold meaning.

On one hand, it can be seen as a warning to teach us how to navigate our lives. On the other hand, it can give us comfort and confidence as we face life situations.

As a warning, it is a constant reminder for the children of God always to be cognizant of the dangers and temptations that await us if we do not practice caution in our living. In I Peter 5:8, we are warned, "Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." There is always something threatening to try to harm us, to take our focus off God and ultimately disrupt our destiny.

On the other side, the statement offers the children of God consolation in every situation that we may face. We are assured of the closeness of God. We can be confident of the presence of God in our immediate surroundings.

This passage in Psalm 46:1 is a statement of assurance of God's presence. Not only is God always present but the Spirit of God is closer than we can imagine. The psalmist tells the readers not to be in fear even in the worst-case scenario of events. The listing of such events and calamities could pose a threat to one's very existence. However, after a description of these life-threatening events, we are again comforted in the verses that follow showing us God is always there. God is a present help and God is in the midst of us.

An all-wise omniscient God, who knows everything, repeatedly gives us comfort through the Holy Scriptures. For every event that may cause us concern, God gives an antidote for fear. The word of God counteracts anything or any situation that could potentially cause us to be alarmed. Like a good parent, God reminds His children, "I am always near."

As a child, did you ever fear the imagined monster hidden under the bed or in the closet? Even as adults, we still fear the hidden and the unknown. Again, like a good parent, God asks the question then gives the answer for our concerns about His presence in Jeremiah 23:23-24 (KJV). God speaks saying, "Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord."

In all that may or may not happen to us, just as God reminded Joshua not to fear, so are we reminded not to fear. "Fear not" is not simply a suggestion by God, but it is a command. In

Joshua 1:9, God speaks, “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” In all his perfection, God is the exemplary custodial parent who will never be guilty of Child Neglect or leaving his children alone. We are always on his mind and He is always in our presence. In Psalm 139:7-10, the psalmist makes it plain there is no place we can go that God is not present.

We are never left alone. No matter where we may go, we are always within God’s reach. God's presence is never accidental or coincidental. Just as God is intentional in keeping his eyes on us, we are to be intentional in keeping our eyes on God.

Personal Reflection

1. Recall the most difficult moments that have caused you concern or to fear.
2. Make a mental note of how in each situation you felt the power and the presence God.
3. List the many occurrences, which others may view as insignificant or coincidental, that daily reminds you of God's presence and availability to you.

Finally, share your reflections with someone who needs encouragement regarding God's peace, God’s presence, and God’s protection. We serve a big God. For those who like acronyms, we serve a **PHITT God**. (pronounced fit, one who is able to function efficiently and effectively).

PHITT – Present Help In Time of Trouble.

Prayer

Dear God, We give thanks to you on this and every day for being our Heavenly Parent, a parent whose love for us is immeasurable. We thank you for the evidence of your peace and your protection of us on each day. We thank you for your written reminders in scripture and the daily reminders that you are present with us. We ask that you help us to see your hand at work on each day as you lead and guide us to do the things that are pleasing to you. Thank you that your ear is always attuned to us to answer our prayers in ways that you know are best for us. Help us to keep our focus on you to be attentive to even your most gentle nudges to keep us on the right path.

Allow our lives to be a testimony as we “re-present” you. It is in the mighty and matchless Name of Jesus that we pray, Amen.

Reference scriptures: Psalm 46:1-7, Joshua 1:9, Isaiah 43:2, Jeremiah 23:23-24, Psalm 139:7-10, Psalm 141:3, 1 Peter 5:8, Matthew 28:20, Deuteronomy 31:8, Psalm 23:4, Hebrews 13:6

Submitted by Pastor Nadolyn Woody-Dunigan