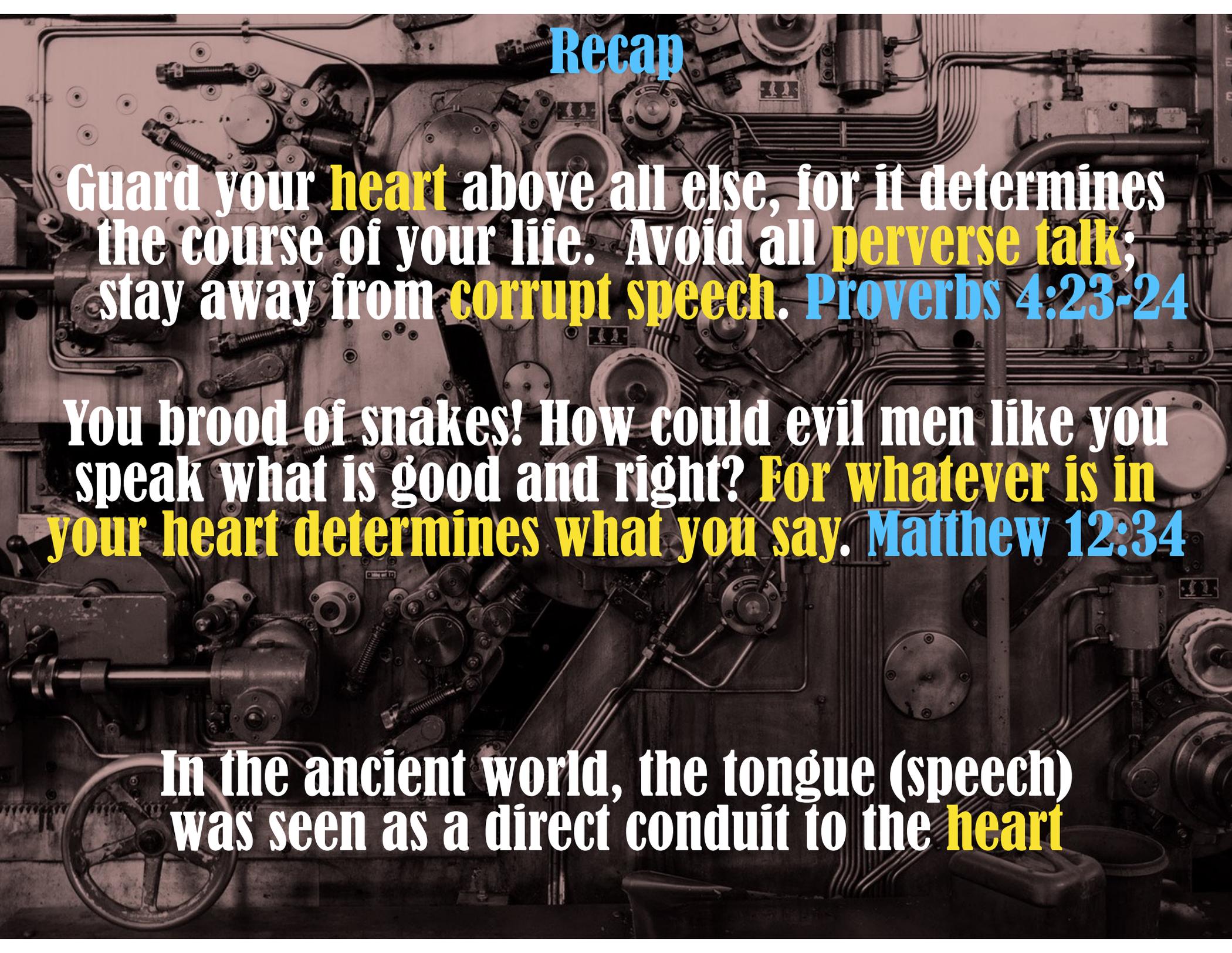




The Pleasure Lie

Recap

Dear brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we who teach will be judged more strictly. Indeed, we all make many mistakes. For **if we could control our tongues**, we would be **perfect** and could also **control ourselves** in every other way. **3:1-2**

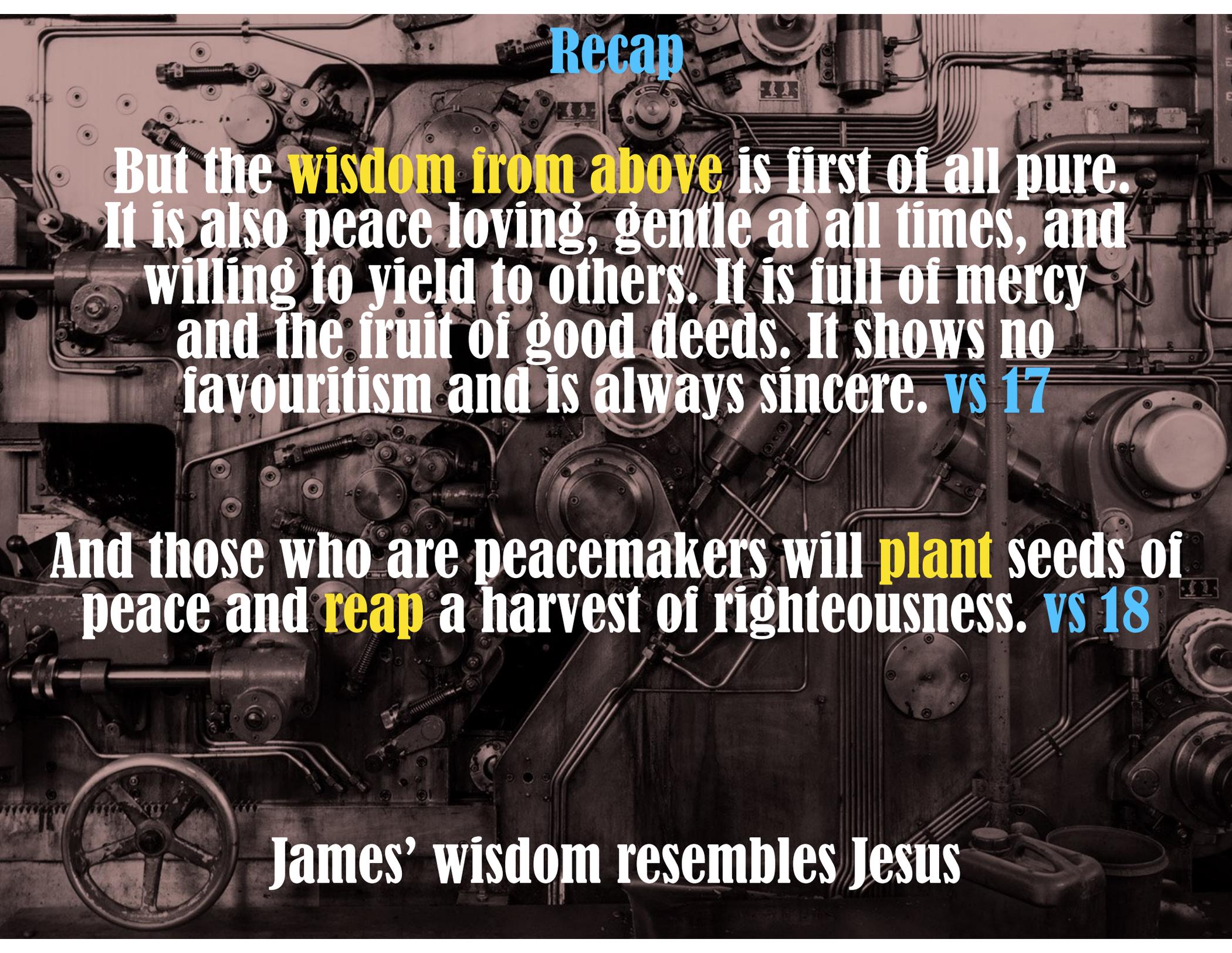


Recap

Guard your **heart** above all else, for it determines the course of your life. Avoid all **perverse talk**; stay away from **corrupt speech**. **Proverbs 4:23-24**

You brood of snakes! How could evil men like you speak what is good and right? **For whatever is in your heart determines what you say**. **Matthew 12:34**

In the ancient world, the tongue (speech) was seen as a direct conduit to the **heart**

