



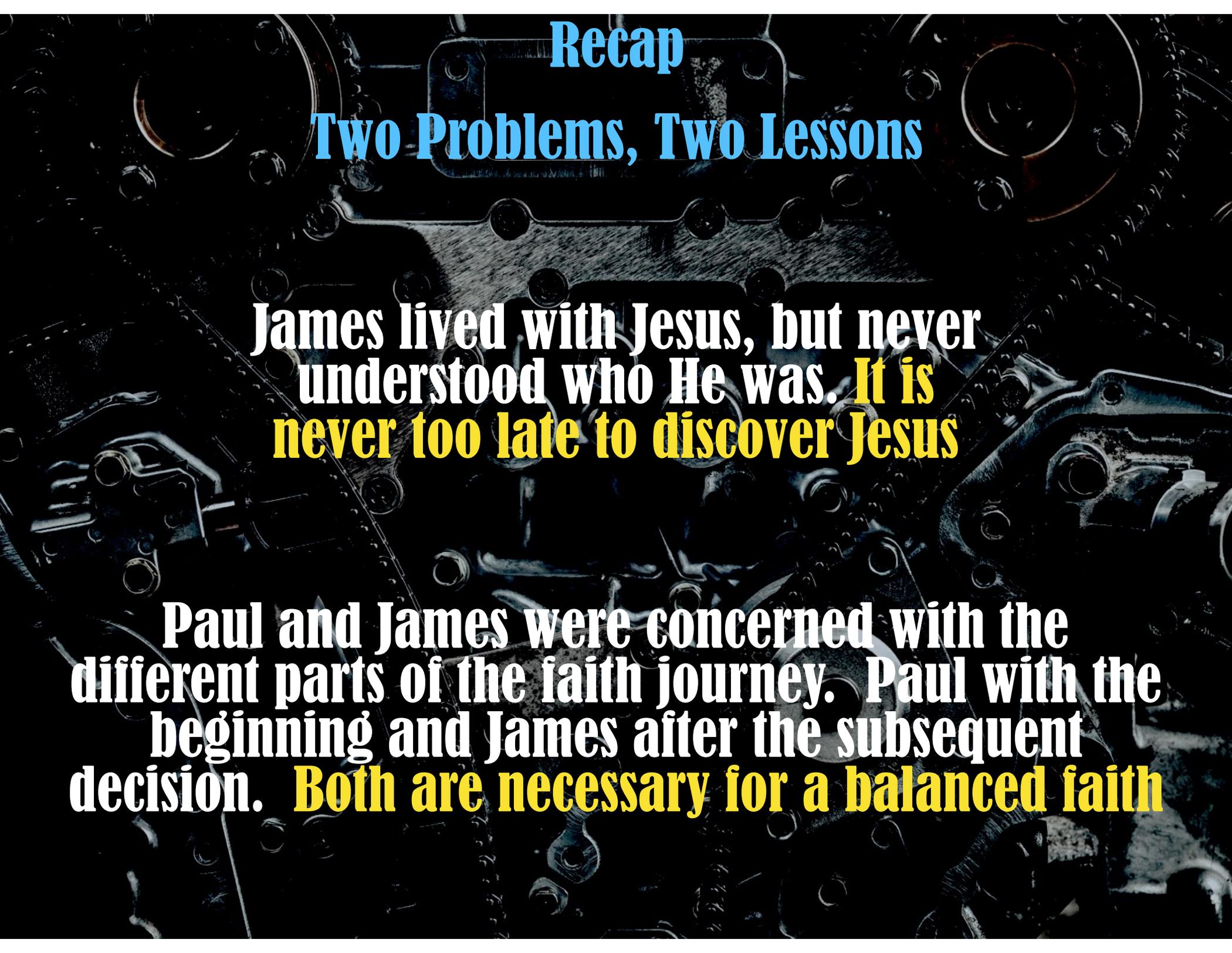
JAMES

FAITH + WORKS

Crucible of Faith

Recap

The book of James reads like a New Testament book of **Proverbs**. It contains some of the most memorable quotes from the New Testament yet also is the most offensive book towards Christian culture.



Recap

Two Problems, Two Lessons

James lived with Jesus, but never understood who He was. **It is never too late to discover Jesus**

Paul and James were concerned with the different parts of the faith journey. Paul with the beginning and James after the subsequent decision. **Both are necessary for a balanced faith**

