

# Growing in Christ

January 14 - March 10

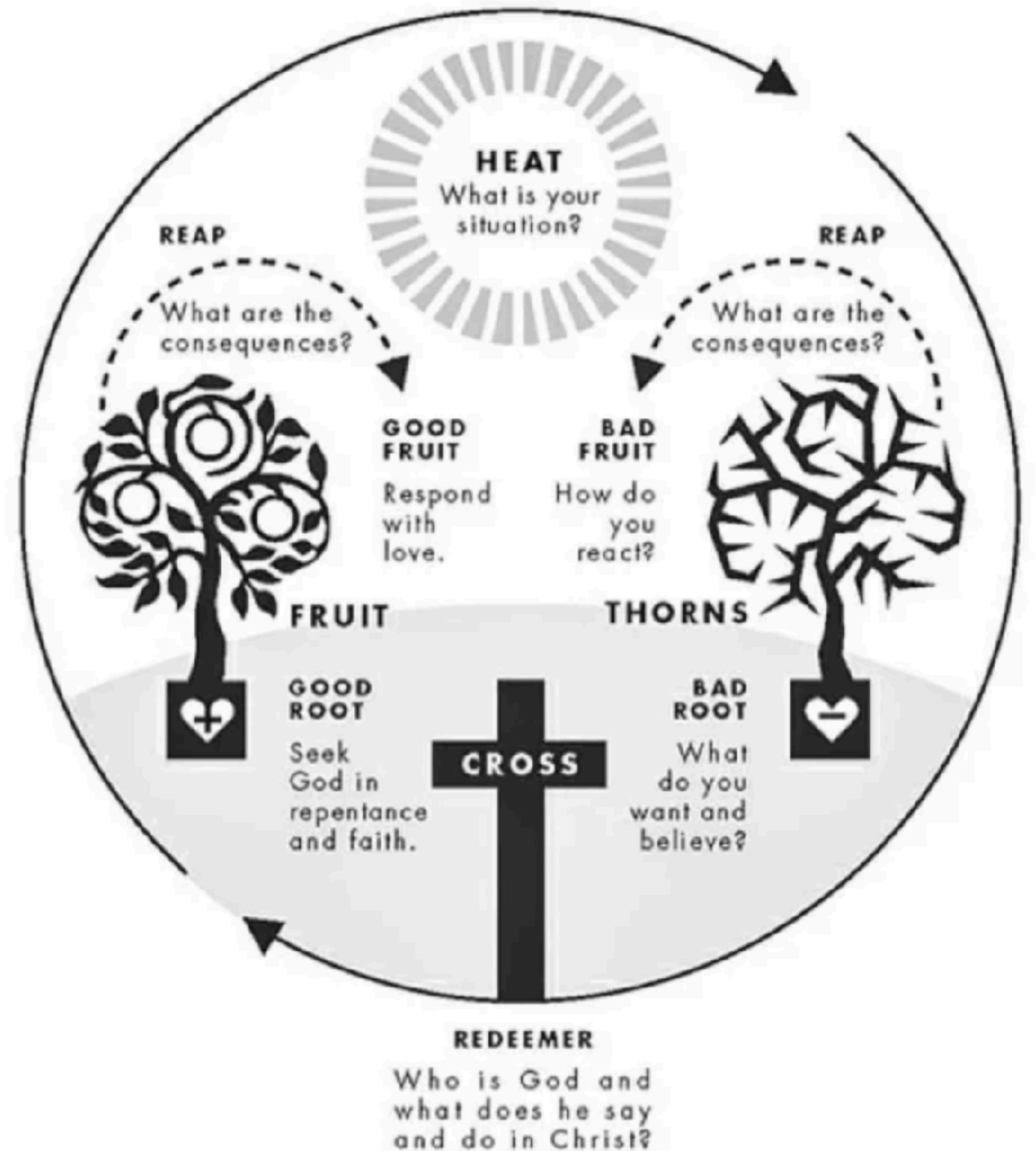


# Session 1: Beholding & Becoming



# Sessions 4 & 5

1. Heat
2. Thorns
3. Cross
4. Fruit



# IDOLS OF THE HEART

## Influences

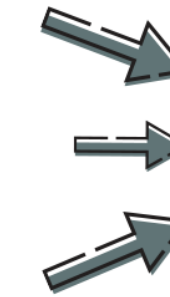
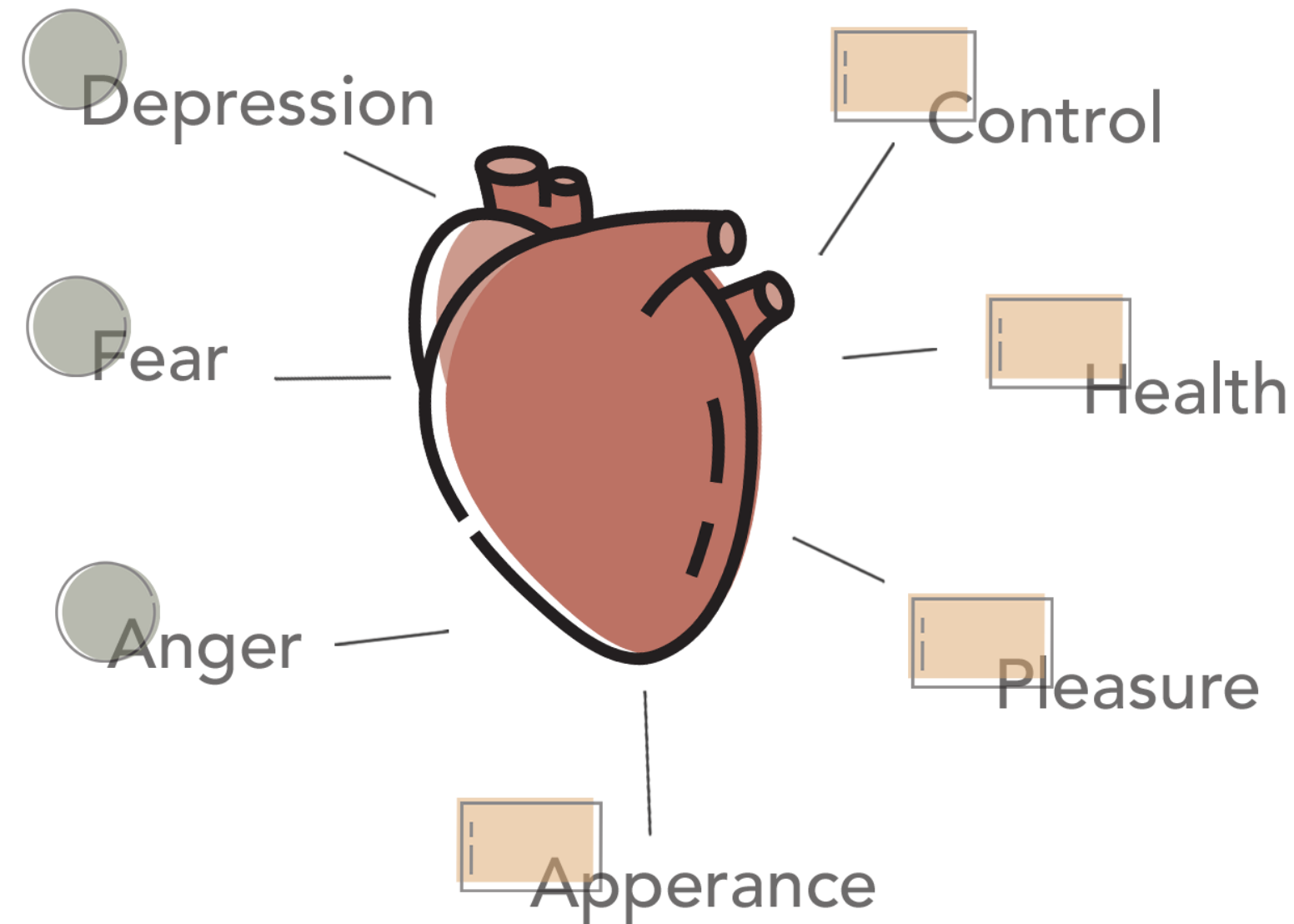
Sickness  
Finances  
Traffic  
People  
Job  
Satan



Idols



Emotions



## Behaviors

Sleeping  
Drugs/Alcohol  
Spending  
Exercise  
Injury  
Sex  
Hiding  
Exploding  
Religion  
Eating

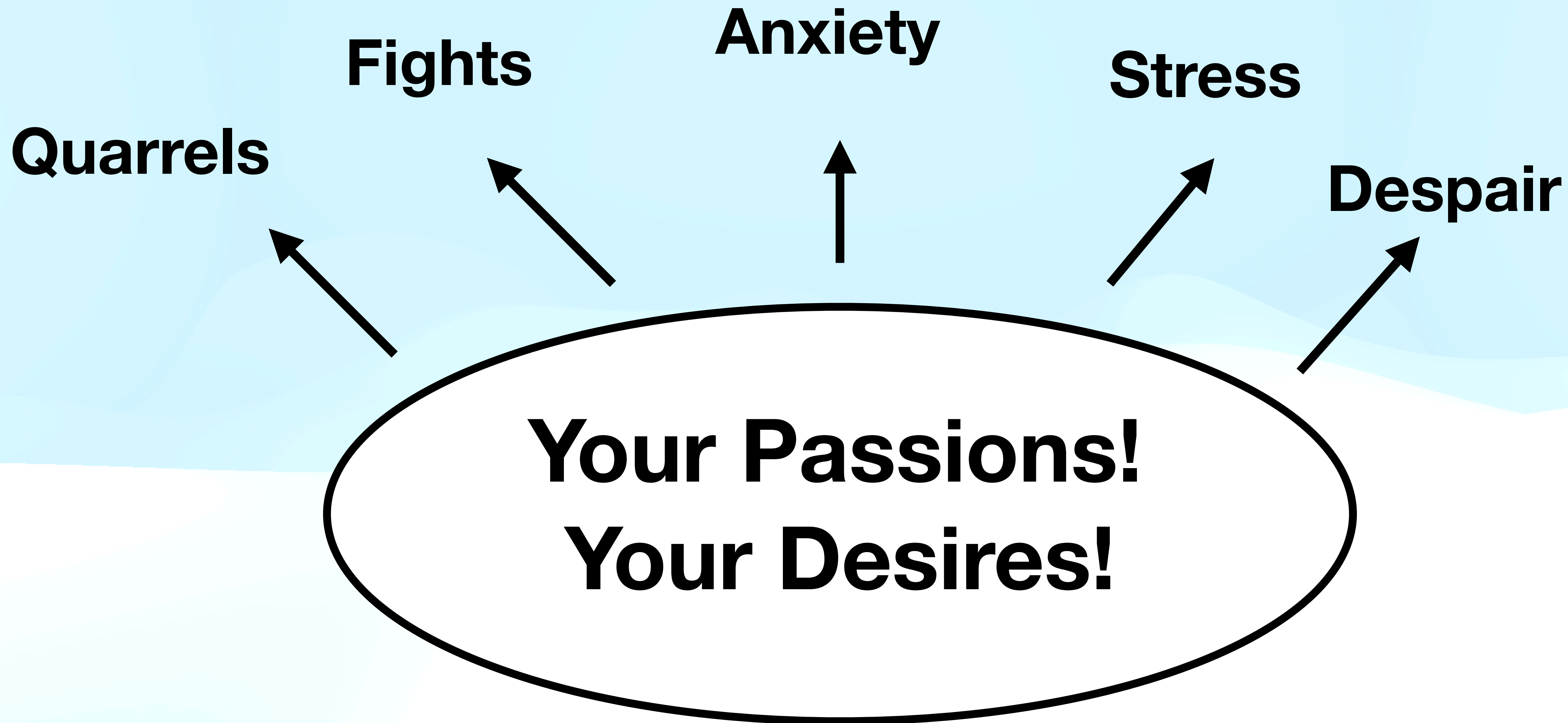
## How to identify idols?

1. I will sin if I don't get....
2. I will sin in order to get...
3. I need this...
4. I want this...
5. I must have this...
6. I have the right to...

**Jeremiah 17:5-10, Ezekiel 14:1-11 & 37:26-27, 1 Corinthians 10:1-14**



# Session 6: Spiritual Disciplines

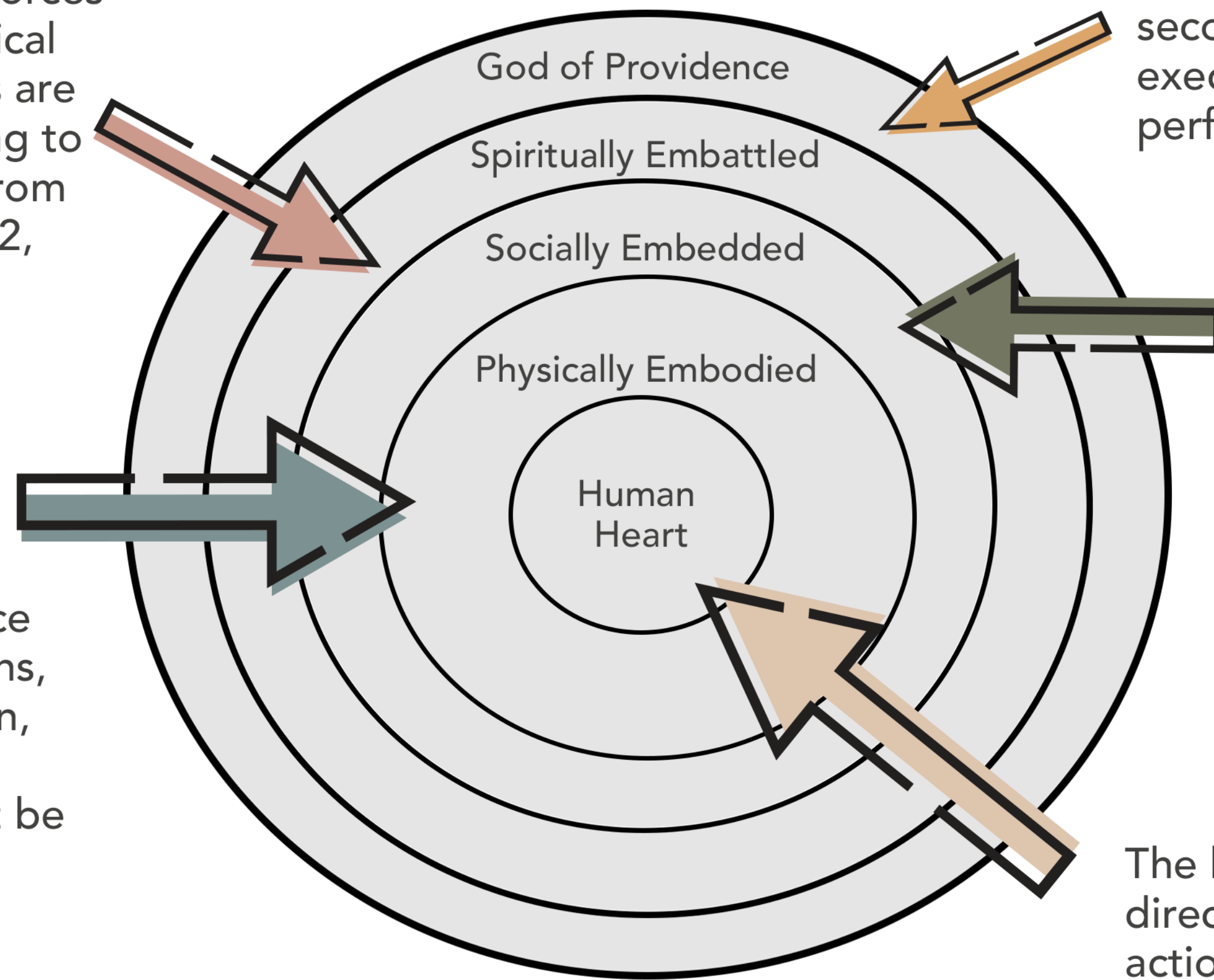


**James 4:1a**

# INFLUENCES ON THE HEART

There are spiritual forces at work in the physical world. The enemies are hard at work seeking to influence us away from God. Ephesians 6:12, 1 Peter 5:8

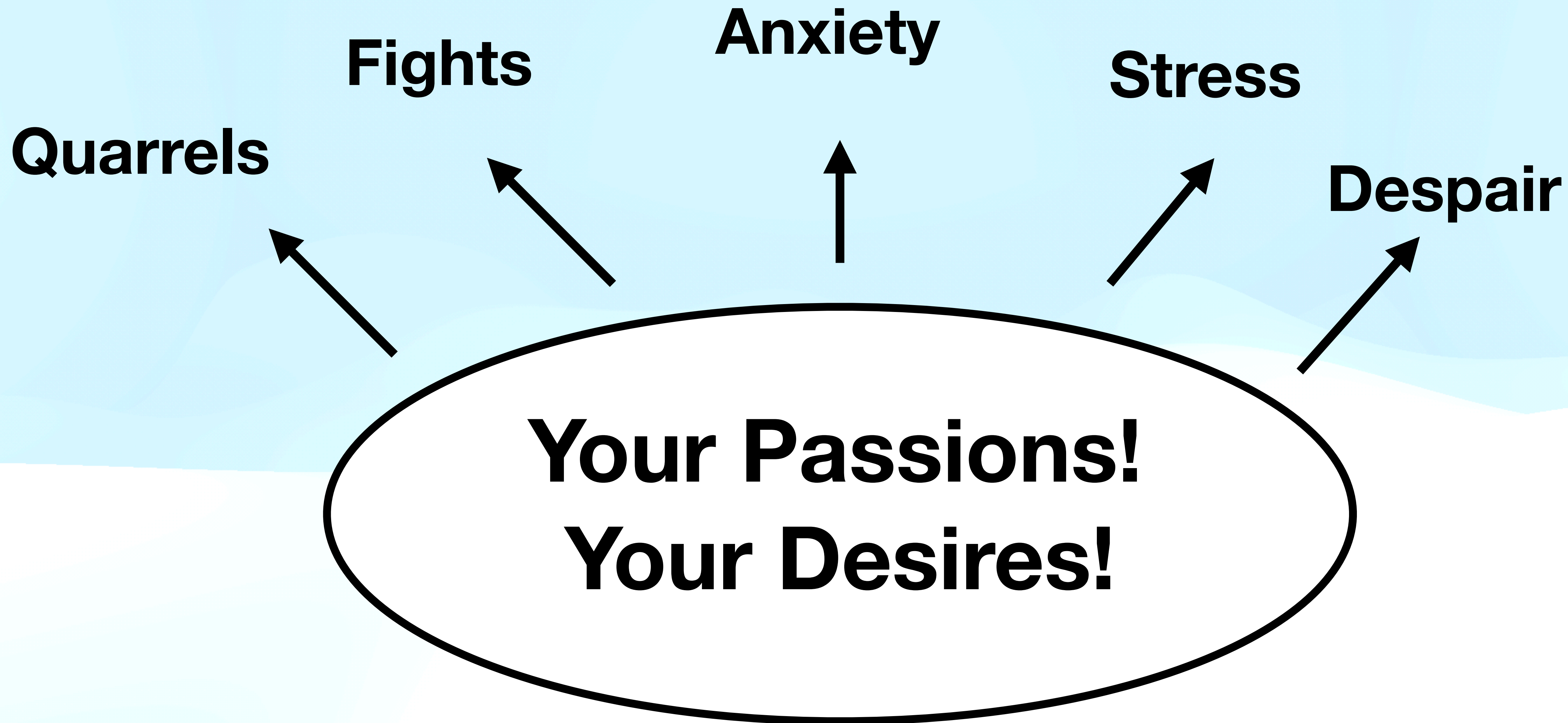
Our hearts exist in a decaying, aging, and imperfect body. Our fallen bodies experience forgetfulness, joint pains, menopause, depression, cancer, etc. There is weakness that may not be connected to sin.