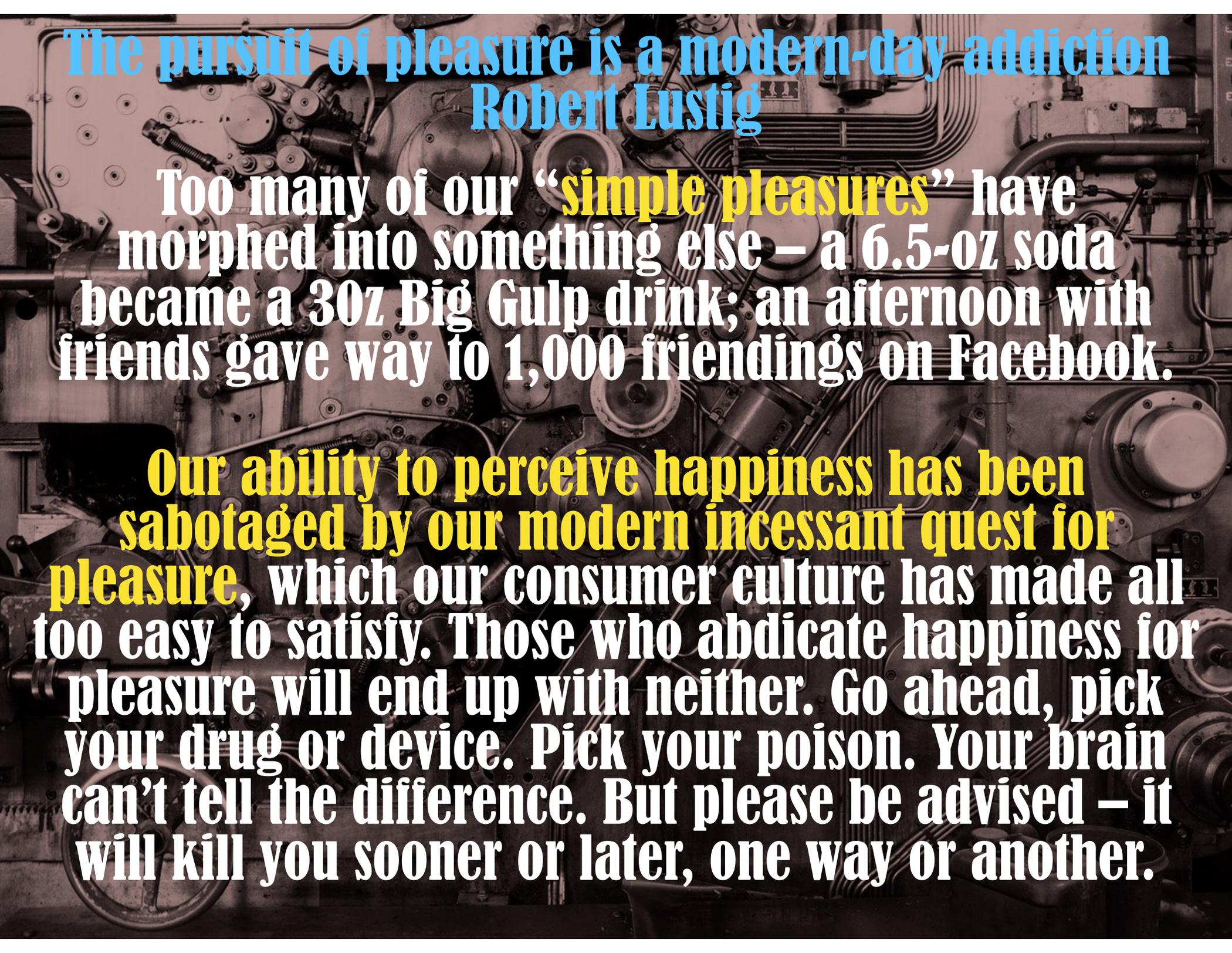


Recap

But the **wisdom from above** is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favouritism and is always sincere. **vs 17**

And those who are peacemakers will **plant** seeds of peace and **reap** a harvest of righteousness. **vs 18**

James' wisdom resembles Jesus



The pursuit of pleasure is a modern-day addiction
Robert Lustig

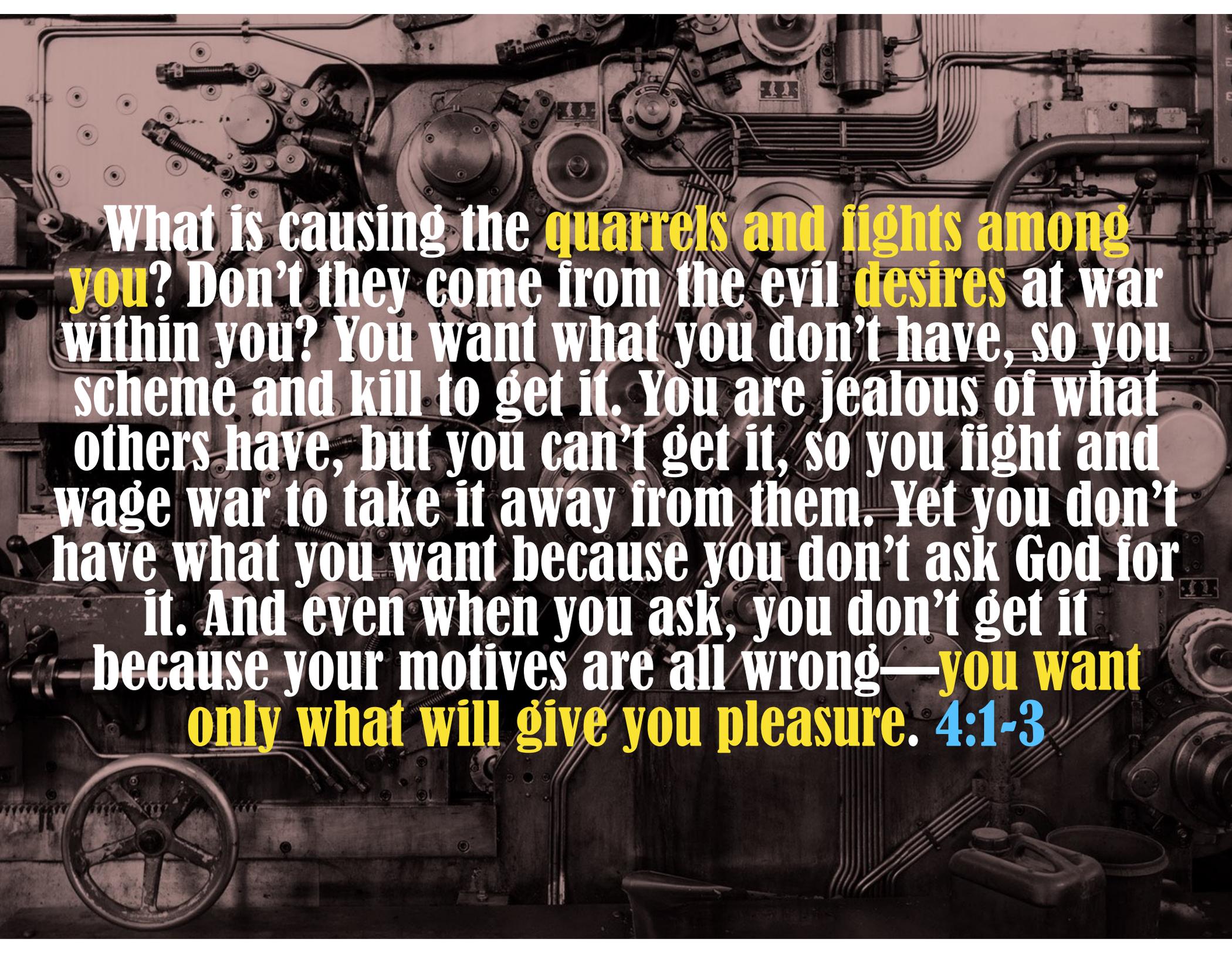
Too many of our “**simple pleasures**” have morphed into something else – a 6.5-oz soda became a 30z Big Gulp drink; an afternoon with friends gave way to 1,000 friendings on Facebook.

Our ability to perceive happiness has been sabotaged by our modern incessant quest for pleasure, which our consumer culture has made all too easy to satisfy. Those who abdicate happiness for pleasure will end up with neither. Go ahead, pick your drug or device. Pick your poison. Your brain can't tell the difference. But please be advised – it will kill you sooner or later, one way or another.

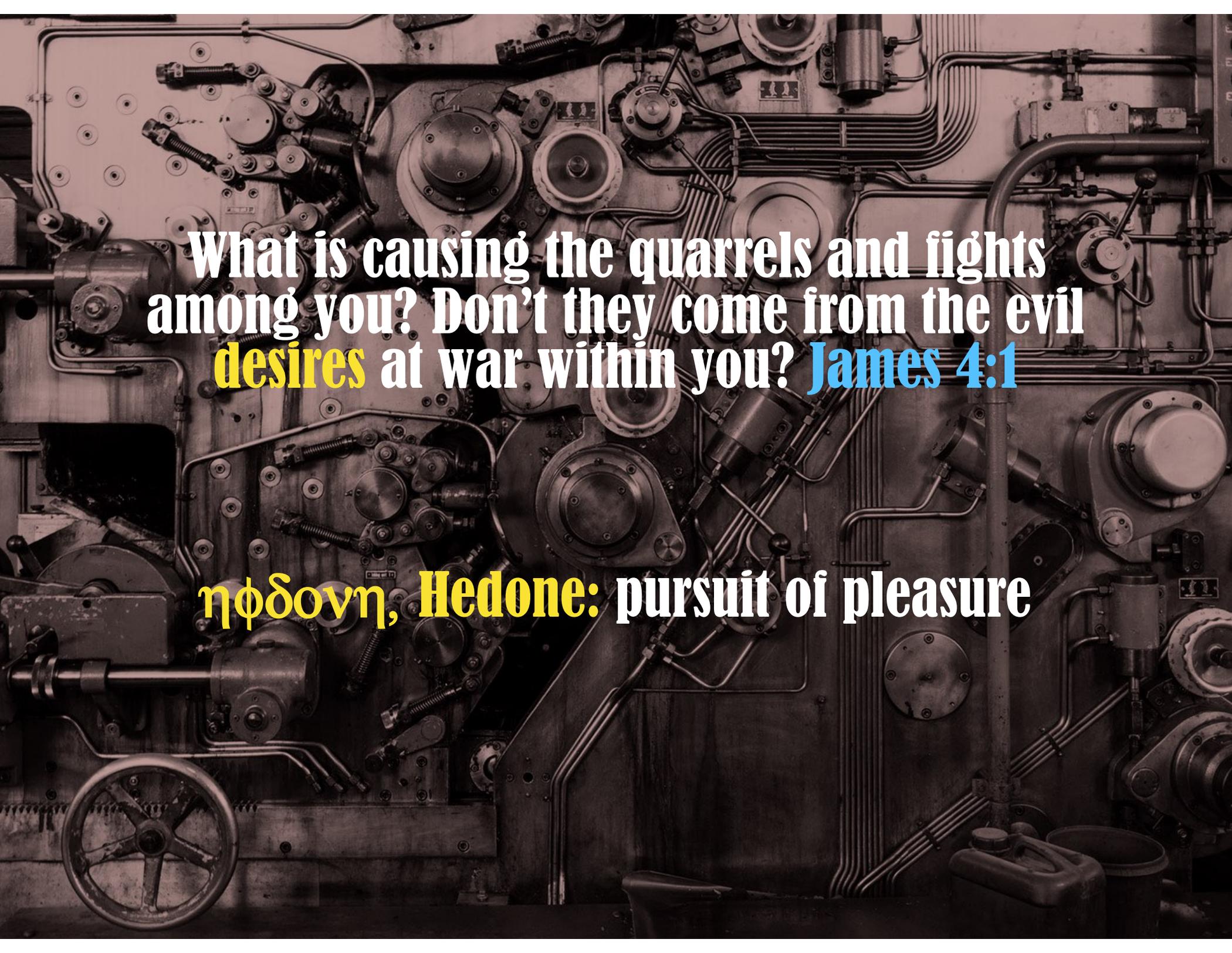
Hedonic Treadmill, Jeanette Bicknell

When Fyodor Dostoyevsky wrote, in *The House of the Dead*, that **“Man is a creature that can get accustomed to anything,”** he was talking about the cruelties and deprivations of life in Siberian prison camp. But the human tendency to adapt or **“get accustomed”** to situations is more profound than even Dostoyevsky may have realized.

