

Questions That Matter

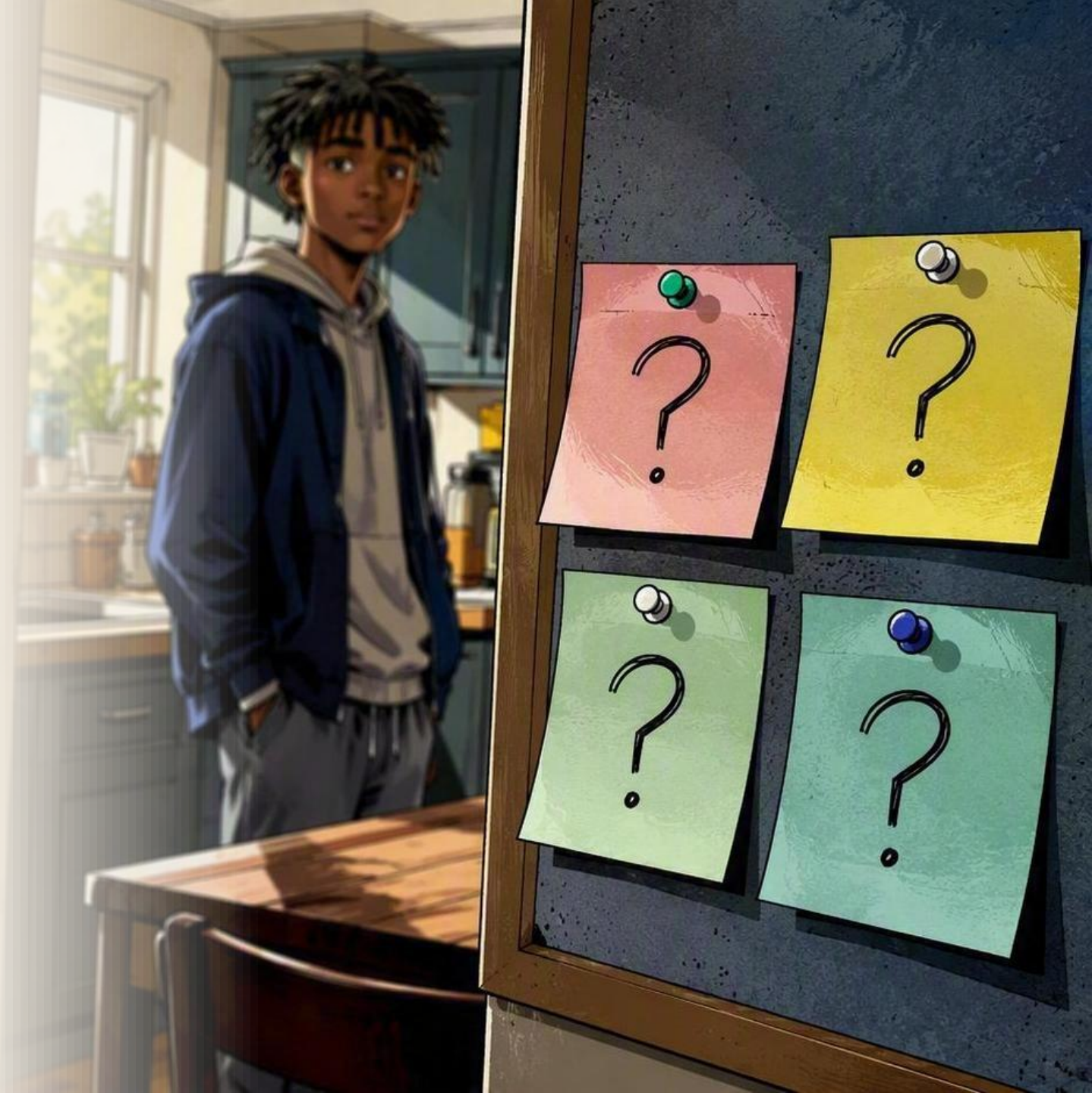
Biblical Answers for Real Life

Four-week summer study



Four questions that shape real life

- Who am I?
- How do I handle pressure?
- What makes relationships healthy?
- What does a good future look like?



One question leads to the next

What you believe about who you are affects:

what you feel you must prove;

how you handle pressure;

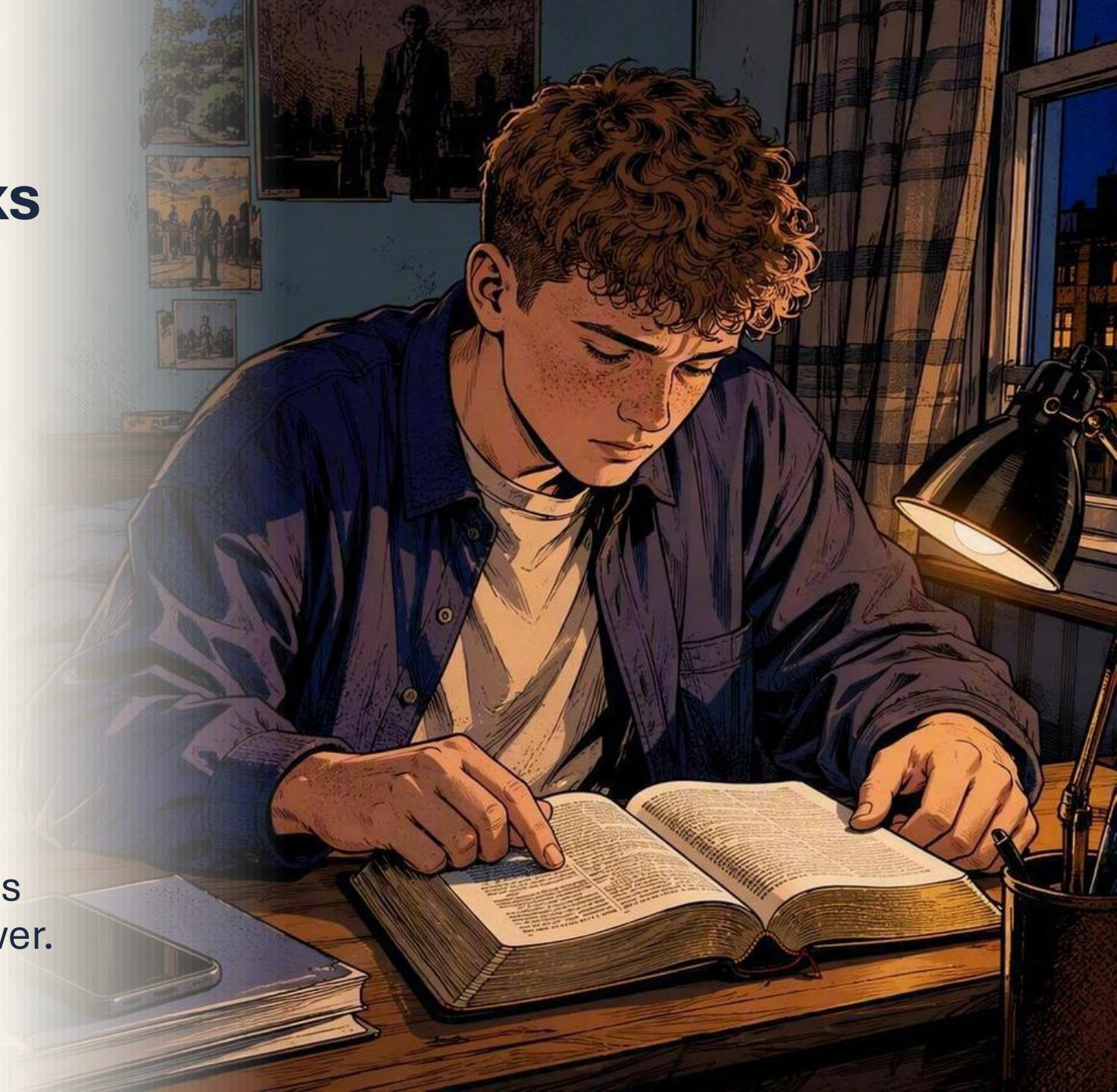
how you treat people;