God works through all secondary causes to execute his good and perfect will.

Our responses are impacted by our situation and story. Past experiences have present influence. The past does not determine our response, but it influences how we think and what we choose.

The heart is the center of human direction, behavior, thoughts, actions, and motivations. Proverbs 4:23, Matthew 15:18

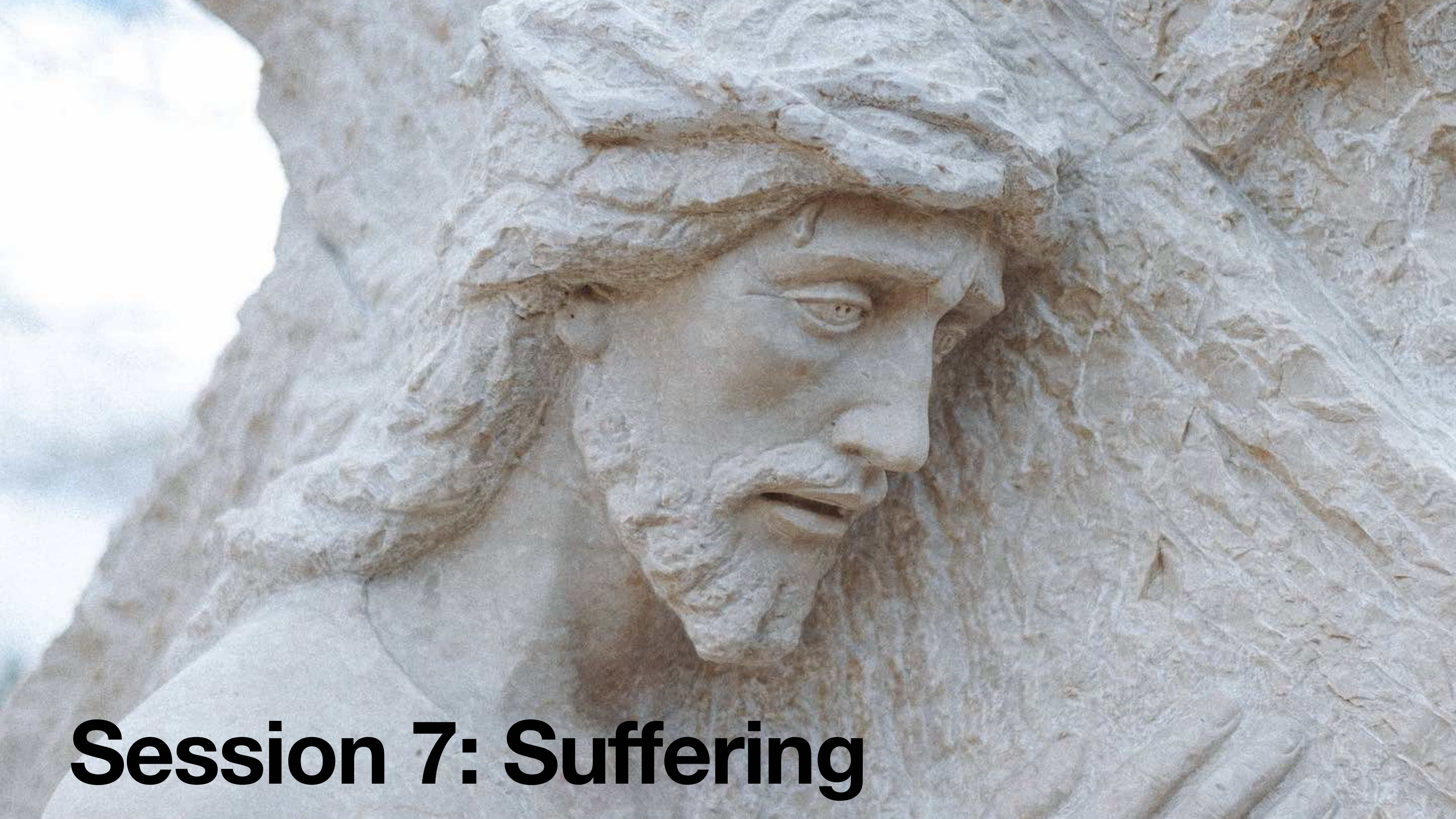


**James 4:1a**



“I have been ***crucified with Christ***. It is ***no longer I who live***, but ***Christ who lives in me***. And the life I now live in the flesh I live ***by faith in the Son of God***, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

**Galatians 2:20**



# **Session 7: Suffering**

“For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him **but also suffer for his sake...**”

**Philippians 1:29**



“For ***to this you have been called***, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.”

**1 Peter 2:21**

“that no one be moved by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that ***we are destined for this.***”

**1 Thes 3:3**

# 1. God's Good Design for Suffering



“People are not prepared or able to rejoice in suffering unless they experience *a massive biblical revolution of how they think and feel about the meaning of life.*

Human nature and American culture make it impossible to rejoice in suffering. This is a miracle in the human soul wrought by God through his Word.”

**John Piper**







**God's Good Design**

**James 1: Refinement**



**God's Good Design**

**John 11: Belief**

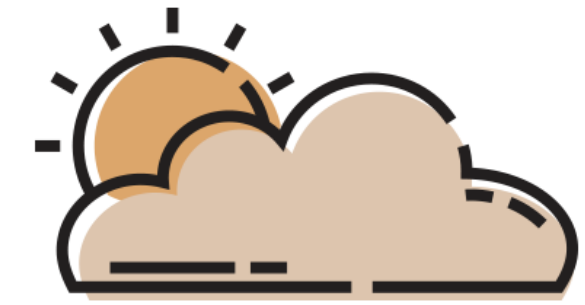
A photograph of two women sitting on a brown couch. The woman on the left has long red hair in a ponytail, is wearing a plaid scarf, and has her head bowed with her hands clasped in prayer. The woman on the right has blonde hair and is wearing a grey patterned sweater, covering her face with her hands as if crying. The background shows a window with blinds and a green wall.

**God's Good Design**

**2 Cor 1: Outfitting**

# DEPRESSION STAIRCASE

Matthew 11:28-30



**Renewed thought**

"God is wise and He has a good plan for me, even if I never find someone."

**Renewed thought**

"God is loving and He is always with me."

**Philippians 4:8**  
**2 Corinthians 10:3-5**  
**Romans 12:1-2**

**Thought**

"I don't want to be alone."



**Unbiblical thoughts rule mind**

"I am always going to be alone."



**Deep depression**

**Thoughts go deeper**

"Everyone else has someone but me."

**Thought**

"I really don't want to be alone."

# EIGHT GOSPEL THOUGHTS

## Gospel Thought #8

"True joy arises from a heart of love and forgiveness."

**2 Corinthians 2:3**

## Gospel Thought #7

"Absorbing pain and suffering is a means of knowing Christ more."

**Philippians 3:10**

## Gospel Thought #6

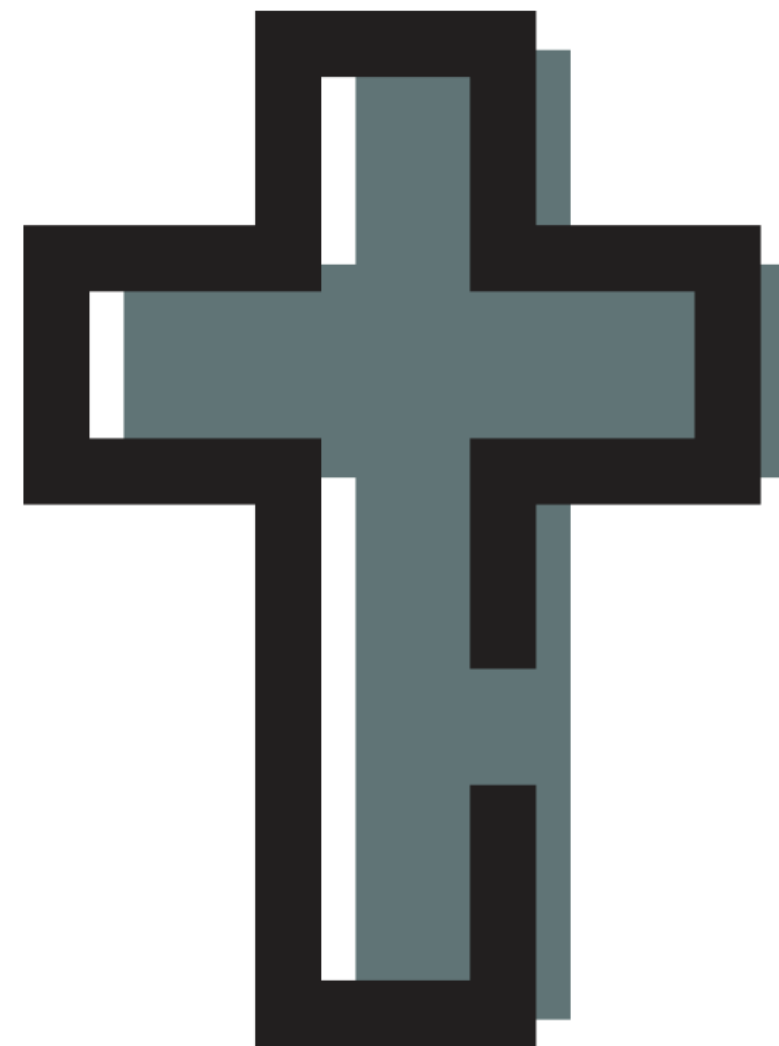
"Forgiveness is costly/suffering."

**Ephesians 1:7**

## Gospel Thought #1

"Christ has suffered as I am suffering right now infinitely more so, which means I am never alone in any pain."

**Isaiah 53:4, Hebrews 4:15**



## Gospel Thought #5

"Christ has accomplished my forgiveness and justification at the cross."

**Ephesians 1:7, Matthew 18:32**

## Gospel Thought #2

"Sometimes God purposes that those whom He loves deeply be painfully sinned against."

**Matthew 3:17, Acts 2:23**

## Gospel Thought #3

"God the Father can be trusted completely on the receiving end of my wrongdoing."

**1 Peter 2:23**

## Gospel Thought #4

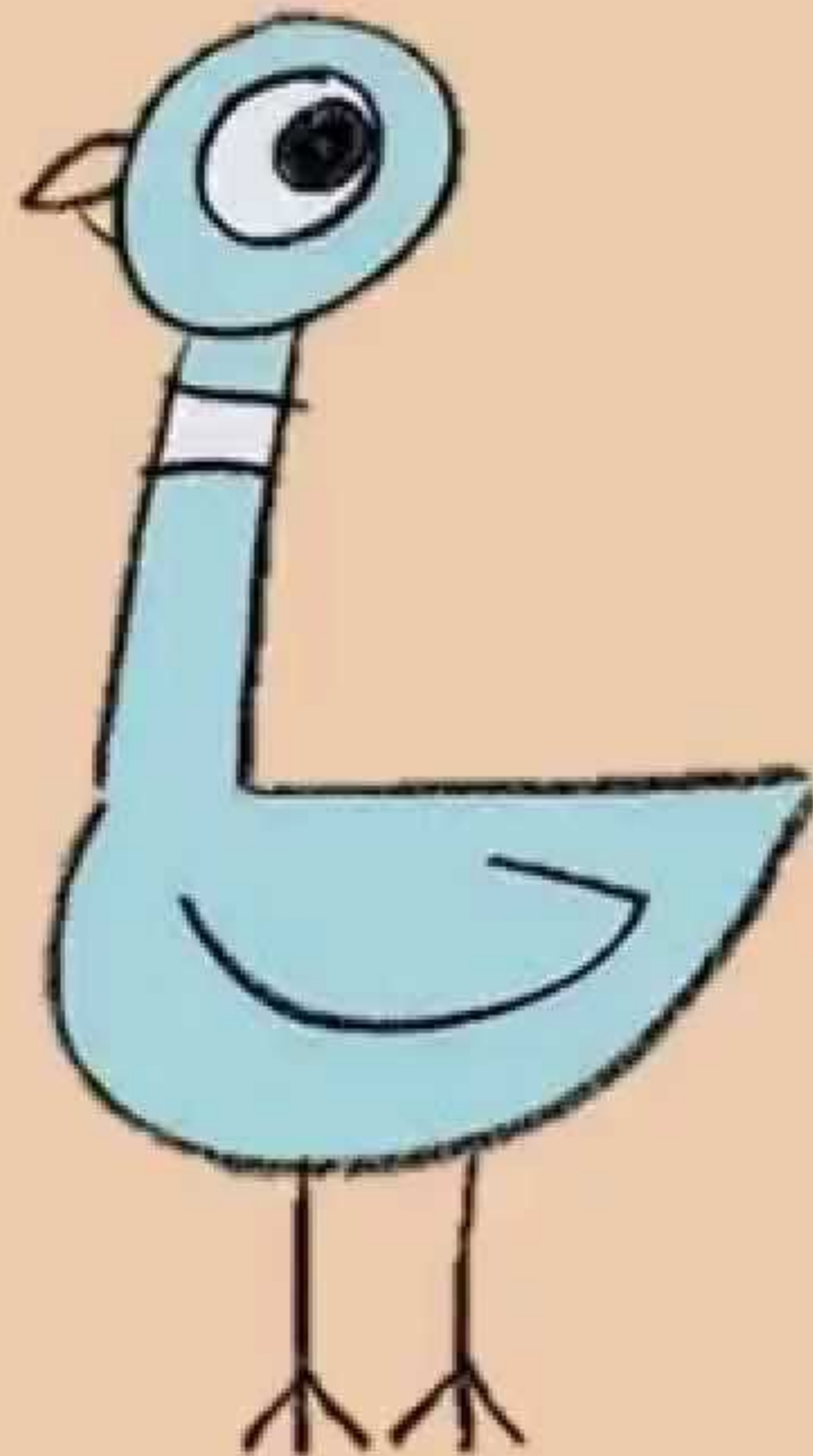
"I have committed greater sins against God than any person has ever committed against me."

**Matthew 7:3, Isaiah 53:5**



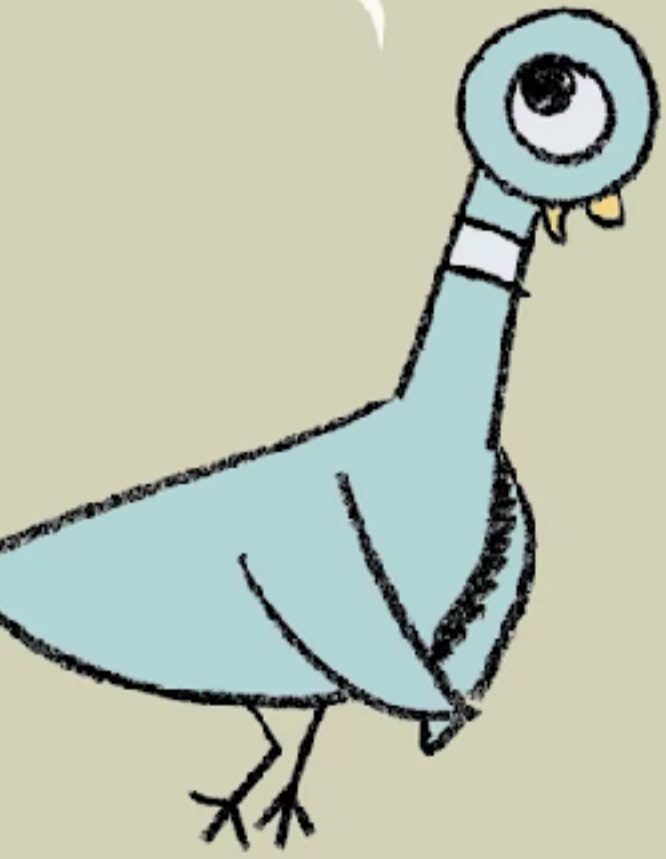
# **Session 8: Decision Making & Daily Living**

Don't  
Let the  
Pigeon  
Drive  
the  
Bus!

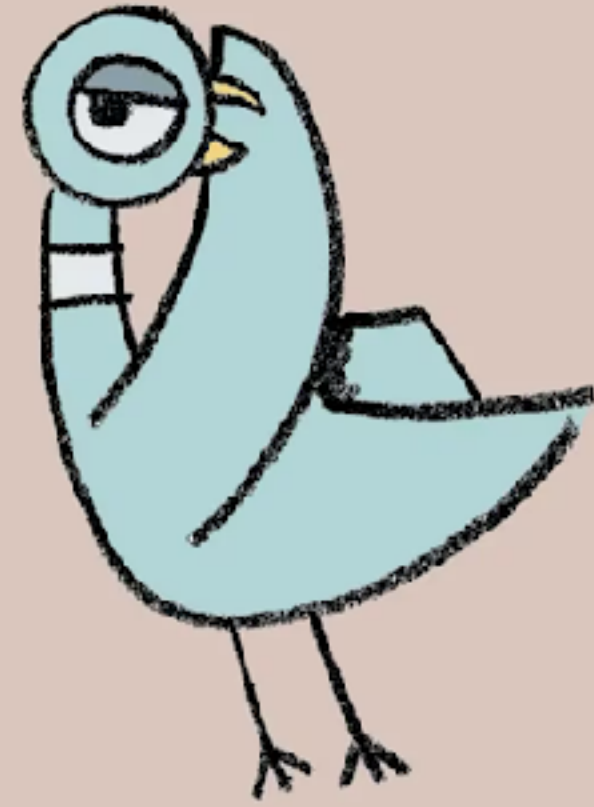


by mo willems

I'll be your best friend!



How 'bout I give you five bucks?



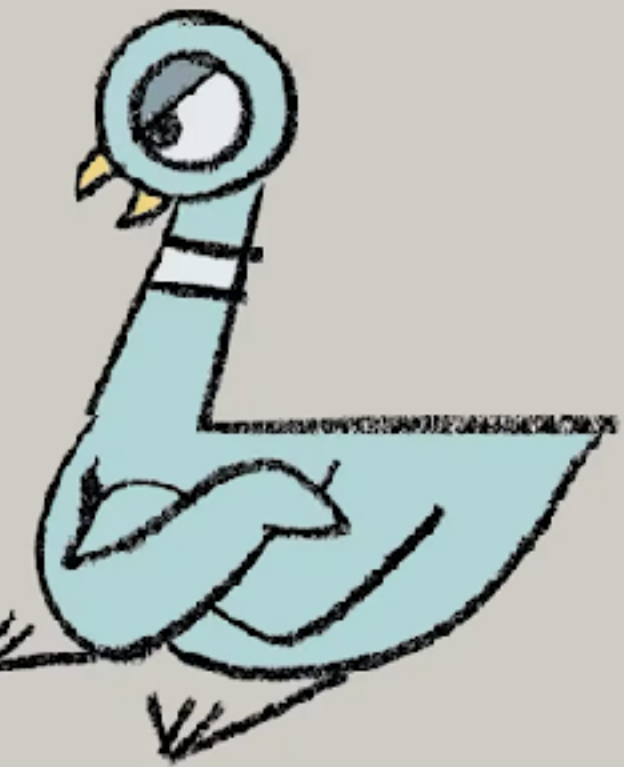
What's the big deal!?



