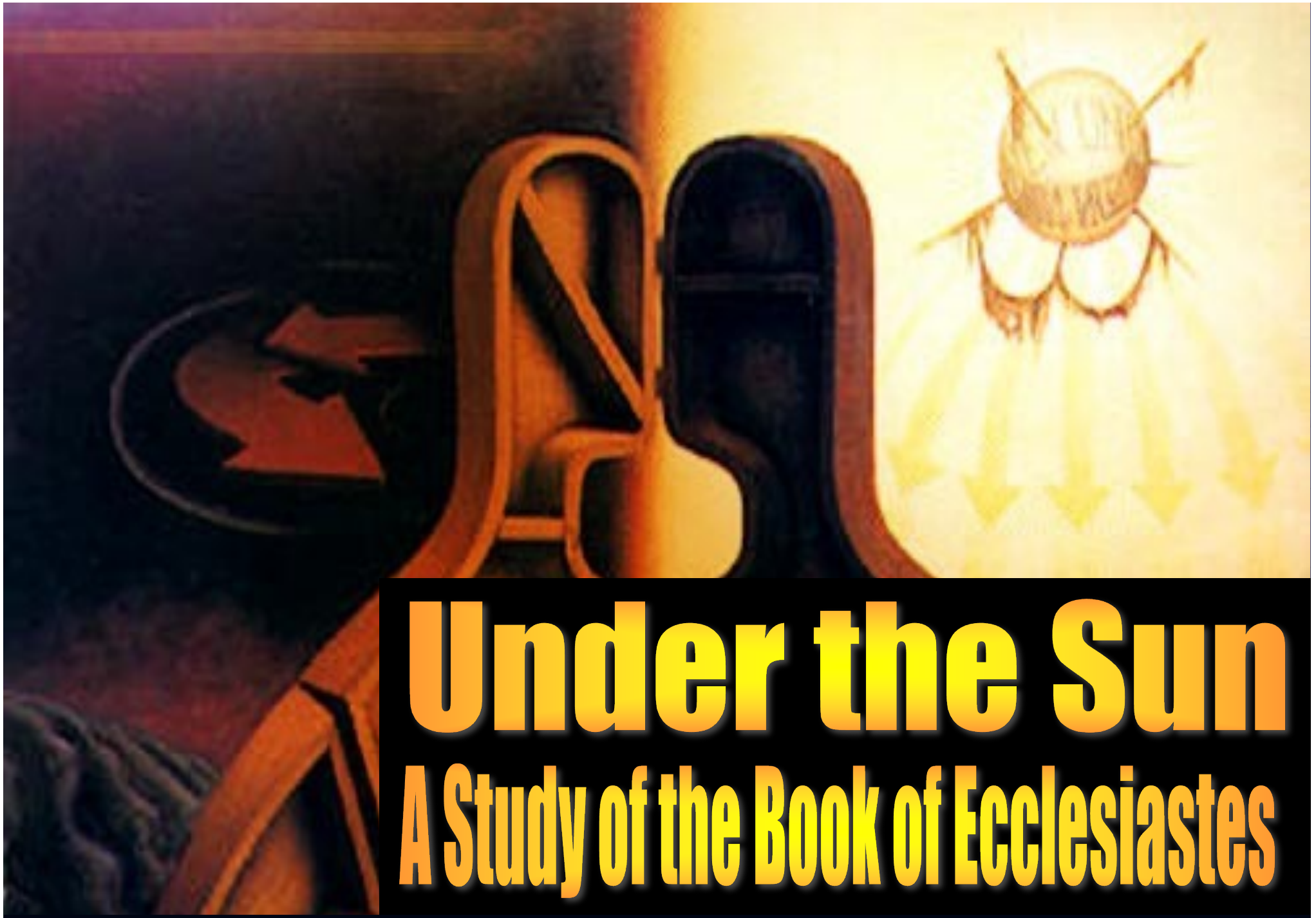


Under the Sun

A Study of the Book of Ecclesiastes

Dr. Rick Griffith • Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary • BibleStudyDownloads.org

Key Word

403
343

Fleeting

Ecclesiastes

Theme

Work & Wisdom Don't Last

Ecclesiastes

Key Verses

Enjoy Life: "A man can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment?" (2:24-25)

Fear God: "Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil" (12:13-14).

Ecclesiastes

Kingdom Statement

Life is fleeting without submission to God's rule (12:8, 13).

Ecclesiastes



Summary Statement

Solomon proves the **fleeting** nature of human achievement and wisdom and recommends the joyous enjoyment of life and fear of God to warn others not to follow his empty path.

Ecclesiastes

Covenant

Israel's covenant relationship with God in which he is feared and his Mosaic covenant is obeyed (12:13-14) brought meaning to a meaningless life (cf. 1:2).


Redemption
347a
Life not lived under the "one Shepherd" (12:11) is empty and perplexing since all people have eternity in their hearts (3:11) that only the redeemed can appreciate.
Ecclesiastes

Messiah


The "Shepherd" (12:11) provides the wisdom and abundant life that man needs to handle life's enigmas (cf. John 10:9-10).
Ecclesiastes

Ecclesiastes

Work & Wisdom Don't Last

Theme: Fleeting Nature of…	Work	Wisdom	Youth
1:1-11	1:12–6:9	6:10–11:6	11:7–12:14
Man's Humanity	Man's Hands	Man's Head	Man's Heart
Cycles	Work	Ignorance	Aging
Place: Earth ("under the sun") about 935 BC			

Ecclesiastes



1 **E**mptiness of accumulating wealth
2 **C**onclusion to seeking pleasure
3 **C**ompleteness of God's timing
4 **L**abor is also vanity
5 **E**xhortations on hoarding wealth
6 **S**in is never satisfying
7 **I**nadequacy of being affluent
8 **A**buse of God's authority
9 **S**ame end for all
10 **T**emporary wisdom of man
11 **E**mptiness of godless living
12 **S**erving God brings satisfaction

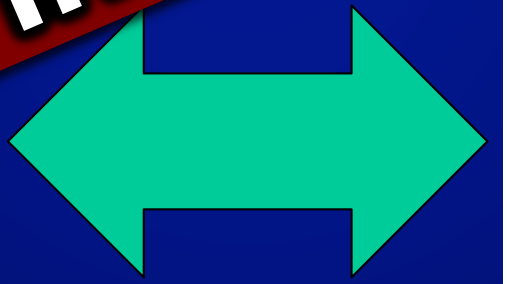
Barry Huddleston, *The Acrostic Summarized Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992)



Dr. Rick Griffith • Crossroads International Church Singapore
CICFamily.com • BibleStudyDownloads.org

How can we do both?

4 ways to be intentional



enjoy life

fear God

Ecclesiastes

I. Live as if life is fleeting (1:1-11).



II. Live as if work is fleeting (1:12–6:9).

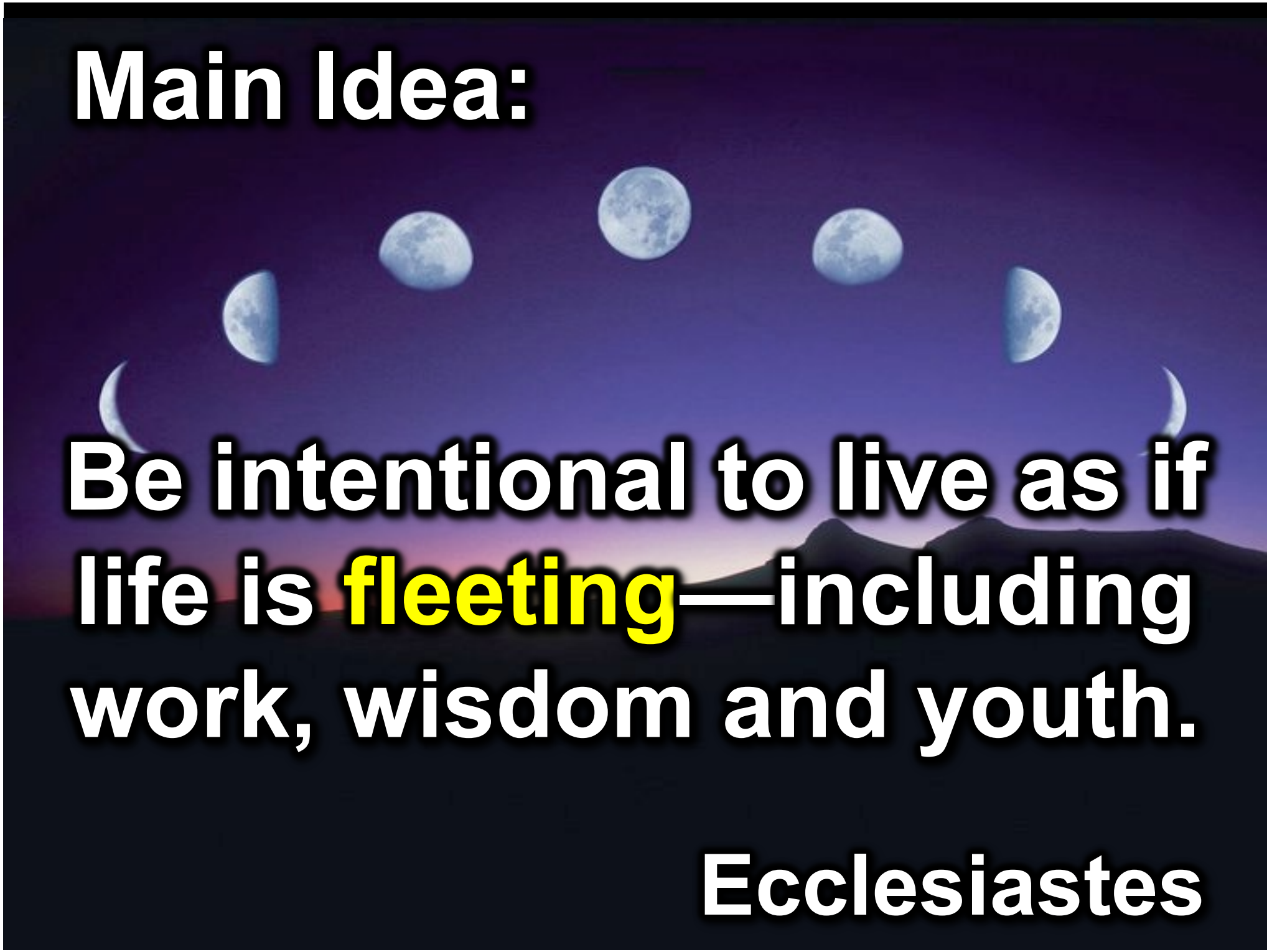


III. Live as if wisdom is fleeting (6:10–11:6).



IV. Live as if youth is fleeting (11:7–12:14)



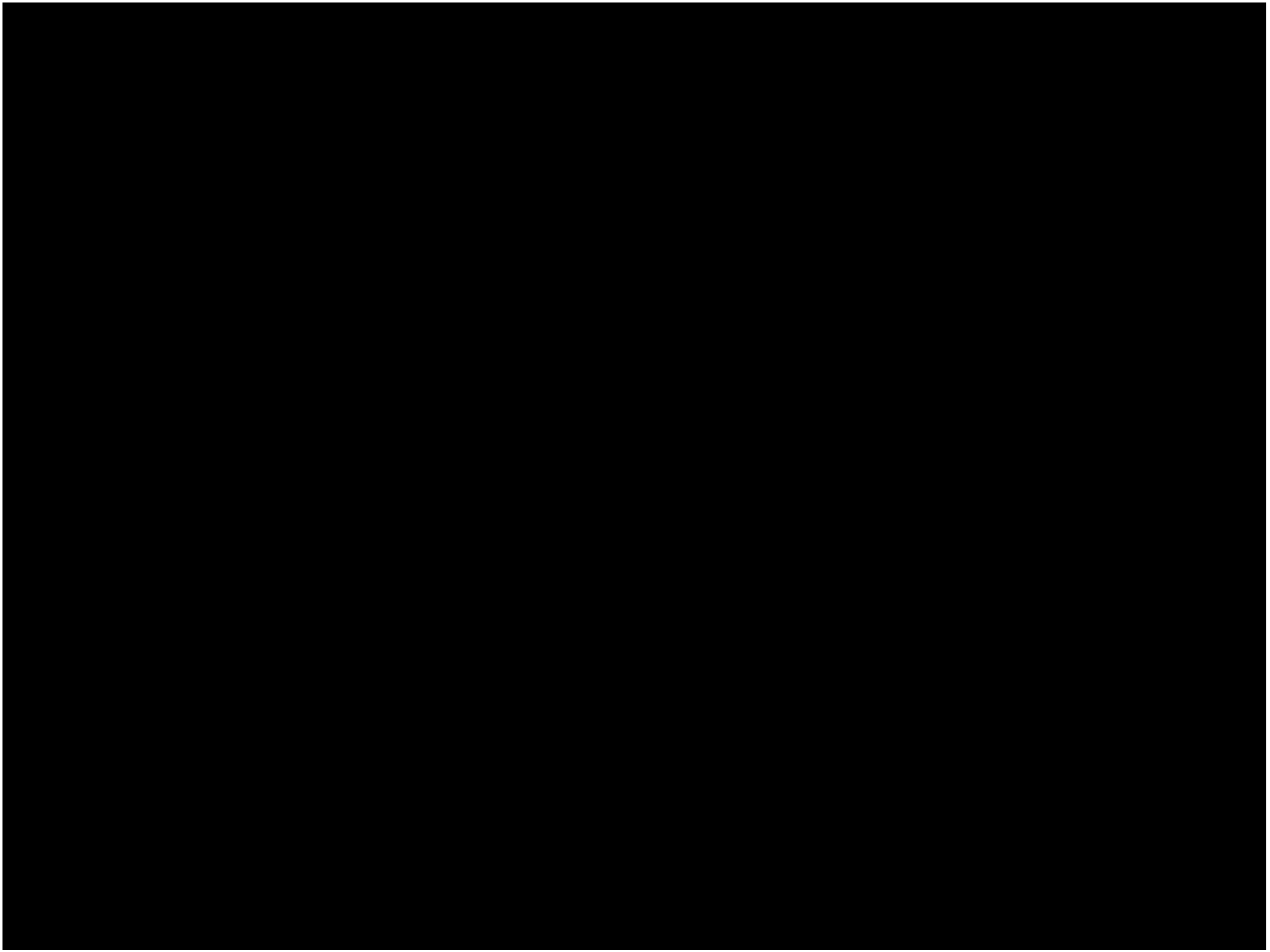

Main Idea:
Be intentional to live as if life is fleeting—including work, wisdom and youth.
Ecclesiastes



5 min./day = 1/288th of a day

bible-reading.com

Ecclesiastes



Job: how to **suffer**

Psalms: how to **pray**

Proverbs: how to **relate**

Song: how to **love**

Ecclesiastes: how to **live**



The OT Poetic Books

Walk Thru the Poetical Books

Ecclesiastes……..Vanity
"Wisdom can overcome life's vanities"

Song…..Love in Marriage
"Wisdom can maintain a godly marriage"

Proverbs 31:30 "Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD will be praised."

Proverbs 5:18 "Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth."

Proverbs……..Wisdom
"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom."

Psalm 111:10 "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments…"

Psalms……..Worship
"Worship develops the fear of the LORD"

Job 42:2 "I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted."

Job……..Sovereignty
"Seeing God's Sovereignty causes us to worship"

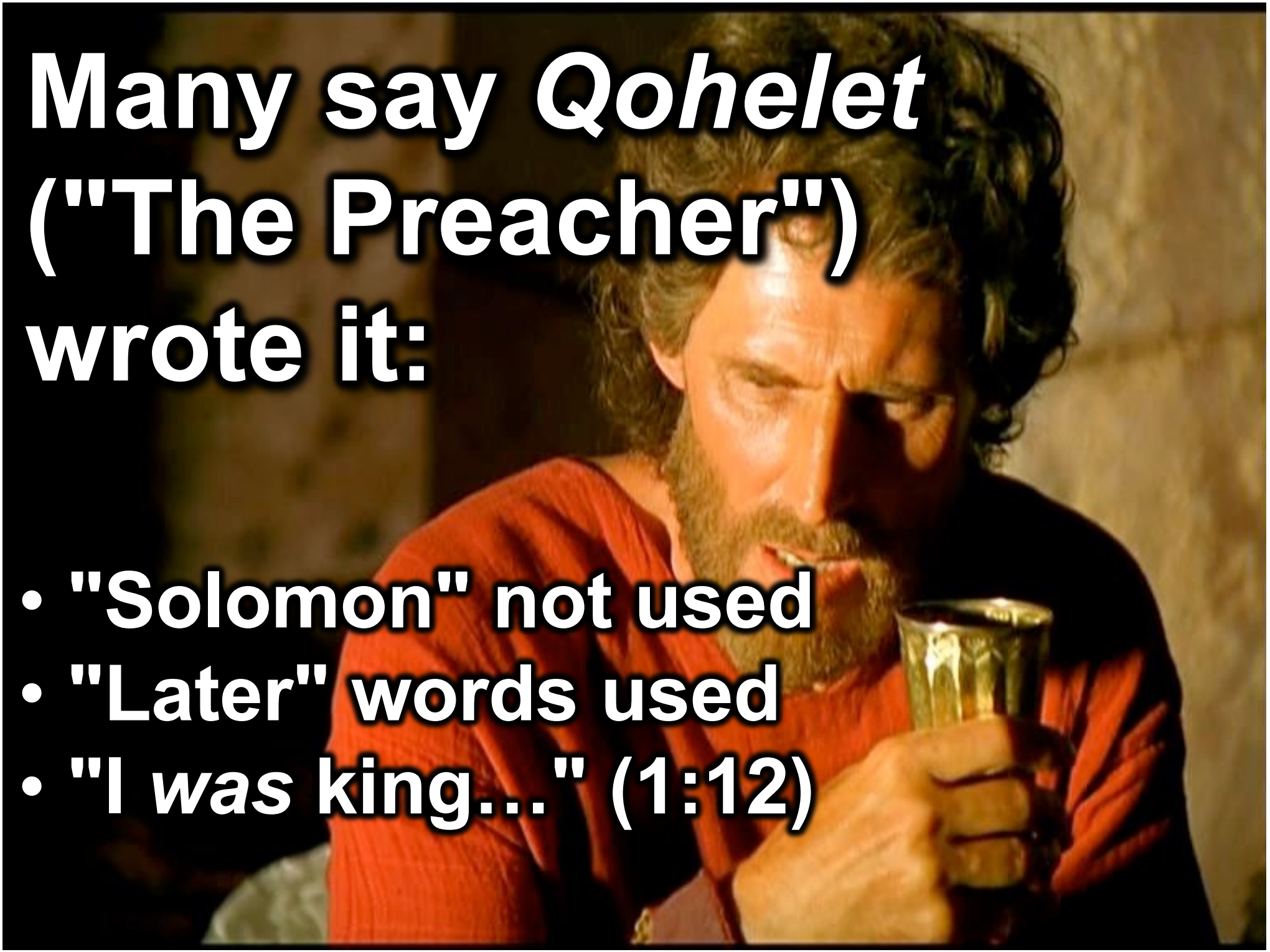
Source:
Walk Thru the Bible Ministries

Contrasts

PROVERBS	Ecclesiastes
Challenges of life	Meaning of life
Practical advice	Philosophical musings
How to live for God	Why to live for God
Ideals	Reality
Several authors	One man's testimony
Godly wisdom only	Godly and worldly wisdom
Positive	Negative
General	Exceptions
Present orientation	Eternal orientation
Black & white orientation	Gray areas
Wisdom praised	Wisdom doubted


Who do you admire?
MODERN IDOLS


They
admired
sages


Many say *Qohelet* ("The Preacher") wrote it:
• "Solomon" not used
• "Later" words used
• "I *was* king…" (1:12)

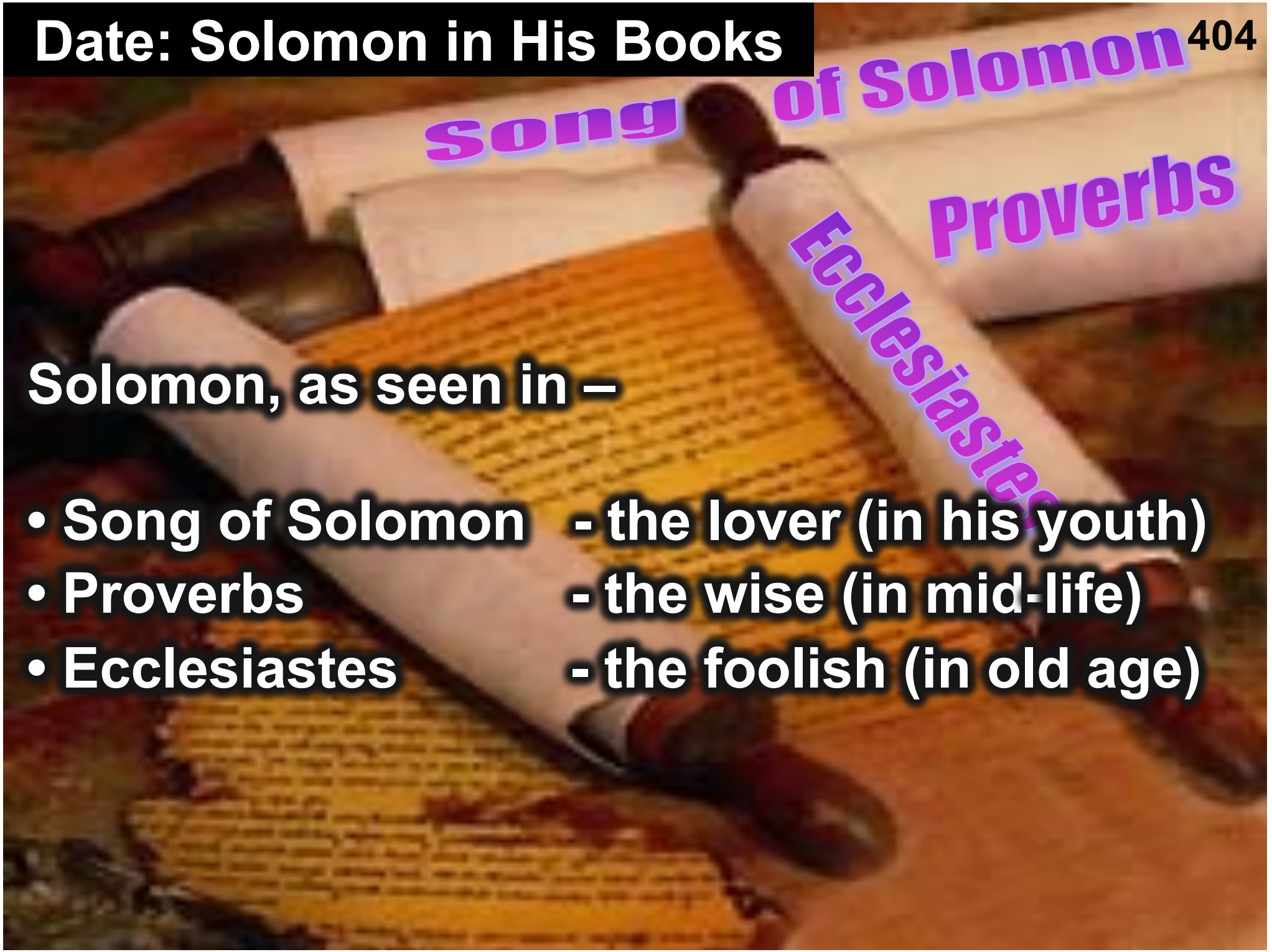

Befitting Solomon:
• Wisdom (1:16)
• Building (2:4-6)
• Slaves (2:7)
• Wealth (2:8a)
• Harem (2:8b)
• Proverbs (12:9)
Ecclesiastes

When was it written?



Ecclesiastes

Date: Solomon in His Books



Solomon, as seen in –

- Song of Solomon - the lover (in his youth)
- Proverbs - the wise (in mid-life)
- Ecclesiastes - the foolish (in old age)



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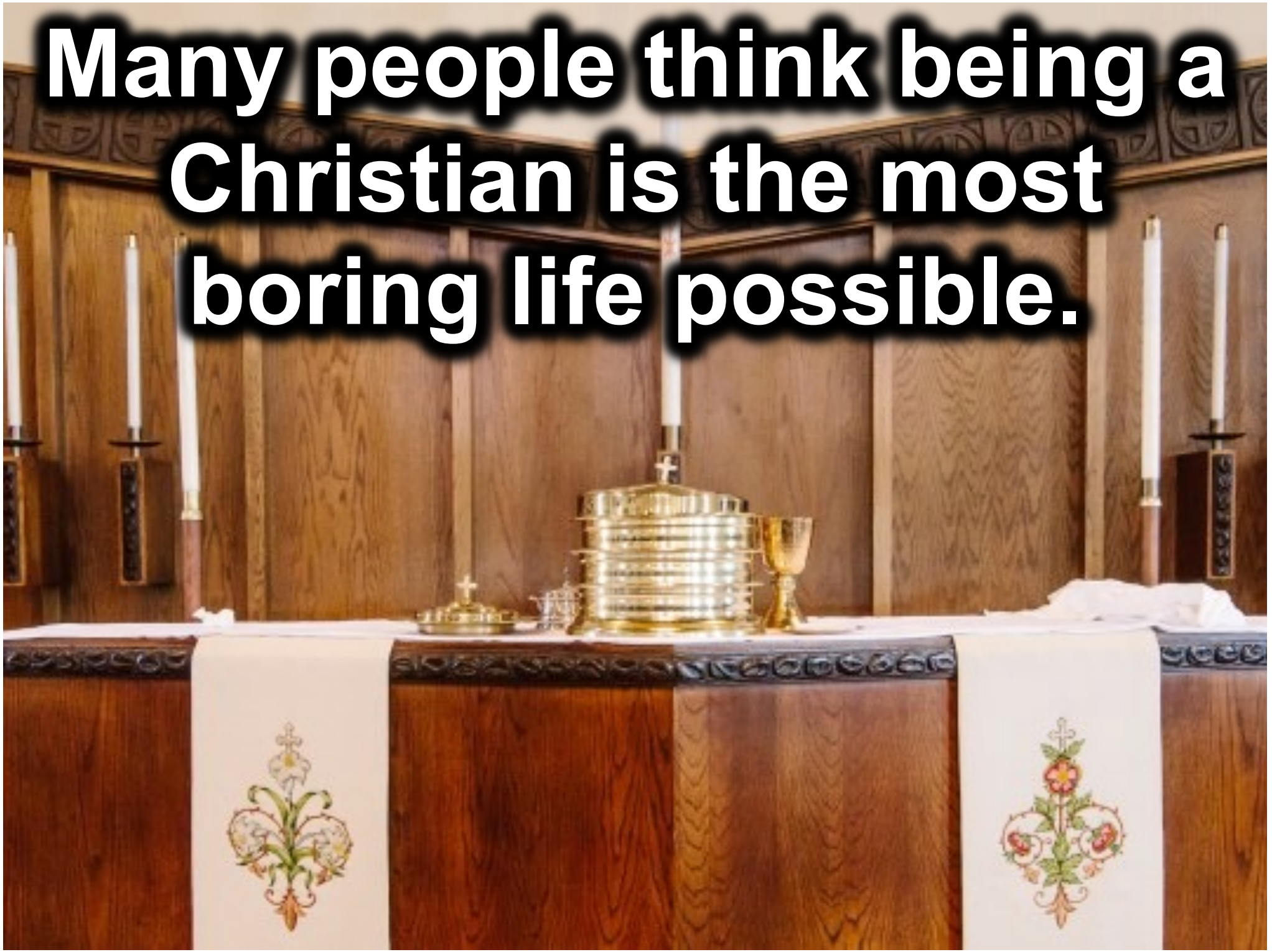
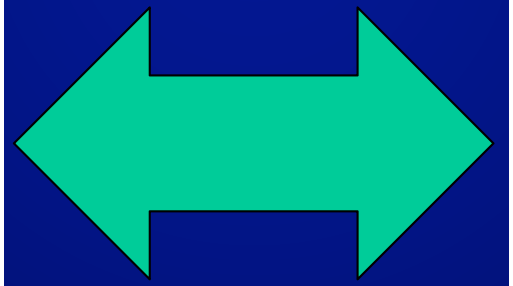

Many people think being a Christian is the most boring life possible.

Can Christians be happy?



Do you think these contradict?

enjoy life

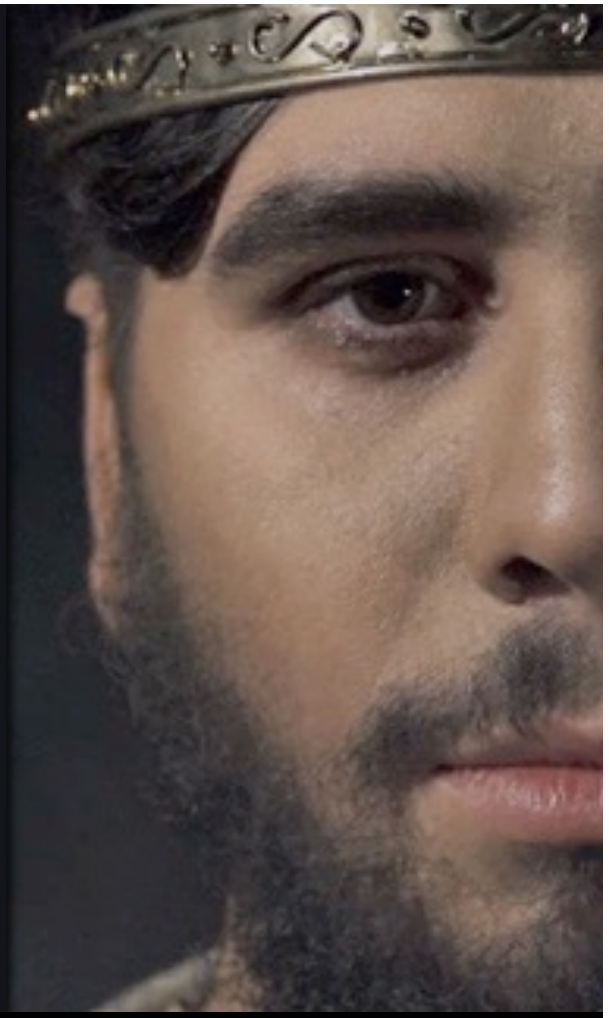


fear God

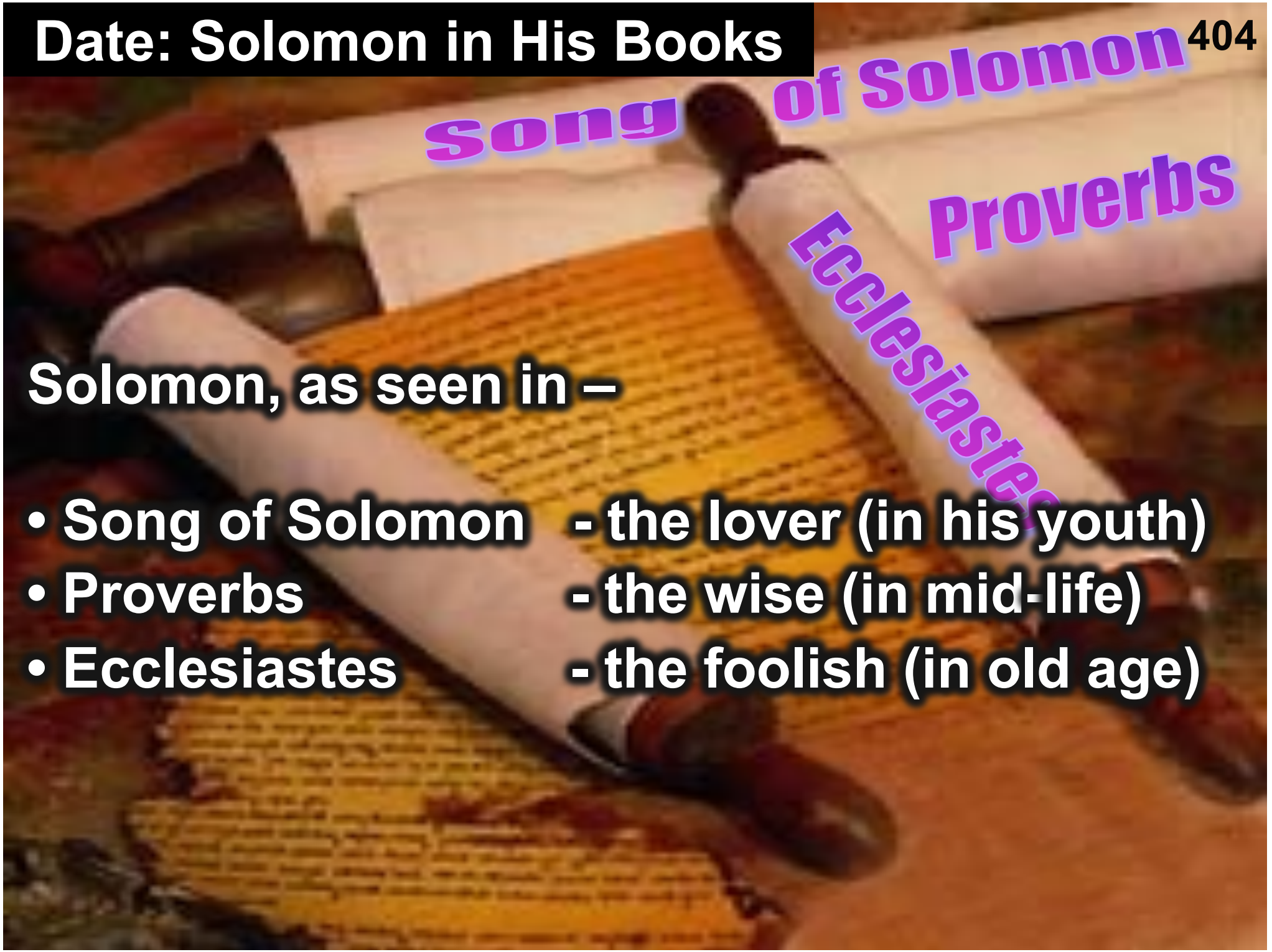
A UNIQUE AUTHOR

Ecclesiastes

A King's Ambition



Date: Solomon in His Books



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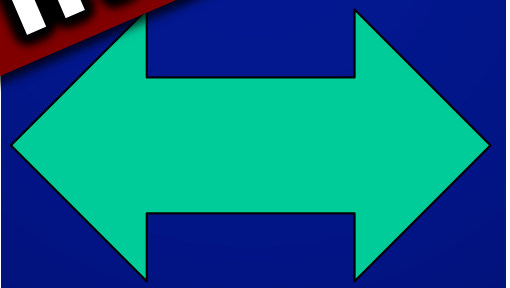

enjoy life

fear God

I. Live as if life is fleeting (1:1-11).



Work & Wisdom Don't Last

Theme: Fleeting Nature of…	Work	Wisdom	Youth
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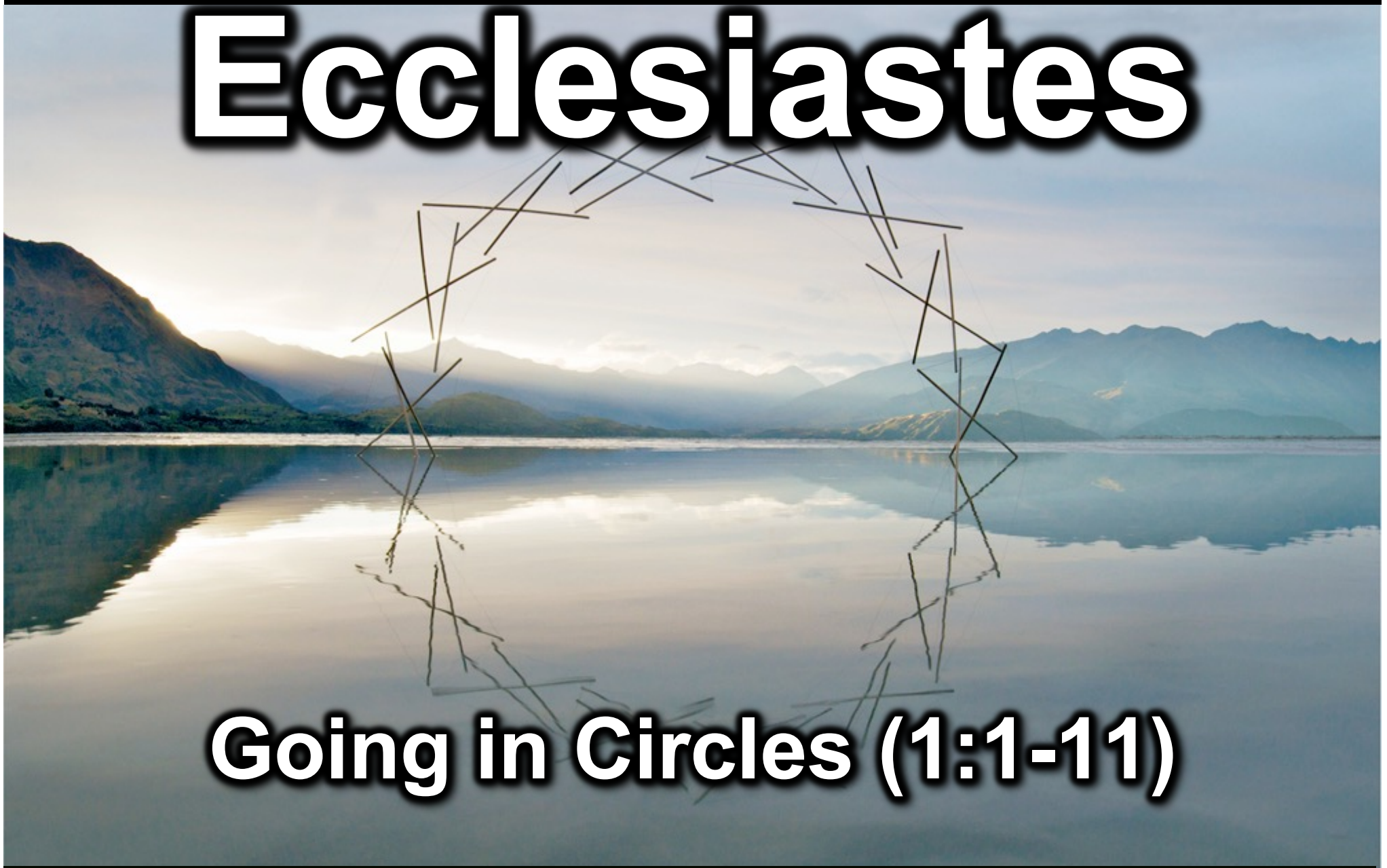
Man's Humanity	Man's Hands	Man's Head	Man's Heart
Cycles	Work	Ignorance	Aging
Place: Earth ("under the sun") about 935 BC			

Ecclesiastes 1

Ecclesiastes



Going in Circles (1:1-11)

Dr. Rick Griffith, Crossroads International Church
www.biblestudydownloads.com


Singapore 10:55
New York 12:00
Blantyre, Malawi 31:60
How fast do *you* walk 60 feet?


Do you walk fast?

Why so fast?



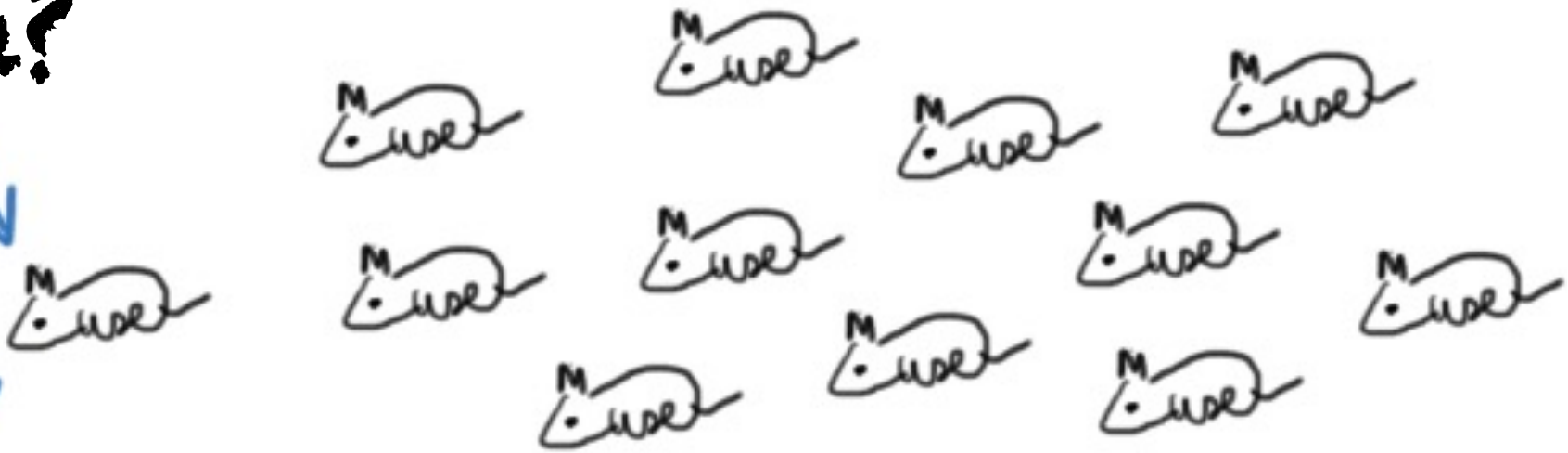
Rats often run in circles





Rat Race

You?



Still a <u>rat.</u>

"Yeah, but if only you knew my boss..."

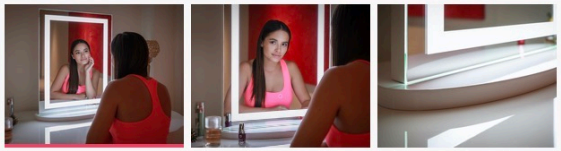


I. Every human endeavor is short-lived (1:2).









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deal f ppl
shaving, hair styli

Quantity:

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Price	$399.00
Discount	$50
PRICE	**$349.00**

Vanity

The Hebrew Word *Hebel*



"Vanity of vanities!"

"all is vanity!"

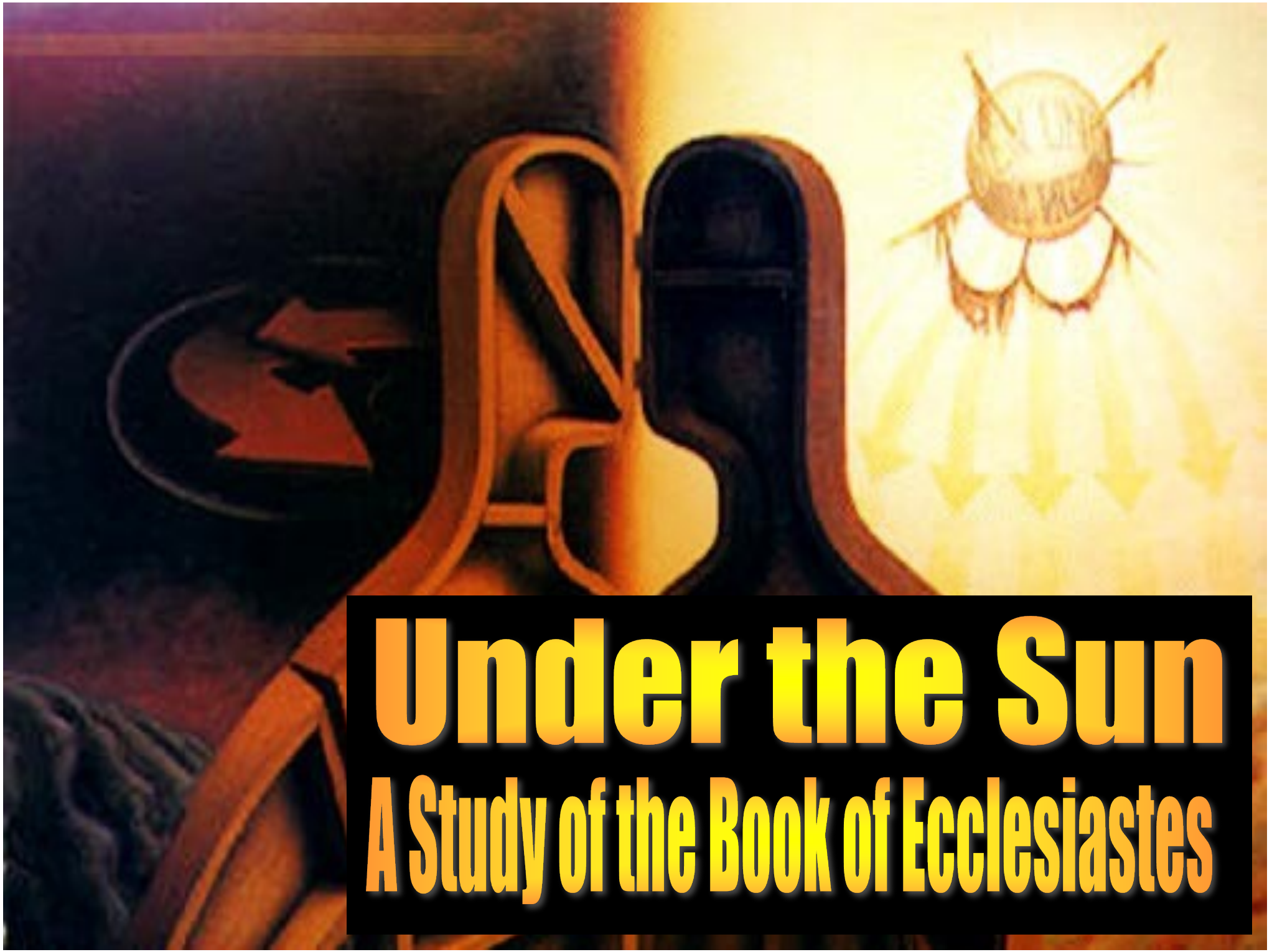
1:2 KJV

Meaning of *Hebel*

הבל

"vanity" (KJV, ESV, NAU),
"meaningless" (NIV, NLT),
"futile" (NET, TLB, BKC)
"fleeting" 

The Key Word of Ecclesiastes


Under the Sun
A Study of the Book of Ecclesiastes

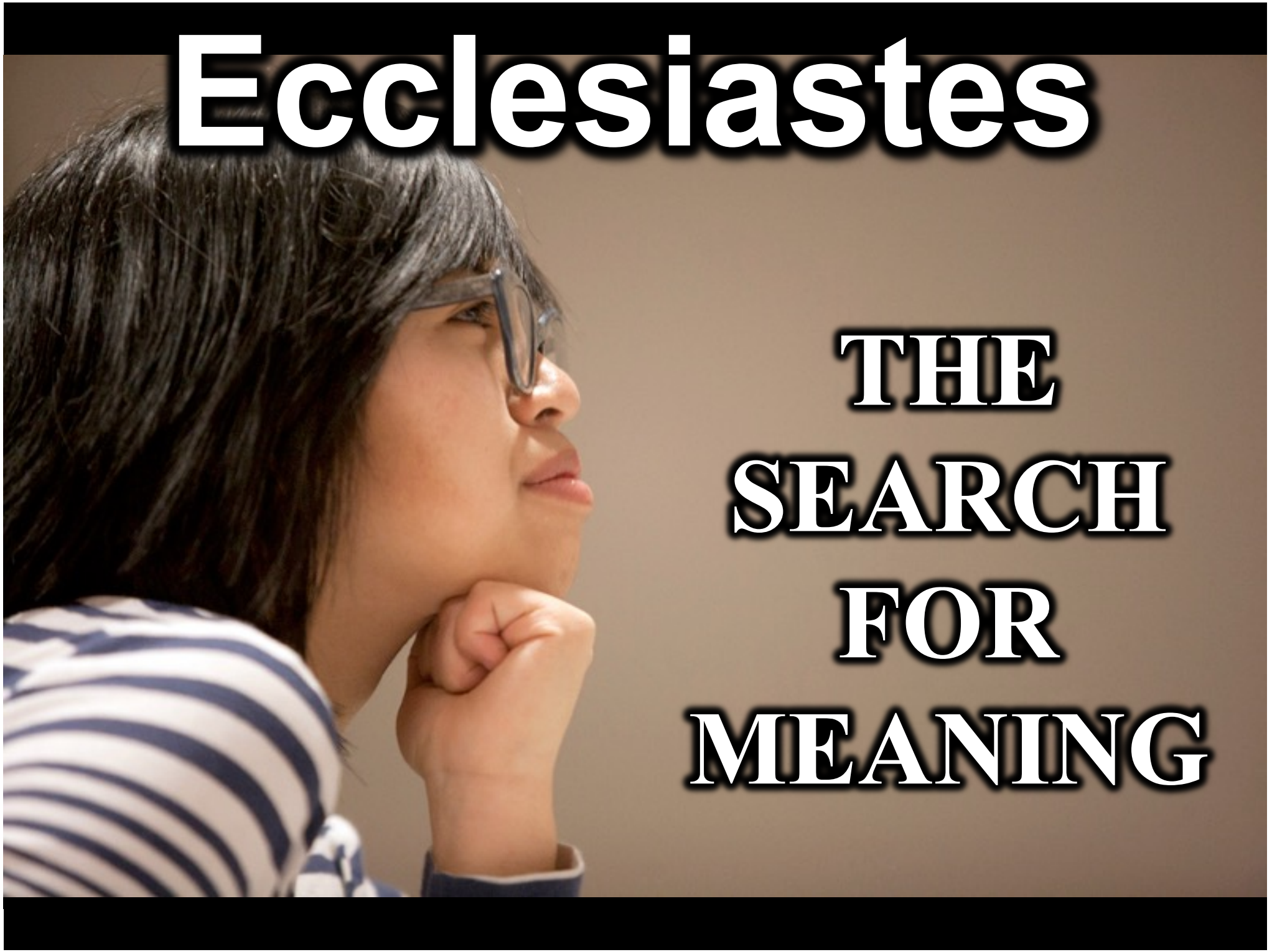
Hebel & "Under the Sun"

Word or Phrase	Generally Held Meaning
hebel הֶבֶל	**lit. "vapor, breath" (BDB 210d 1); "what is evanescent, unsubstantial, worthless, vanity" (BDB 210d 2); "meaningless" (NIV), "vanity" (KJV), "futile" (NET)**
"under the sun"	***manner* of observing life from a human perspective (Leupold)**

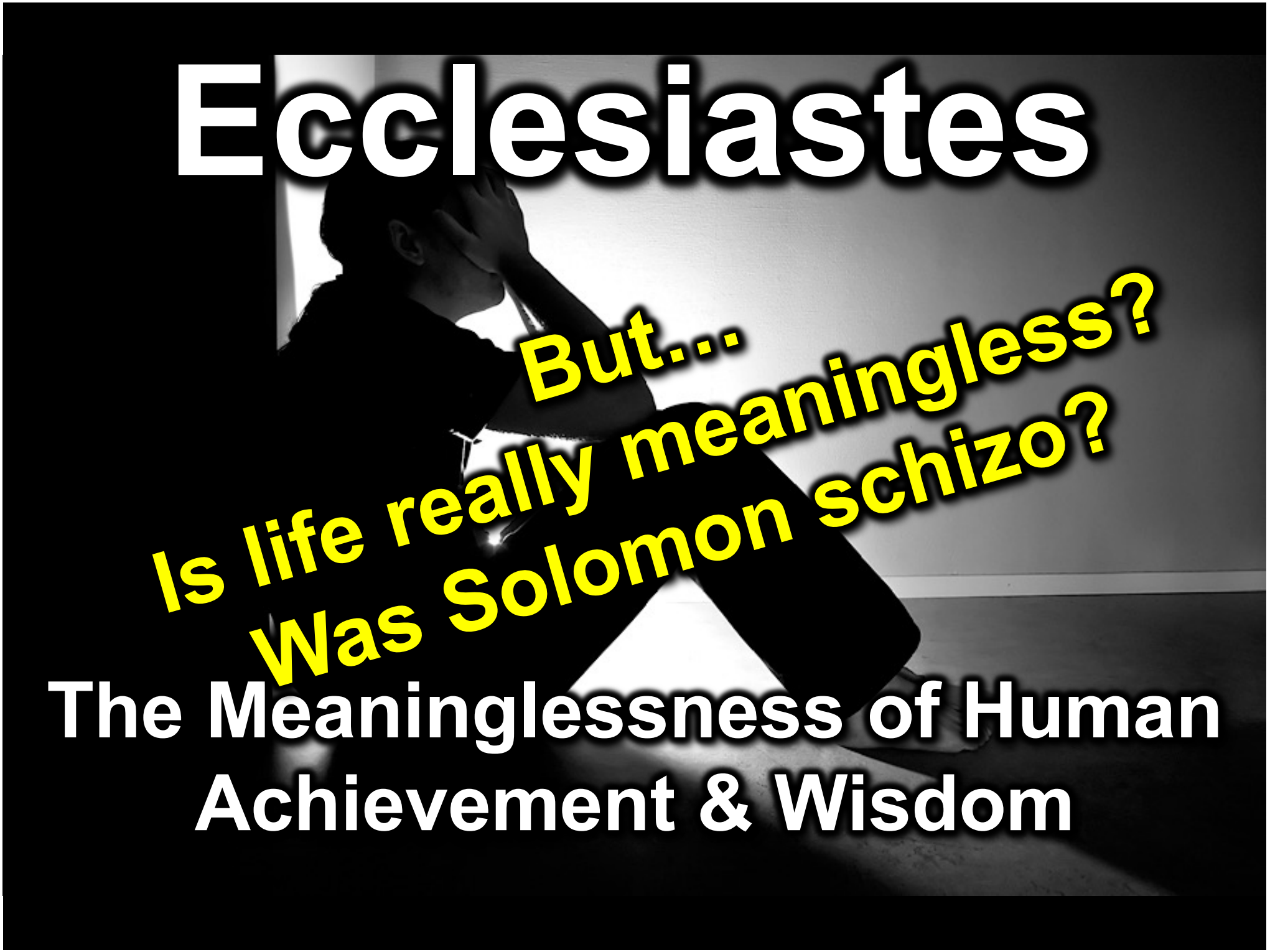
Two Ways to Look at Life



Ecclesiastes



Ecclesiastes

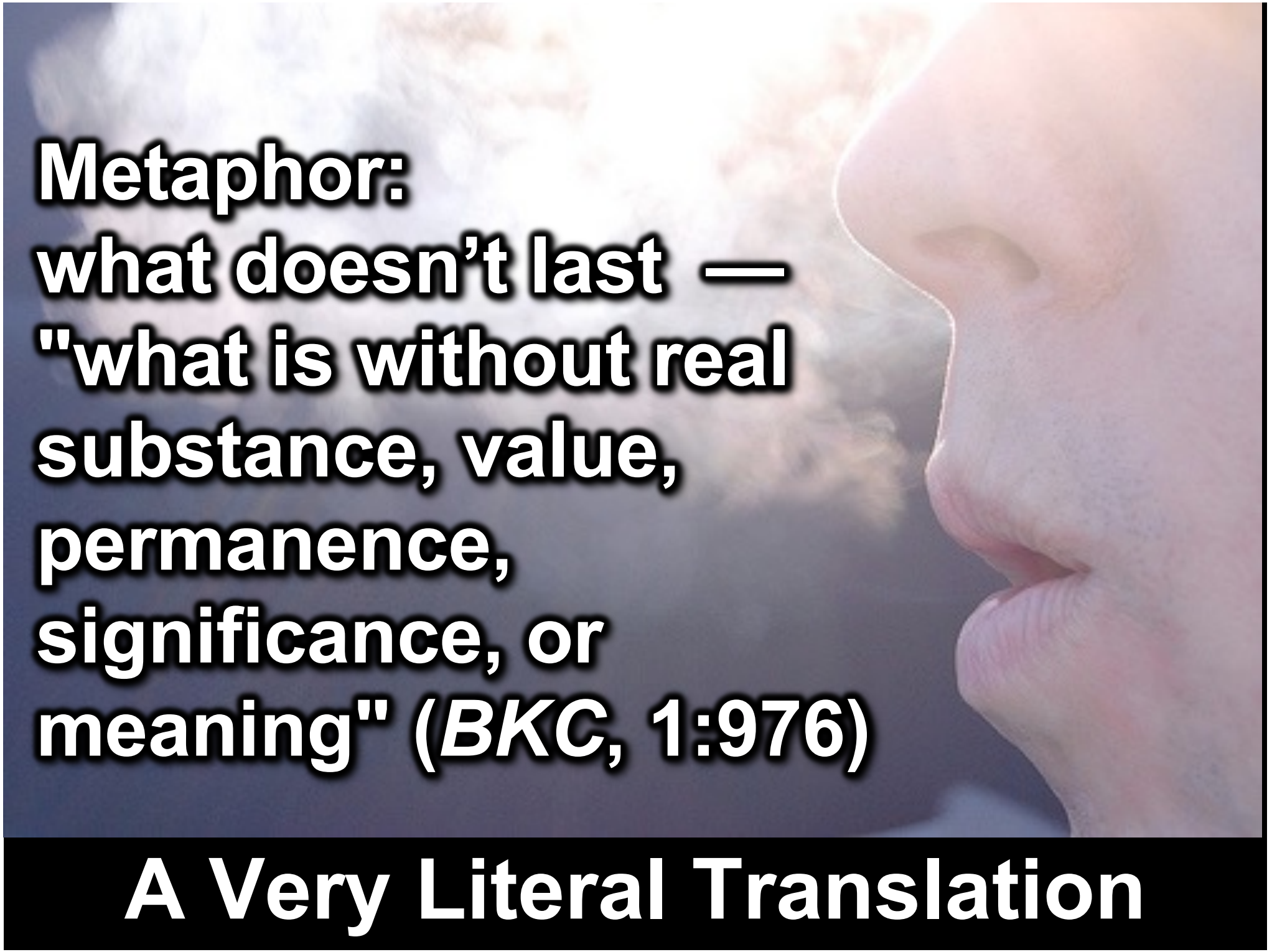


The Meaninglessness of Human Achievement & Wisdom

Hebel literally means
"a breath, wind, or vapor"
(Prov. 21:6; Isa. 57:13).



Ecclesiastes

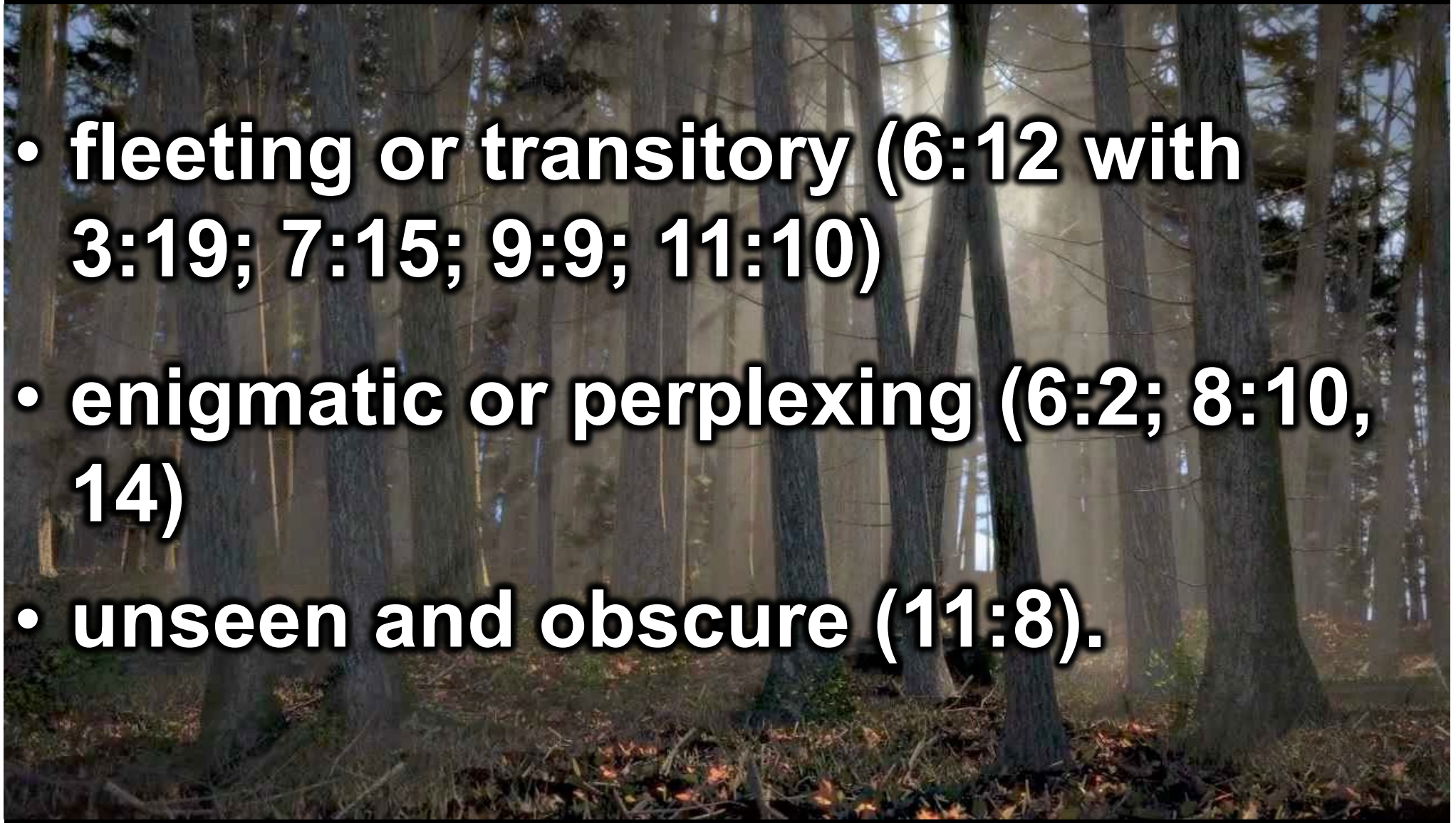

Metaphor:
what doesn't last —
"what is without real
substance, value,
permanence,
significance, or
meaning" (*BKC*, 1:976)
A Very Literal Translation

Does a word always have the same meaning in every context?

“Light”= bright
“Light”= not heavy
“Light”= device to illuminate things
“Light”= understanding

Multiple meanings also apply to Hebrew words.

What's wind or vapor like?



- fleeting or transitory (6:12 with 3:19; 7:15; 9:9; 11:10)
- enigmatic or perplexing (6:2; 8:10, 14)
- unseen and obscure (11:8).