what you chase in the future.



How each session works

- Begin with a real question.
- Consider answers people find online.
- Open the Bible.
- Understand what the Bible teaches.
- Apply the biblical answer to real life.
- Websites and articles can help us start. The Bible gives us the answer.



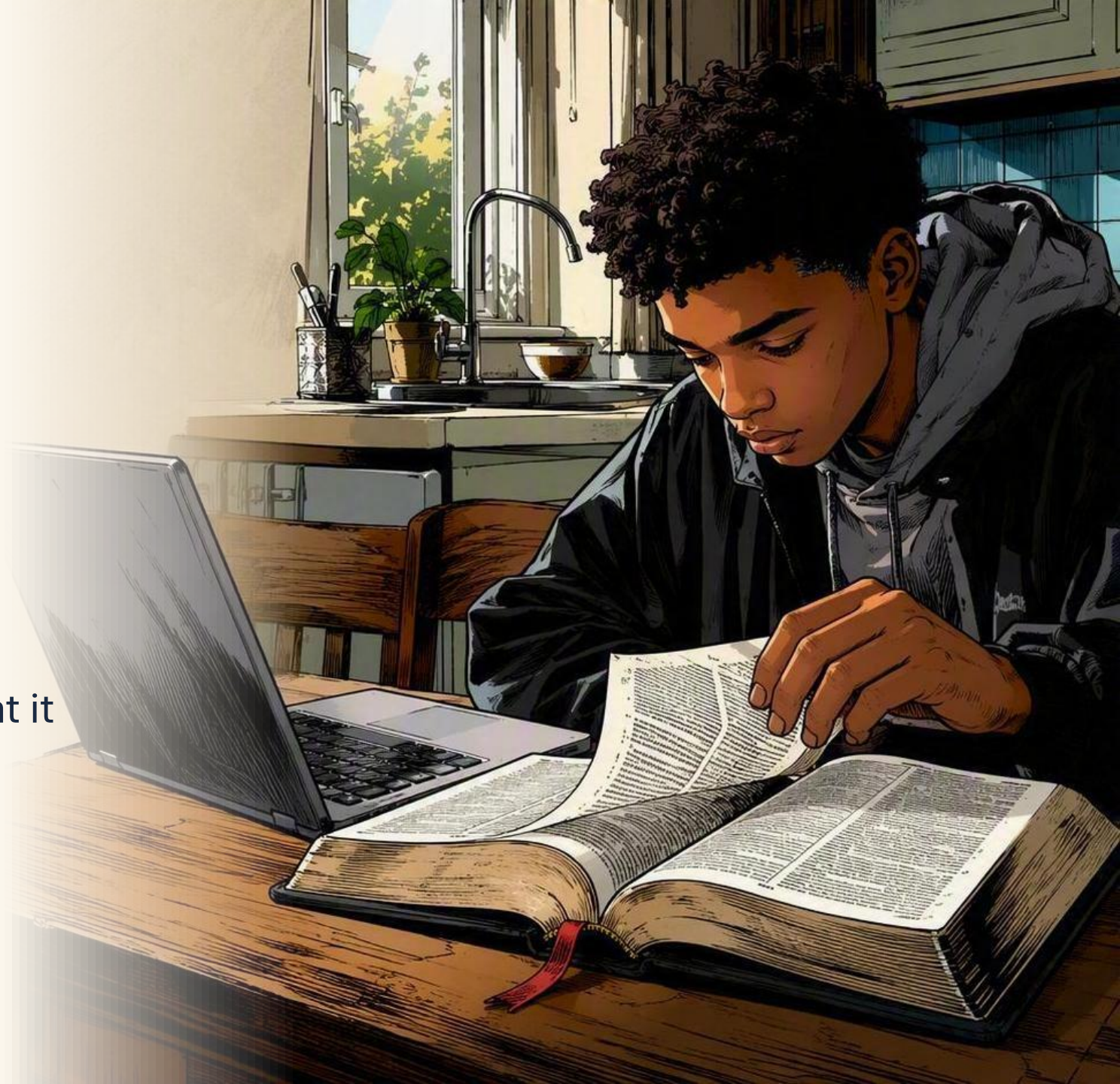
How we will use GotQuestions

GotQuestions can help us by:

- naming common questions;
- giving a short Christian answer;
- pointing us to Bible passages.

But we will not stop at the article.

We will open the Bible and see what it says.