A great pleasure, repeated often enough, becomes **routine**, and it takes an even greater treat to give us the same enjoyment. When we get used to having more, it takes more to please us... This is the known as the **“hedonic treadmill.”**

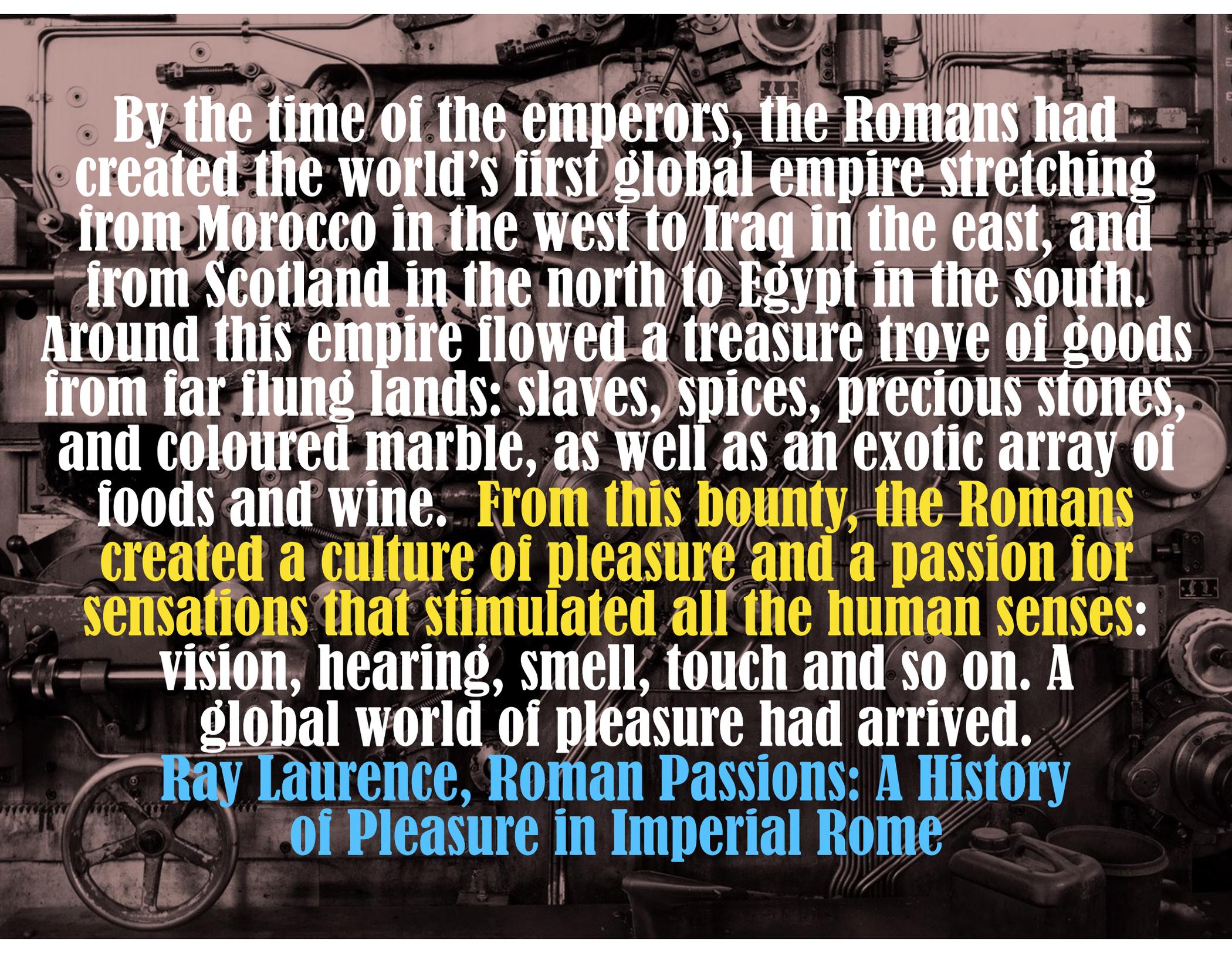


What is causing the **quarrels and fights among you**? Don't they come from the evil **desires** at war within you? You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what others have, but you can't get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them. Yet you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it. And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong—**you want only what will give you pleasure. 4:1-3**



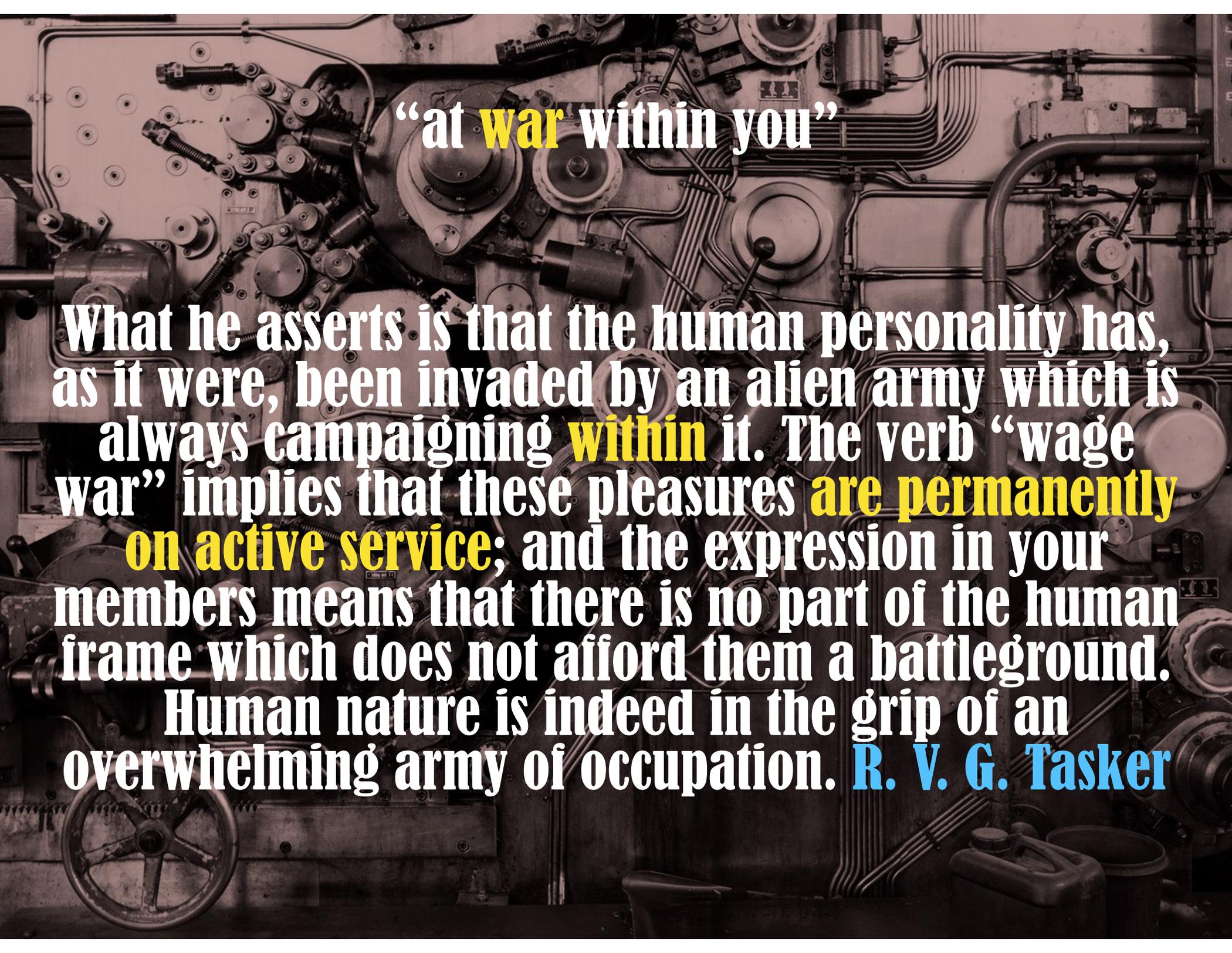
What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don't they come from the evil desires at war within you? James 4:1