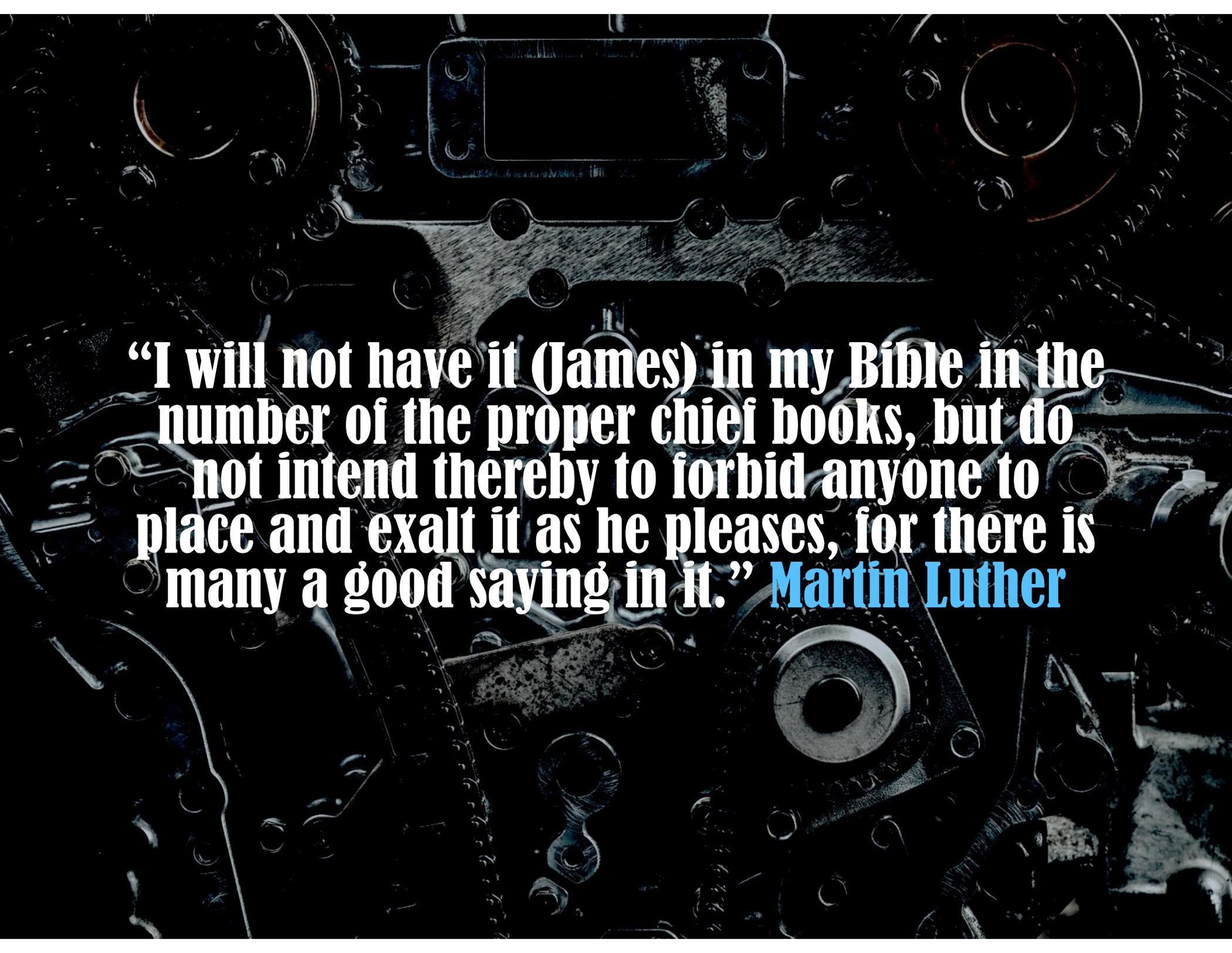
Recap

The Ephesians Solution

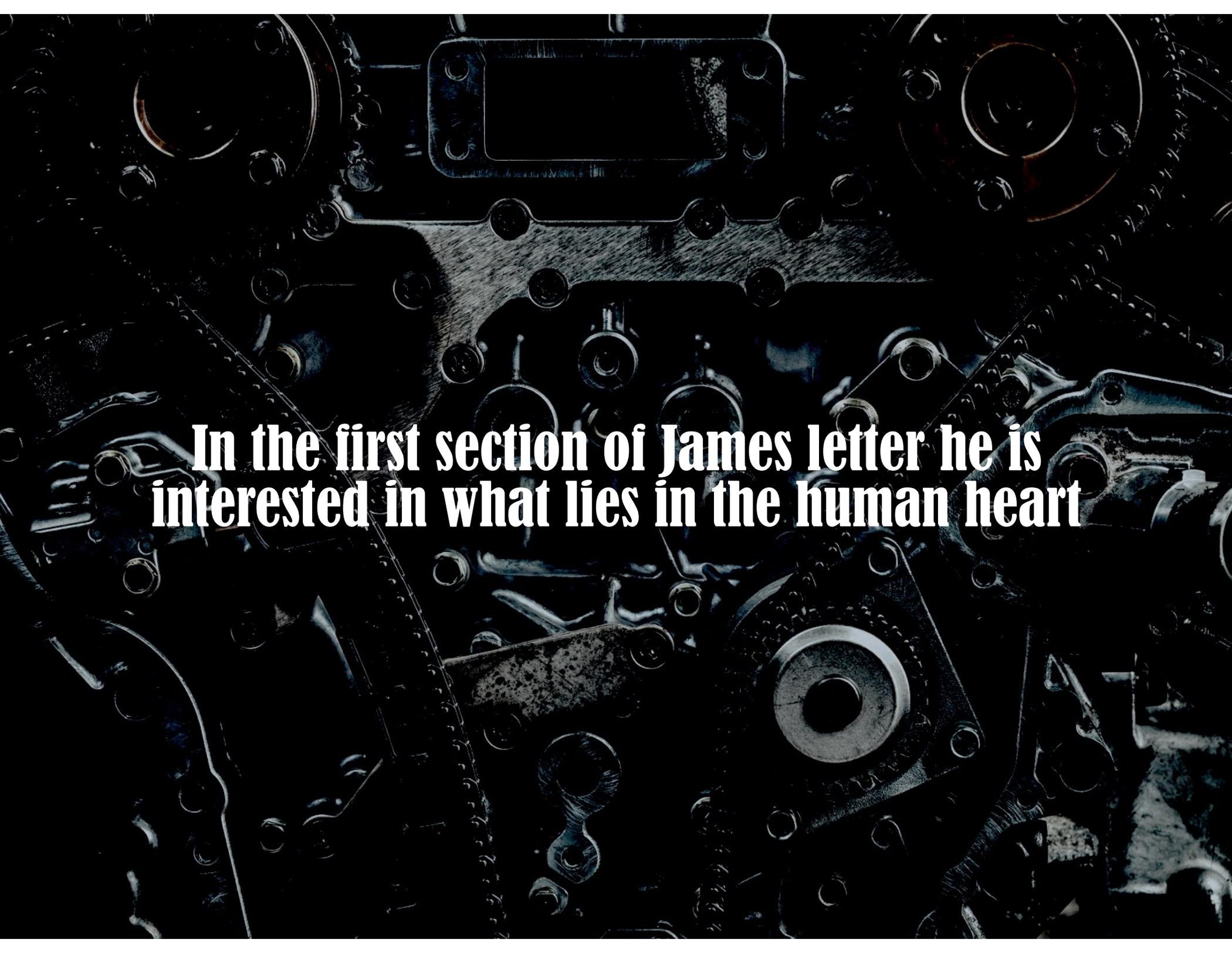
God saved you by his **grace** when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. **2:8**

Salvation is **not a reward for the good things we have done**, so none of us can boast about it. **vs 9**

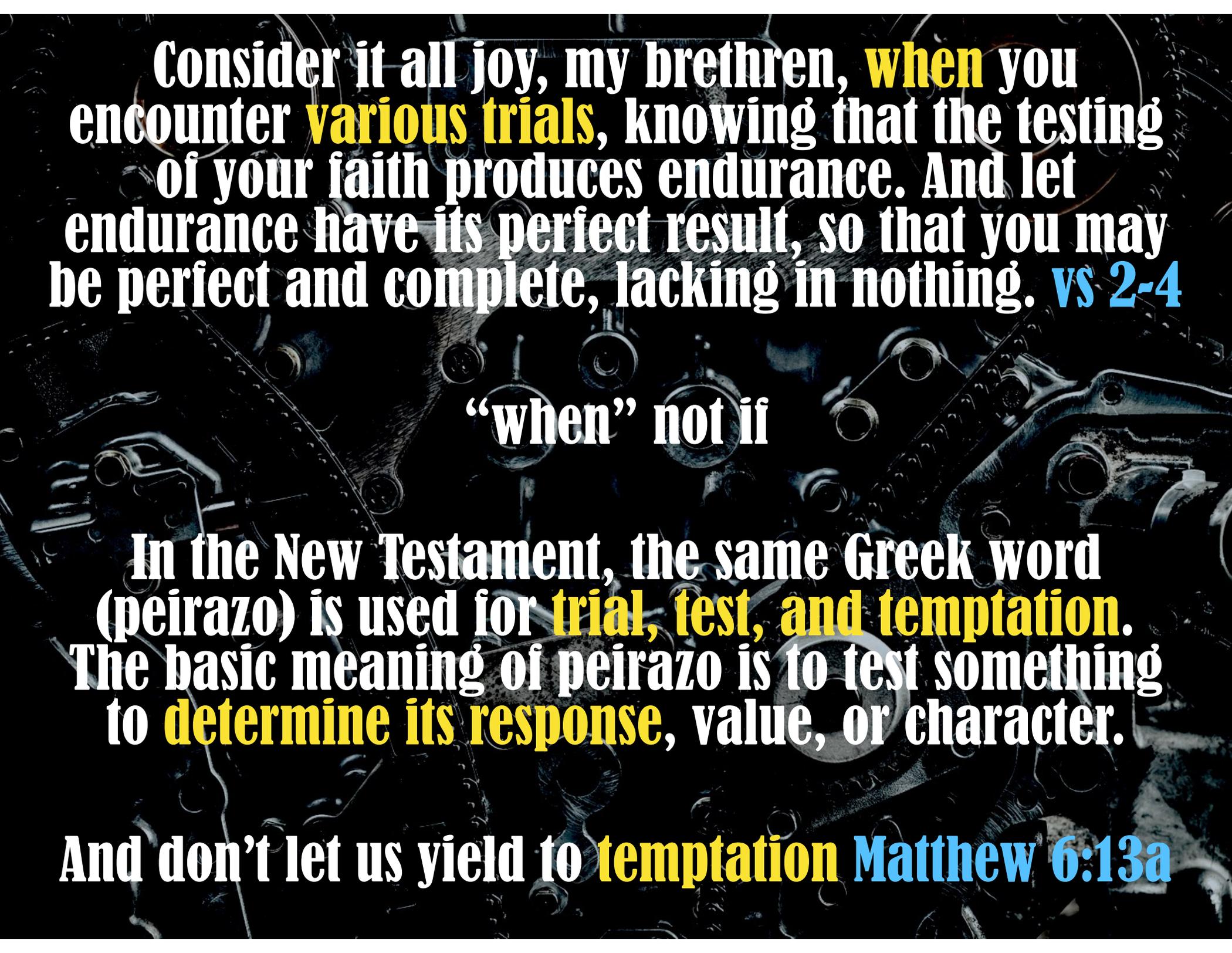
For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, **so we can do the good things** he planned for us long ago. **vs 10**



“I will not have it (James) in my Bible in the number of the proper chief books, but do not intend thereby to forbid anyone to place and exalt it as he pleases, for there is many a good saying in it.” Martin Luther



In the first section of James letter he is interested in what lies in the human heart

