



**FAST FOCUS, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2017
FASTING INSTRUCTIONS**

WE WILL FAST from 6:00pm Thursday evening until 6:00am Friday 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, JUICE, FRUITS and VEGETABLES.

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

**“O Give Thanks”
Psalm 136**

In Psalm 136 (KJV), the phrase, “O give thanks unto the Lord,” is repeated four times: in verses 1-3 and again at the end in verse 26. The verses in between list some of the mighty deeds of God as creator, provider, and protector.

In just a few weeks, many people will gather in homes and around tables to celebrate Thanksgiving. At many gatherings, there will be lots of delicious food, fellowship, fun, and football. Whether in homes or other venues where people gather in community for Thanksgiving dinner and fellowship, one tradition is to go around and have people say what they are thankful for. Whatever we give thanks for - whether tangible or intangible, visible or invisible – we realize EVERYTHING is a blessing from God, whose love endures forever.

I like the way this Psalm reads in the King James Version. The “O” at the beginning of the phrase suggests a depth of emotion by the Psalmist, the writer, in recognition of the supremacy, sovereignty, goodness, and holiness of God. According to the psalmist, every work or deed of God is given in mercy, undeserved, yet for the good of humankind.

In the book, "The Treasury of David," a commentary on the Psalms, the writer states that this song was probably written by David and was given to the Levites to sing every day. Although we set aside one day out of the year to celebrate and give thanks, this psalm emphasizes the importance of daily Thanksgiving. This echoes the words of the song "Every Day is a Day of Thanksgiving." In daily prayer, we give thanks to God for his blessings to us. However, it is not only to God that we owe thanks, but we also owe thanks to and for one another. Sometimes we express our thanks verbally, face-to-face, and sometimes in writing, in a card or a note. When we fail to give thanks to God and/or to one another, it suggests that we take God and/or others for granted.

More than a one-day celebration, even more than a season, thanksgiving should be a daily practice, especially to the God who blesses us daily.

Action Steps

1. Read Psalm 136
2. Write your own Psalm/song/prayer of Thanksgiving following the pattern of Psalm 136 using as many or as few verses as you like.
3. Express thanks to someone in your life today.
4. Search in Psalms for other verses of thanksgiving.

Reference Scripture

Psalm 136

Prayer

Thank you God for all of your goodness, mercy, love, and blessings to us. Thank you for Jesus and all that is possible to us because of him, and for the Holy Spirit who lives with us and helps us to do what pleases and glorifies you. Let us not only practice thanks giving, but also thanks living. Everything that we have comes from you and belongs to you. Help us to be good stewards of all that you have given to us. Help us to remember that we are blessed to be a blessing. Help us to be ever so generous and thankful to you, as well as to and for one another. Help us to express our thanks not just one day of the year but every day. Father, we praise you, we bless you, we honor you, and we give thanks to you in Jesus name. Amen.

Submitted by Dr. Deborah Carter