ηφδονη, Hedone: pursuit of pleasure



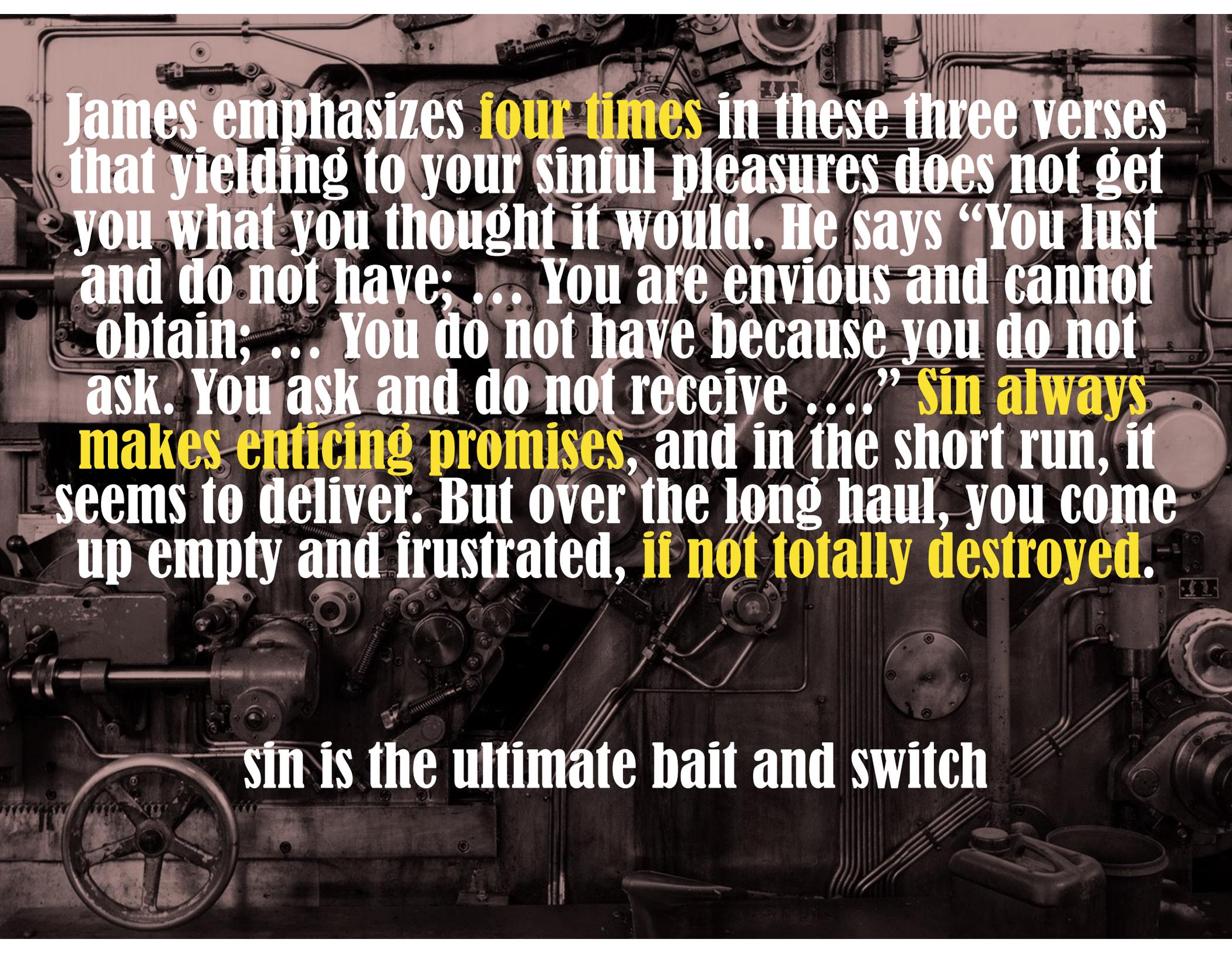
By the time of the emperors, the Romans had created the world's first global empire stretching from Morocco in the west to Iraq in the east, and from Scotland in the north to Egypt in the south. Around this empire flowed a treasure trove of goods from far flung lands: slaves, spices, precious stones, and coloured marble, as well as an exotic array of foods and wine. **From this bounty, the Romans created a culture of pleasure and a passion for sensations that stimulated all the human senses: vision, hearing, smell, touch and so on. A global world of pleasure had arrived.**

Ray Laurence, Roman Passions: A History of Pleasure in Imperial Rome



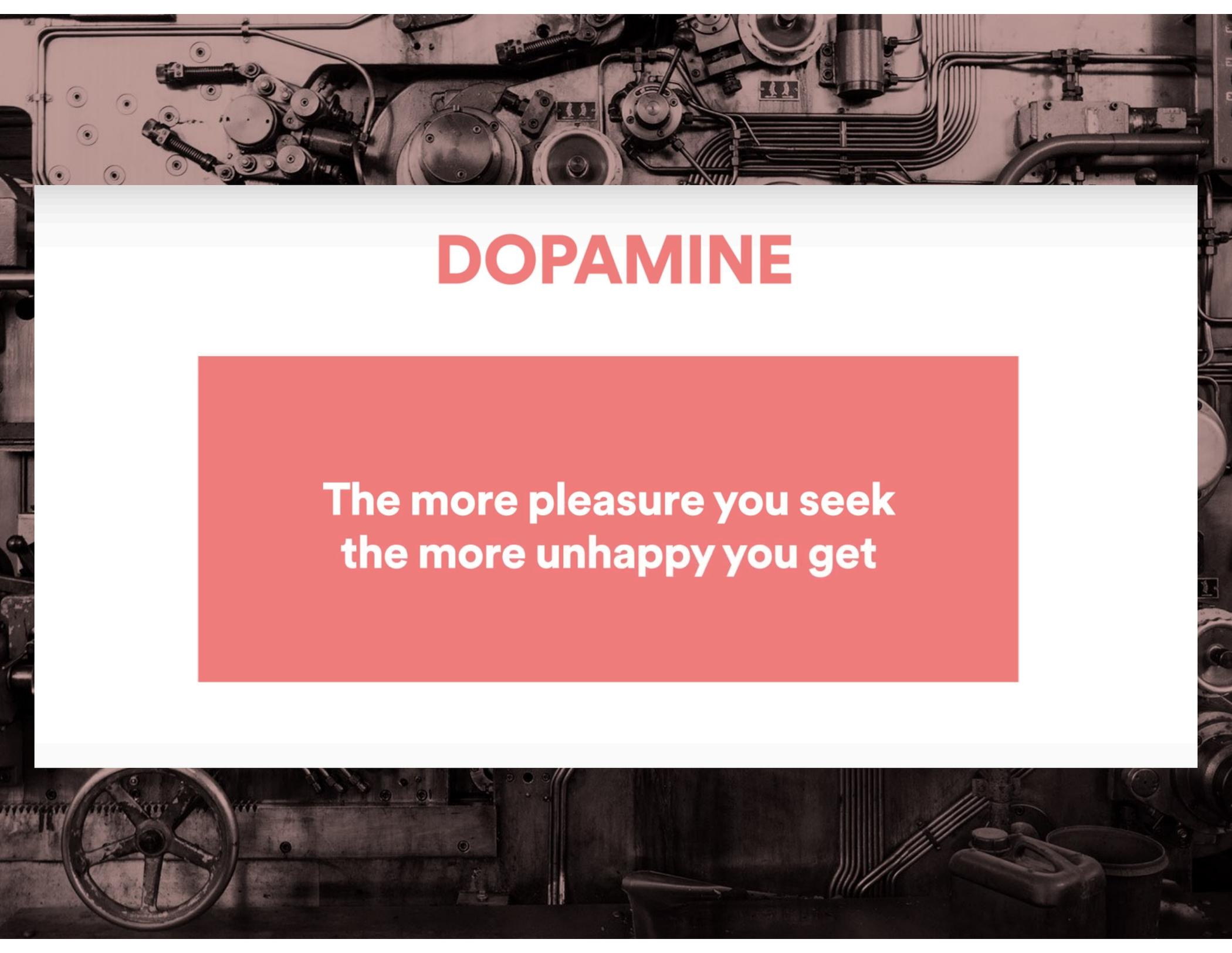
“at war within you”

What he asserts is that the human personality has, as it were, been invaded by an alien army which is always campaigning **within** it. The verb “wage war” implies that these pleasures **are permanently on active service**; and the expression in your members means that there is no part of the human frame which does not afford them a battleground. Human nature is indeed in the grip of an overwhelming army of occupation. **R. V. G. Tasker**



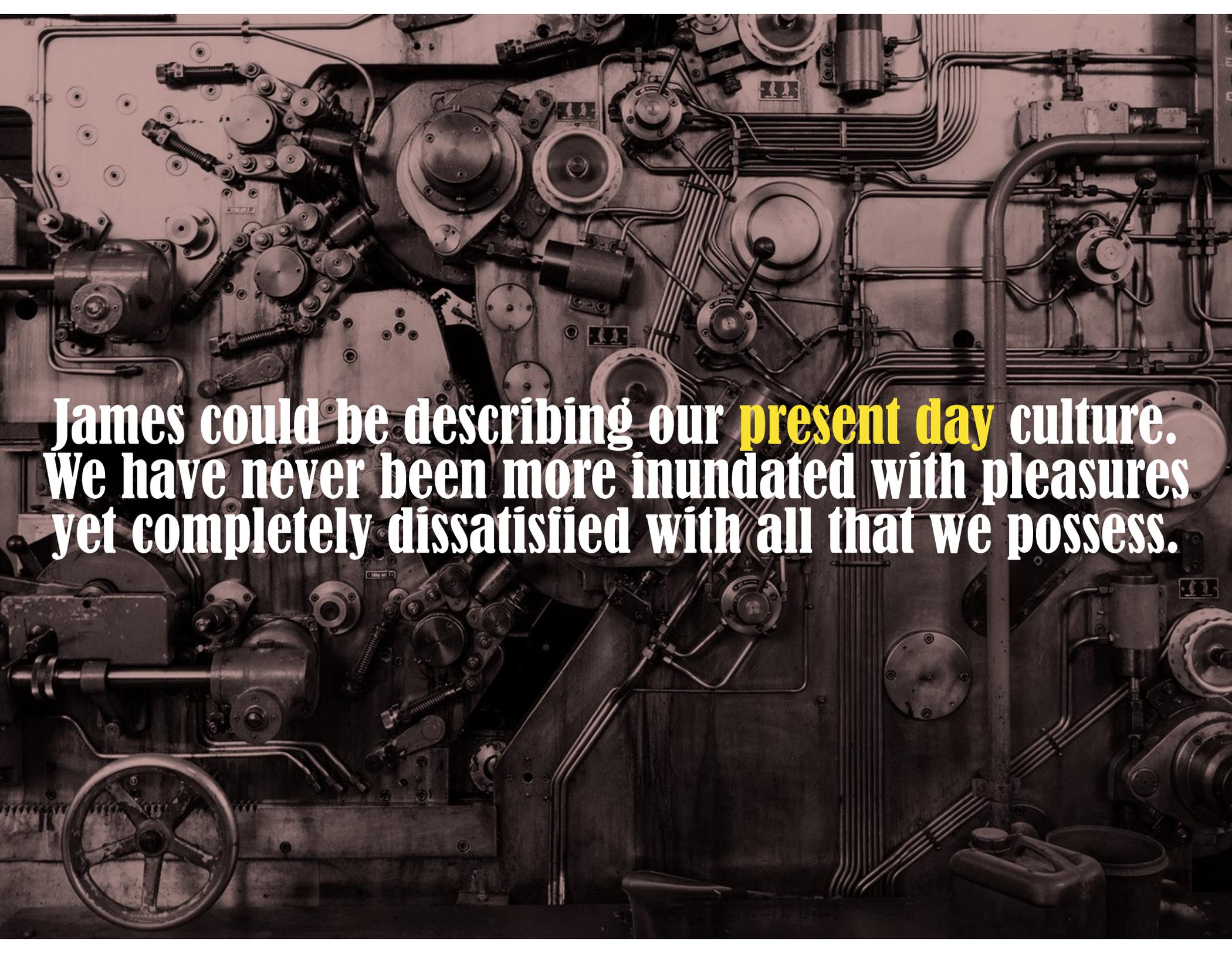
James emphasizes **four times** in these three verses that yielding to your sinful pleasures does not get you what you thought it would. He says “You lust and do not have; ... You are envious and cannot obtain; ... You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive” **Sin always makes enticing promises**, and in the short run, it seems to deliver. But over the long haul, you come up empty and frustrated, **if not totally destroyed.**