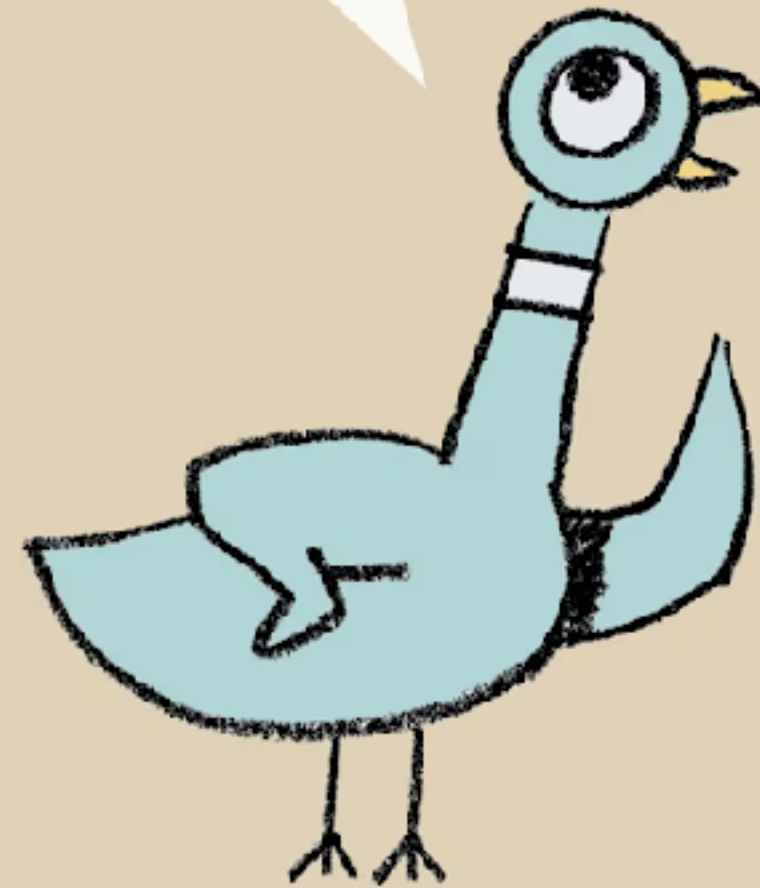
It's just a bus!!!



No fair!



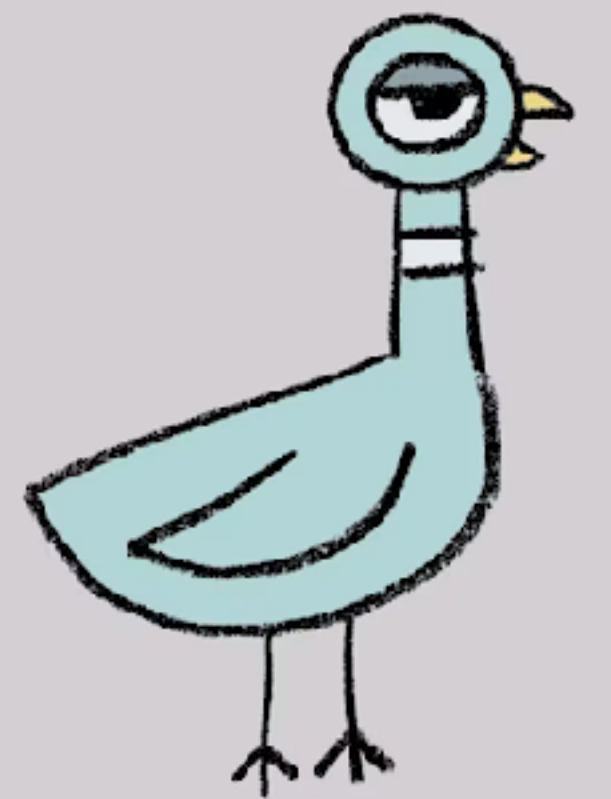
I bet your mom would let me.



I have dreams, you know!



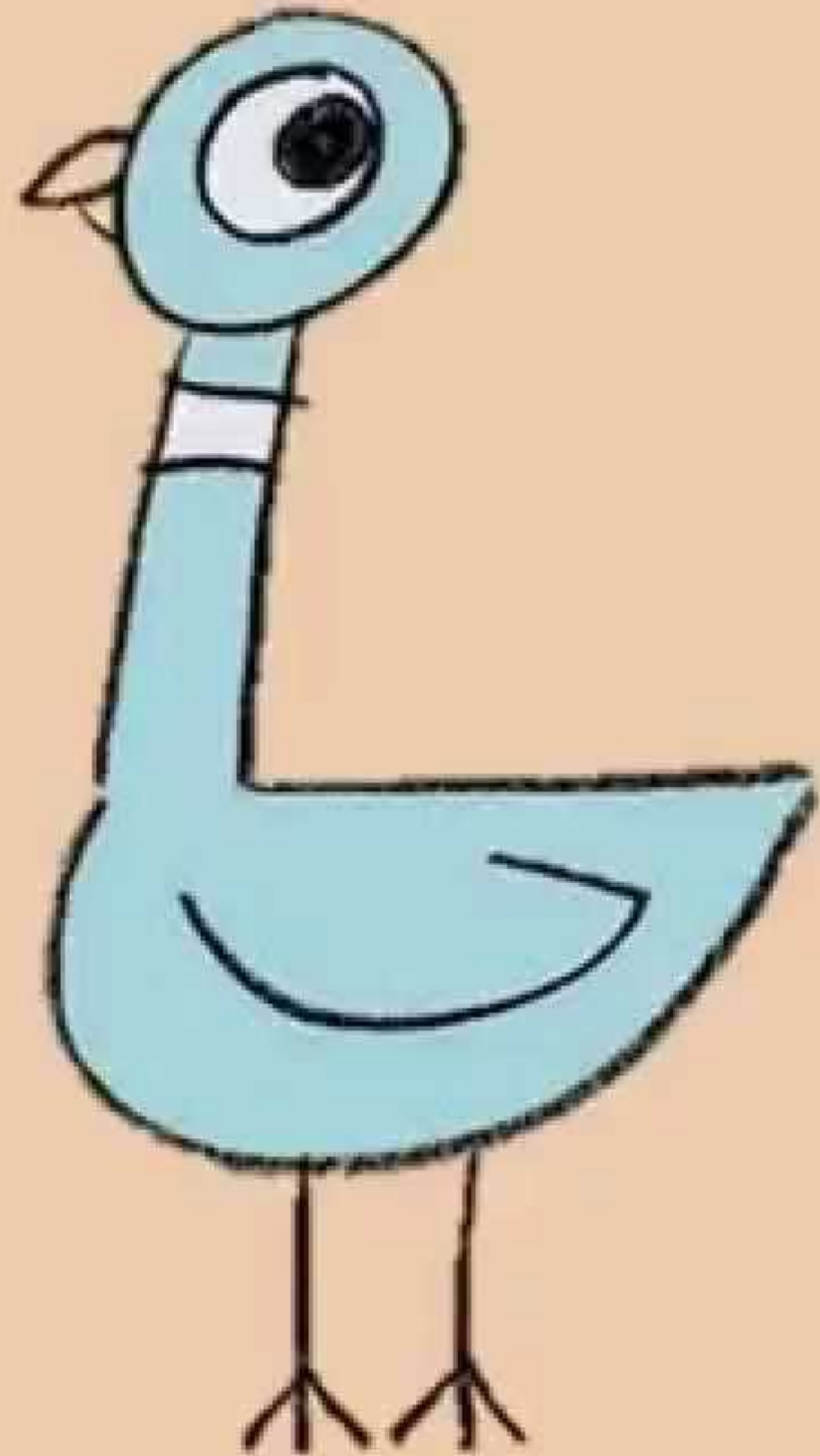
Fine.



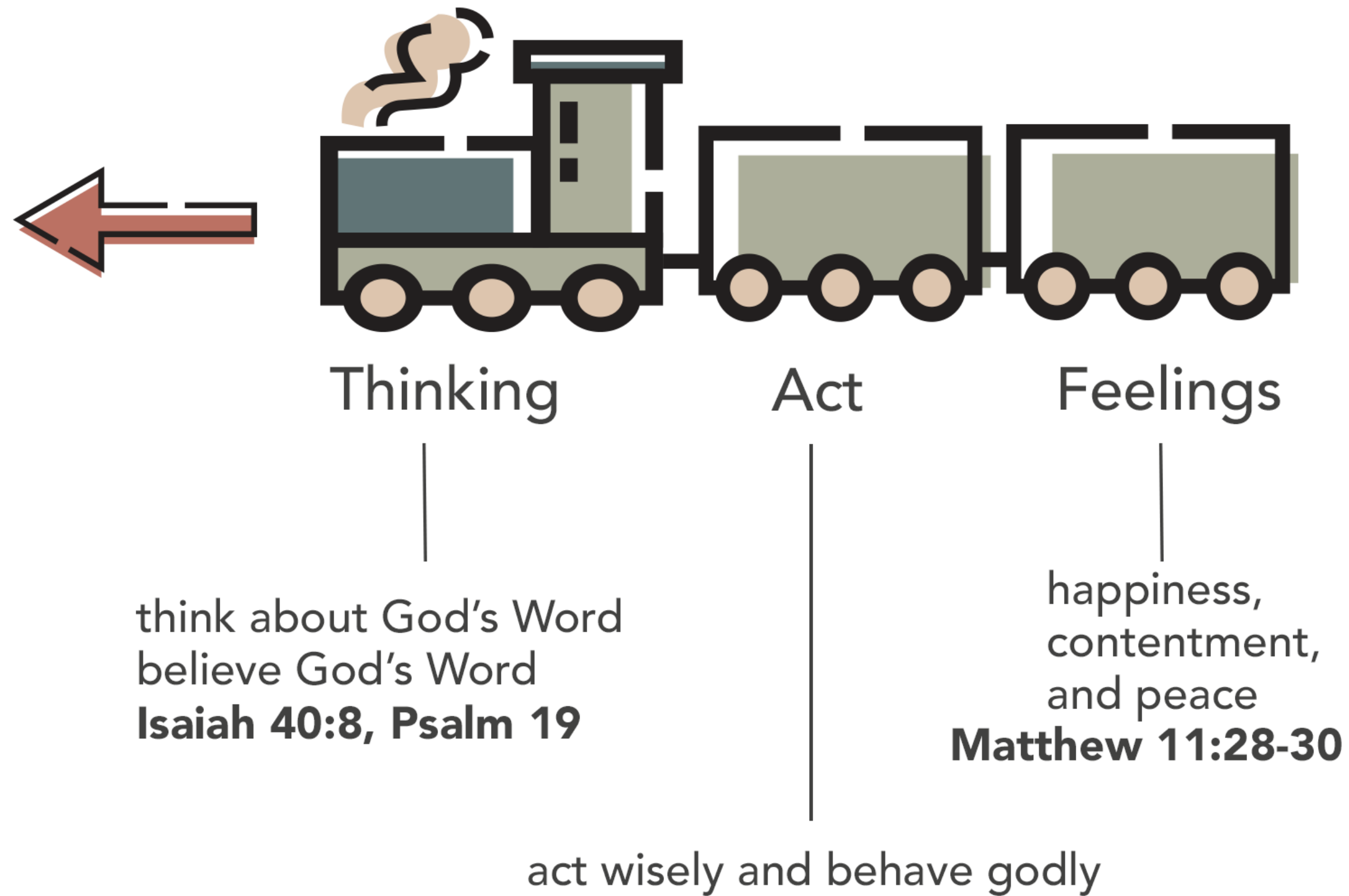


Don't  
Let Your  
Feelings  
Drive  
the  
Bus!

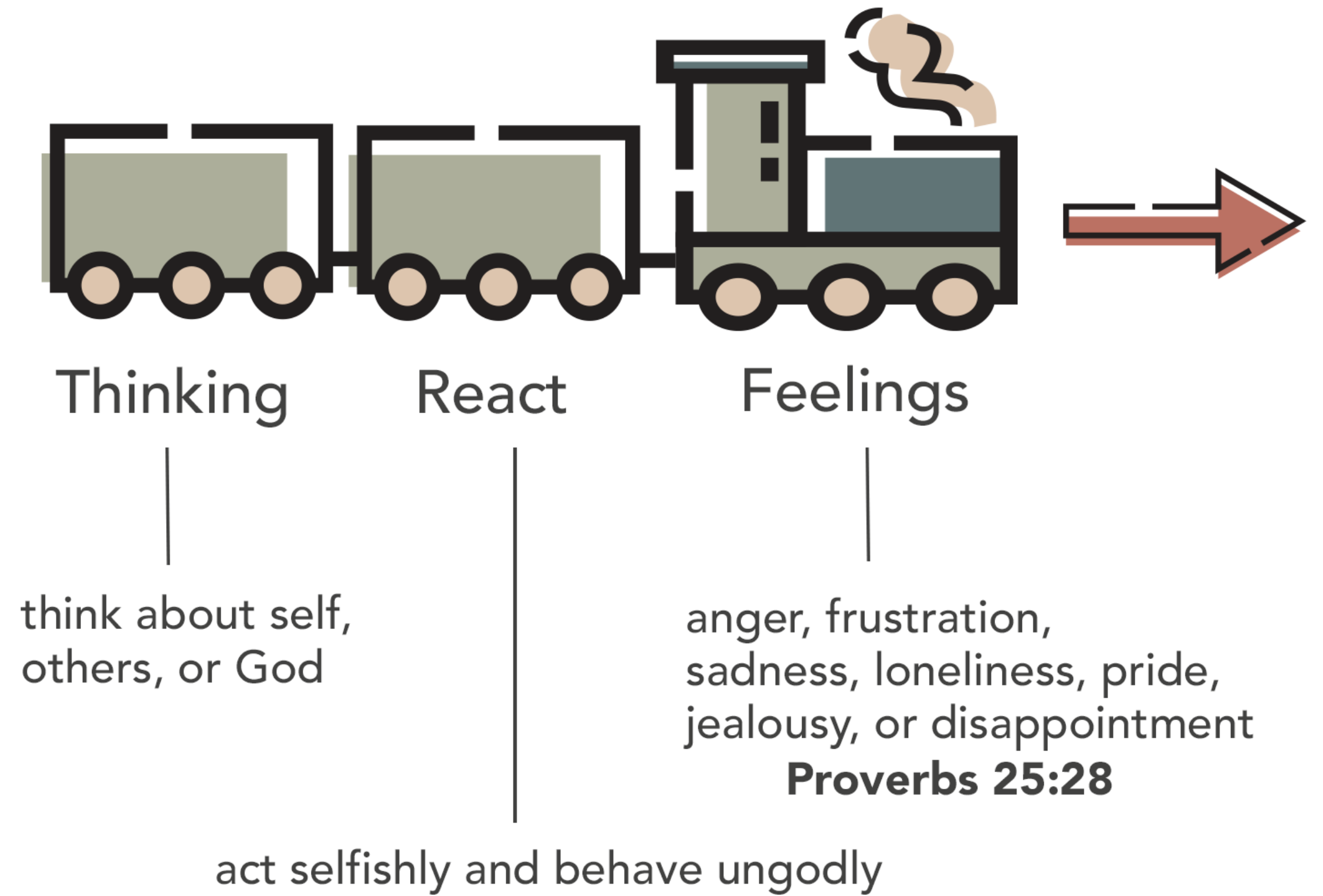
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## Pleasing God

