

FRAUD AND FRIENDS OF GOD

"For all that is in the world – the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions – is not from the Father but is from the world..."

(1 John 2:16)

REFLECTION

Rapid digitalization intensified by the pandemic has resulted in the rise in cyber scamming. Many have fallen prey to QR code scams, WhatsApp hijacking and e-mail phishing, social media impersonation, love scams and cheats via fake gambling and loan platforms as well as e-commerce fraudulent investment deals. Cyber Security Agency of Singapore (CSA) chief executive David Koh said in a Straits Times article dated Dec 10 2020: "Our dependence now on the digital infrastructure - our smartphones and computers - has gone up tremendously (because of COVID19). It also means that the cyber-attack surface, the angles at which the bad guys, the malicious actors, the crooks can attack us, have gone up as well." How can we avoid becoming victims of fraud?

Apart from being aware of the technical safety measures we should take in order to safe guard our personal details, it behooves us to gain godly wisdom and spiritual disciplines that would steer us away from evil schemes. Truth be told, regular reading and meditation of God's word, prayer, fellowship with the Church community and a worshipful lifestyle are God's means that protect our hearts from the lures of "Too-good-to-be-true" investments, quick-fix emotional and dating scams, and worldly consumeristic lifestyles. They are also His way of protecting our hearts and lives against greed, love of money, loneliness, false or empty promises, and every form of evil and cheating schemes.

The COVID pandemic highlights the presence of a deep longing within every person. It also reveals the evil intentions that some people have and would do unto others. What about you? Would you surrender your heart to God for Him to do transformational work within you? God wants to fill you with the love of Jesus and satisfy your every need. Only Jesus can be our one true Provider who satisfies our every need and our Protector who keeps us safe from men's evil intentions.

PRAYER

Father God, thank You that You give us strength not to fall victim to those who abuse our trust and take advantage of our need for love. Shine Your light of love and wisdom into our lives that we may be wise in our ways and not fall victim to every form of evil scheme. We seek Your deliverance for victims who have been cheated and Your saving grace of

those who do evil that they may know Your righteousness and mercy. Amen.

SUPPLICATION

- Thank God for the authorities in their effort to stem the rising tide of cyber fraud. Praise God for the successes in investigations and recent arrests of fraudulence in Singapore and beyond our shores. Thank God for the set-up of preventive measures by the authorities to alert and to educate the public about cyber-scamming.
- Thank God for His intervention through the involvement of friends and family members that come alongside those who may fall victim to cyber fraud. Pray for loving friends and family to support the emotionally vulnerable duped by cyber-dating and cyber-sex scams, those who are addicted to gambling online, those who have been swindled from online investment scams. Pray for the elderly and the young who might become victimized by cyber fraud.
- Thank God that churches and religious organizations are more connected digitally. Pray for churches to protect the data of members and have relevant IT support to prevent any breaches of data privacy. Pray for churches to be alert to cyber-crime and cyber threats even as services go online and meetings continue in digital platforms.
- Pray for victims who fall prey to money scams. In the latest Police News Release on *ScamSituation* on police.gov.sg between January and March 2020, at least S\$41.3 million was lost to scammers. This is about S\$9 million (or 27.9%) more compared to the same period last year. Pray that such perpetrators may be caught and turn from their wicked ways.

"Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but he who makes his ways crooked will be found out." (Proverbs 10:9)

If you need any prayer or pastoral care support, kindly contact the pastoral care team via:

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