sin is the ultimate bait and switch

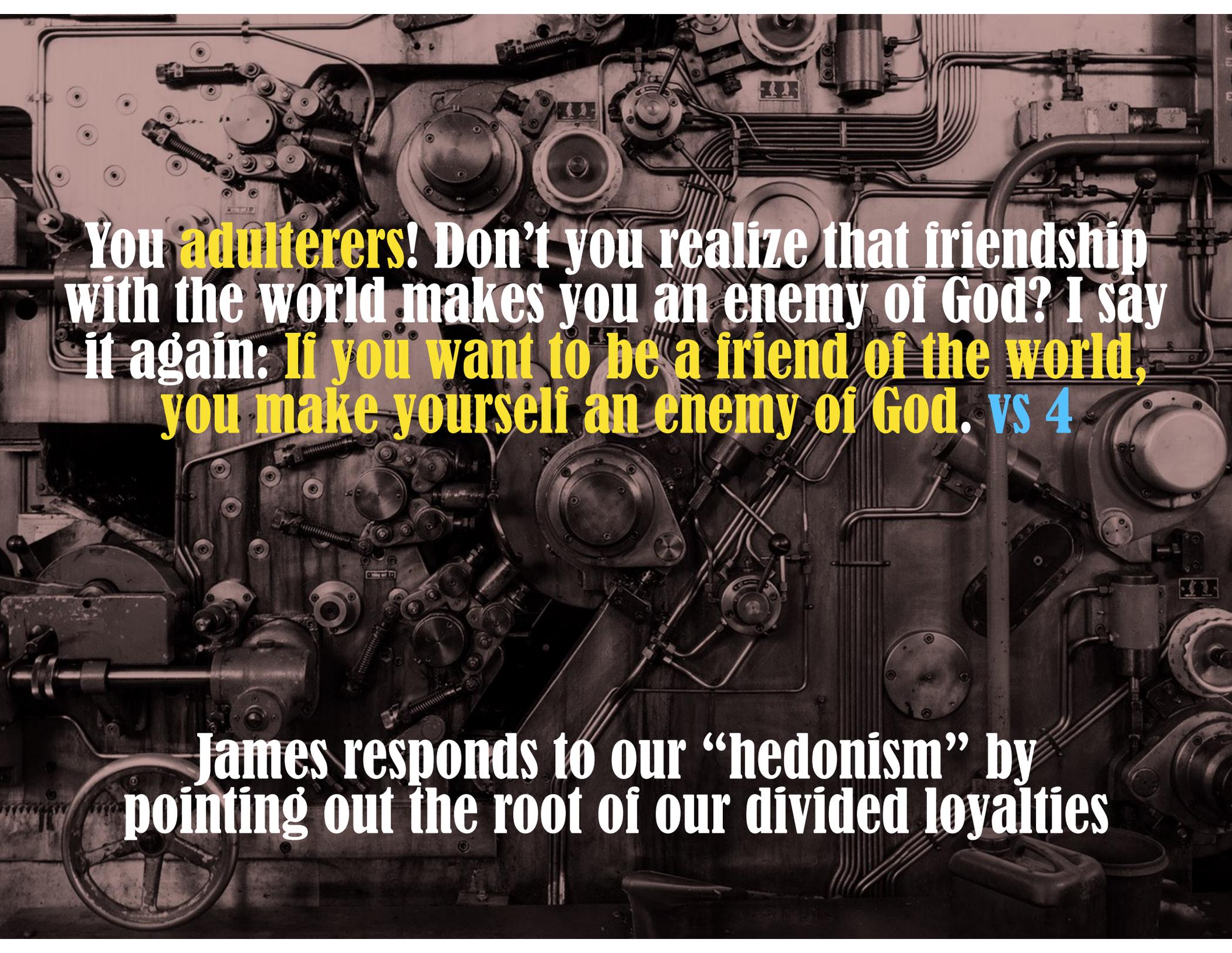


DOPAMINE

**The more pleasure you seek
the more unhappy you get**

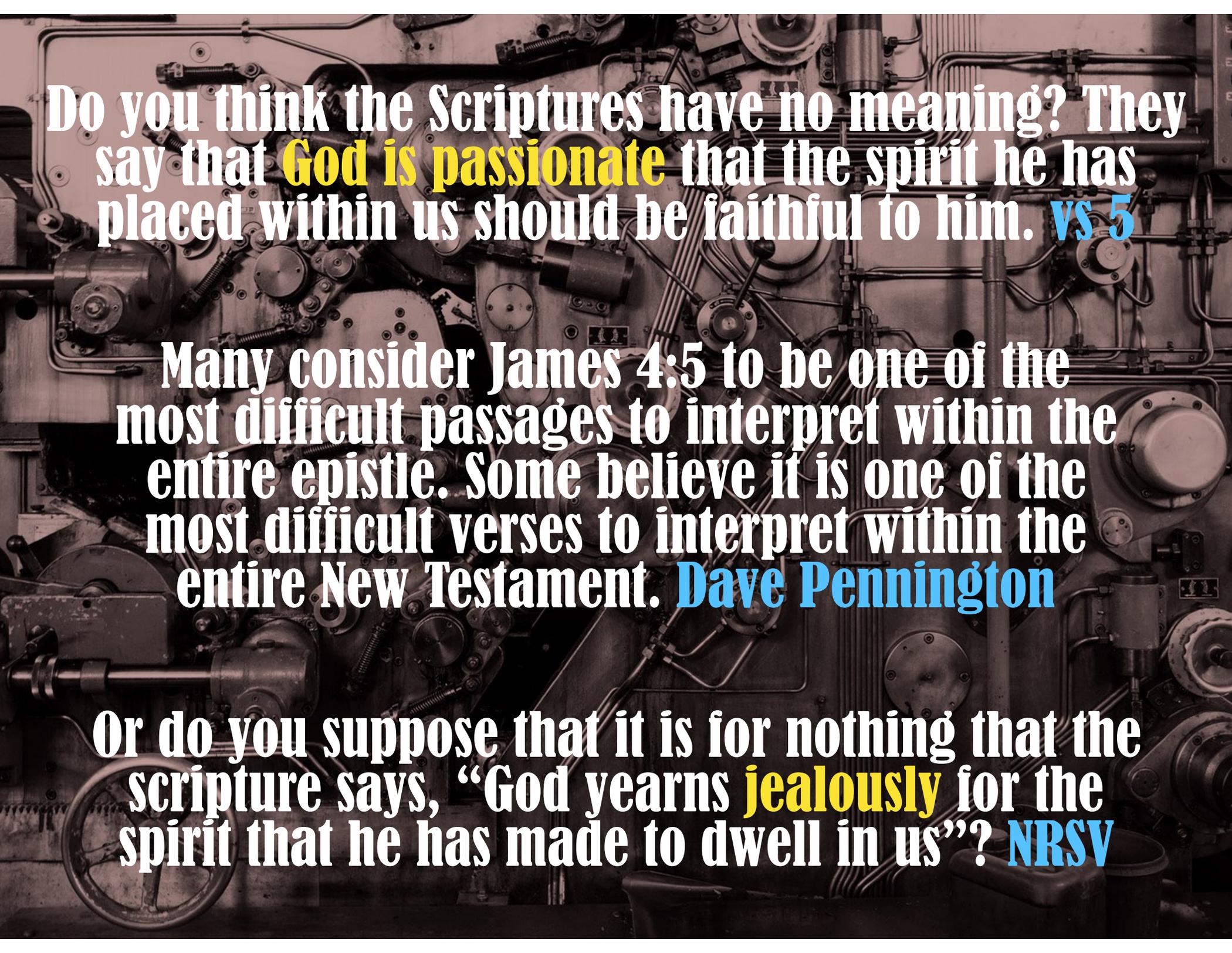


James could be describing our **present day** culture.
We have never been more inundated with pleasures
yet completely dissatisfied with all that we possess.