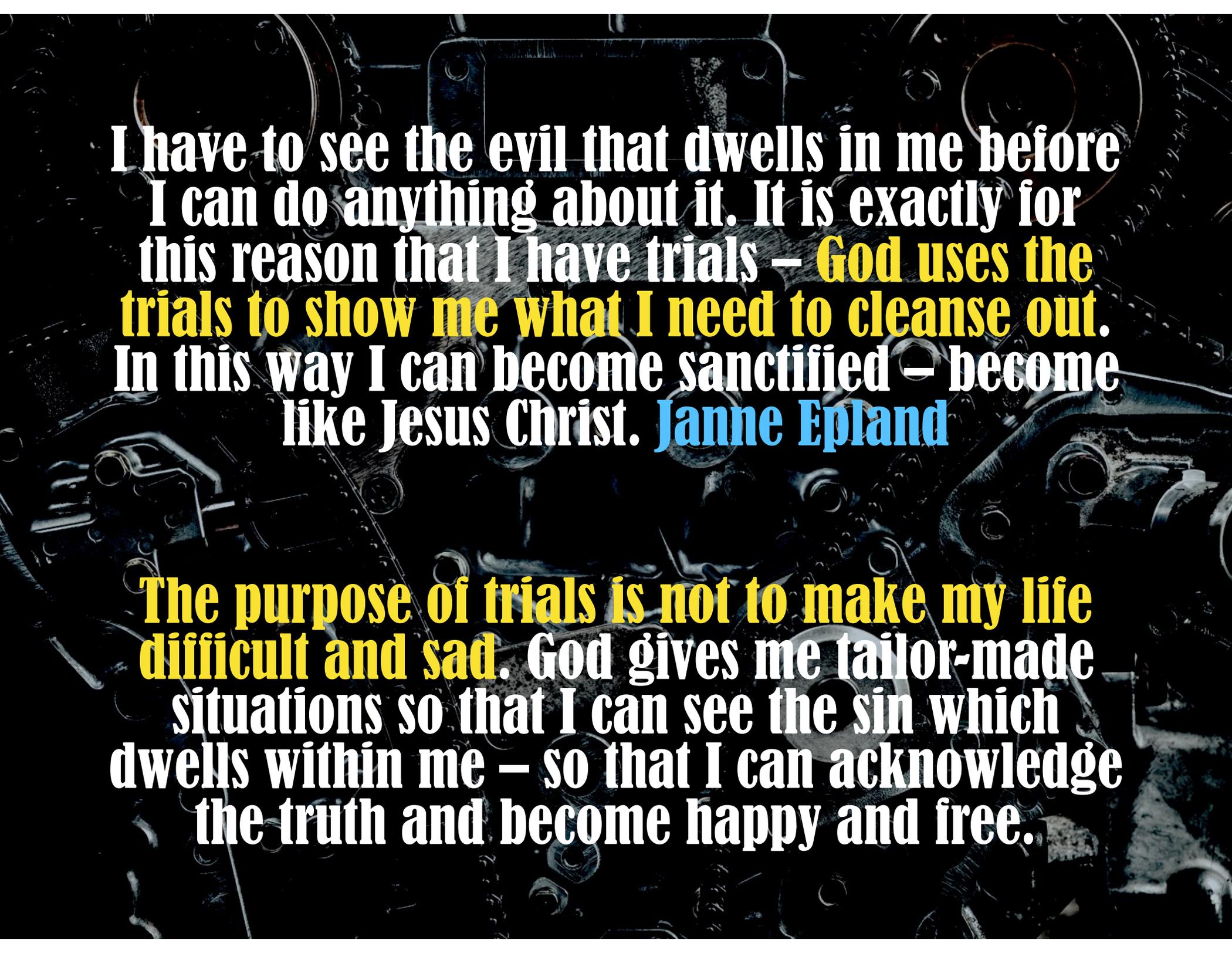


Consider it all joy, my brethren, **when** you encounter **various trials**, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. **vs 2-4**

“when” not if

In the New Testament, the same Greek word (peirazo) is used for **trial, test, and temptation**. The basic meaning of peirazo is to test something to **determine its response**, value, or character.

And don't let us yield to **temptation** **Matthew 6:13a**



I have to see the evil that dwells in me before I can do anything about it. It is exactly for this reason that I have trials – **God uses the trials to show me what I need to cleanse out.** In this way I can become sanctified – become like Jesus Christ. **Janne Epland**

The purpose of trials is not to make my life difficult and sad. God gives me tailor-made situations so that I can see the sin which dwells within me – so that I can acknowledge the truth and become happy and free.