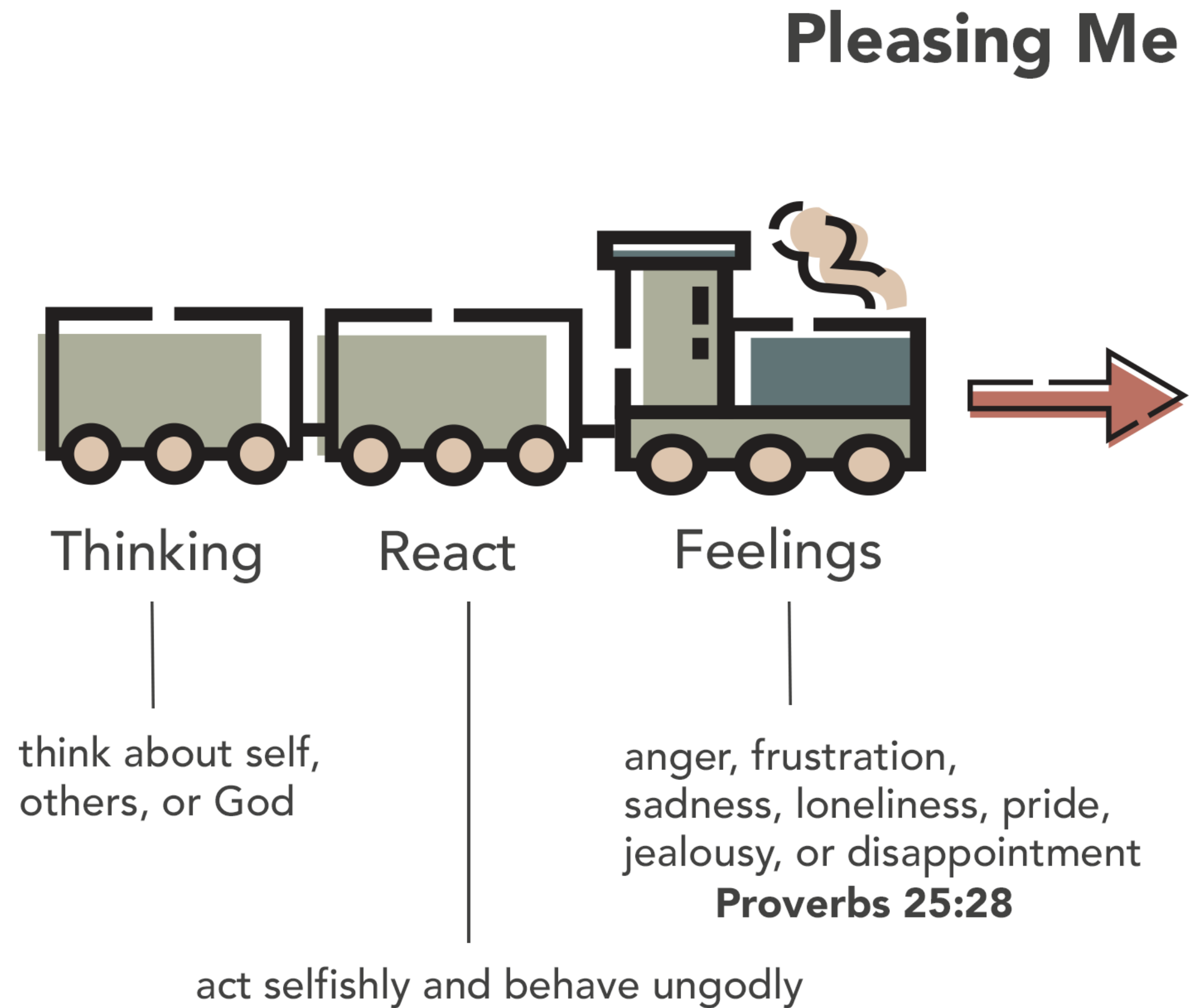


## Pleasing Me

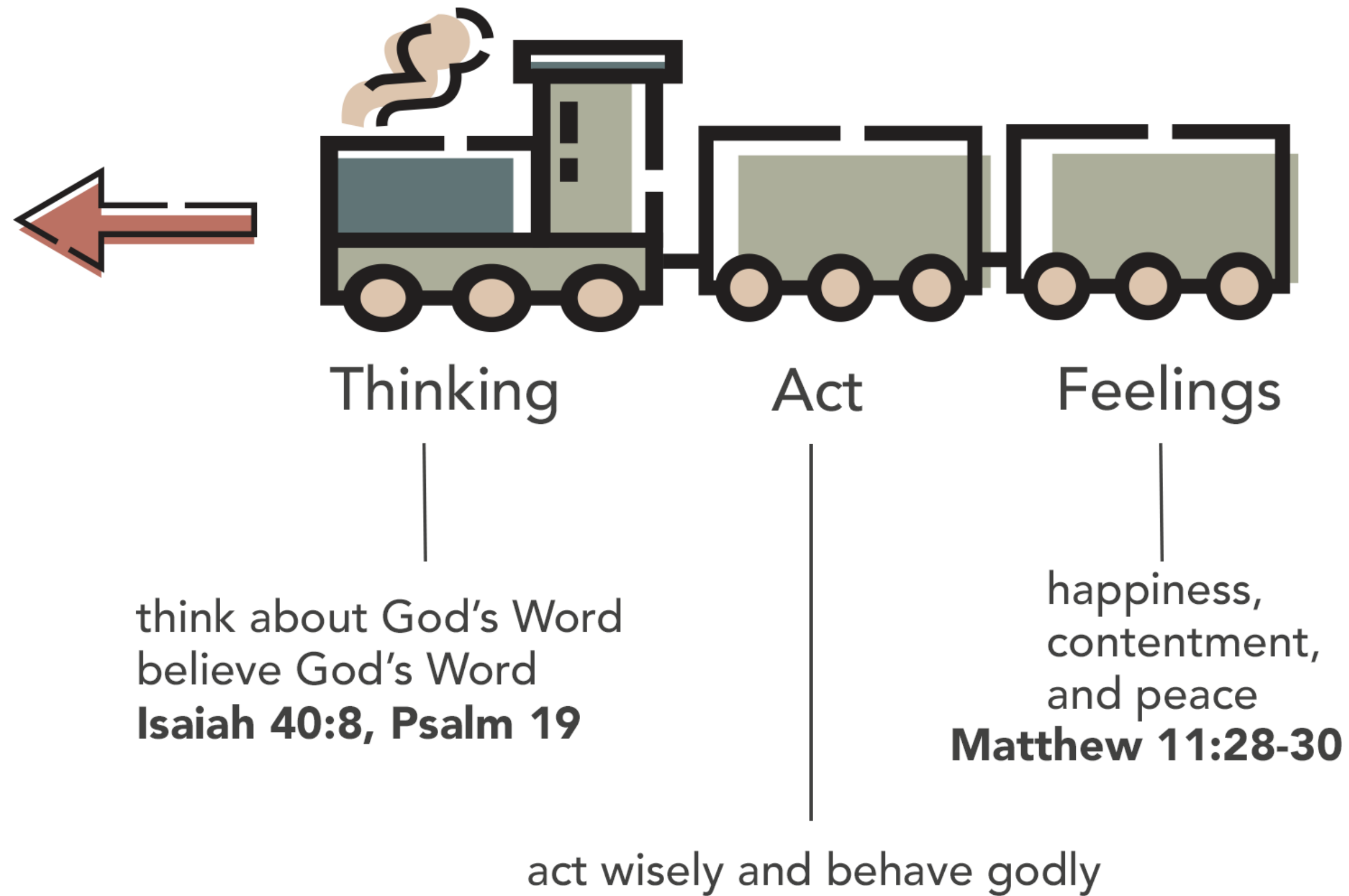


“A man without self-control is like *a city broken into and left without walls.*”

**Proverbs 25:28**

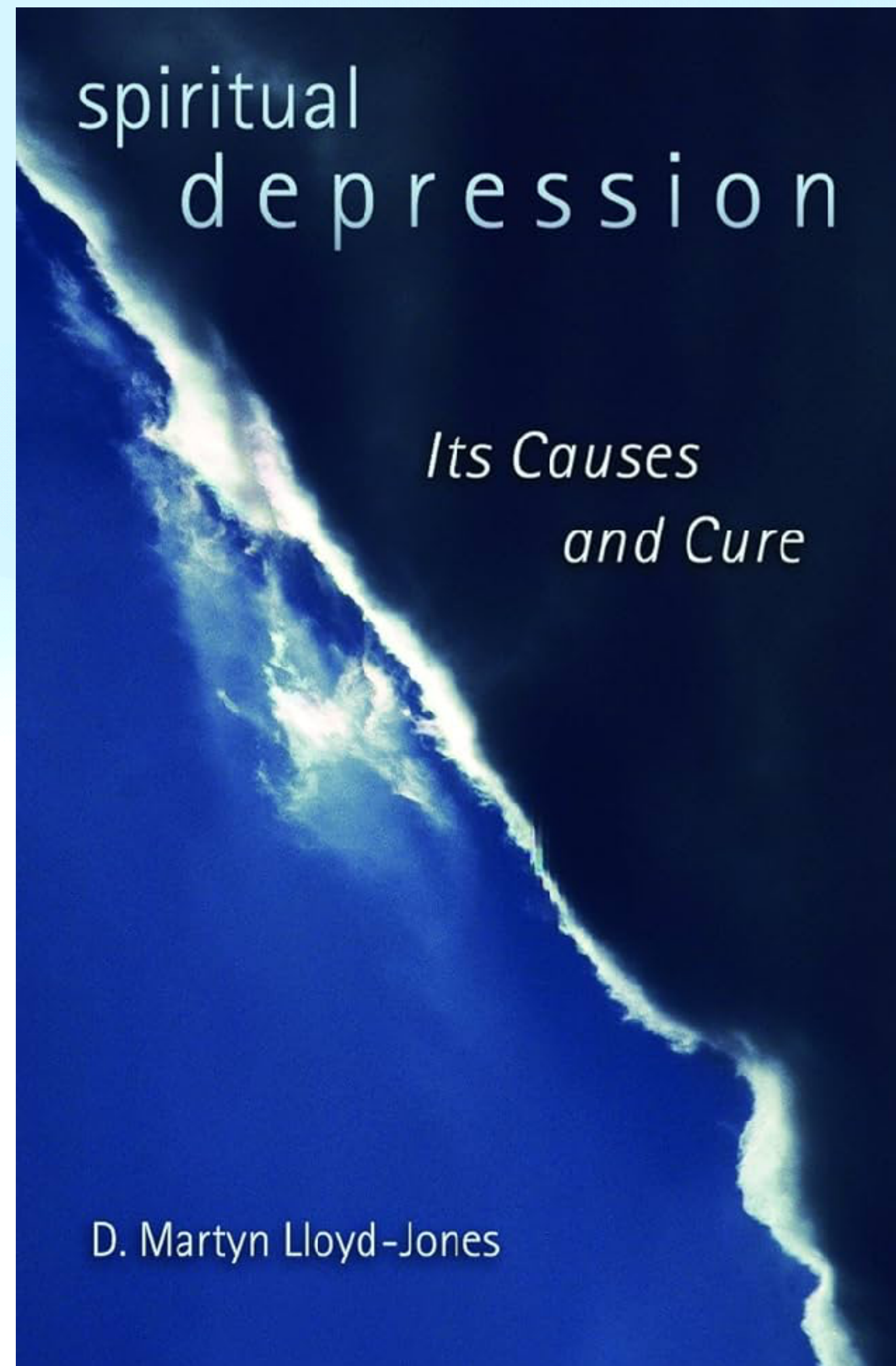
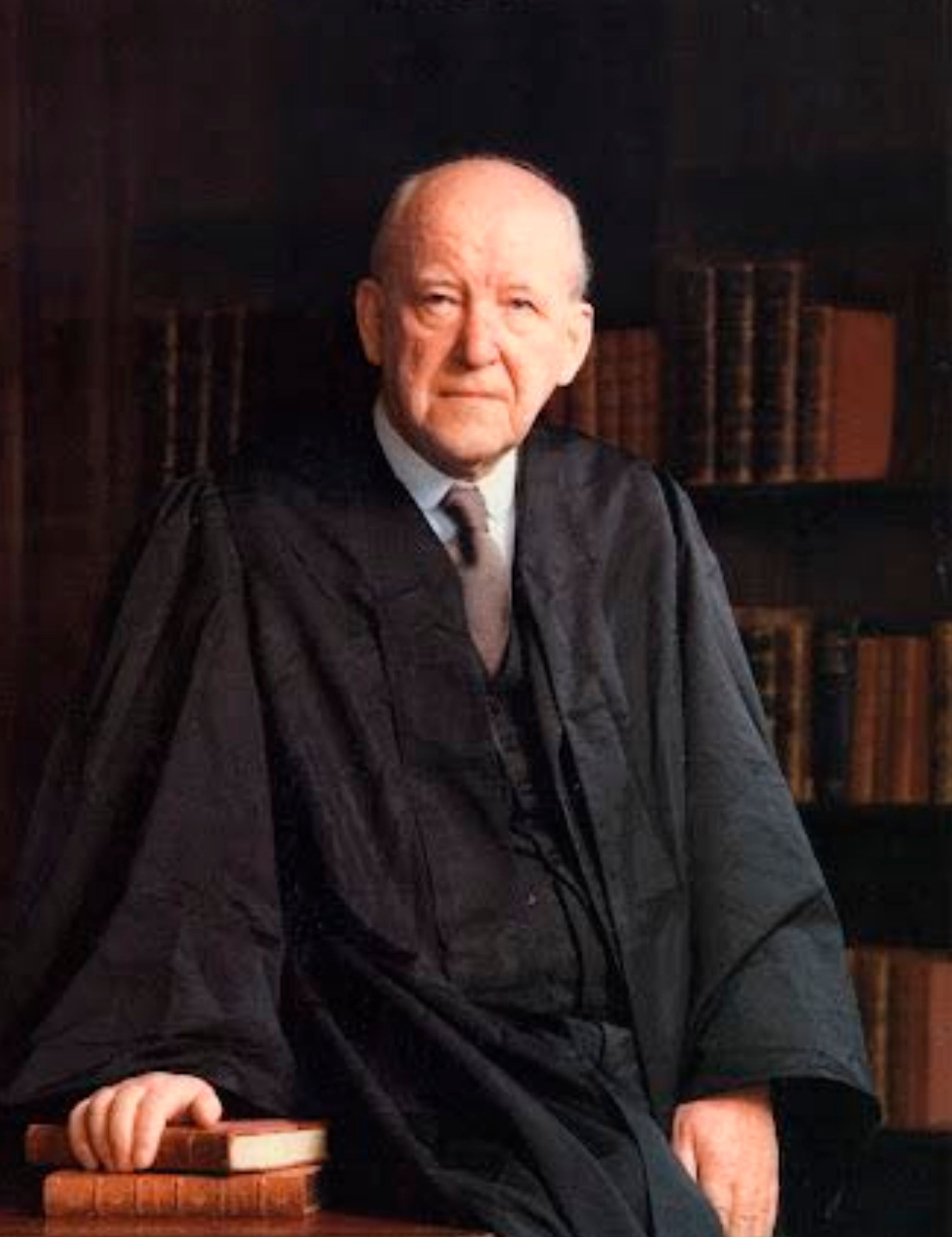


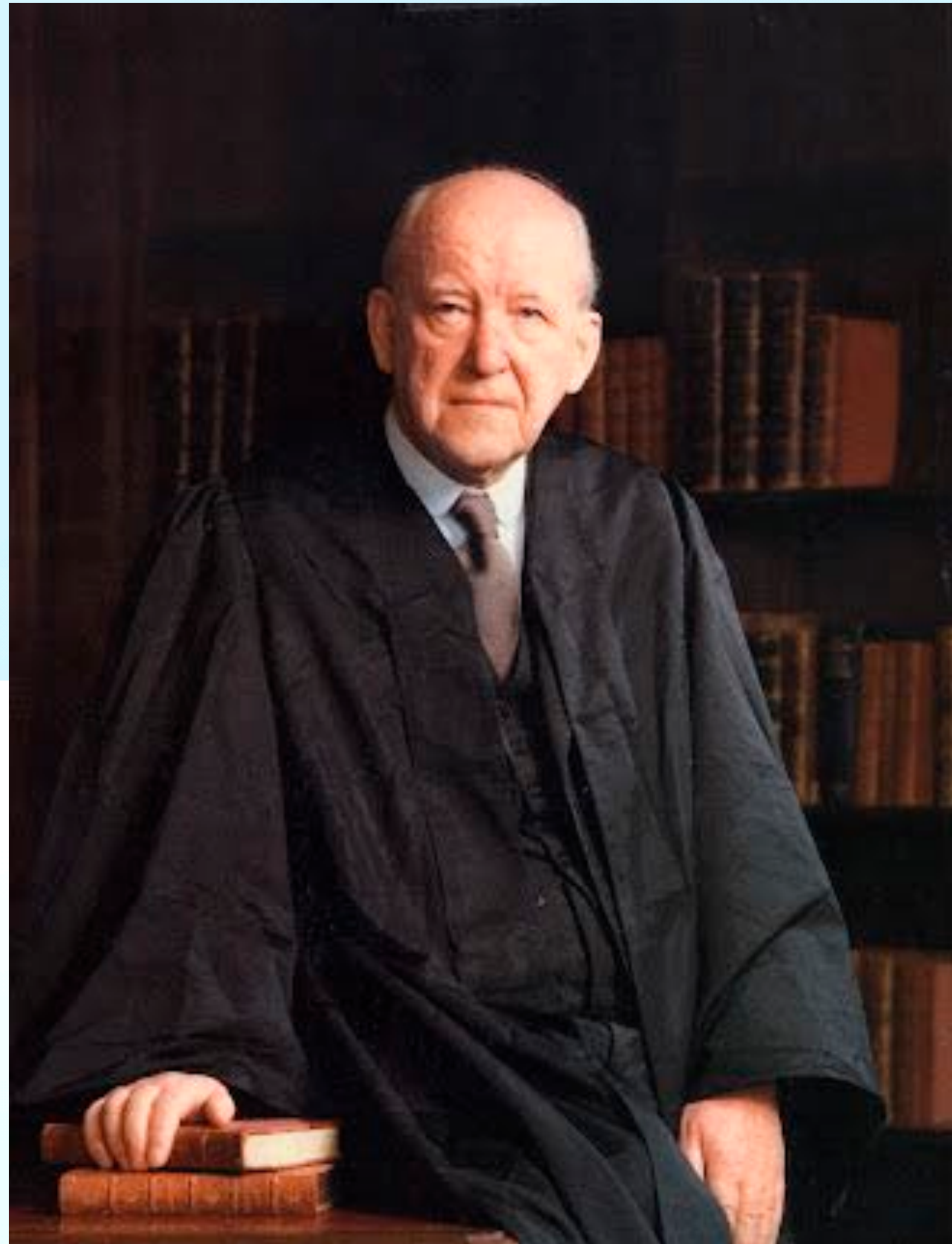
## Pleasing God



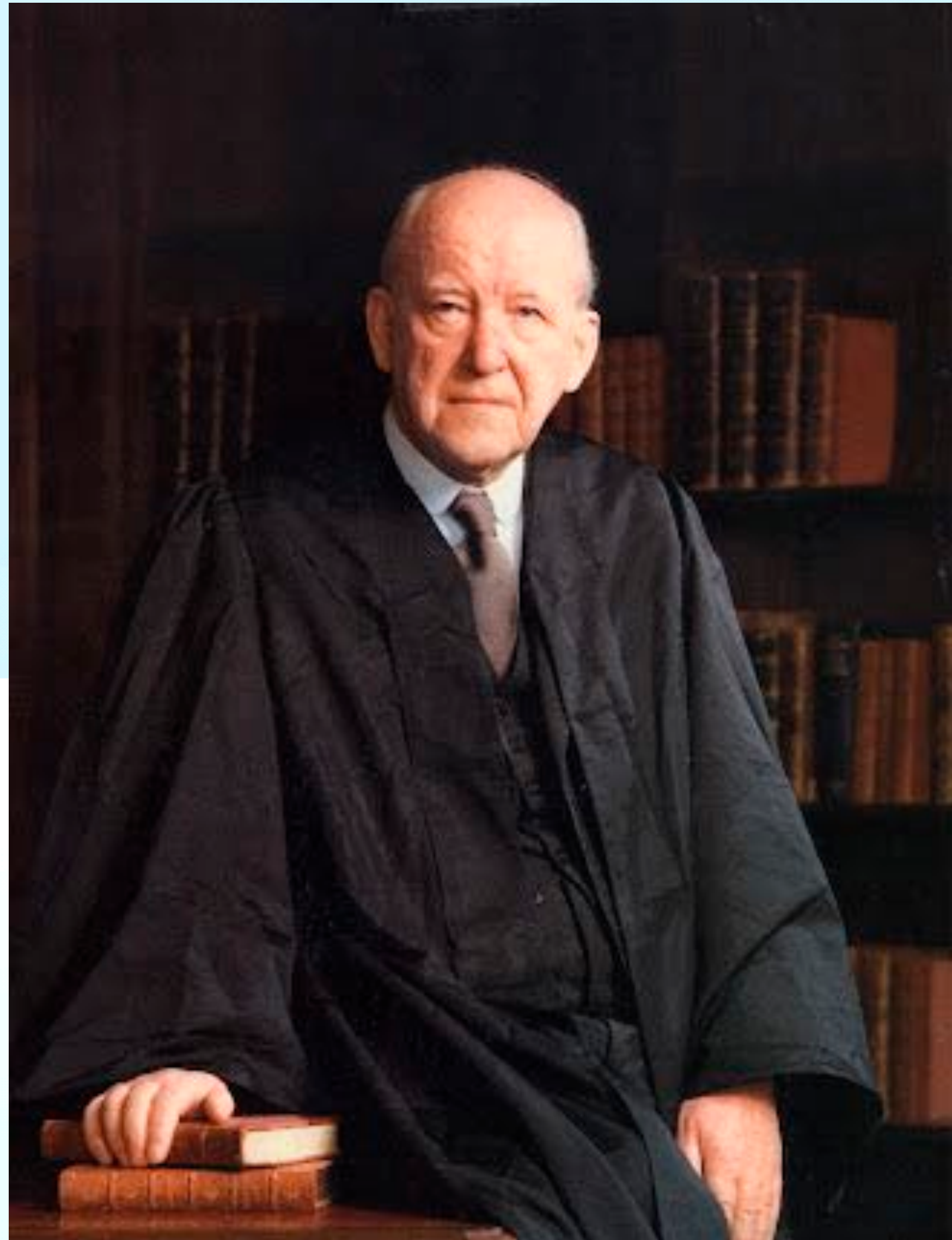
“The grass withers,  
the flower fades,  
***but the word of  
our God will  
stand forever.***”