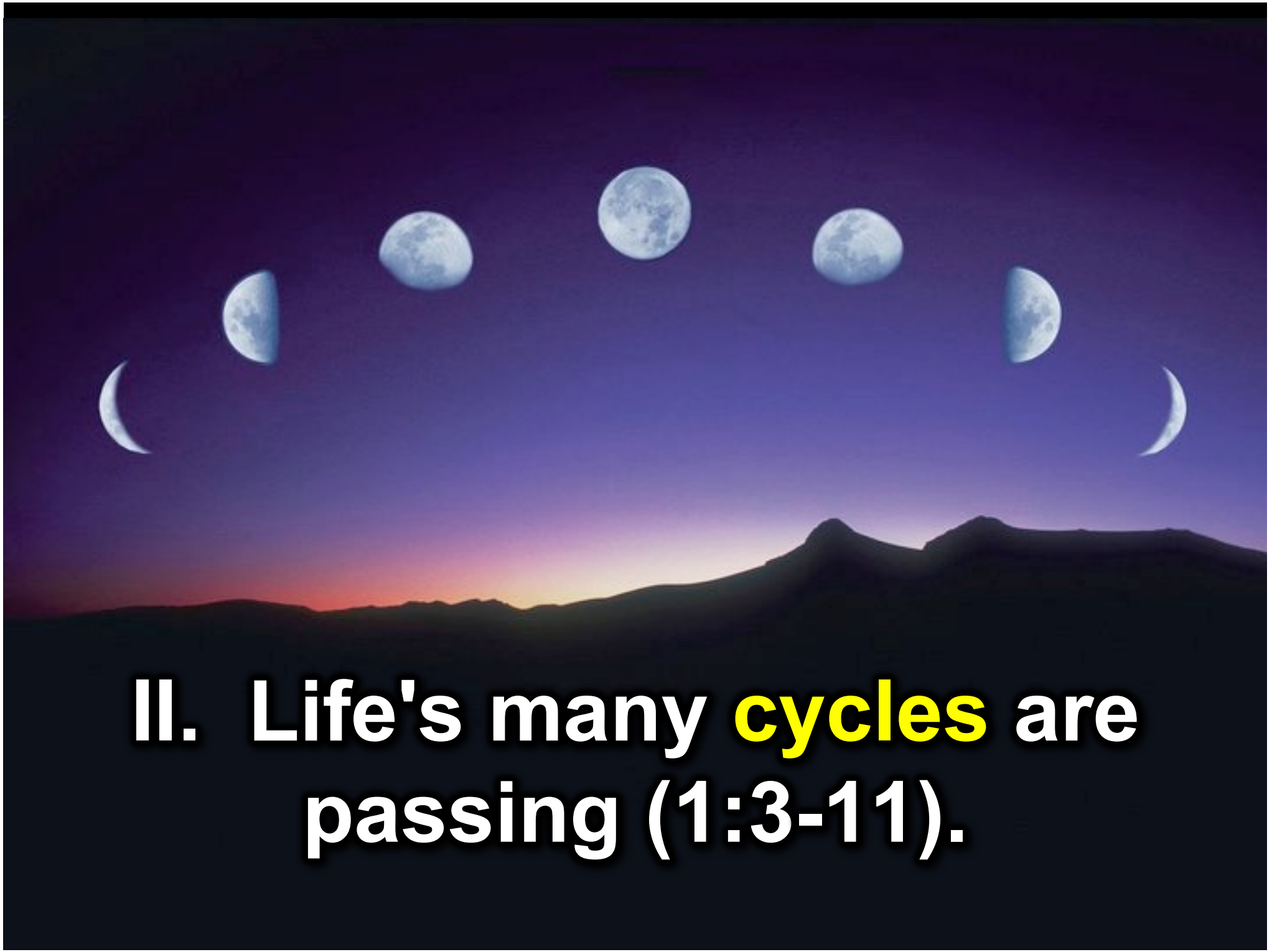
BKC, 1:976

Synonyms:

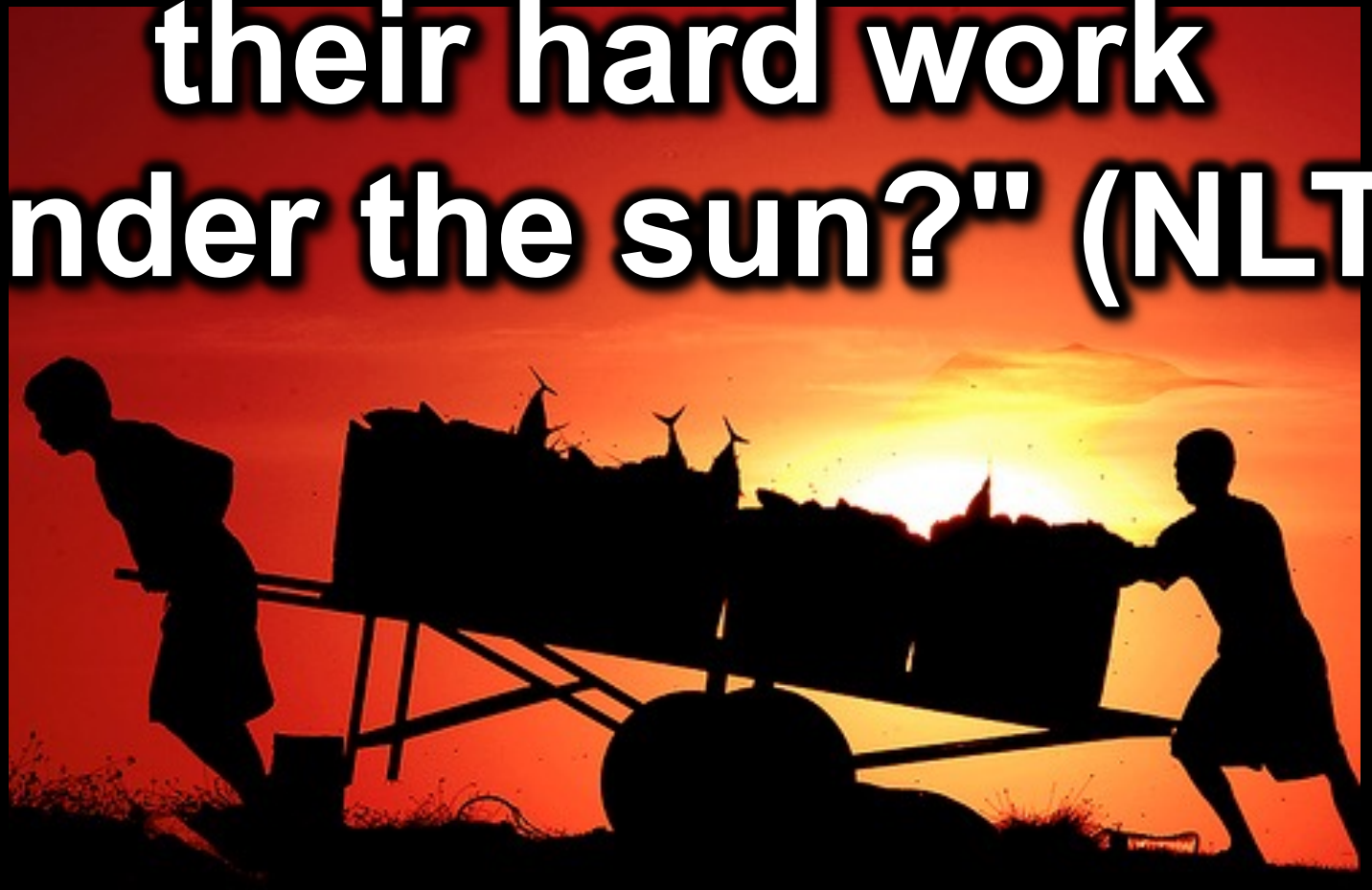

Fleeting
Passing
Brief
Temporary
Momentary
Transitory
Short-lived

Hebel & "Under the Sun"

Word or Phrase	Generally Held Meaning	Other Options Offered
hebel הֶבֶל	lit. "vapor, breath" (BDB 210d 1); "what is evanescent, unsubstantial, worthless, vanity" (BDB 210d 2); "meaningless" (NIV), "vanity" (KJV), "futile" (NET)	"enigmatic, mysterious" (Graham S. Ogden); "absurd" (Michael V. Fox); "irony" (Edwin Good); "fleeting" (Radmacher)
"under the sun"	***manner*** of observing life from a human perspective (Leupold)	***sphere*** of man's earthly activity, i.e., "down here on earth" (Ardel B. Caneday)


II. Life's many cycles are passing (1:3-11).

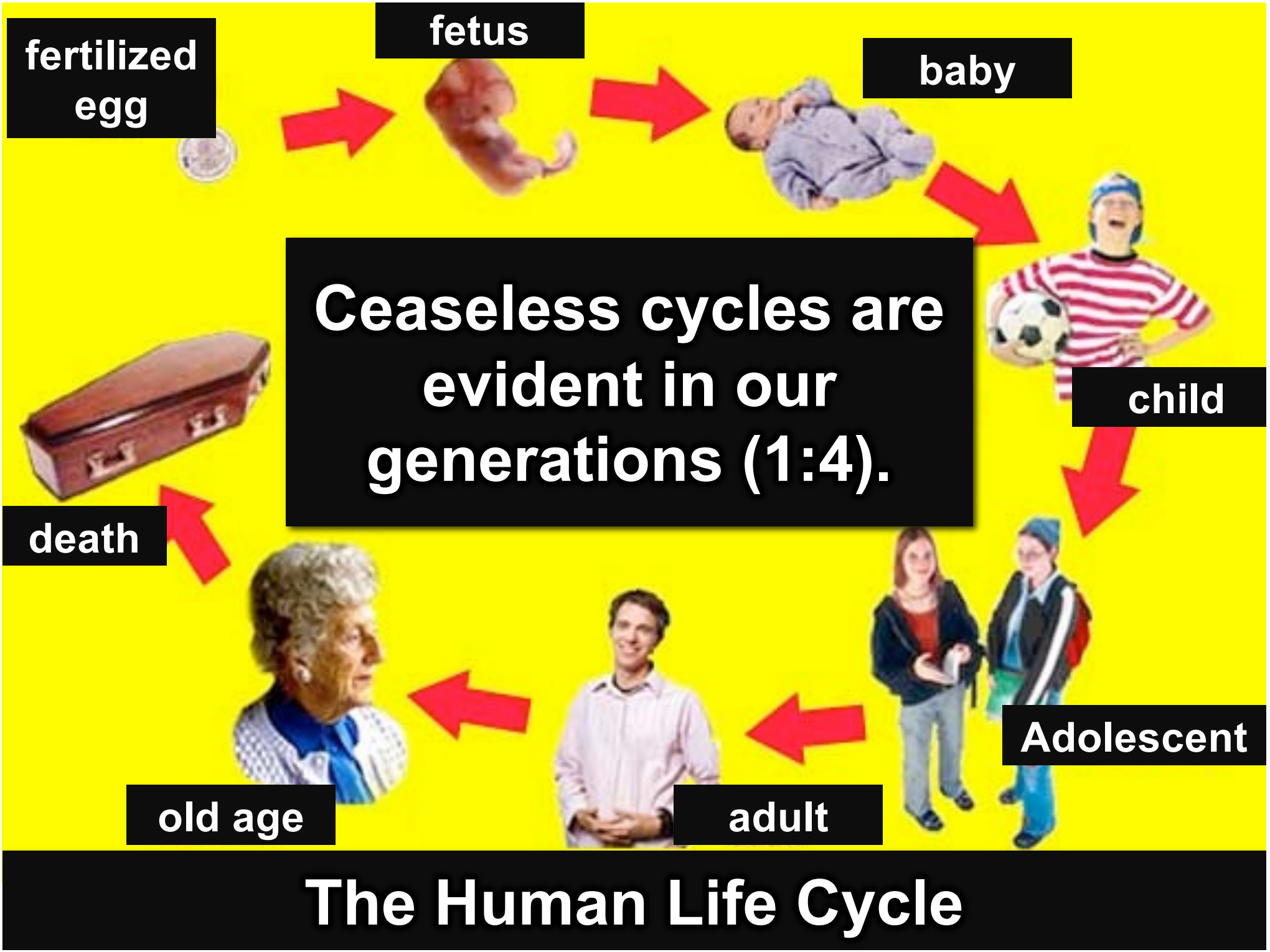
"What do people get for all their hard work under the sun?" (NLT)



Theme (of 1:1–6:9): Our work ultimately brings us nowhere (1:3).

Proof: Life's many fleeting repetitions bring no real change (1:4-11).




fertilized egg
fetus
baby
child
Adolescent
adult
old age
death
Ceaseless cycles are evident in our generations (1:4).
The Human Life Cycle

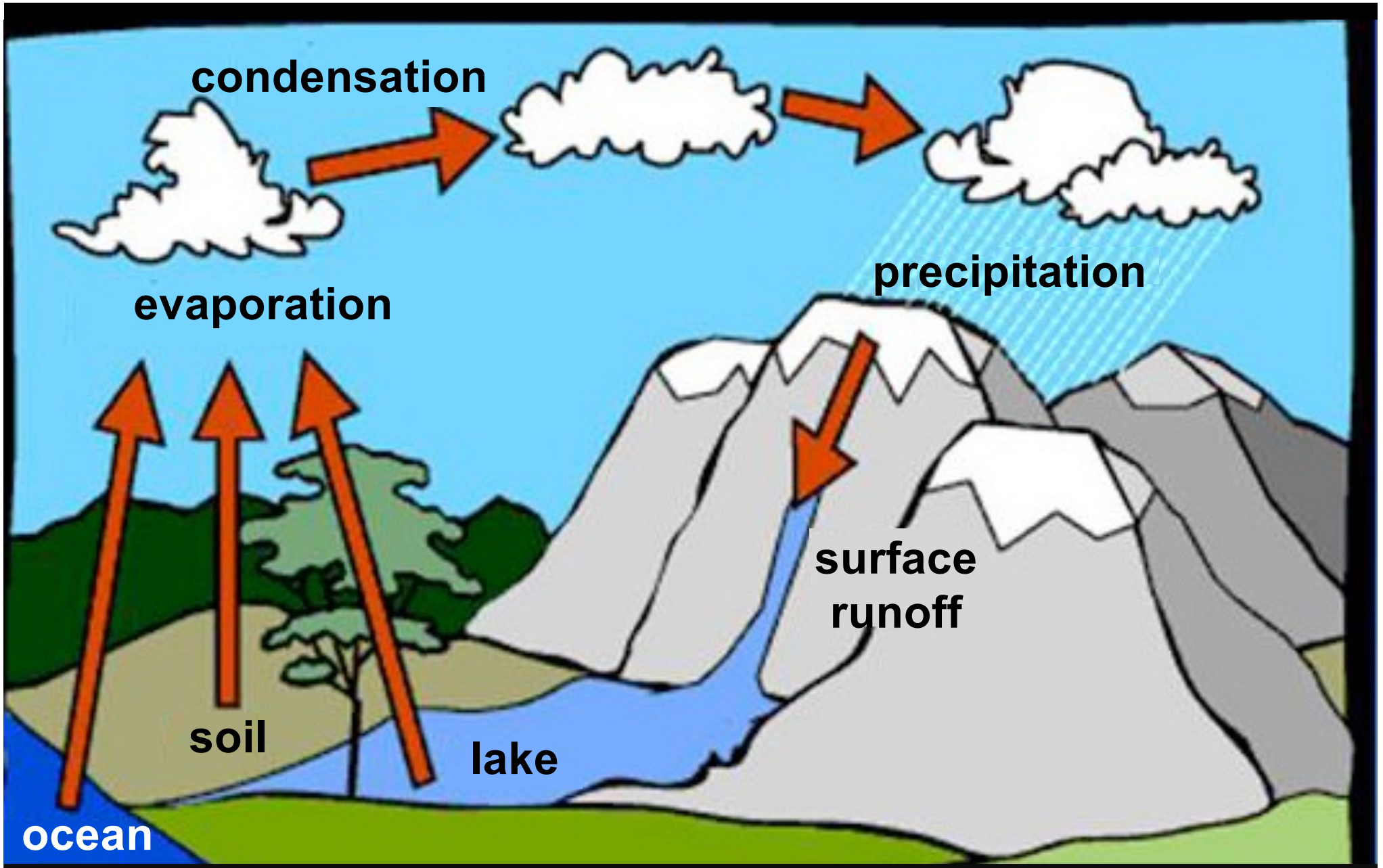
Ceaseless cycles are evident in nature (1:5-7).



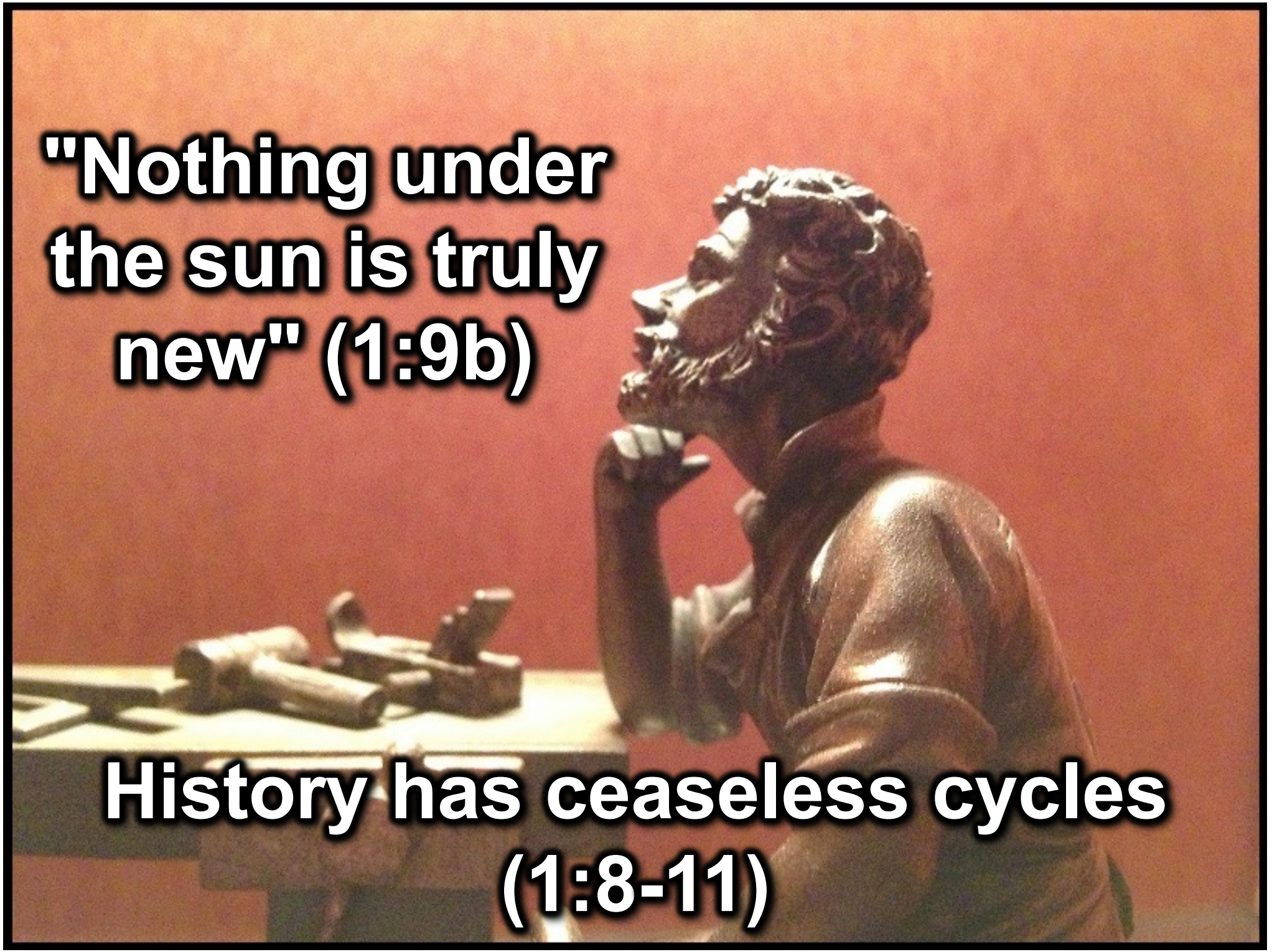

The sun continually rises and sets (1:5).



The wind blows in circles (1:6).



The rivers and seas cycle water endlessly (1:7).


"Nothing under the sun is truly new" (1:9b)
History has ceaseless cycles (1:8-11)

Main Idea of 1:1-11



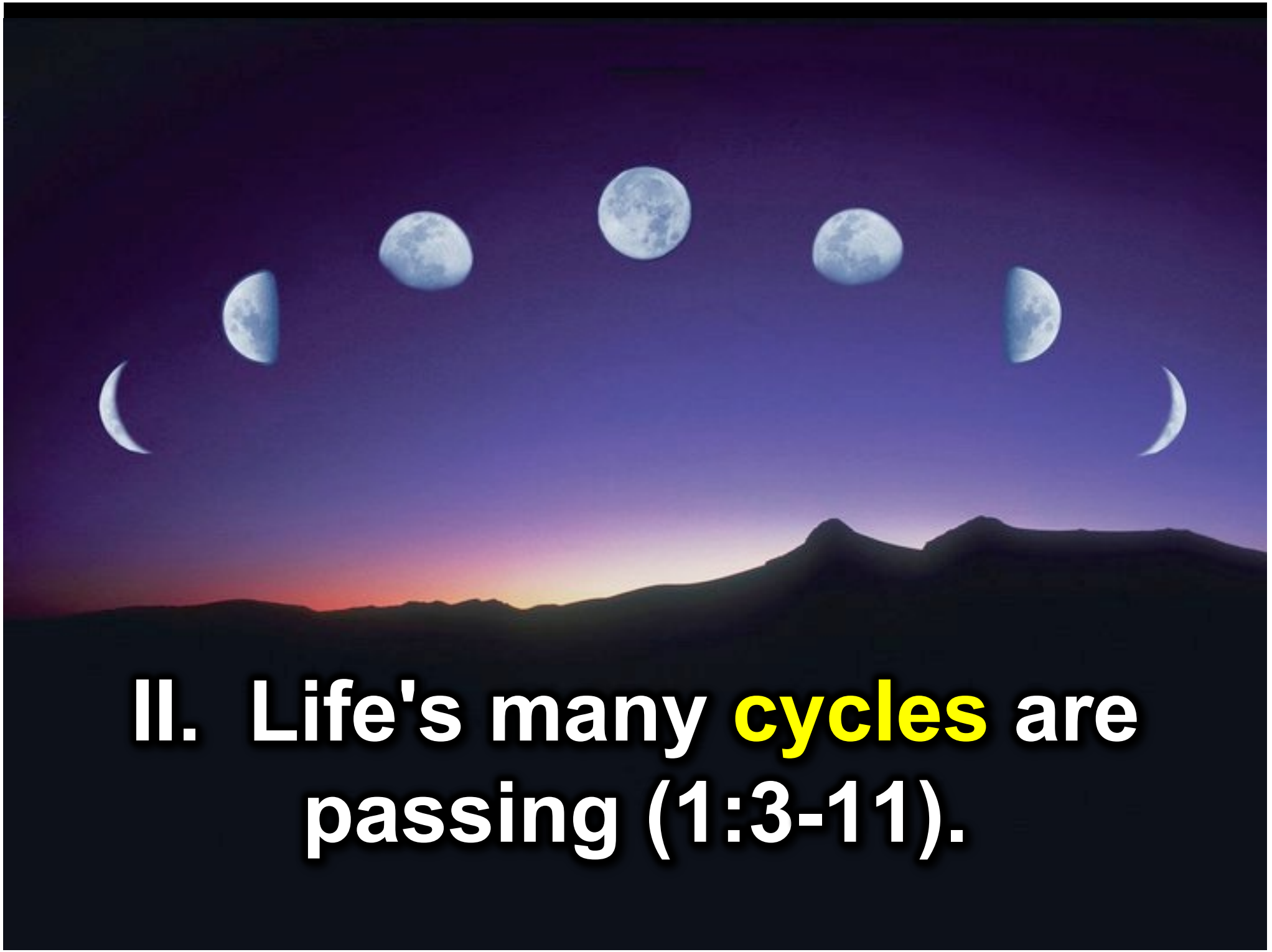
Life's short-lived and fleeting cycles should move us to seek God.


Fleeting
Futile
Find
God
(12:1)
&
Fear
God
(12:13)

I. Every human endeavor is short-lived (1:2).



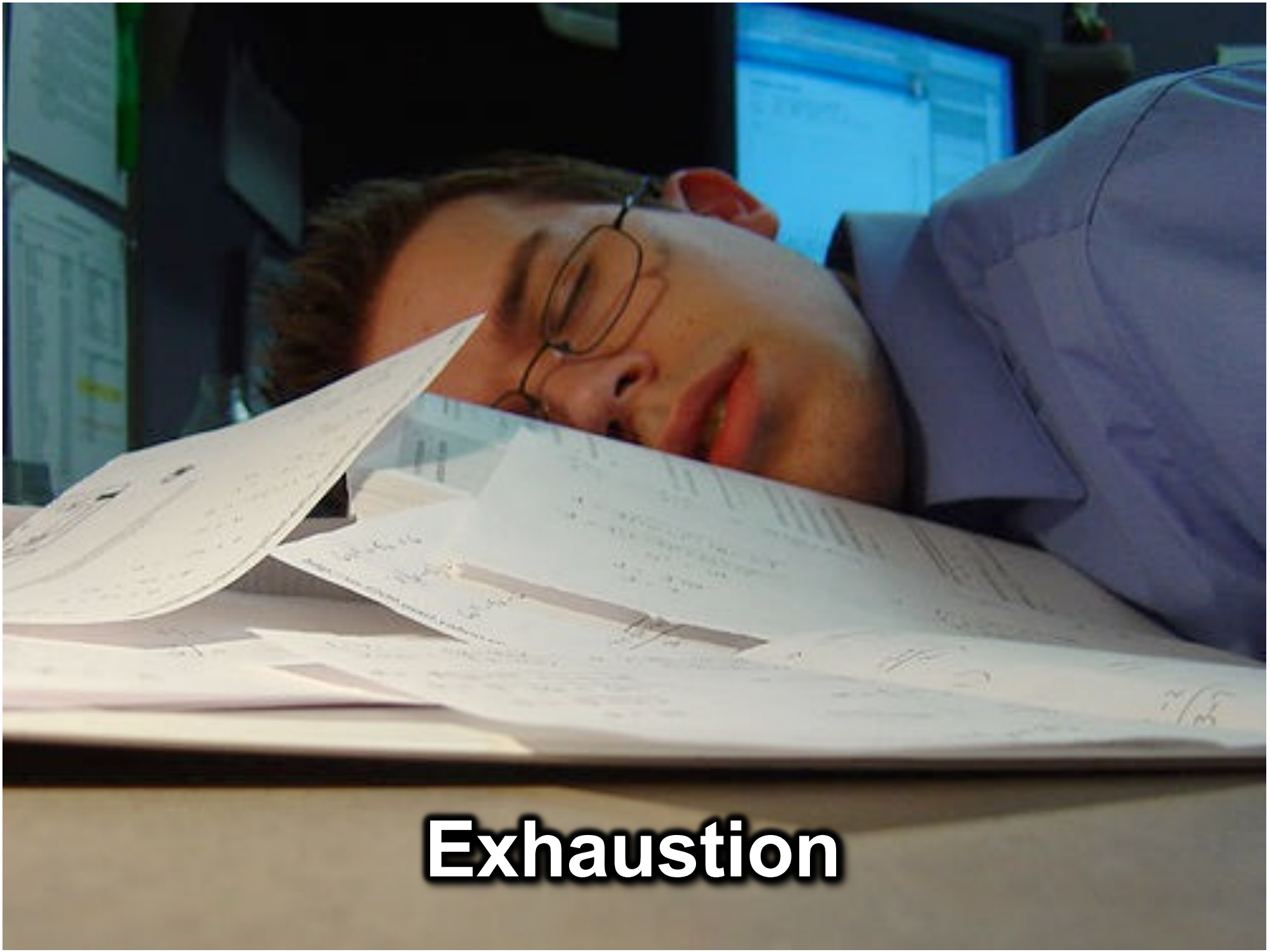


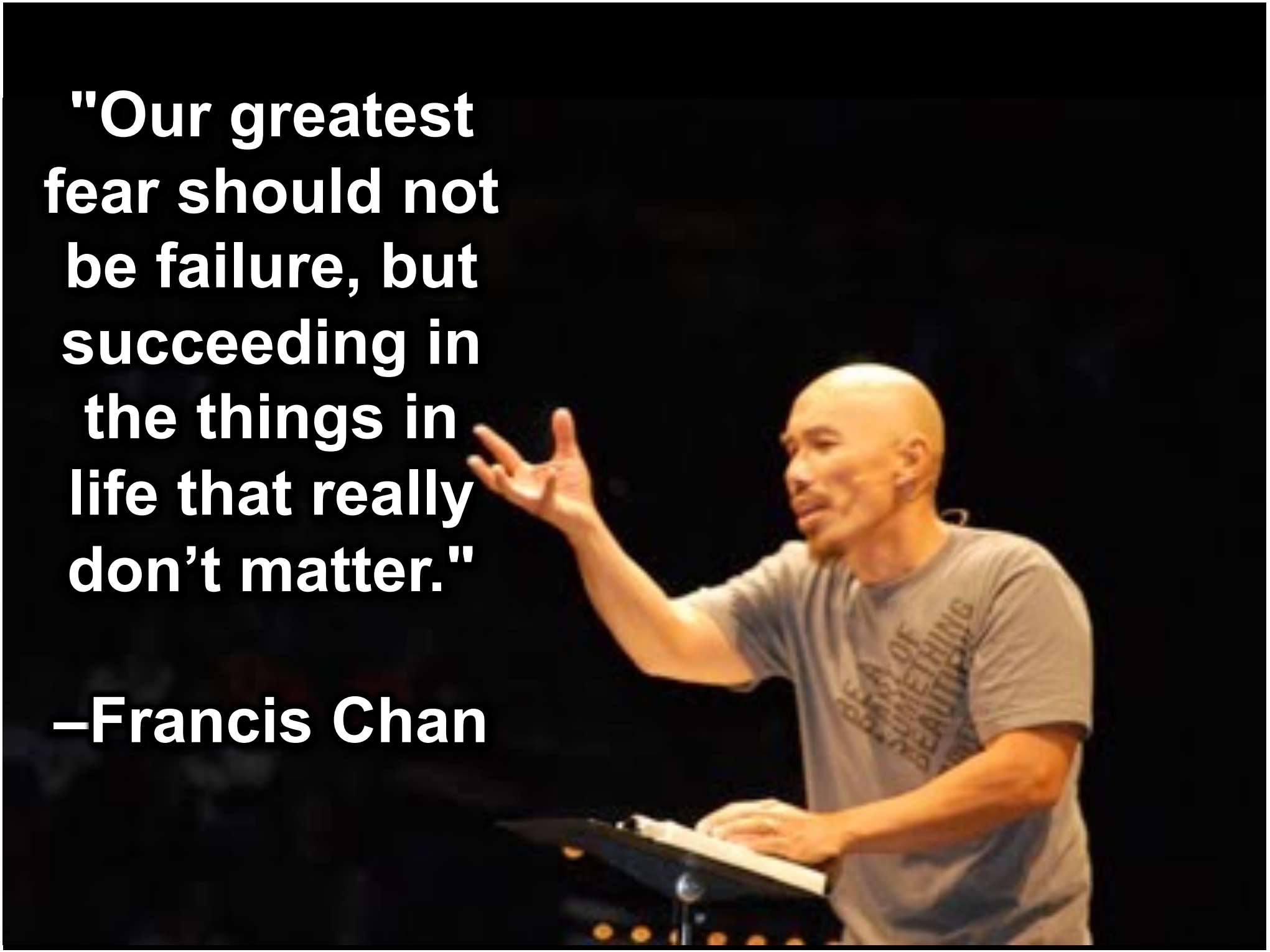

II. Life's many cycles are passing (1:3-11).

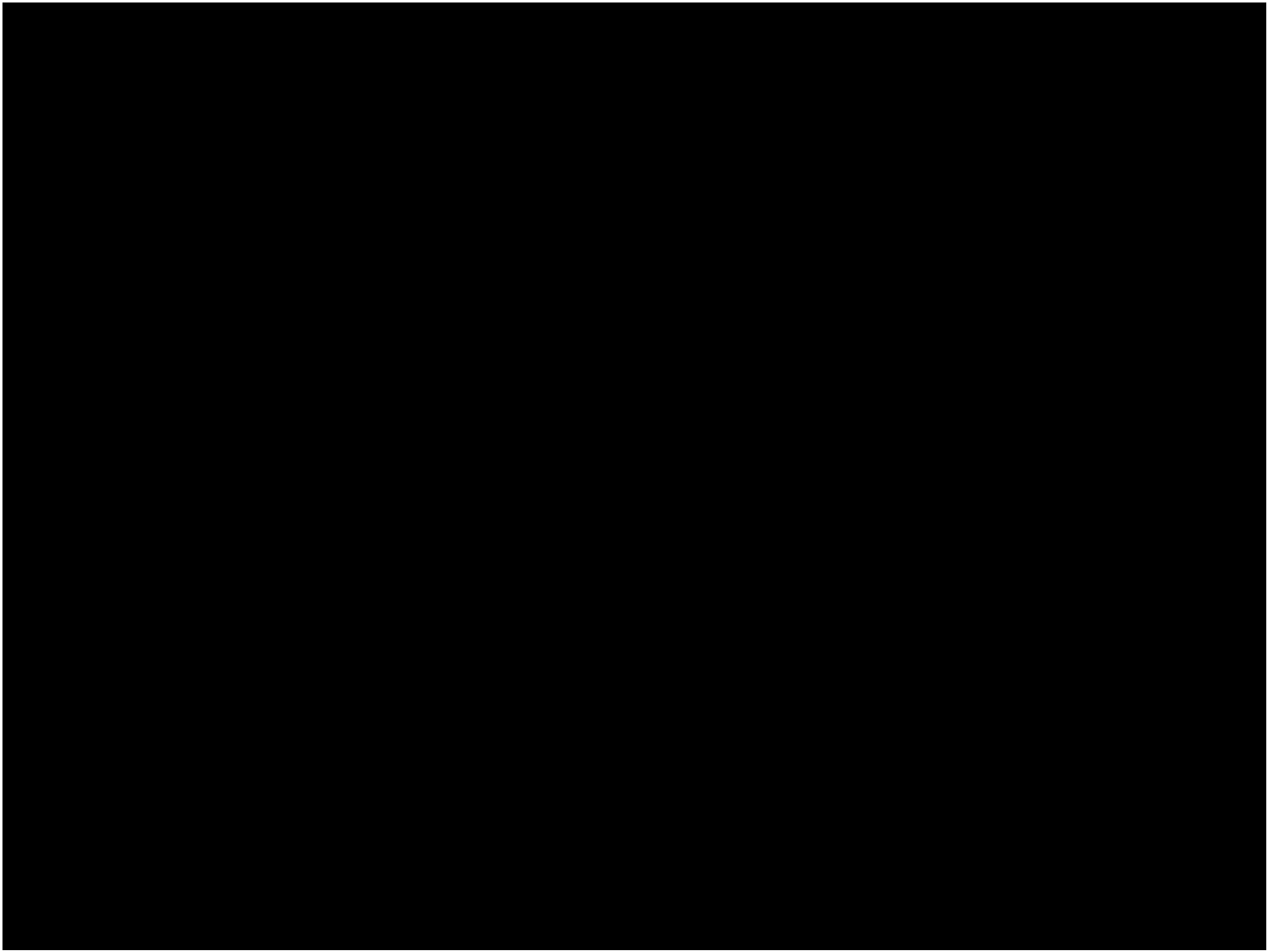
Don't get caught up in the race





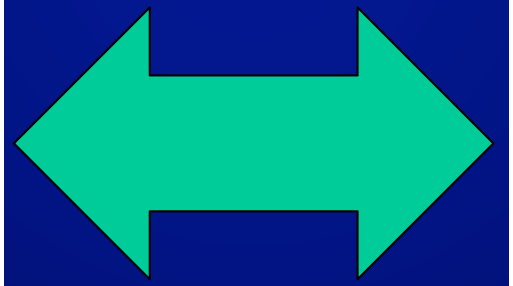

Exhaustion


"Our greatest fear should not be failure, but succeeding in the things in life that really don't matter."
–Francis Chan



How can we do both?

enjoy life



fear God

I. Live as if life is fleeting (1:1-11).



II. Live as if work is fleeting (1:12–6:9).



Ecclesiastes

Work & Wisdom Don't Last

Theme: Fleeting Nature of…	Work	Wisdom	Youth
1:1-11	1:12–6:9	6:10–11:6	11:7–12:14
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Cycles	Work	Ignorance	Aging
Place: Earth ("under the sun") about 935 BC			



Profitless Pursuits

Ecclesiastes 1:12–2:11

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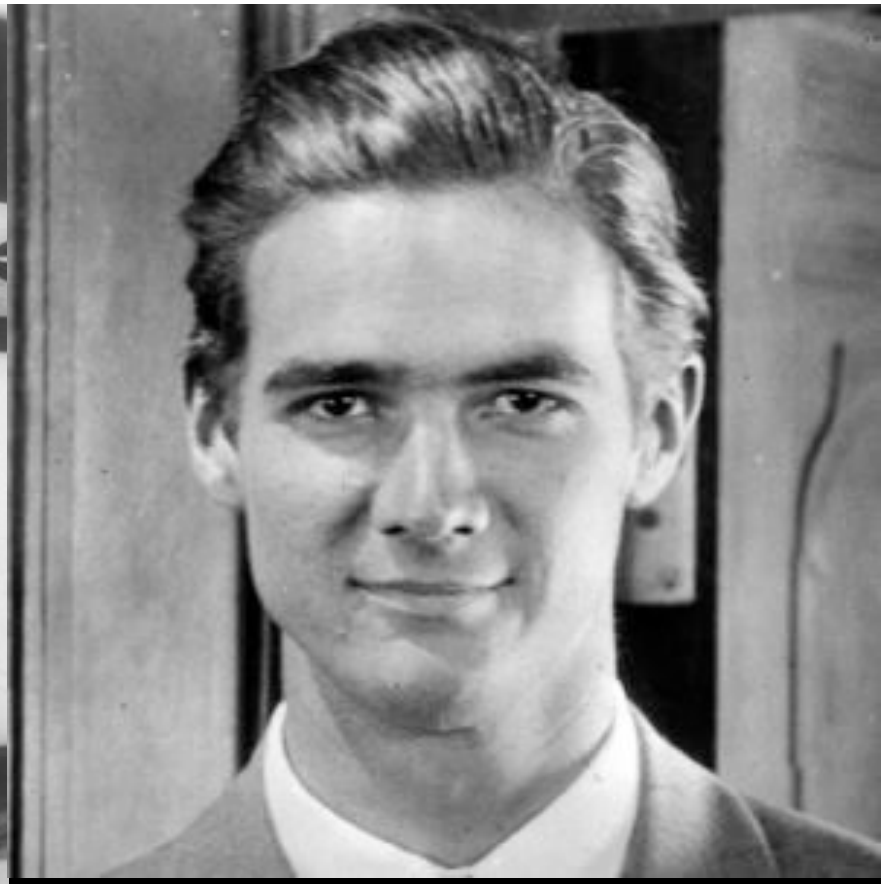


Howard Hughes (1905-1976)

HUGHES

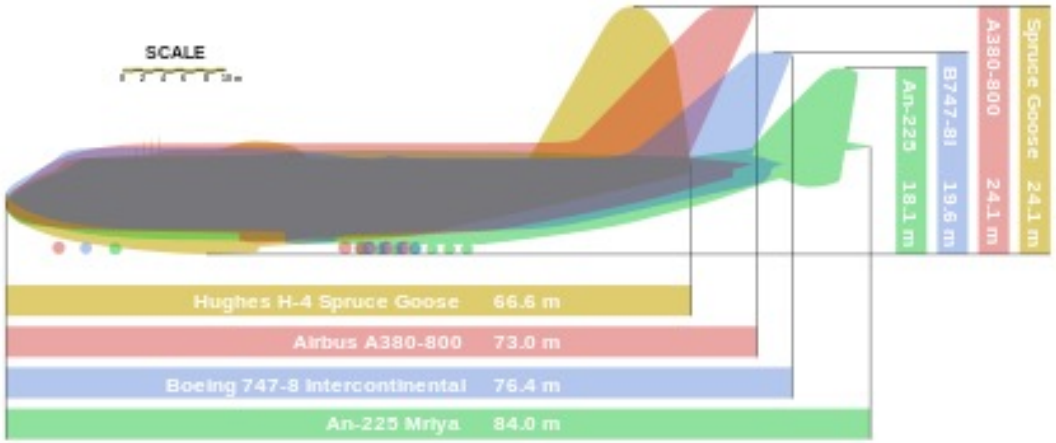
HUGHES AIRCRAFT COMPANY

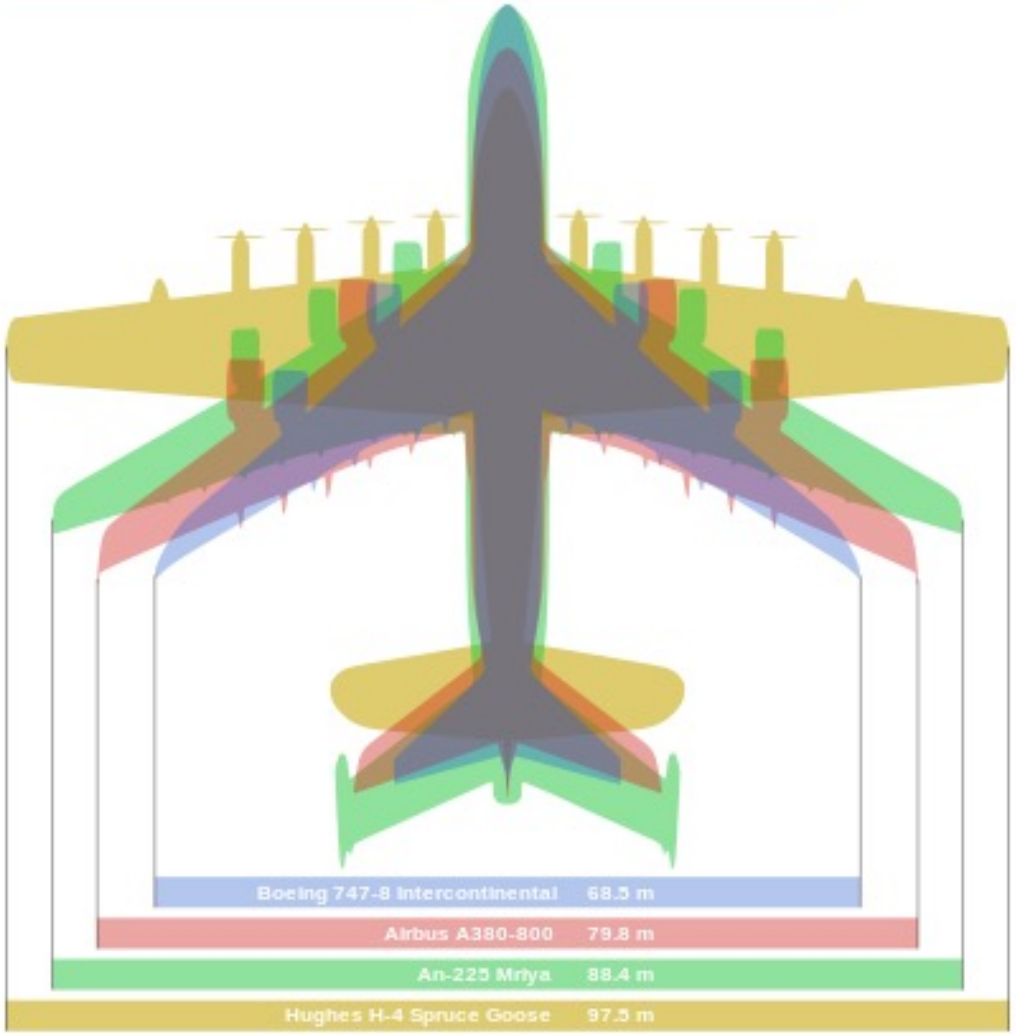


H-4 Hercules 2

H-4 Hercules 2 had the longest wingspan ever!

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Giant_planes_comparison.svg







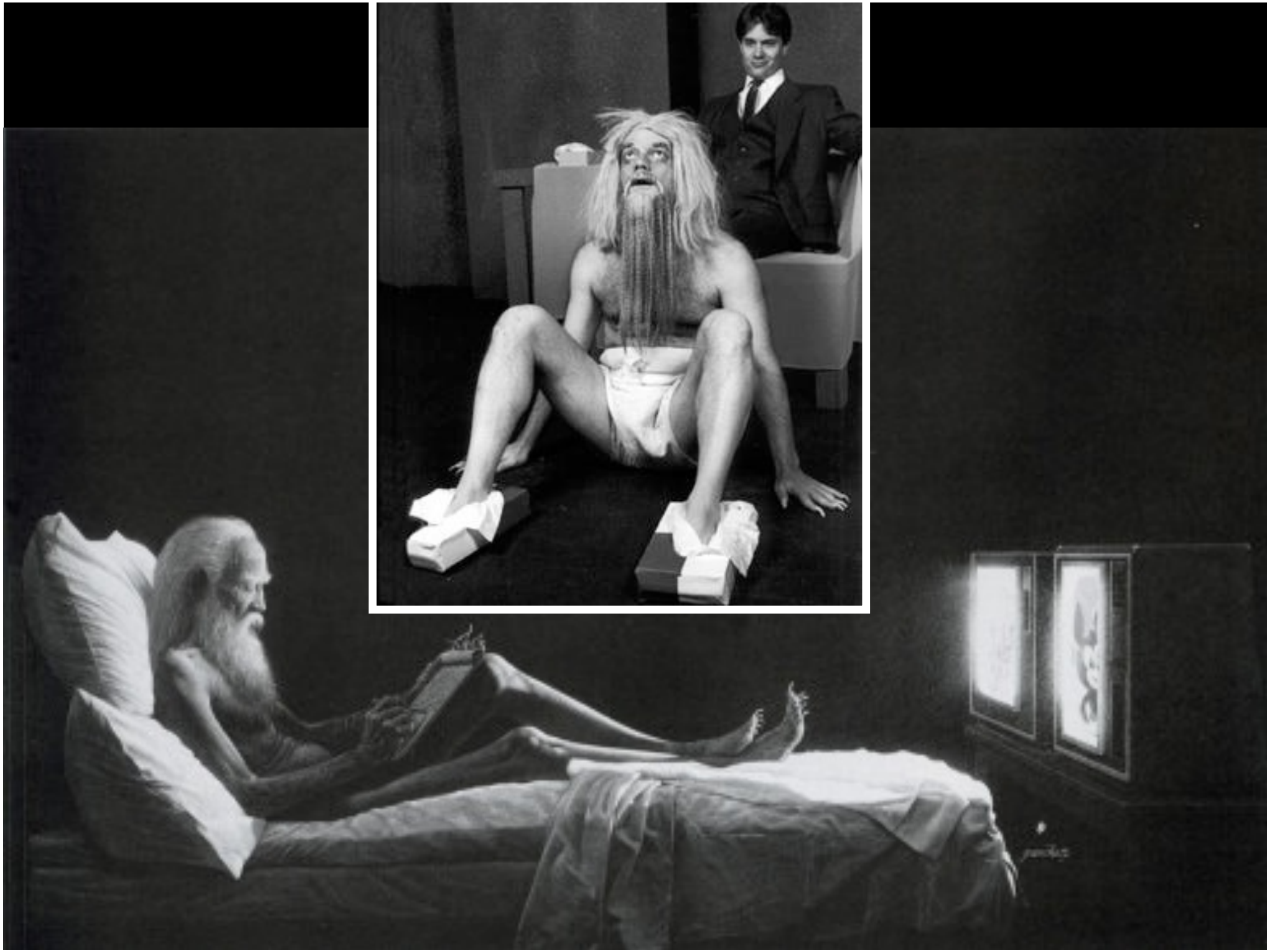
The "Spruce Goose" (1947)


Billie Dove
Bette Davis
Ava Gardner
Olivia de Havilland
Katharine Hepburn
Ginger Rogers
Gene Tierney
Joan Fontaine
Women, Women, Women!


Terry Moore
(disputed wife
from 1949-76)
Jean Peters
(3rd wife from
1957-71)
Bessie Love
(mistress in his
1st marriage)

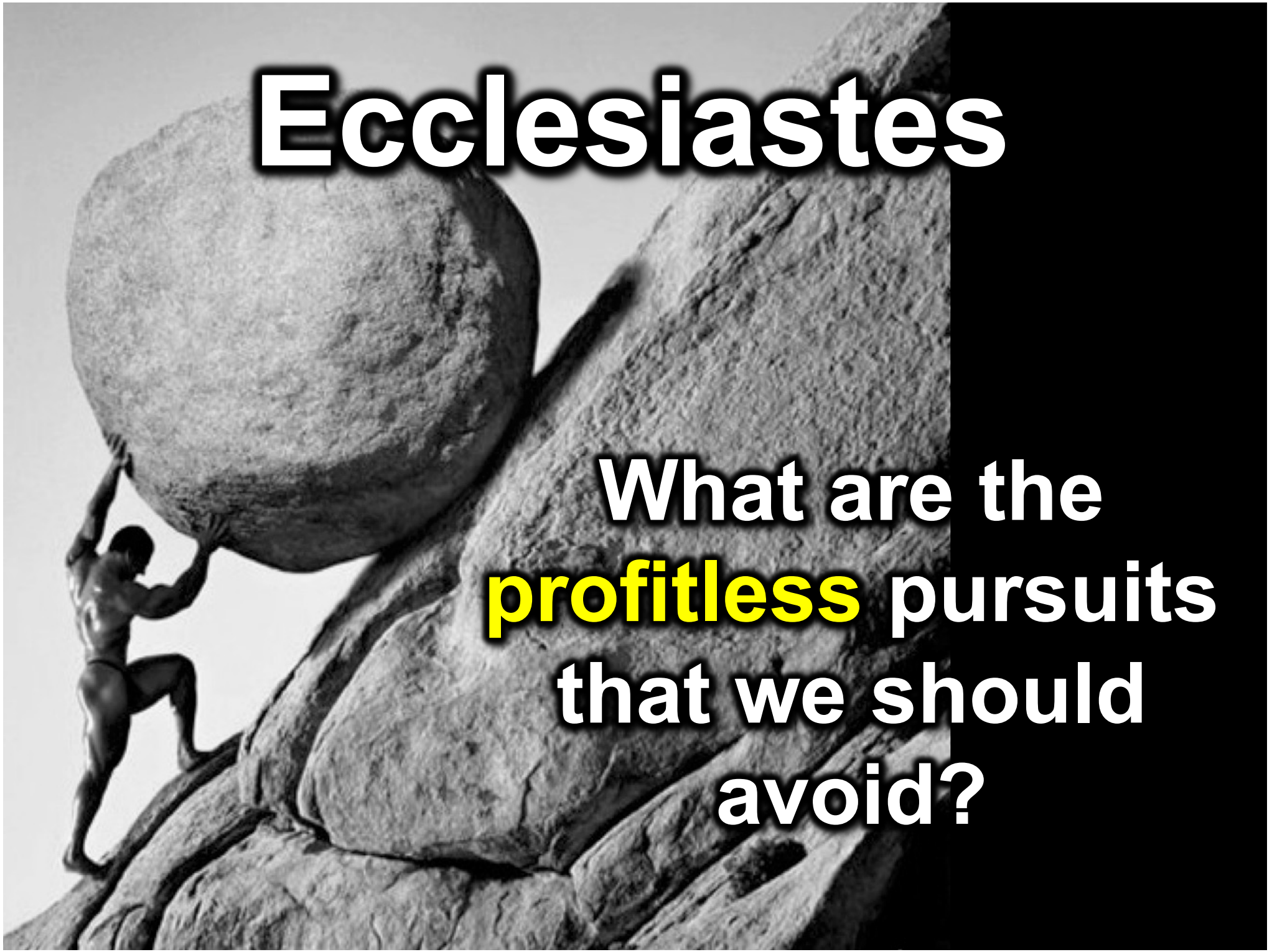


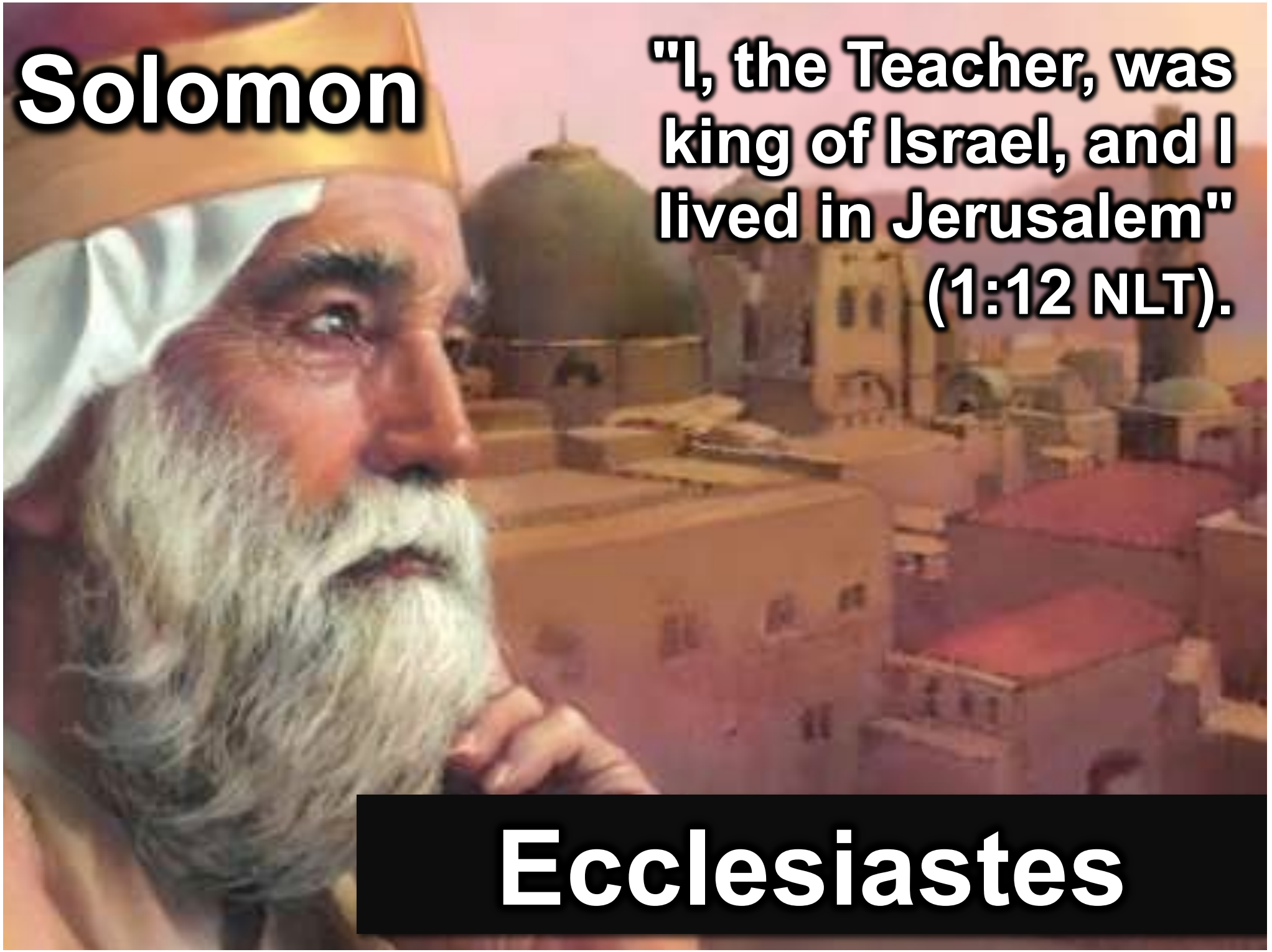
The Desert Inn, Las Vegas

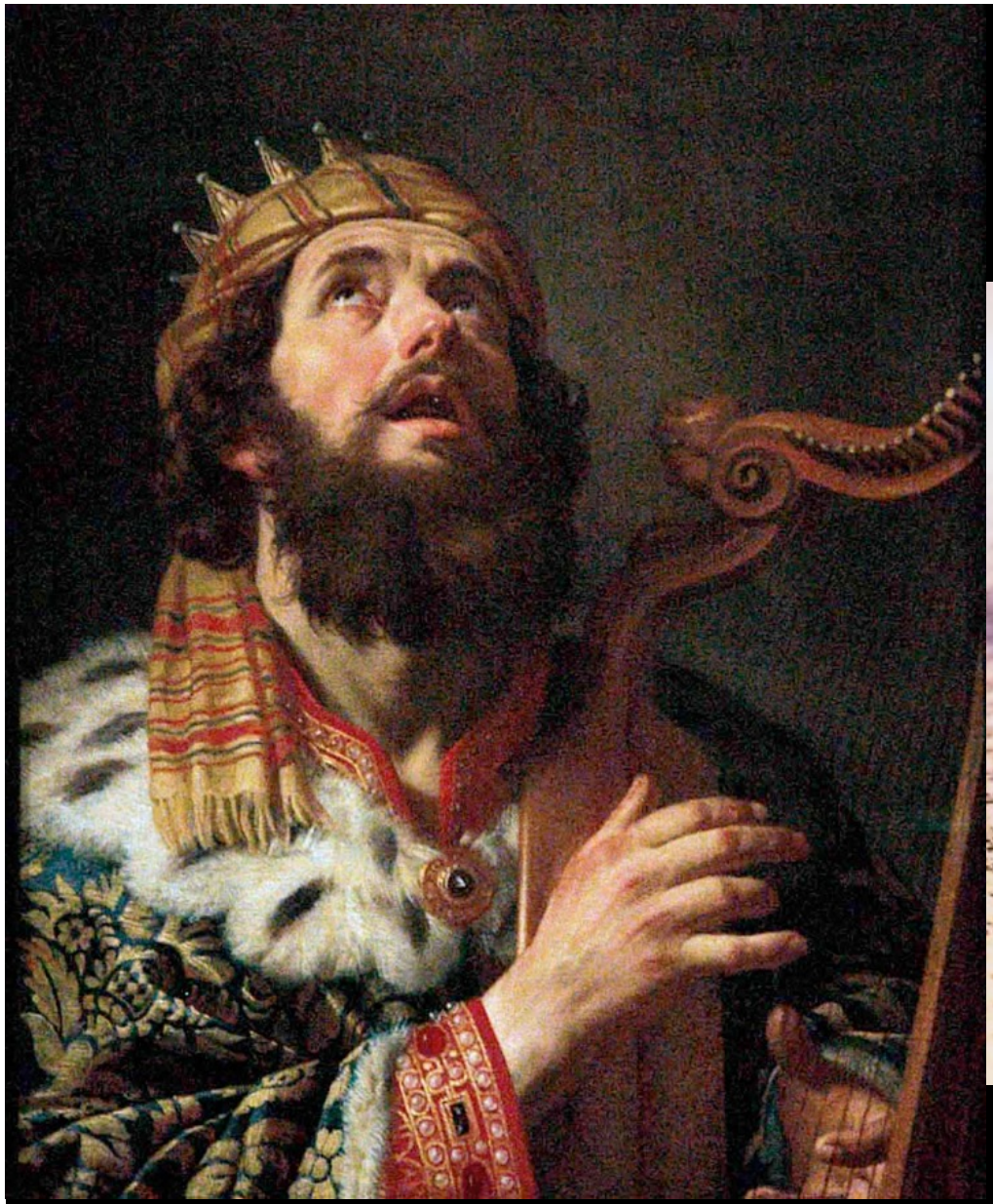



HOWARD
ROBARD
HUGHES, JR.
DECEMBER 24 1905
APRIL 5 1976


Ecclesiastes
The Fleeting Nature of Human Achievement & Wisdom

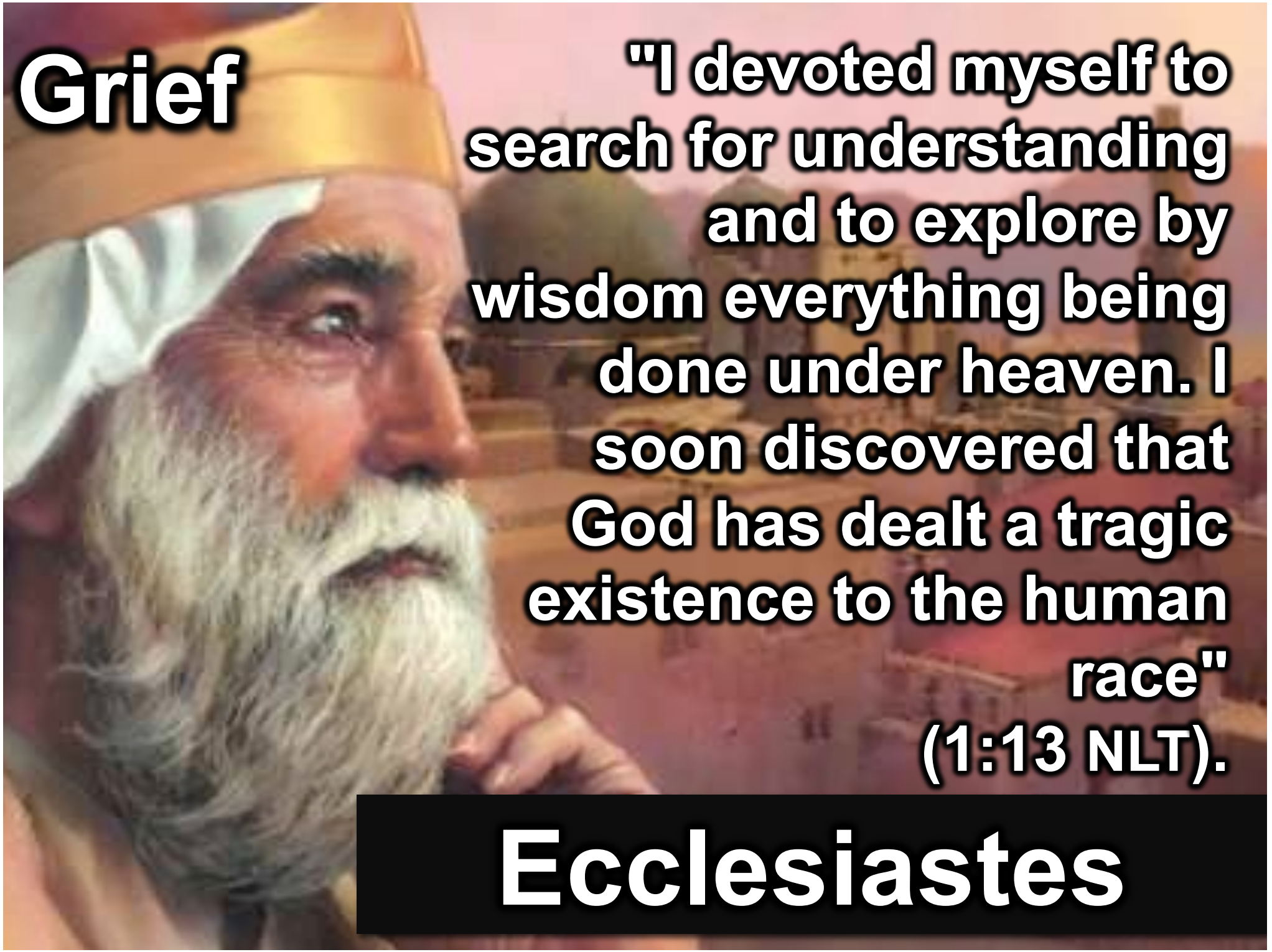

Ecclesiastes
What are the profitless pursuits that we should avoid?