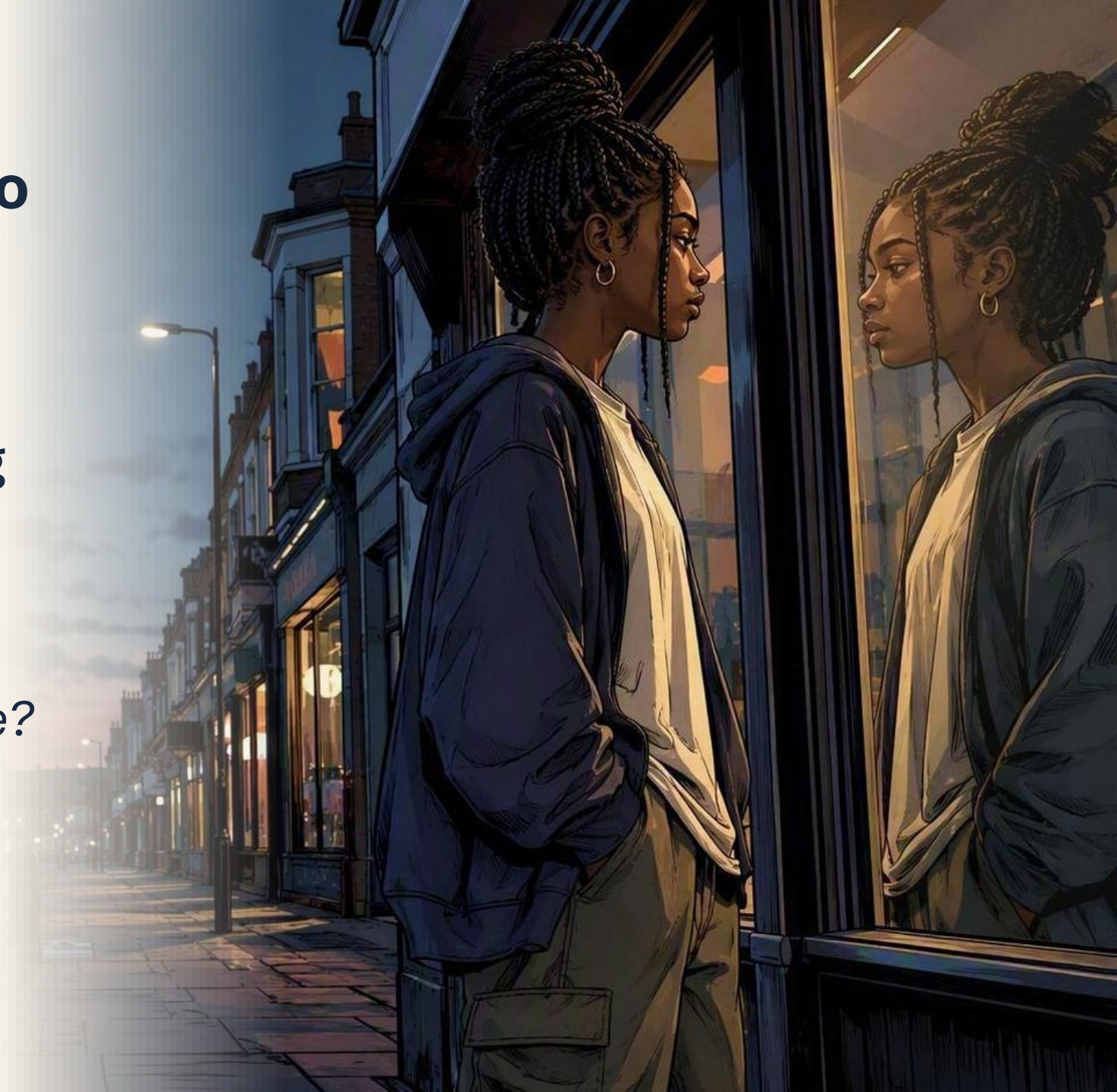
Session 1

Who Am I and Where Do I Belong?

**Identity, the body,
comparison and belonging
to Christ**

Central question:

Who has the right to define me?



What tries to define us?

- Appearance
- Grades
- Followers
- Family and culture
- Feelings
- Mistakes
- Other people's opinions



Not enough to carry you

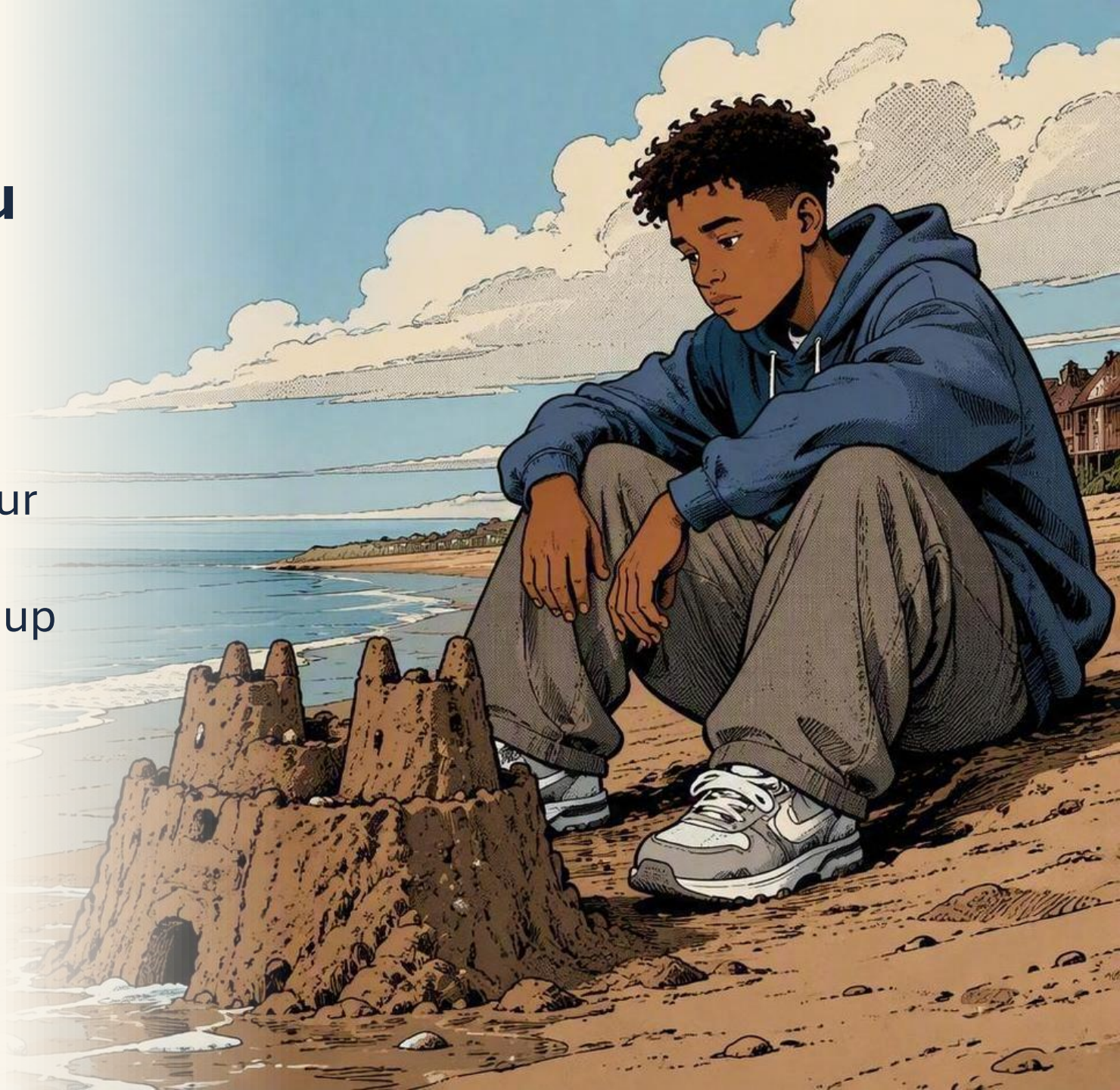
Family, results and feelings all matter.