**external/
internal**

trial/temptation



testing

revelation



response

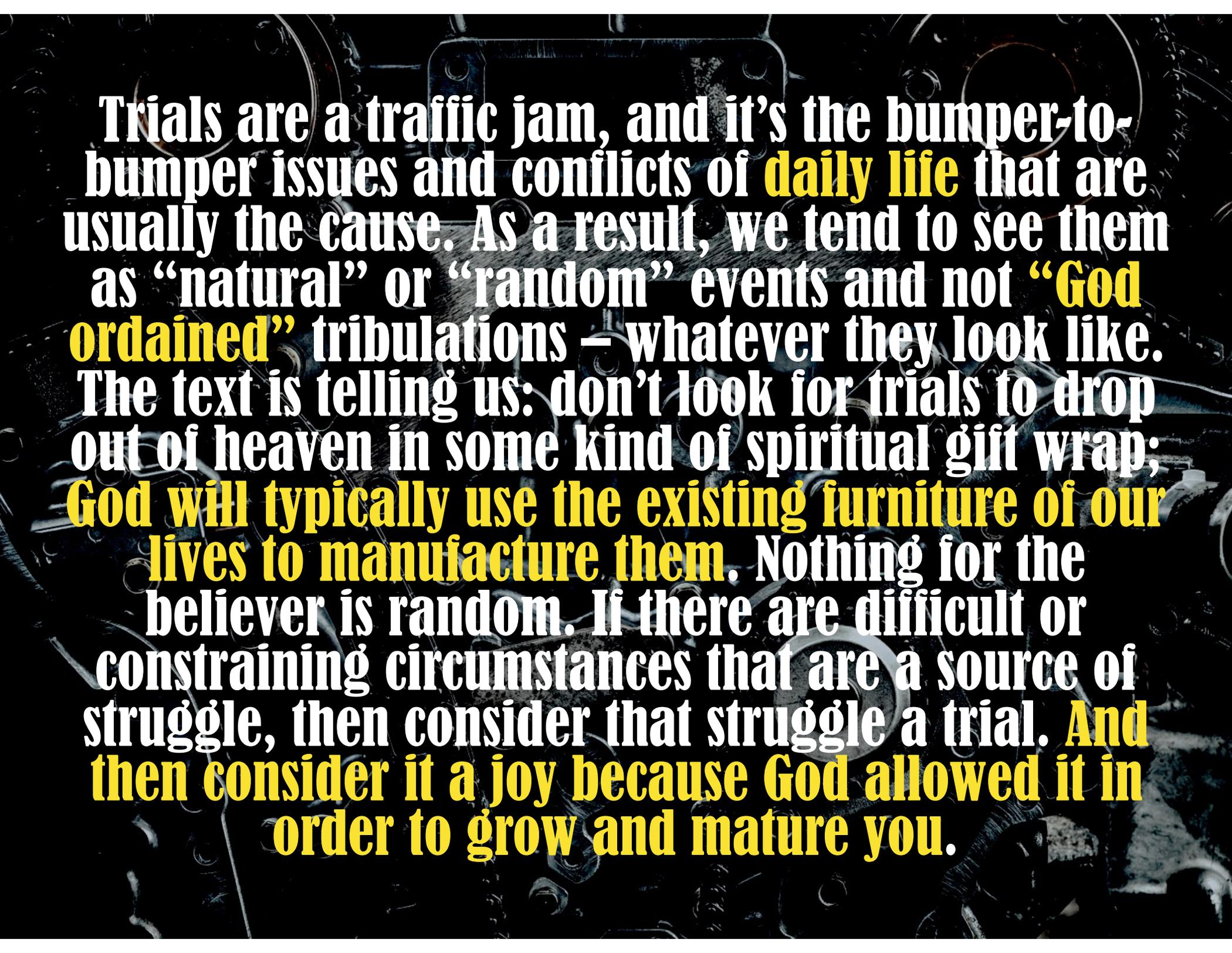
endurance



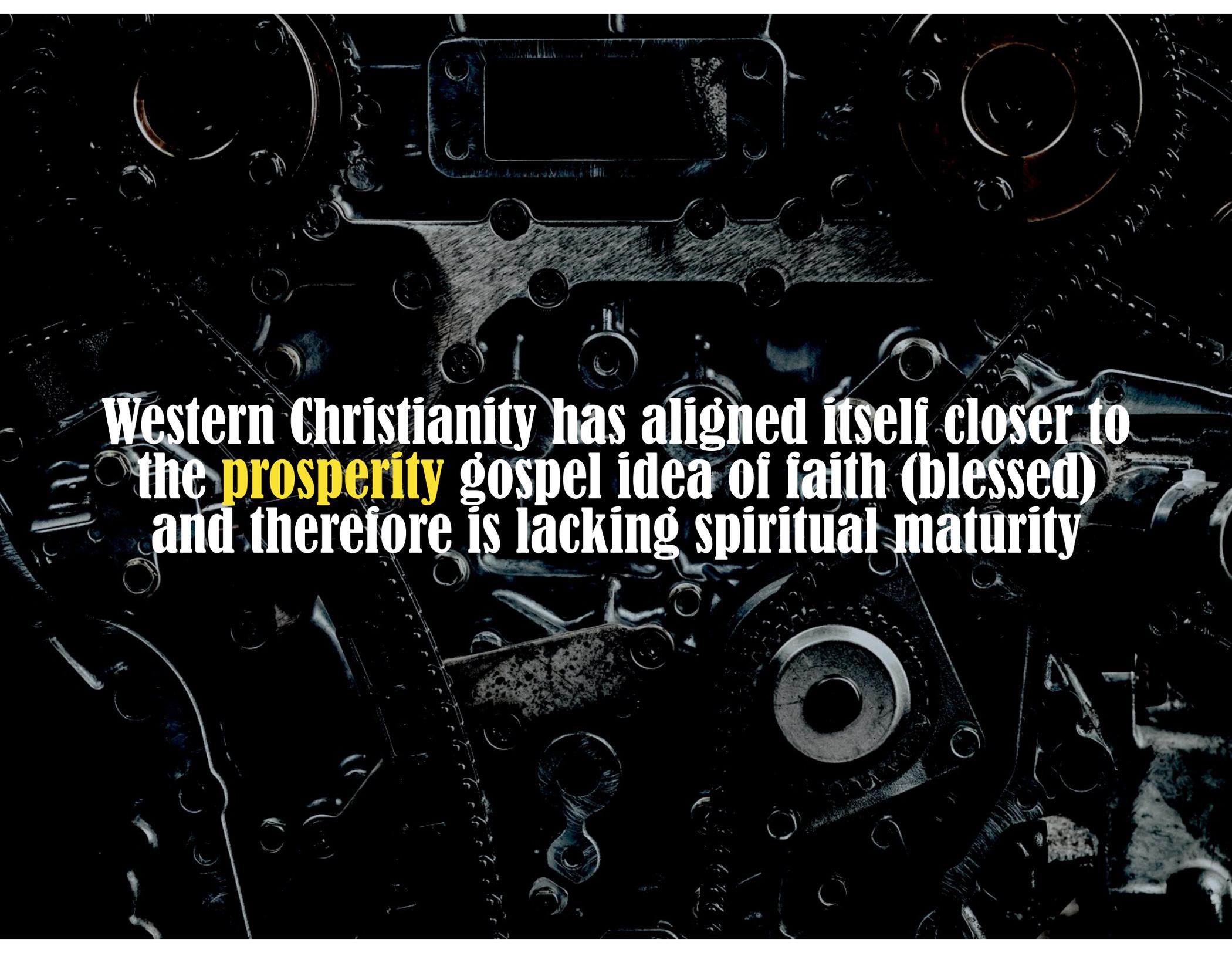
mature

result

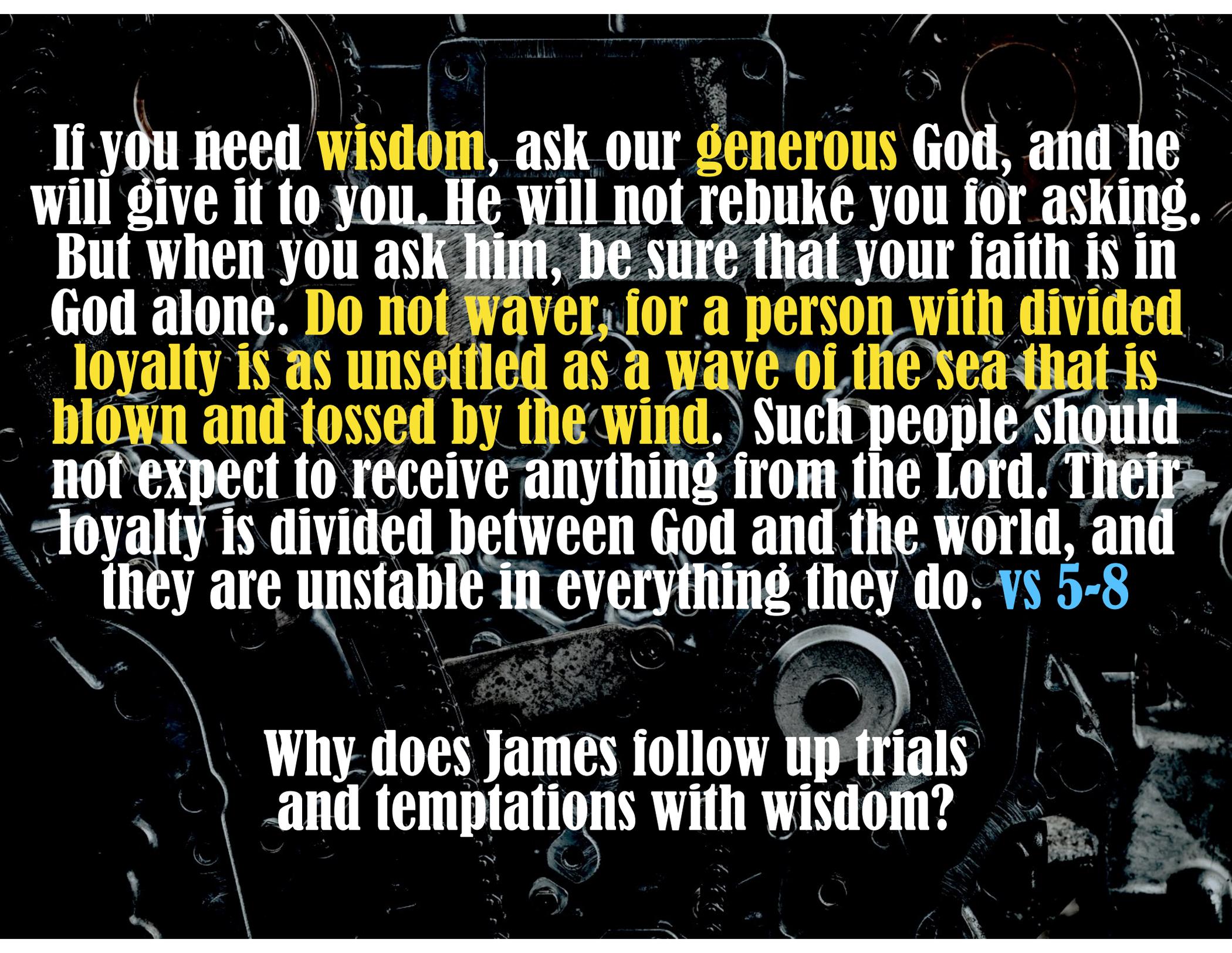
Revealing of our heart



Trials are a traffic jam, and it's the bumper-to-bumper issues and conflicts of **daily life that are usually the cause. As a result, we tend to see them as "natural" or "random" events and not "**God ordained**" tribulations – whatever they look like. The text is telling us: don't look for trials to drop out of heaven in some kind of spiritual gift wrap; **God will typically use the existing furniture of our lives to manufacture them.** Nothing for the believer is random. If there are difficult or constraining circumstances that are a source of struggle, then consider that struggle a trial. **And then consider it a joy because God allowed it in order to grow and mature you.****