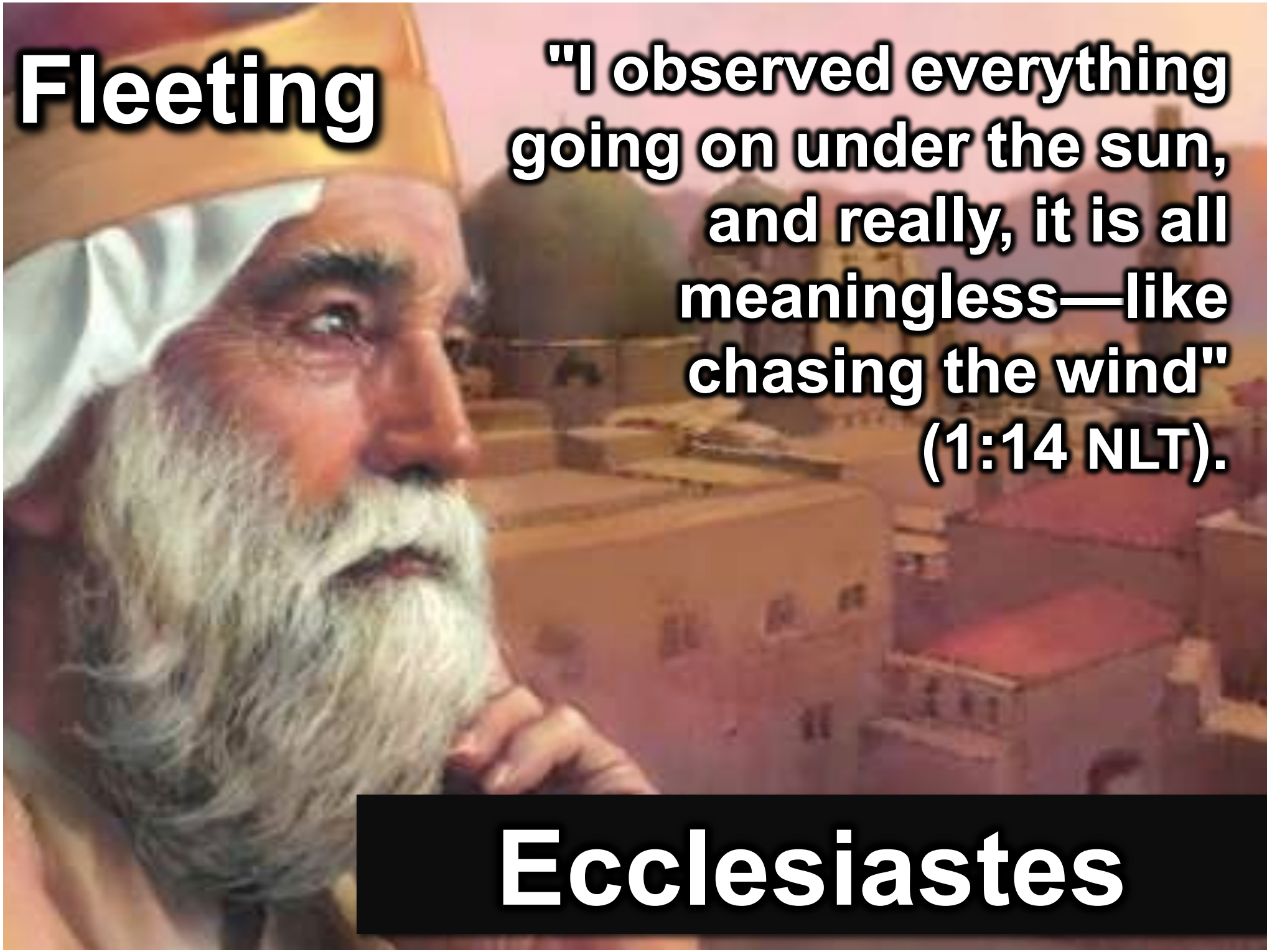

Solomon
"I, the Teacher, was king of Israel, and I lived in Jerusalem" (1:12 NLT).
Ecclesiastes

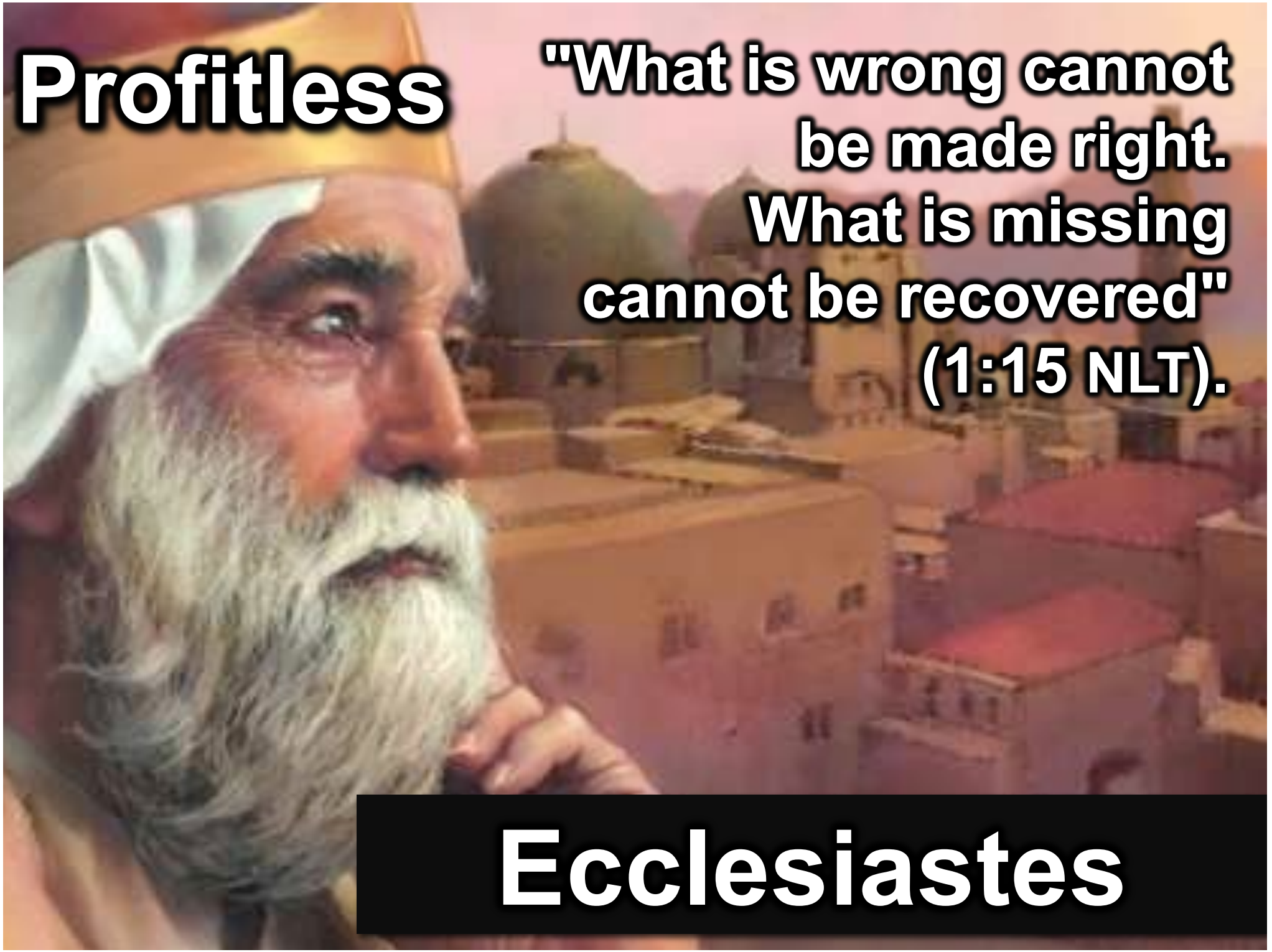




Israel's Golden Age


Grief
"I devoted myself to search for understanding and to explore by wisdom everything being done under heaven. I soon discovered that God has dealt a tragic existence to the human race"
(1:13 NLT).
Ecclesiastes


Fleeting
"I observed everything going on under the sun, and really, it is all meaningless—like chasing the wind" (1:14 NLT).
Ecclesiastes


Profitless
"What is wrong cannot be made right. What is missing cannot be recovered" (1:15 NLT).
Ecclesiastes

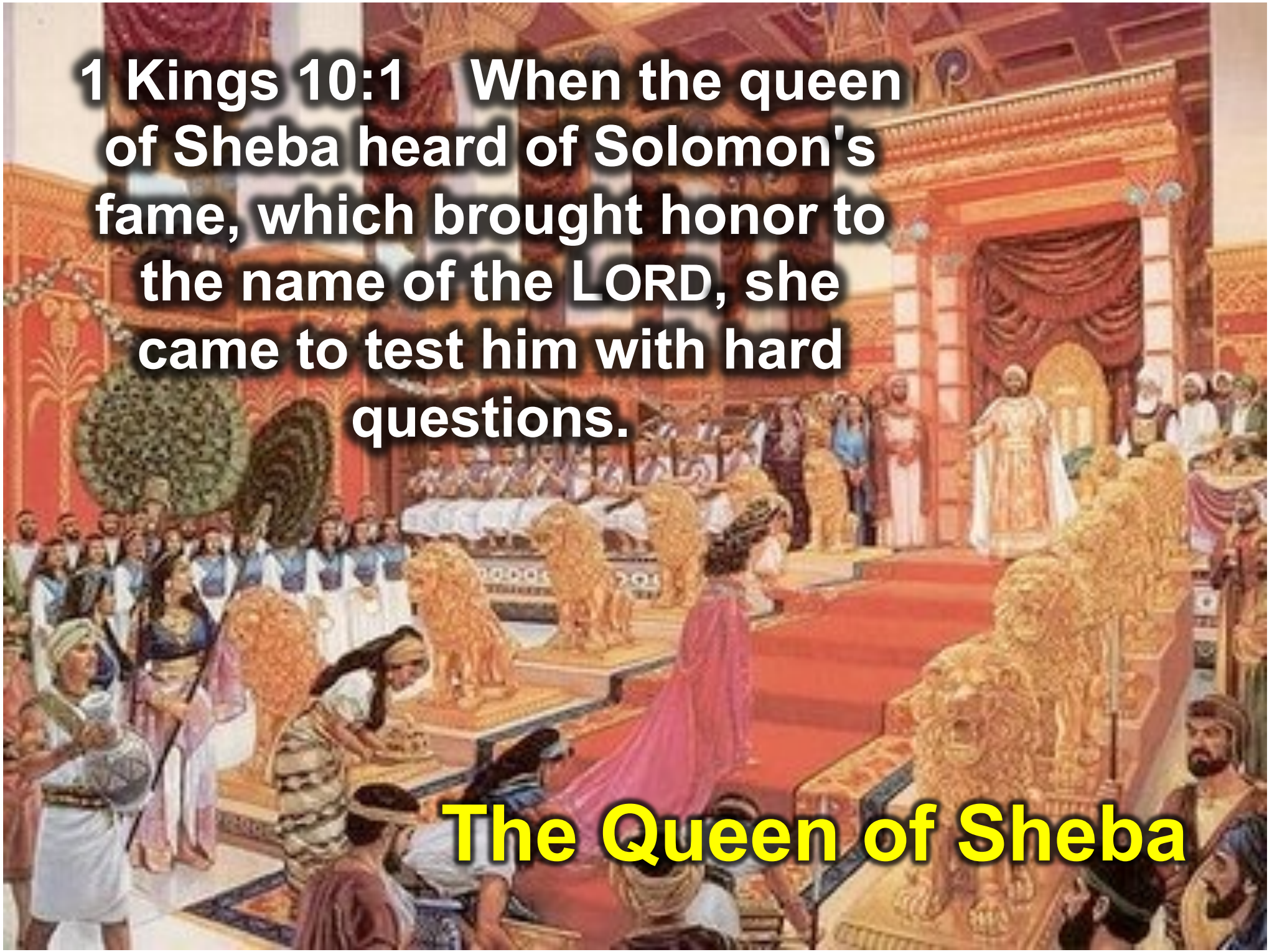

Let's see
5 of
them...
Profitless Pursuits
Under the Sun


1. Prudence doesn't satisfy
(1:16-18; 2:12-16).

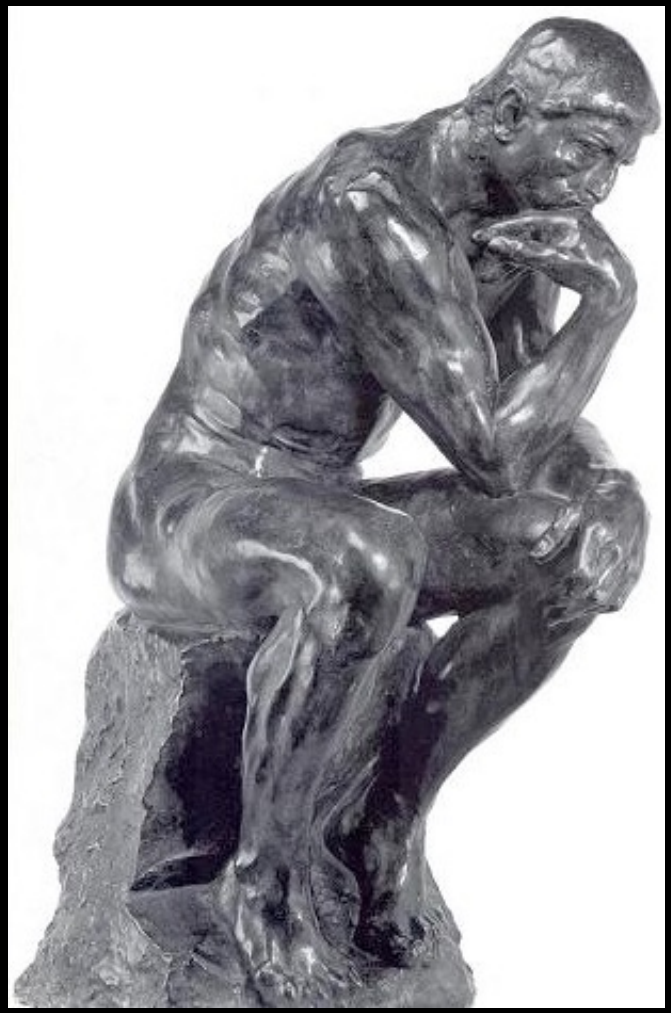
Many sought his wisdom






1 Kings 10:1 When the queen of Sheba heard of Solomon's fame, which brought honor to the name of the LORD, she came to test him with hard questions.
The Queen of Sheba

Wisdom is Fleeting



- Wisdom

Pain

- Doubt



Pride

Ecclesiastes 2

2. Pleasure doesn't satisfy (2:1-3).








Solomon tried pleasure (2:1).
TACA
BOHOL AIR
BA
"I said to myself, 'Come on, let's try pleasure. Let's look for the 'good things' in life.' But I found that this, too, was meaningless"

Solomon tried pleasure in humor (2:2).

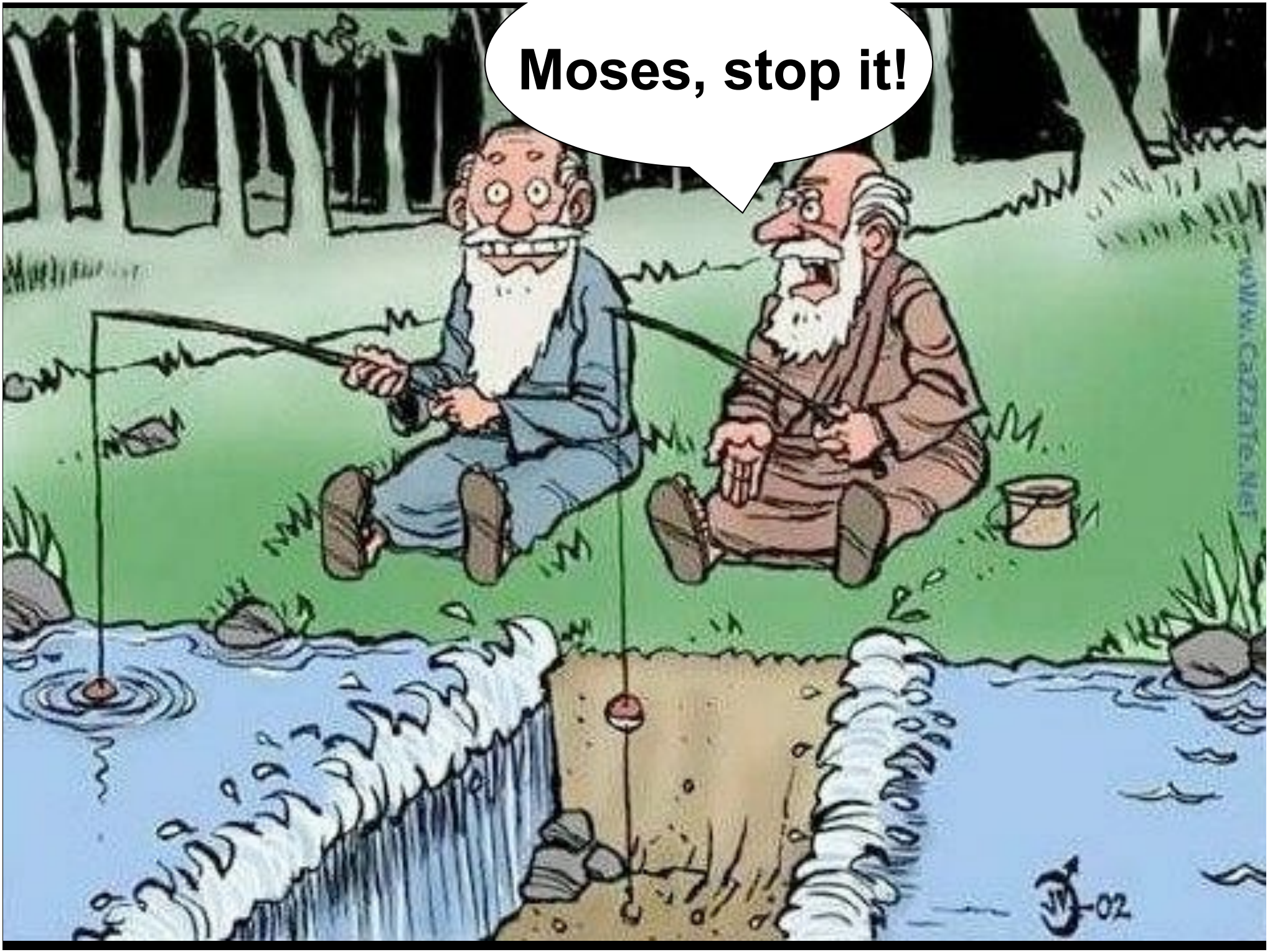
"So I said, 'Laughter is silly. What good does it do to seek pleasure?'"





MILITARY HUMOR

You gotta love it…


Moses, stop it!
WWW.CAZZATE.NET
02


Christians ought to love to laugh!

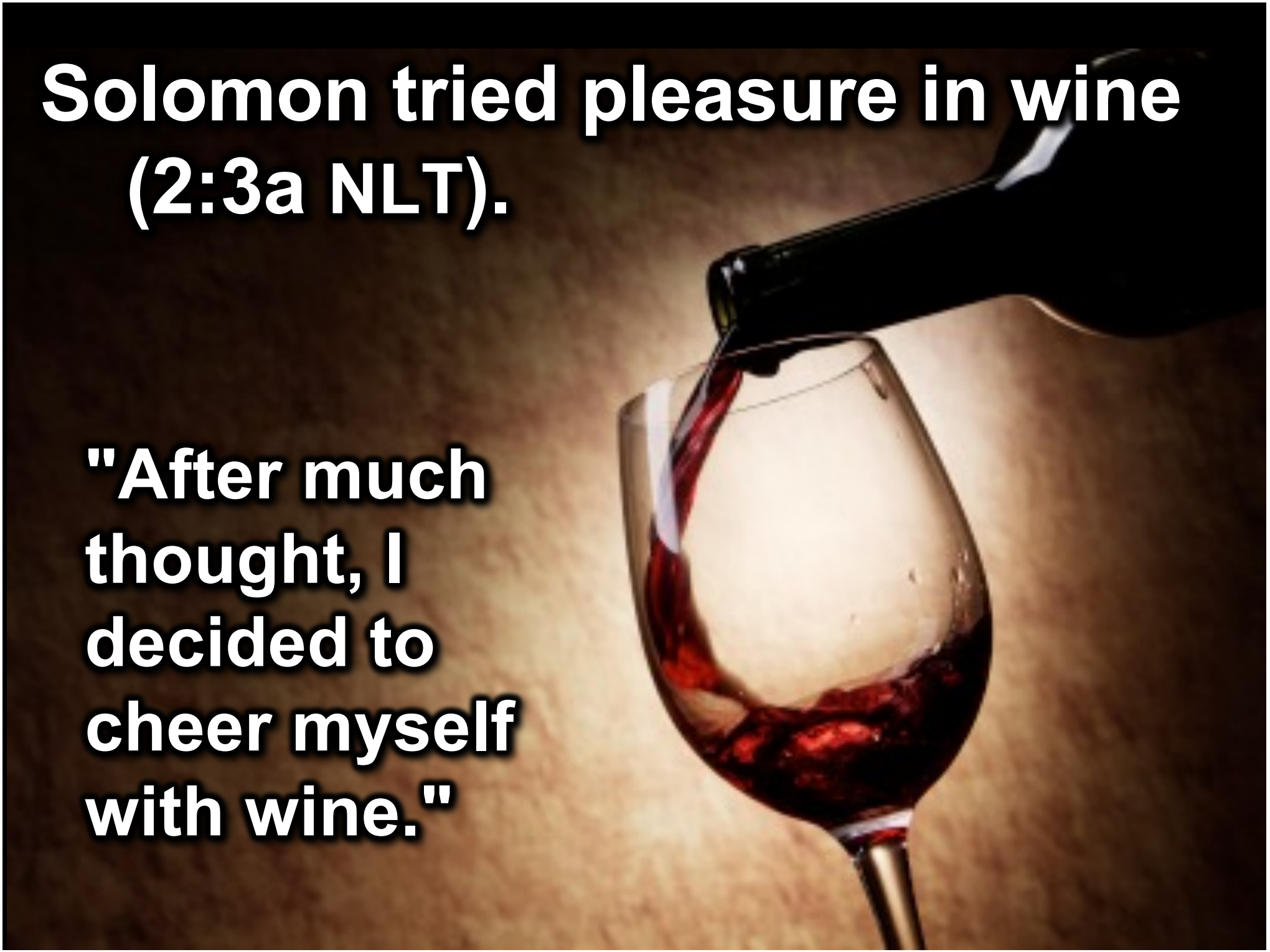

Garbonzo the
Clown

What do you laugh about?



"By nothing do men show their character more than by the things they laugh at."

—Goethe


Solomon tried pleasure in wine (2:3a NLT).
"After much thought, I decided to cheer myself with wine."

The secret to enjoying a good wine:



1. Open the bottle to allow it to breathe.

2. If it does not look like it's breathing, give it mouth-to-mouth.

Wine a little.
It'll make
you feel better.



People say that drinking milk makes you stronger.

Drink 5 glasses of milk and try to move a wall. Can't?

Now drink 5 glasses of wine. The wall moves all by itself!

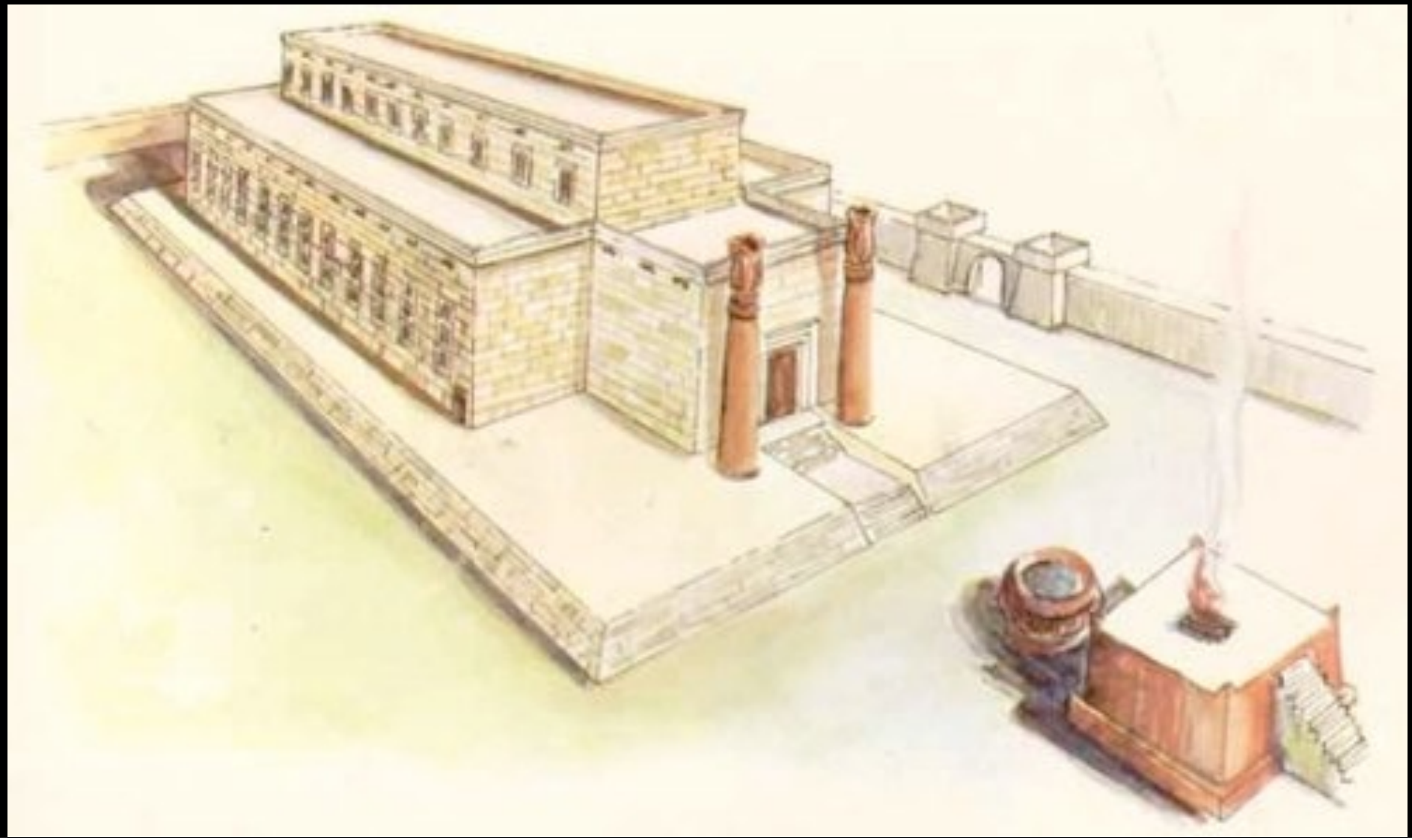
Solomon tried pleasure in foolishness (2:3b NLT).



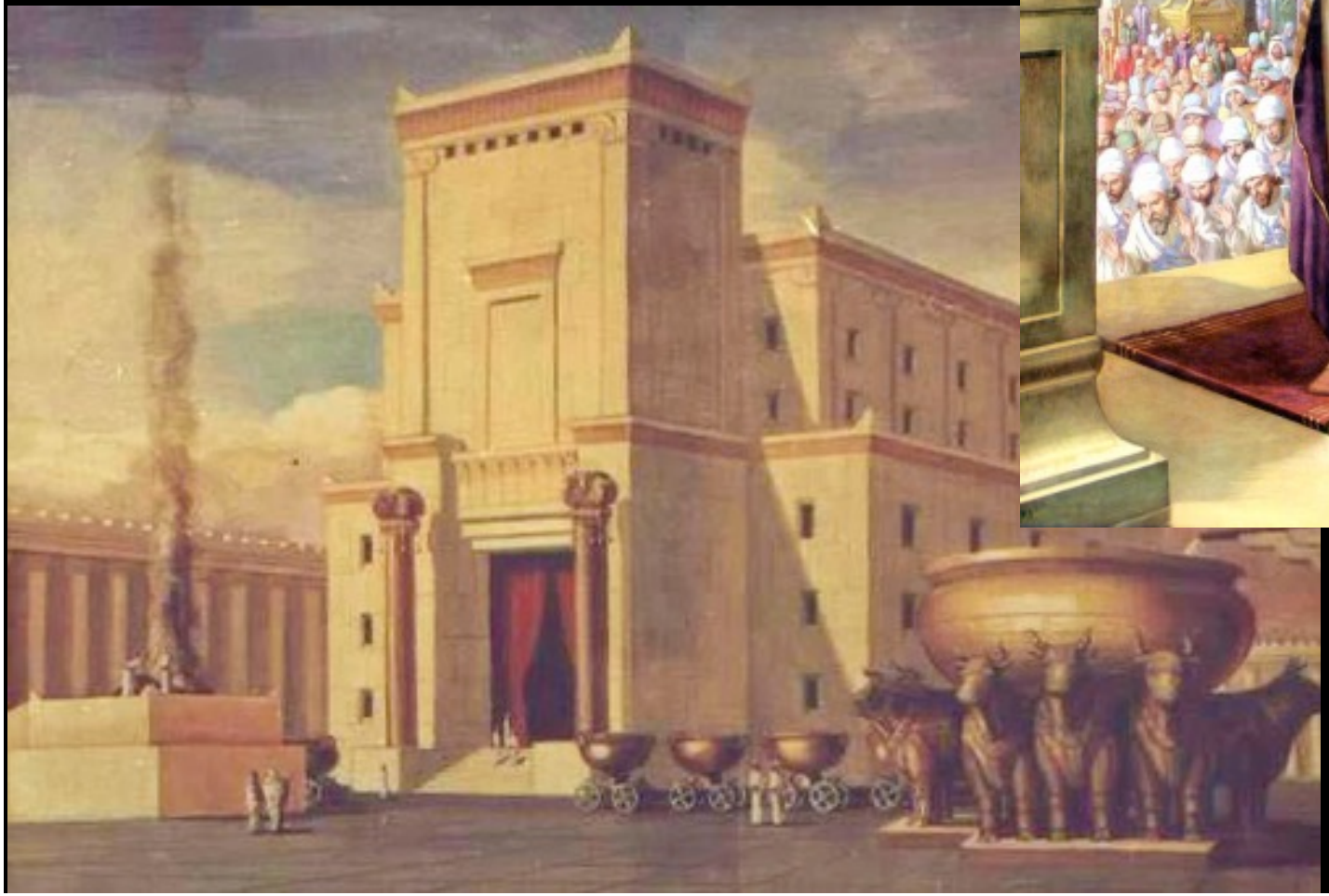
"And while still seeking wisdom, I clutched at foolishness. In this way, I tried to experience the only happiness most people find during their brief life in this world."



3. Projects don't satisfy (2:4-6).



The temple was his greatest project






The Great Sea was
supported by 12 oxen

Projects Passionately Pursued

Homes

"I also tried to find meaning by building huge homes for myself…" (4a NLT)



Projects Passionately Pursued

Homes

"I also tried to find meaning by building huge homes for myself…" (4a NLT)



Projects Passionately Pursued

Vineyards



"I also tried to find meaning by…planting beautiful vineyards" (2:4b NLT).

Projects Passionately Pursued



Projects Passionately Pursued

Food









"…filling them with all kinds of fruit trees" (2:5b NLT).

Projects Passionately Pursued



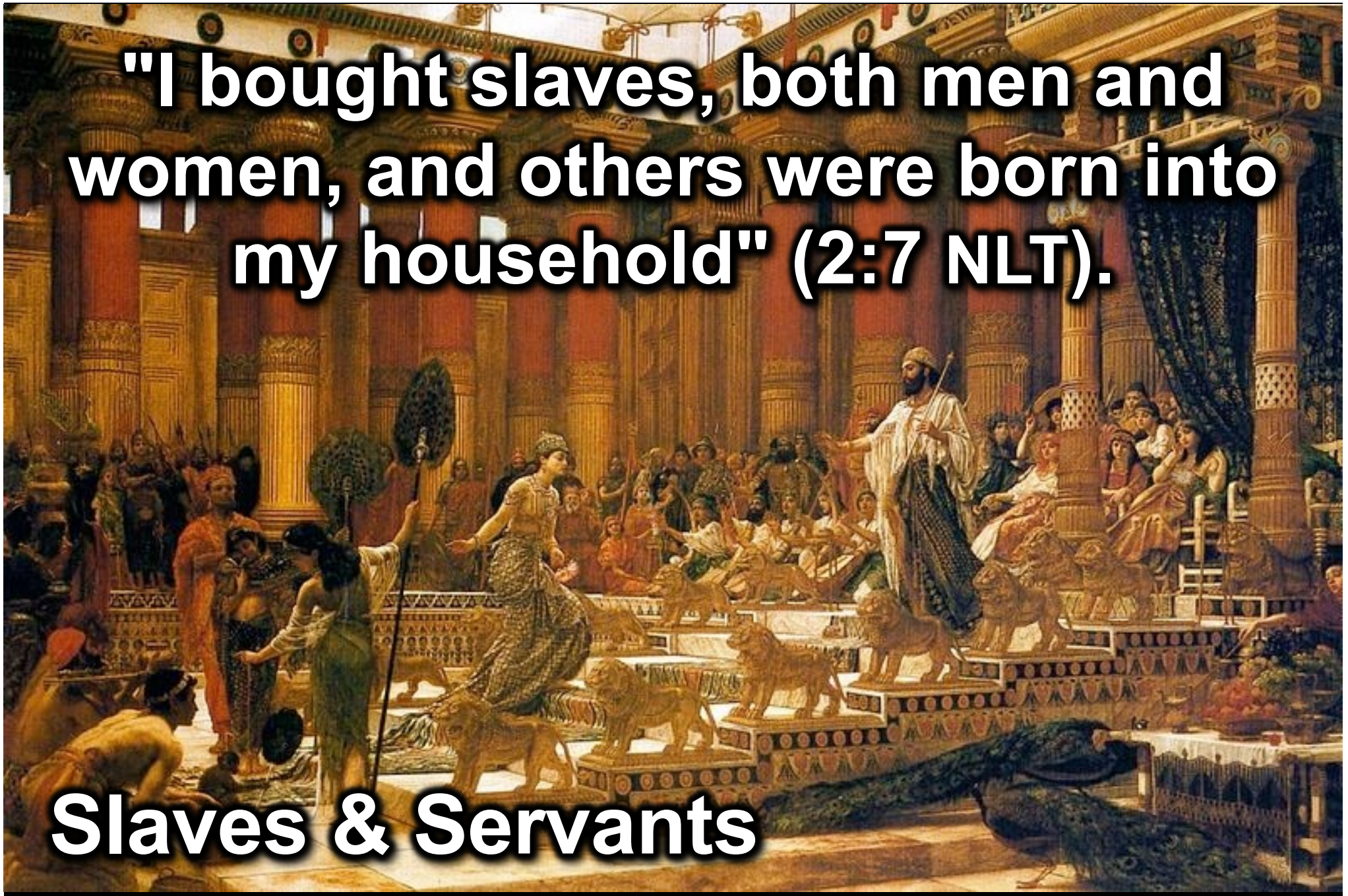
The most used word…



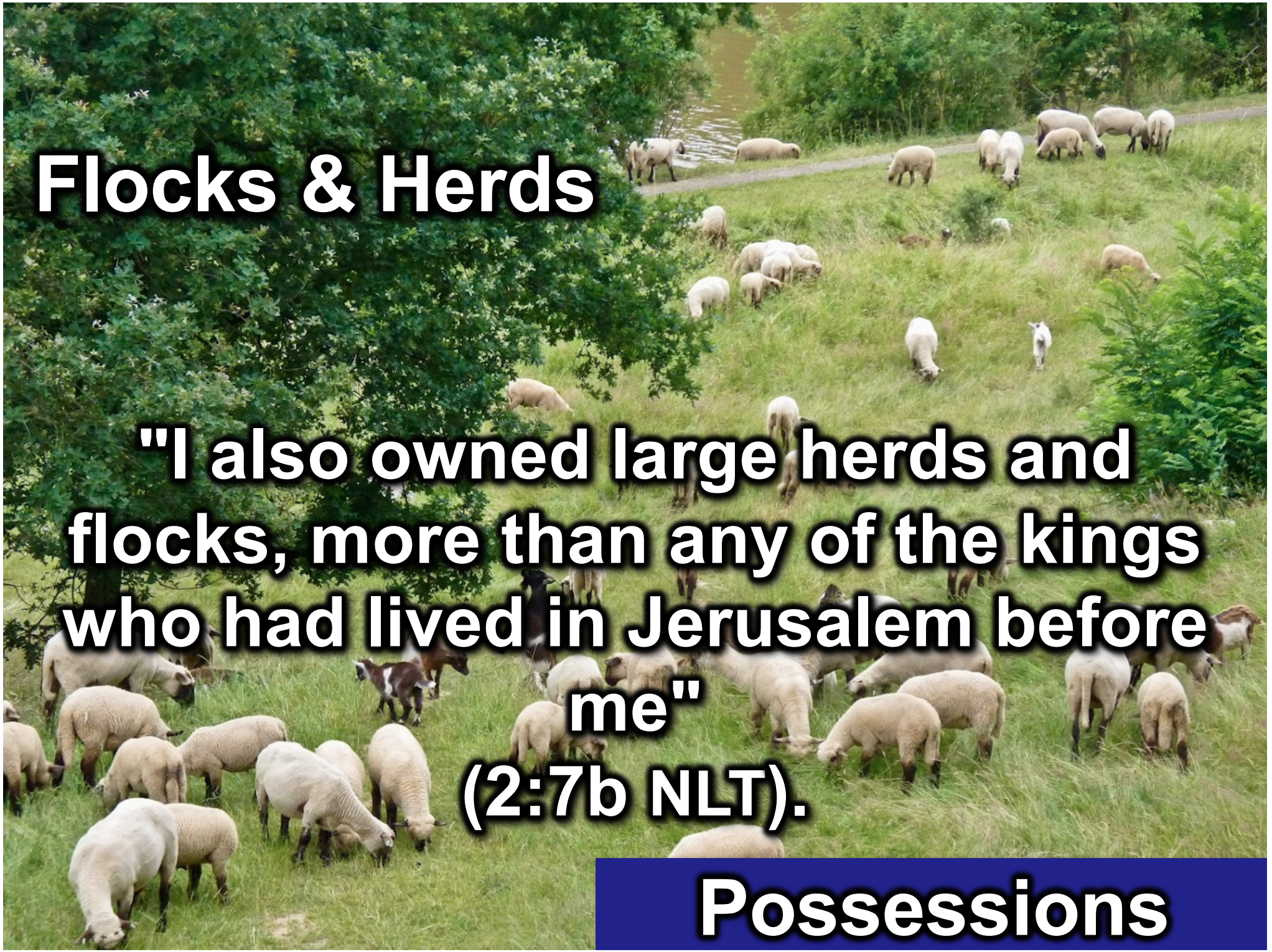
4. Possessions don't satisfy (2:7-8).




Winning?
NEW YORK
WINNING
EMPIRE STATE



Possessions


Flocks & Herds
"I also owned large herds and flocks, more than any of the kings who had lived in Jerusalem before me"
(2:7b NLT).
Possessions

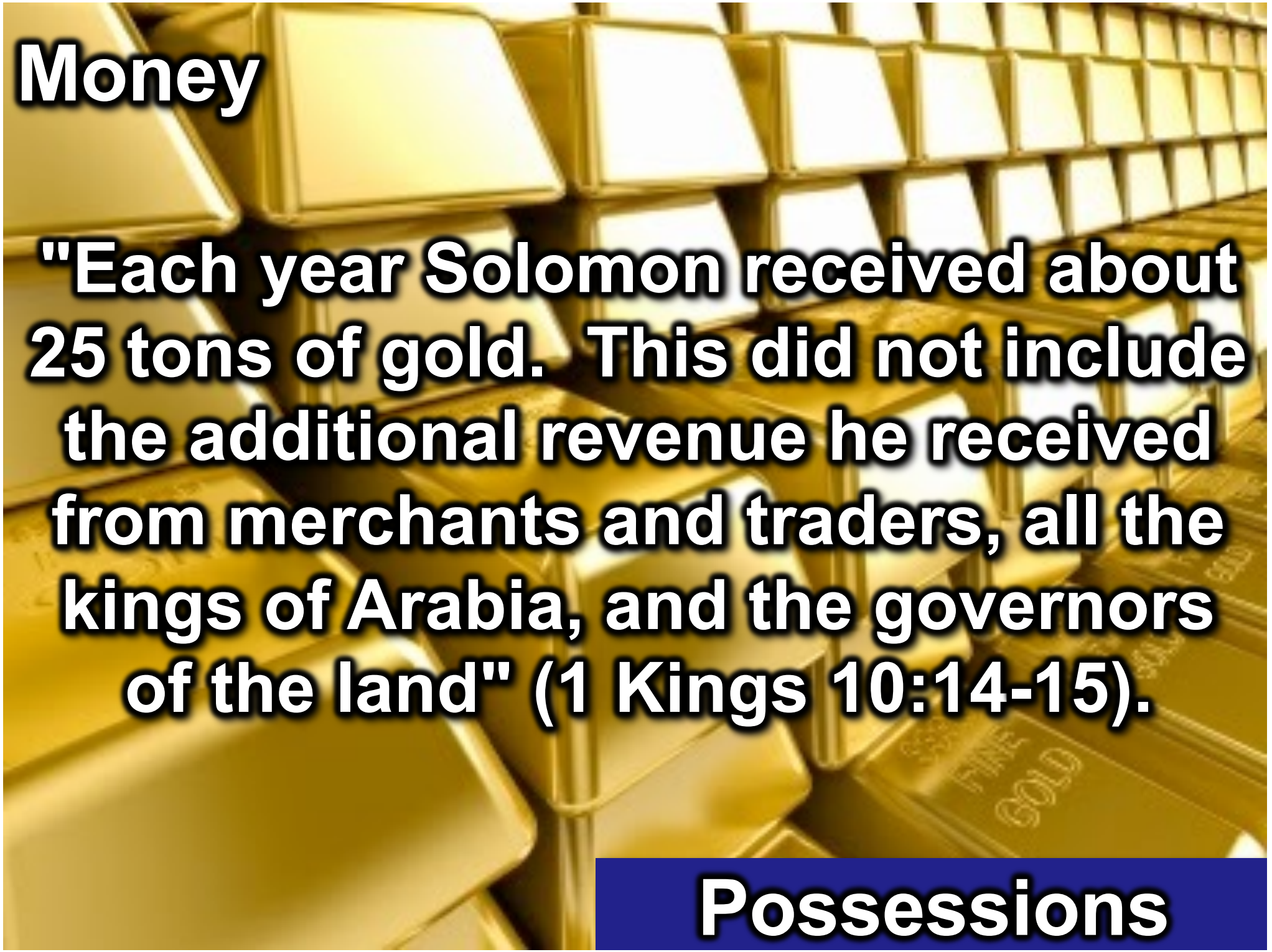

Flocks & Herds

Money

"I collected great sums of silver and gold, the treasure of many kings and provinces" (2:8a NLT).

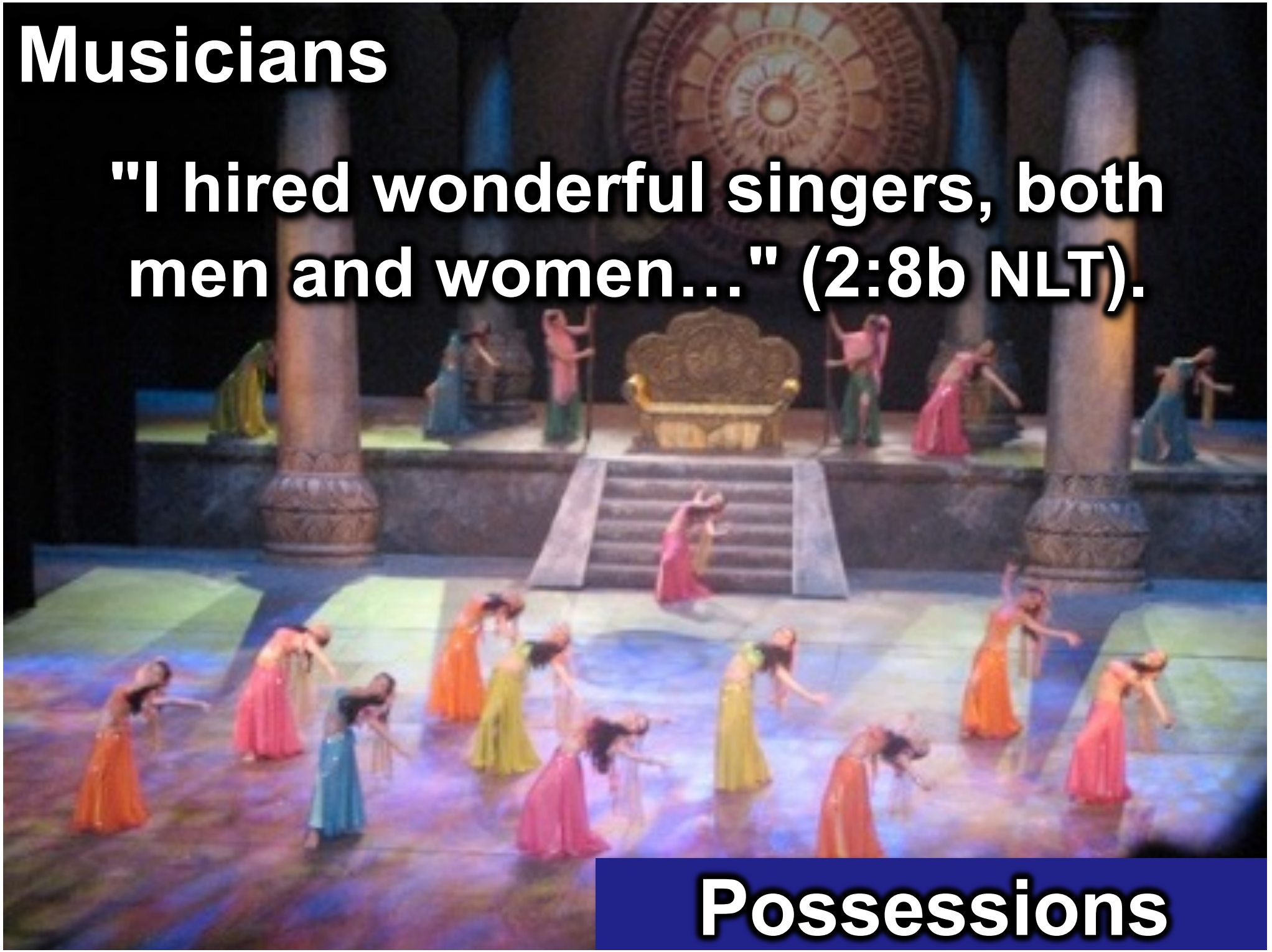


Possessions


Money
"Each year Solomon received about 25 tons of gold. This did not include the additional revenue he received from merchants and traders, all the kings of Arabia, and the governors of the land" (1 Kings 10:14-15).
Possessions



More Money = More Happiness?


Musicians
"I hired wonderful singers, both men and women…" (2:8b NLT).
Possessions



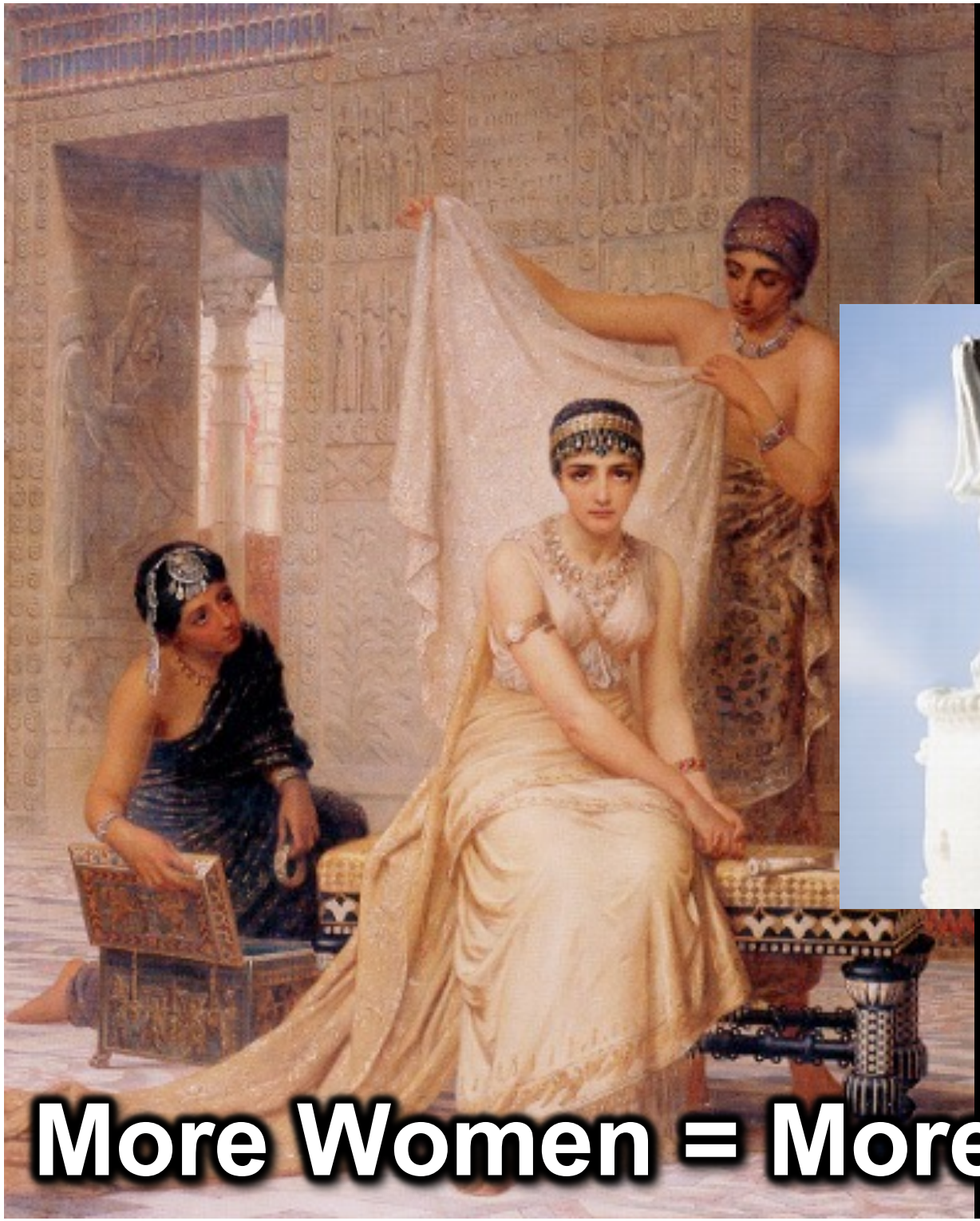
Possessions



Women and money turned Solomon's heart away



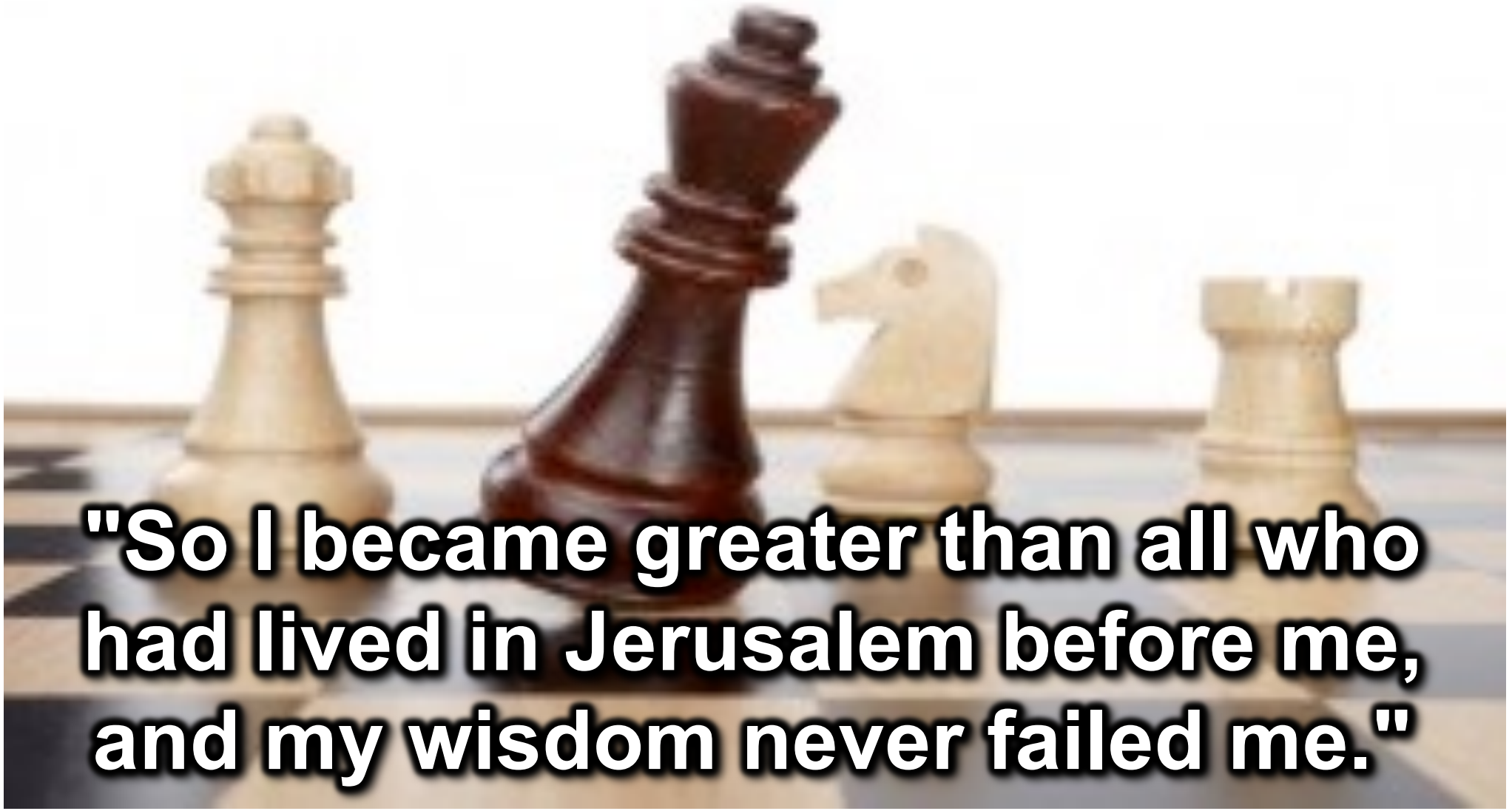


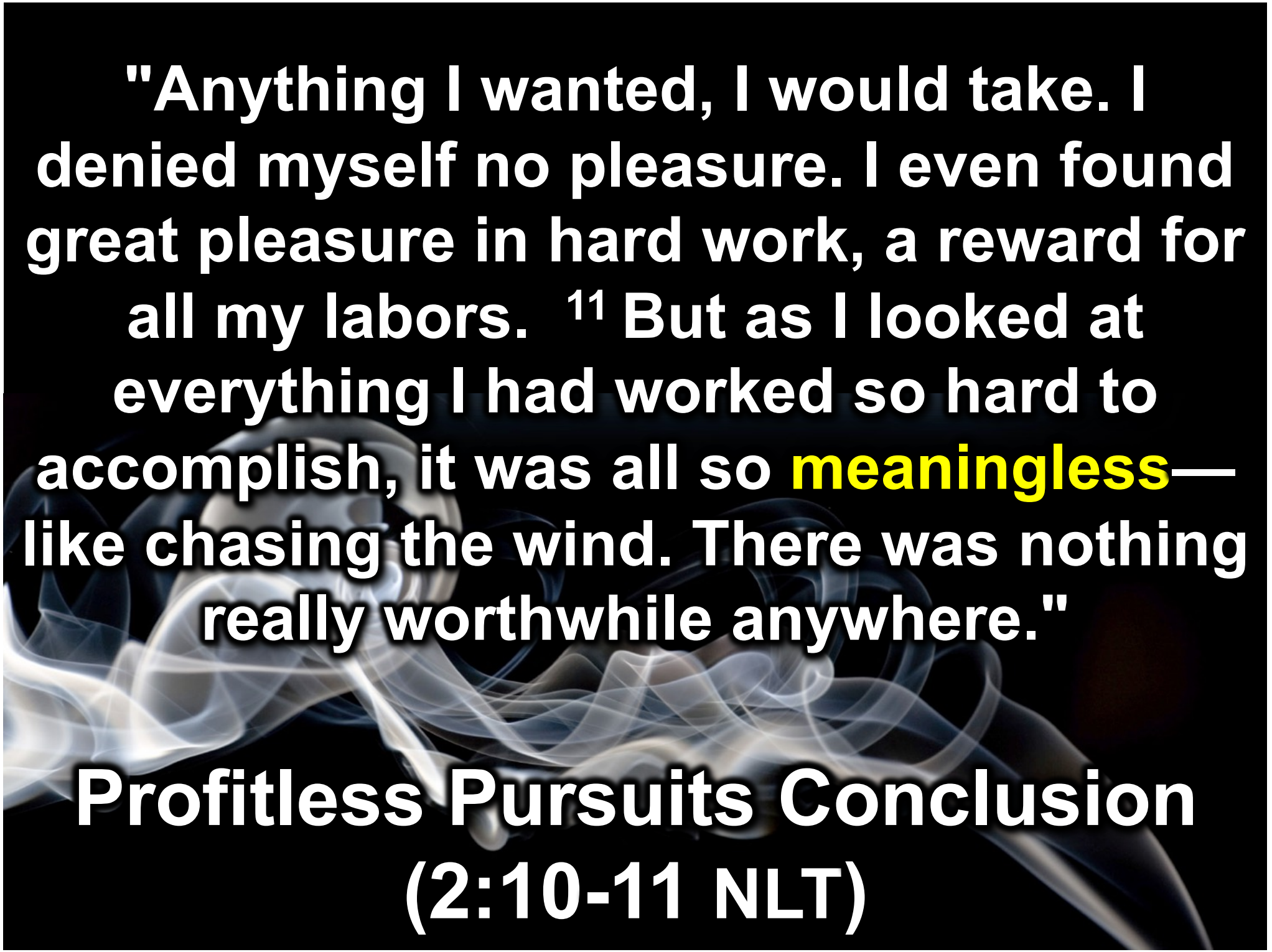




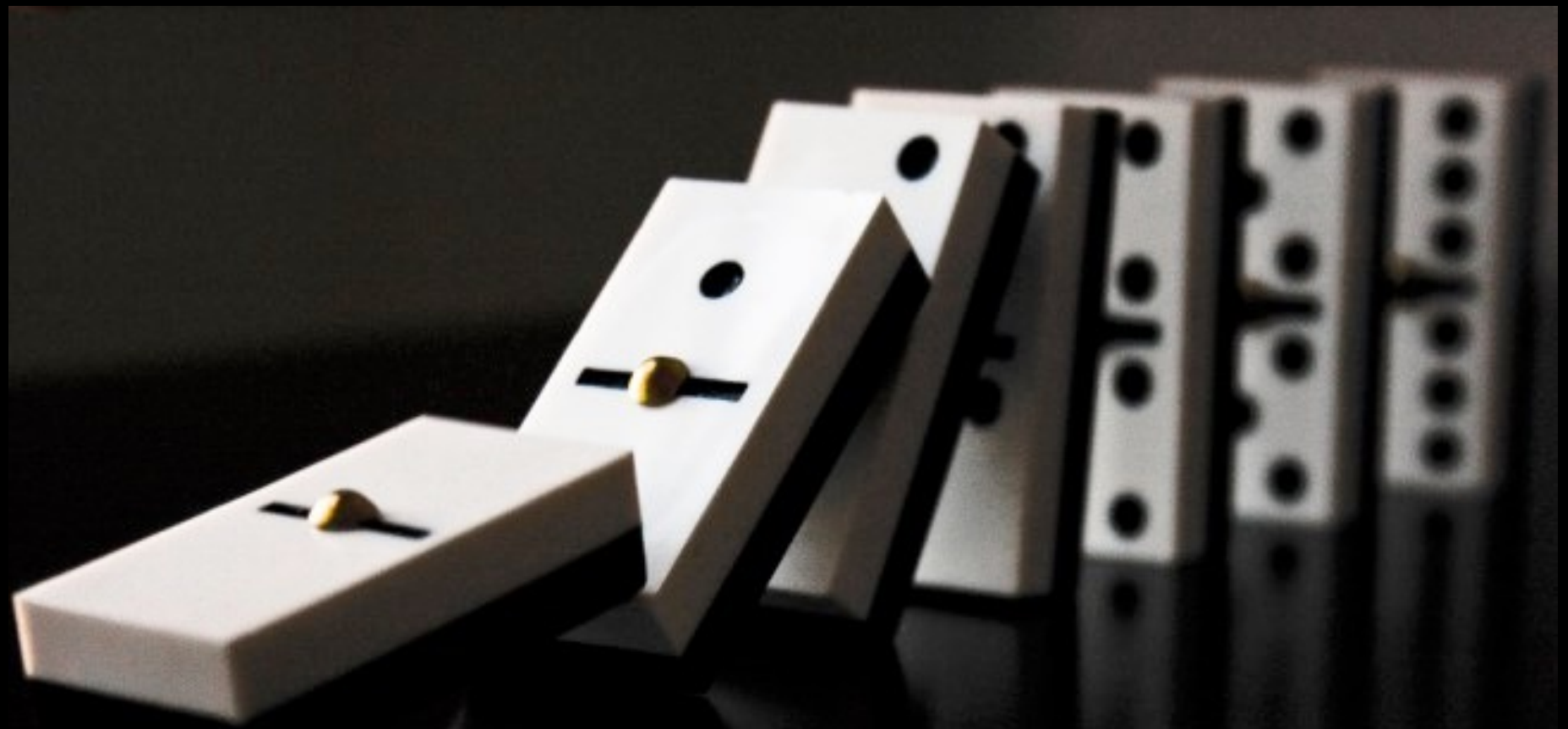
More Women = More Happiness?