But none of them can tell you your full worth:

appearance changes; results go up and down;

followers disappear; opinions contradict each other.

Even a good thing becomes a burden when you have to keep proving it.



Discuss

Which of these speaks loudest in your life?

- Who or what has most shaped how you see yourself?
- Can any one thing tell the whole truth about who you are?
- What happens when what you build your identity on lets you down?



A real question online

GotQuestions article:

“What is to be our true identity?”

The article says our true identity is found in Jesus Christ.

It begins with being created in God’s image and continues with new life in Christ.

[Insert screenshot of article title and opening section.]

QUESTION

What is to be our true identity?



ANSWER

In a world where we are constantly bombarded with conflicting messages about who we are and who we should be, discovering our true identity can be a confusing process. According to the Bible, however, our true identity is found in Jesus Christ. Once we understand this, our focus shifts from self-perception to a God-centered perspective that gives purpose, joy, and peace.

The foundation of our true identity is the fact that we are created in the image of God. [Genesis 1:27](#) states, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (ESV). God’s divine imprint on us signifies that we have inherent worth and dignity and sets the stage for understanding our true identity and who we are meant to be.

Our true identity is further defined by the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Through faith in His crucifixion and resurrection, we are forgiven and transformed. [Second Corinthians 5:17](#) proclaims, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a [new creation](#). The old has passed away; behold, the new has come” (ESV). In Christ, we are made new, relinquishing the old self rooted in sin and embracing new life in Him.

When we believe in Christ for salvation, we are adopted into God’s family, which is central to our true identity: “In Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith” ([Galatians 3:26](#)). And [John 1:12](#) affirms, “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God” (ESV). Our new birth, our adoption into God’s family, changes our relationship with God. We are heirs with Christ and deeply loved by the Father.

Repeatedly in Scripture, believers are said to be “[in Christ](#).” Our identity is wrapped up in Him. [Colossians 3:3](#) goes so far as to say, “For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” In His [High Priestly Prayer](#), Jesus prayed this kind of unity: “I pray . . . that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity” ([John 17:20–23](#)). Believers are “predestined to be conformed to the image of [God’s] Son” ([Romans 8:29](#)).

Our true identity in Christ also includes the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. [Romans 8:9](#) states, “You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you” (ESV). The Holy Spirit guides, comforts, and equips us to live as children of God, bearing the fruit of the Spirit in our daily lives.

Another aspect of our true identity is freedom from condemnation. [Romans 8:1](#) assures us, “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (ESV). The freedom we have in Christ allows us to live boldly, knowing that past sins do not define us. We are instead defined by God, who “created [us] in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (ESV). As God’s creation, we are called to live out our faith in holiness and righteousness.

Bible passages in the article

The article uses:

- Genesis 1:27
- 2 Corinthians 5:17
- Colossians 3:3
- We will study these passages in context:
 - Genesis 1:26-28
 - 2 Corinthians 5:14-17
 - Colossians 3:1-4

The foundation of our true identity is the fact that we are created in the image of God. [Genesis 1:27](#) states, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (ESV). God’s divine imprint on us signifies that we have inherent worth and dignity and sets the stage for understanding our true identity and who we are meant to be.

Our true identity is further defined by the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Through faith in His crucifixion and resurrection, we are forgiven and transformed. [Second Corinthians 5:17](#) proclaims, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a [new creation](#). The old has passed away; behold, the new has come” (ESV). In Christ, we are made new, relinquishing the old self rooted in sin and embracing new life in Him.

When we believe in Christ for salvation, we are adopted into God’s family, which is central to our true identity: “In Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith” ([Galatians 3:26](#)). And [John 1:12](#) affirms, “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God” (ESV). Our new birth, our adoption into God’s family, changes our relationship with God. We are heirs with Christ and deeply loved by the Father.

Repeatedly in Scripture, believers are said to be “[in Christ](#).” Our identity is wrapped up in Him. [Colossians 3:3](#) goes so far as to say, “For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” In His [High Priestly Prayer](#), Jesus prayed this kind of unity: “I pray . . . that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity” ([John 17:20–23](#)). Believers are “predestined to be conformed to the image of [God’s] Son” ([Romans 8:29](#)).

Our true identity in Christ also includes the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. [Romans 8:9](#) states, “You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you” (ESV). The Holy Spirit guides, comforts, and equips us to live as children of God, bearing the fruit of the Spirit in our daily lives.

Another aspect of our true identity is freedom from condemnation. [Romans 8:1](#) assures us, “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (ESV). The freedom we have in Christ allows us to live boldly, knowing that past sins do not define us. We are

Where identity actually starts

“Let us make mankind in our image...”

Genesis 1:26-28

**Identity begins with God—
not with achievements,
popularity or trying to define
ourselves.**



Worth before you've done anything

Before anyone had achieved anything, God gave people dignity, relationships and responsibility.

Genesis 1:26-28

This stops us boasting when we succeed or giving up when we fail.