**Isaiah 40:8**

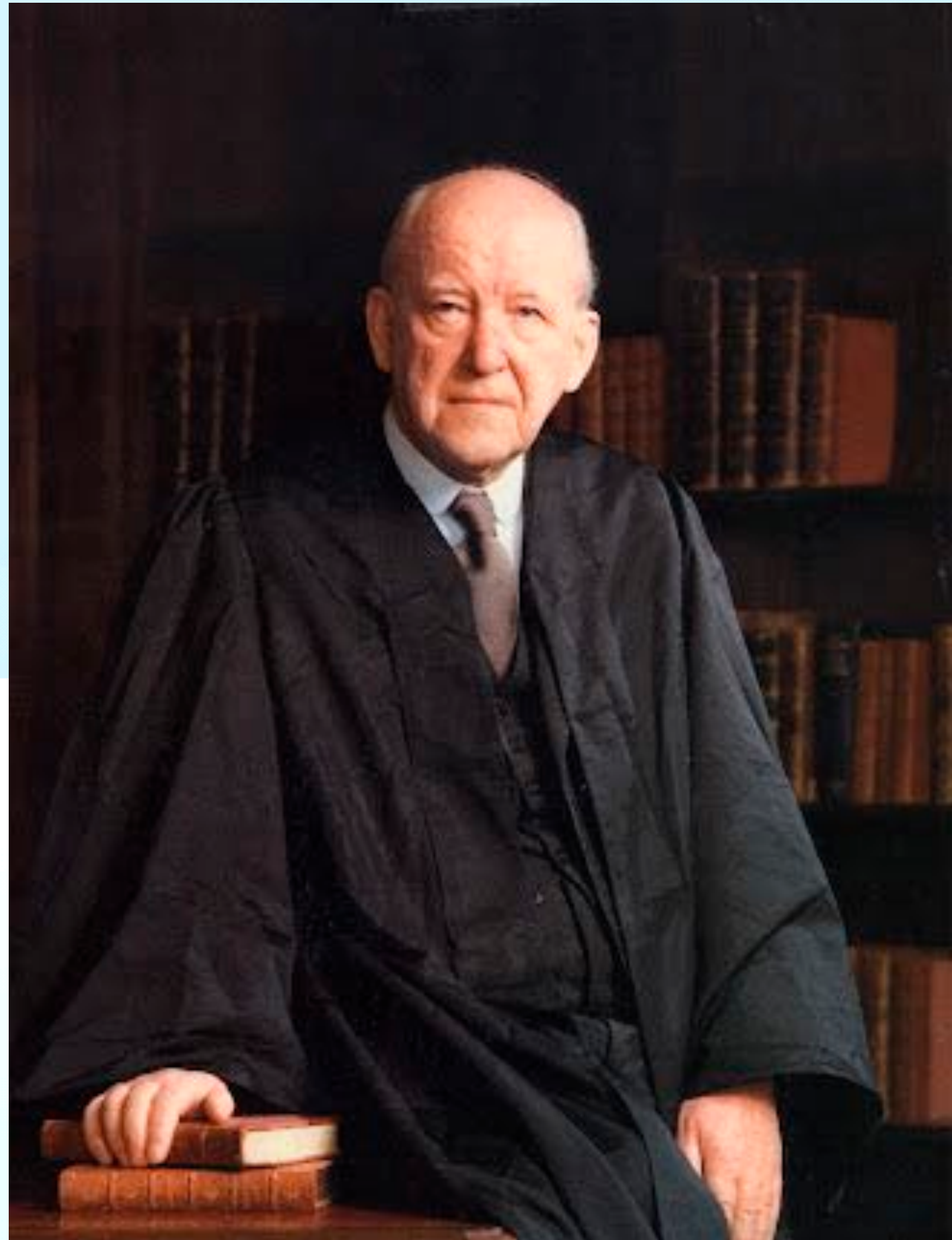




“The main trouble in this whole matter of spiritual depression in a sense is this, **that we allow our self to talk to us instead of talking to our self.**”

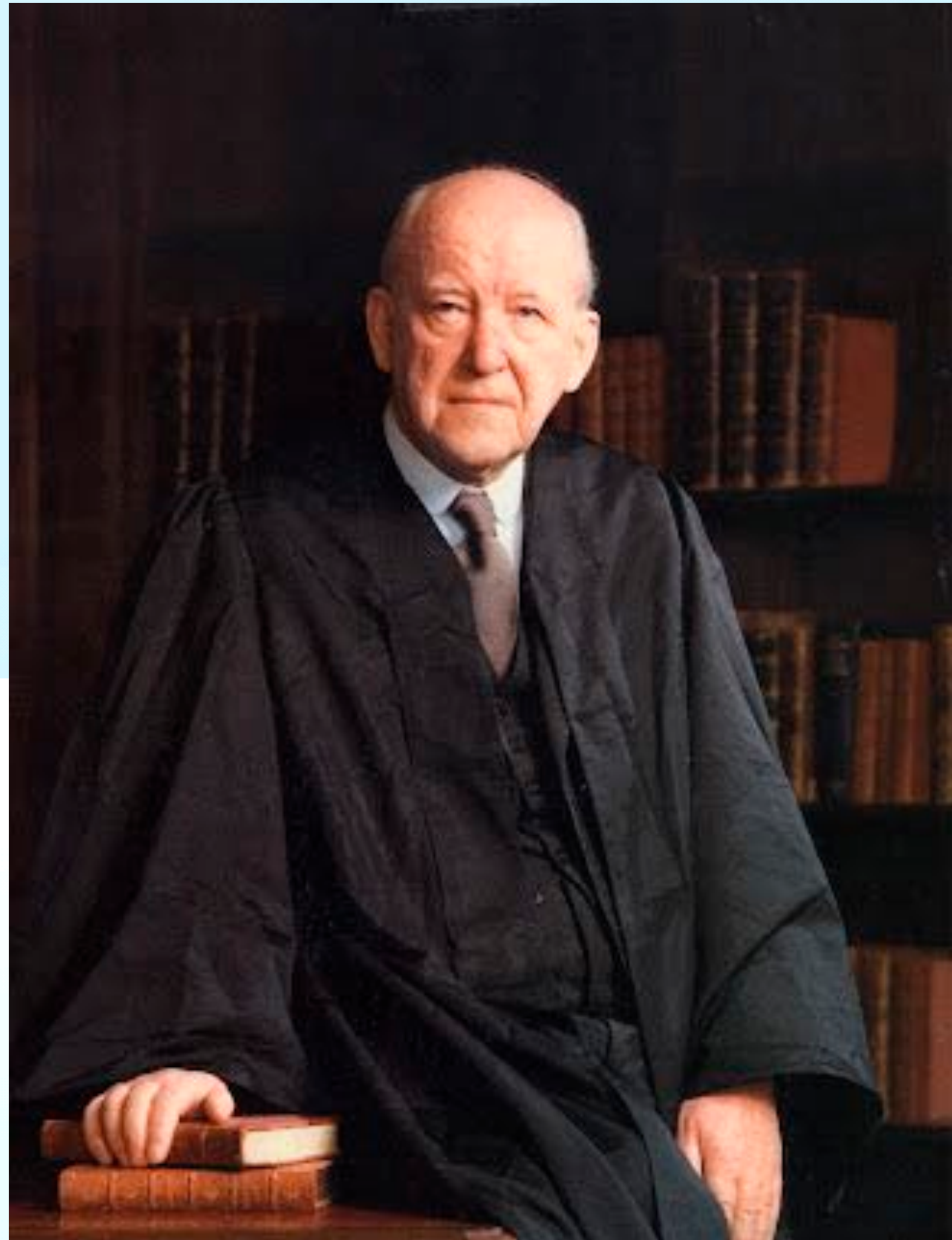


“Have you realized that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself?”

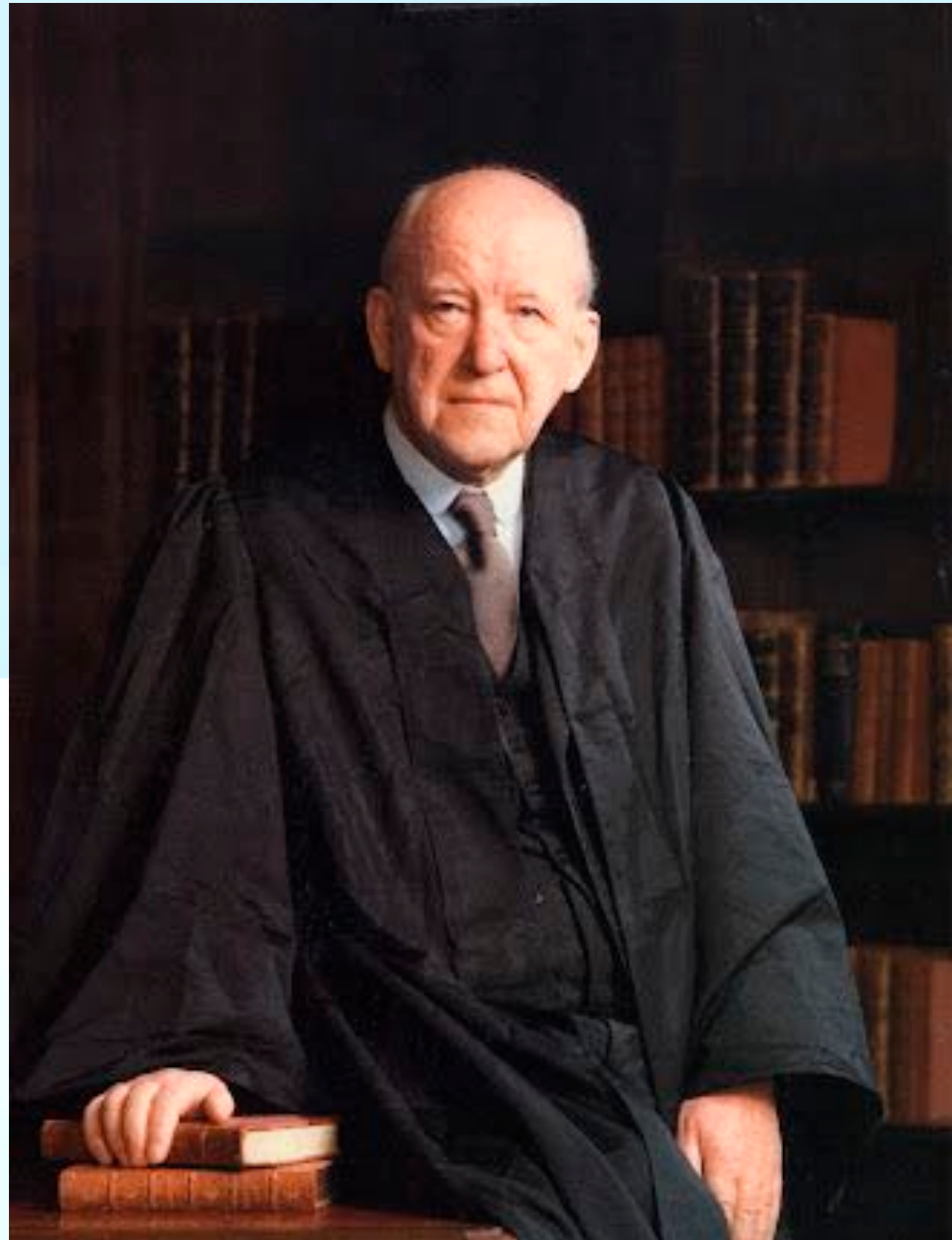


“Take those thoughts that come to you the moment you wake up in the morning. You have not originated them, but they start talking to you, they bring back the problem of yesterday, etc. Somebody is talking. Who is talking to you? Your self is talking to you.”

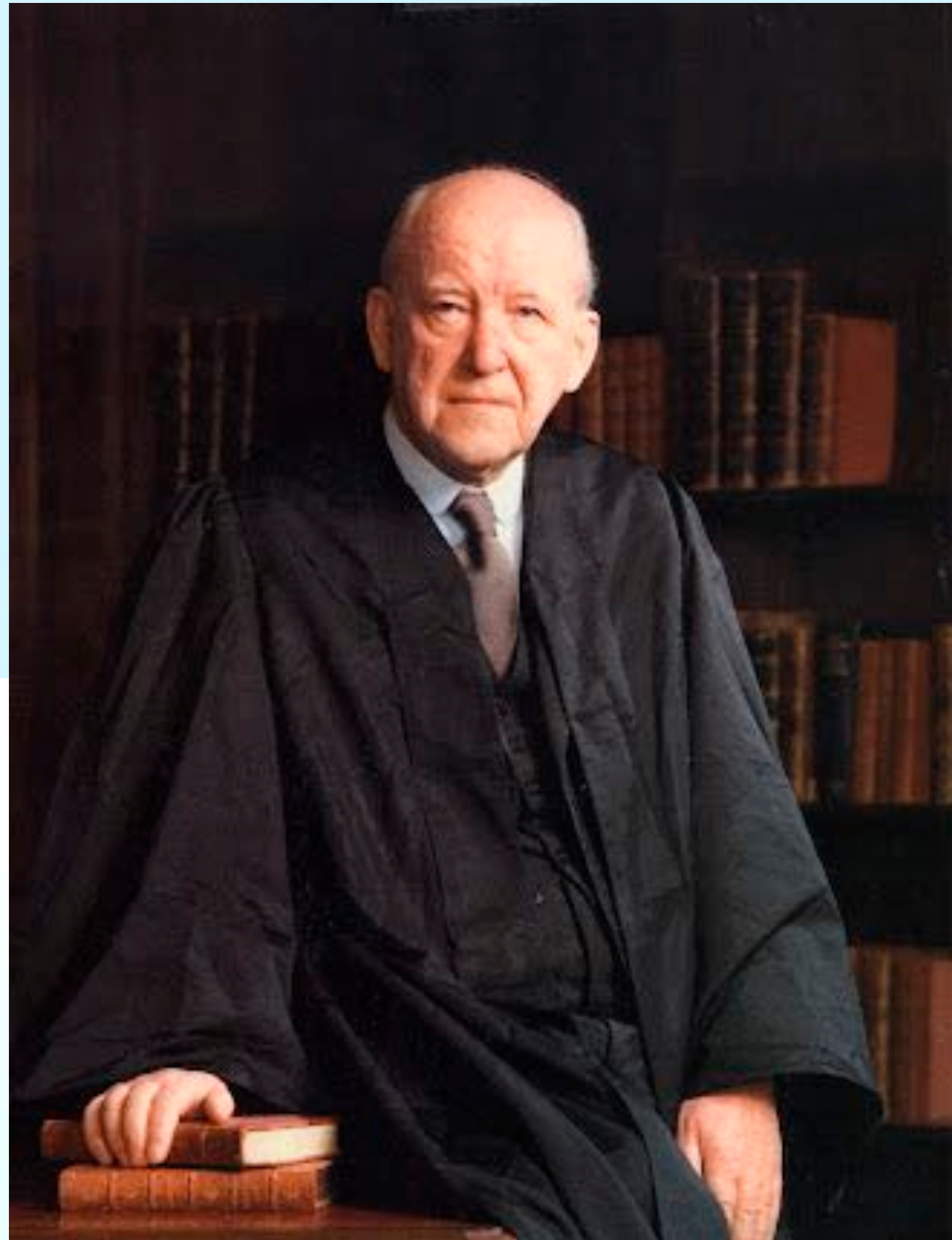




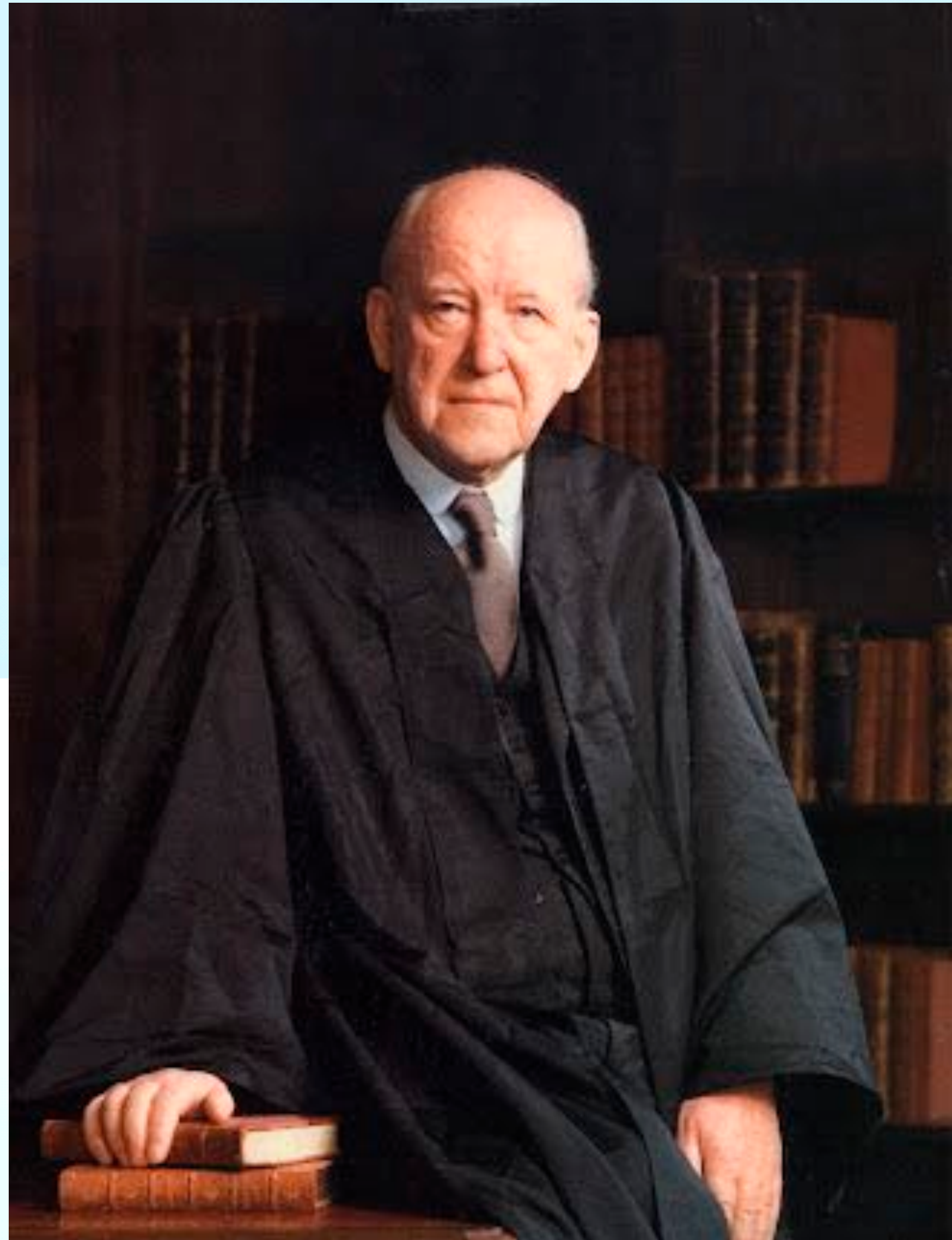
“Now this man’s treatment [in Psalm 42] was this; instead of allowing this self to talk to him, he starts talking to himself, ‘Why art thou cast down, O my soul?’ he asks. **His soul had been repressing him, crushing him. So he stands up and says: ‘Self, listen for a moment, I will speak to you’.** Do you know what I mean?”