5. Power doesn't satisfy (2:9).




"Anything I wanted, I would take. I denied myself no pleasure. I even found great pleasure in hard work, a reward for all my labors. 11 But as I looked at everything I had worked so hard to accomplish, it was all so meaningless— like chasing the wind. There was nothing really worthwhile anywhere."
Profitless Pursuits Conclusion
(2:10-11 NLT)

Main Idea of 1:12–2:16



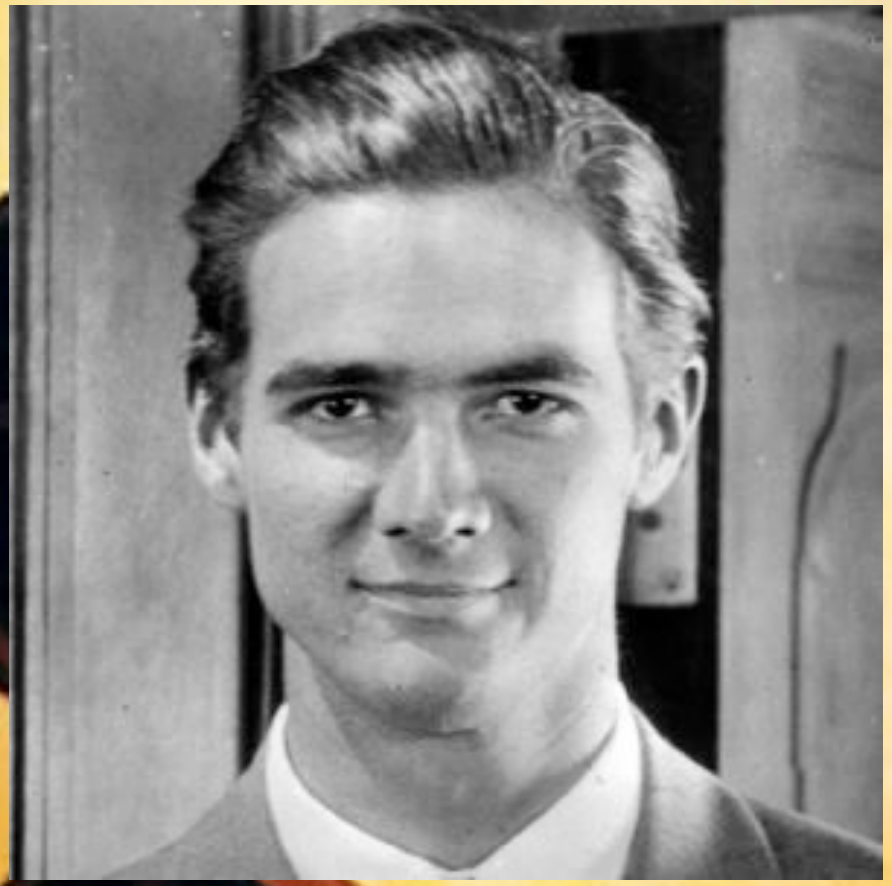
Our pursuits never profit.

Hebel literally means
"a breath, wind, or vapor"
(Prov. 21:6; Isa. 57:13).



The Key Word of Ecclesiastes

Prudence
Pleasure
Projects
Possessions
Power



Profitless Pursuits Under the Sun

The Hebrew Word *Hebel*

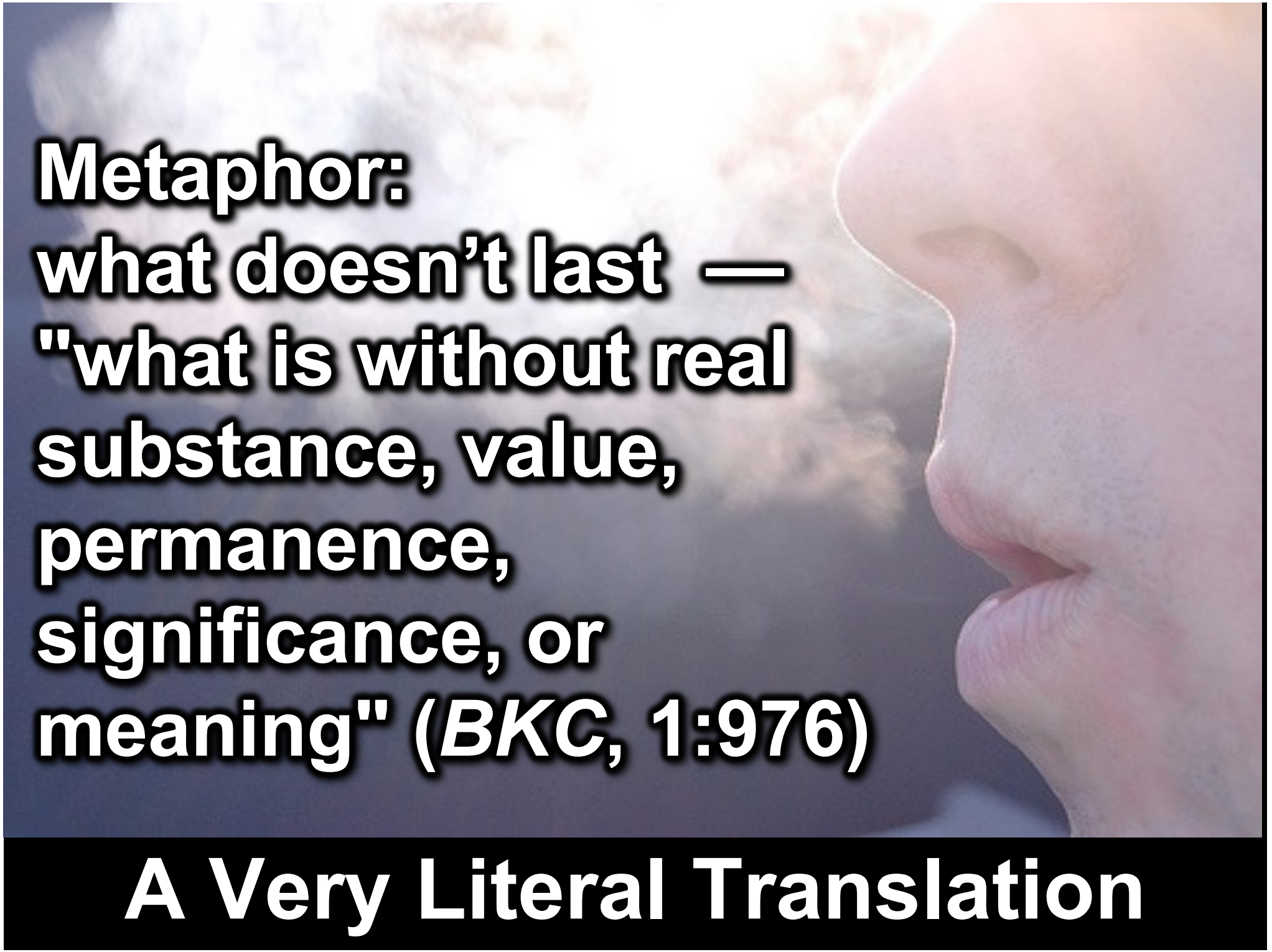


Meaning of *Hebel*

הבל

"vanity" (KJV, ESV, NAU),
"meaningless" (NIV, NLT), "futile"
(NET, TLB, BKC)
"fleeting" 

The Key Word of Ecclesiastes


Metaphor:
what doesn't last —
"what is without real
substance, value,
permanence,
significance, or
meaning" (*BKC*, 1:976)
A Very Literal Translation

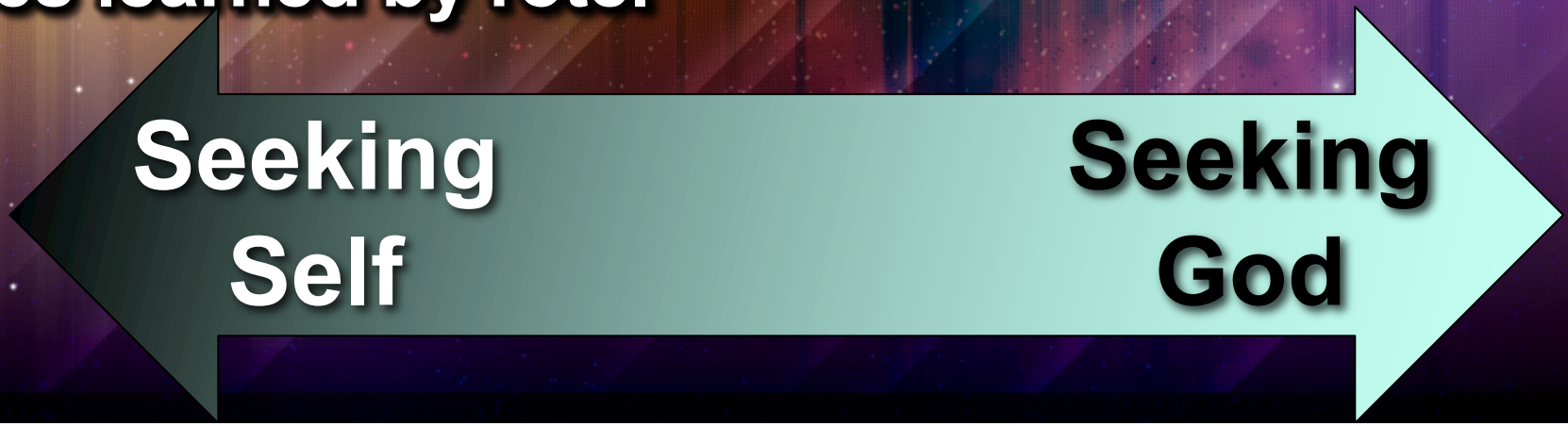
Opposite Directions at 29:13

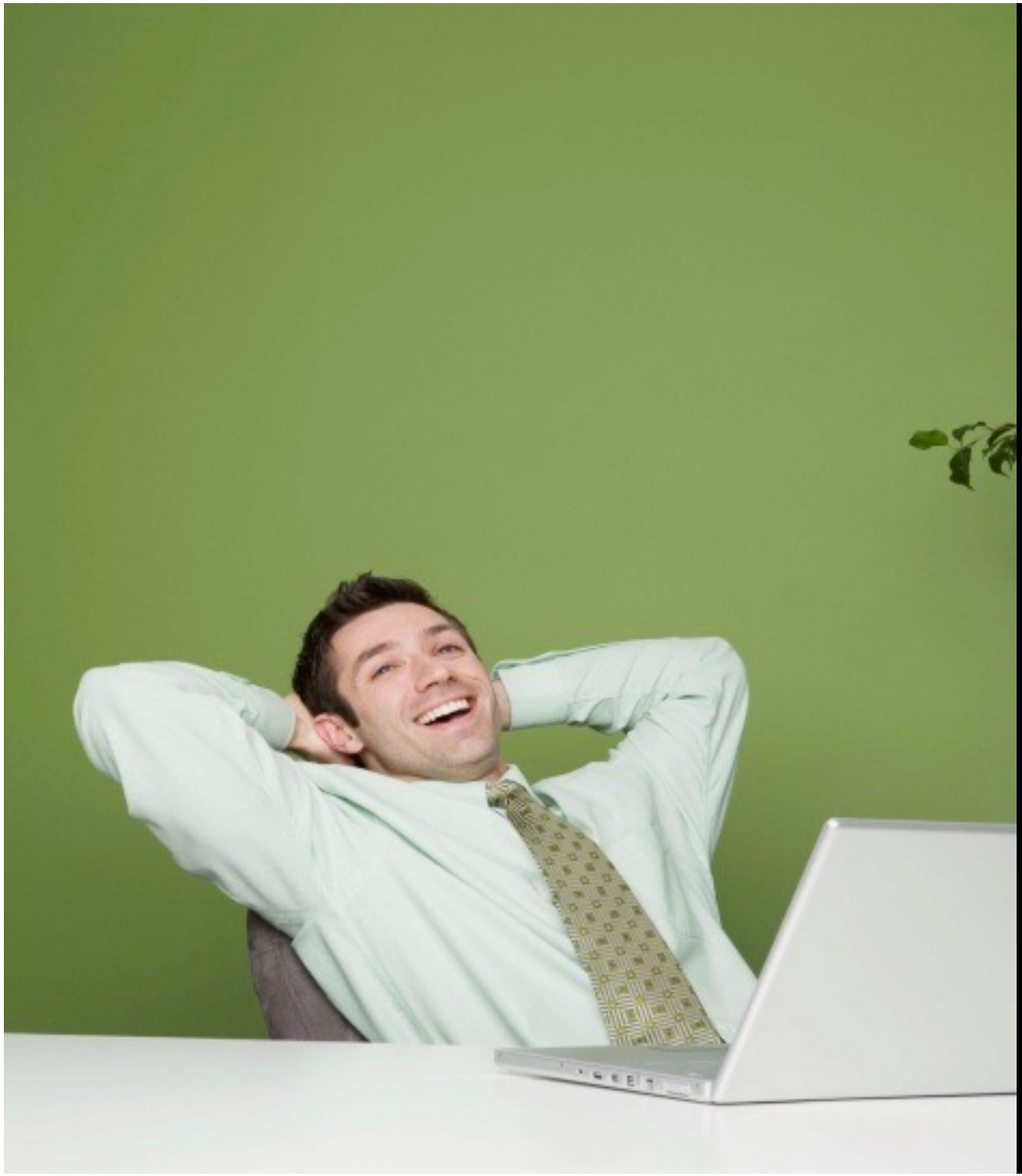
Isaiah 29:13

"And so the Lord says, 'These people say they are mine. They honor me with their lips, but their **hearts are far from me**. And their worship of me is nothing but man-made rules learned by rote.'"

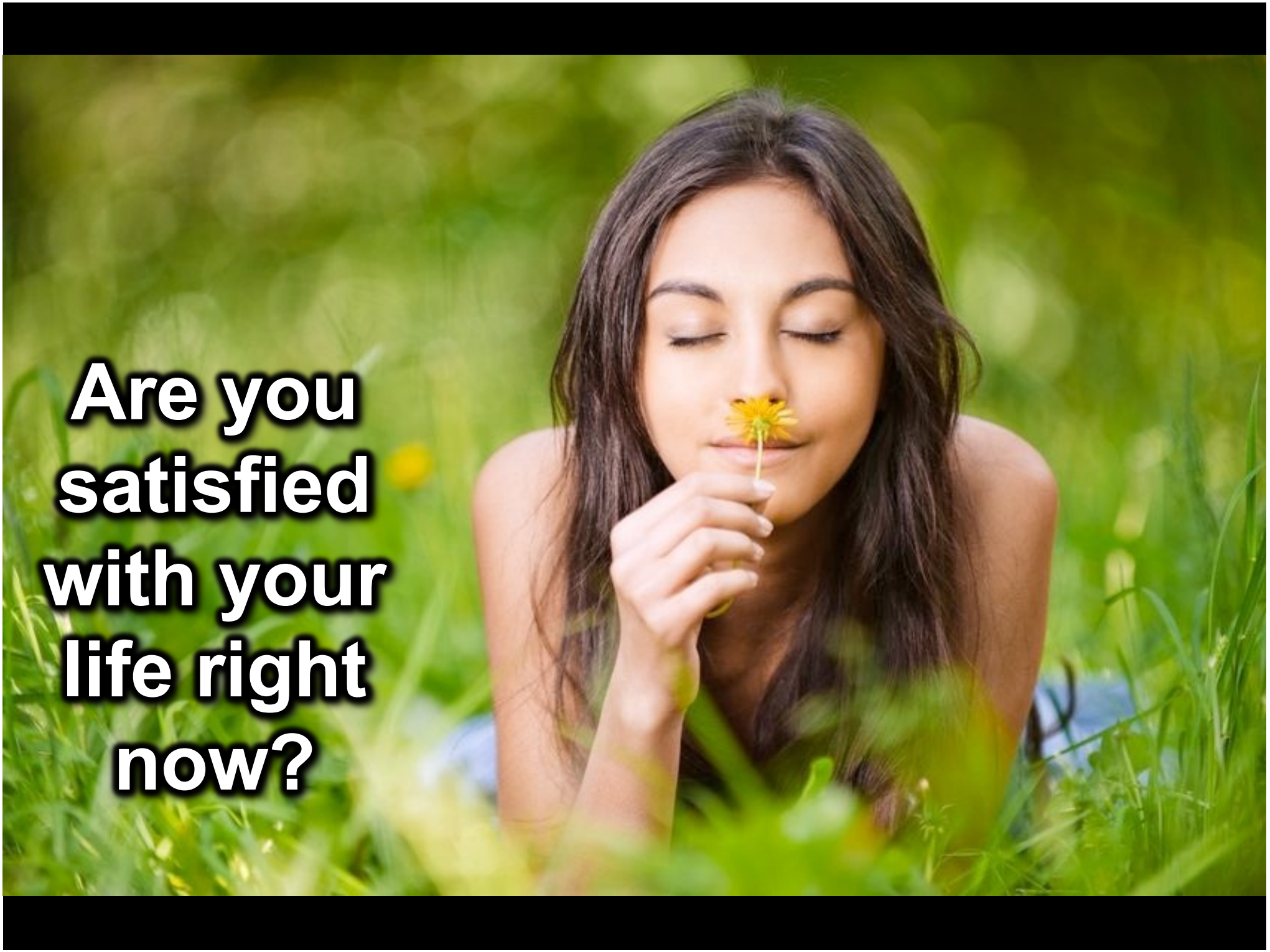
Jeremiah 29:13

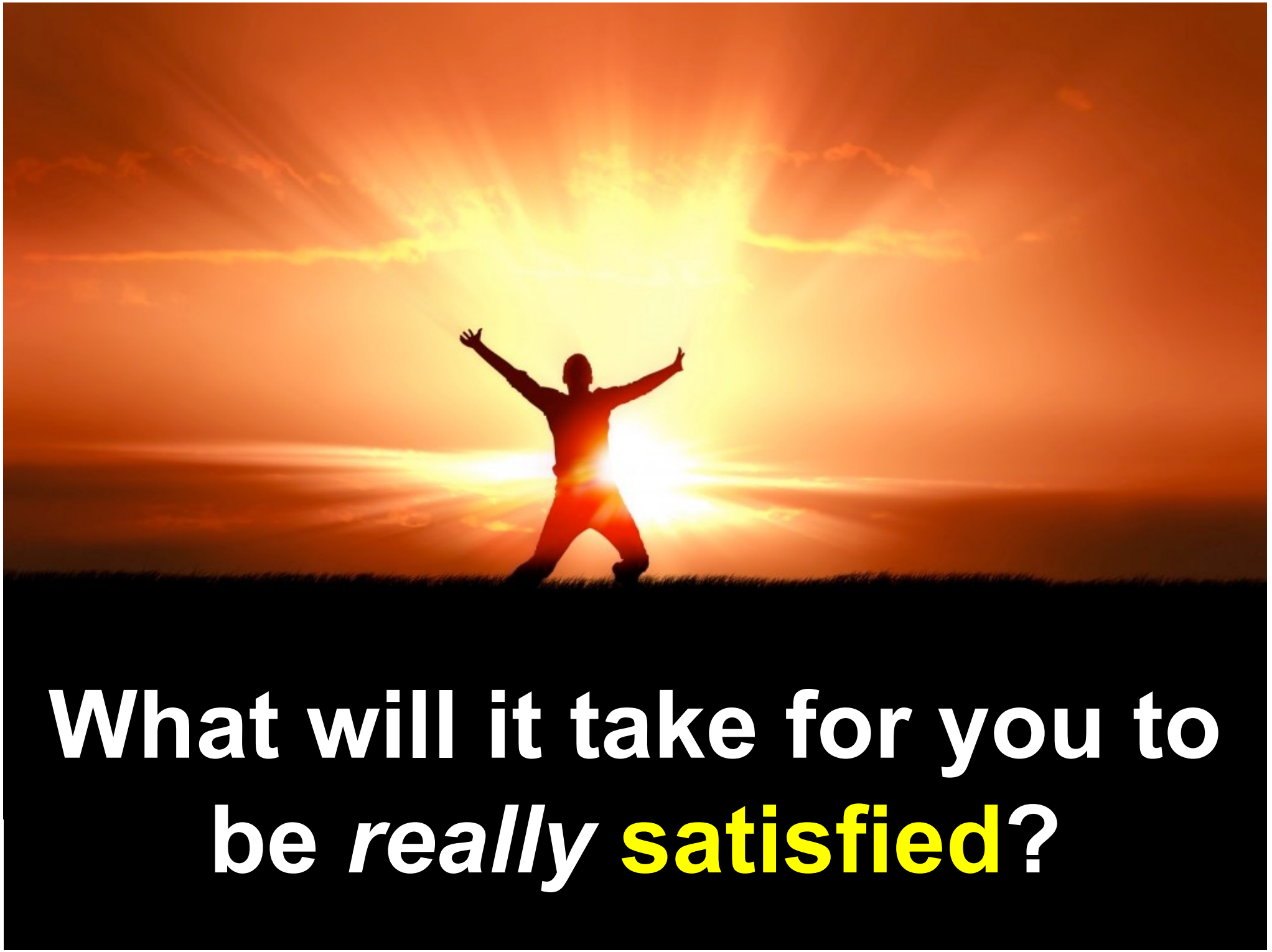
"If you **look for me wholeheartedly**, you will find me."





Are you satisfied with your life right now?

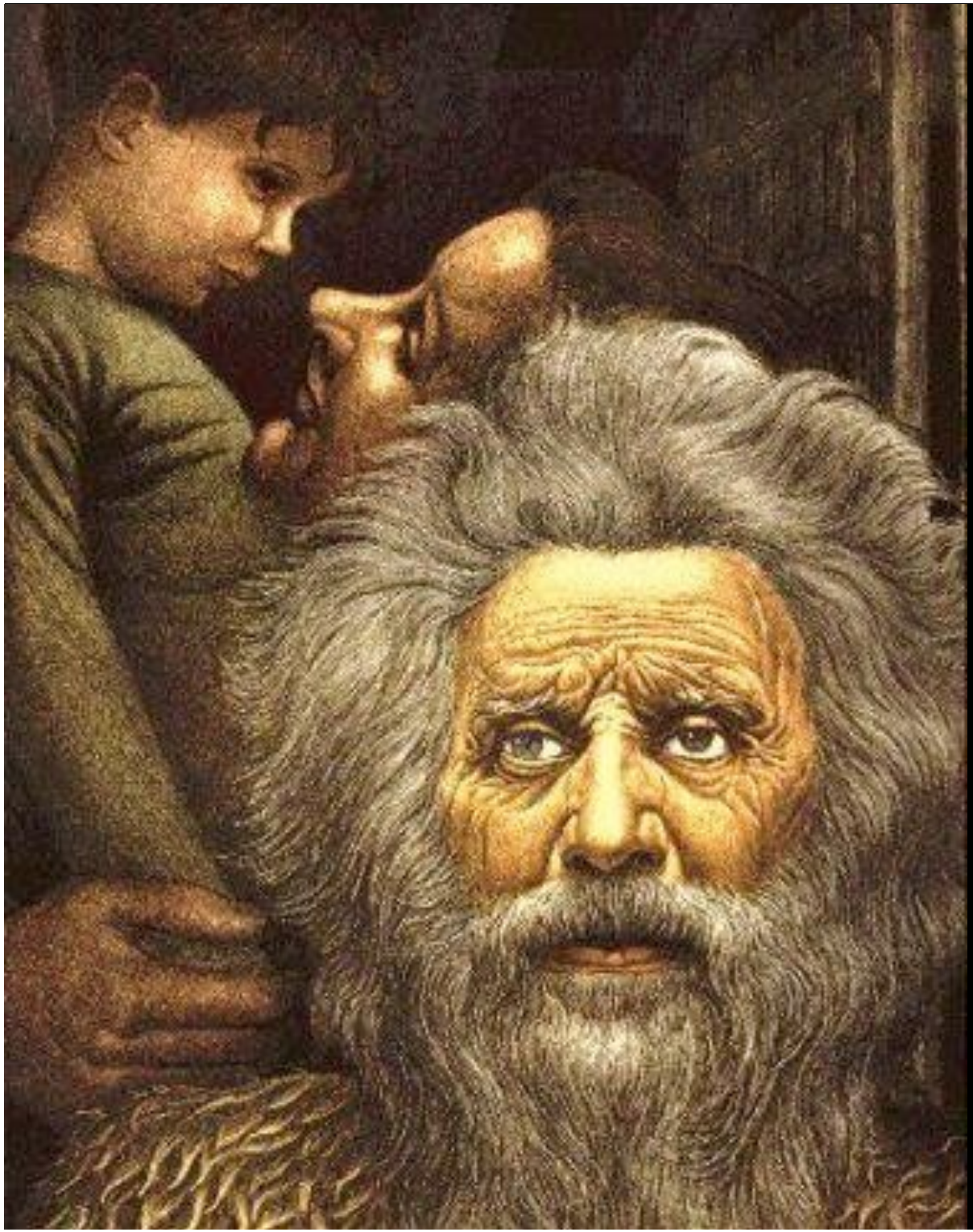

Are you satisfied with your life right now?


What will it take for you to be *really* satisfied?

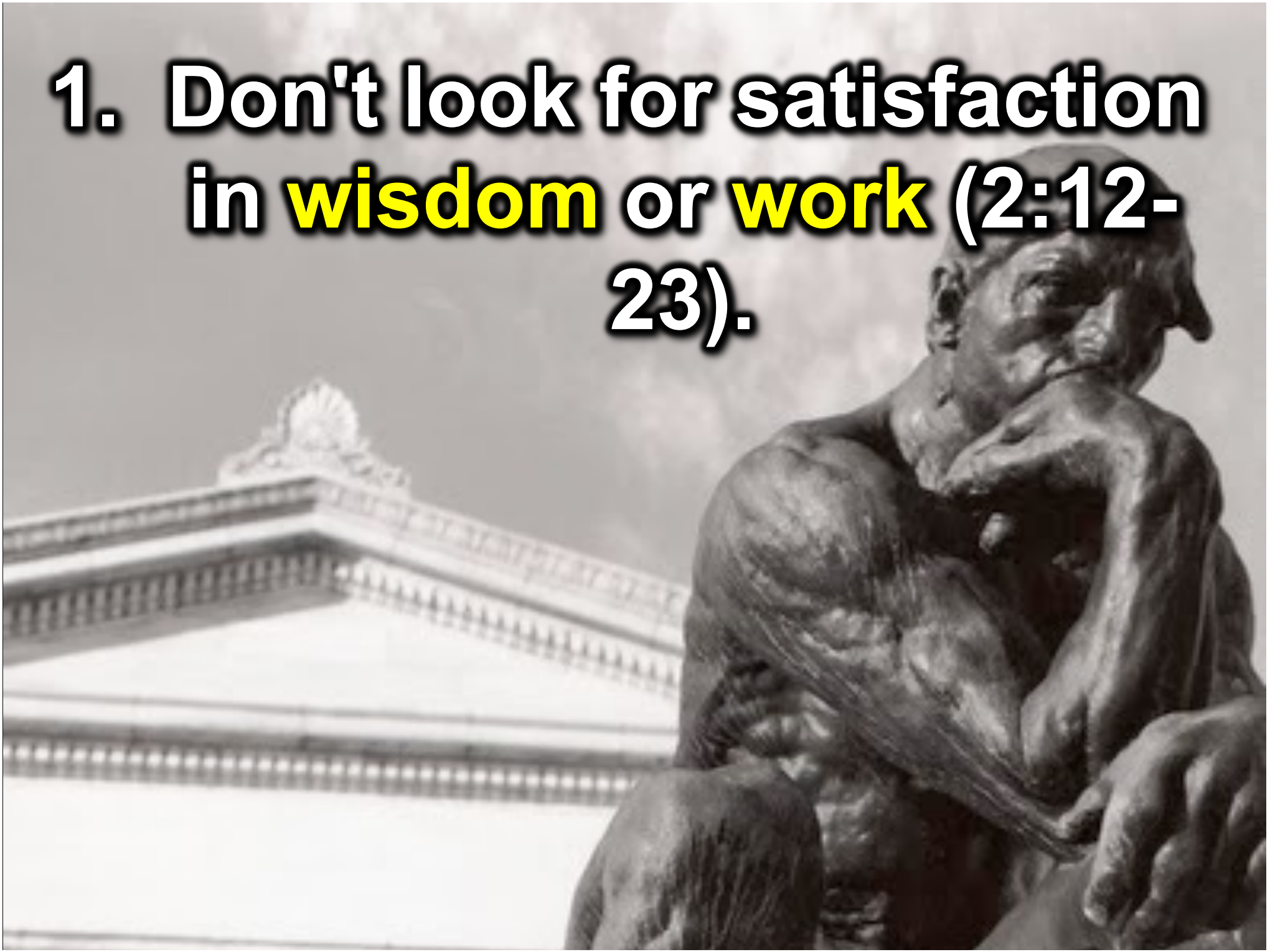
"All of King Solomon's drinking cups were solid gold, as were all the utensils in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon. They were not made of silver, for silver was considered worthless in Solomon's day!" (1 Kings 10:21 NLT).





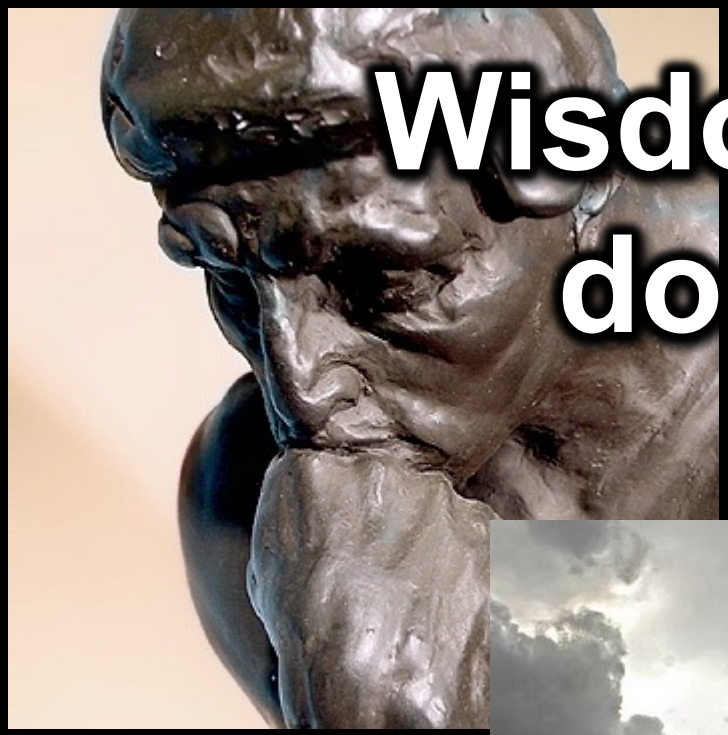


Reflections of an Old Man

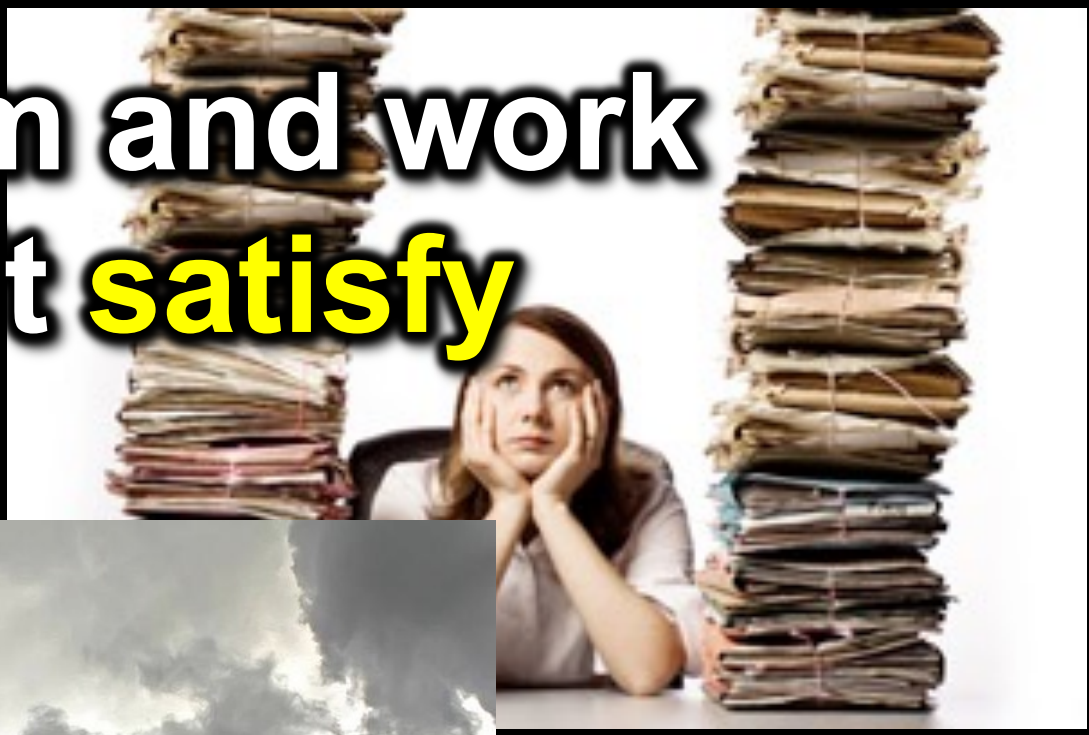

1. Don't look for satisfaction in wisdom or work (2:12-23).


2. You will be satisfied only when you please God (2:24-26).

Main Idea of 2:12-26

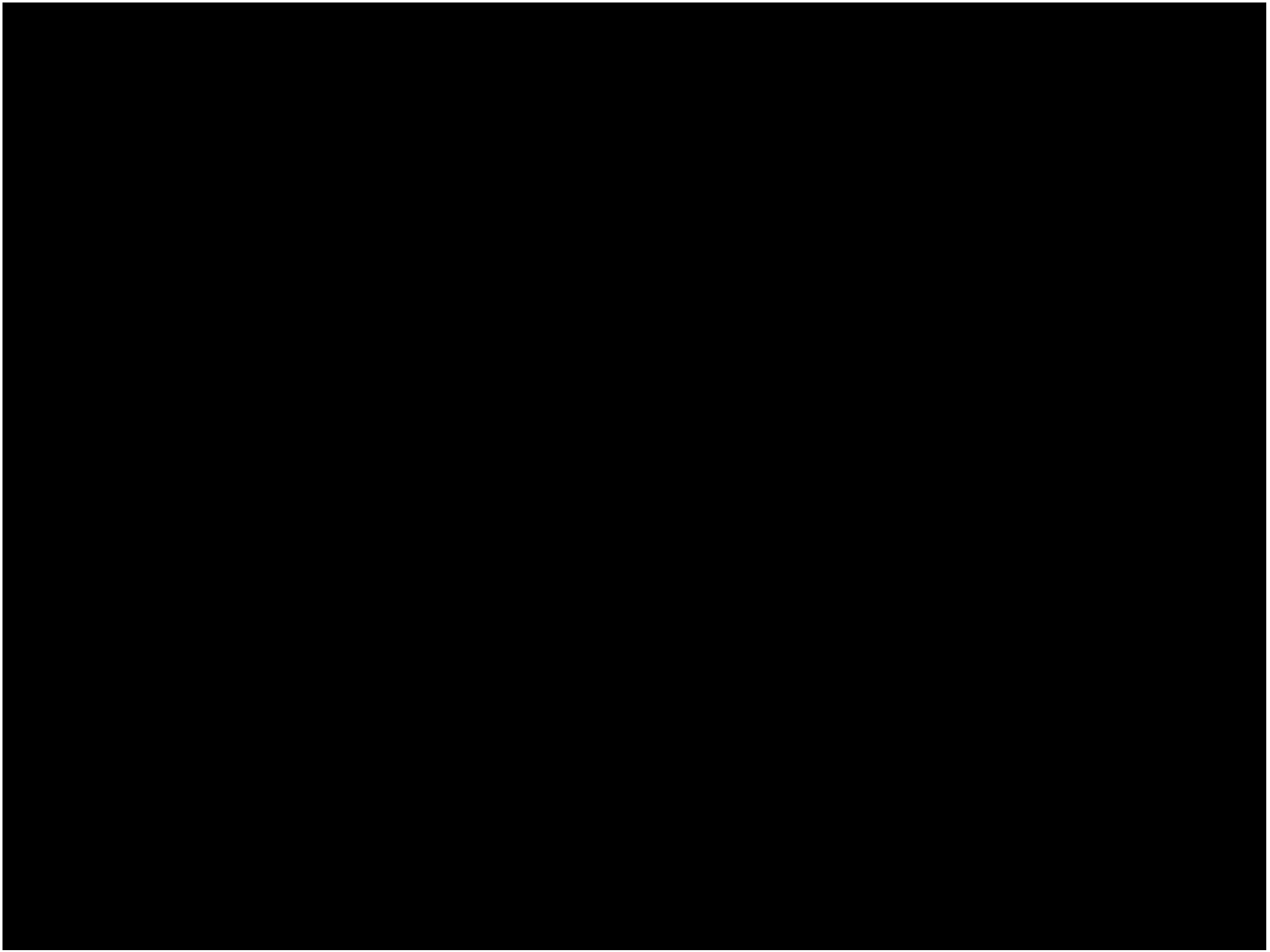


Wisdom and work don't satisfy





unless you please God.





Outline



- Premise
- Penmanship — Author, Title & Writing Style
- Period & Setting
- Panoramic View
- Peculiarities — Key Verse & Key Word
- Puzzles — Internal & External
- Purpose & Predicament
- Points of Application



Premise

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.

2 Timothy 3:16 (NIV)

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Penmanship -- Author

King Solomon authorship because of:

- **"son of David, king in Jerusalem" (1:1)**
- **"king over Israel in Jerusalem" (1:12)**
- **"set in order many proverbs" (12:9)**

Penmanship – Title & Style

"*Ecclesiastes",* comes from the Septuagint translation of *"Qohelet",* which means *"The Preacher"* (KJV) or "The Teacher" (NIV).

Mix of
Narration, poetry, proverbial sayings & meditation



Period & Setting

Probably before 931 BC

Solomon is now an old man. He's looking back over all of his accomplishments, all of his pursuits. He sees the emptiness of his life.



Joshua Miller


Ecclesiastes
Problem stated
1:1-3
Experiments made
1:4–12:12
Results of experiments
12:13-14
All is vanity
Study of Science
1:4-11
Wisdom & philosophy
1:12-18
Pleasure
2:1-11
Materialism
2:12-26
Fatalism
3:1-15
Egoism
3:16–4:16
Religion
5:1-8
Wealth
5:9–6:12
Morality
7:1–12:12
All things
under the sun are vanity
A right relationship with God,
through the way He has made,
brings abiding satisfaction
Panoramic
View

Keys

Key Verse:

"Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (12:13 KJV).

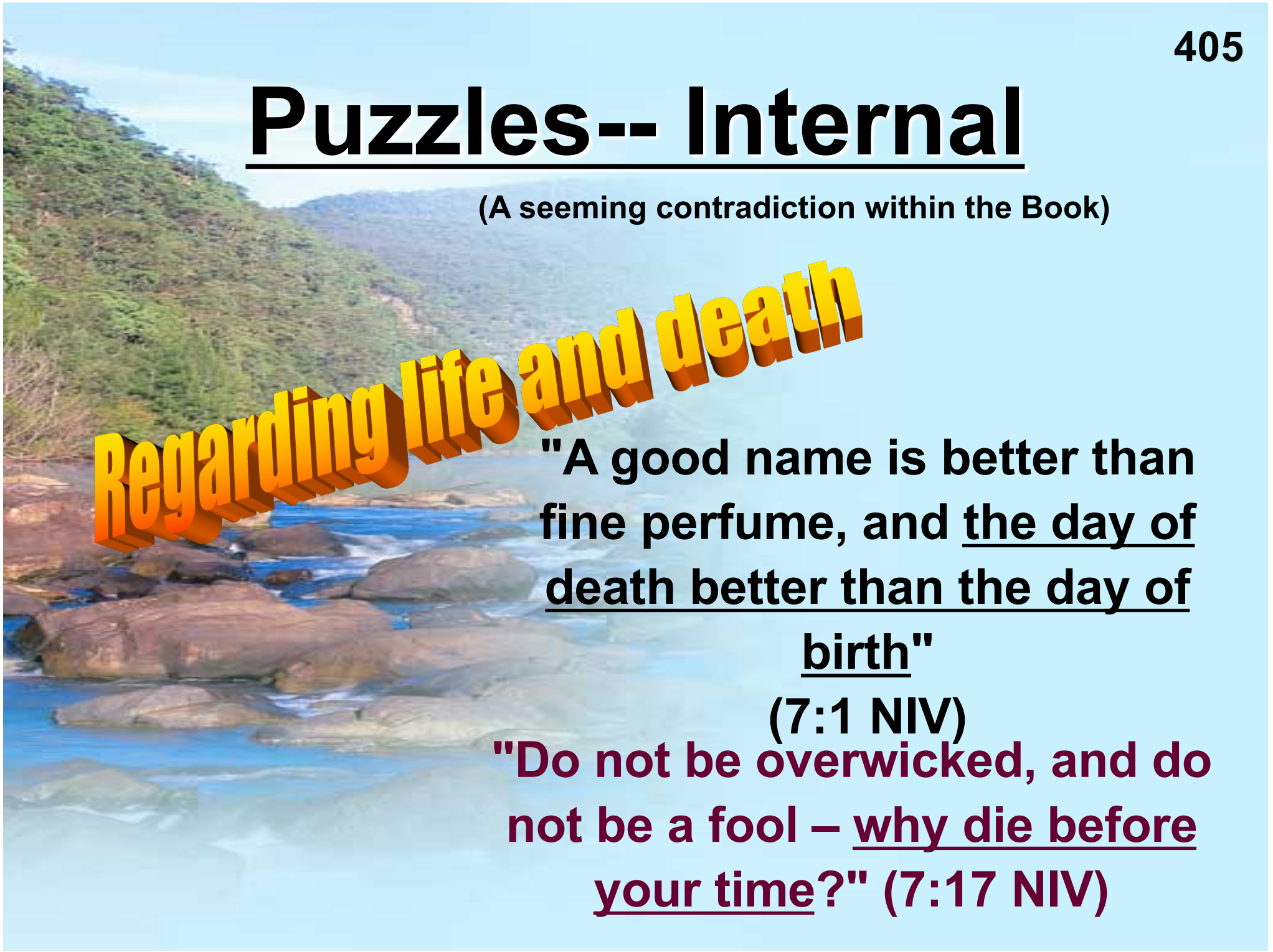
Key Word: Fleeting




Puzzles???

Puzzles-- Internal

(A seeming contradiction within the Book)



"A good name is better than fine perfume, and the day of death better than the day of birth"

(7:1 NIV)

"Do not be overwicked, and do not be a fool – why die before your time?" (7:17 NIV)

Puzzles -- Internal

(A seeming contradiction within the Book)

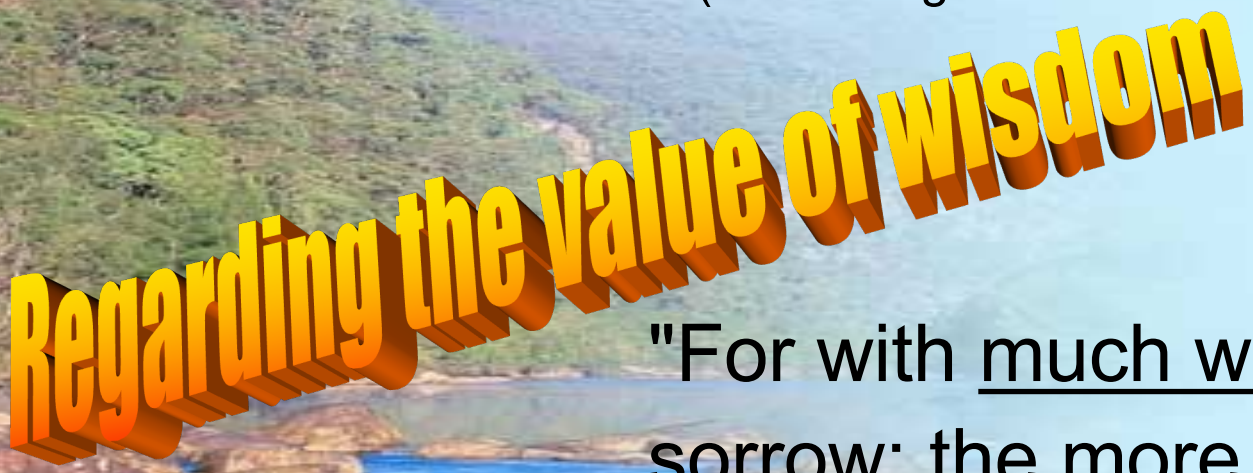
Regarding the value of working

"I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my work, and this was the reward for all my labor" (2:10 NIV)

"I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who comes after me" (2:18 NIV)

Puzzles -- Internal

(A seeming contradiction within the Book)



"For with much wisdom comes much sorrow; the more knowledge, the more grief" (1:18 NIV)

"I saw that wisdom is better than folly, just as light is better than darkness" (2:13 NIV)

Puzzles -- Internal

(A seeming contradiction within the Book)

Regarding the view of sorrow

"Sorrow is better than laughter, because a sad face is good for the heart" (7:3 NIV)

"So then, banish anxiety from your heart and cast off the troubles of your body, for youth and vigor are meaningless" (11:10 NIV)

Puzzles -- External

(A seeming contradiction with other books in the Bible)

Solomon claims there is a time to kill…

"A time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build" (3:3 NIV).

Puzzles -- External

(A seeming contradiction with other books in the Bible)

But God says that we are not to kill…

"You shall not murder" (Exod. 20:13 NIV).

To kill is God's prerogative…

"See now that I myself am He! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand" (Deut. 32:39 NIV).

Puzzles -- External

(A seeming contradiction with other books in the Bible)

Solomon advocates a time to hate…

"A time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace" (3:8 NIV)

Puzzles -- External

(A seeming contradiction with other books in the Bible)

But Jesus said we are not to hate…

"But I tell you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matt. 5:44 NIV)

Puzzles -- External

(A seeming contradiction with other books in the Bible)

Solomon claims there is nothing better than to look at the physical, the here and now…

"So I saw that there is nothing better for a man than to enjoy his work, because that is his lot. For who can bring him to see what will happen after him?" (3:22 NIV)

Puzzles -- External

(A seeming contradiction with other books in the Bible)

But Jesus said that it is far better to deny self and resist the pulls of our physical natures…

"Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me'" (Matt. 16:24 NIV)

Puzzles -- External

(A seeming contradiction with other books in the Bible)

Solomon says sorrow is better than joy and laughter…

"Sorrow is better than laughter, because a sad face is good for the heart" (7:3 NIV)

Puzzles -- External

(A seeming contradiction with other books in the Bible)

But Paul tells us to always rejoice…

"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" (Phil. 4:4 NIV)

Hebel & "Under the Sun"

Word or Phrase	Generally Held Meaning	Other Options Offered
hebel הֶבֶל	lit. "vapor, breath" (BDB 210d 1); "what is evanescent, unsubstantial, worthless, vanity" (BDB 210d 2); "meaningless" (NIV), "vanity" (KJV), "futile" (NET)	"enigmatic, mysterious" (Graham S. Ogden); "absurd" (Michael V. Fox); "irony" (Edwin Good); "fleeting" (Radmacher)
"under the sun"	***manner*** of observing life from a human perspective (Leupold)	***sphere*** of man's earthly activity, i.e., "down here on earth" (Ardel B. Caneday)

Two Ways to Look at Life



Since work is fleeting, trust God's timing, enjoy life, and enjoy God (2:17–6:9).



Ecclesiastes 3


God's timing is
perfect (3:1-8).

The Thesis: Every activity has its appointed time (3:1)



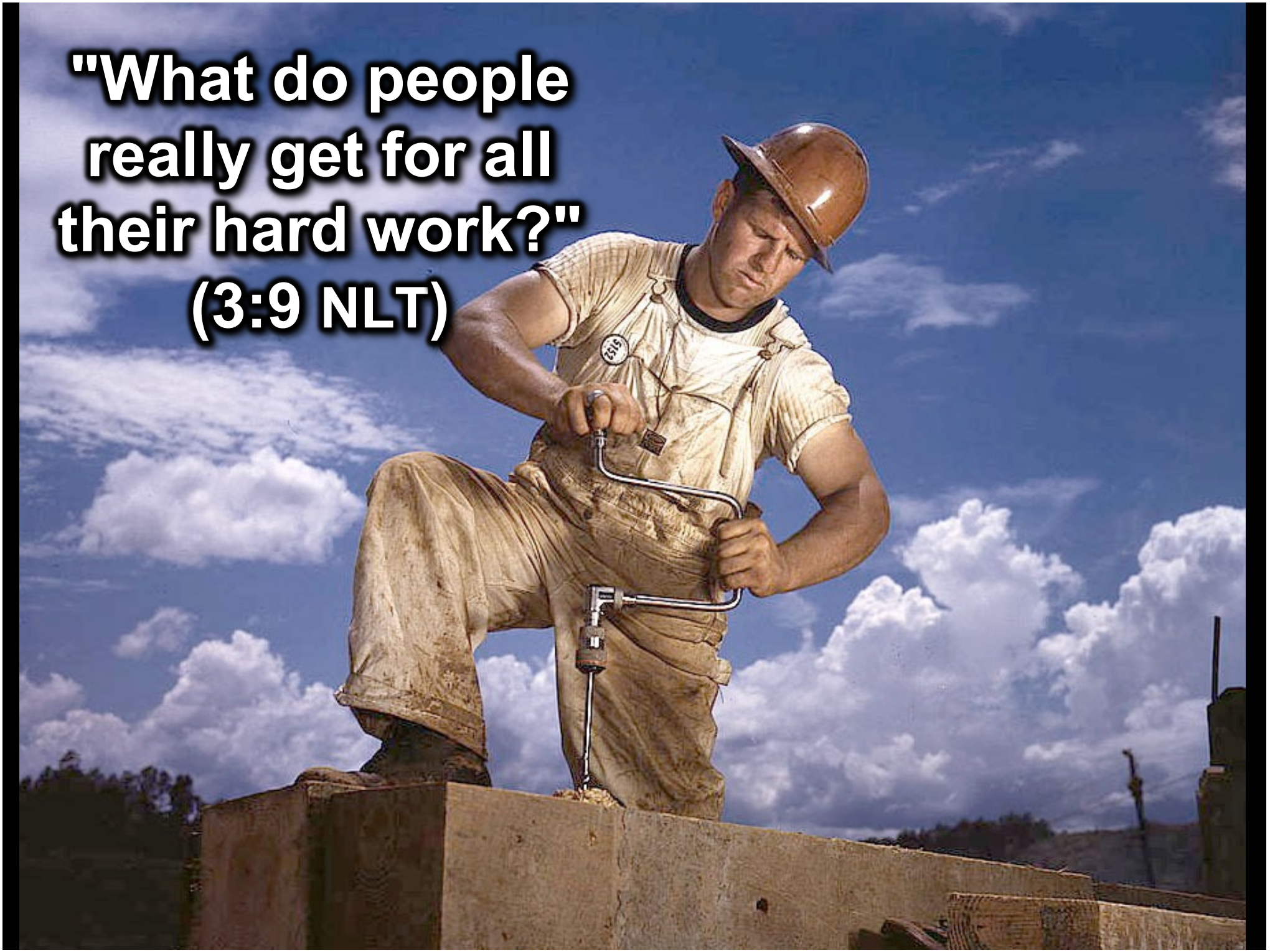


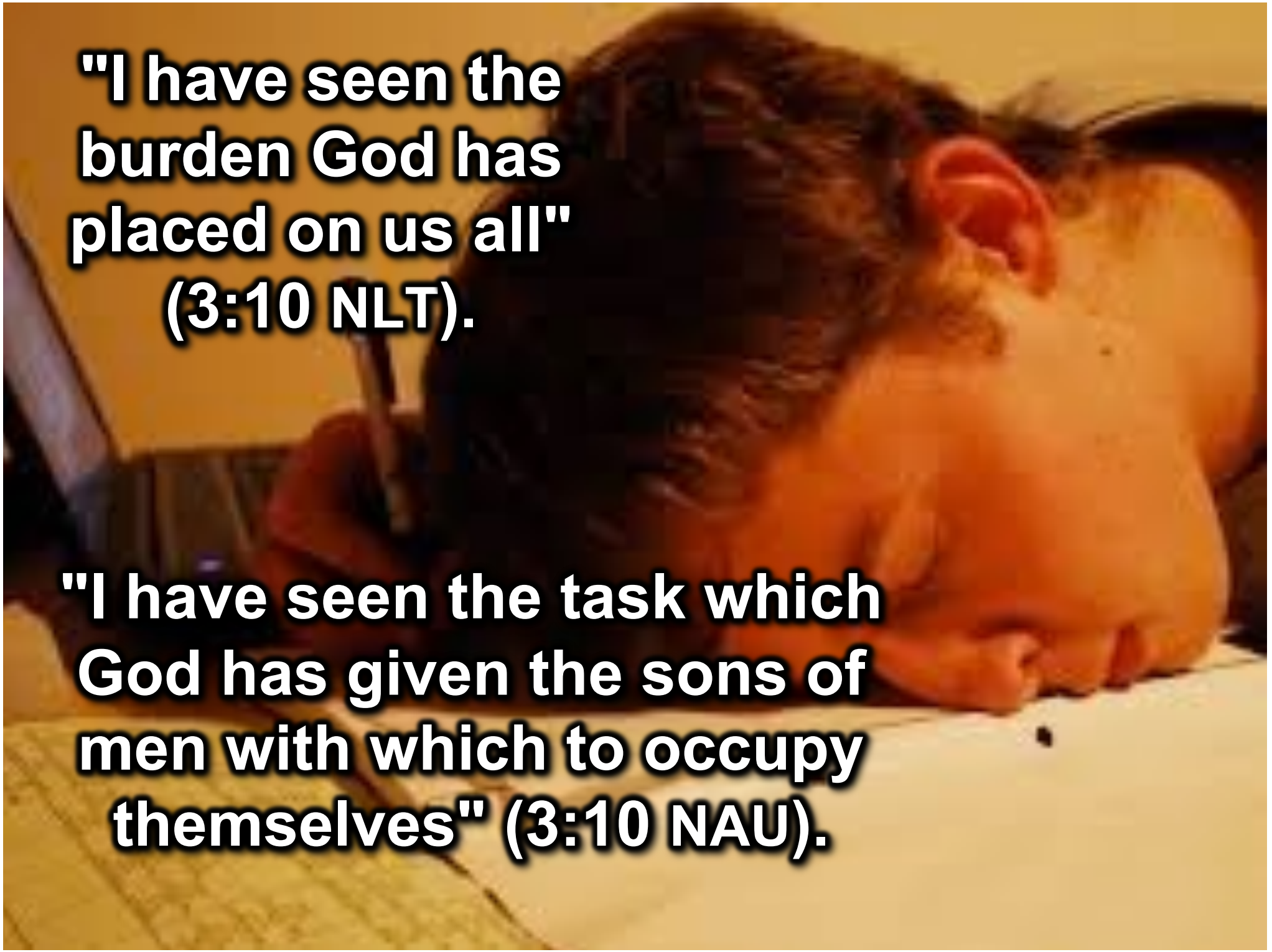
Ecclesiastes 3:1a (NIV)



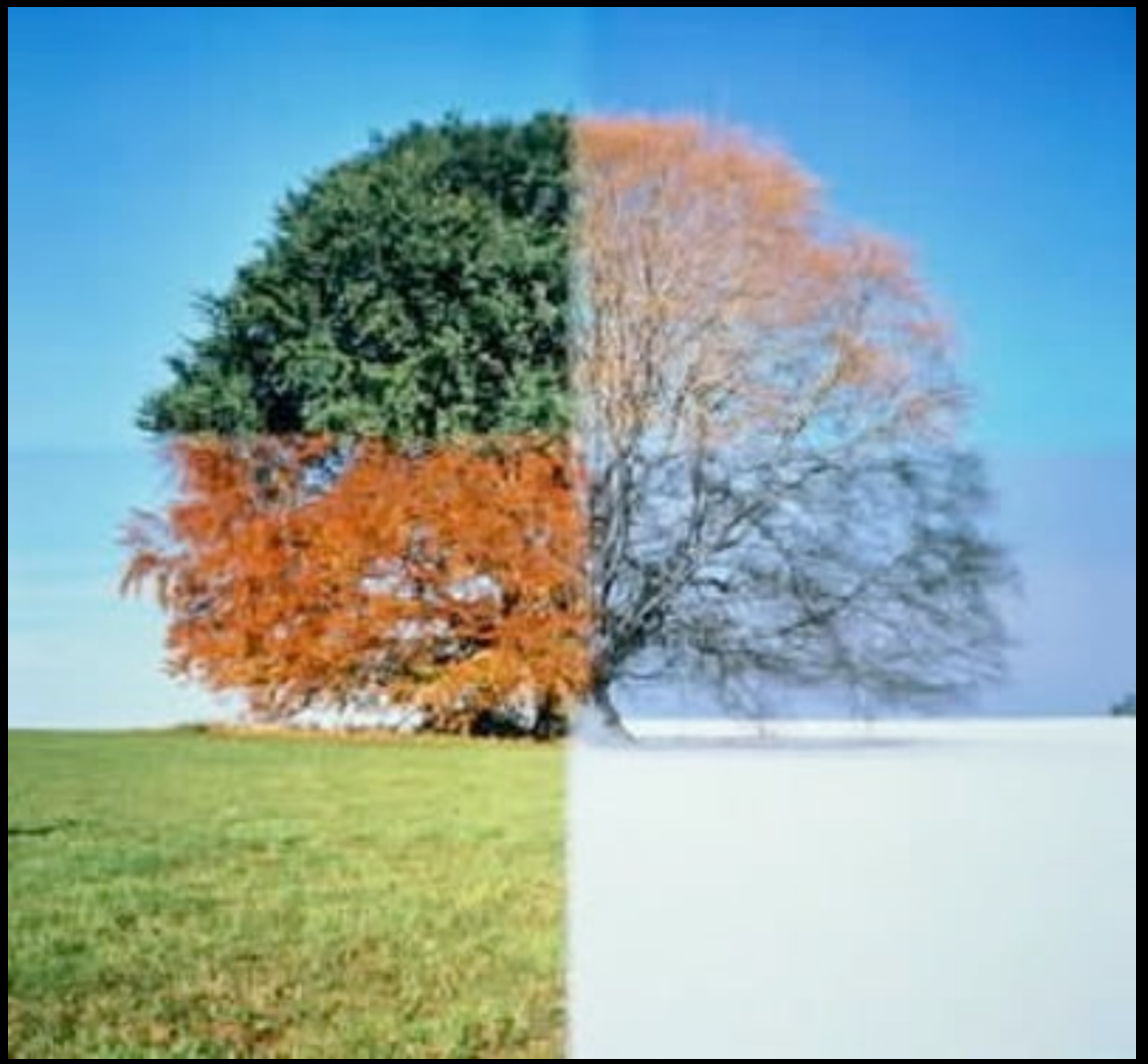
"…and a season for every activity under heaven" (3:1b NIV).


God's ways are
perfect (3:9-11).


"What do people
really get for all
their hard work?"
(3:9 NLT)


"I have seen the burden God has placed on us all" (3:10 NLT).
"I have seen the task which God has given the sons of men with which to occupy themselves" (3:10 NAU).

"Yet God has made everything ***beautiful**** for its own time"
(3:11a NLT)



* "appropriate" (NAU), "fitting" (5:18)



Celebrate your ignorance of God's timing.


God's timing is perfect (3:1-8).
God's ways are perfect (3:9-11).
Enjoy life and fear God (3:12-15).

Key Ideas

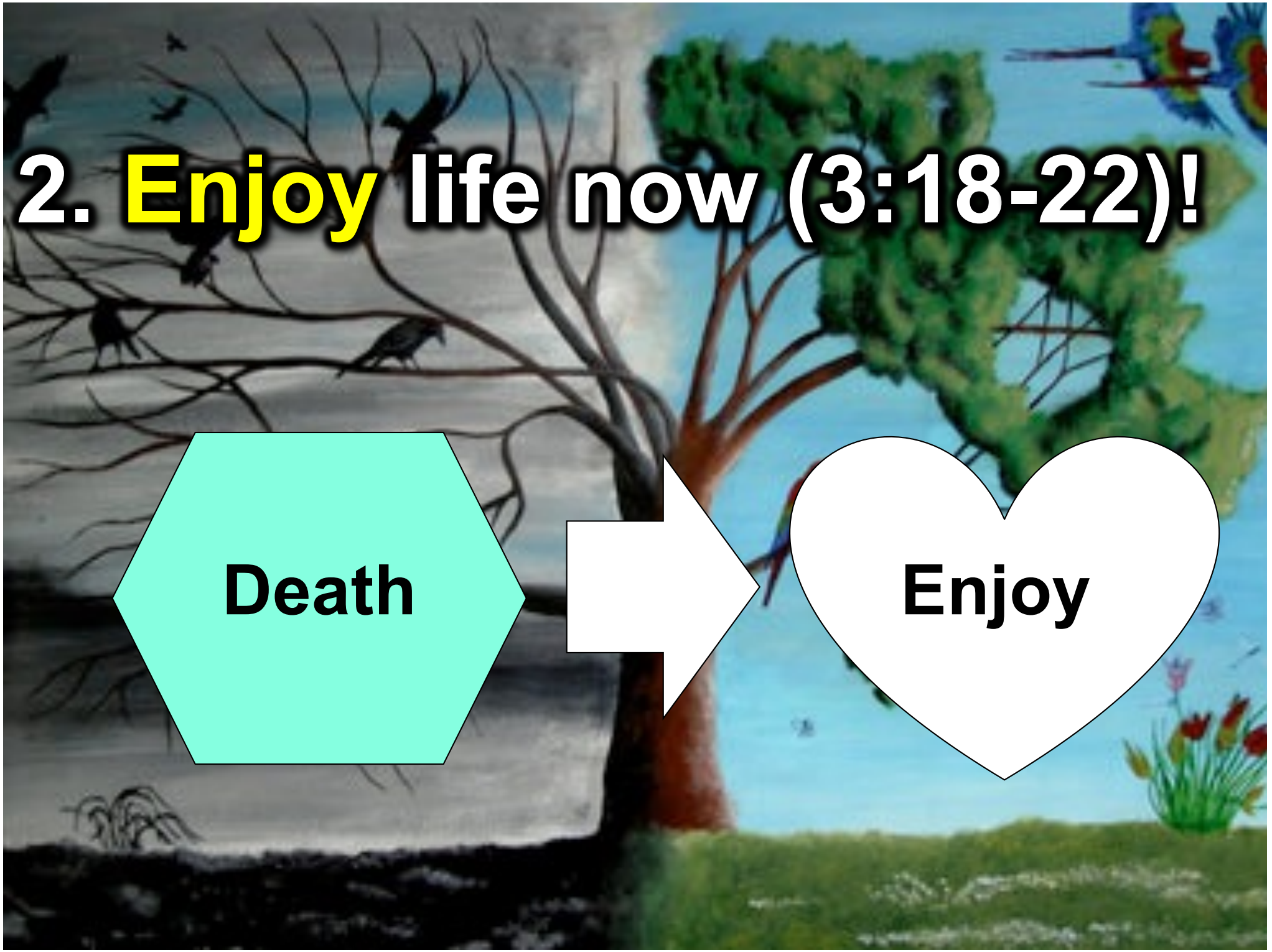
What injustices irk you most?