You adulterers! Don't you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God? I say it again: **If you want to be a friend of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God.** vs 4

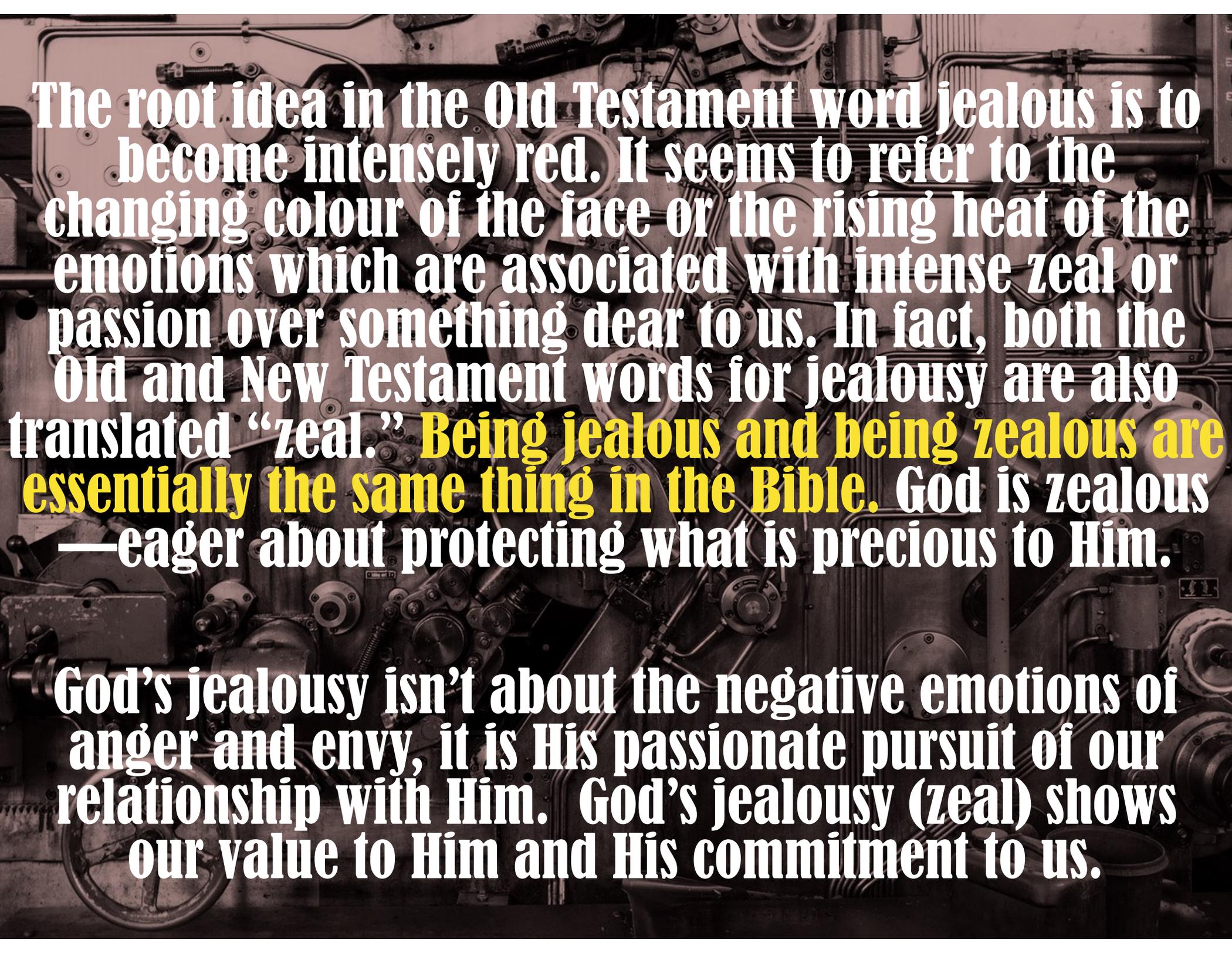
James responds to our "hedonism" by pointing out the root of our divided loyalties



Do you think the Scriptures have no meaning? They say that **God is passionate** that the spirit he has placed within us should be faithful to him. **vs 5**

Many consider James 4:5 to be one of the most difficult passages to interpret within the entire epistle. Some believe it is one of the most difficult verses to interpret within the entire New Testament. **Dave Pennington**

Or do you suppose that it is for nothing that the scripture says, "God yearns **jealously** for the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? **NRSV**



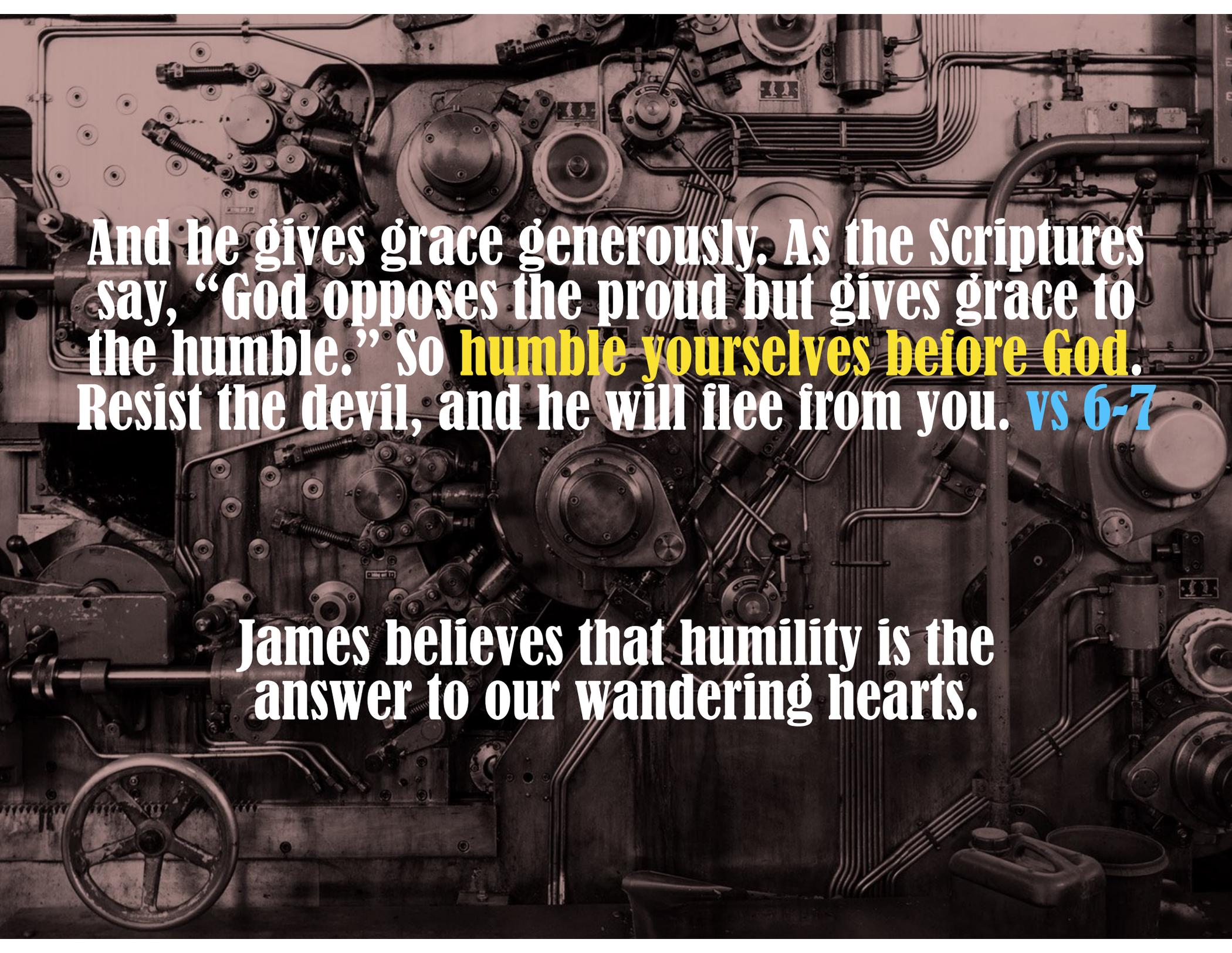
The root idea in the Old Testament word jealous is to become intensely red. It seems to refer to the changing colour of the face or the rising heat of the emotions which are associated with intense zeal or passion over something dear to us. In fact, both the Old and New Testament words for jealousy are also translated “zeal.” **Being jealous and being zealous are essentially the same thing in the Bible.** God is zealous—eager about protecting what is precious to Him.

God’s jealousy isn’t about the negative emotions of anger and envy, it is His passionate pursuit of our relationship with Him. God’s jealousy (zeal) shows our value to Him and His commitment to us.