“The main art in the matter of spiritual living is to know how to handle yourself. **You have to take yourself in hand, you have to address yourself, preach to yourself, question yourself.** You must say to your soul: ‘Why art thou cast down’—what business have you to be disquieted?”



**“You must turn on yourself, upbraid yourself, condemn yourself, exhort yourself, and say to yourself: ‘Hope thou in God’—instead of muttering in this depressed, unhappy way.”**



“And then you must go on to **remind yourself of God**, Who God is, and what God is and what God has done, and what God has pledged Himself to do. Then having done that, end on this great note: **defy yourself, and defy other people, and defy the devil and the whole world**, and say with this man: ‘I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance, who is also the health of my countenance and my God’.

# Thinking Biblically



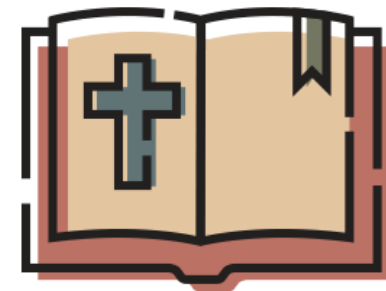
# LENS OF LIFE

## How do you view life?

Workmanship  
God's child



Love God  
Love others



You allow Scripture to inform your view of God

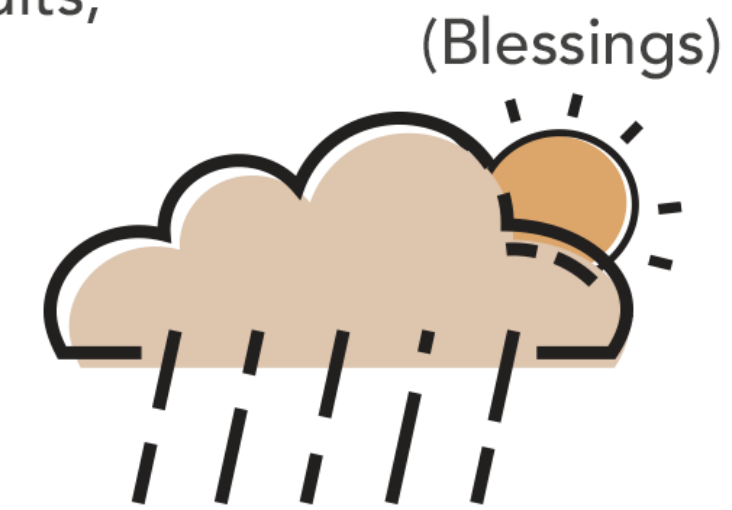
Accurate view of God's attributes and promises



God

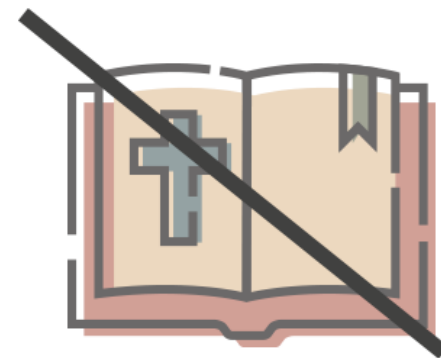
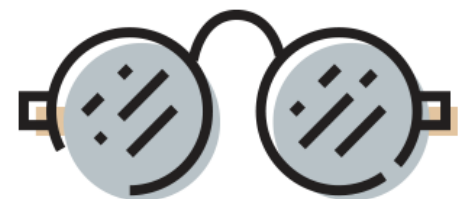
Afflicted, perplexed, persecuted, struck down, weak, calamities, insults, and hardships

You will still have trials and hardships but you see God's purpose and sovereignty behind every experience



Hope, press on, meditate on God's Word, depend on Him, seek God's will, fellowship with others, His power in you

"Victim-like"

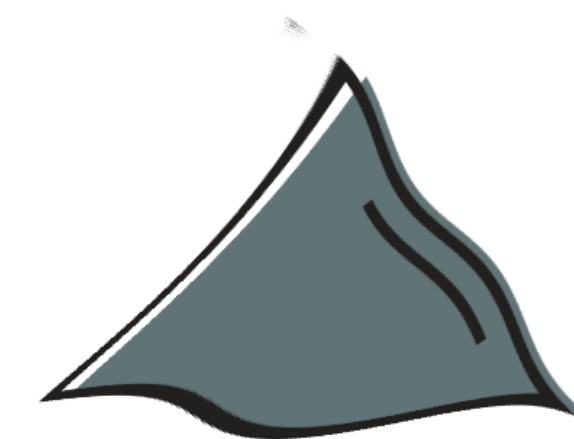


You neglect the Bible and only focus on your trials. The difficulties and sufferings shape the way you see God, rather than trusting in God's Word for how God reveals Himself



Afflicted, perplexed, persecuted, struck down, weak, calamities, insults, and hardships

God is distorted, you allow your circumstances to distort your view of God as unwise, not good, unfair, unloving, etc.



Discouraged, depressed, give up, don't study Scripture, pray only for deliverance, seek own will, rely on own strength, self-pity, isolate

# Philippians 4:8-9: Filter for your thoughts

## Philippians 4:8

“Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”



Run your thoughts through the filter of Scripture. Do your thoughts conform to God’s command?



Is there anything excellent or praiseworthy? Think about these things!

“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, ***think about these things***. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—***practice these things***, and ***the God of peace will be with you.***”

**Philippians 4:8-9**



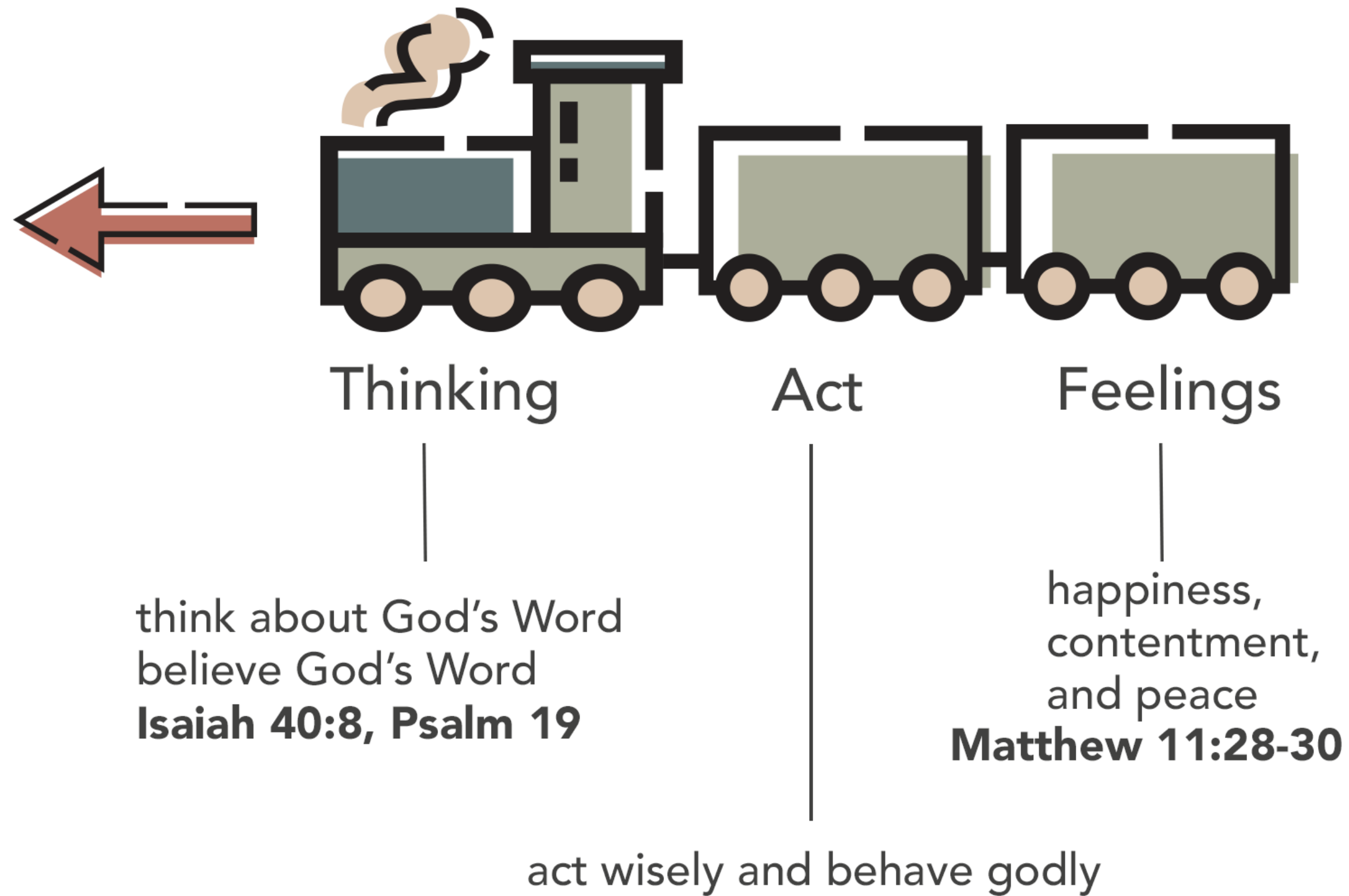
***...think about these things.***

***...practice these things,***

***...the God of peace will be with you.”***

**Philippians 4:8-9**

## Pleasing God



...think about these things.

...practice these things,

...the God of peace will be with you.”

**Philippians 4:8-9**

# Philippians 4:8-9: Filter for your thoughts

Name your specific thought. Example: "I can't live this way anymore!" or "Why can't he just respect me?" or "I'll always be stuck in this situation."



**Whatever is:**

**True (Ephesians 1:1 & 2:8-10, Job 42:2)**

- True about God, self, godly worldview, real

**Honorable (Revelation 4:11, Hebrews 12:14, Romans 12:1)**

- Accurate view of God and His holiness, God's moral character, high thoughts

**Just (Romans 5:5 & 6:16, Psalm 19:14, Micah 6:8)**

- God is righteous, God's commands are right; thoughts of justice, mercy, and humility

**Pure (Psalm 86:11 & 19:14, John 5:19, Matthew 23:25-26)**

- Authentic, 100% pure and devoted to the Lord

**Lovely (Psalm 27:4, Exodus 34:6-7, Psalm 8, Matthew 27:45-56)**

- God's beauty revealed in His nature and creation, the cross and Jesus' sacrifice

**Commendable (1 Corinthians 11:1, Matthew 22:37-39)**

- Love and imitate Christ's admirable qualities, thoughts that are worthy of being thought



# Decision Making

# THE Y-CHART

## Eternal

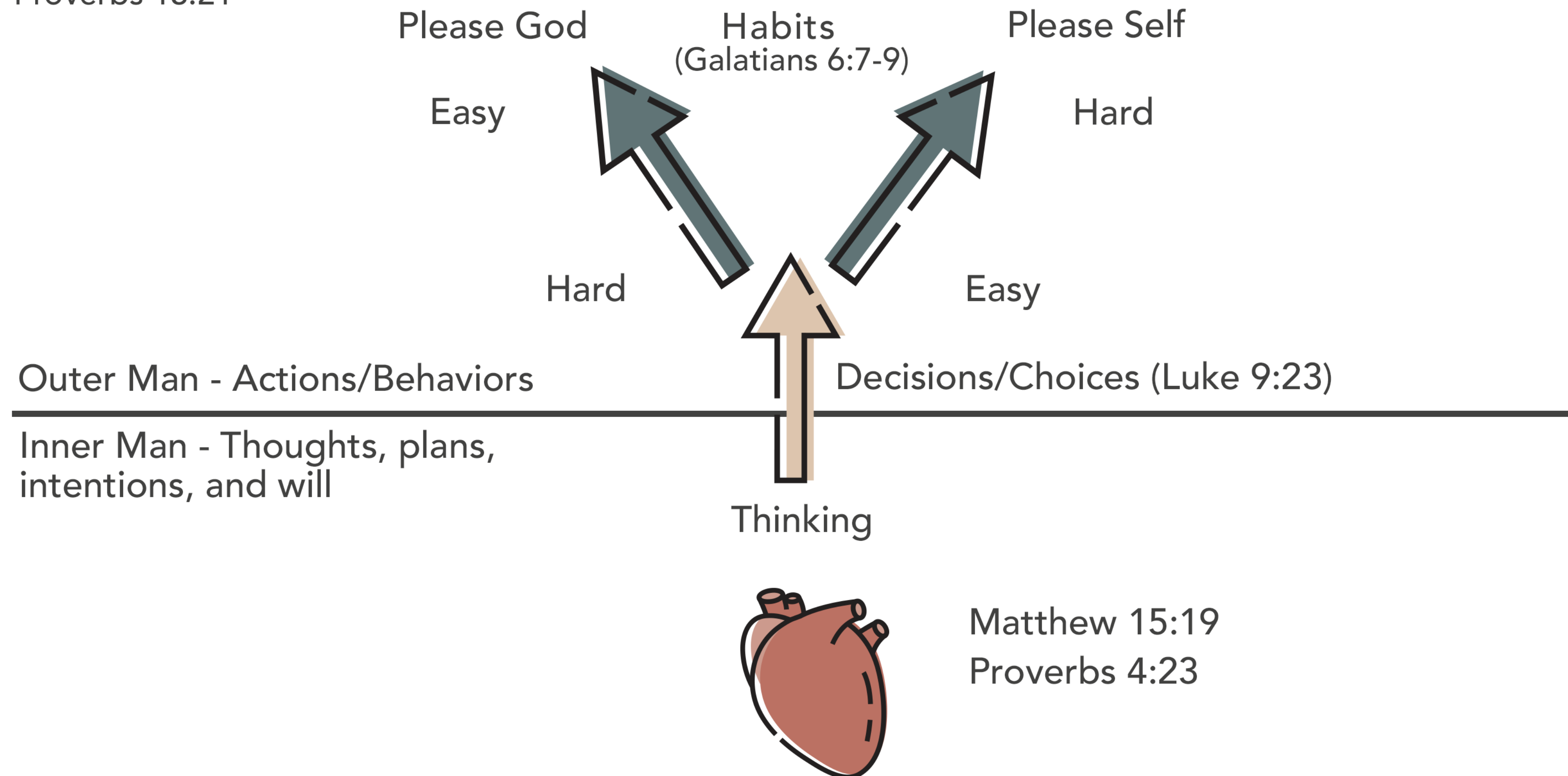
Principle-Oriented

2 Corinthians 5:9  
Matthew 11:28-29  
Proverbs 13:21

## Temporal

Feelings-Oriented

Proverbs 13:15  
Proverbs 13:21



“Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, ***for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.***

For ***the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption,***

but ***the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.*** And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”

**Galatians 6:7-9**

“And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, ***let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.***”

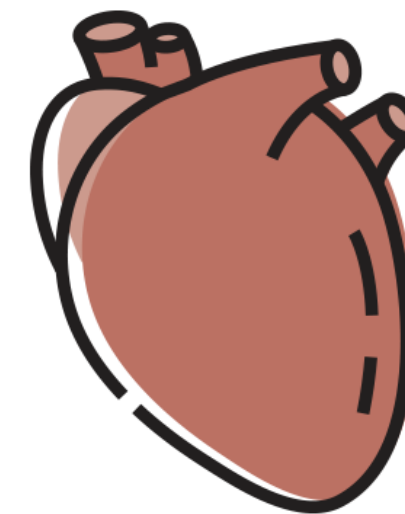
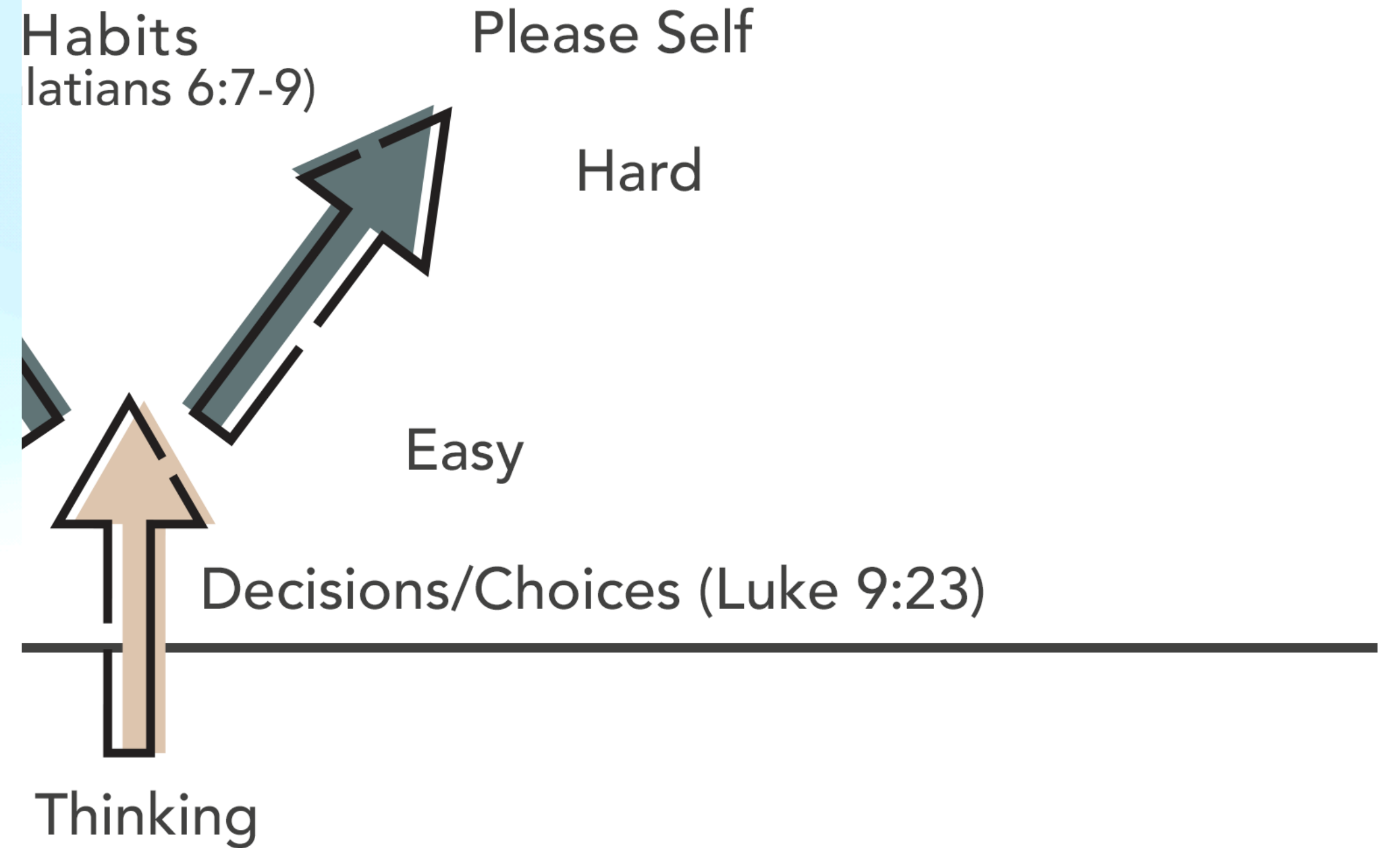
**Luke 9:23**

“...the way of the treacherous is their ruin.”