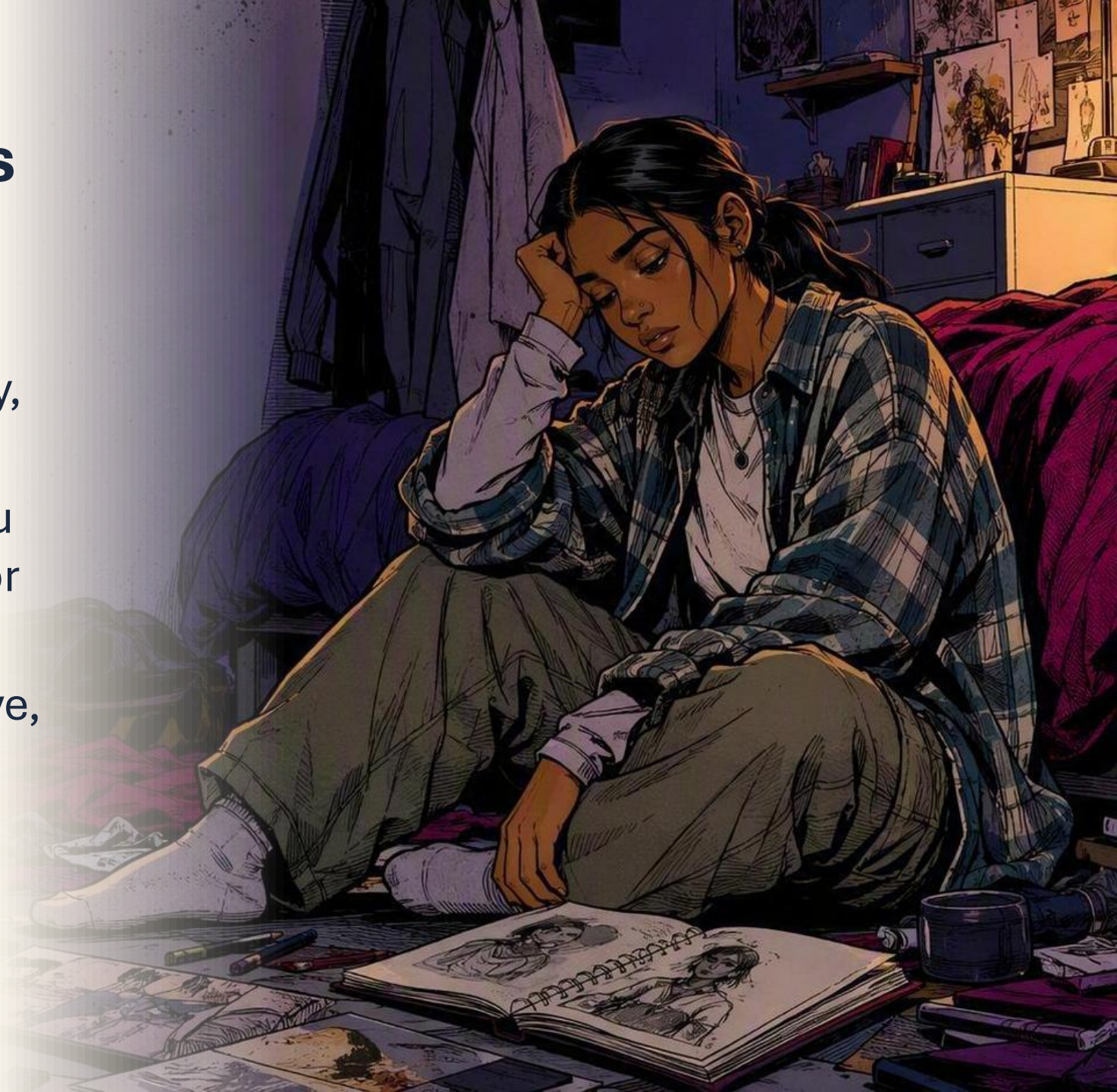


Why defining yourself is tiring

When you build your own identity, you also have to keep it going.

You have to keep proving that you are successful, popular, strong or always okay.

God gives us an identity to receive, not one we have to maintain.



Think about it

- What difference does it make that God gave you worth before you achieved anything?
- Why is “define yourself” harder than it sounds?
- How would this change the way we talk about others online?



Created in God's image

- Every person has dignity.
- God gives us our value. We do not earn it.
- Ability, appearance and status do not make someone more human.



Equally made in God's image

It is not a quality some people have more of.

A disabled classmate, a struggling student and a top achiever all bear God's image equally.

This is why the Bible takes cruelty and contempt so seriously.

Genesis 1:26-28



New creation in Christ

“If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come.”

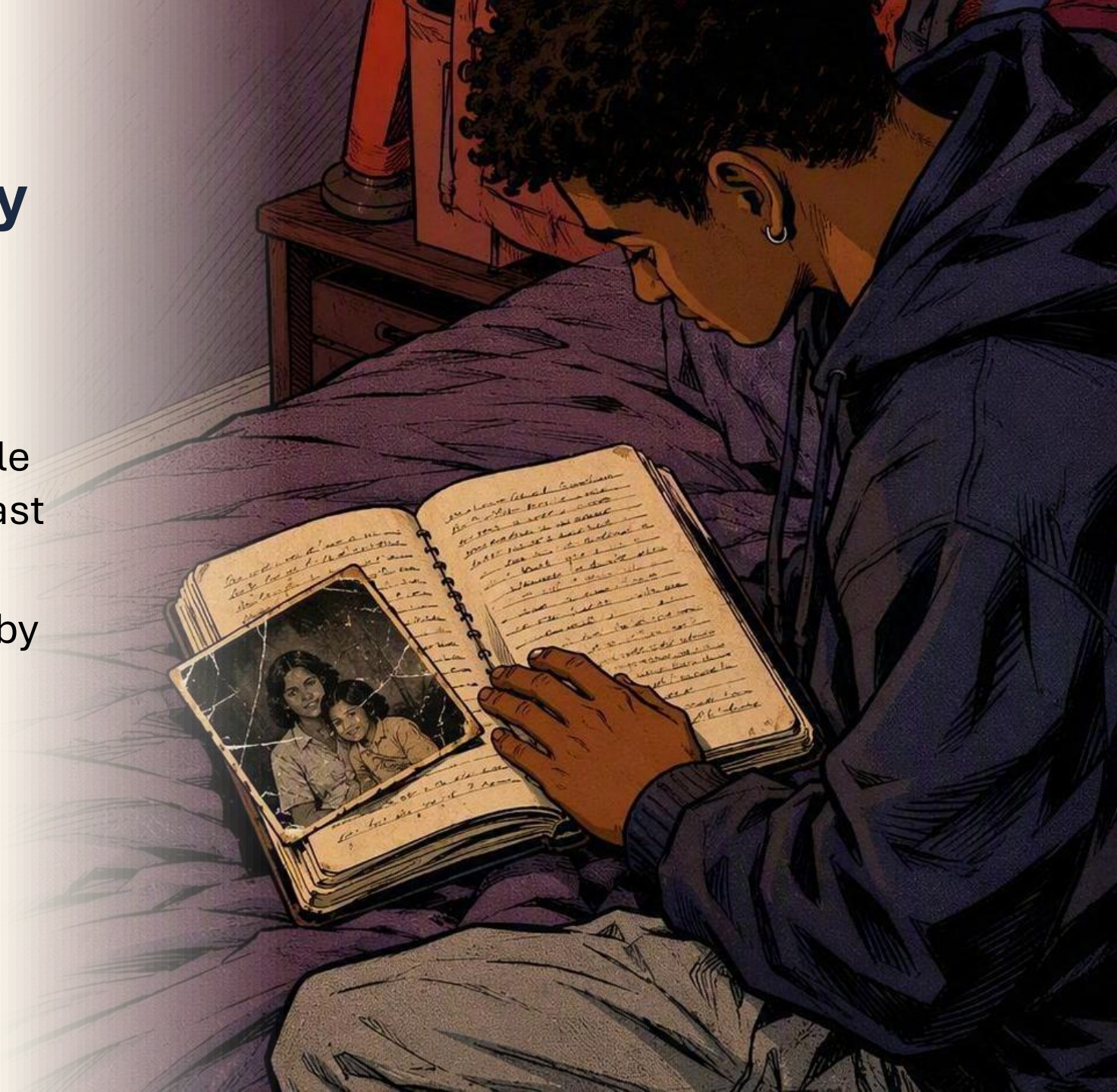
- **2 Corinthians 5:14-17**
- Christ's death and resurrection do not only give us a label.
- They give us a new identity.
- In Christ, the old verdict does not have the final word.
- God begins a new creation in us.