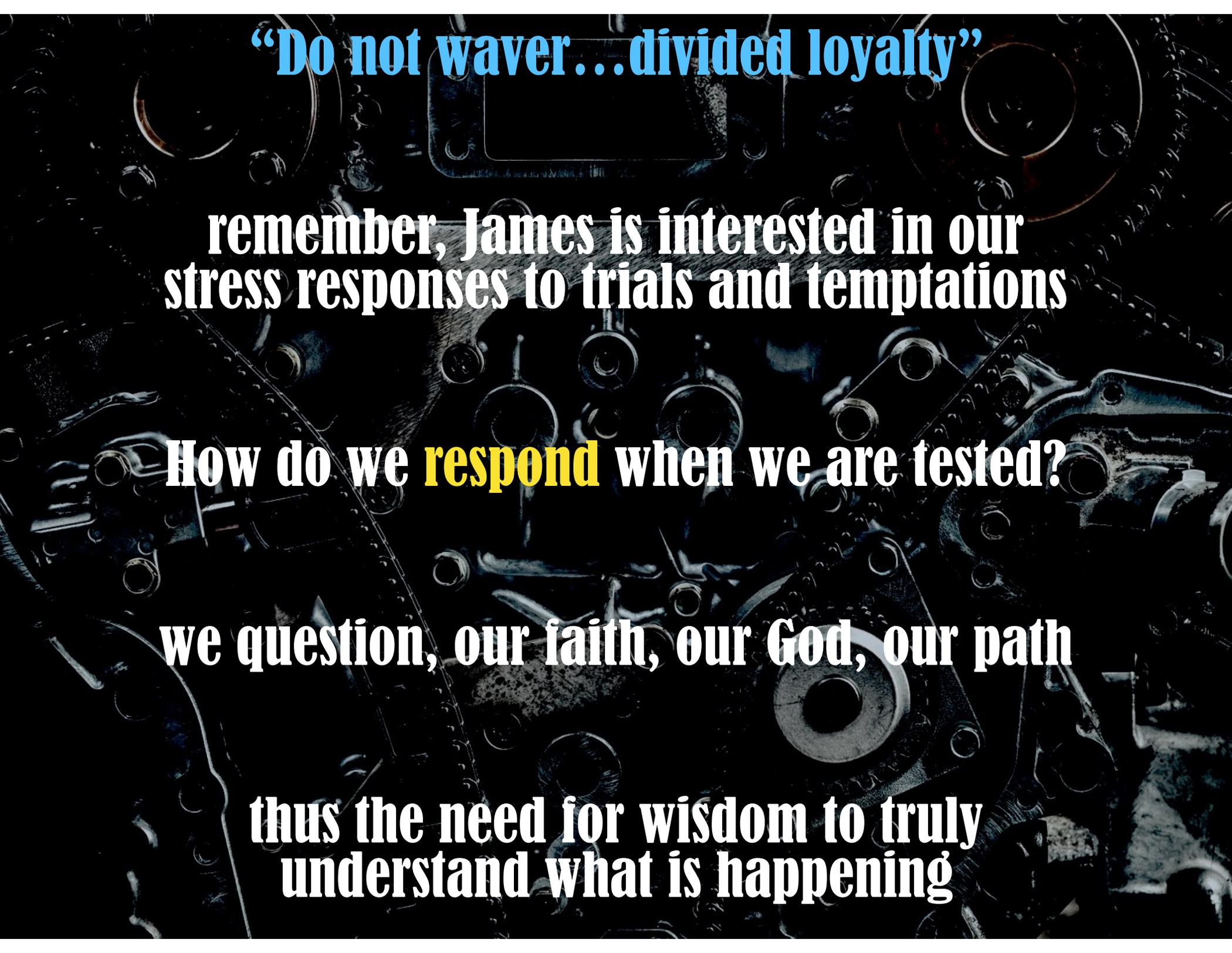


Western Christianity has aligned itself closer to the **prosperity** gospel idea of faith (blessed) and therefore is lacking spiritual maturity



If you need **wisdom**, ask our **generous** God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. **Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind.** Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Their loyalty is divided between God and the world, and they are unstable in everything they do. **vs 5-8**

Why does James follow up trials and temptations with wisdom?



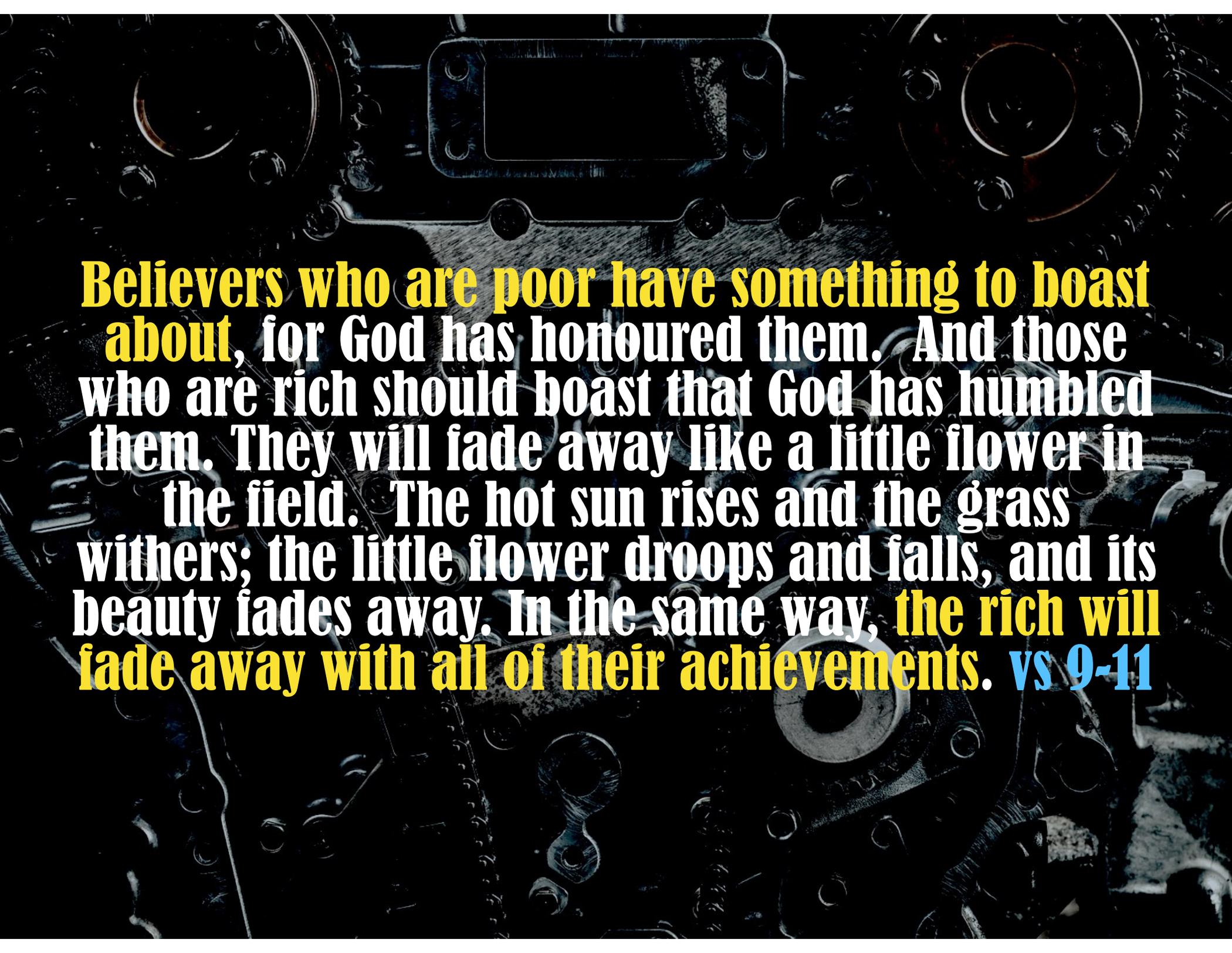
“Do not waver...divided loyalty”