- No credit?
- Politicking?
- Birth defects?
- Cutting in line?
- Family background?


What should you do when life is unfair?


1. Realize that you will account to God (3:16-17).
Injustice
You


2. Enjoy life now (3:18-22)!
Death
Enjoy

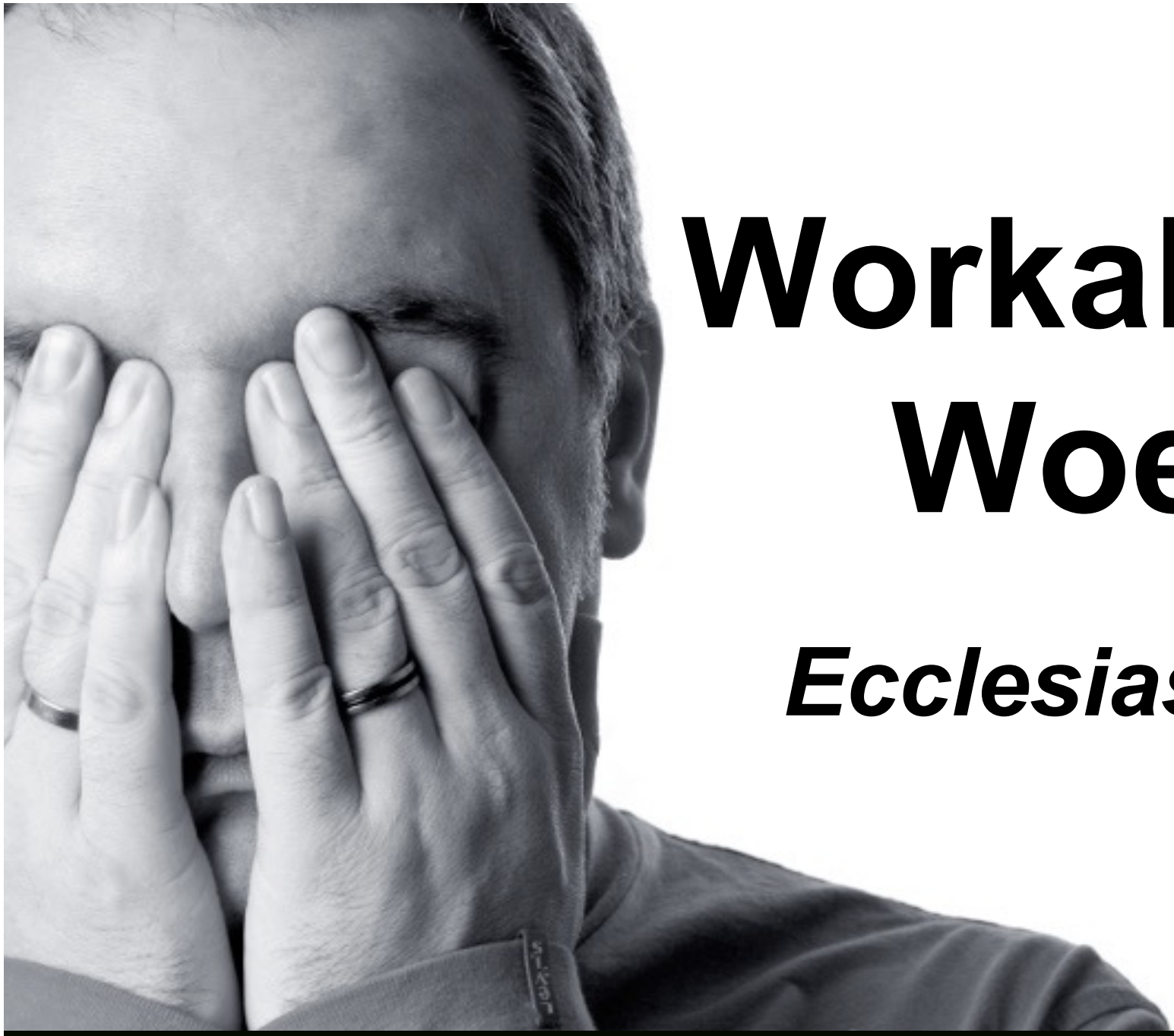
Main Idea of 3:16-22



What should you do when life is unfair?

Account to God and enjoy life!

Ecclesiastes 4



Workaholic Woes

Ecclesiastes 4

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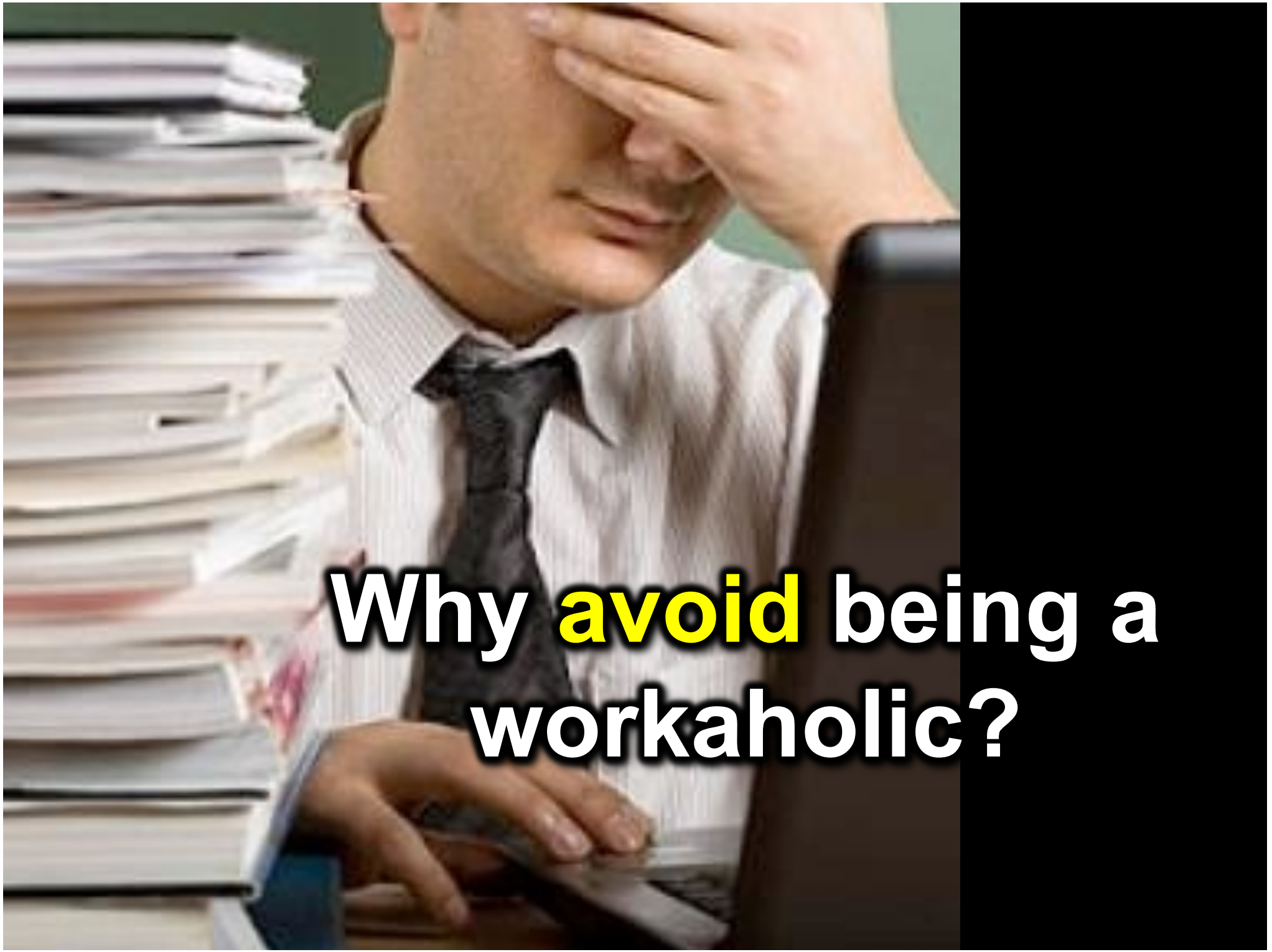

Why avoid being a workaholic?


Workaholic Woes
No Comforters
No Rest
No Followers
No Beneficiaries
No Friends

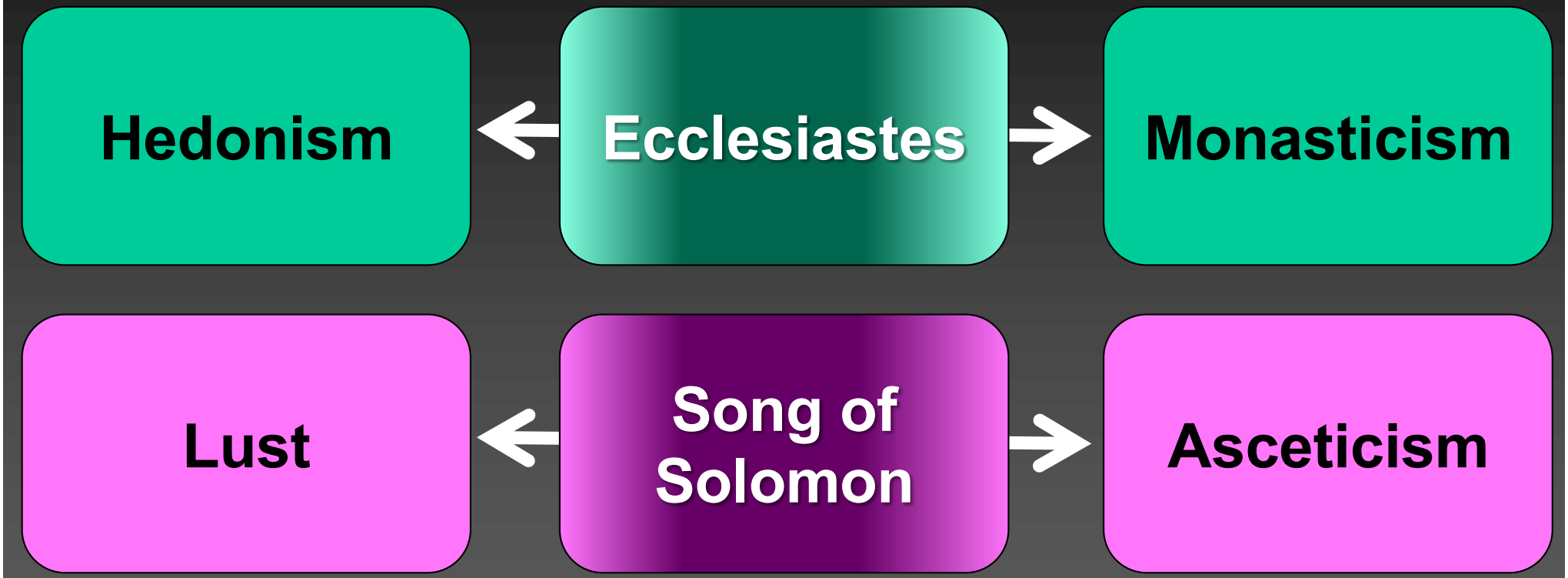
Work at not becoming a workaholic.



Main Idea of Ecclesiastes 4

Striking a Balance

Huang Sabin, SBC



Why is it called a vanity mirror?



Have you ever wanted to be free from all your responsibilities, to release yourself from those demands that weigh your life down?





Have you ever gotten the itch to strike out on your own, so that you could fulfill some of those dreams which now only collect dust in the back of your mind?





Have you ever wondered if your current lifestyle should be traded in for a newer and more exciting one?



If you answered 'YES' to any of these questions,

You are not alone.

Many people are

dissatisfied

frustrated

&

bored

with their lives

King Solomon
was one of them

After a successful period of his kingly & godly reign, he went through a season in his adult life when everything seemed to have lost its luster

Through his experience, King Solomon became wiser

Ecclesiastes is a divinely inspired journal of his desperate journey

It's time for

ECCLESIASTES



What does this book address?

✈ ✈ ✈ ✈ ✈ ✈ ✈ ✈ ✈ ✈ ✈ ✈ ✈ ✈ ✈ ✈

In my opinion . . . . .

. . . . a thousand and one things!

But with careful reading,
you will find
3 broad categories

1

Fleeting nature of human achievement





2

Fleeting nature of human wisdom





and

3

Fleeting nature of youth





Ecclesiastes 5



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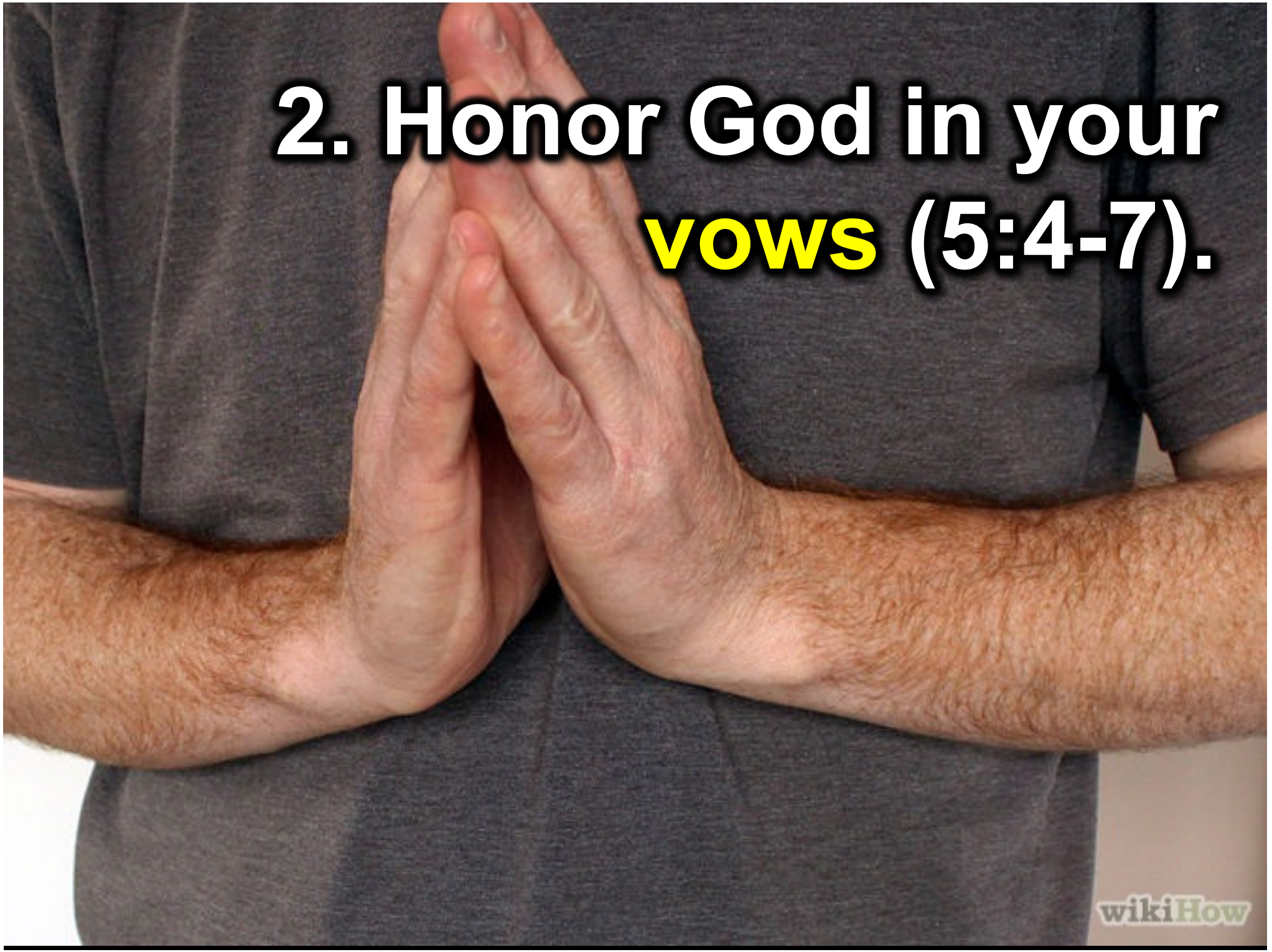
Do you struggle
worshipping God?



How can we honor God?


1. Honor God in your
worship (5:1-3).


2. Honor God in your vows (5:4-7).
wikiHow



My Vows

1. Sexual purity
2. Read Bible 5 min./day
3. Never divorce Susan
4. Serve God anywhere
5. Church membership
6. Giving



Main Idea of 5:1-7



Ecclesiastes 5:8–6:9

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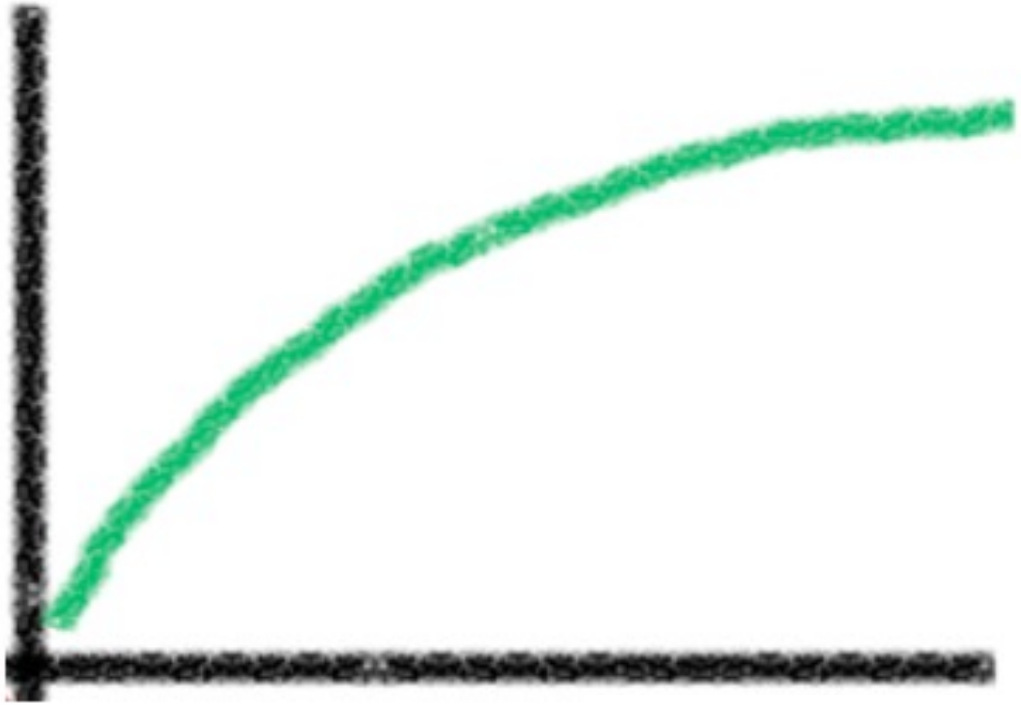
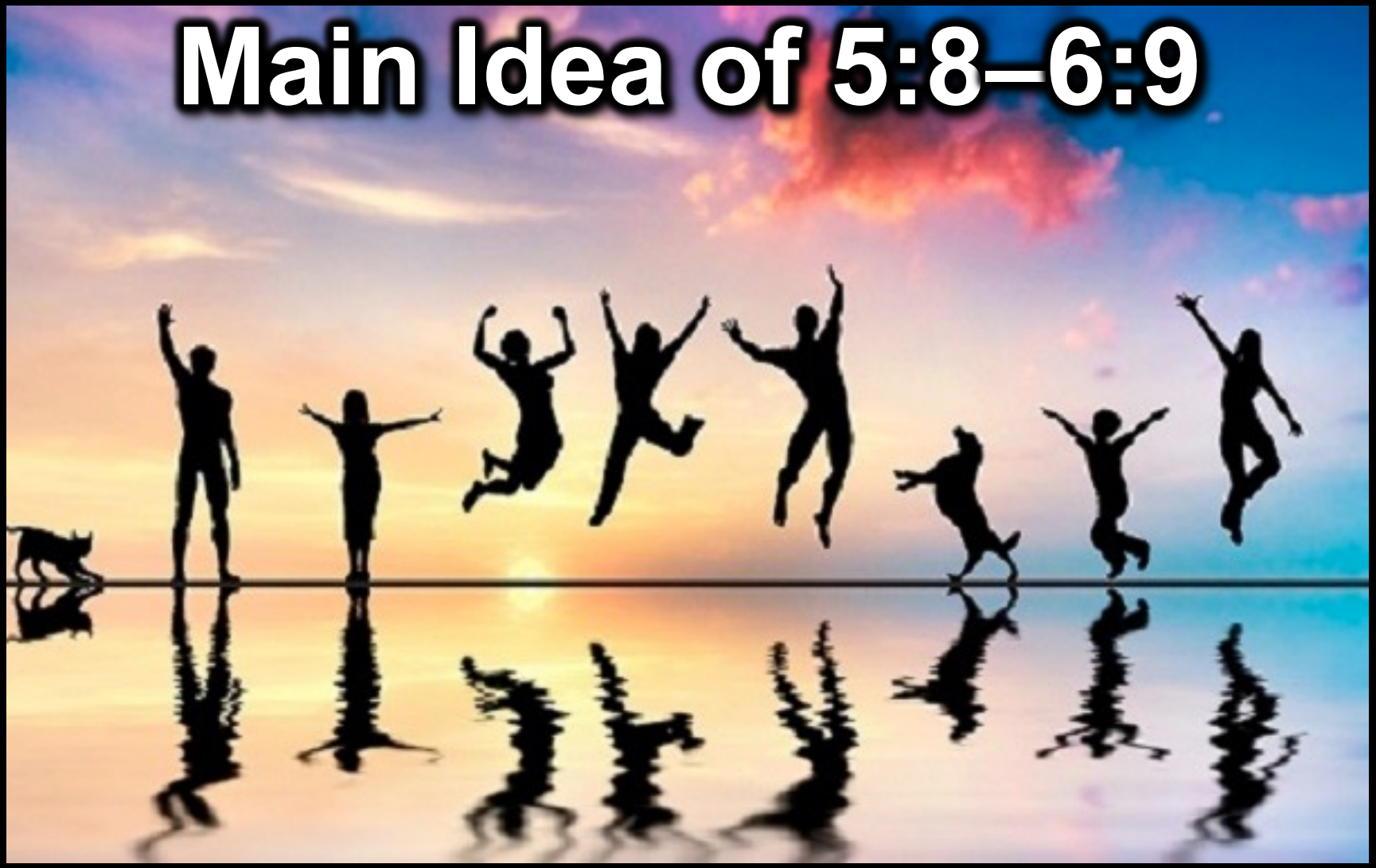
More Money = More Happiness?

Happiness



Money

Main Idea of 5:8–6:9



Materialism has many negative results but godly people can enjoy wealth.



1. Don't be surprised that some corrupt officials hoard wealth (5:8-9).

2. Materialism has many sad results (5:10-17)

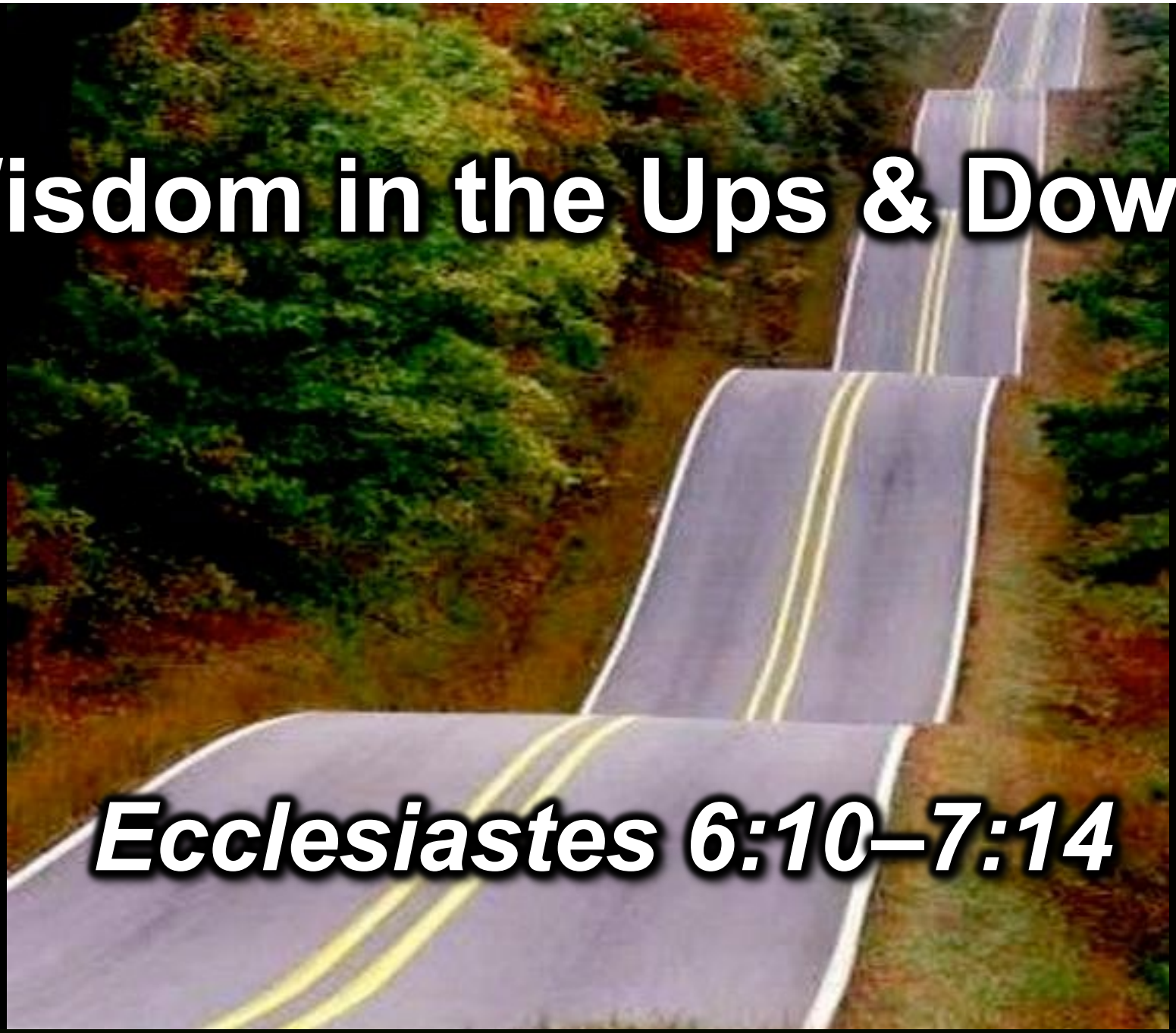


3. God gives money either for the worker or for others to enjoy (5:18–6:9).



Ecclesiastes 6

Wisdom in the Ups & Downs



Ecclesiastes 6:10–7:14

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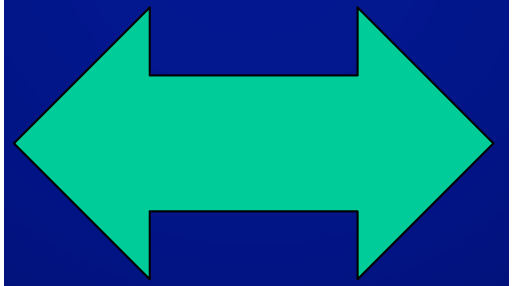
Why should we trust in God's plan for our lives?

How can we do both?

enjoy life



fear God

I. Live as if life is fleeting (1:1-11).



II. Live as if work is fleeting (1:12–6:9).



III. Live as if wisdom is fleeting (6:10–11:6).



Ecclesiastes

Work & Wisdom Don't Last

Theme: Fleeting Nature of…	Work	Wisdom	Youth
1:1-11	1:12–6:9	6:10–11:6	11:7–12:14
Man's Humanity	Man's Hands	Man's Head	Man's Heart
Cycles	Work	Ignorance	Aging
Place: Earth ("under the sun") about 935 BC			

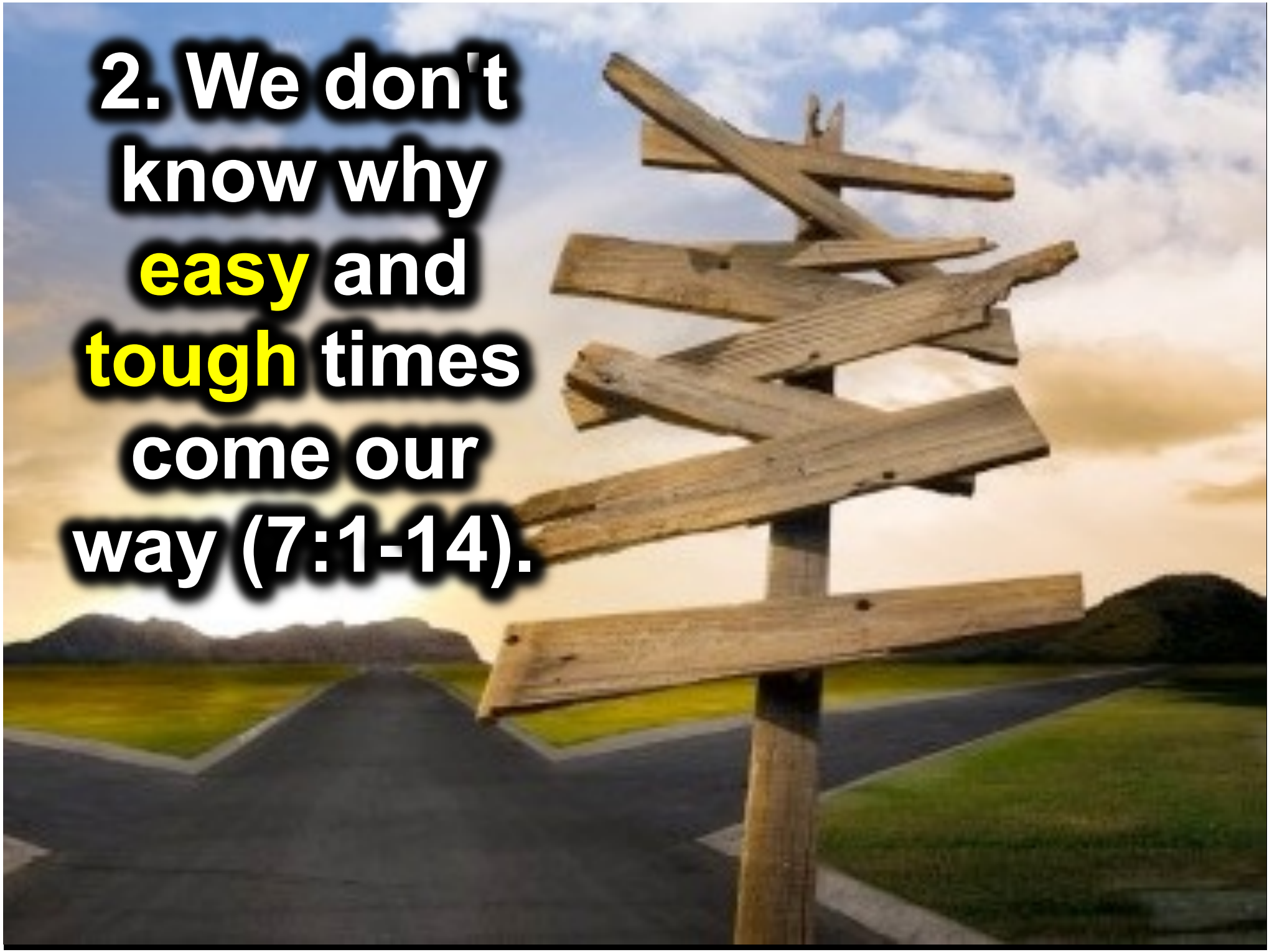

Wisdom



2 reasons
(Eccl. 6:10–7:14)

Why should we trust in God's plan for our lives?


1. God has planned all events
and won't change them (6:10-12).


2. We don't know why easy and tough times come our way (7:1-14).

The Main Idea of 6:10–7:14

Why trust in God's plan?



God's plan is unchanging and you are ignorant of it.

Ecclesiastes 7



Man is ignorant so he must rely upon the immutable and wise plan of God (7:1–9:10).



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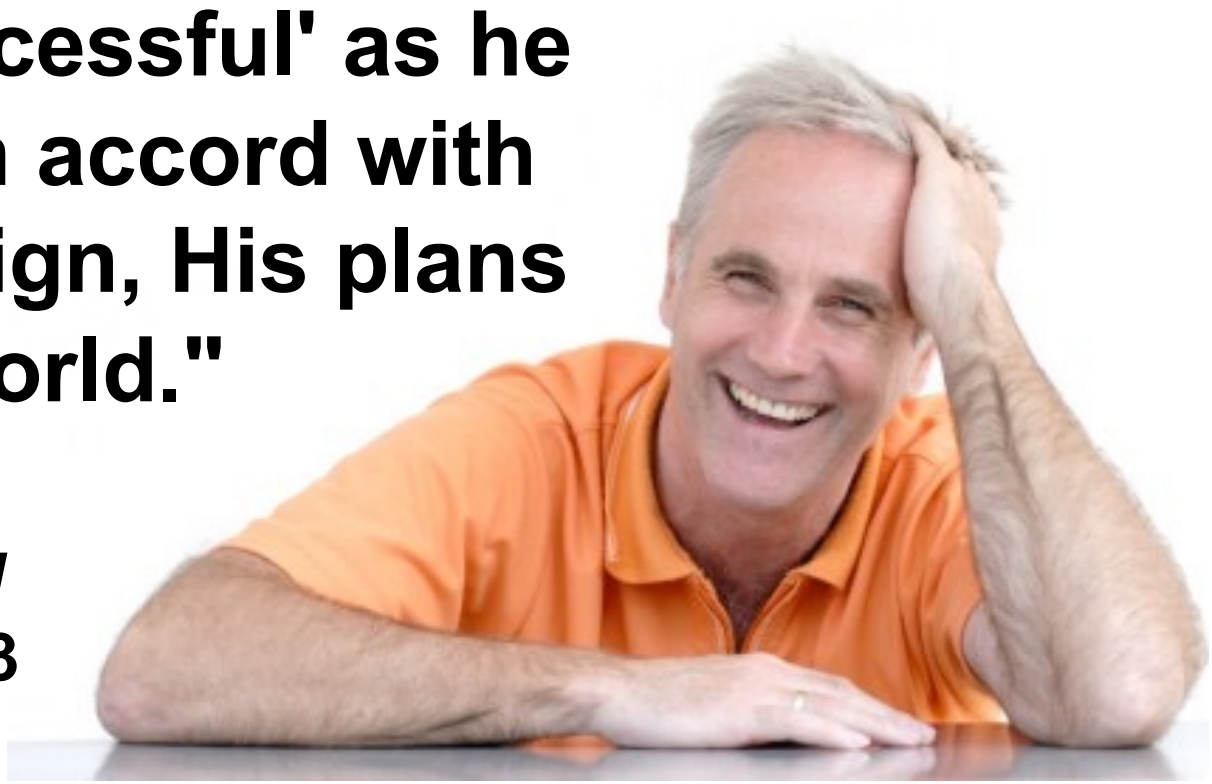
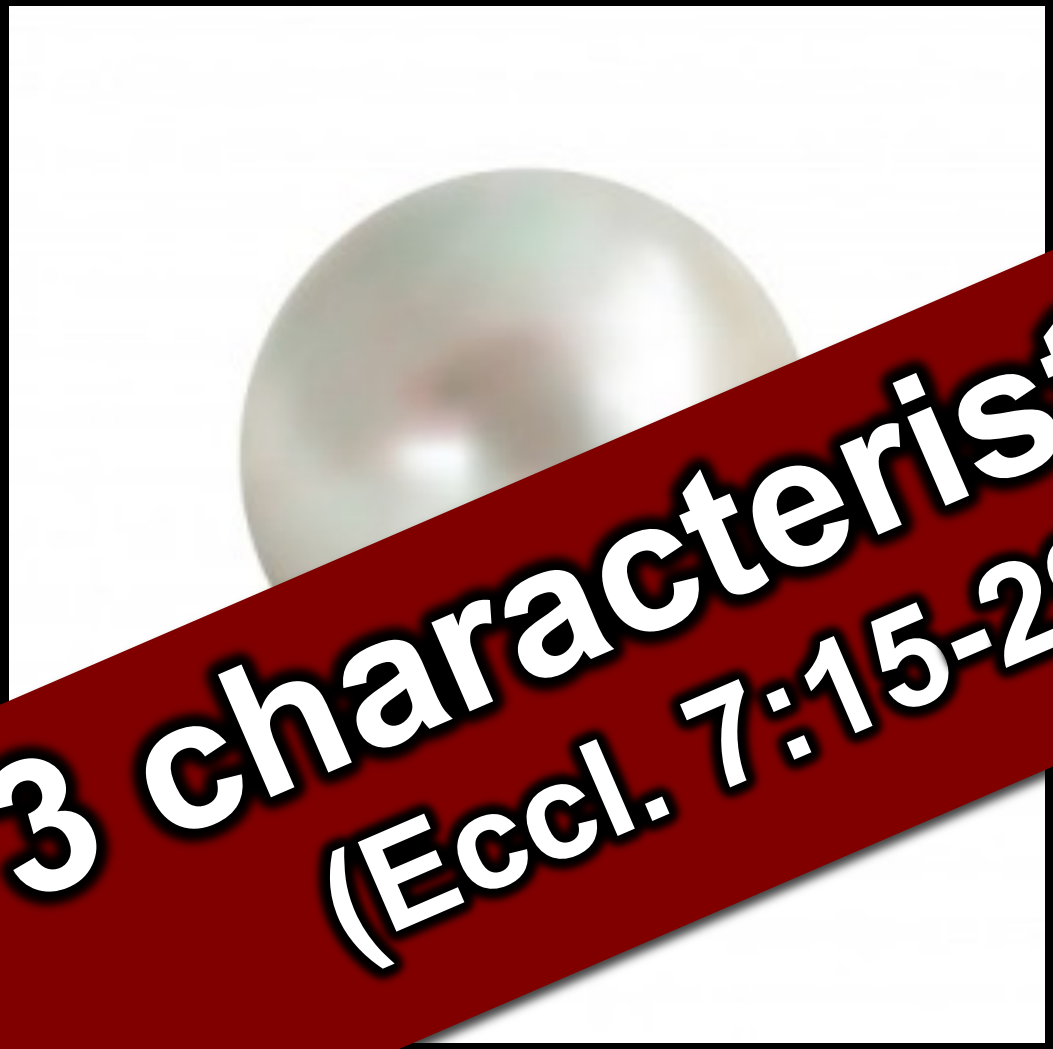
Wisdom is Practical

"Biblical wisdom includes the art of being skillful and successful in one's relationships and responsibilities in life… An individual is 'successful' as he directs his life in accord with God's divine design, His plans for the world."

Roy B. Zuck, *A Biblical Theology of the OT*, 213



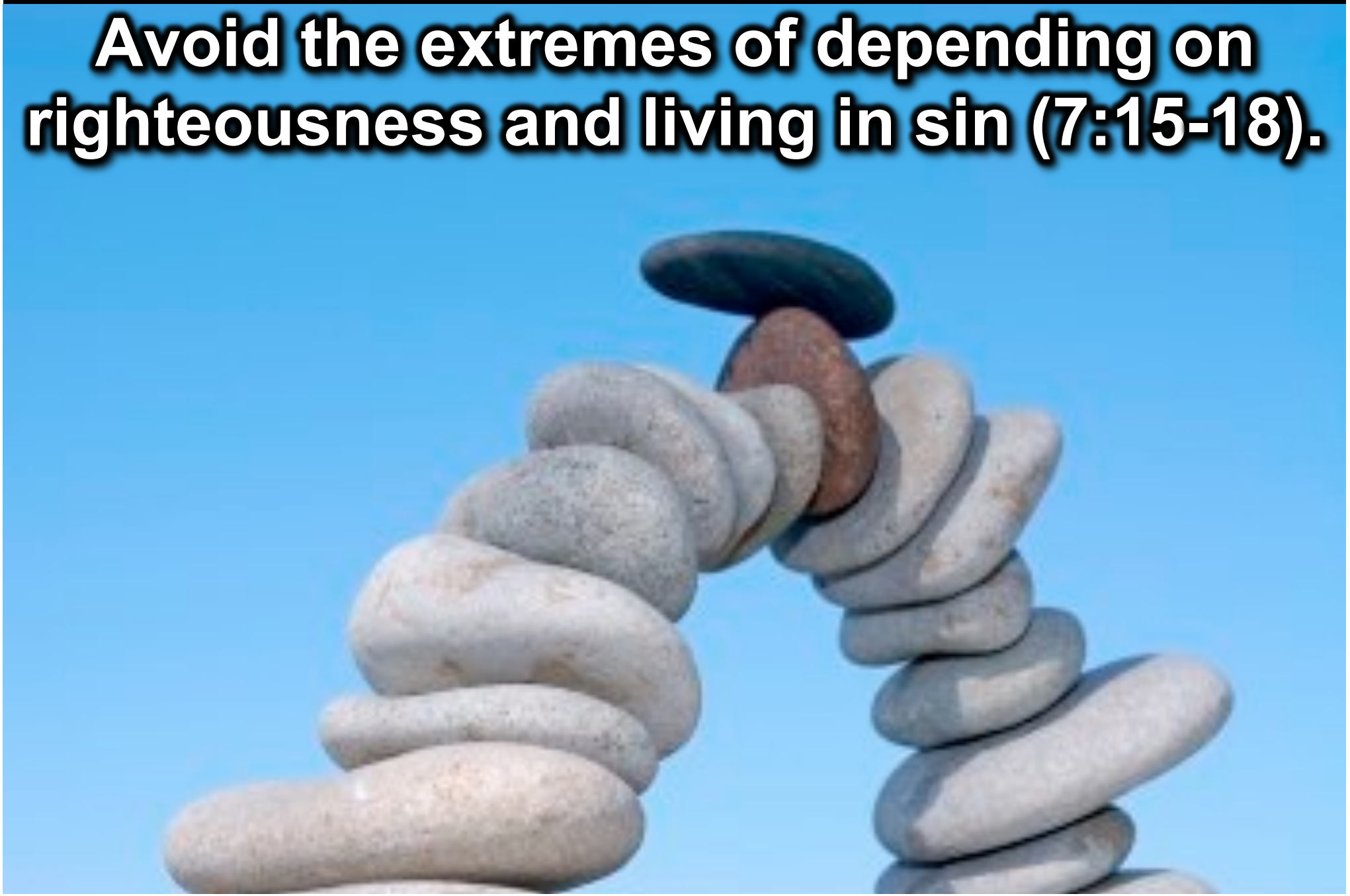


3 characteristics (Eccl. 7:15-29)

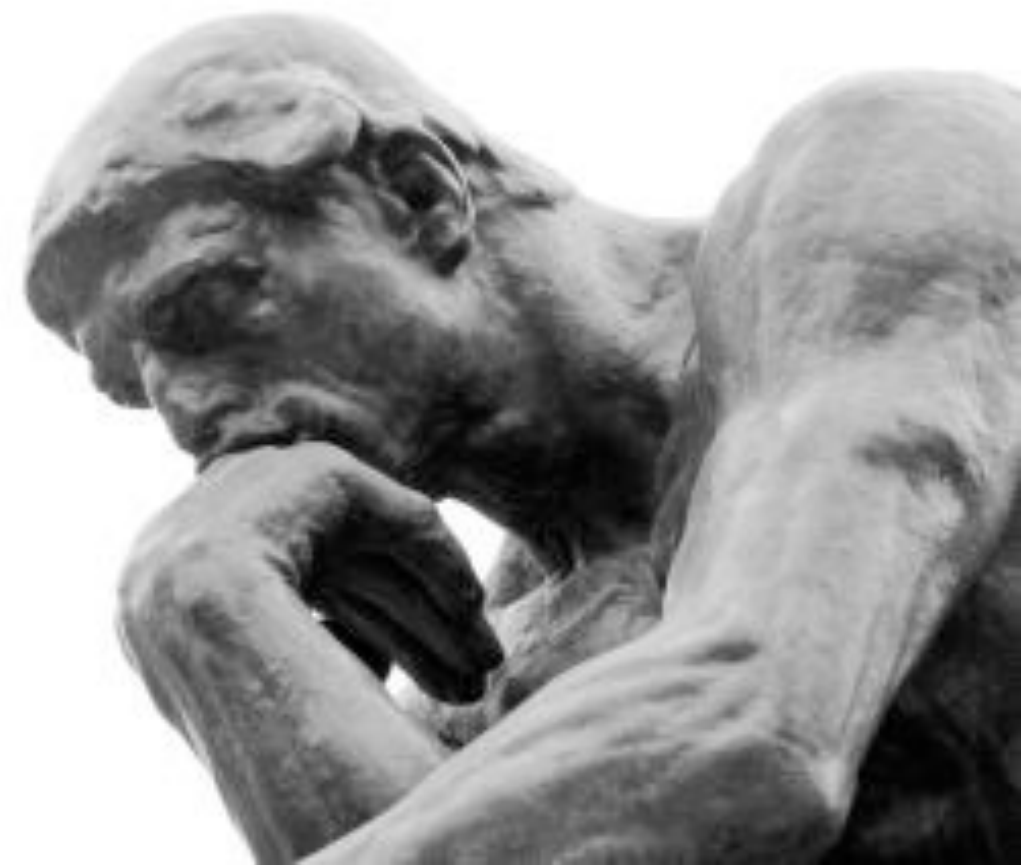
What are the qualities of wisdom?

1. Wisdom is balanced:

Avoid the extremes of depending on righteousness and living in sin (7:15-18).

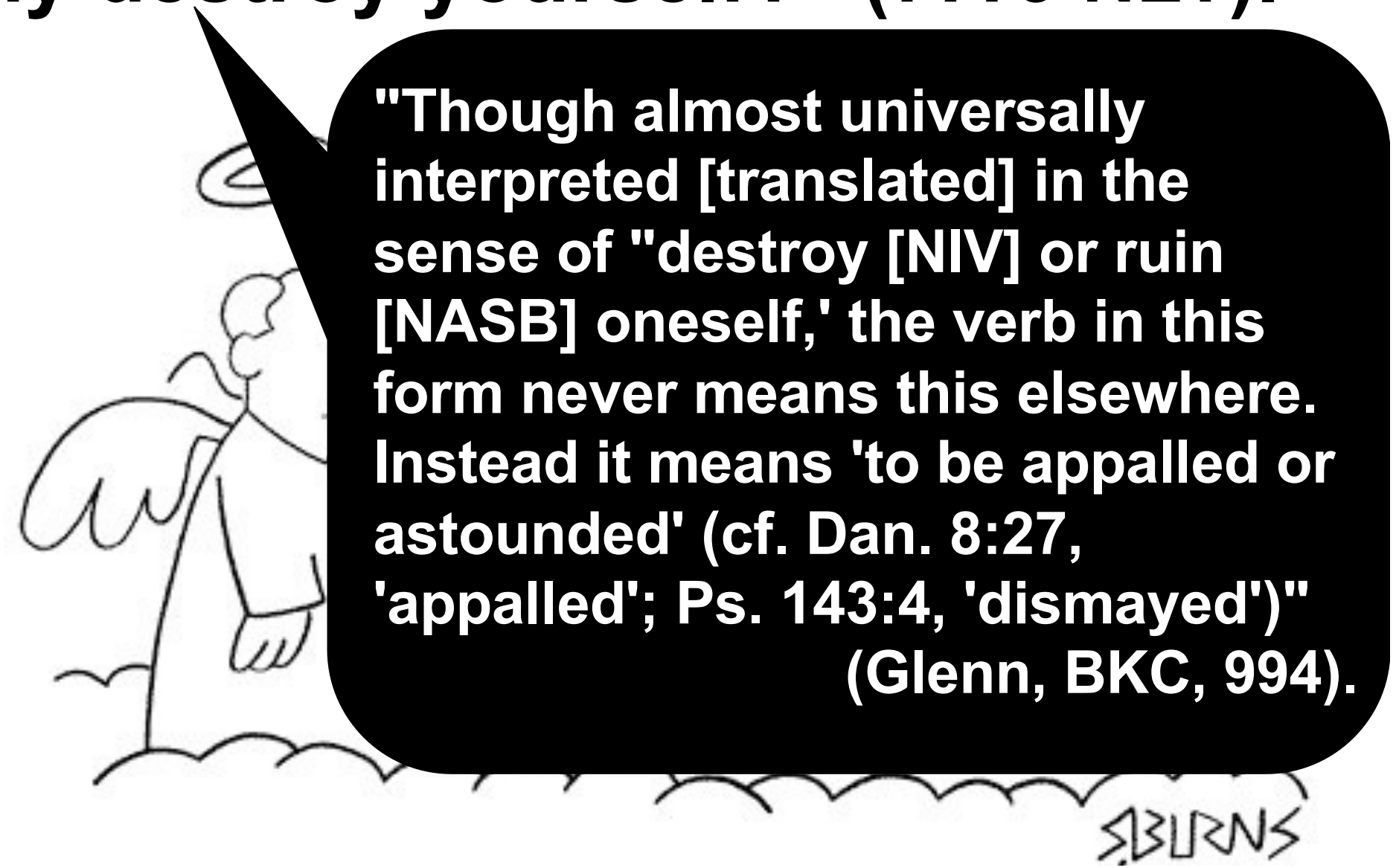


"I have seen everything in this meaningless life, including the death of good young people and the long life of wicked people."



Eccl. 7:15 NLT

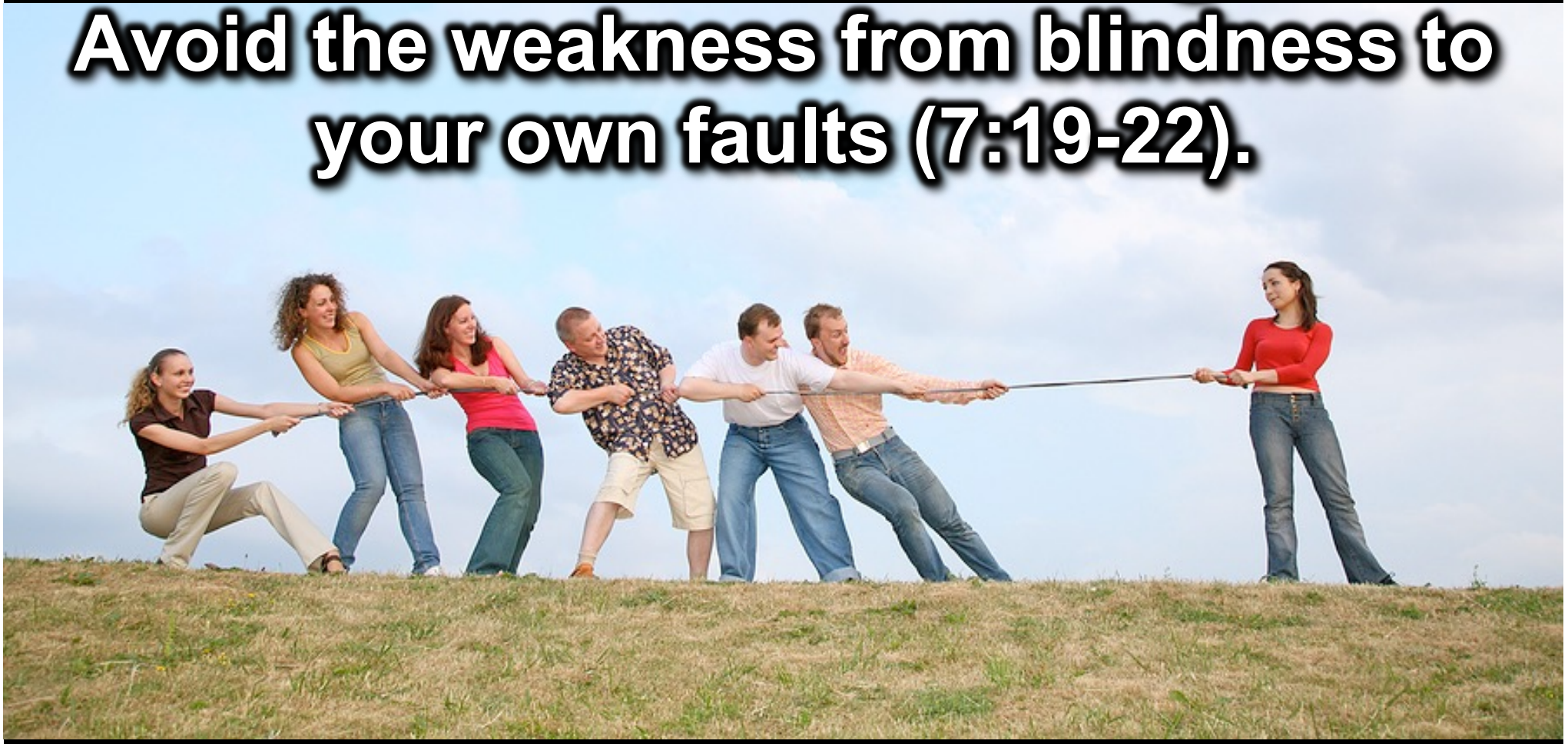
"So don't be too good or too wise! Why destroy yourself?" (7:16 NLT).



"Here comes Mr. 'holier-than-thou.'"

2. Wisdom is strong:

Avoid the weakness from blindness to your own faults (7:19-22).



Wisdom gives strength to see our weaknesses (7:20-22 NLT).

Wisdom avoids perfectionism:

"Not a single person on earth is always good and never sins" (7:20).

Wisdom handles criticism without judging:

"Don't eavesdrop on others—you may hear your servant curse you. 22For you know how often you yourself have cursed others" (7:21-22).

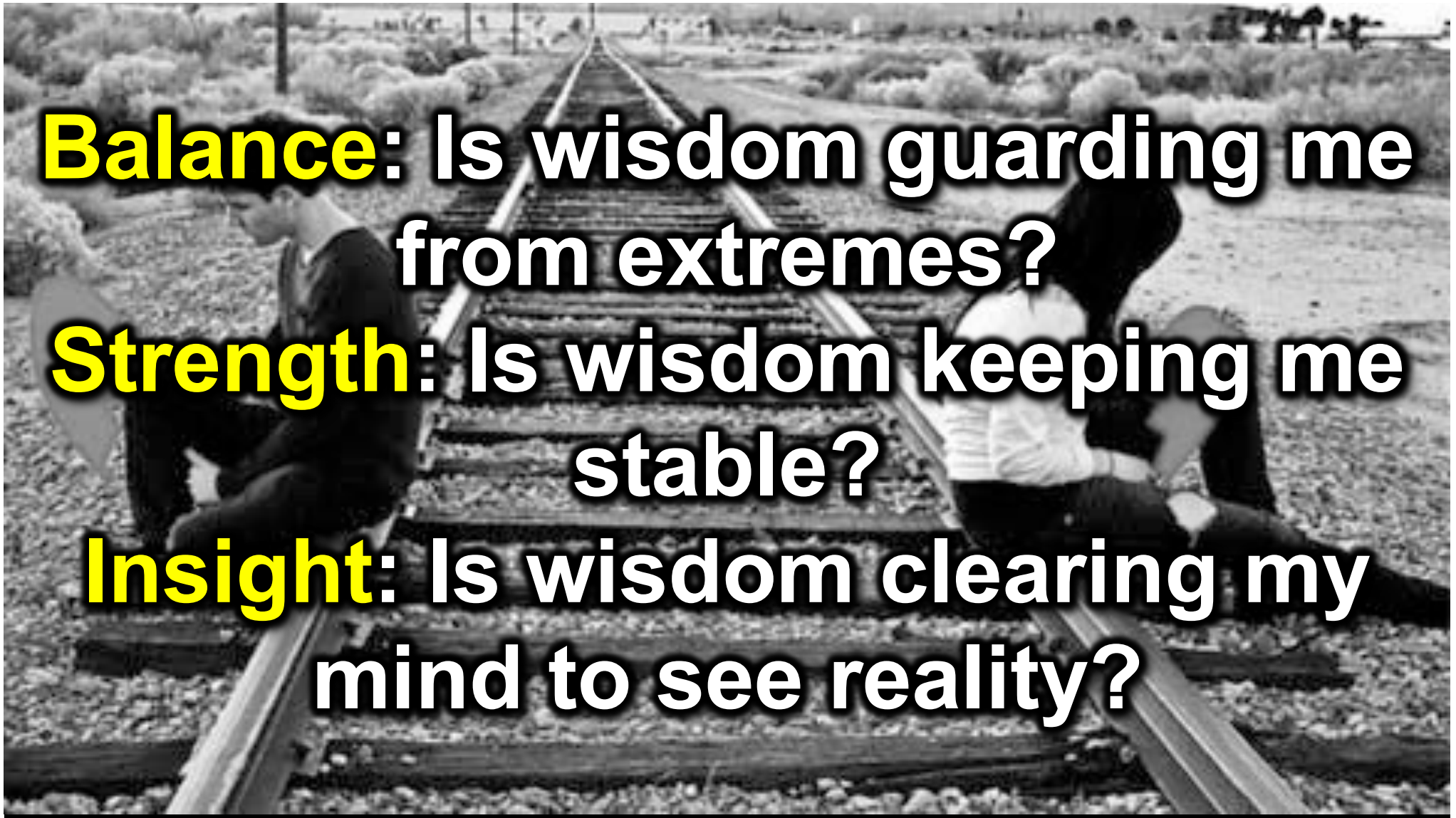
3. Wisdom is insightful:

Avoid thinking you have all the answers but still show insight (7:23-29).



Main Idea





Questions

(Swindoll, *Living on the Ragged Edge Study Guide*, 73).