More than your old story

2 Corinthians 5:16-17

- Paul says we no longer view people only by outward appearance or past record.
- In Christ, a person is not trapped by what others say, what they have done, or what they used to be.
- The new creation has come.



Discuss

- What does it mean that every person is made in God's image?
- What does 2 Corinthians 5 say changes in Christ?
- What difference does Colossians 3 make to the way you see yourself?



Identity in Christ

“Your life is now hidden with Christ in God.”

Colossians 3:1-4

Christ becomes the deepest source of belonging, direction and hope.



Why Christ?

“Christ died for our sins... he was buried, and he was raised.”

1 Corinthians 15:3-4

Jesus lived the life we could not live and died the death we deserved.

He rose from the dead so that everyone who trusts him is given new life and a secure place with God.

That is what it means to be “hidden with Christ.”



A life that cannot be cancelled

Colossians 3:1-4

A life hidden with Christ cannot be cancelled by:

- a bad result;
- a broken friendship;
- a public failure.

This belonging comes through trusting Christ, not through effort or background.



Belonging changes everything

We do not follow Christ to prove who we are.

We live from the identity he has given us.

Colossians 3:1-2



Discuss

- What would change if your deepest sense of belonging was secure?
- Where do you currently look for that security?
- What would it look like to believe this on Monday morning?



More than a label

I am more than:

- My appearance
- My results
- My popularity
- My feelings
- My failures

**I am created by God, known
by God and called to belong
to Christ.**



What GotQuestions got right

It helped us name the question:

“What is my true identity?”

It pointed us to the Bible.

The Bible showed us the deeper answer:

We are created by God, known by God and called to belong to Christ.



In your groups

Take one of the statements on the next slide.

Discuss:

- Who says this, and where do we hear it?
- Why does it feel convincing?
- Which passage today speaks to it: Genesis 1, 2 Corinthians 5 or Colossians 3?
- How would Scripture rewrite it?



Which message has the greatest influence?

- “I am only as good as my results.”
- “I need everyone's approval.”
- “My appearance determines my value.”
- “My mistakes define me.”

Discuss: How would Scripture rewrite the message?



Session 1 response

- I am created by God.
- I am known by God.
- I am called to belong to Christ.

One label I need to stop treating as the final word:

One truth I need to remember:



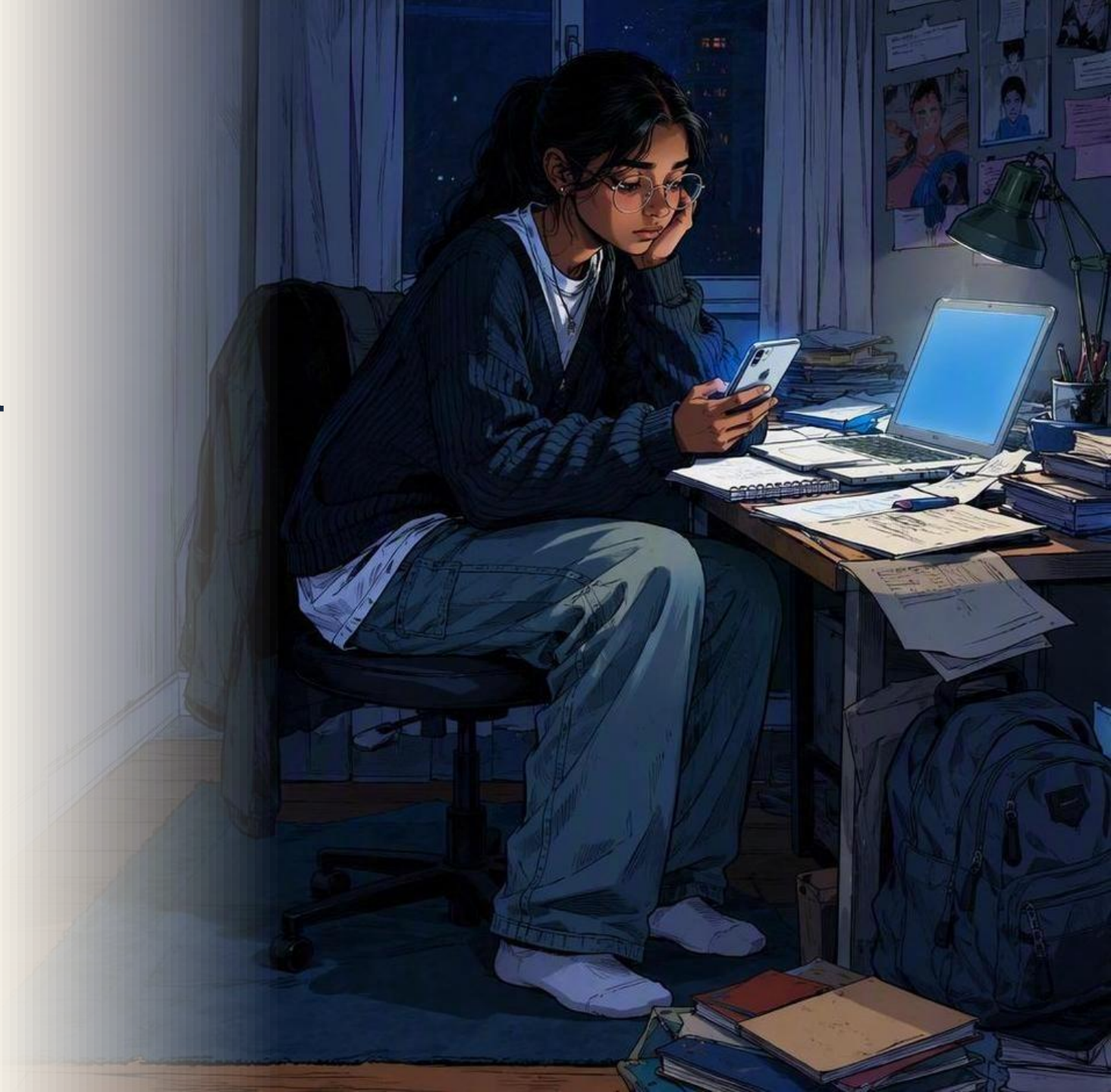
Session 2

How Do I Handle Pressure?