**remember, James is interested in our
stress responses to trials and temptations**

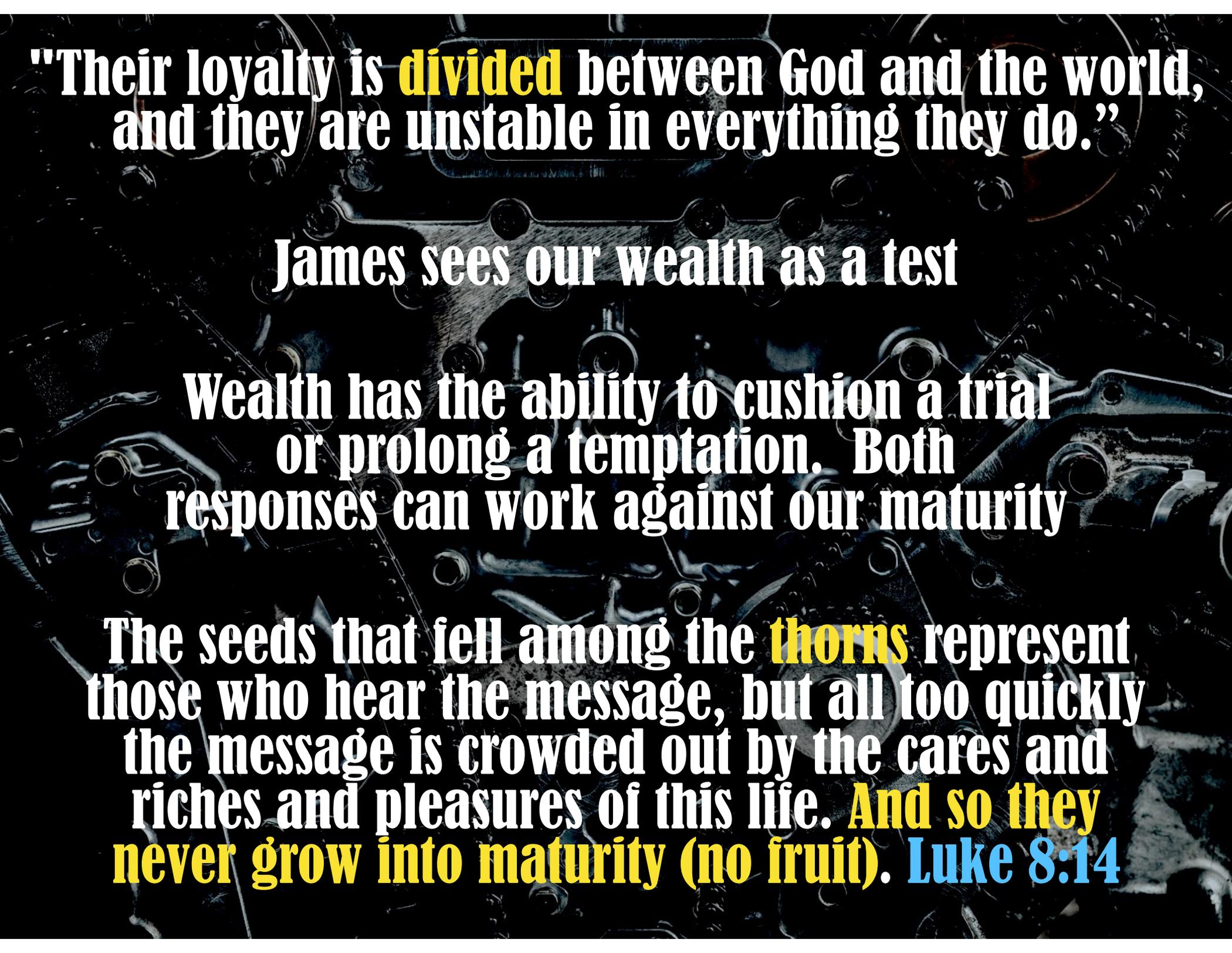
How do we **respond when we are tested?**

we question, our faith, our God, our path

**thus the need for wisdom to truly
understand what is happening**



Believers who are poor have something to boast about, for God has honoured them. And those who are rich should boast that God has humbled them. They will fade away like a little flower in the field. The hot sun rises and the grass withers; the little flower droops and falls, and its beauty fades away. In the same way, **the rich will fade away with all of their achievements.** vs 9-11

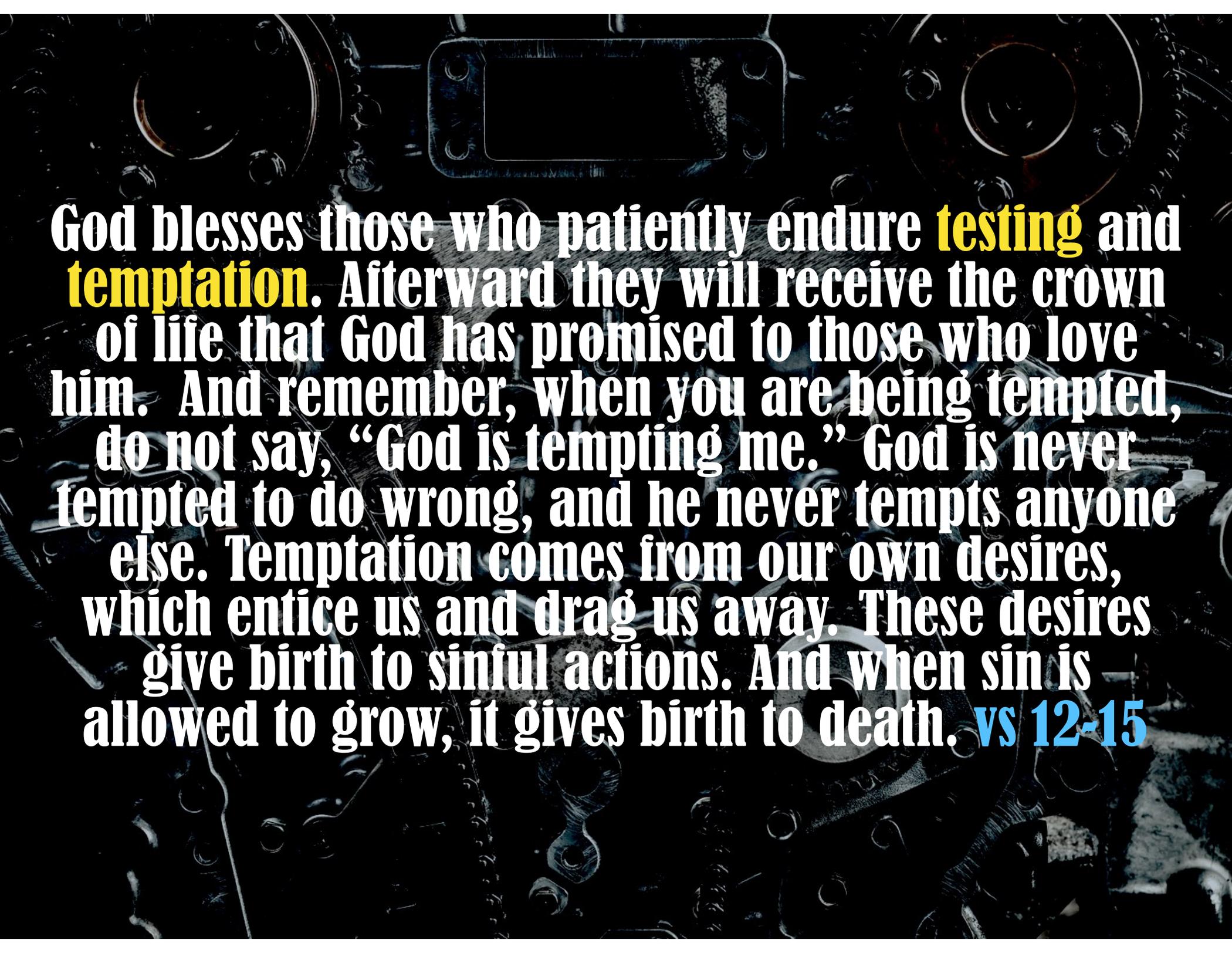


"Their loyalty is **divided between God and the world, and they are unstable in everything they do."**

James sees our wealth as a test

Wealth has the ability to cushion a trial or prolong a temptation. Both responses can work against our maturity

The seeds that fell among the **thorns represent those who hear the message, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the cares and riches and pleasures of this life. **And so they never grow into maturity (no fruit).** **Luke 8:14****