Why is God Jealous?, Mark Batterson

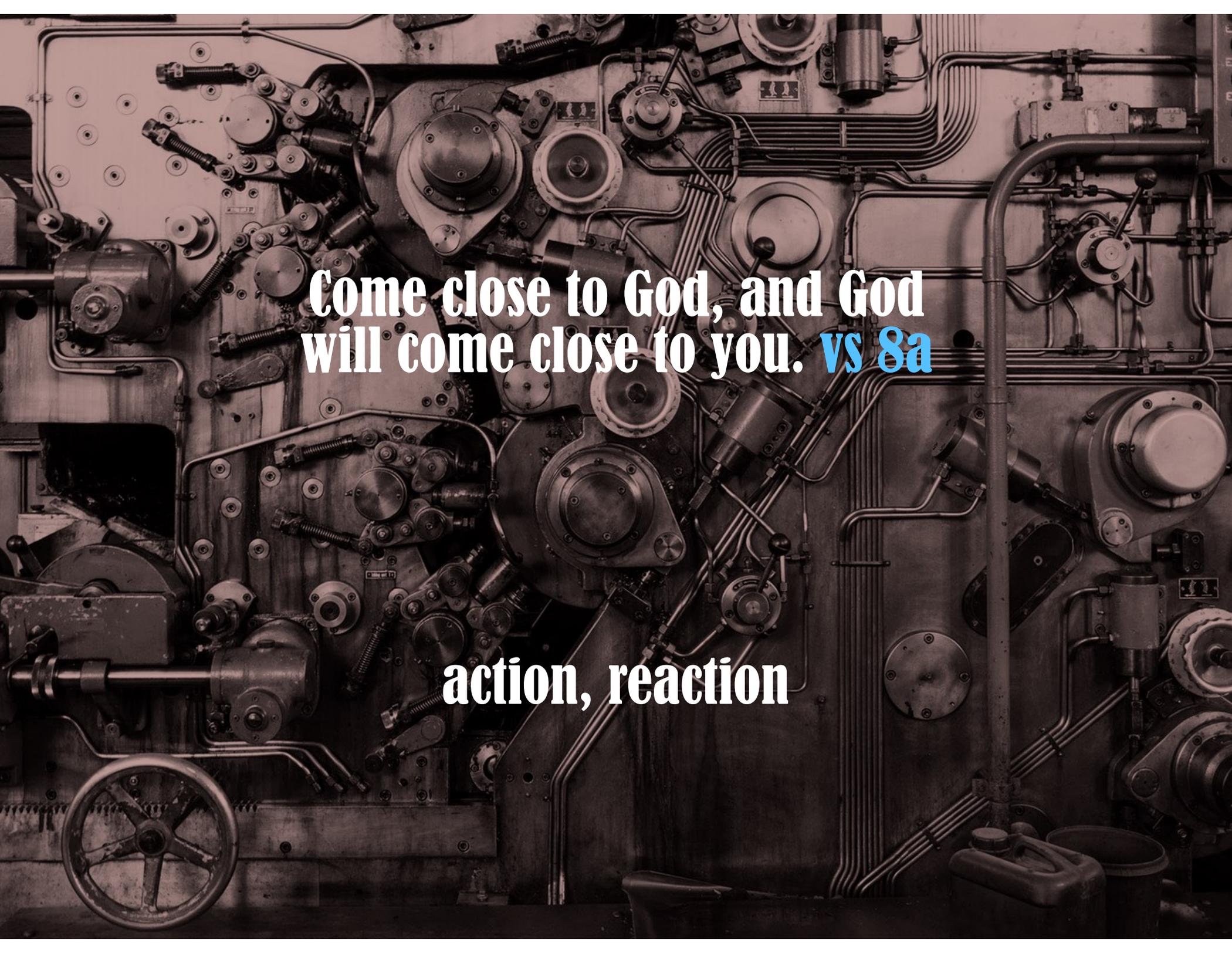
You can't really appreciate the mercy of God if you don't understand the wrath of God. And if you don't have a handle on the justice of God, then you aren't going to appreciate the grace of God. **In a nutshell, if you don't understand one, you can't appreciate the other.** When it comes to love and jealousy, I think many of us don't appreciate the jealousy of God because we don't understand the love of God.

So what is it that provokes His jealousy? It is anything that diverts our **attention or our affection to someone or something else.** Anything that displaces God is an idol, and it is those idols that God hates.



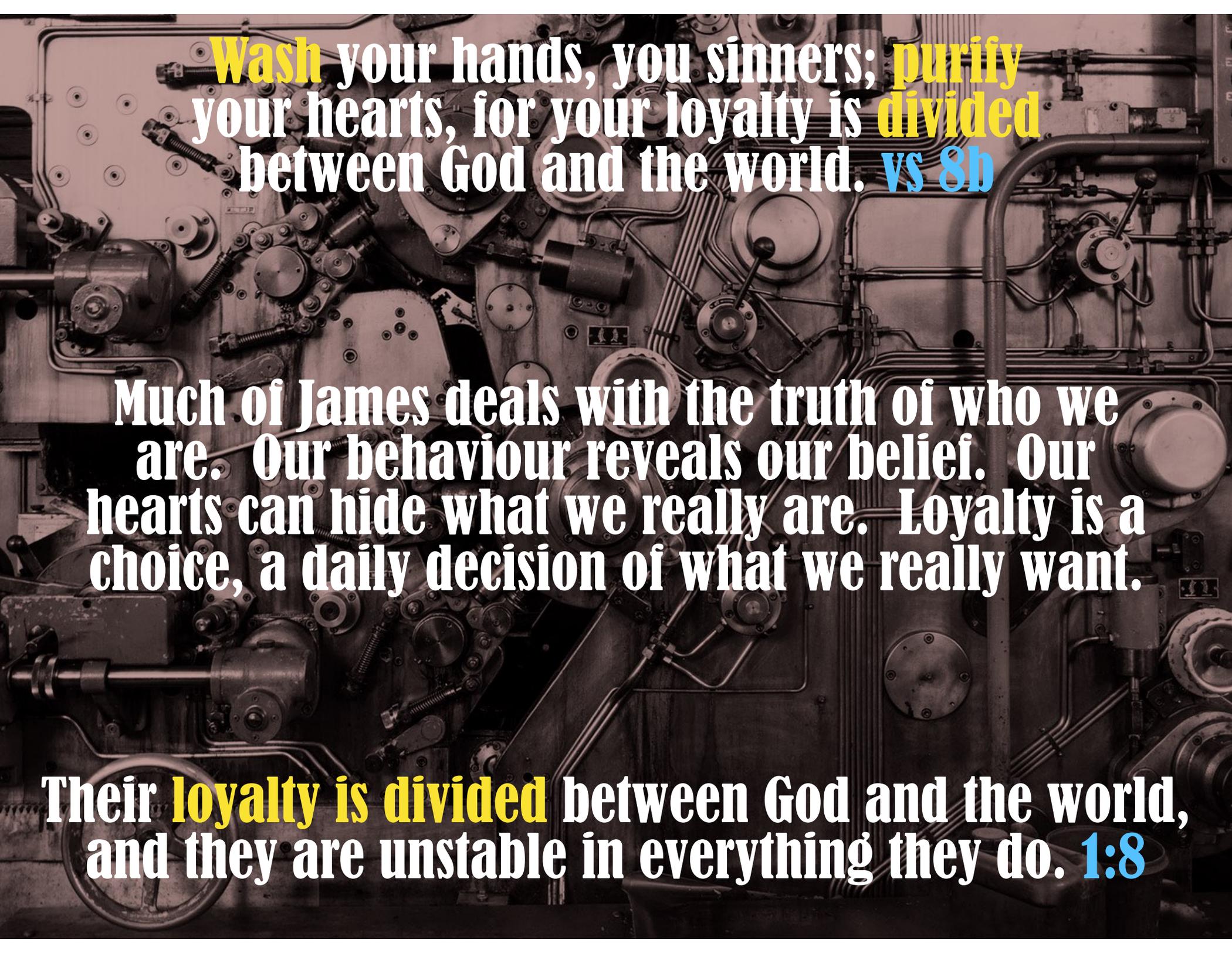
And he gives grace generously. As the Scriptures say, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” So **humble yourselves before God.** Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. **vs 6-7**

James believes that humility is the answer to our wandering hearts.

A detailed, high-contrast photograph of a complex industrial machine, possibly a large engine or a piece of heavy machinery. The image is filled with various components: pipes, valves, gauges, and mechanical parts. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the metallic surfaces and creating deep shadows. The overall tone is industrial and technical.

**Come close to God, and God
will come close to you. vs 8a**

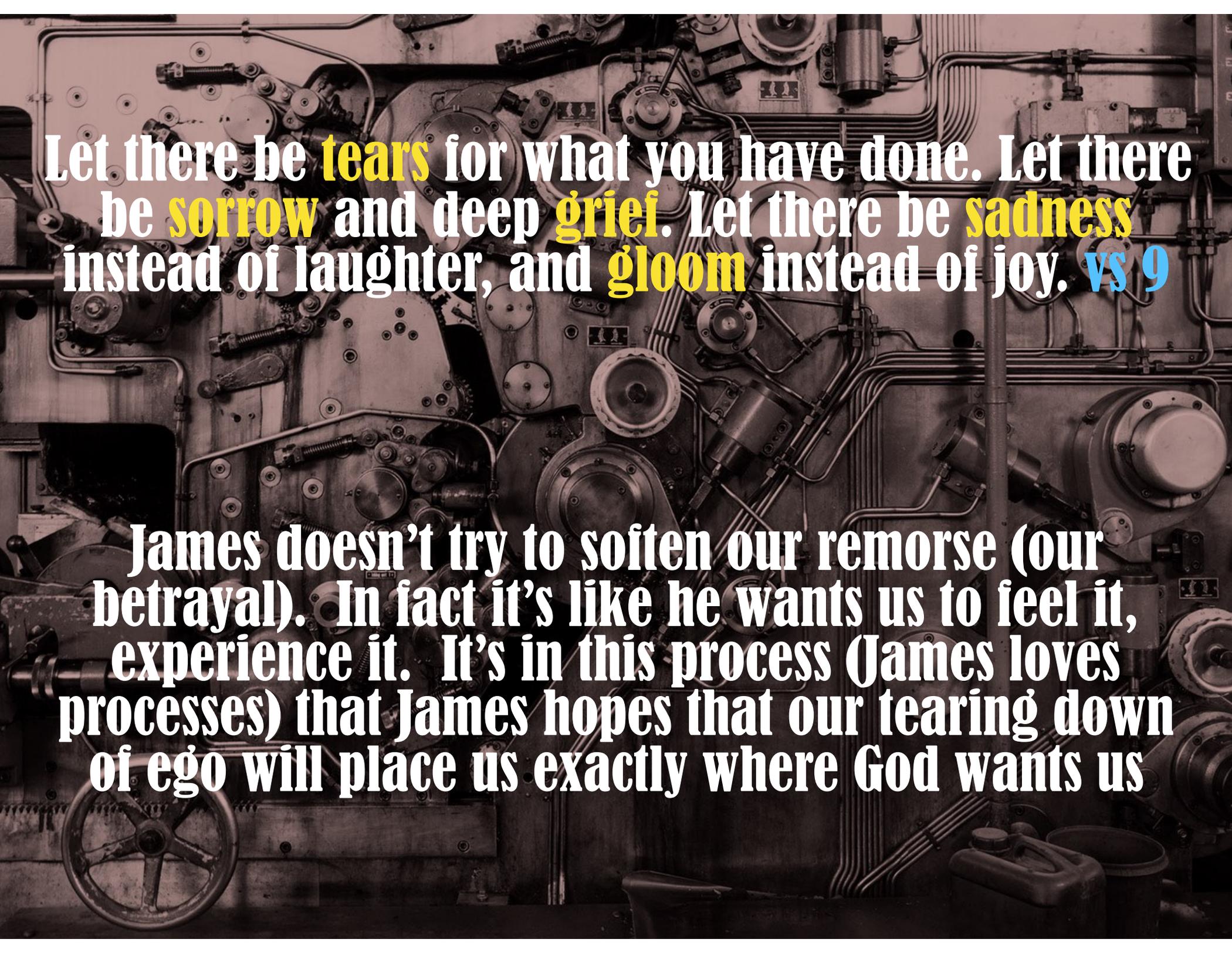
action, reaction



Wash your hands, you sinners; **purify**
your hearts, for your loyalty is **divided**
between God and the world. **vs 8b**