Anxiety, loneliness, school pressure and biblical resilience

Central question:

What can I do when pressure begins to control me?



Before we begin

Feeling anxious does not mean your faith is weak.

The Bible is full of believers who talked honestly about being in distress.

God gives us truth, prayer, people and practical steps.



The pressure pile-up

- Exams are approaching.
- Family expectations feel heavy.
- Friends appear to be doing better.
- Sleep is becoming difficult.
- Everyone else seems to be coping.

What pressures can you see?



Two things that make it worse

One pressure may already be hard. Several pressures at once can feel overwhelming.

Poor sleep quietly makes everything else harder.

It may look as though everyone else is coping, but they often are not. People show their best selves in public.

What else would you add? Caring responsibilities, money, travel, part-time work?



The hidden rules that add pressure

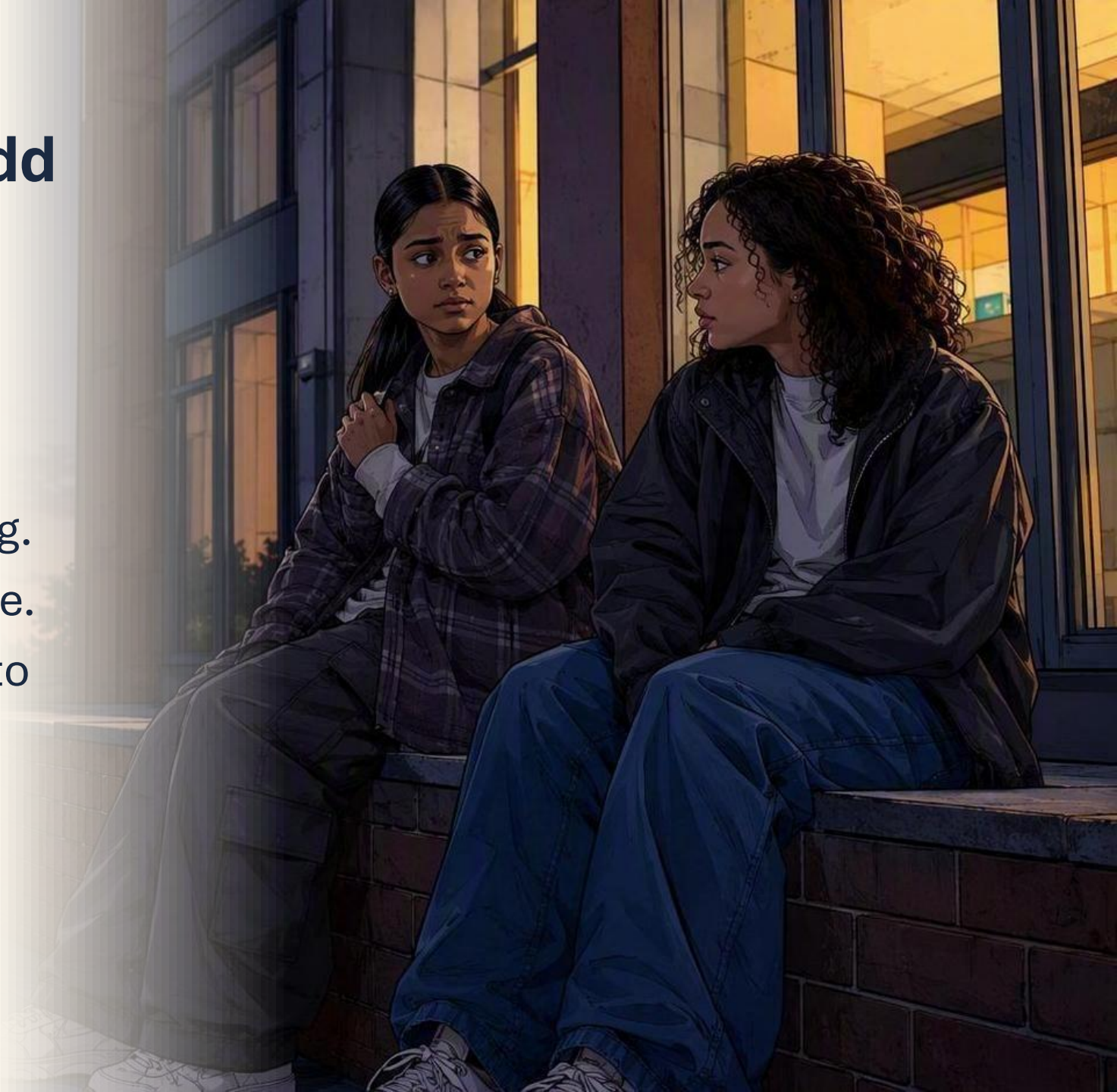
I must always succeed.

I must not disappoint anyone.

I must look as though I am coping.