Ecclesiastes 8

Submission & Joy



Ecclesiastes 8

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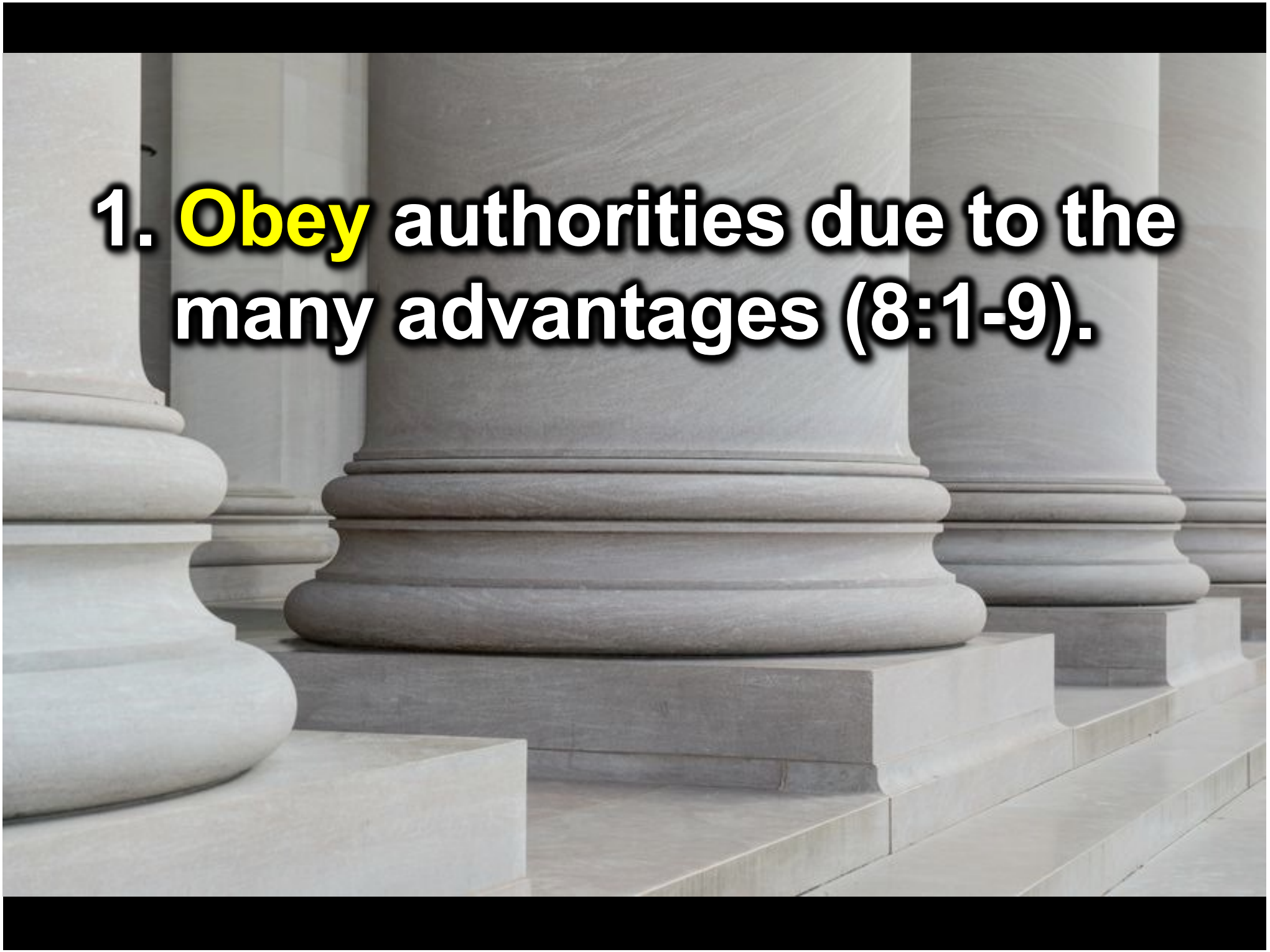
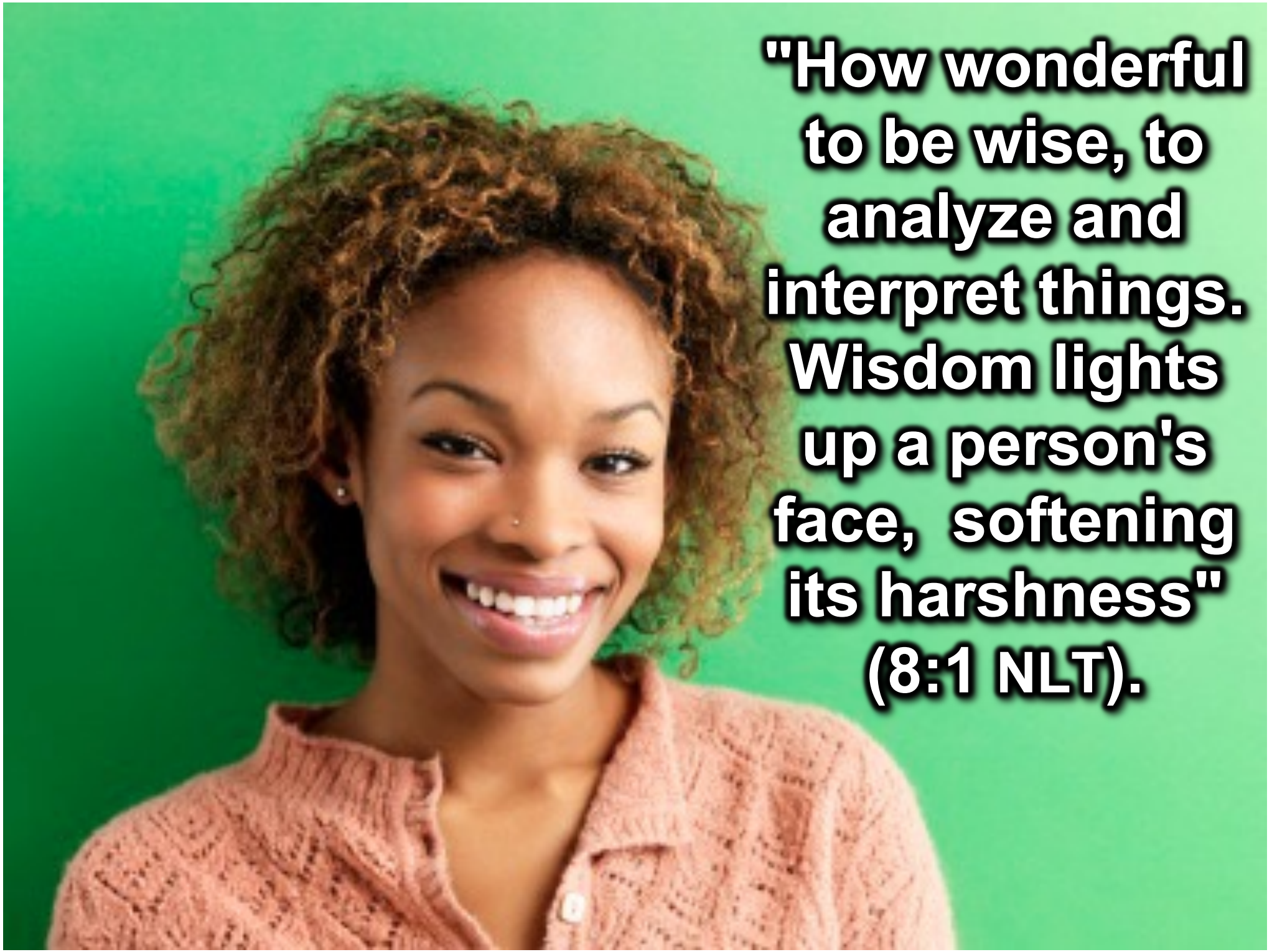
How should we respond to
authority
—to both God and man?


1. Obey authorities due to the many advantages (8:1-9).


"How wonderful to be wise, to analyze and interpret things. Wisdom lights up a person's face, softening its harshness" (8:1 NLT).

"I have thought deeply about all that goes on here under the sun, where people have the power to hurt each other" (8:9 NLT).



2. We punish the wrong people —so it puzzles us (8:10-14).



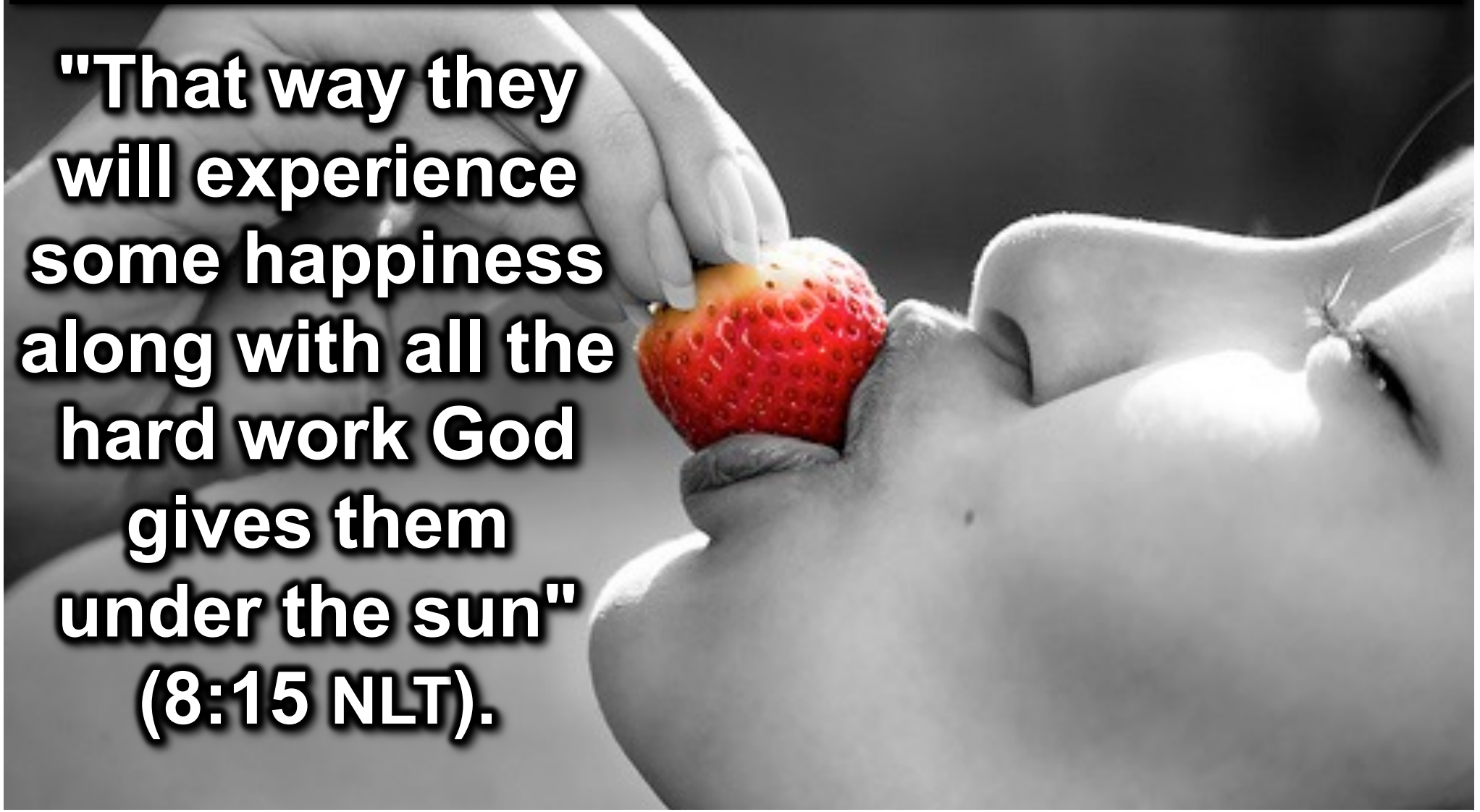
Who do we punish?



3. Enjoy life and submit to God even though He won't tell us His reasons (8:15-17).

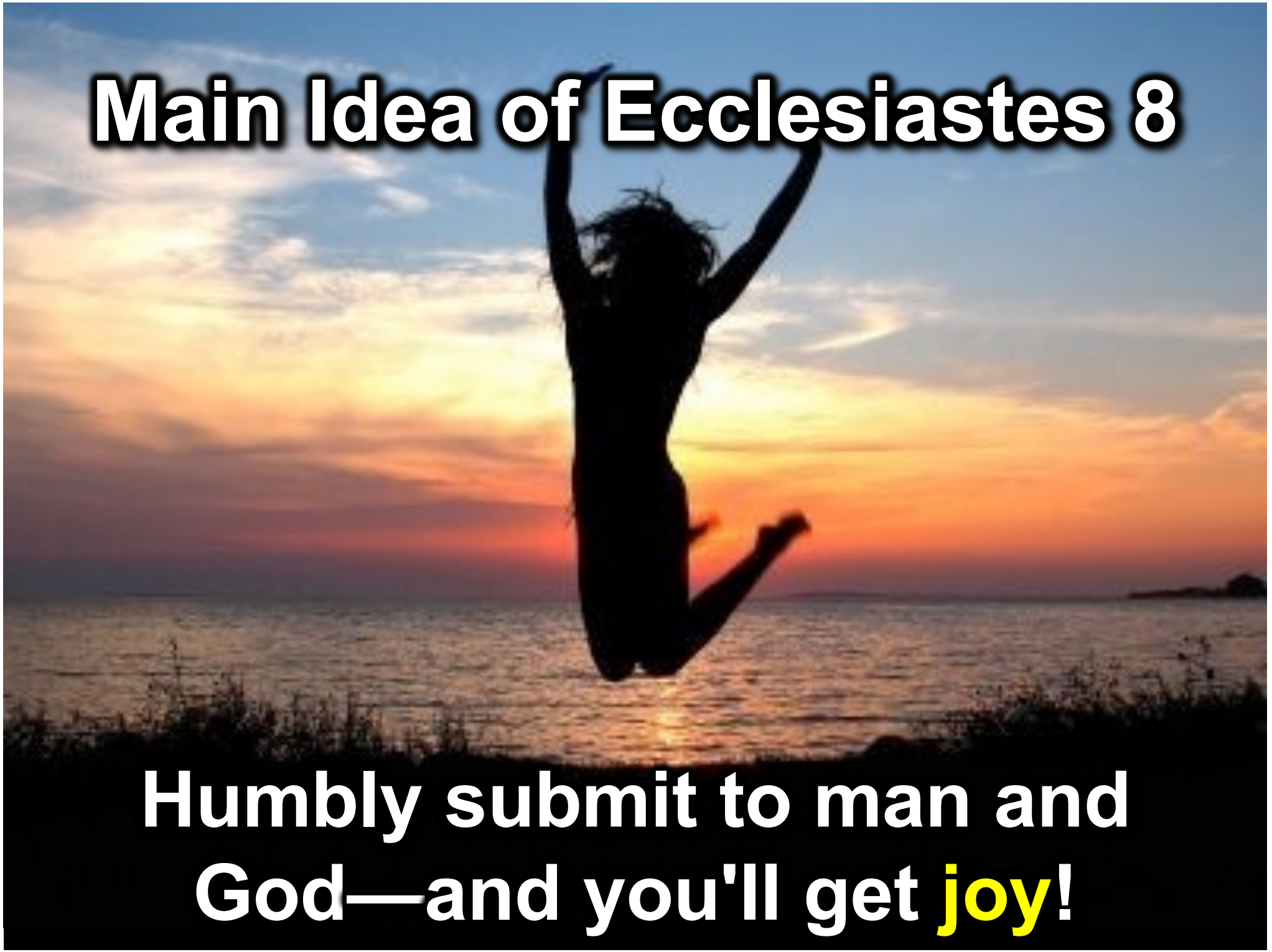


"So I recommend having fun, because there is nothing better for people in this world than to eat, drink, and enjoy life."





She wanted to die running. She did—just after crossing the finish line.


Main Idea of Ecclesiastes 8
Humbly submit to man and God—and you'll get joy!

Where do you need to…

- Submit to authority?
- Recognize your limited understanding?



Ecclesiastes 9



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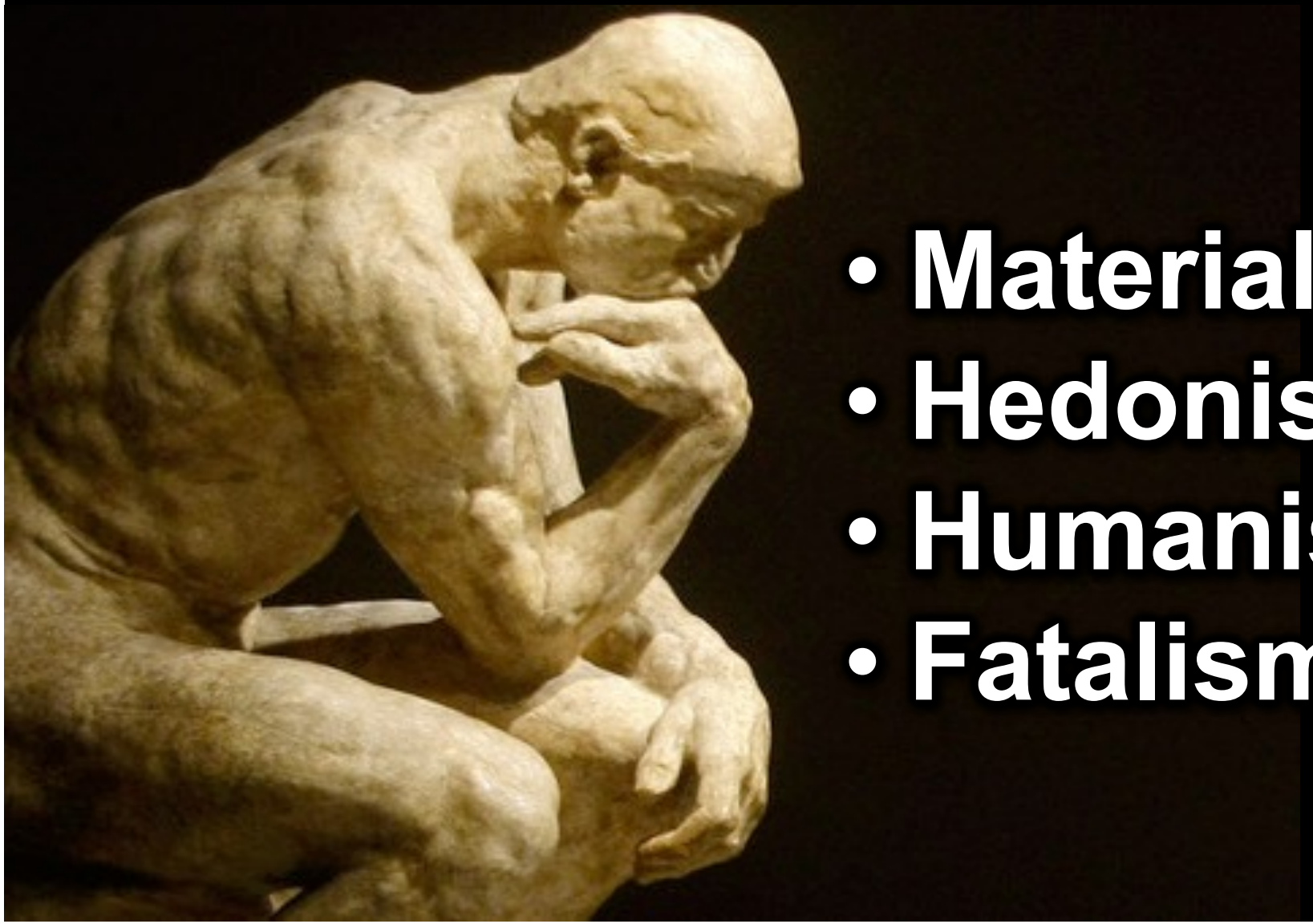
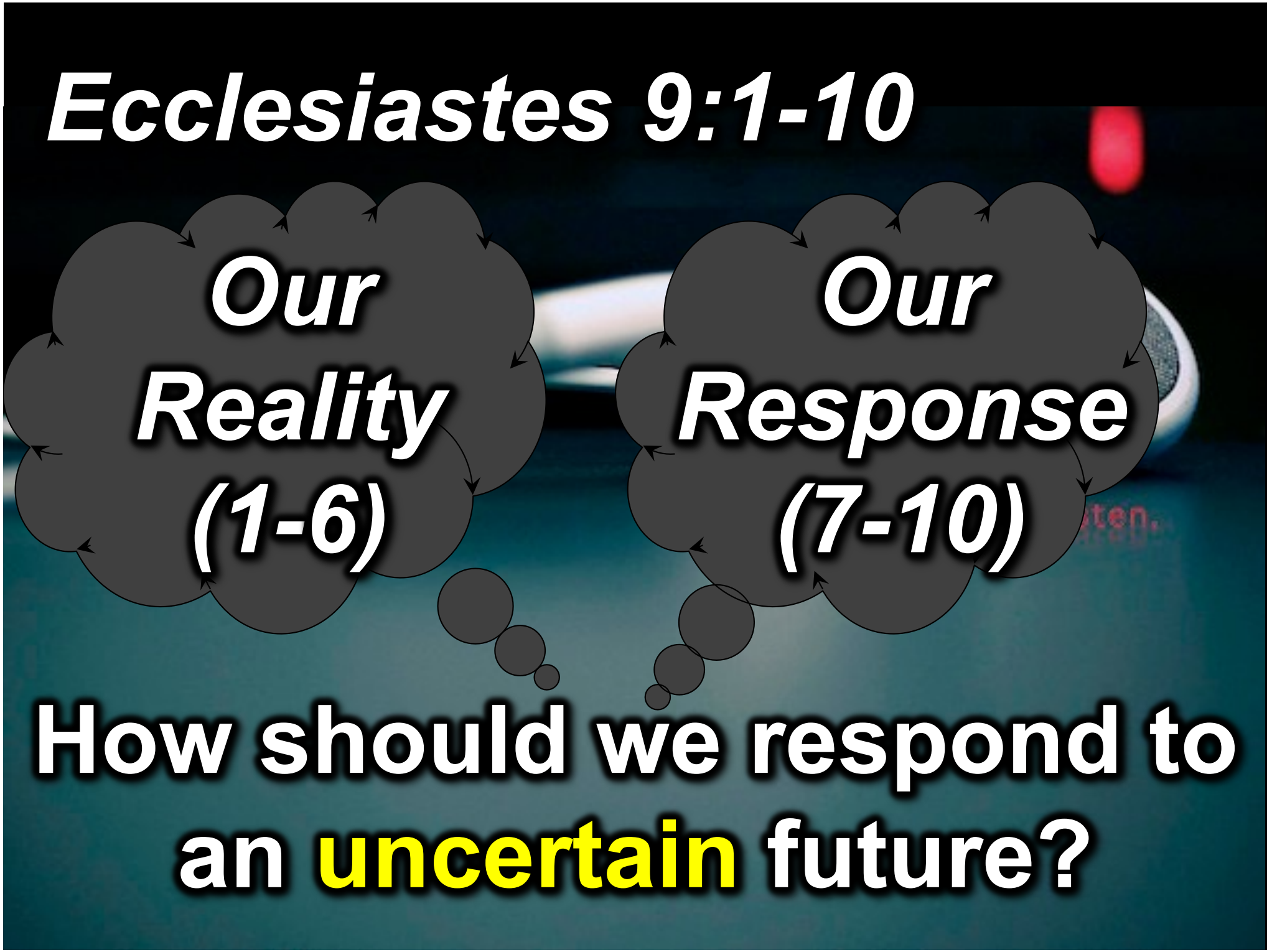
The Future



How do most people deal with our uncertain future?



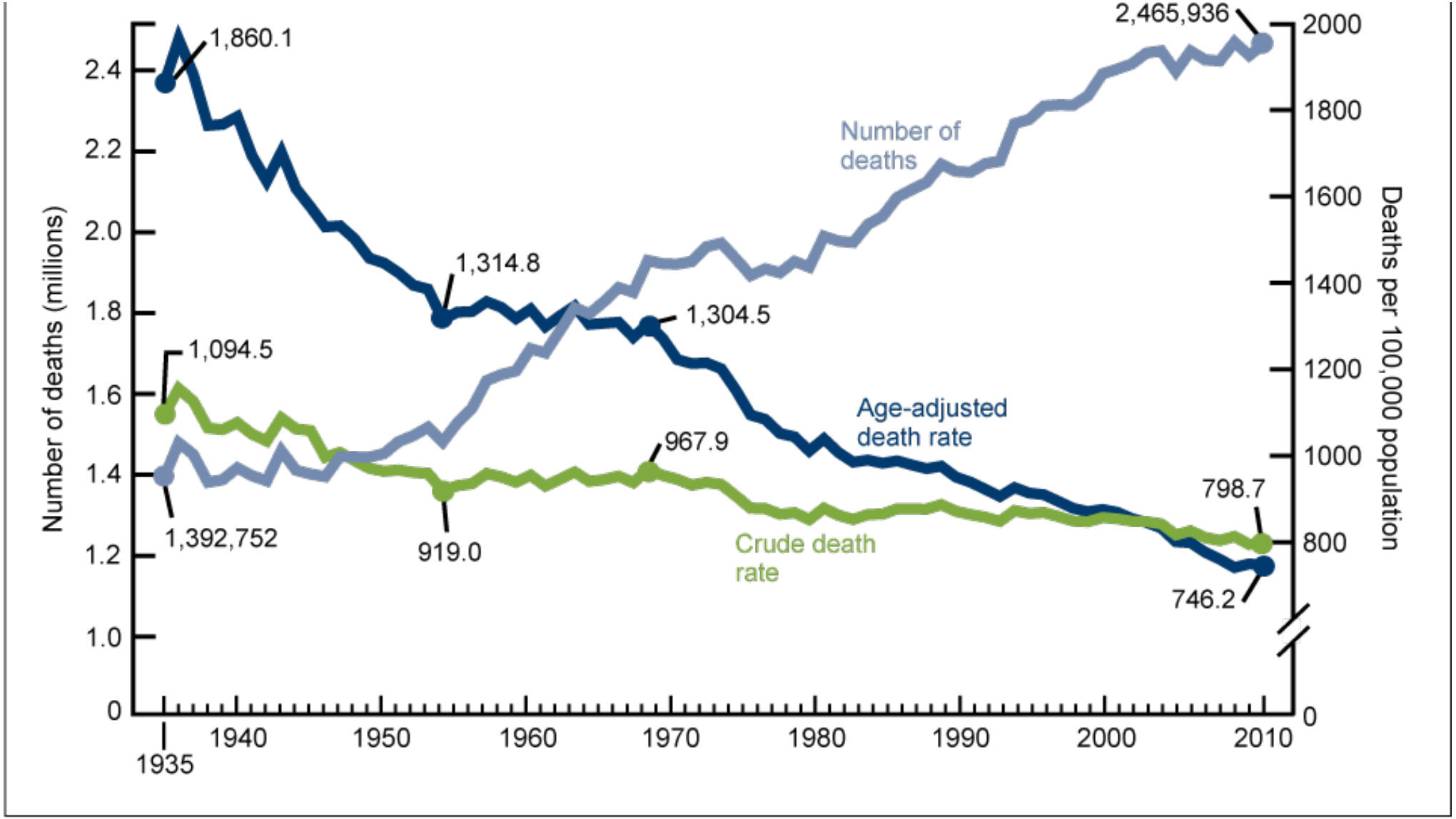
- Materialism
- Hedonism
- Humanism
- Fatalism


Ecclesiastes 9:1-10
Our Reality (1-6)
Our Response (7-10)
How should we respond to an uncertain future?

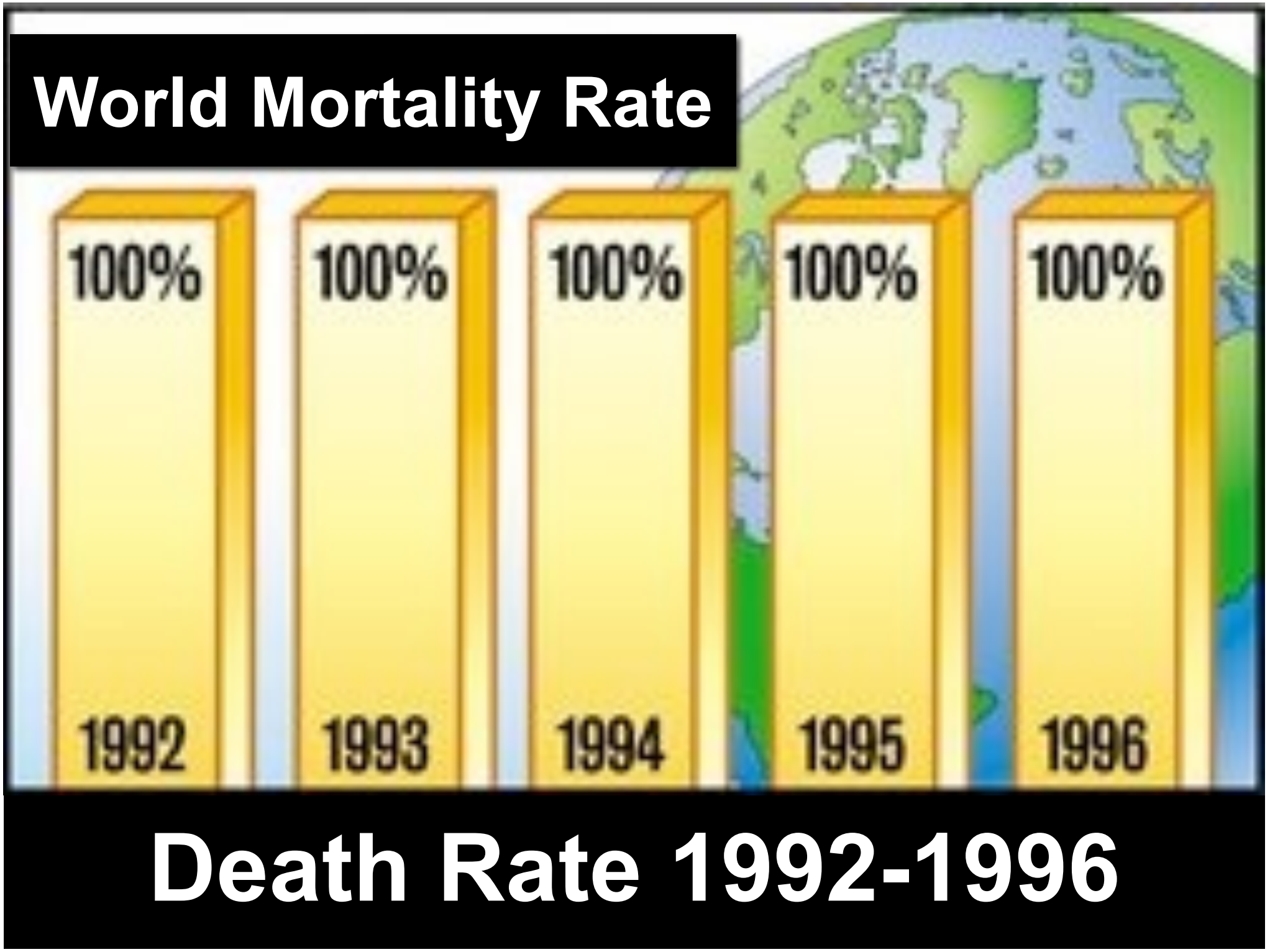
1. Your uncertain future includes certain death (9:1-6).



75 Years of Mortality in the United States, 1935–2010

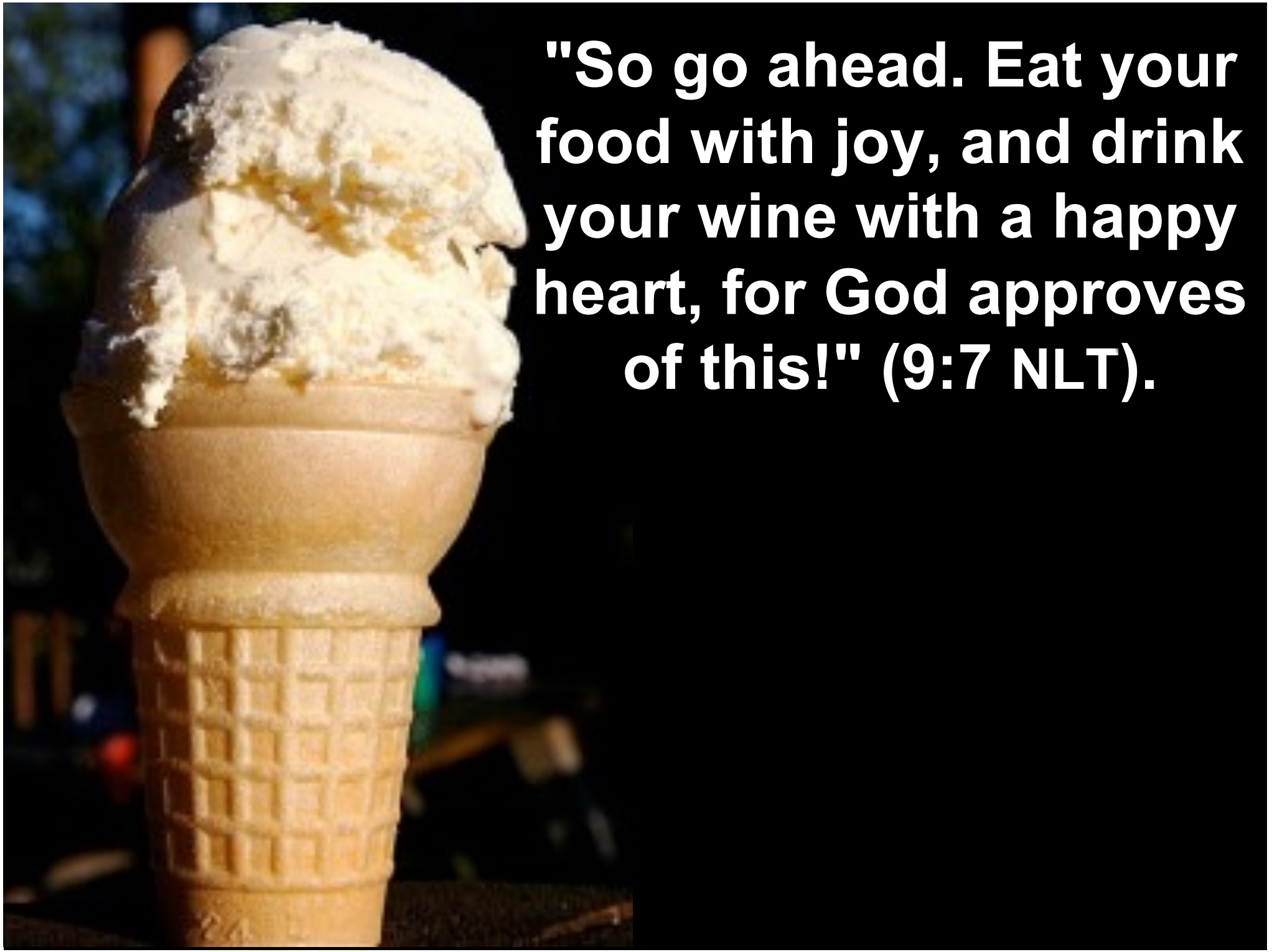


Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (cdc.gov)


World Mortality Rate
100%
100%
100%
100%
100%
1992
1993
1994
1995
1996
Death Rate 1992-1996

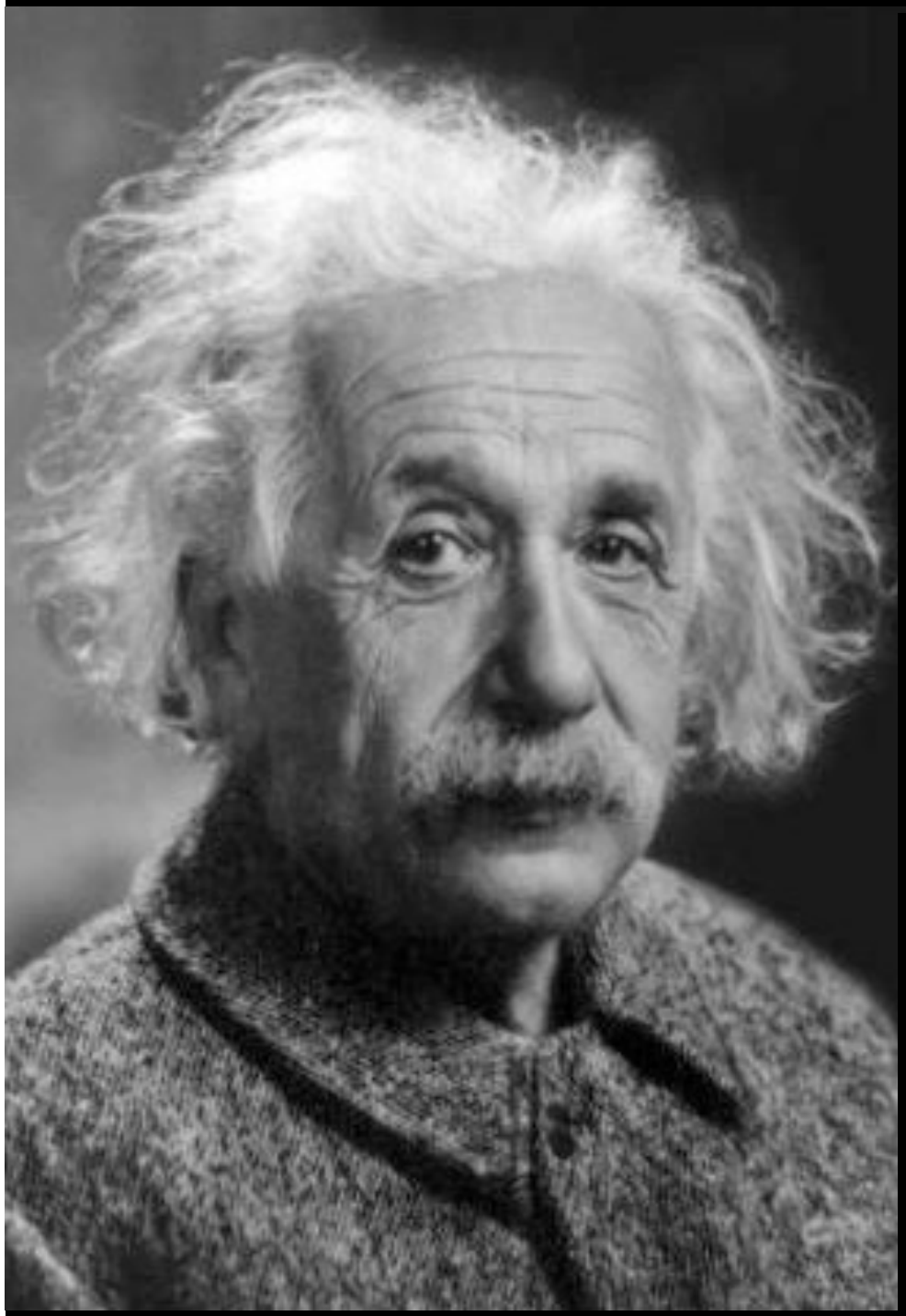


2. Since you'll die, enjoy life and work hard now (9:7-10).


"So go ahead. Eat your food with joy, and drink your wine with a happy heart, for God approves of this!" (9:7 NLT).

Main Idea of Ecclesiastes 9:1-10





“As a child I received instruction both in the Bible and in the Talmud. I am a Jew, but I am enthralled by the luminous figure of the Nazarene. No one can read the Gospels without feeling the actual presence of Jesus. His personality pulsates in every word. No myth is filled with such life.”

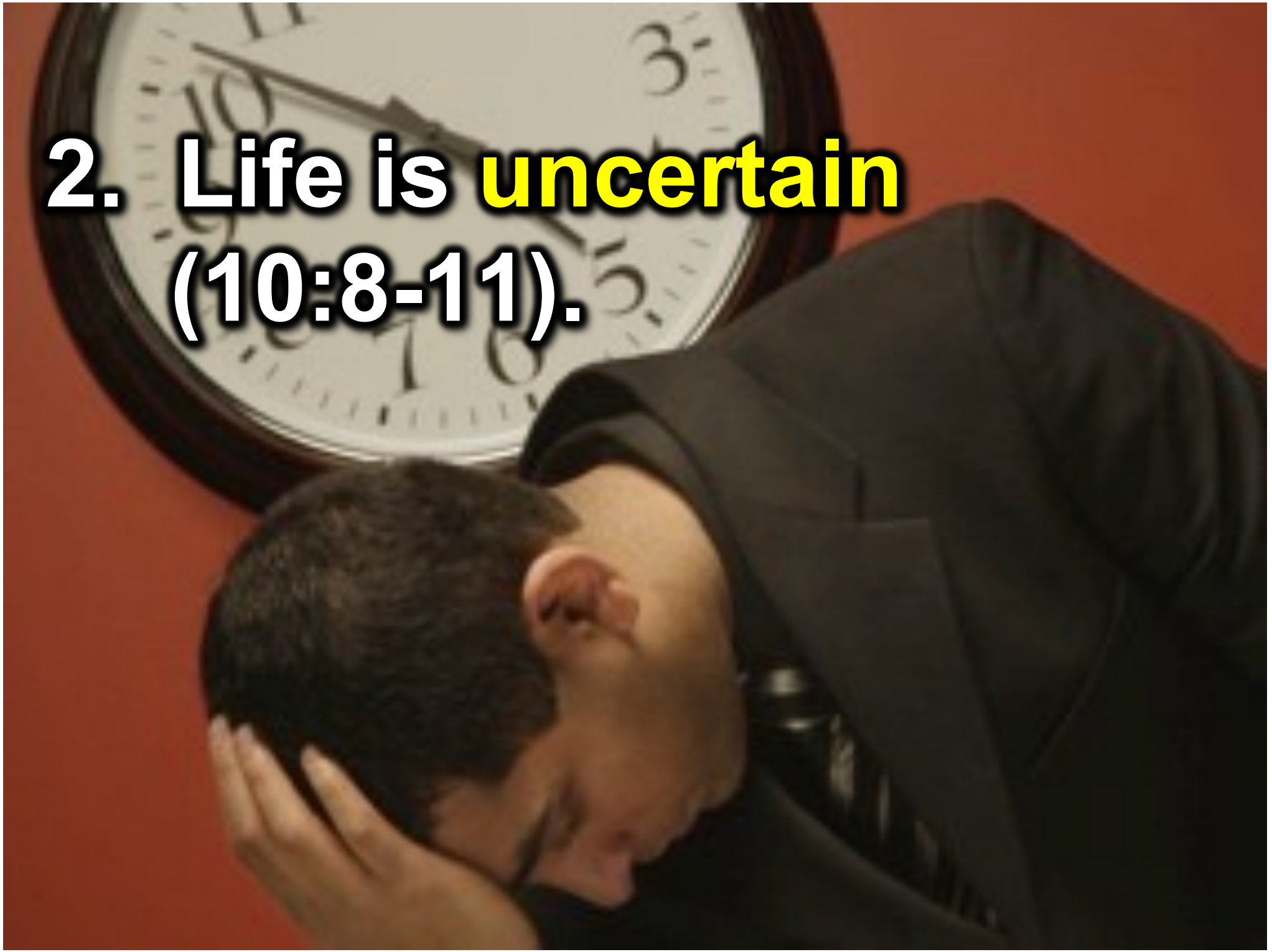
Albert Einstein
***Saturday Evening Post,* Oct 26, 1929**

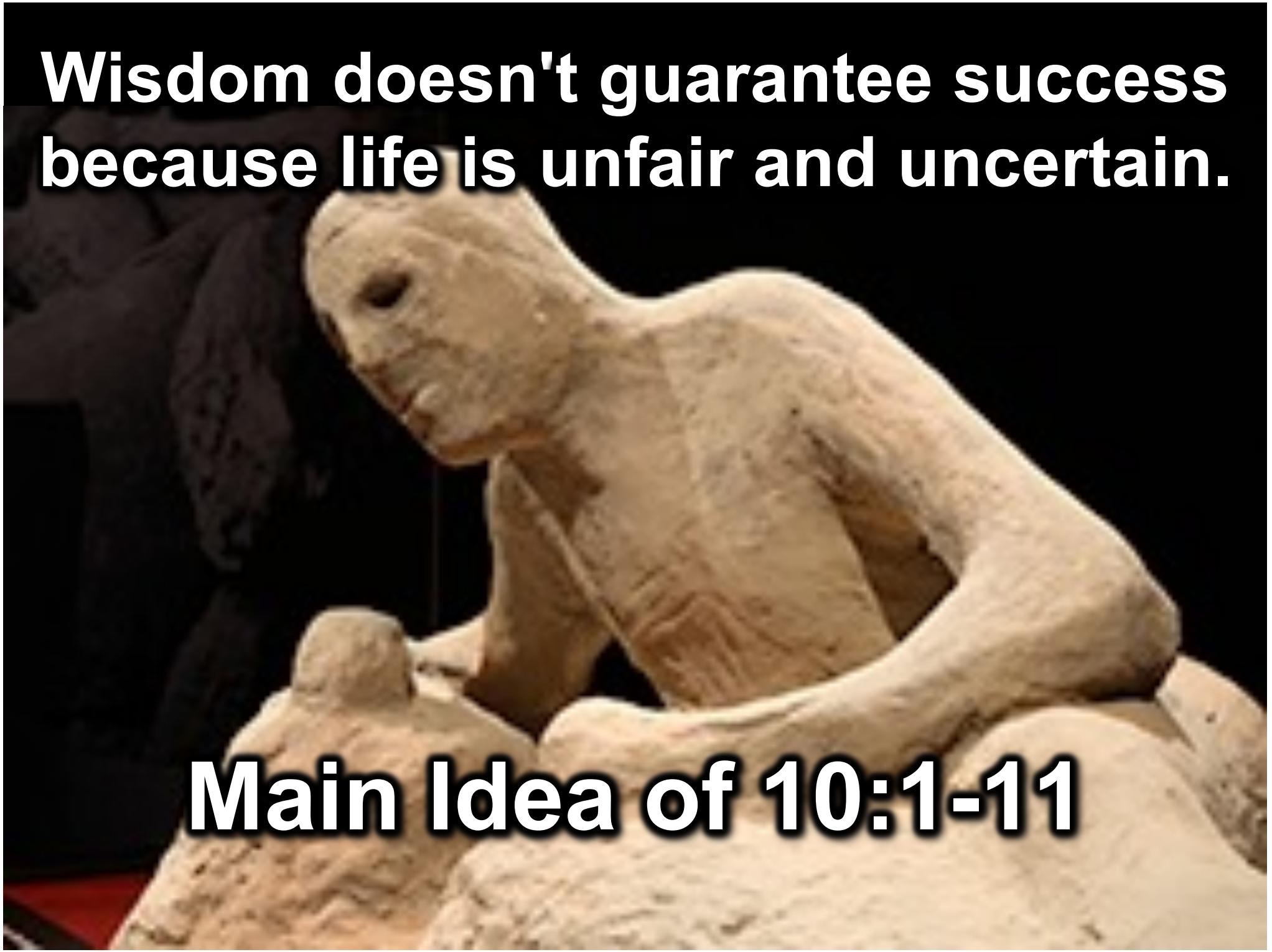
Ecclesiastes 10



Why doesn't wisdom always lead to success?


1. Life is unfair
(9:11–10:7).


2. Life is uncertain
(10:8-11).


Wisdom doesn't guarantee success because life is unfair and uncertain.
Main Idea of 10:1-11



Don't trust wisdom—trust God!

Being Foolish with a Fool



Ecclesiastes 10:12-20

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FOOLS.



FOOLS

We all know one.



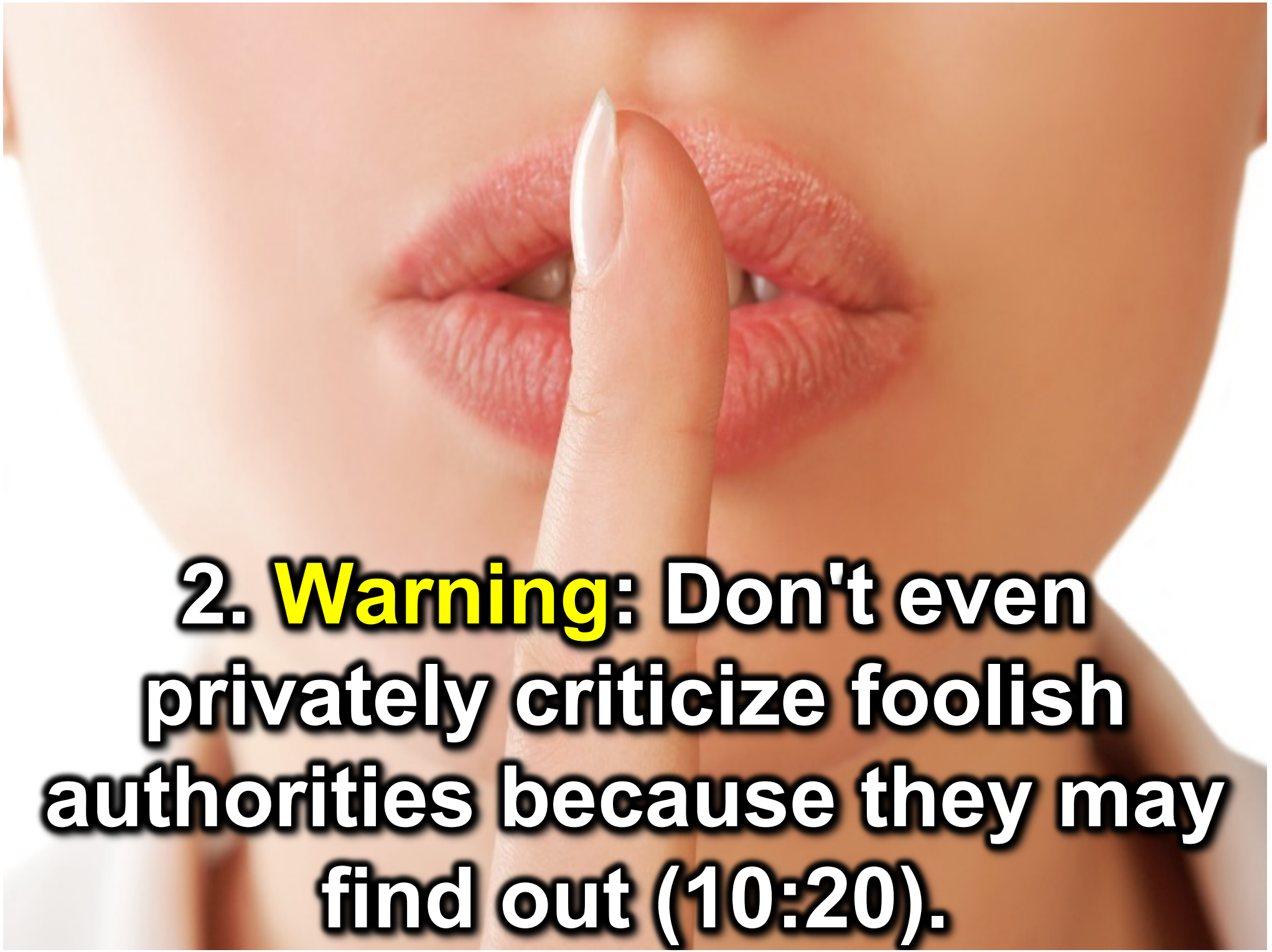
FOOLS

We've all been one.


How should we deal with a fool?

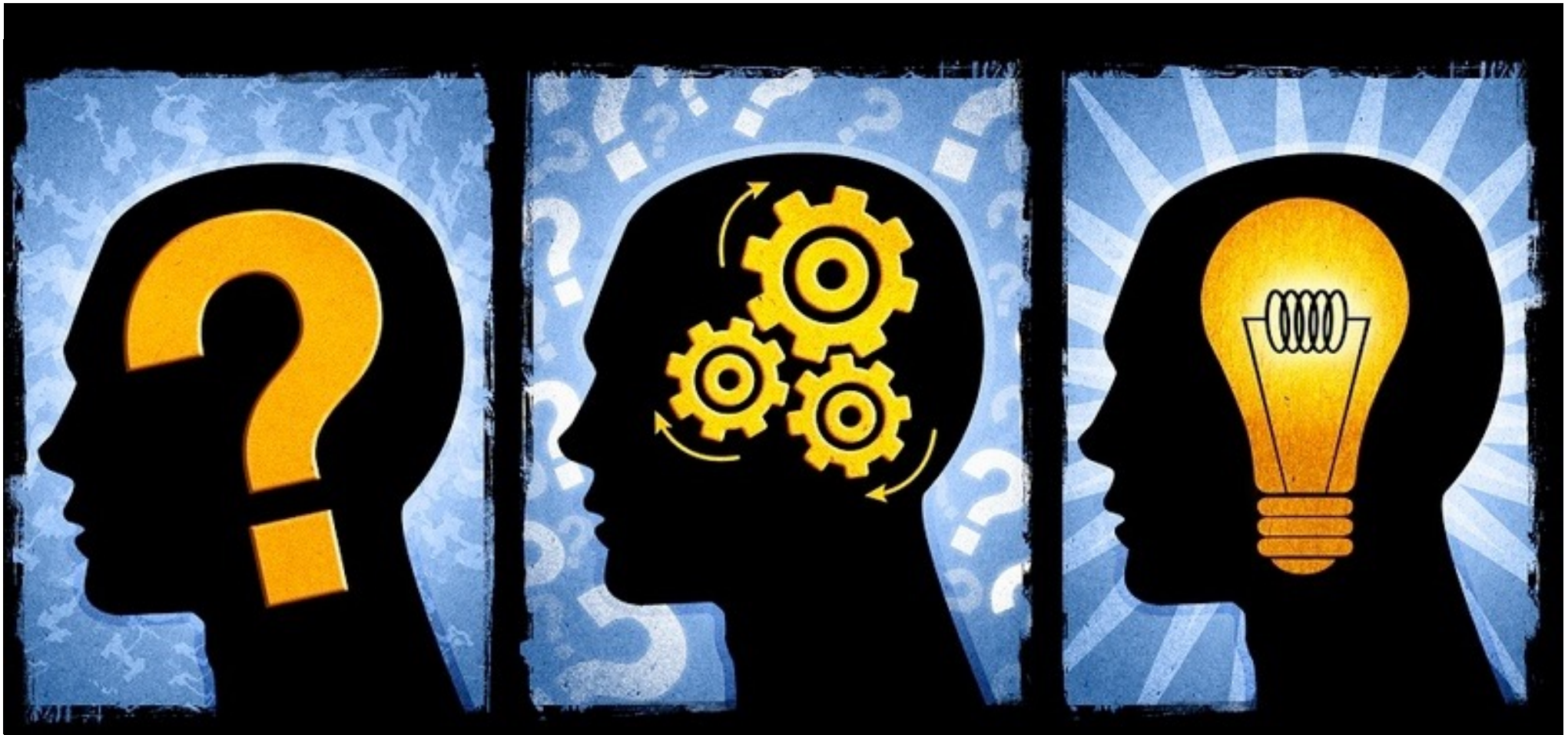


1. **Description**: The speech and actions of a fool are destructive (10:12-19).


2. Warning: Don't even privately criticize foolish authorities because they may find out (10:20).



Don't criticize your foolish leader (Main Idea of 10:12-20)



Have you criticized a superior?
"It takes little size to criticize."



Wise Words Heal

Ecclesiastes 11

What to Do with an Uncertain Future



Ecclesiastes 11:1-6

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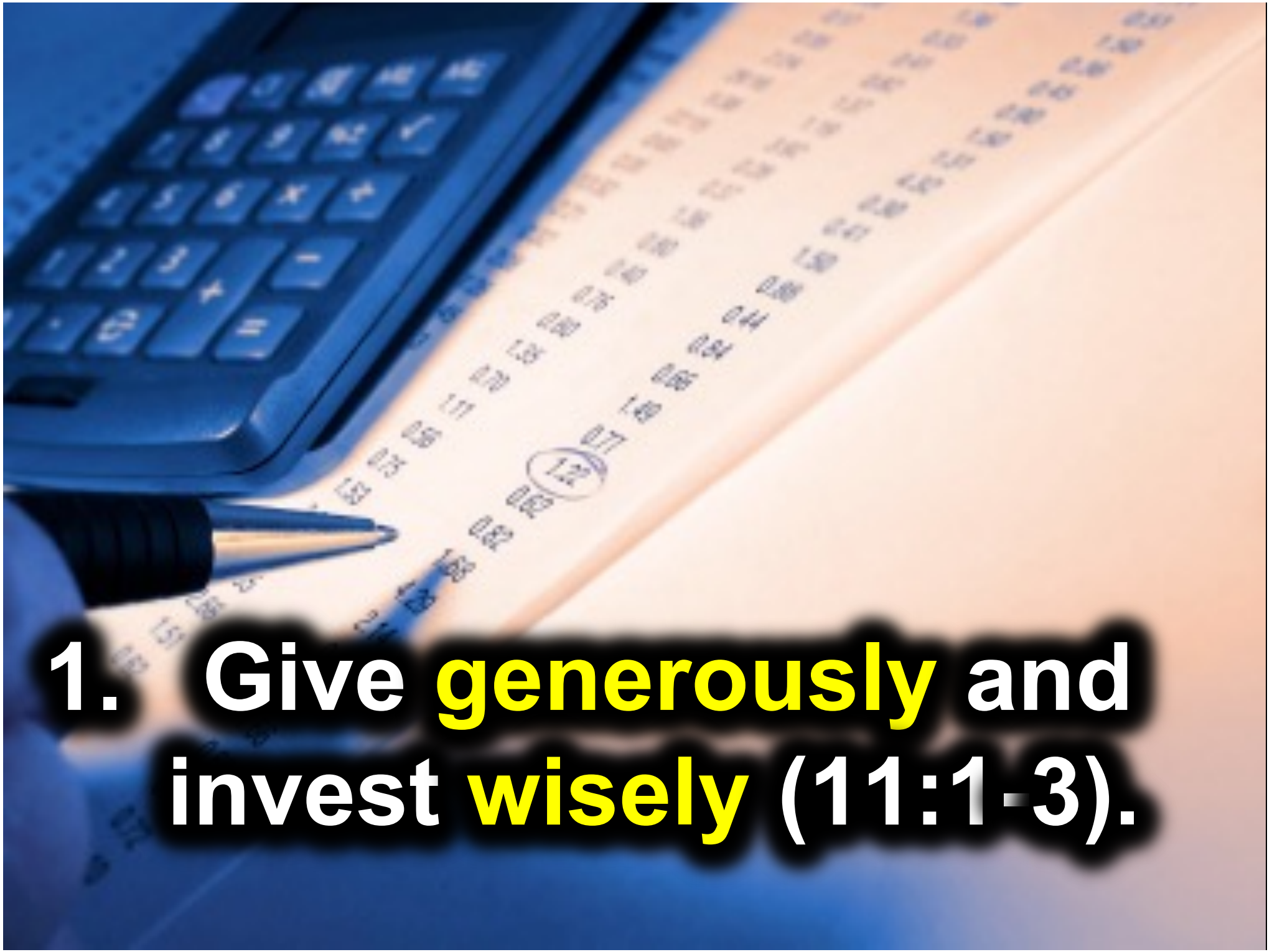
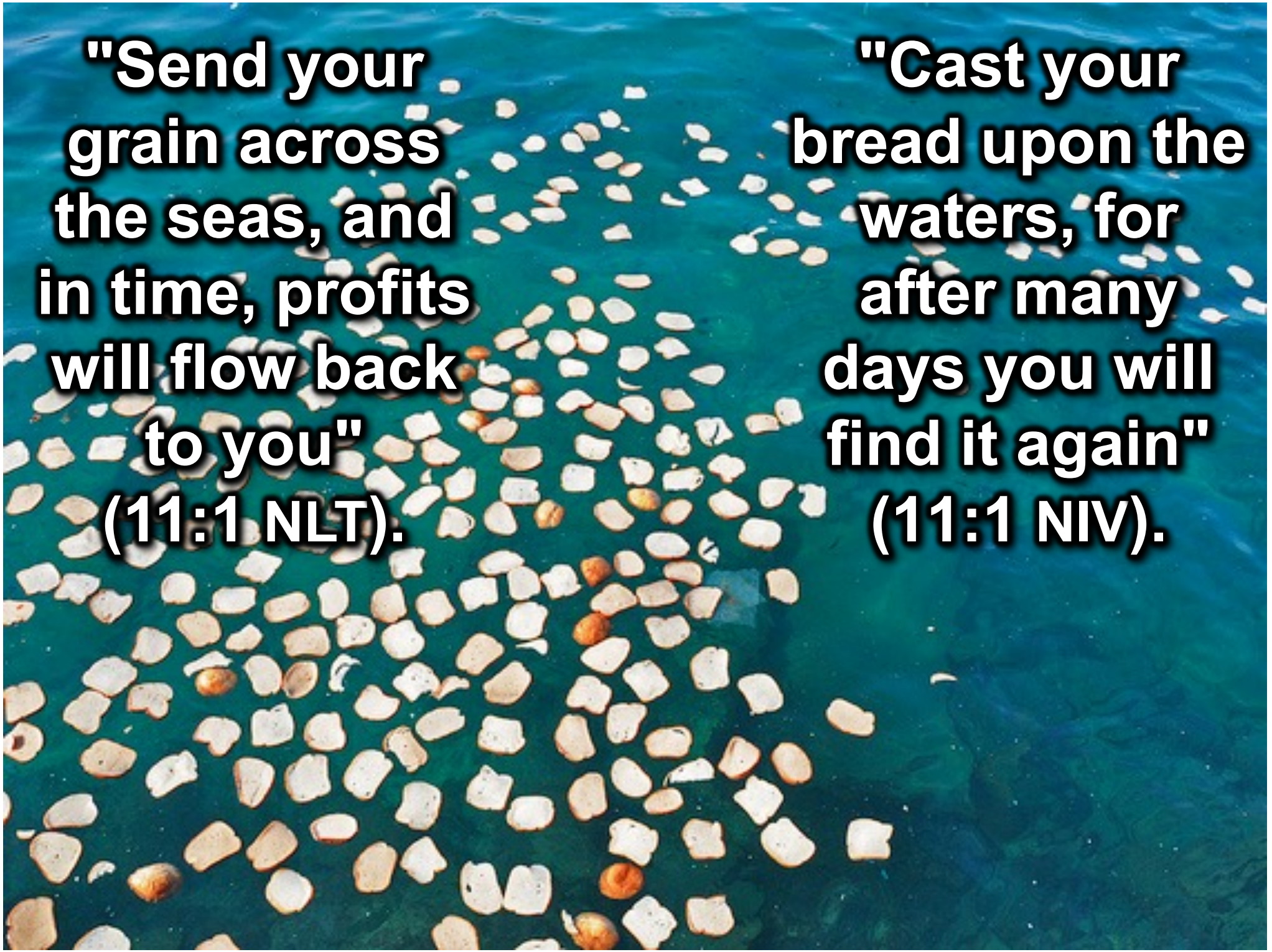
How does the uncertainty of the future affect you?



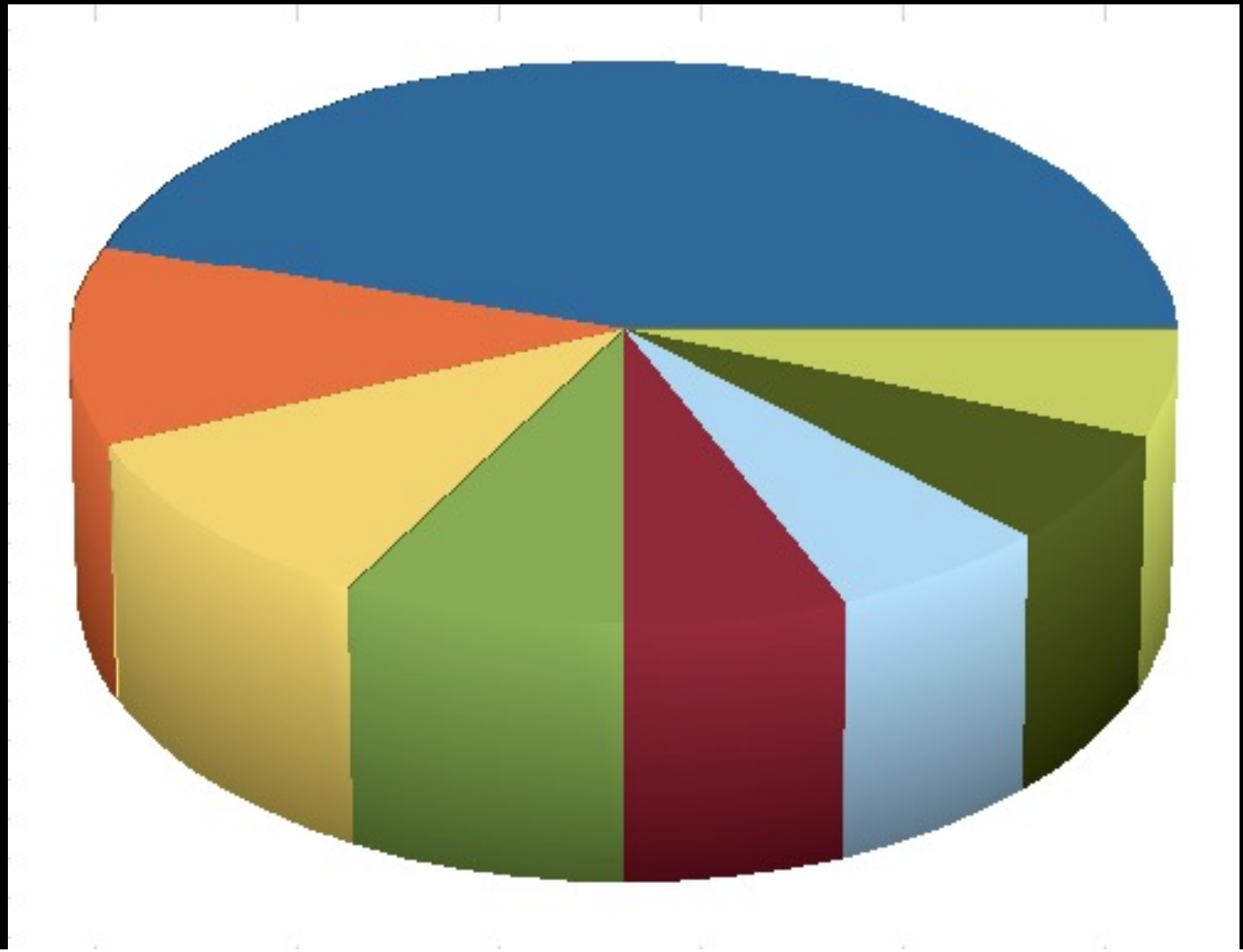
• Giving? • Investments? • Work?