God blesses those who patiently endure **testing** and **temptation**. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, "God is tempting me." God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else. Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death. **vs 12-15**

Cycle of Death

what is good

desires



enticement

we give attention



drag/distance

sin moves us away from God



sinful actions

we act



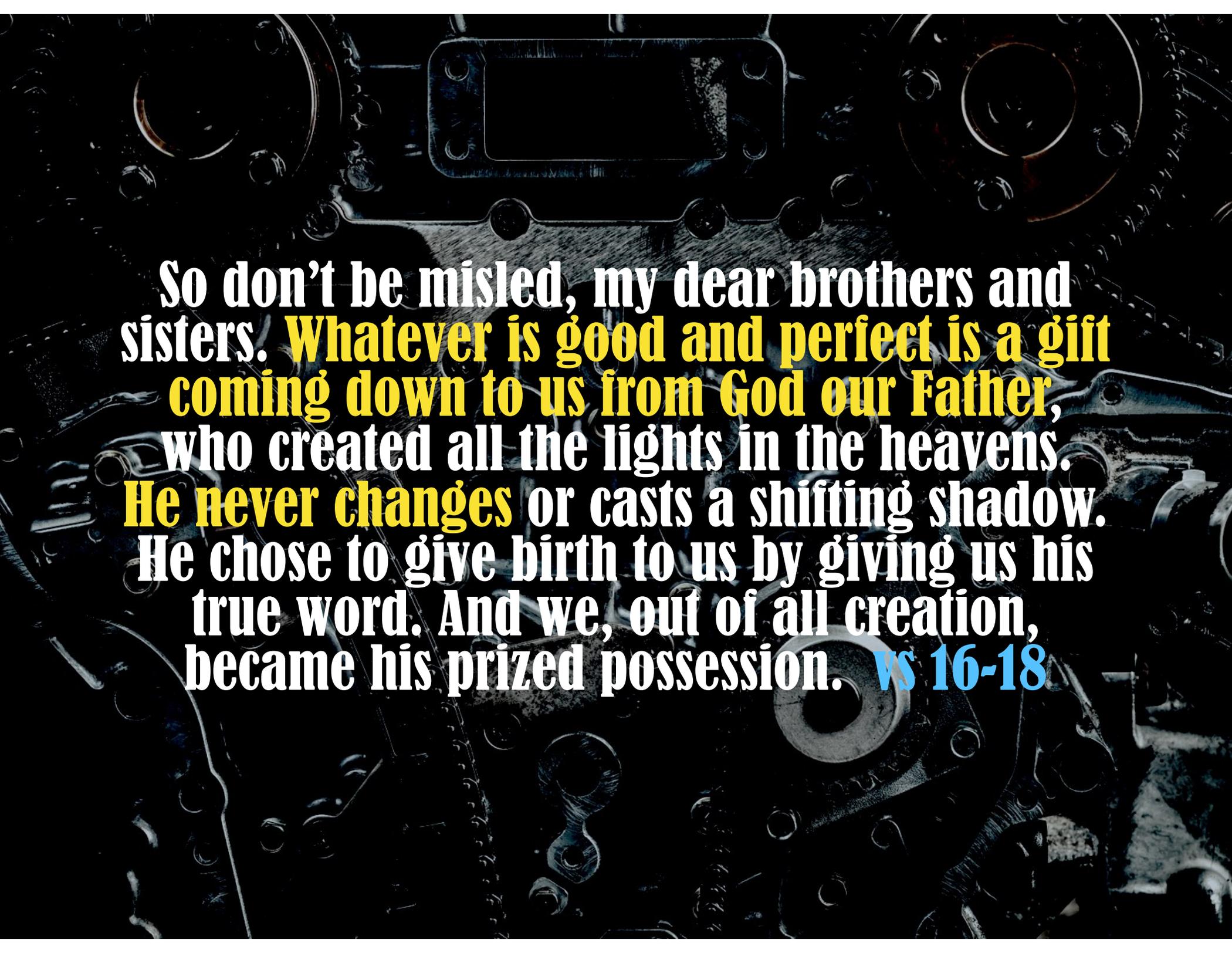
death

spiritual death

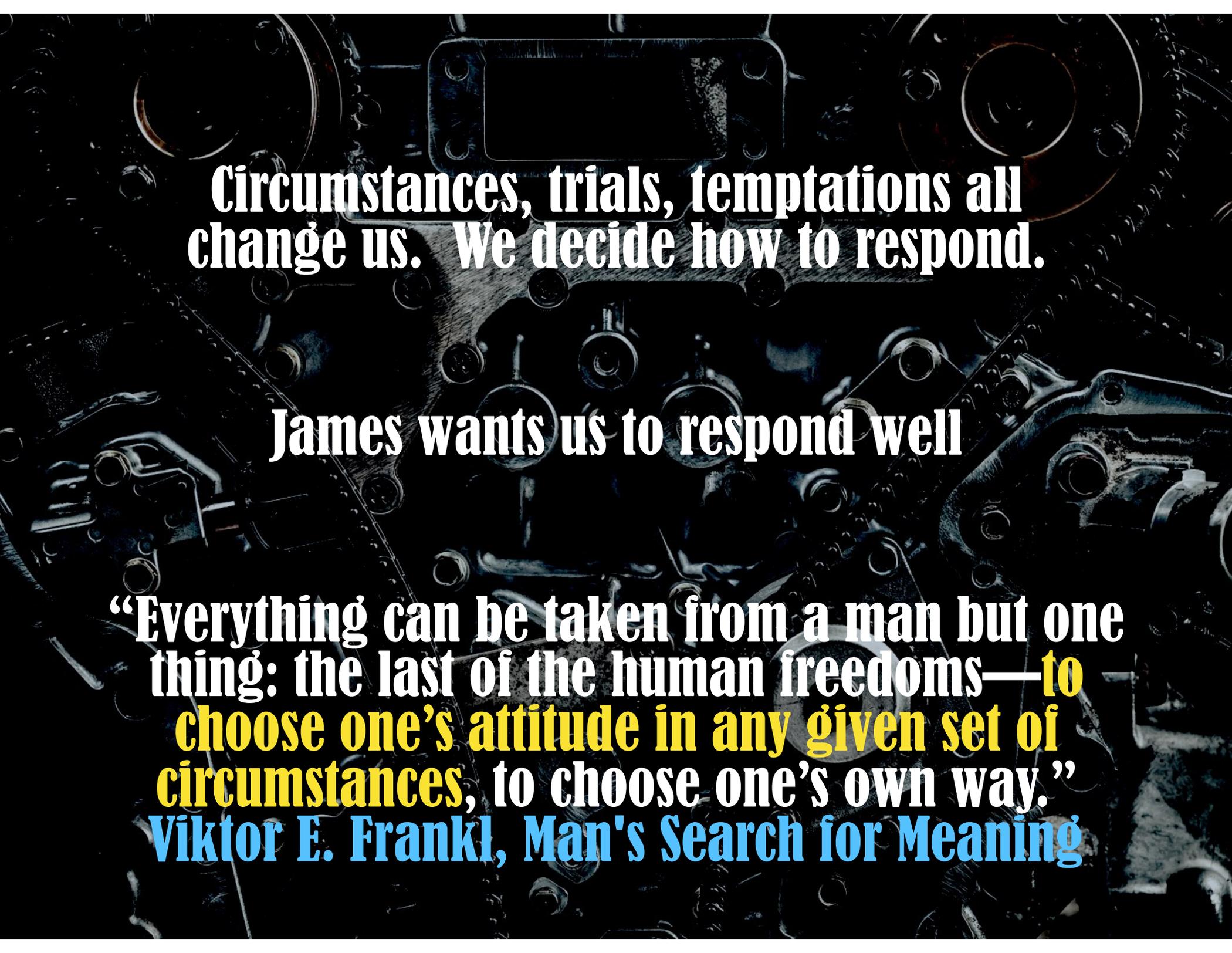


**One cycle starts with suffering
and leads to maturity**

**The other starts with pleasure
and leads to spiritual death**



So don't be misled, my dear brothers and sisters. **Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father,** who created all the lights in the heavens. **He never changes** or casts a shifting shadow. He chose to give birth to us by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession. **vs 16-18**