“Disaster pursues sinners...”

**Proverbs 13:15; 21**

**Temporal**  
Feelings-Oriented  
Proverbs 13:15  
Proverbs 13:21



Matthew 15:19  
Proverbs 4:23



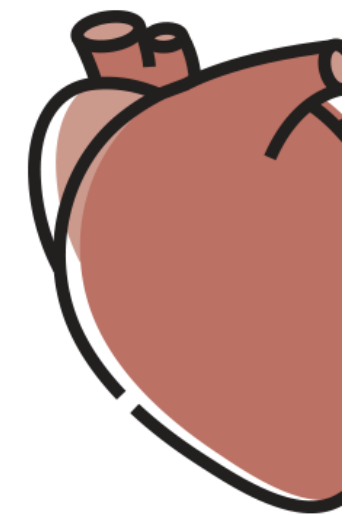
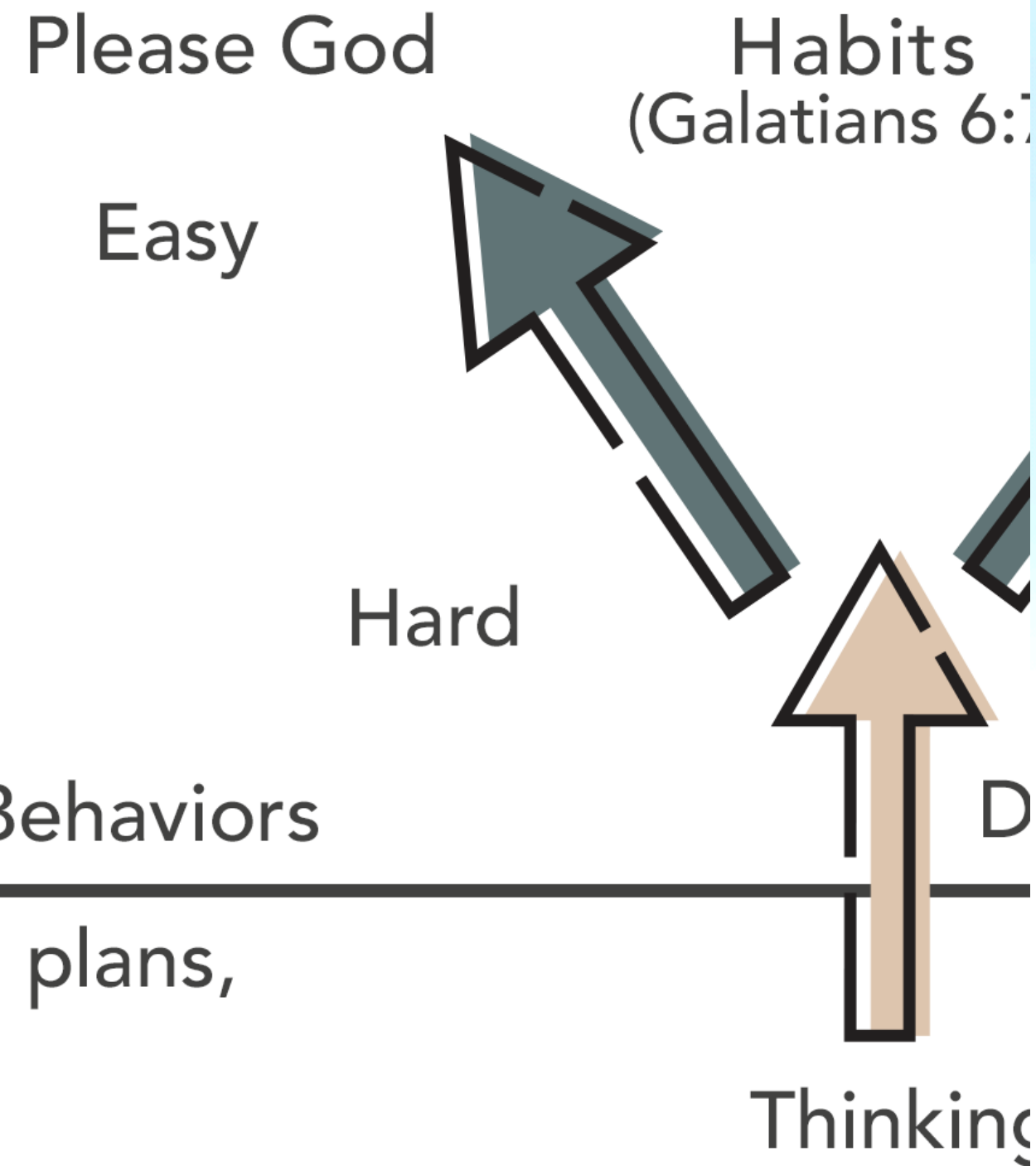
## Eternal

Principle-Oriented

2 Corinthians 5:9

Matthew 11:28-29

Proverbs 13:21



“So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.”

**2 Cor 5:9**

“...the righteous are rewarded with good.”

**Prov 13:21**

# THE Y-CHART

## Eternal

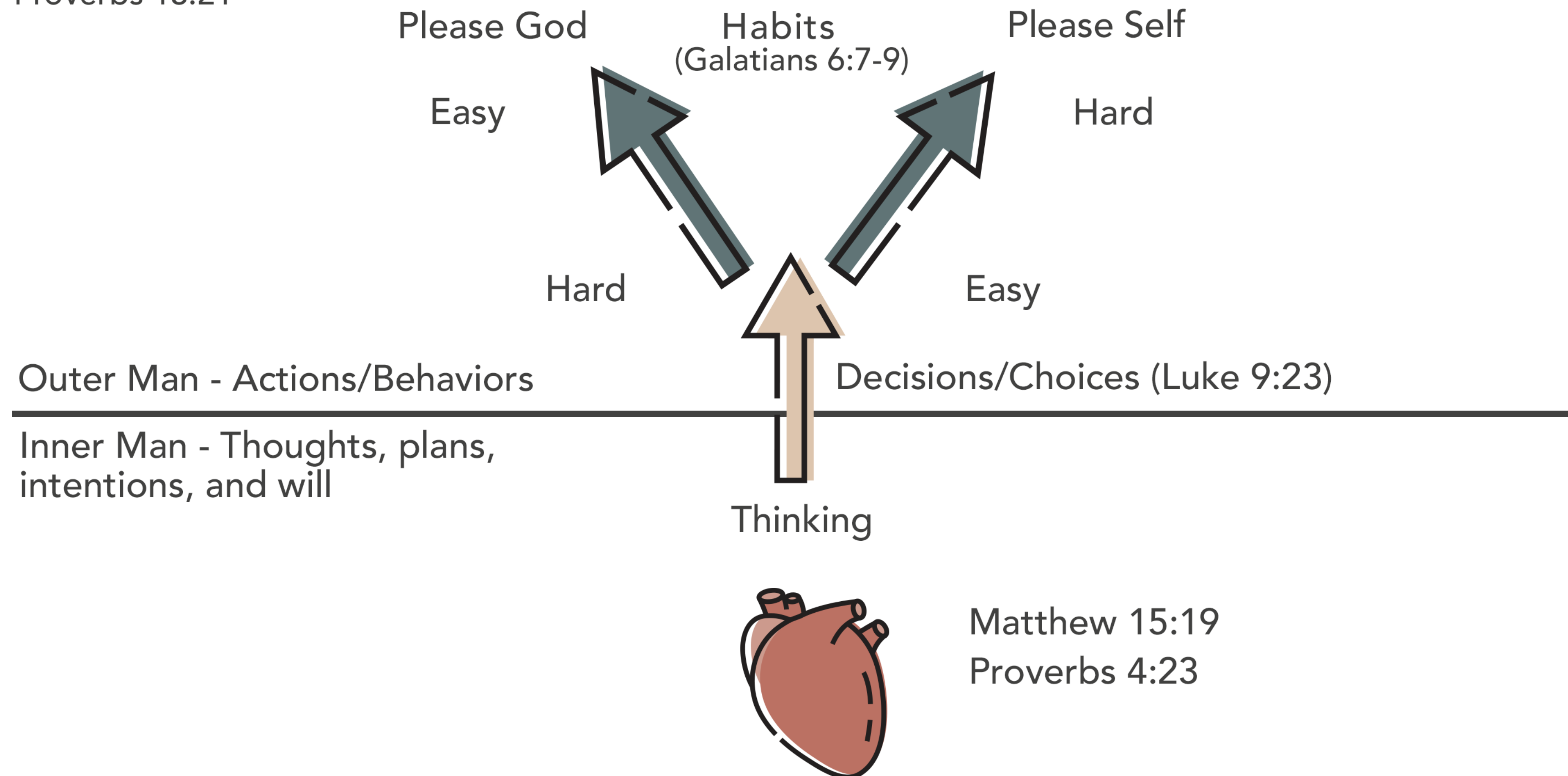
Principle-Oriented

2 Corinthians 5:9  
Matthew 11:28-29  
Proverbs 13:21

## Temporal

Feelings-Oriented

Proverbs 13:15  
Proverbs 13:21



# Responsibility



# CIRCLES OF RESPONSIBILITY

## Your Responsibility

Bible study/pursuit of holiness  
Prayer/church involvement  
Marriage/parenting  
Effort at work/home  
Obedience to God's Word  
Caring for your body  
Time with friends



## God's Responsibility

Salvation of friends and family  
Health/Illness  
Weather  
Feelings of others  
Natural disasters  
Children's behavior  
Provision for family  
Friendships  
Your future  
Family

(You can trust Him and pray for these things)

**When we attempt to control what is God's responsibility, it results in anxiety, frustration and disappointment.**

# Extremes:

- **Your circle too big:**  
Mini-Messiah
- **Your circle too small:**  
Let go and let God



# Examples:

- Unbelieving Spouse
- Rebellious Child
- Conflict



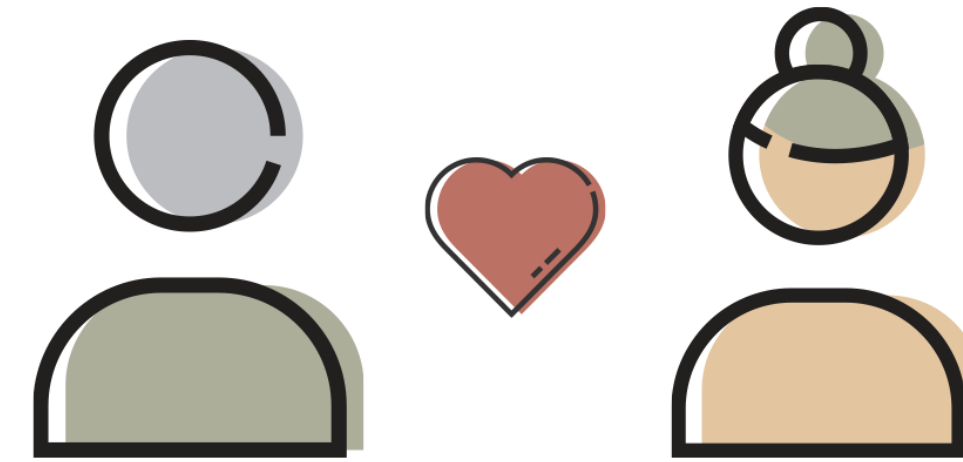
# Conflict



# KINGDOM DIAGRAM



VS.



## Kingdom of self

Options for when people get in the way of my goal:

**Manipulation:** "Hop in the tank with me"

**Intimidation:** "Get out of my way"

**Destruction:** "I am running you over"

## Kingdom of God

When I arrive at my **neighbor**, I have arrived at my **goal**. I am not to manipulate, intimidate, nor destroy them; rather, I am to **SERVE** them and consider them as more important than myself, my wants, my wishes, and my desires.



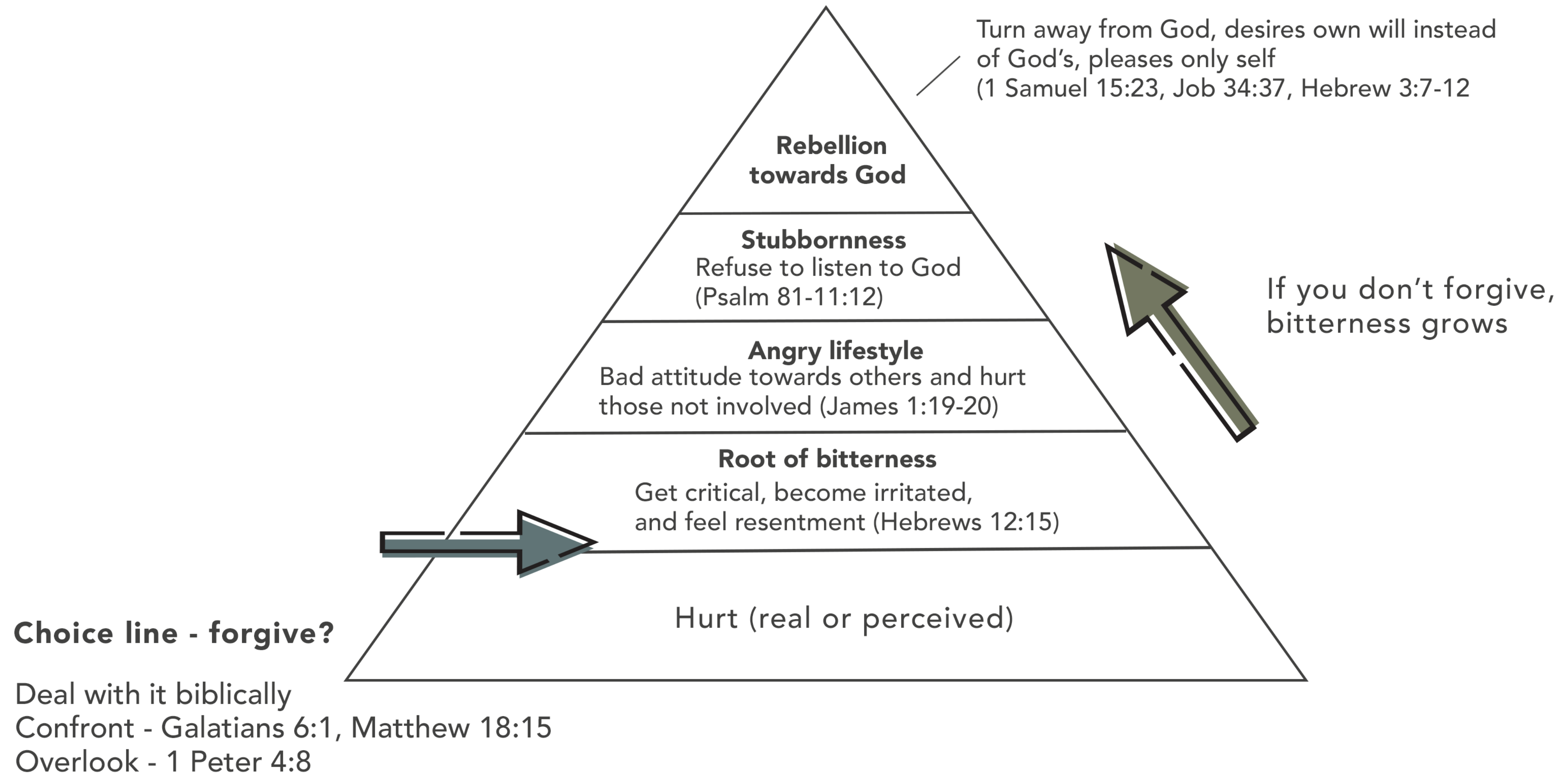
**Goal: Whatever will make me happy**



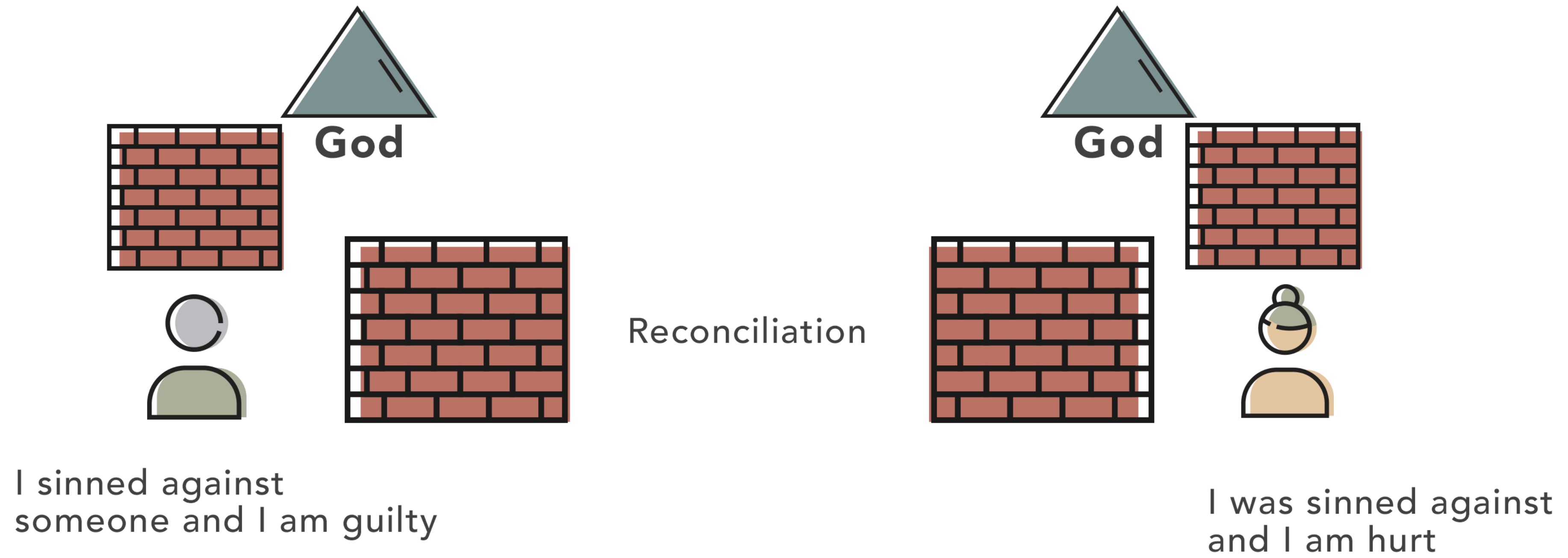
**Goal: Love God and love my neighbor**  
Matthew 22:37-39