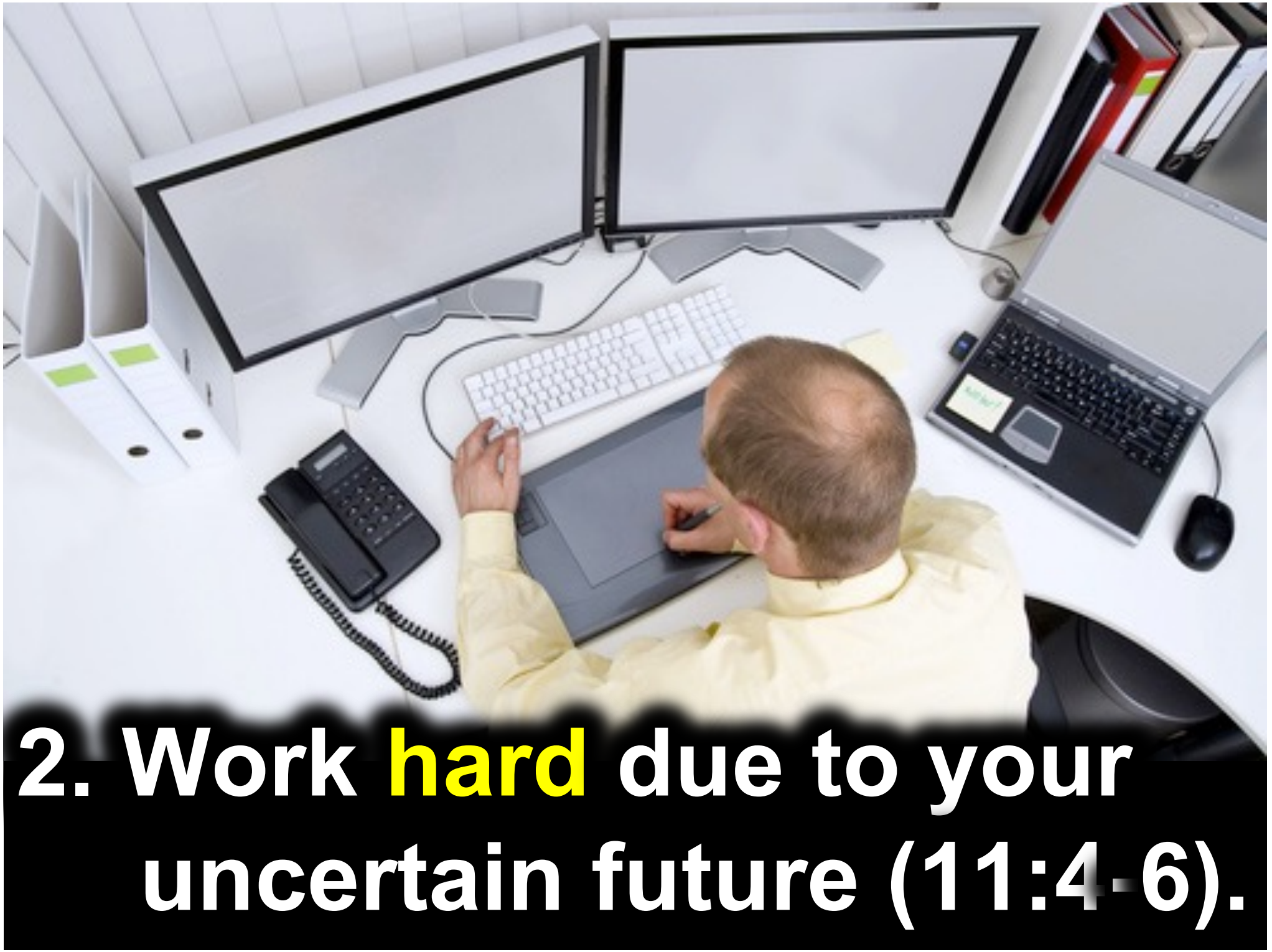

How should your
uncertain future
influence you?
Photography by Constantine Vole


1. Give generously and
invest wisely (11:1-3).


"Send your grain across the seas, and in time, profits will flow back to you" (11:1 NLT).
"Cast your bread upon the waters, for after many days you will find it again" (11:1 NIV).

"But divide your investments among many places, for you do not know what risks might lie ahead" (11:2 NLT).





2. Work hard due to your uncertain future (11:4-6).

"Farmers who wait for perfect weather never plant. If they watch every cloud, they never harvest" (11:4 NLT).

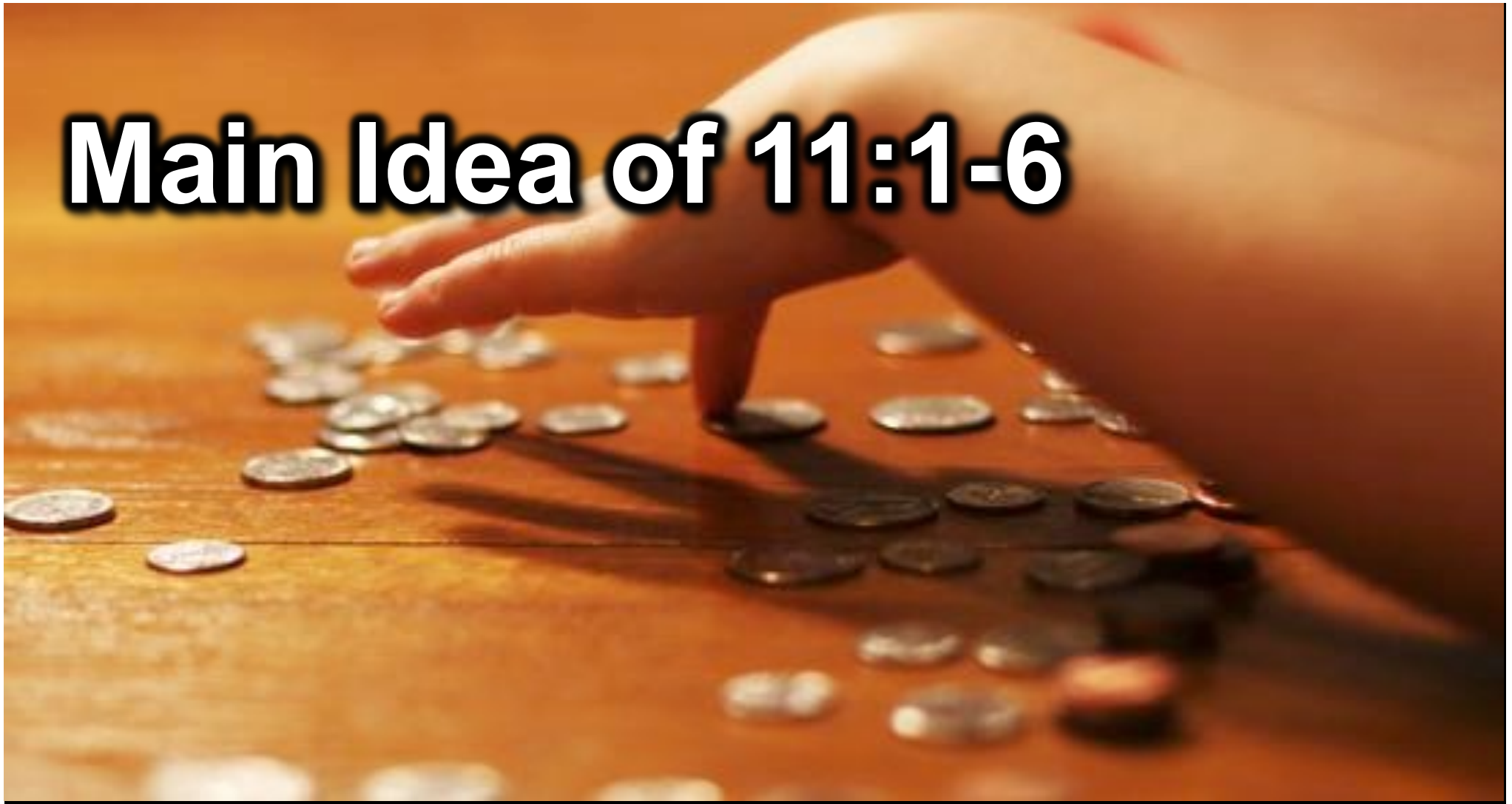


"He who watches the wind will not sow and he who looks at the clouds will not reap" (11:4 NAU).





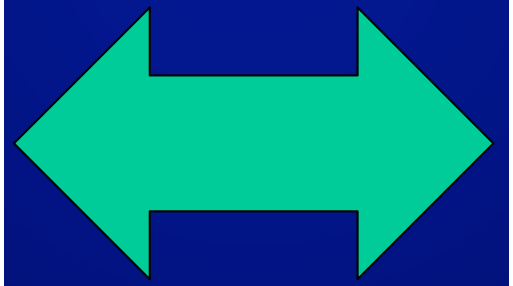
Laziness



Give **generously**, invest **wisely** and work **hard** since you don't know your future.

How can we do both?

enjoy life



fear God

I. Live as if life is fleeting (1:1-11).



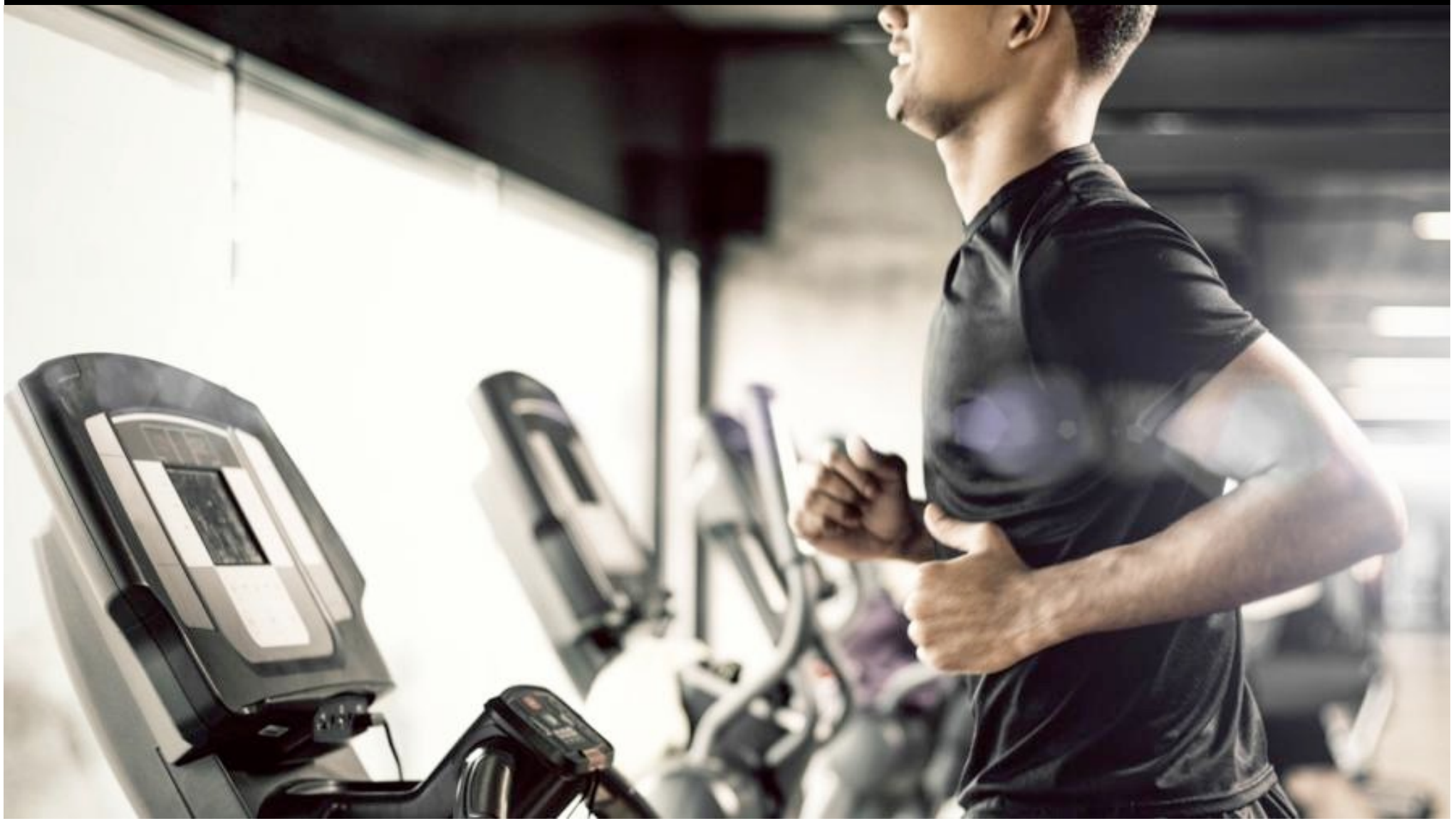
II. Live as if work is fleeting (1:12–6:9).



III. Live as if wisdom is fleeting (6:10–11:6).



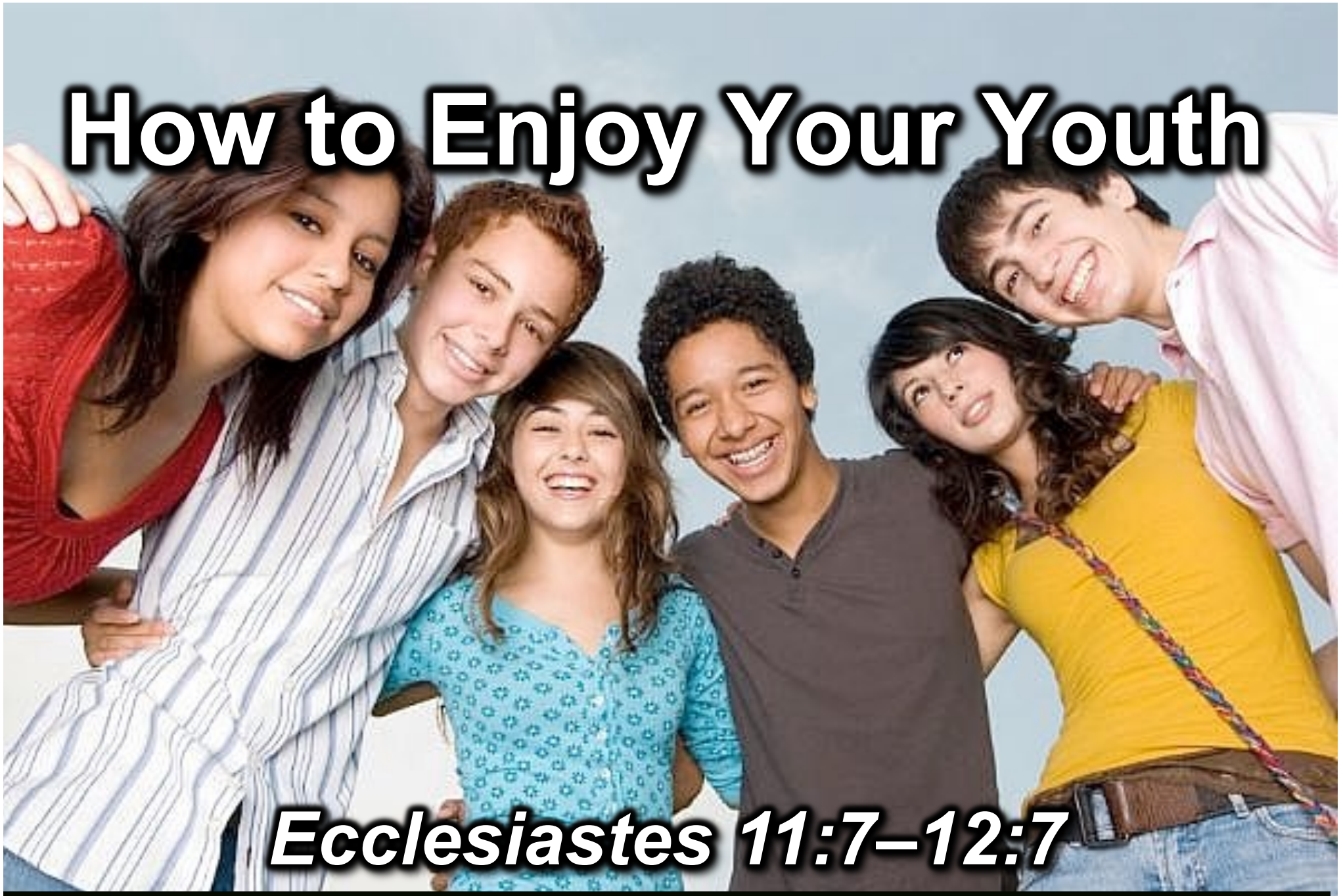
IV. Live as if youth is fleeting (11:7–12:14)



Ecclesiastes

Work & Wisdom Don't Last

Theme: Fleeting Nature of…	Work	Wisdom	Youth
1:1-11	1:12–6:9	6:10–11:6	11:7–12:14
Man's Humanity	Man's Hands	Man's Head	Man's Heart
Cycles	Work	Ignorance	Aging
Place: Earth ("under the sun") about 935 BC			



Dr. Rick Griffith, Crossroads International Church
BibleStudyDownloads.org


Are you a youth?



What are the stages of life?

Three Stages for Women



1. Annoying her dad



2. Annoying her husband

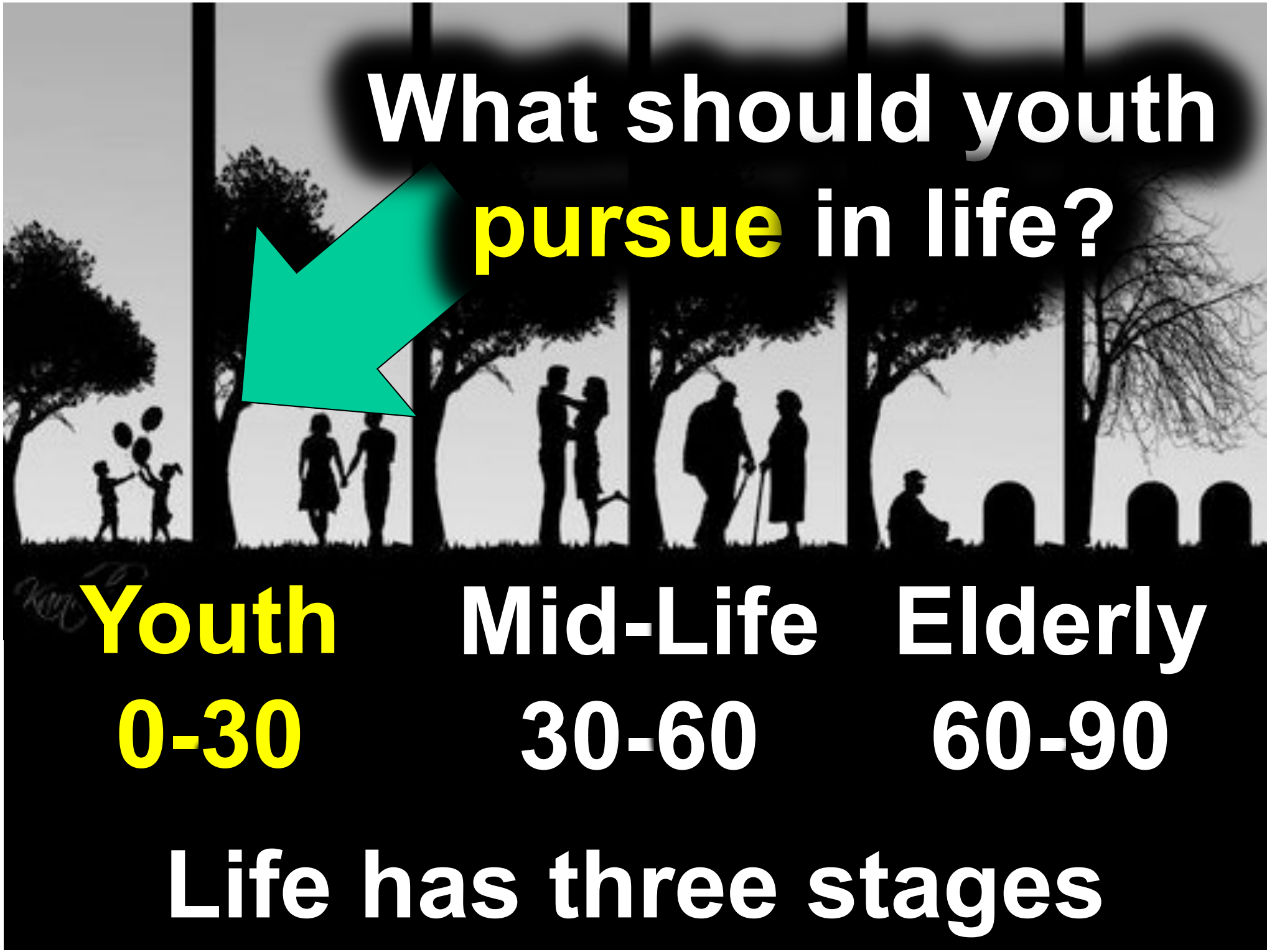


3. Annoying her son-in-law

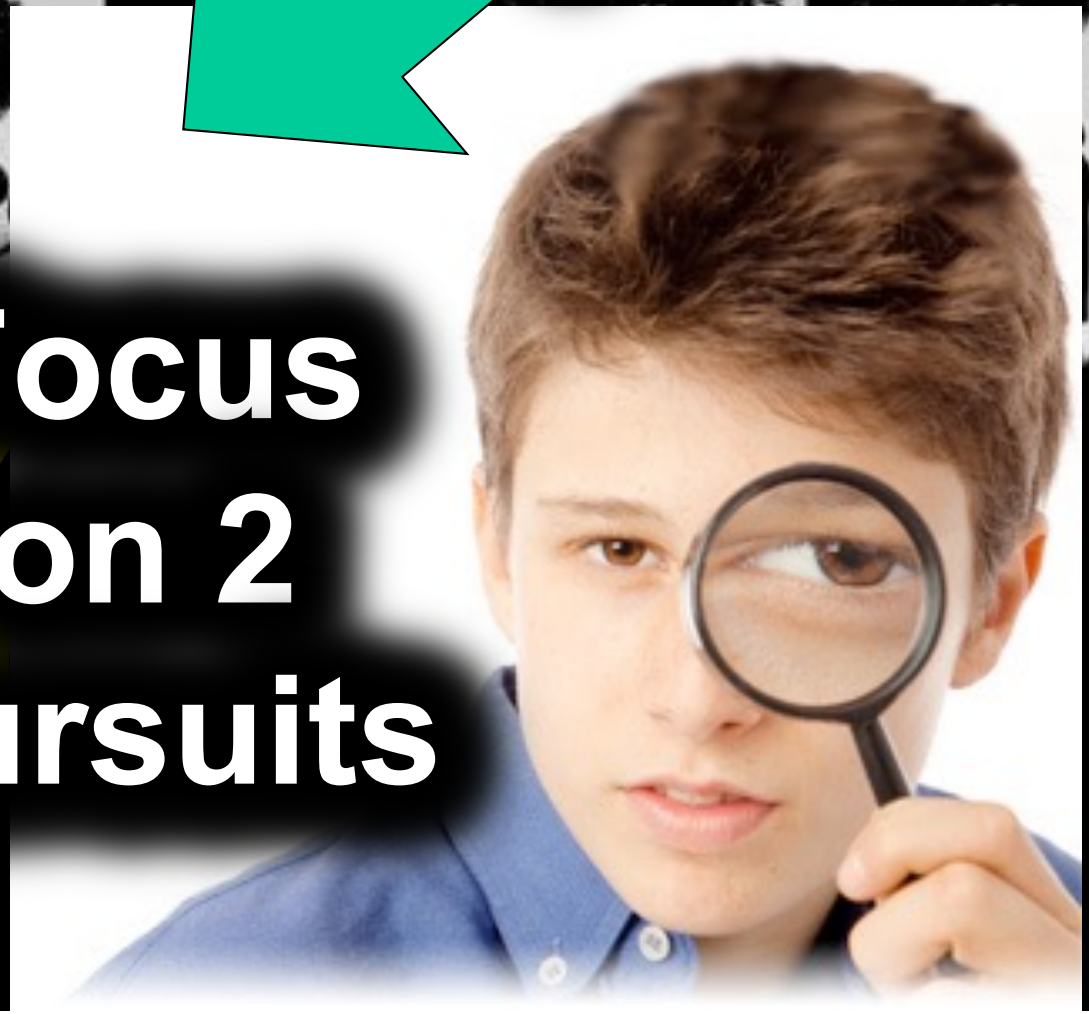


Three Stages for Men

1. You believe in Santa 2. You don't believe 3. You are Santa


What should youth pursue in life?
Youth
0-30
Mid-Life
30-60
Elderly
60-90
Life has three stages

What should youth pursue in life?



Focus on 2 pursuits

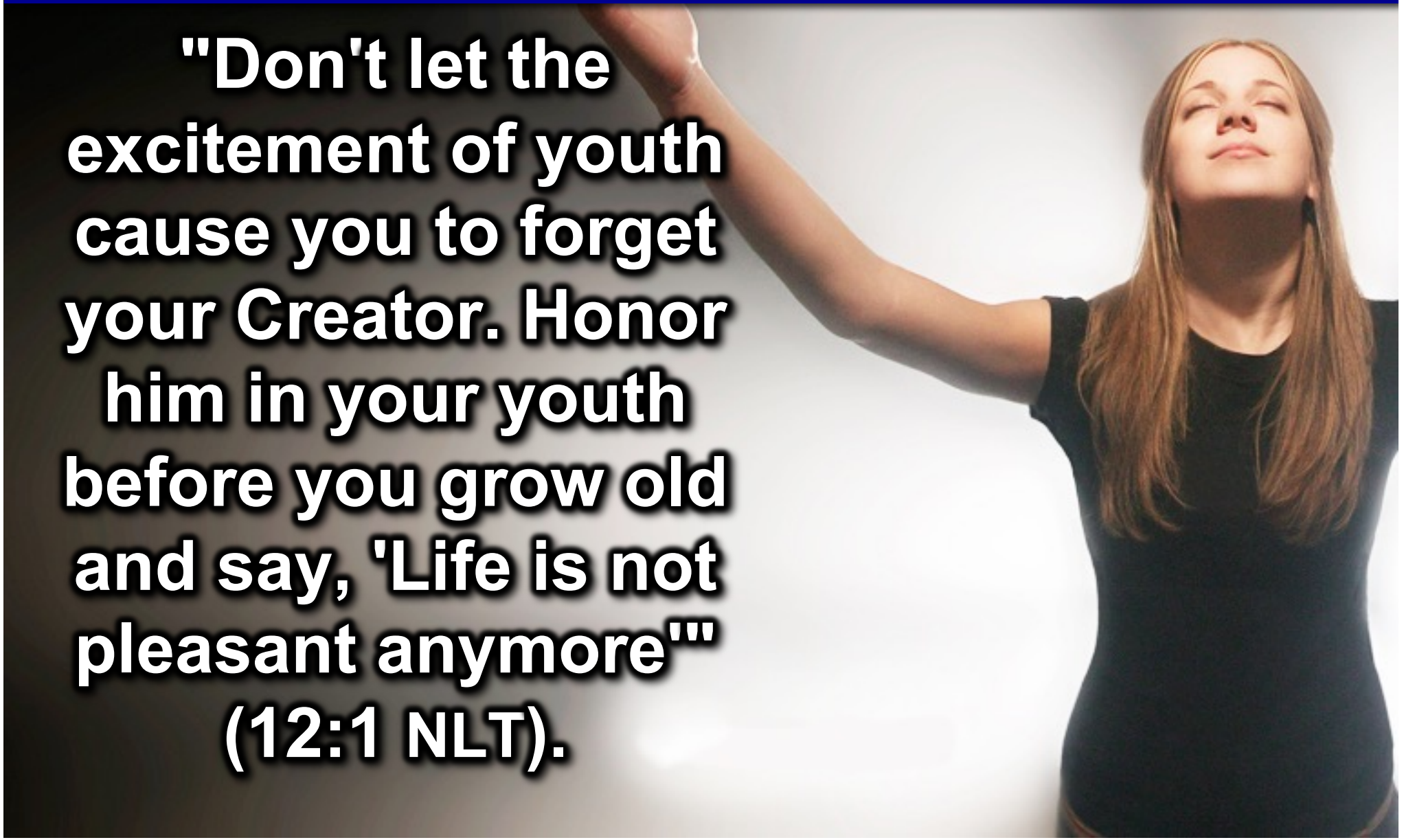
Eccl. 11:7 –12:7


1. Enjoy life now before judgment and death comes (11:7-10).

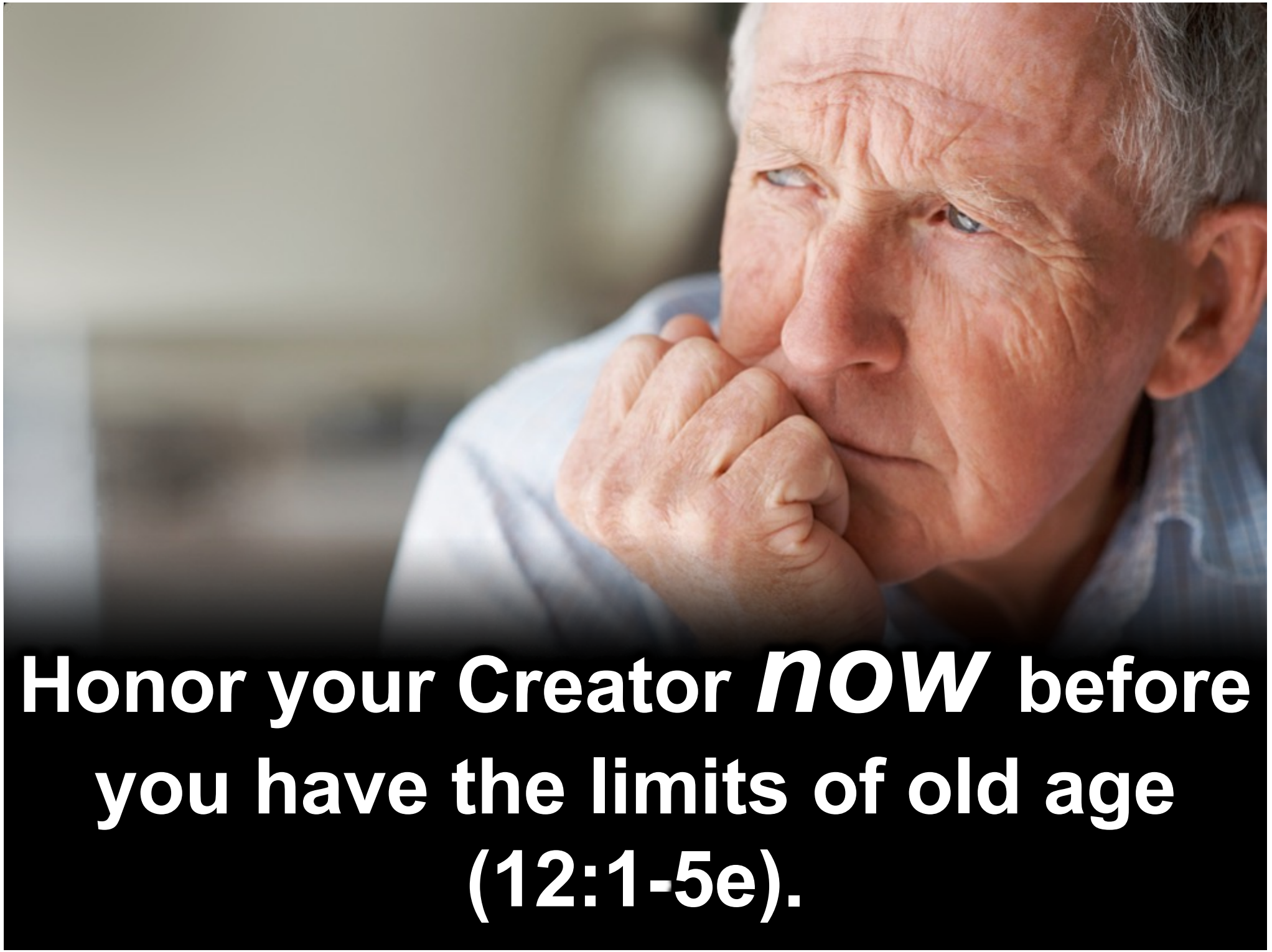

2. Honor God as Creator
before you grow old and die
(12:1-7).

Ecclesiastes 12

"Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth…" (12:1 NAU).




One day at the dentist…


Honor your Creator now before you have the limits of old age (12:1-5e).


Honor your Creator now
before death comes (12:5f-7).


"Remember him before you near the grave, your everlasting home, when the mourners will weep at your funeral" (12:5f NLT).

Main Idea of 11:7–12:7

The way to enjoy your youth is to honor God

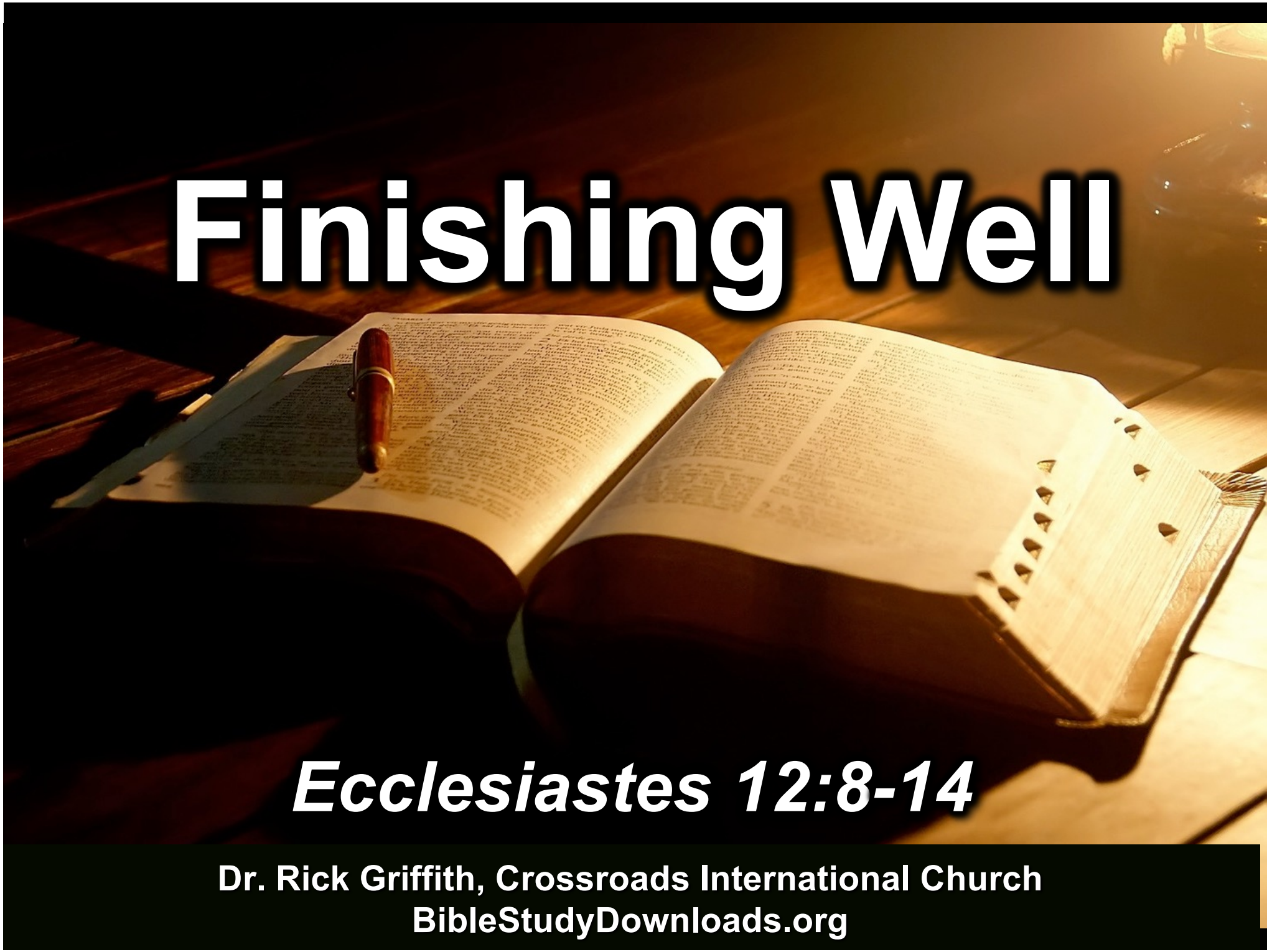


Old people at weddings always poke me and say, "You're next." So,

I started doing the same thing

to them at funerals.

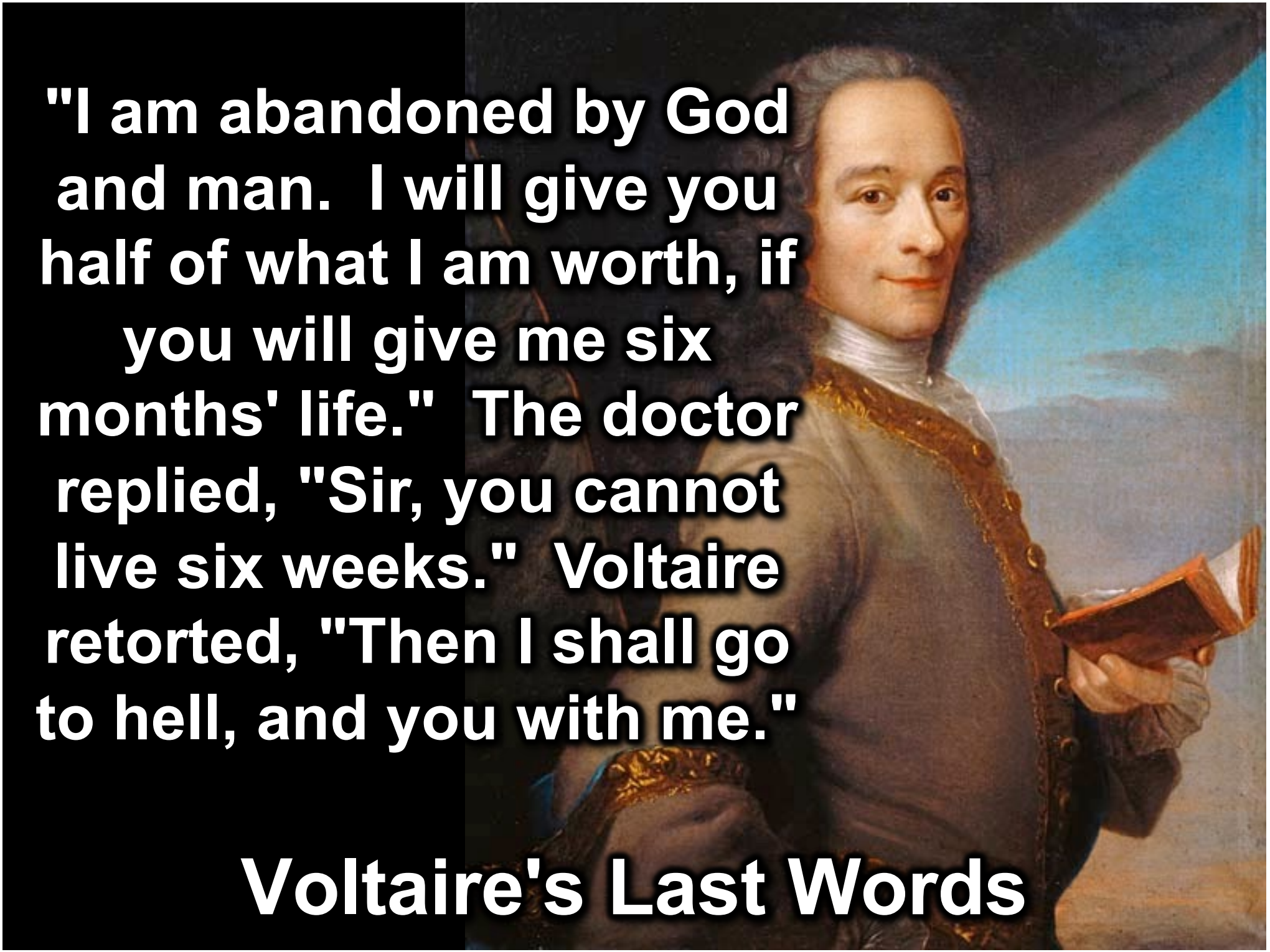
We all are terminal.


Finishing Well
Ecclesiastes 12:8-14
Dr. Rick Griffith, Crossroads International Church
BibleStudyDownloads.org



Adoniram Judson's Last Words

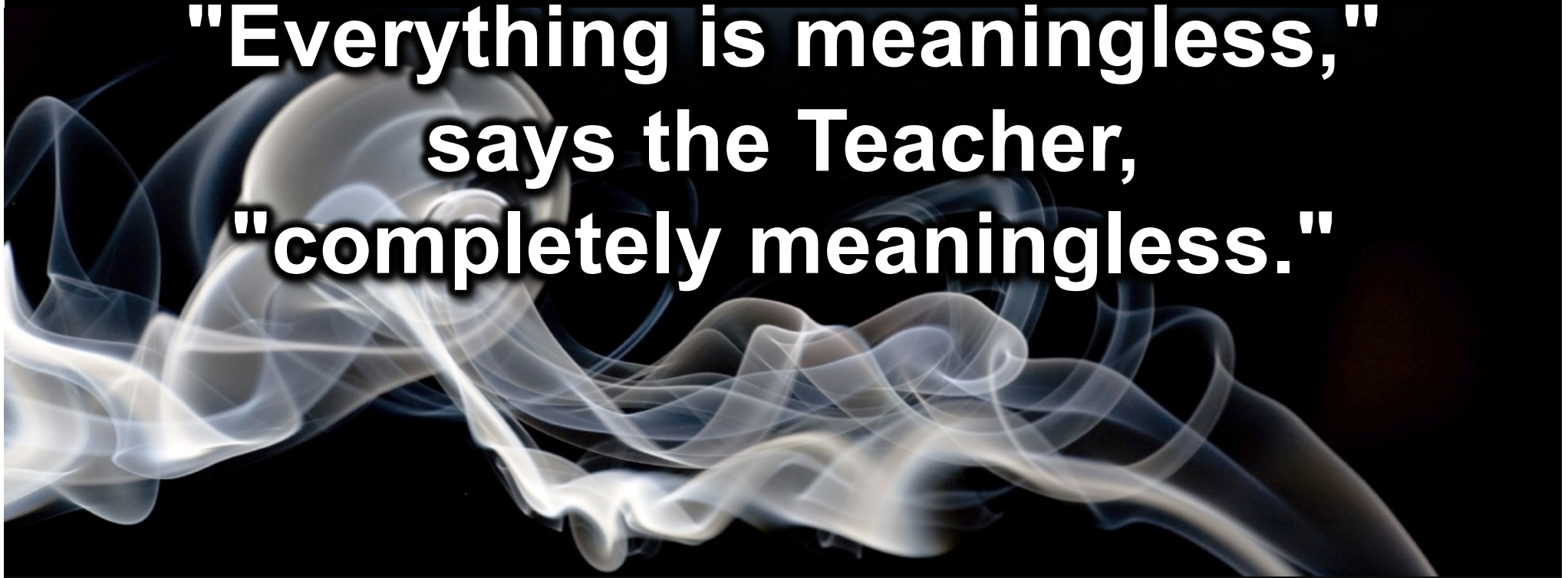
"I am not tired of my work, neither am I tired of the world; yet when Christ calls me home, I shall go with the gladness of a boy bounding away from school."


"I am abandoned by God and man. I will give you half of what I am worth, if you will give me six months' life." The doctor replied, "Sir, you cannot live six weeks." Voltaire retorted, "Then I shall go to hell, and you with me."
Voltaire's Last Words

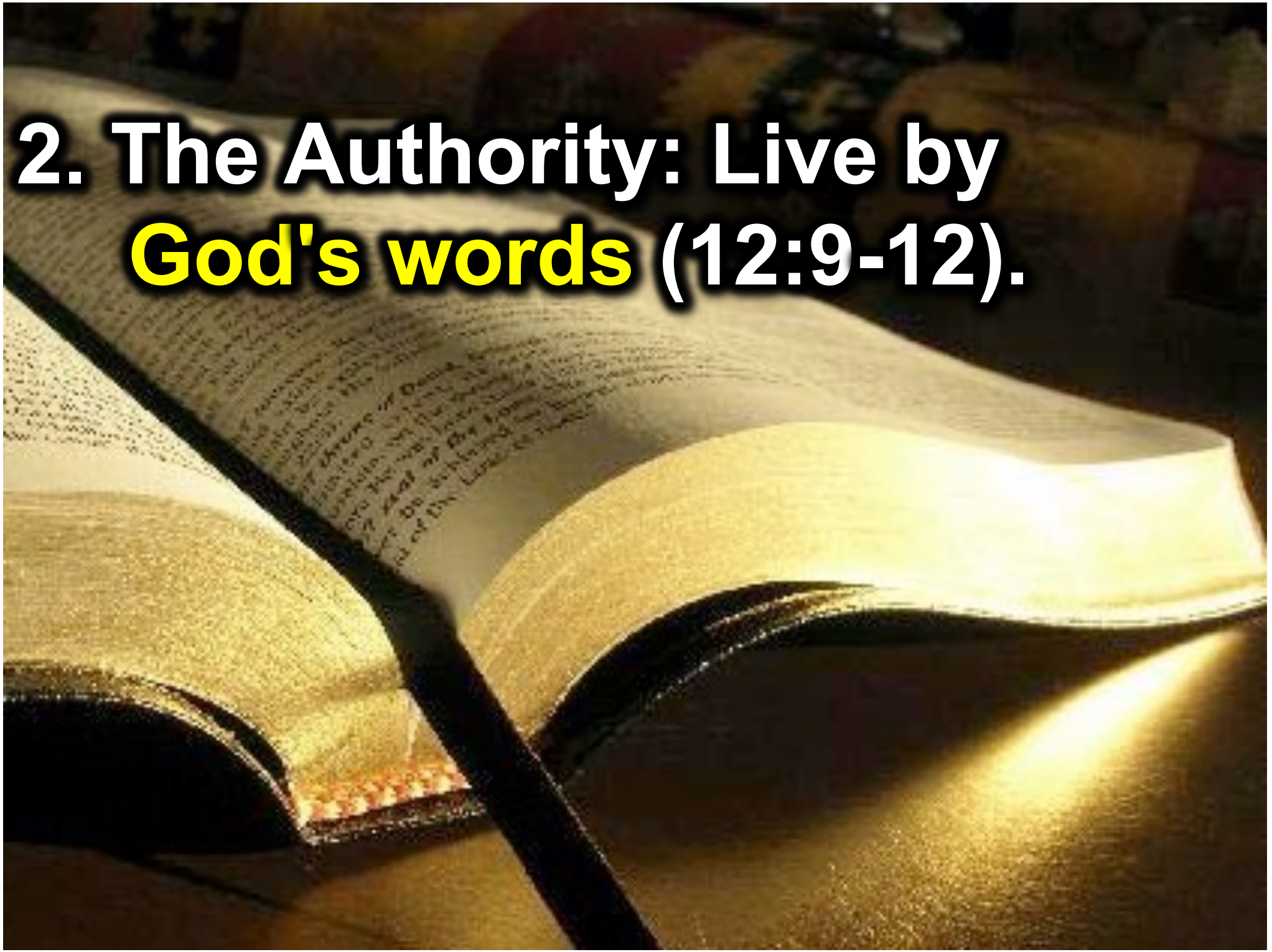

How can you
finish well?

1. The Theme: Life is fleeting (12:8).

"Everything is meaningless,"
says the Teacher,
"completely meaningless."



Key Word of Ecclesiastes

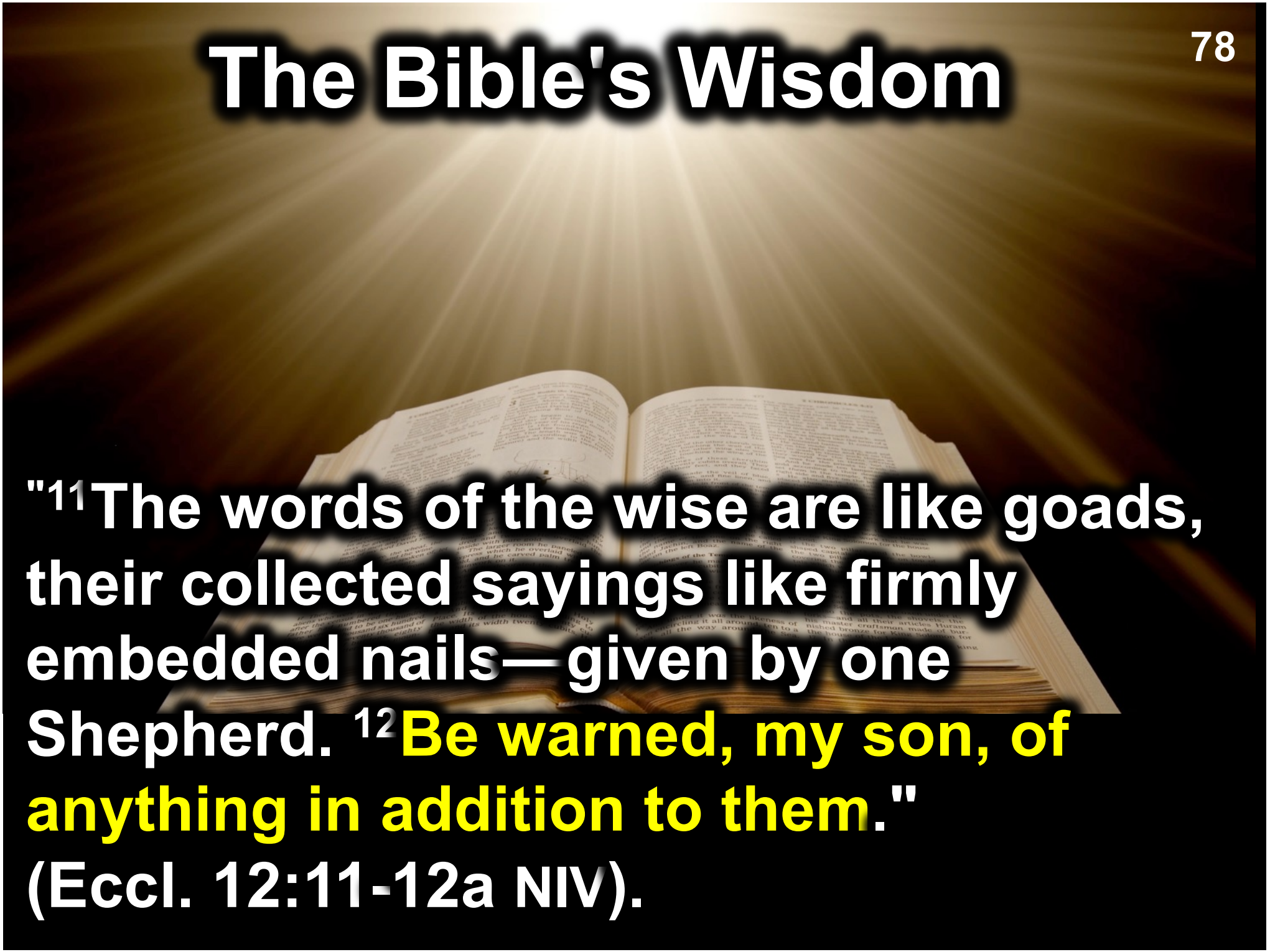

2. The Authority: Live by
God's words (12:9-12).

God's words matter!

"[9]Not only was the Teacher wise, but also he imparted knowledge to the people. He pondered and searched out and set in order many proverbs. [10]**The Teacher searched to find just the right words**, and what he wrote was upright and true" (Eccl. 12:9-10 NIV).



The Bible's Wisdom



"[11]The words of the wise are like goads, their collected sayings like firmly embedded nails—given by one Shepherd. [12]Be warned, my son, of anything in addition to them."
(Eccl. 12:11-12a NIV).



The Bible motivates and guides in wise living

"[11]The words of the wise are like goads" (Eccl. 12:11a NIV).

The Bible gives a strong basis for wise living

"[11]…their collected sayings like firmly embedded nails" (Eccl. 12:11b NIV).

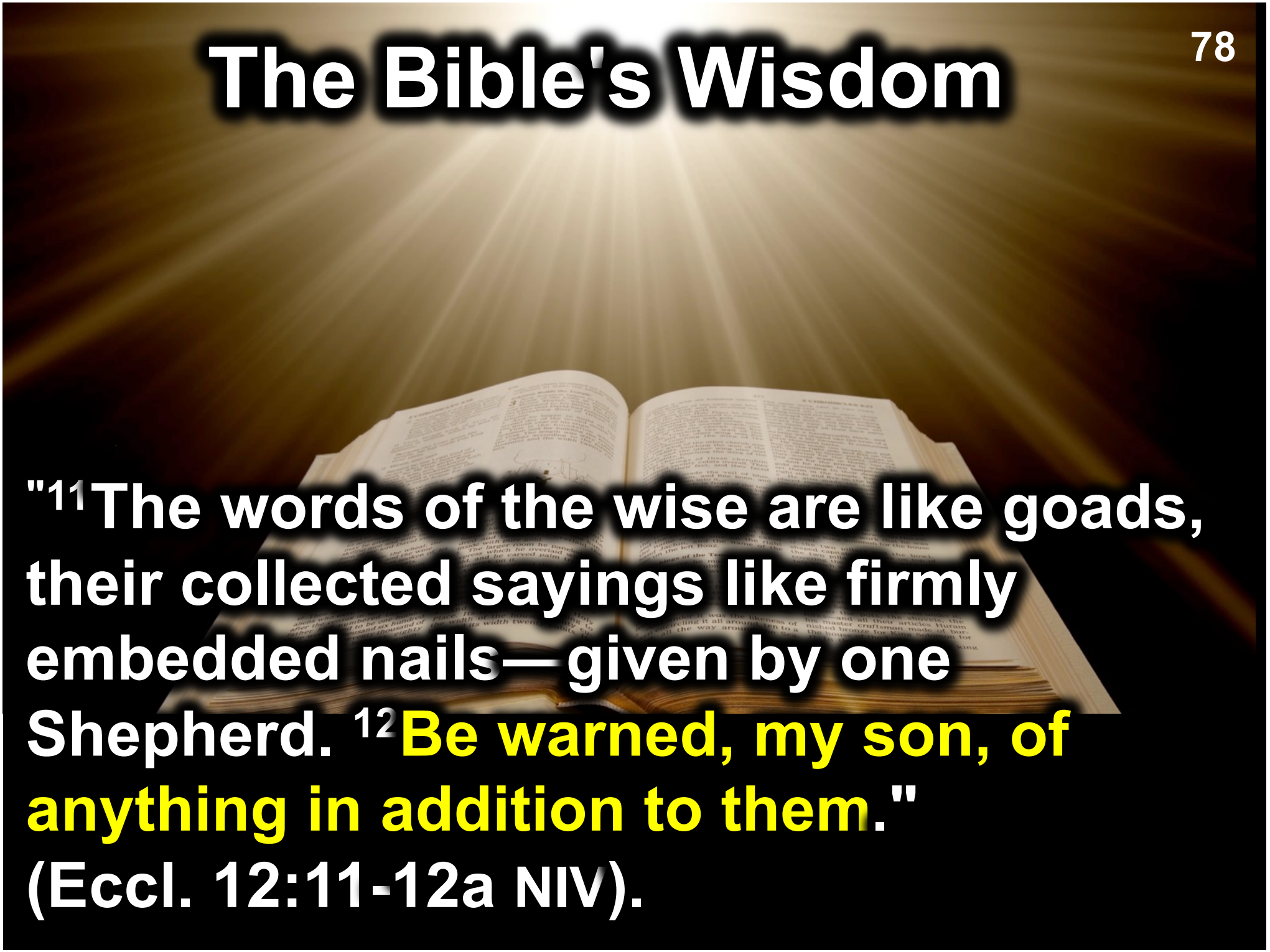


The Bible is the only Book that is divinely inspired

"[11]…given by one Shepherd" (Eccl. 12:11c NIV).