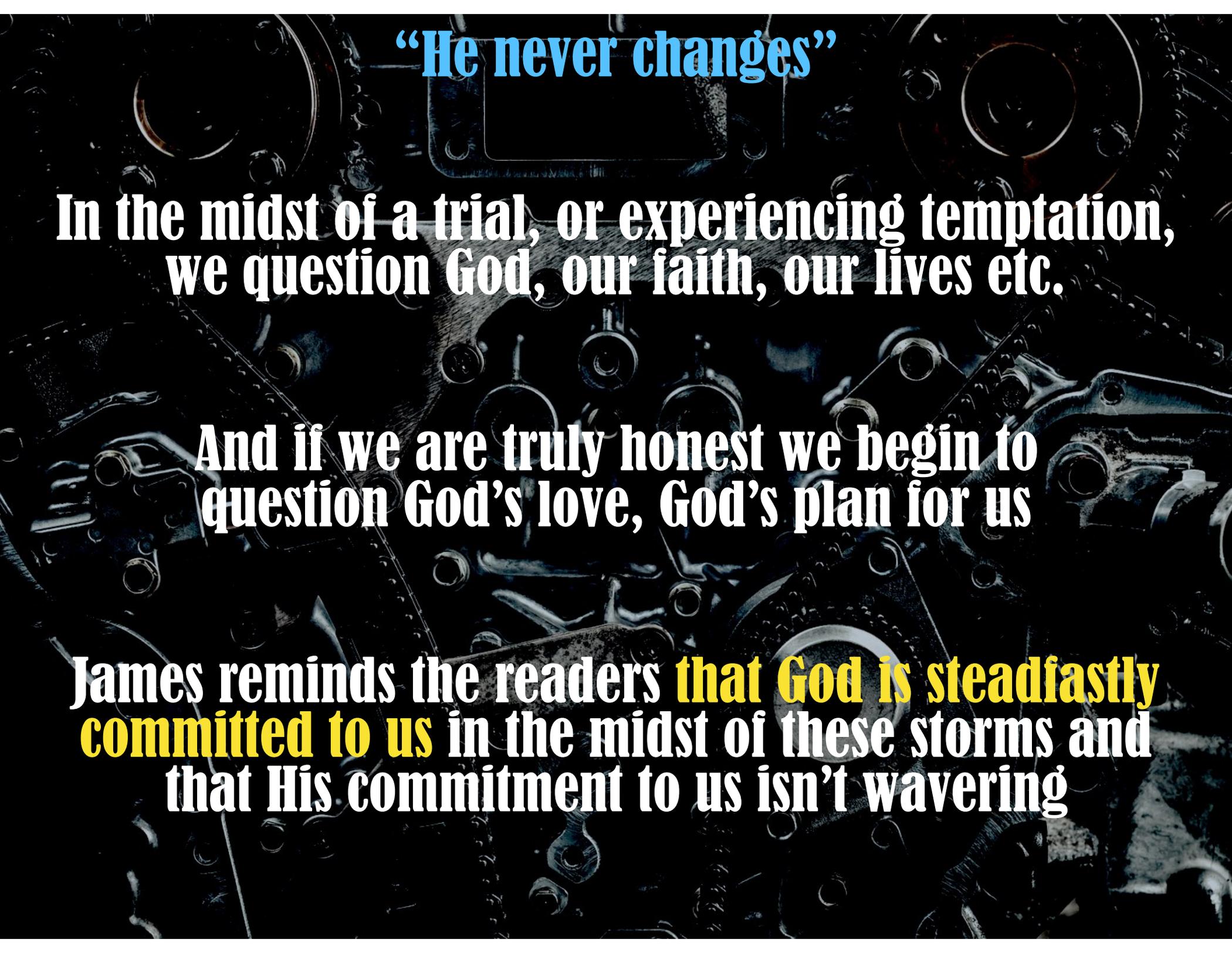


**Circumstances, trials, temptations all
change us. We decide how to respond.**

James wants us to respond well

**“Everything can be taken from a man but one
thing: the last of the human freedoms—to
choose one’s attitude in any given set of
circumstances, to choose one’s own way.”**

Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning

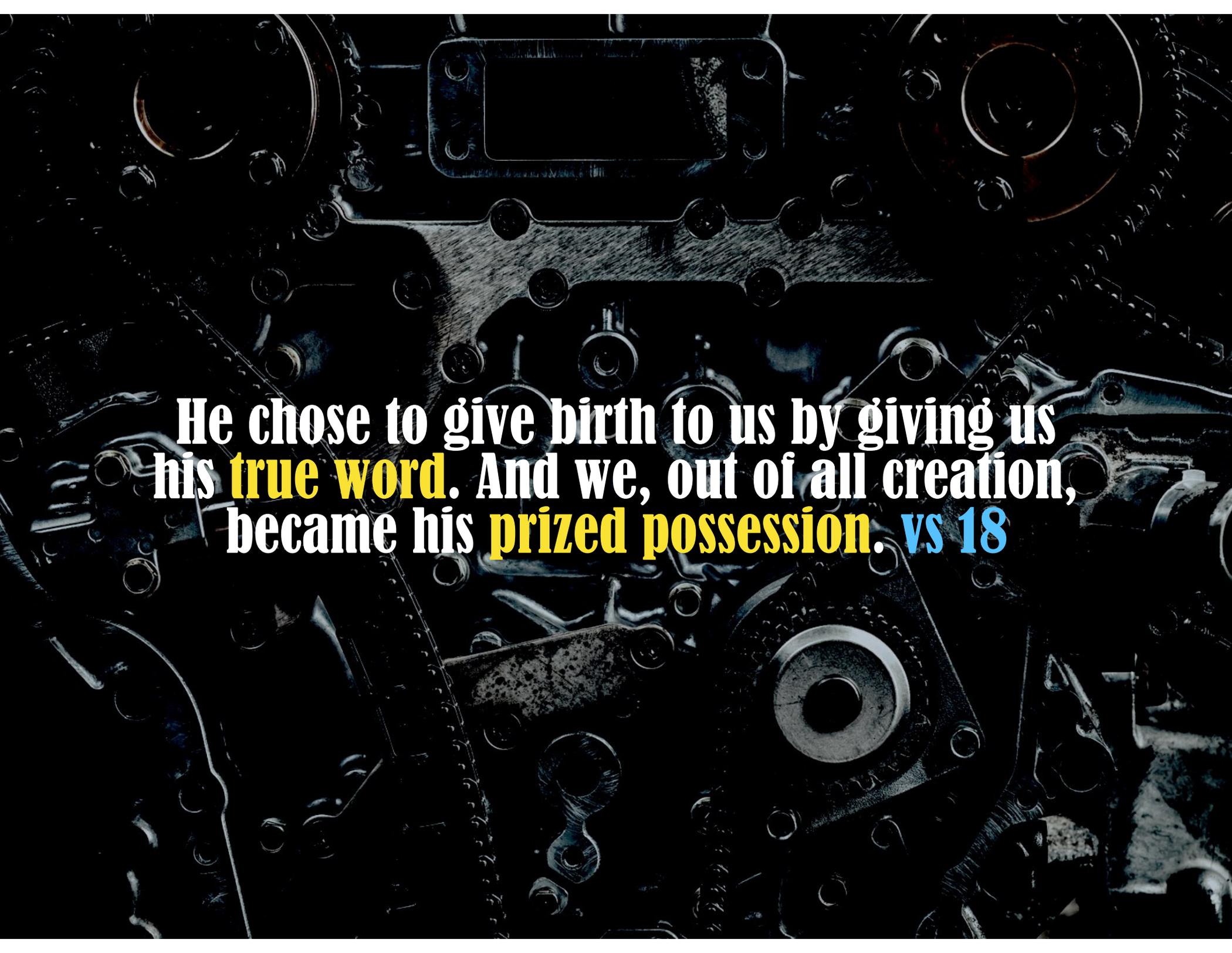


“He never changes”

**In the midst of a trial, or experiencing temptation,
we question God, our faith, our lives etc.**

**And if we are truly honest we begin to
question God’s love, God’s plan for us**

**James reminds the readers that God is steadfastly
committed to us in the midst of these storms and
that His commitment to us isn’t wavering**



He chose to give birth to us by giving us
his **true word**. And we, out of all creation,
became his **prized possession**. vs 18