# STAGES OF HURT



# RECONCILIATION



## Repentance:

Contemplation → Remorse → Confession → Restitution → Change → Reconciliation

## Forgiveness:

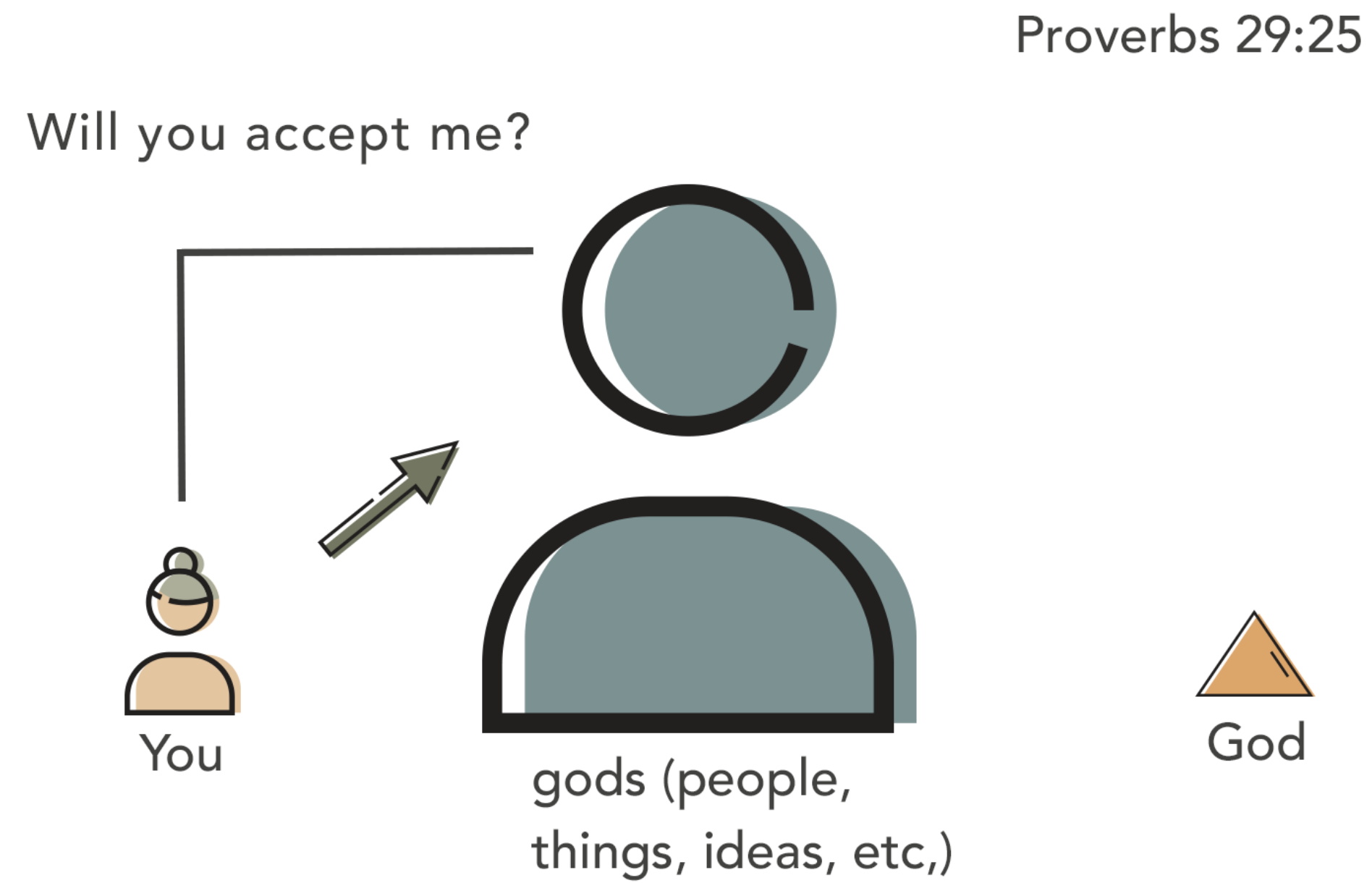
I promise I will not bring it up to others, I will not bring it up to myself, I will not bring it up to you, unless it would be for your benefit.

# Anxiety

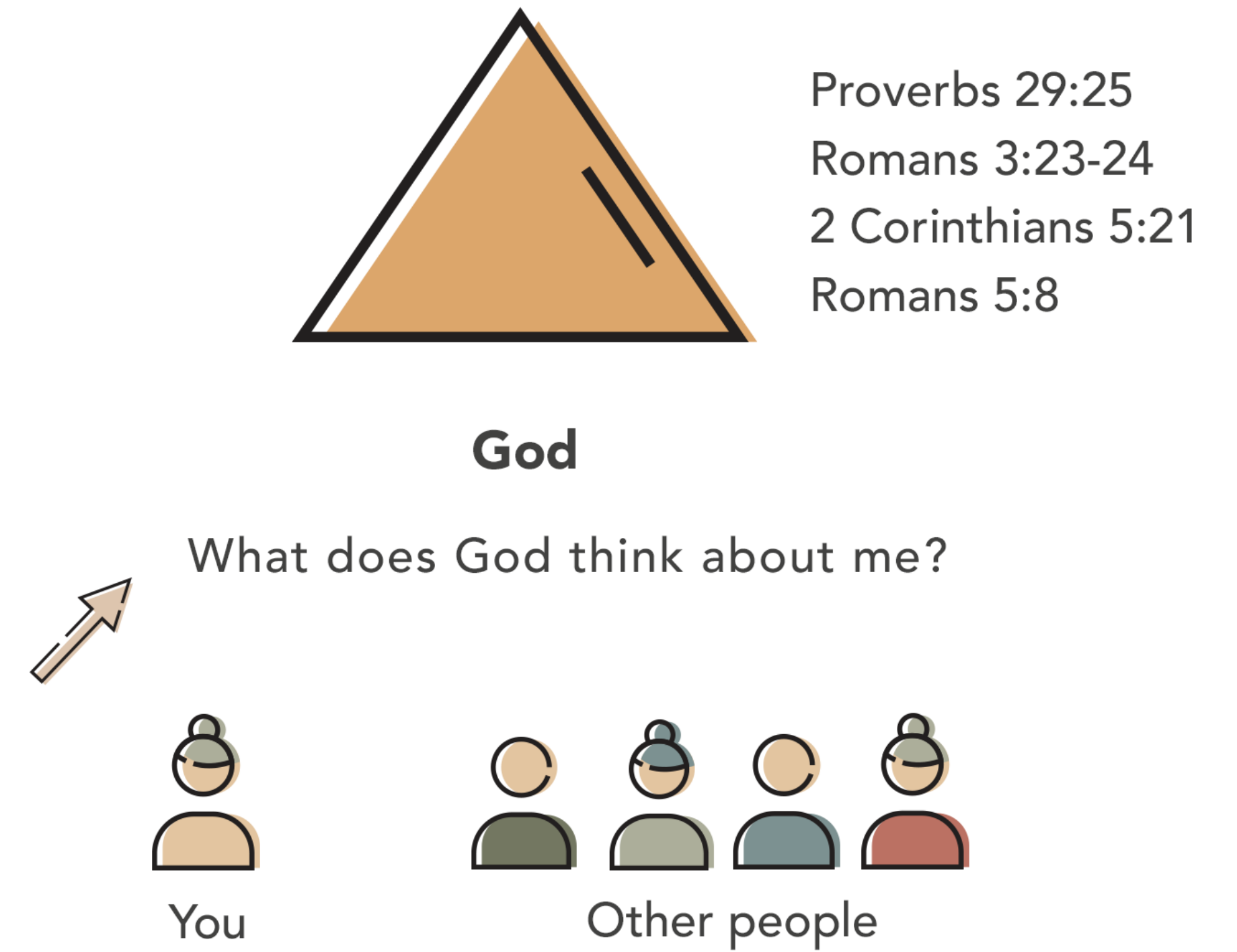


# FEAR OF MAN VS

# FEAR OF GOD



**Desire:**  
Love  
Acceptance  
Approval  
Respect  
Significance  
**Therefore, fears rejection**



Proverbs 29:25  
Romans 3:23-24  
2 Corinthians 5:21  
Romans 5:8

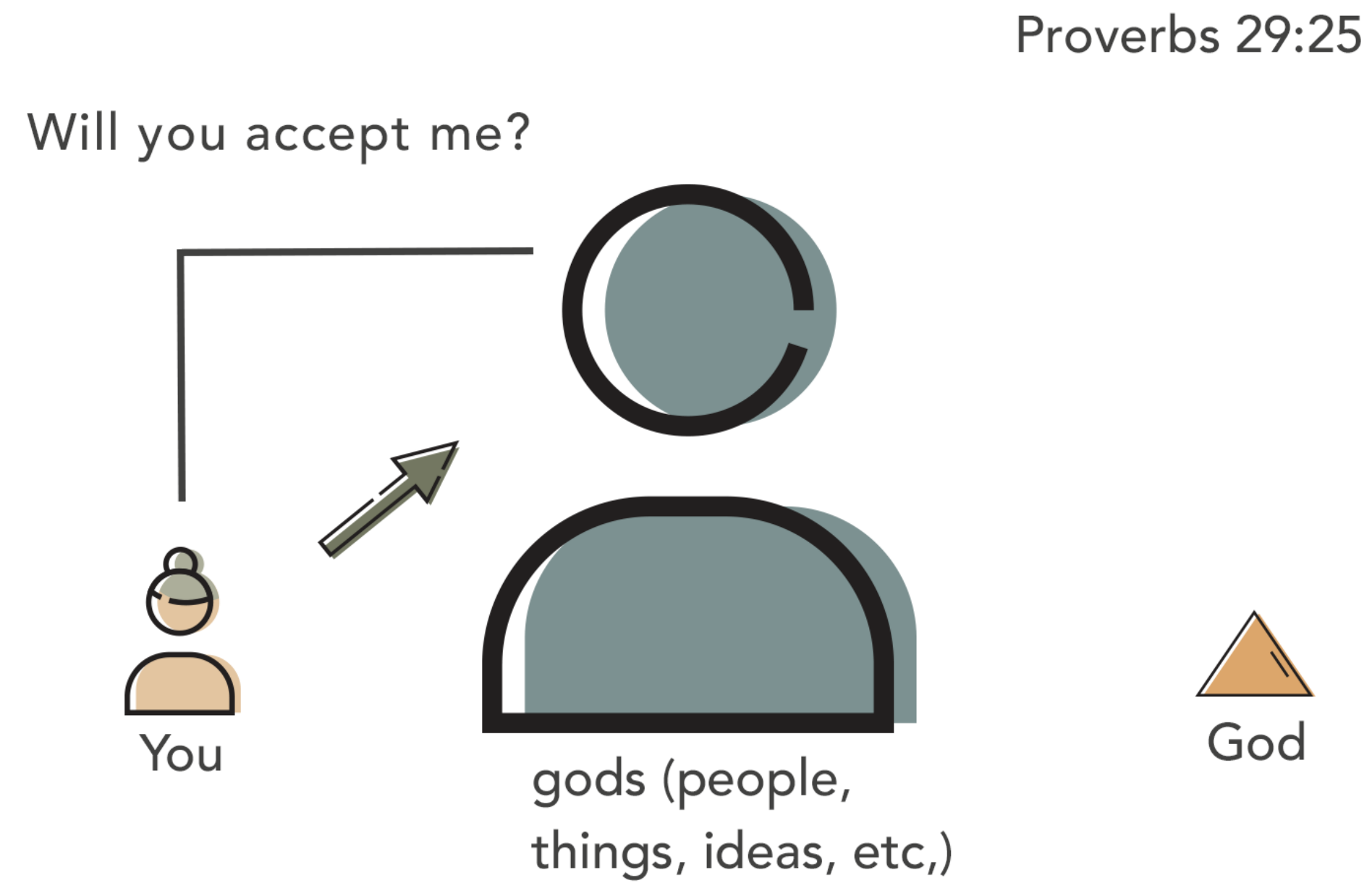
Romans 3:23-24

“The fear of man lays a snare, but  
whoever trusts in the Lord is safe.”

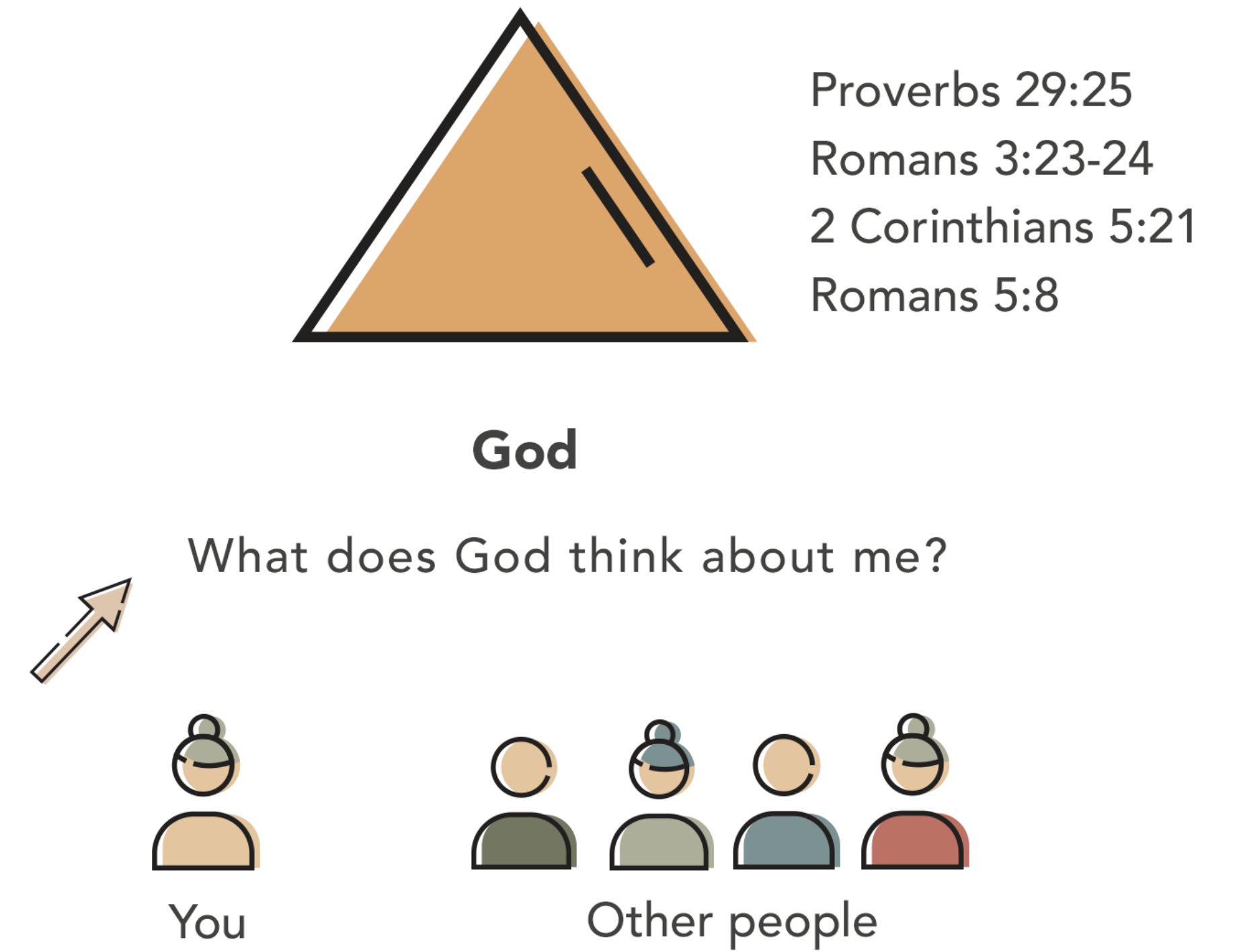
**Proverbs 29:25**

# FEAR OF MAN VS

# FEAR OF GOD



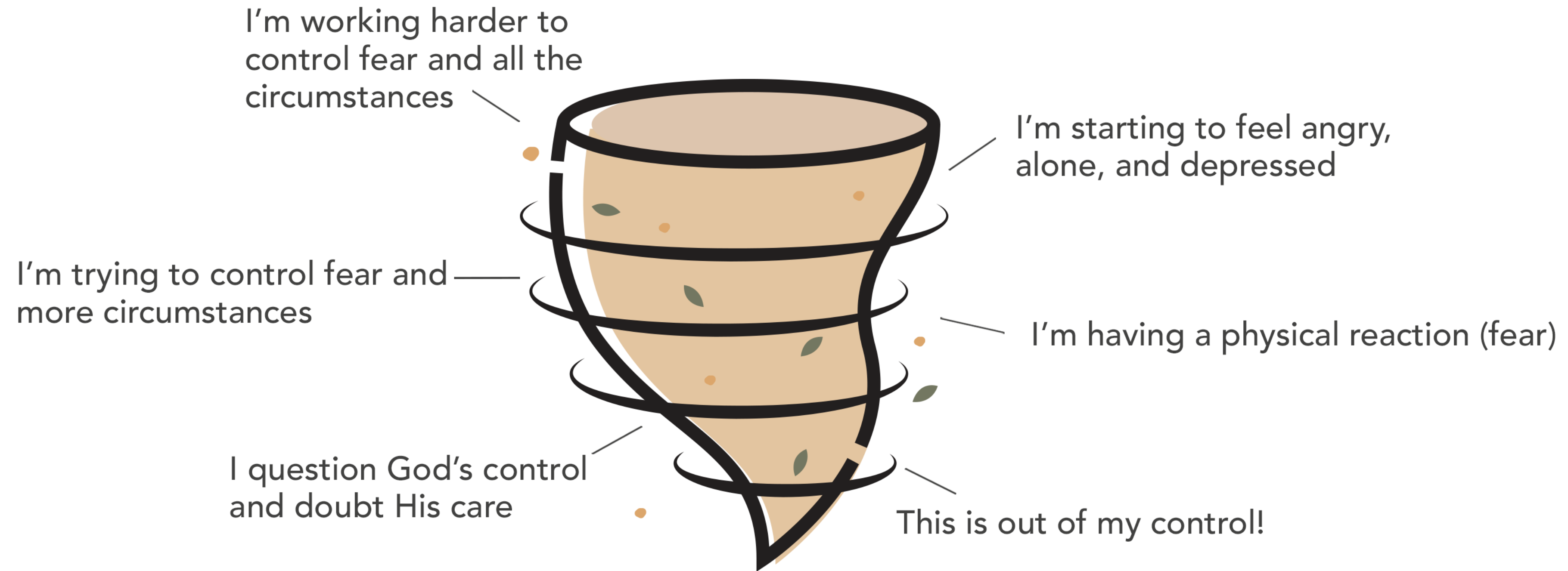
**Desire:**  
Love  
Acceptance  
Approval  
Respect  
Significance  
**Therefore, fears rejection**



Proverbs 29:25  
Romans 3:23-24  
2 Corinthians 5:21  
Romans 5:8

Romans 3:23-24

# TORNADO OF ANXIETY



**Matthew 6:25-34 (trust God, seek Him first), 1 Peter 5:7-11 (cast your cares on Him), Philippians 4:4-9 (talk to God, think rightly)**

What is something that you have taken away from this class?





**THREE WEEKENDS**  
AUGUST 16-17  
SEPTEMBER 20-21  
OCTOBER 18-19

**SAVE THE DATES**

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