The Bible's Wisdom



"[11]The words of the wise are like goads, their collected sayings like firmly embedded nails—given by one Shepherd. [12]Be warned, my son, of anything in addition to them."
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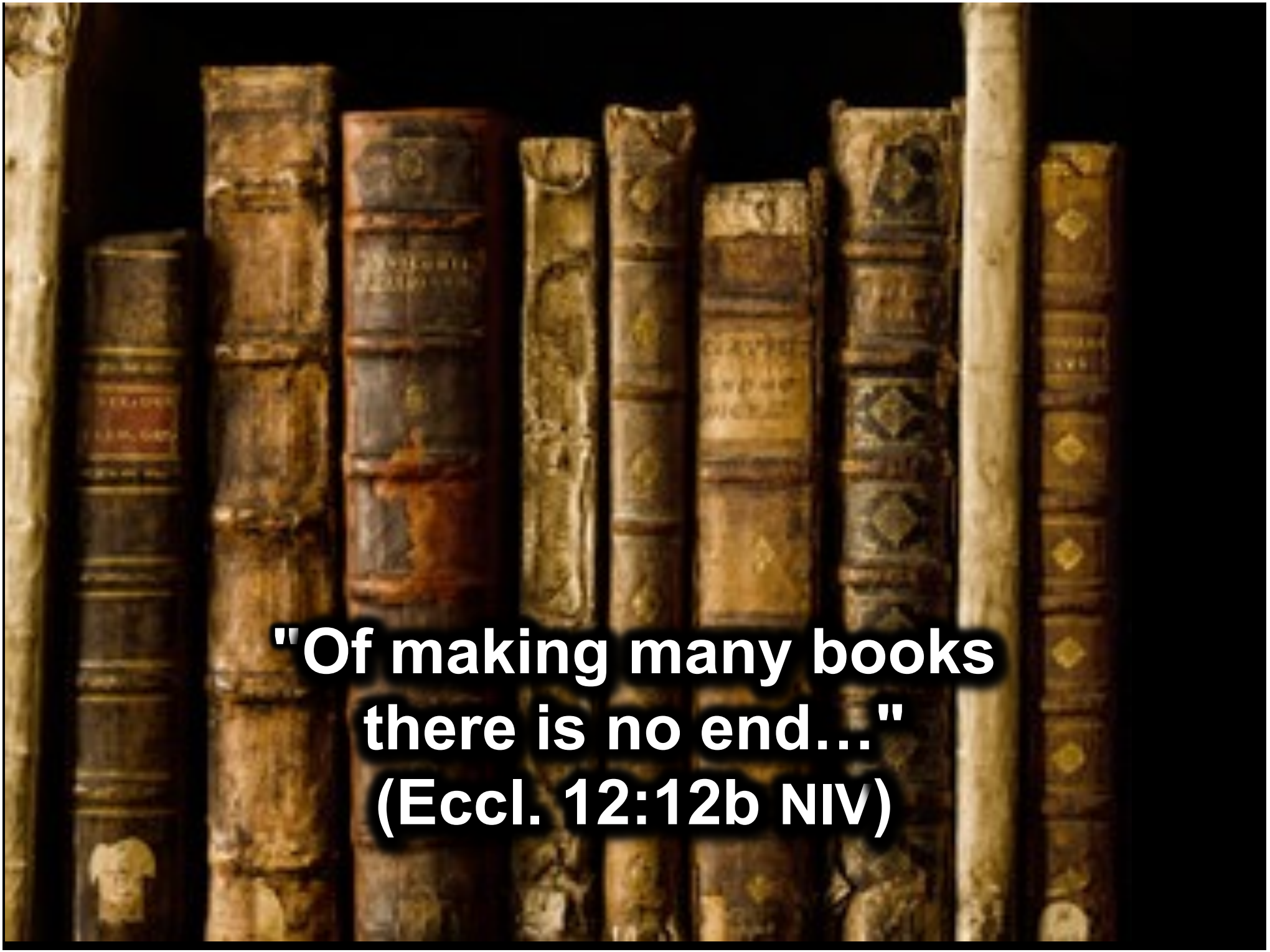
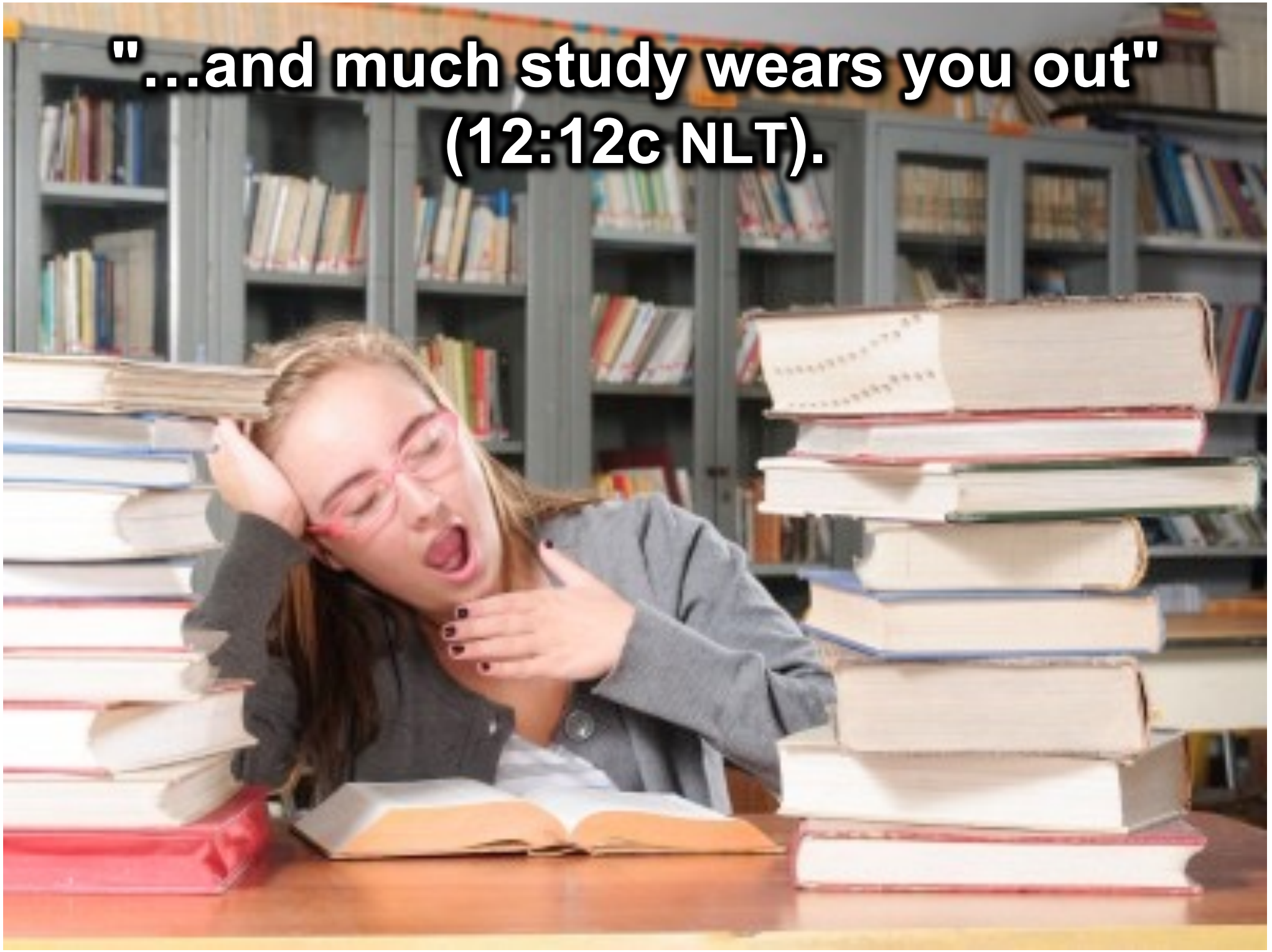
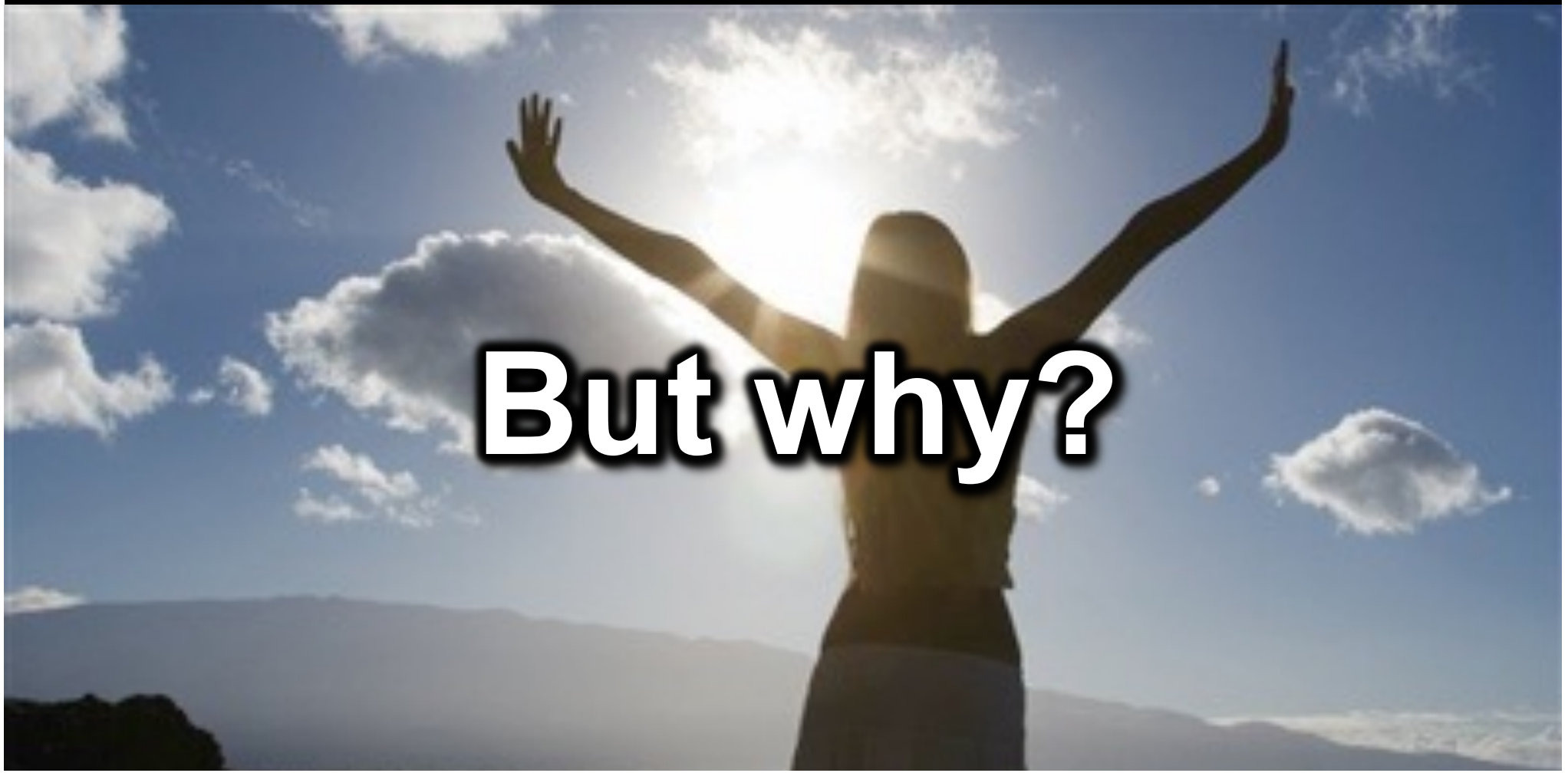

"Of making many books
there is no end…"
(Eccl. 12:12b NIV)


"…and much study wears you out"
(12:12c NLT).

3. The Conclusion: Respect and obey God because this applies to **everyone** (12:13-14).



"That's the whole story.
Her now is my final conclusion:
Fear God and obey his commands"
(12:13a-b NLT).



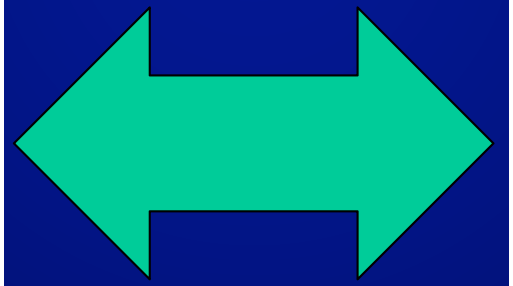
"That's the whole story. Here now is my final conclusion: Fear God and obey his commands, **for this is everyone's duty**" (12:13 NLT).



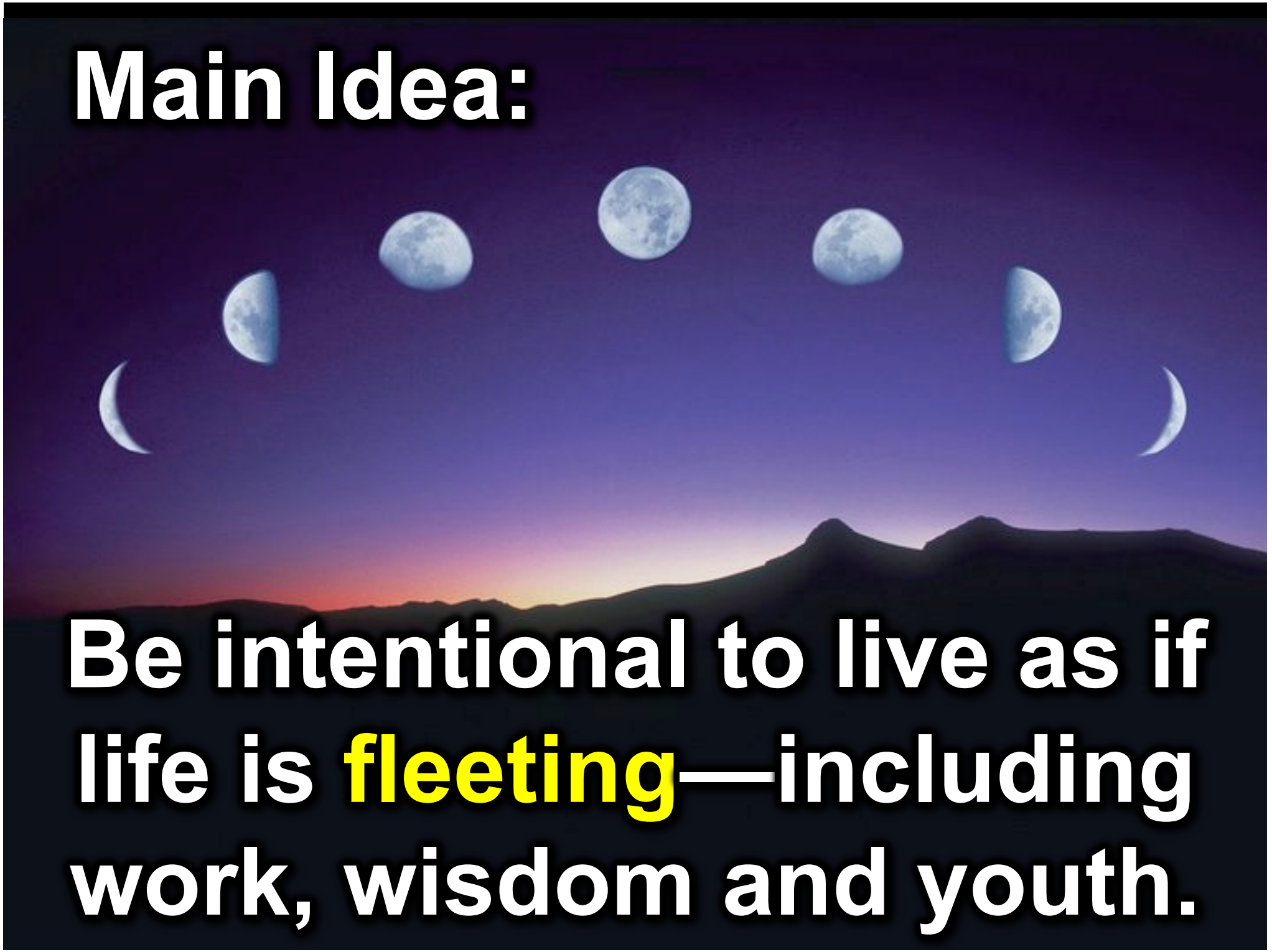

Said differently...
Respect and obey God
to finish well.

How can we do both?

enjoy life



fear God


Main Idea:
Be intentional to live as if life is fleeting—including work, wisdom and youth.

I. Live as if life is fleeting (1:1-11).



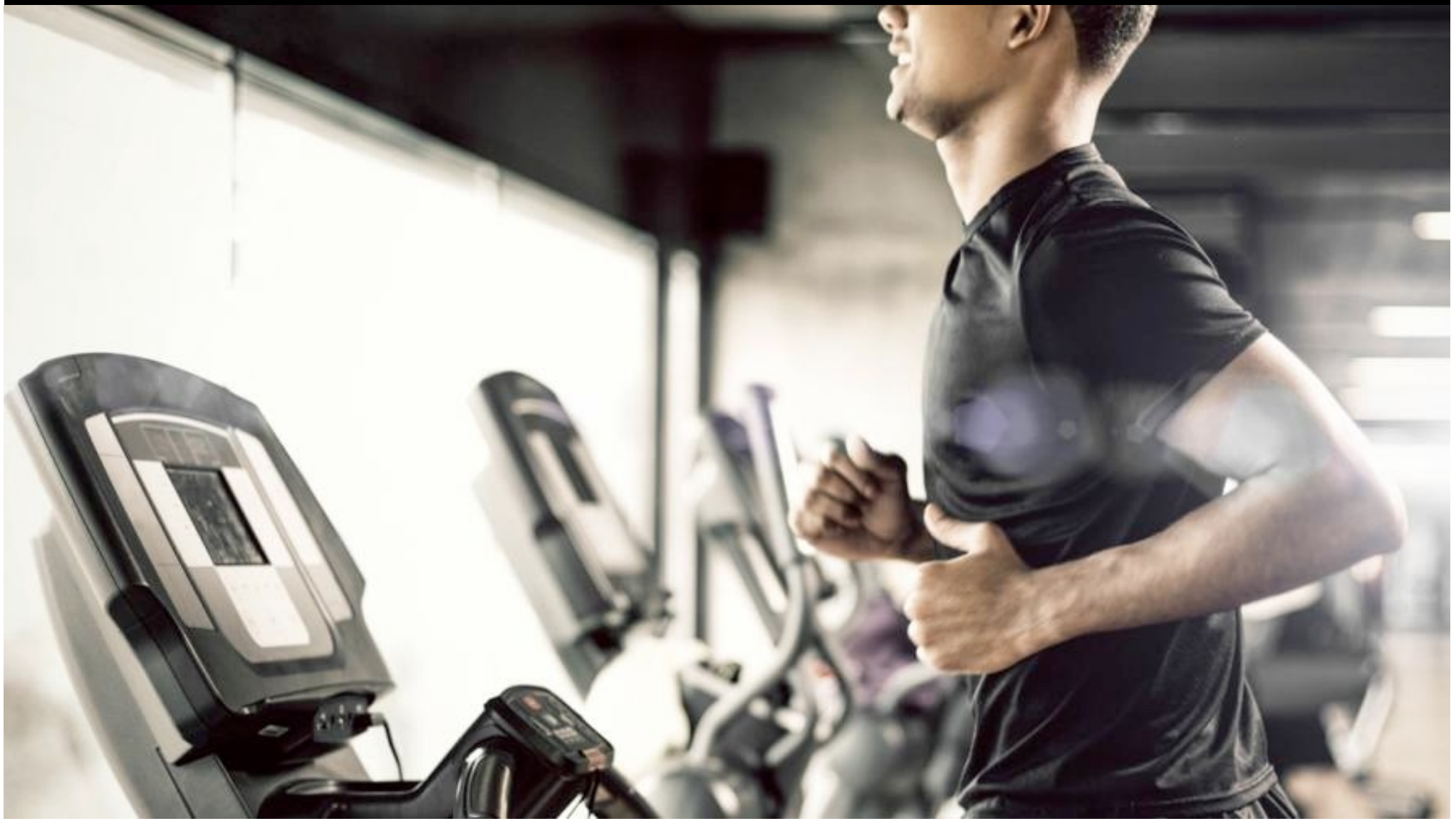
II. Live as if work is fleeting (1:12–6:9).



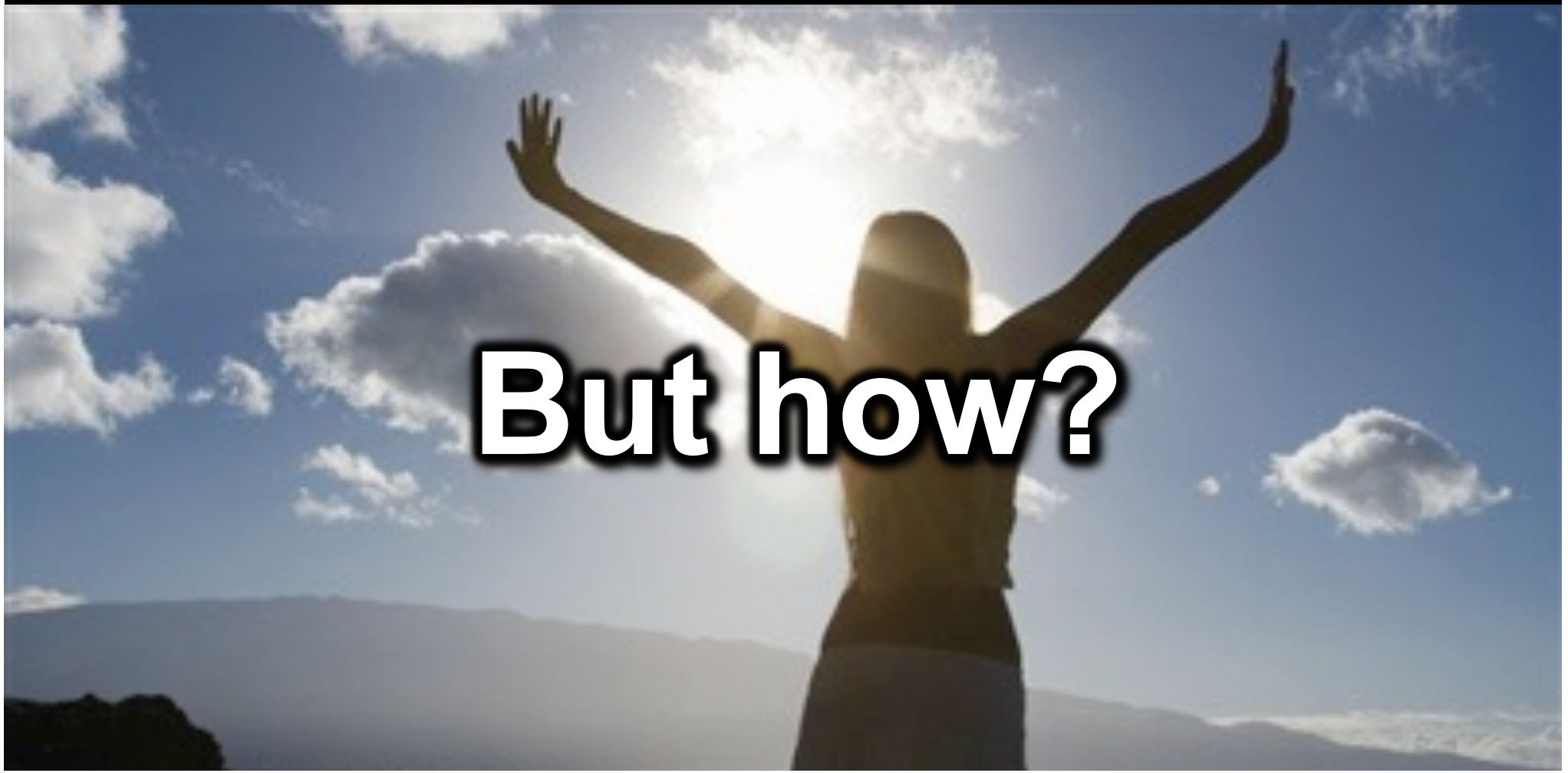
III. Live as if wisdom is fleeting (6:10–11:6).



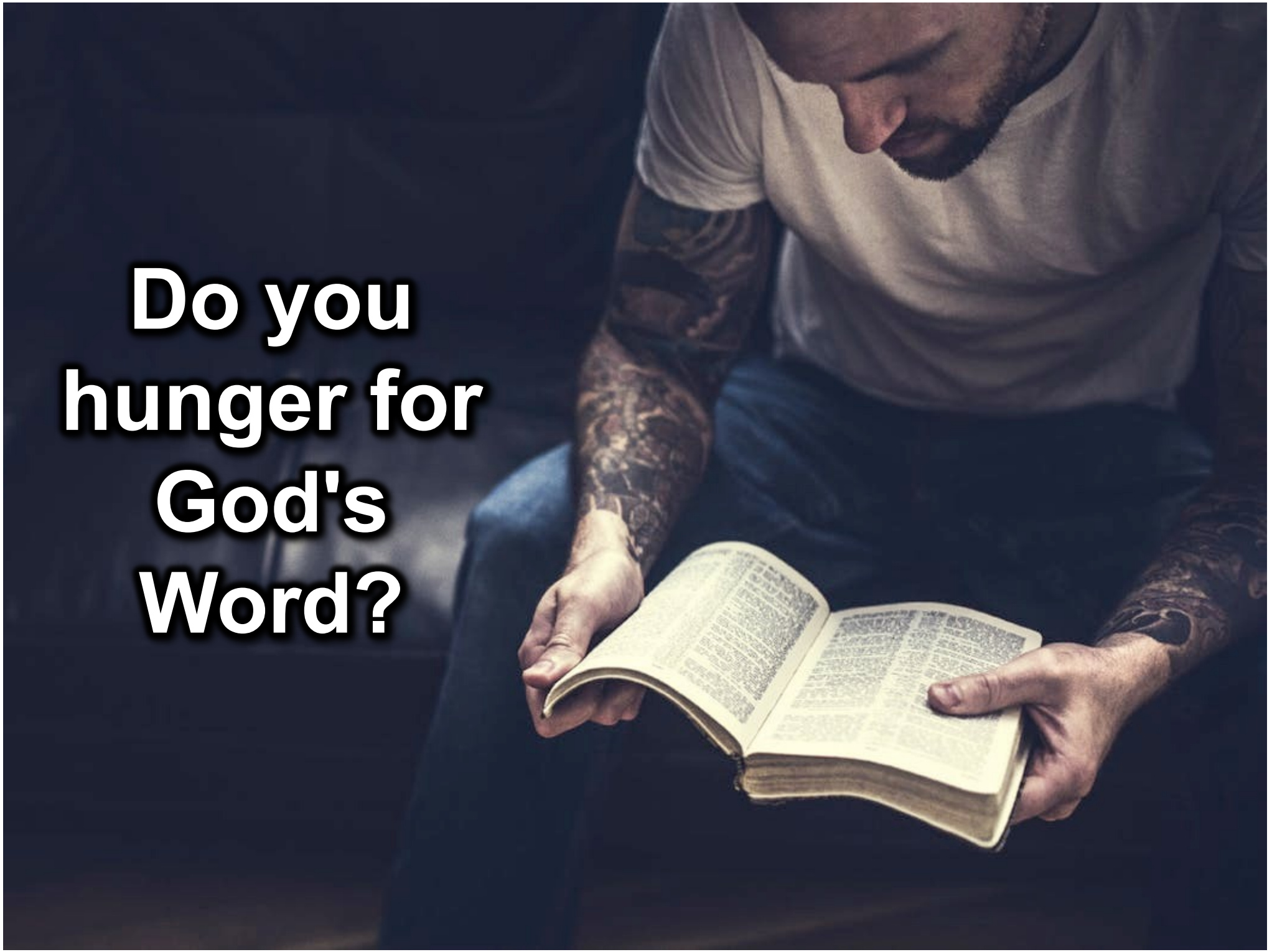
IV. Live as if youth is fleeting (11:7–12:14)



"That's the whole story.
Here now is my final conclusion:
Fear God and obey his commands"
(12:13a-b NLT).



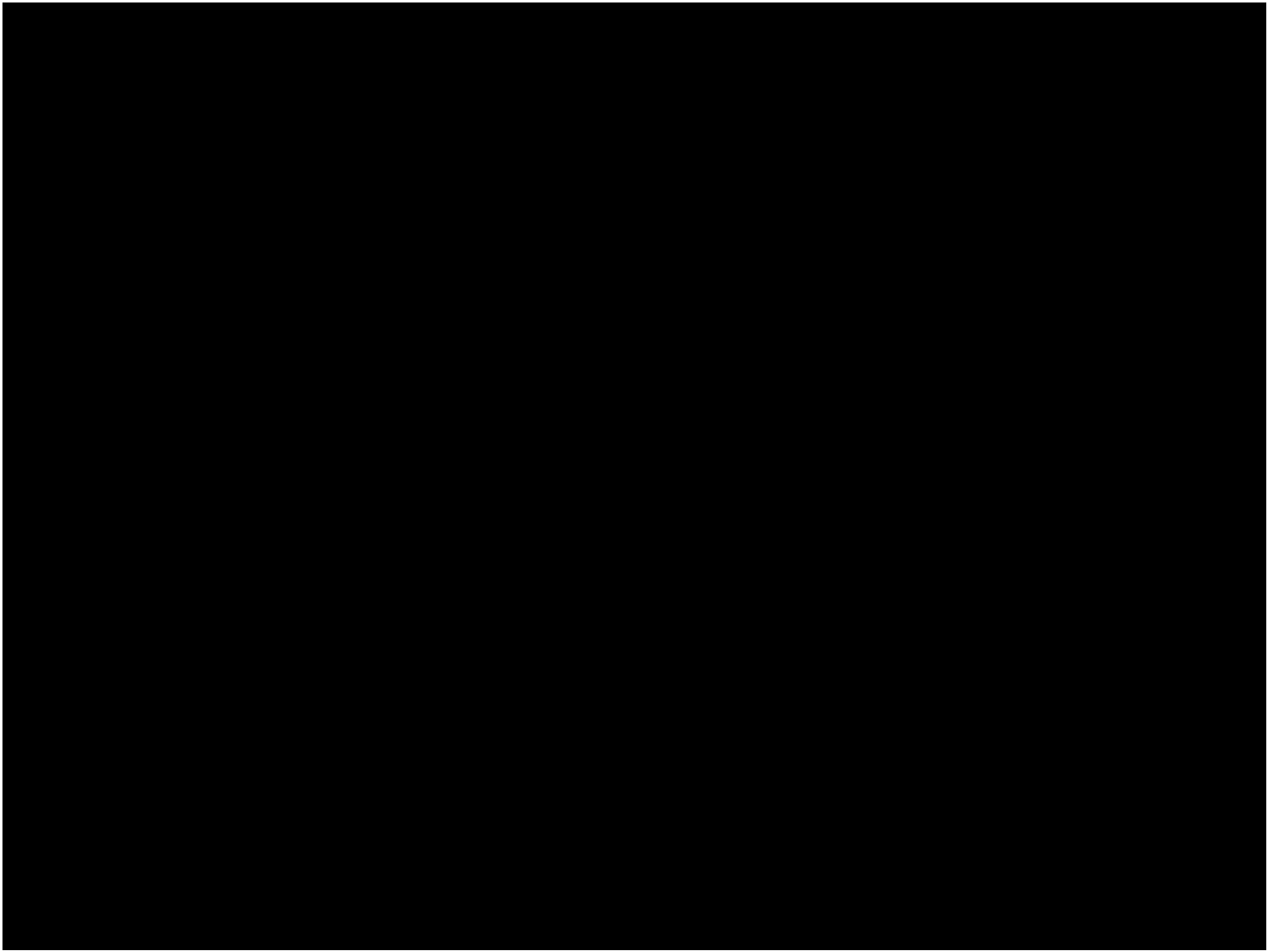

Your Pursuit?


Do you
hunger for
God's
Word?



5 min./day = 1/288th of a day

bible-reading.com



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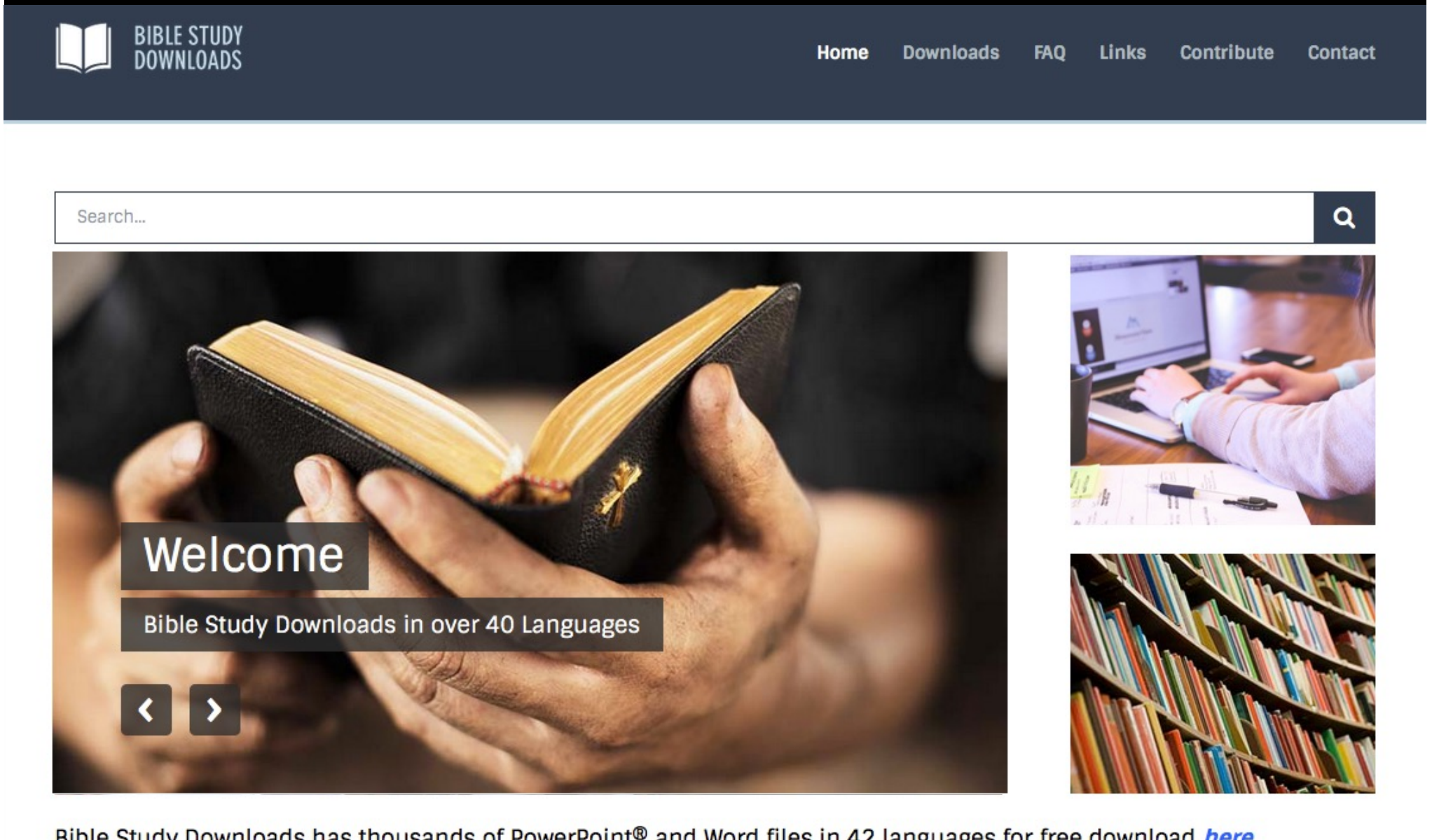


OT Preaching link at BibleStudyDownloads.org

"How can you tell a 1st year seminary student from a 4th year?"

1st Year



?

4th Year



"All zeal, no knowledge"

"All knowledge, no zeal"



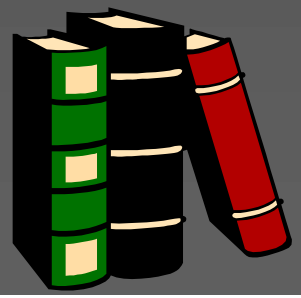
Purpose & Theme of Ecclesiastes





Purpose & Theme

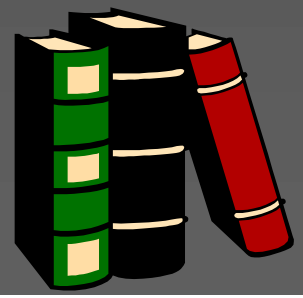
- Ecclesiastes records man's attempts to find meaning & fulfillment in life.
- It tells us that life is empty & meaningless apart from a right relationship with God.
- Nothing can give a man peace & satisfaction unless he knows the Creator.
- Everything therefore is fleeting or vain.





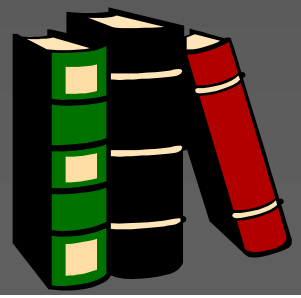
Characteristics of Ecclesiastes





Characteristics

- **Canonicity:** This was one of the last of the books of Scripture agreed upon as worthy to be among the other inspired books.
- **Pessimism:** This book gives a very skeptical view of life. Among the many despairing phrases, the author kept saying that everything is fleeting.
- **Difficult words:** The two repeated words that kept many scholars busy figuring out what they mean are, *'hebel'* (vapour / breath / vanity) and *'under the sun'* (human perspective).



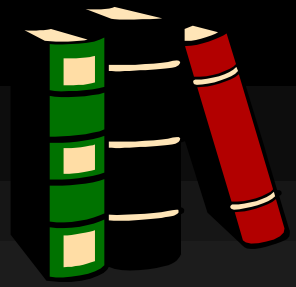


Key Matters in Ecclesiastes





Key Matters

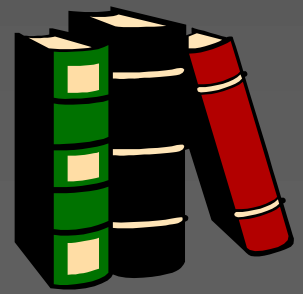


- **Key Word**: Fleeting
- **Key Verses**: "A man can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, for without Him, who can eat or find enjoyment?" 2:24-25

  "Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil." 12:13-14

Key Matters

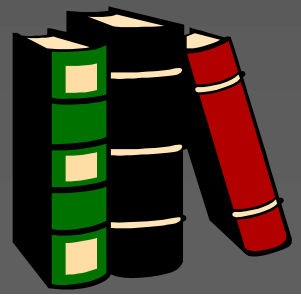
- **Key Chapter**: Chapter 12 - The conclusion of the Issue
- **Key Statement**: Solomon demonstrates the fleeting nature of human achievement and wisdom & recommends the joyous enjoyment of life & fear of God to warn others not to follow his empty path.
- **Key Character**: Solomon
- **Key Location**: Israel





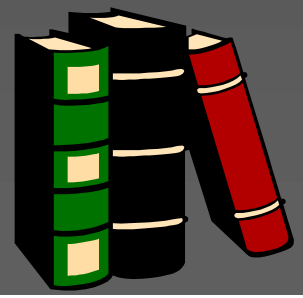
Interesting Observations in Ecclesiastes





Interesting Observations

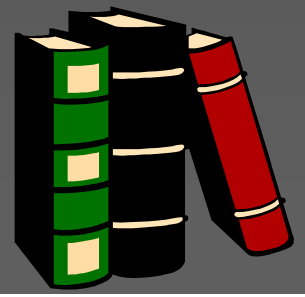
- The name for Ecclesiastes in Hebrew is Qohelet, meaning "collector of sentences," or "Preacher."
- The author identifies himself 7 times as "Qohelet" or "Preacher."
- The word "meaninglessness" or "vanity" is used 37 times and refers to that which vanishes away.
- The phrase "under the sun" which refers to the viewpoint or reasoning of man is used 27 times.





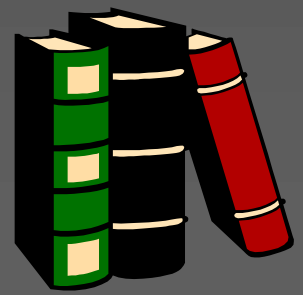
3 Broad Categories in Ecclesiastes





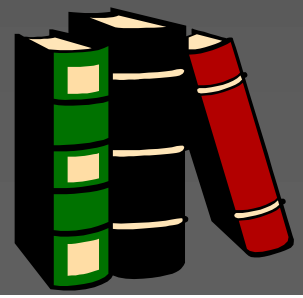
Fleeting nature of human achievement (1:12–6:9)

- No real profit exists in it (1:3)
- Man's life, like nature, is an endless cycle (1:3-11)
- No satisfaction can be gained from it (1:12-18)



Other Issues Covered

- Sensual pleasures never deliver the satisfaction they promise (2:10-11)
- Satisfaction is also not found even when one lives wisely (2:21)
- Our hard work does not guarantee that the fruits of our labour will remain after we die (2:18-19)



There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the sun... there is a time to mourn, a time to dance, a time to weep, a time to laugh.

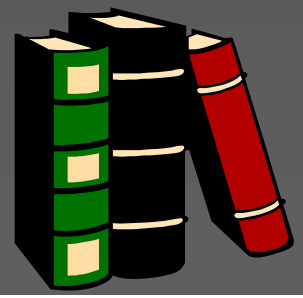


Fleeting nature of human wisdom (6:10–11:6)

- Man's wisdom v. God's wisdom (6:10-11)
- Man is ignorant and must rely on the wise plan of God (7:1-9:10)
- Wisdom prevents our lives from human pitfalls (7:11-12)
- Wisdom provides our lives with divine perspective (7:13-14)

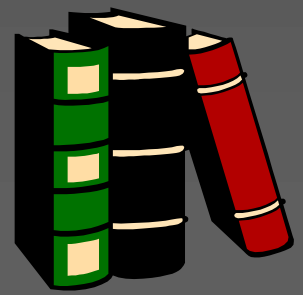
Other Issues Covered

- The qualities of a wise leader (8:1-9)
- The existence of unfair and unjust situations around us (8:10-17)
- God's control over all man and their deeds (8:15–9:3)
- Counsel on how to live happily, walk in purity and give your best to whatever your hand finds to do (9:4-9)



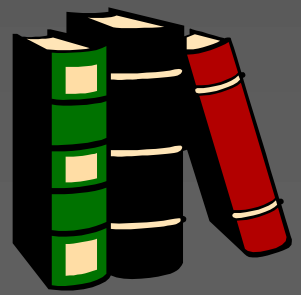
Youthful joy and godliness (11:7-12:14)

- Let man rejoice throughout his years of living (11:7-8)
- Let him rejoice especially when he is young, following his impulses (11:9-10)
- God will judge everything (12:1-14)



Overall, the pursuits addressed in this book are:

- knowledge
- amusements
- possessions
- wisdom & folly
- philosophy
- labour
- riches
- pleasures



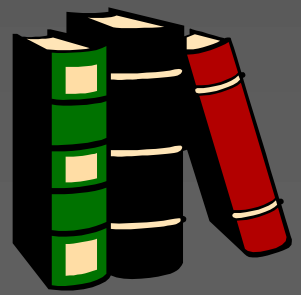
However, Solomon tells us that . . .

Without God's help:

Man cannot discover what is good & meaningful for him to do.

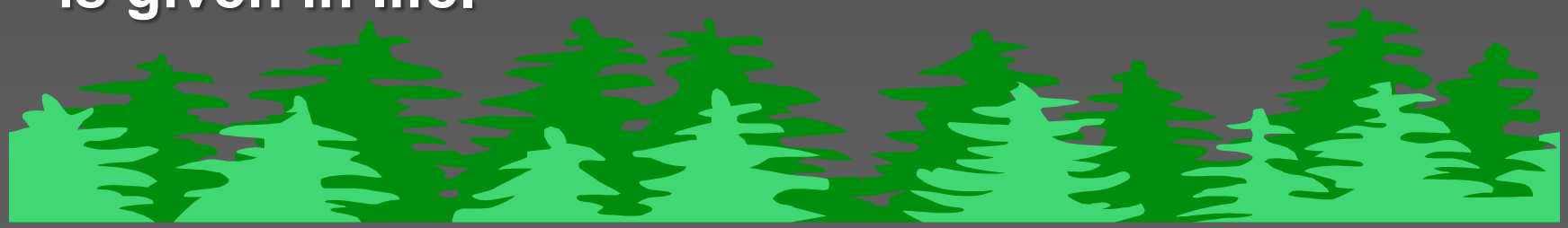
Without God's revelation:

Man does not know what will come after him.



Wrapping Up

- Solomon was demonstrating that life without God has no meaning.
- He was affirming that since much in life cannot be fully understood, we must live by faith, not by sight.
- His views counterbalance the empty optimism of traditional wisdom.
- Ecclesiastes affirms that the only answer to the meaning of life is to fear God and to enjoy what one is given in life.



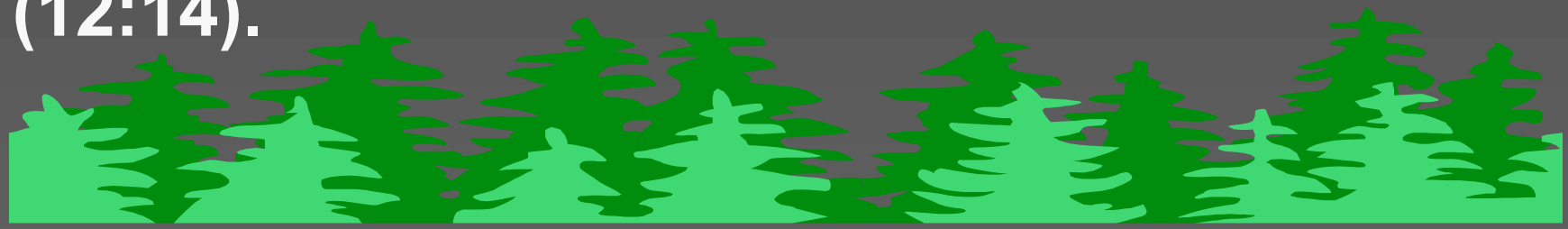
So...

Solomon's conclusion is simple and to the point:

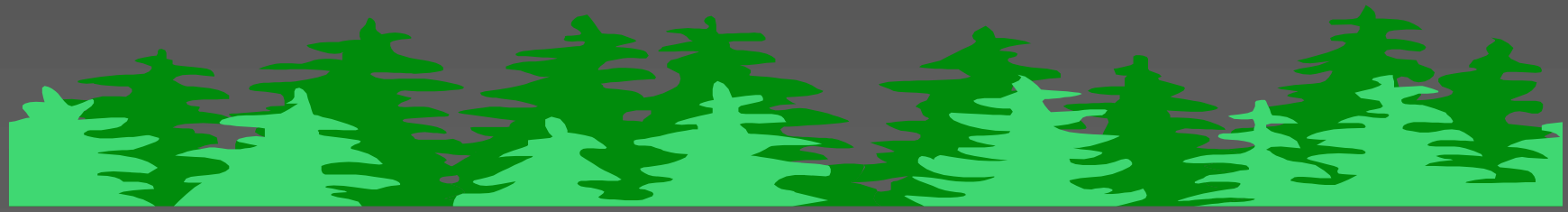
"Fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person" (12:13).

Why are these commands relevant to all?

Because God will bring every act to judgment, everything that is hidden, whether good or bad (12:14).



God is the answer
to our despair,
and obedience to Him
is the cure for our
dissatisfaction.

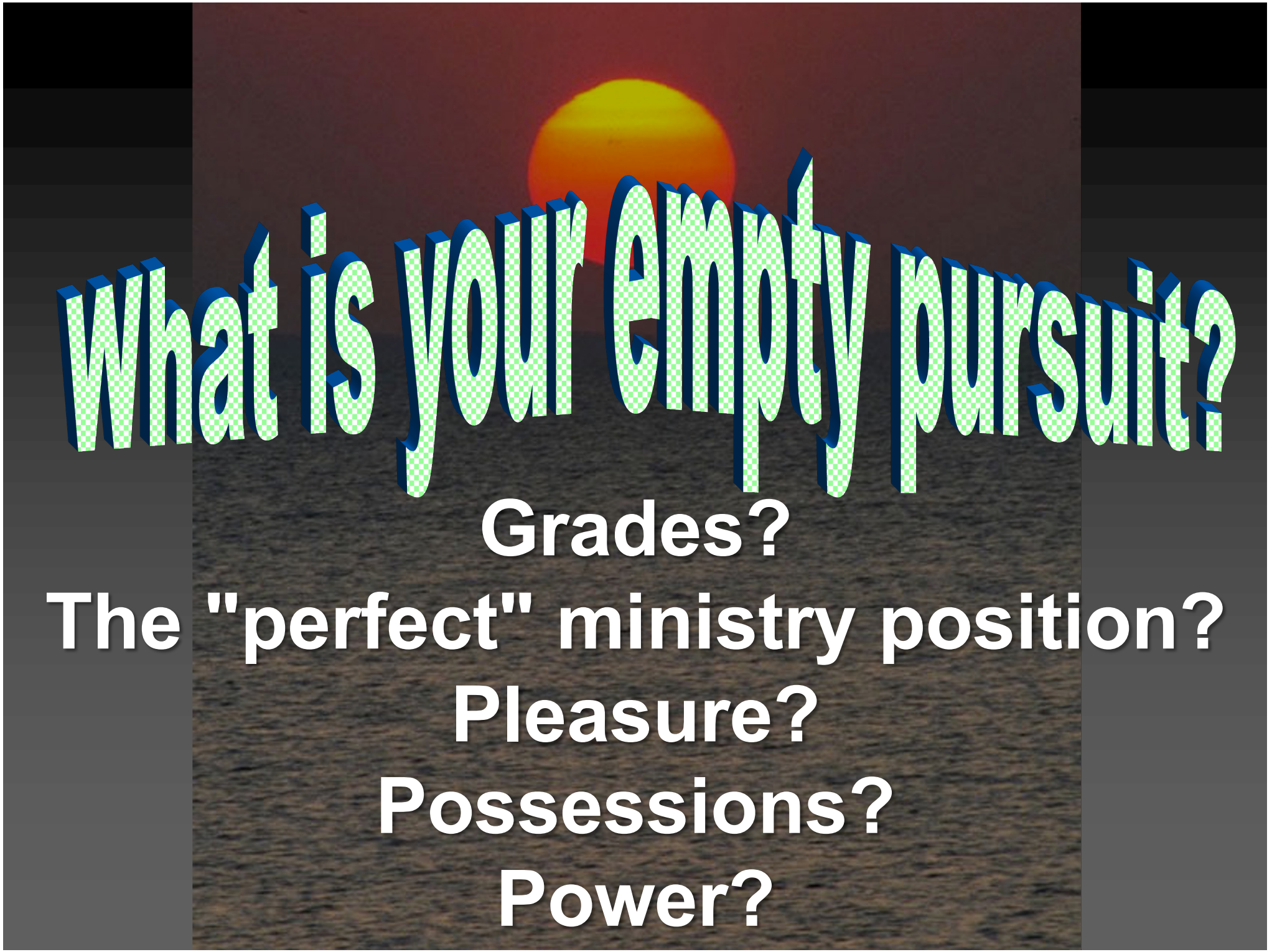


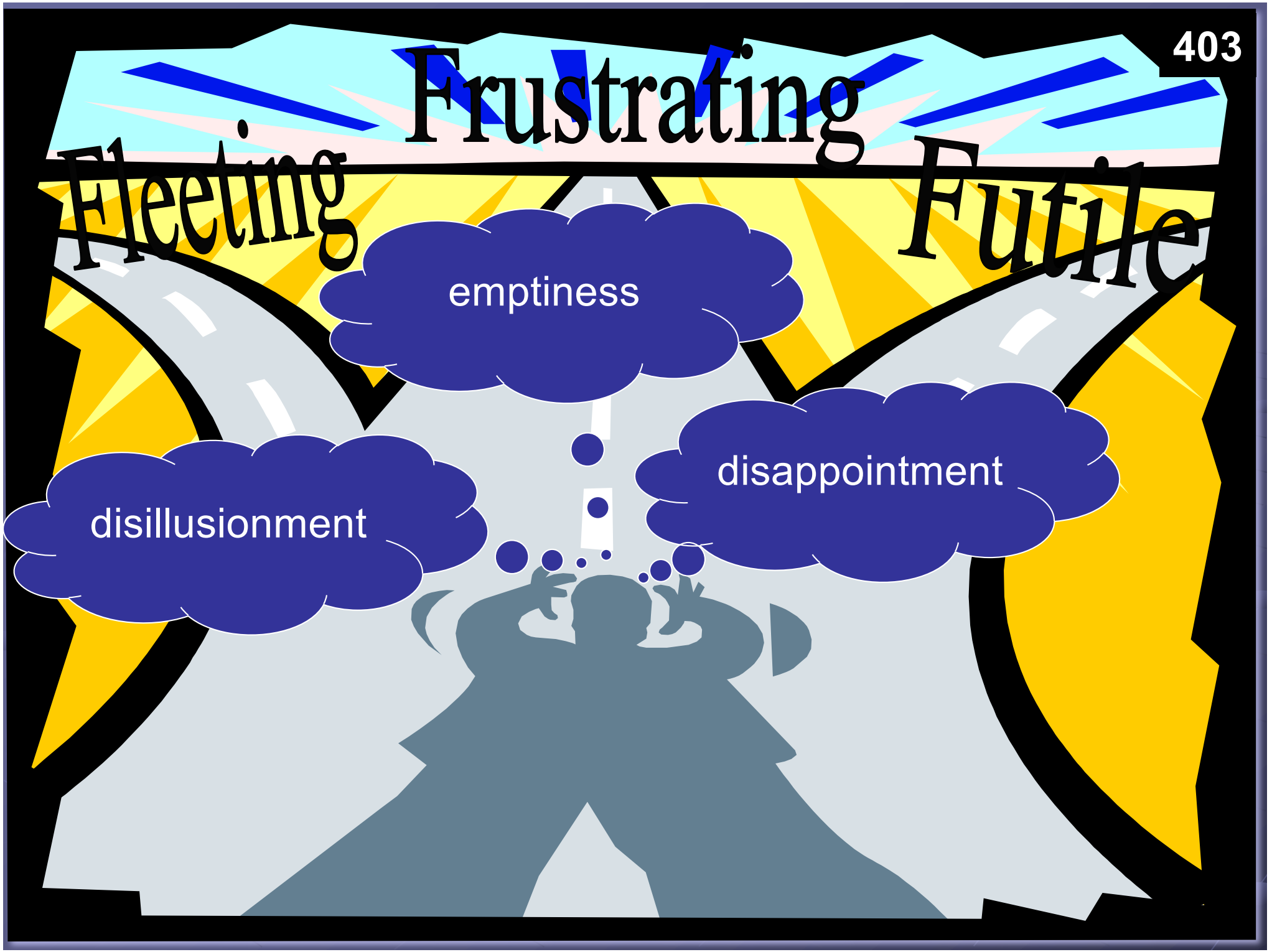
Judgment

**We can
choose to believe
or deny what He says.**

**But all of us
will one day have
to face Him and give
an account of
our lives.**




what is your empty pursuit?
Grades?
The "perfect" ministry position?
Pleasure?
Possessions?
Power?


Fleeting
Frustrating
Futile
emptiness
disillusionment
disappointment

Predicament

A man who had…
possessed EVERYTHING
and experimented with EVERYTHING
"UNDER THE SUN"
…he HAD everything
…he'd DONE everything
…yet…

Is there hope?

Is there a solution?




Fleeting
Futile
Find
God
(12:1)
&
Fear
God
(12:13)



Application

Find God and Fear God means…

"Come, follow me," Jesus said (Matt 4:19 NIV)

Jesus is saying…. "Draw near and follow me"

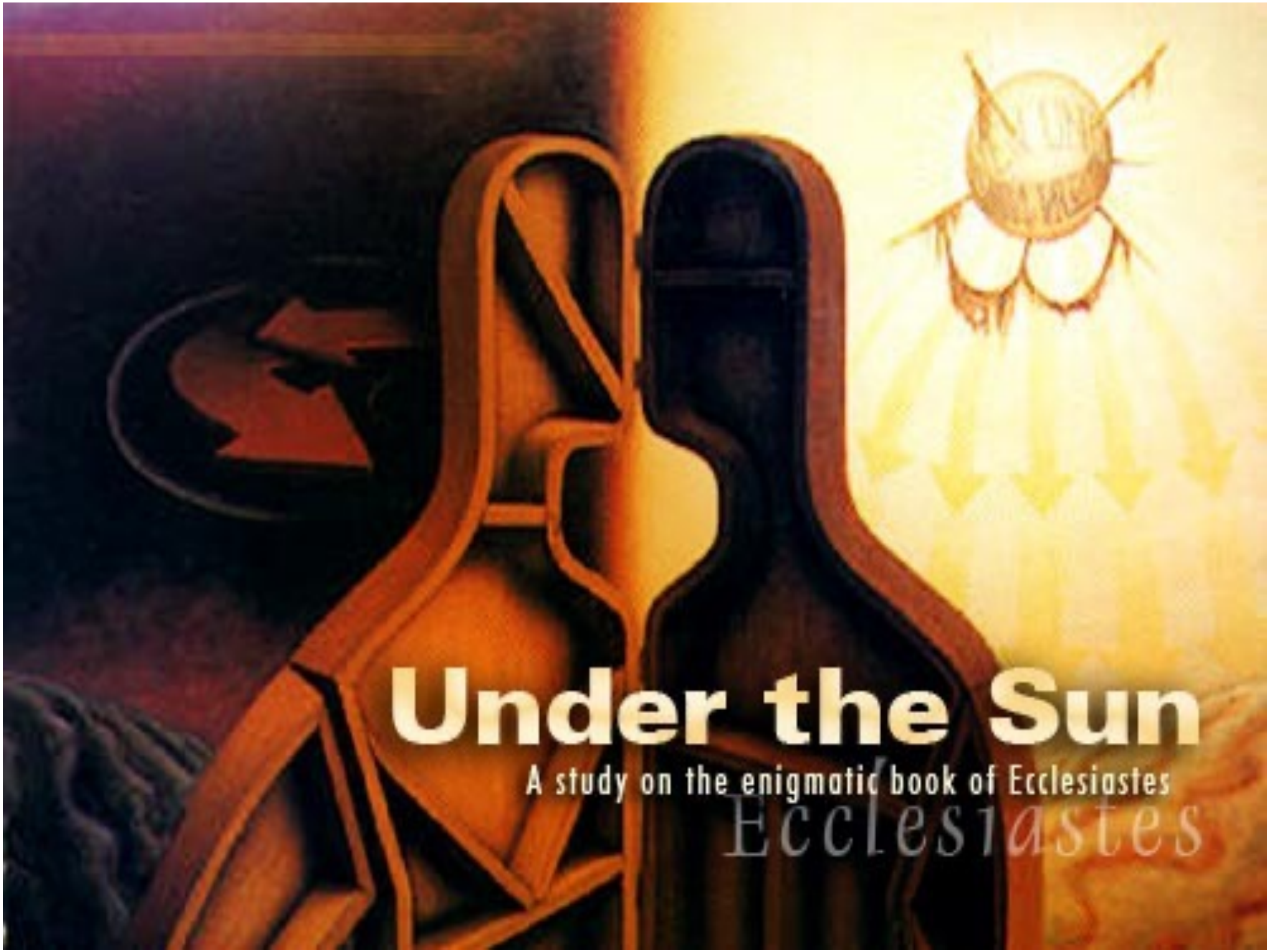
"For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil." (Eccl. 12:14)

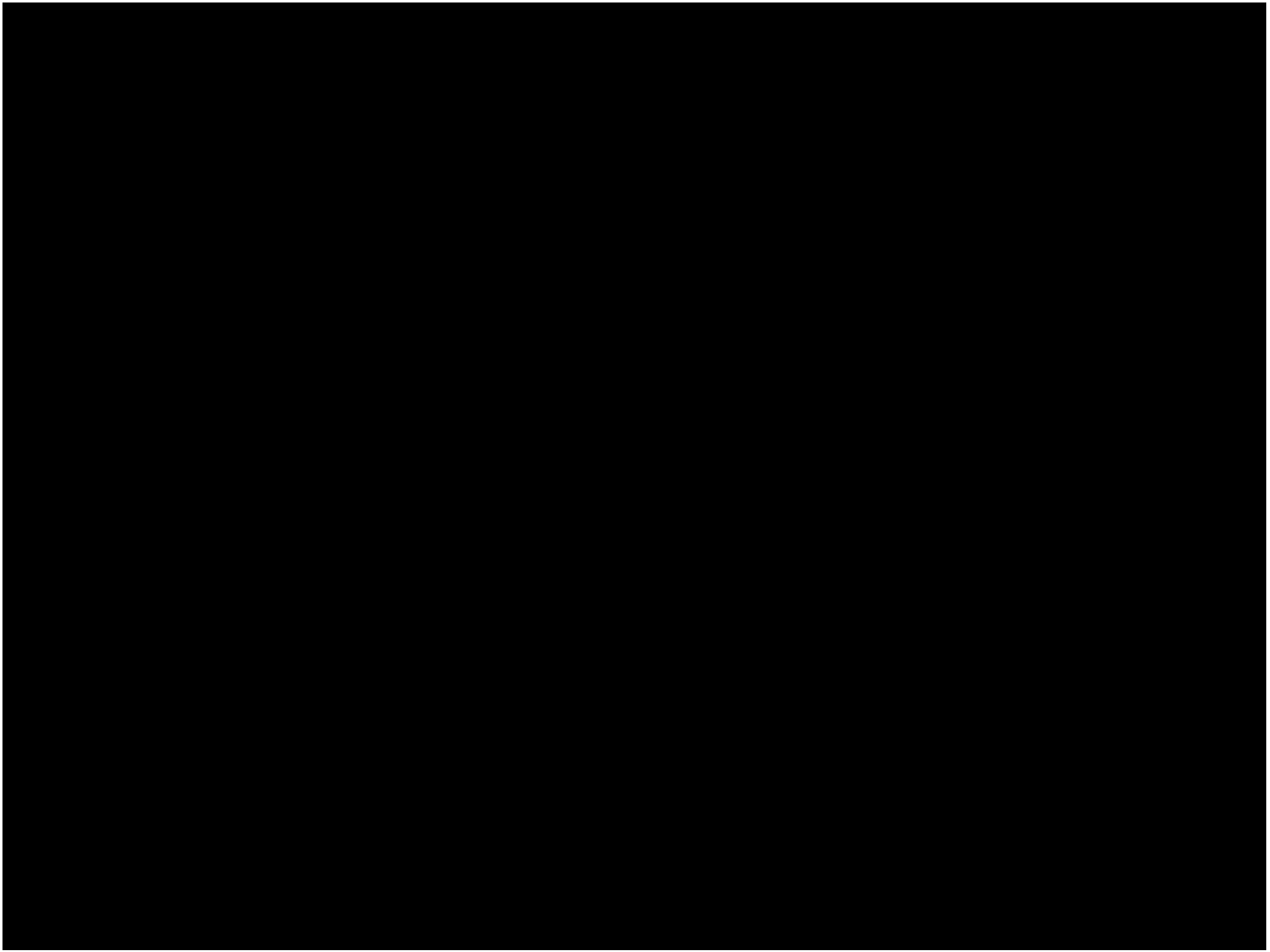
Teenager

C F
Teenager, teenager
C G7
Are you getting out of life what you ought?
C C7
Do the pleasures that you find
F
Satisfy your peace of mind?
C G7 C
Or do they leave you wanting as before the start
C7
For a thrill, a matchless thrill
F C
Turn to One who climbed the hill
Am G G7
Where He died a death for sin He never sinned
C C7
Give your life to Christ today
F
He will guide you on your way
C G7 C
And that teenager is a thrill that never ends


This Project is done by:
John Tan
Kenneth Liew
Joshua Chan


Thank you for your kind attention!


Under the Sun
A study on the enigmatic book of Ecclesiastes
Ecclesiastes



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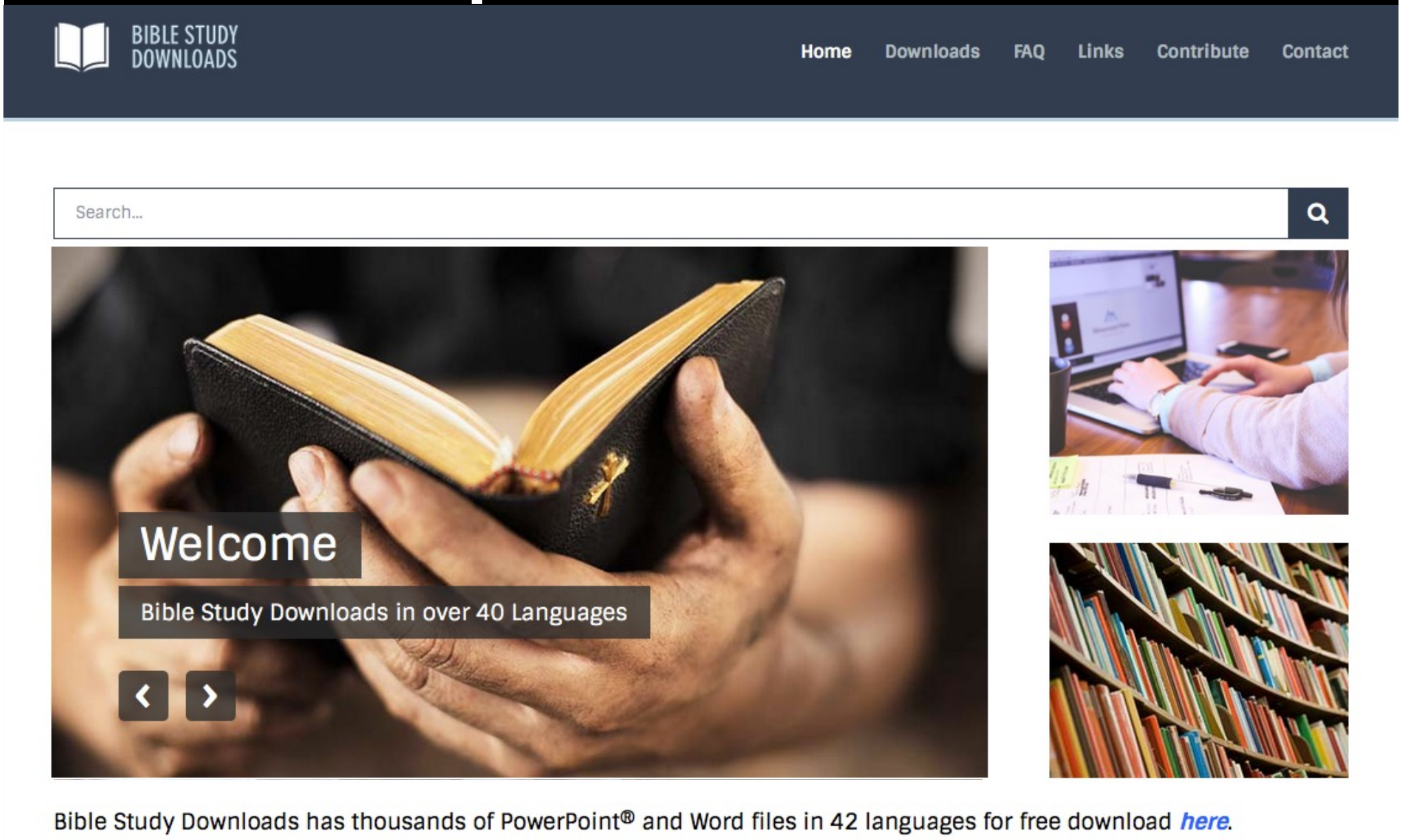

OT Survey link at BibleStudyDownloads.org