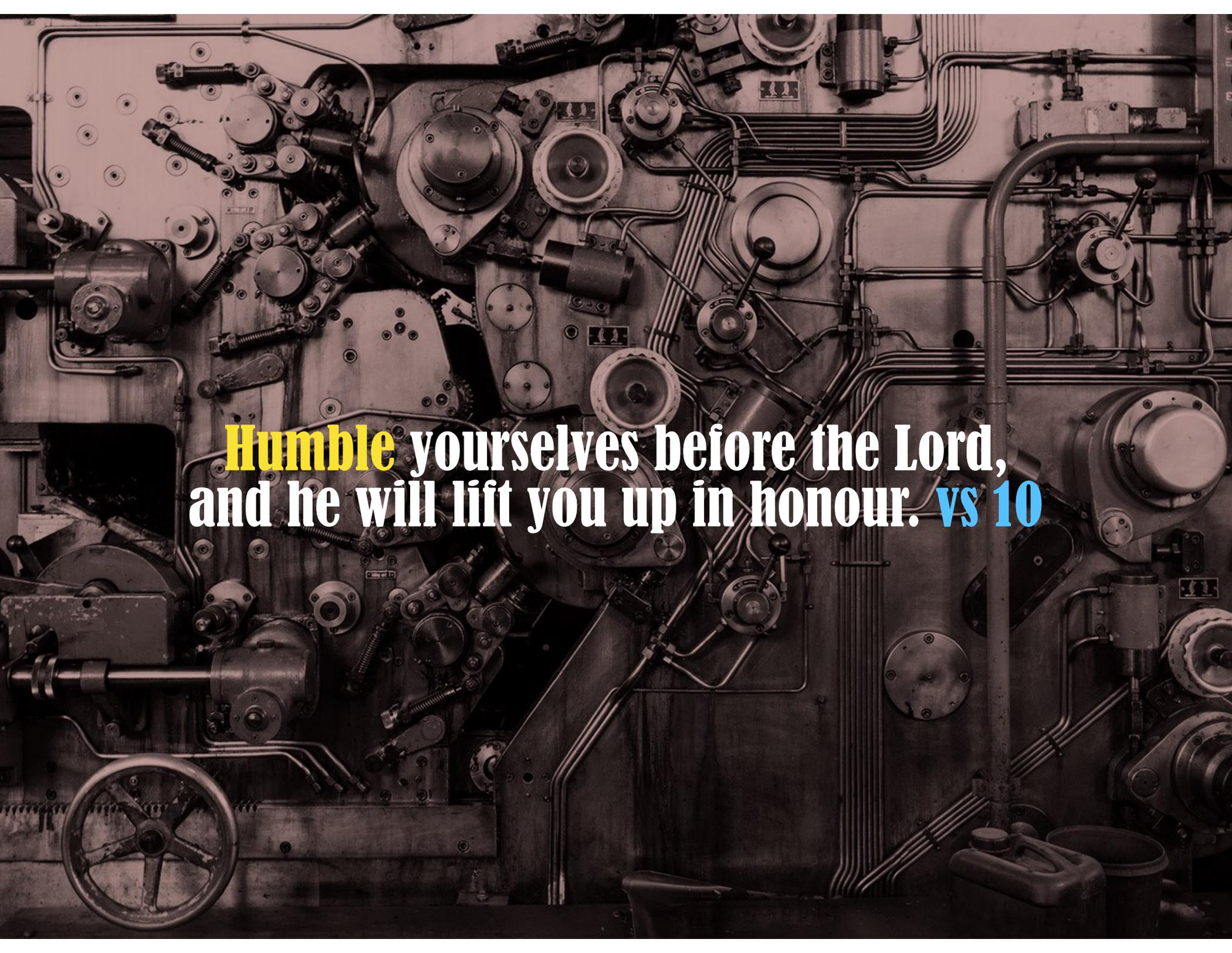
Much of James deals with the truth of who we are. Our behaviour reveals our belief. Our hearts can hide what we really are. Loyalty is a choice, a daily decision of what we really want.

Their **loyalty is divided** between God and the world,
and they are unstable in everything they do. **1:8**

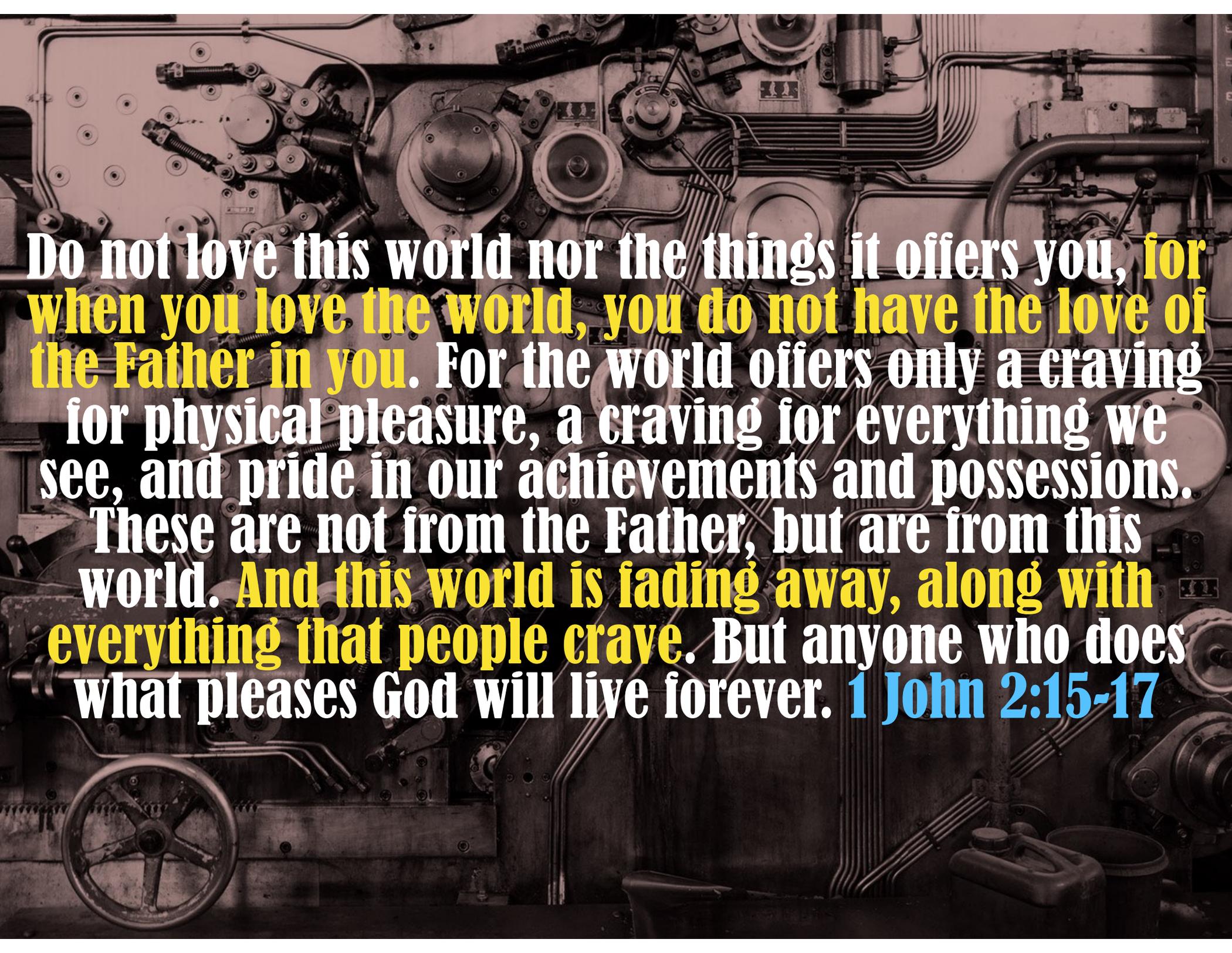


Let there be **tears** for what you have done. Let there be **sorrow** and deep **grief**. Let there be **sadness** instead of laughter, and **gloom** instead of joy. vs 9

James doesn't try to soften our remorse (our betrayal). In fact it's like he wants us to feel it, experience it. It's in this process (James loves processes) that James hopes that our tearing down of ego will place us exactly where God wants us

A detailed, high-angle photograph of a complex industrial machine, possibly a large engine or a piece of heavy machinery. The machine is composed of numerous metal components, including pipes, valves, gauges, and a large flywheel on the left side. The overall appearance is that of a well-used, intricate piece of engineering. The lighting is somewhat dim, highlighting the metallic textures and the complexity of the assembly.

Humble yourselves before the Lord,
and he will lift you up in honour. **vs 10**



Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, **for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you.** For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. **And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave.** But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever. **1 John 2:15-17**