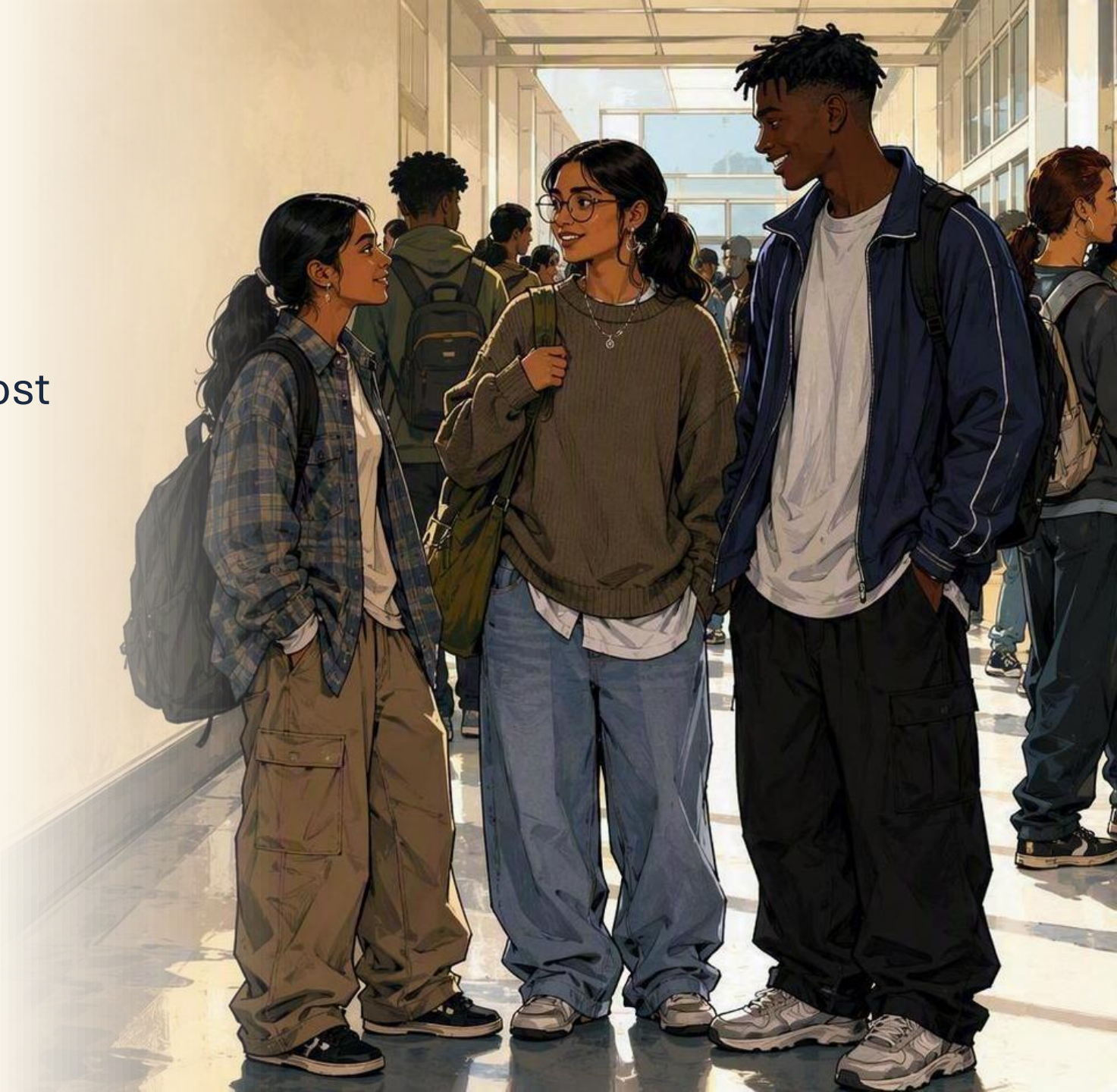
I must keep up with everyone else.

These rules can turn pressure into anxiety.



Discuss

- What kinds of pressure are most common at your school or college?
- Do people talk about it honestly?
- Which of these pressures is most familiar to you?



A real question online

GotQuestions article:

“How can I overcome exam/test anxiety?”

The article recognises that exams bring pressure and anxiety.

It gives practical advice: prepare, rest, pray, relax, trust and obey.

[Insert screenshot of article title and advice list.]

QUESTION

How can I overcome exam/test anxiety?



ANSWER

Taking tests is a common part of the formal educational process. Students in school know that it's only a matter of time before exam week rolls around again—and, leading up to that time, there are the quizzes, assessments, practices, exercises, reviews, etc. Some students take it all in stride; others dread being tested; some are so anxious about making the grade on exams that they “freeze” or “choke” on the big day—which, of course, doesn't help in making the grade.

Although the Bible does not address taking exams as practiced in modern education, it does have something to say about [anxiety](#) and facing pressure. Here is some biblical and practical advice on handling exam anxiety:

Prepare. Early preparation for a test is vital. As Benjamin Franklin said, “By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.” Good study habits help us learn the material efficiently and prevent “cramming” the night before. Part of preparation is communicating ahead of time with the instructor in order to know what material will be covered on the test. Be sure to balance preparation for an exam with other activities. Remember that “much study wearies the body” ([Ecclesiastes 12:12](#)). So don't overdo it, and be sure to pay attention to the next point:

Rest. In the days leading up to an exam, be sure to eat well and get some exercise. A good night's sleep the night before the test is almost always better than a late-night cram session.

Pray. Ask the Lord for clarity of thought, the ability to focus, and the skill to make wise use of time during the test. Ask for the [peace of God](#) to control your heart ([Philippians 4:7](#)).

Relax. Exams can be fearful because they involve an element of the unknown. Refuse to panic; instead, allow the Holy Spirit to fill you with His fruit of peace. All things are known to God, and we know that He is in control. No matter what, He has promised to be with His children and not forsake them ([Hebrews 13:5](#)).

Trust. Take to heart God's promise that, no matter what, He loves His own ([Romans 8:38–39](#)). His acceptance of us is based on the perfect work of His Son, not on our academic success (or failure).

Obey. The command is “fear not” ([Luke 12:7](#)). Take courage, trust in the Lord, and do your best.

[Philippians 4:6](#) says, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” The “anything” here includes test-taking; the “every situation” includes when the instructor hands out exams—or says it's time to log in to the exam online. We shouldn't be anxious about exams, especially if we are doing as the verse says: praying with a spirit of

Bible passages in the article

The article uses:

- Philippians 4:6-7
 - Luke 12:7
 - Romans 8:38-39
- We will study these passages in context:
- Luke 12:4-7
 - Romans 8:31-39
 - Philippians 4:4-9

Pray. Ask the Lord for clarity of thought, the ability to focus, and the skill to make wise use of time during the test. Ask for the [peace of God](#) to control your heart ([Philippians 4:7](#)).

Relax. Exams can be fearful because they involve an element of the unknown. Refuse to panic; instead, allow the Holy Spirit to fill you with

Trust. Take to heart God's promise that, no matter what, He loves His own ([Romans 8:38–39](#)). His acceptance of us is based on the perfect work of His Son, not on our academic success (or failure).

Obey. The command is “fear not” ([Luke 12:7](#)). Take courage, trust in the Lord, and do your best.

[Philippians 4:6](#) says, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” The “anything” here includes test-taking; the “every situation” includes when the instructor hands out exams—or says it’s

[Philippians 4:6](#) says, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” The “anything” here includes test-taking; the “every situation” includes when the instructor hands out exams—or says it’s time to log in to the exam online. We shouldn’t be anxious about exams, especially if we are doing as the verse says: praying with a spirit of gratitude and appealing to the Lord for help.

God knows you under pressure

“Even the hairs of your head are all numbered.”

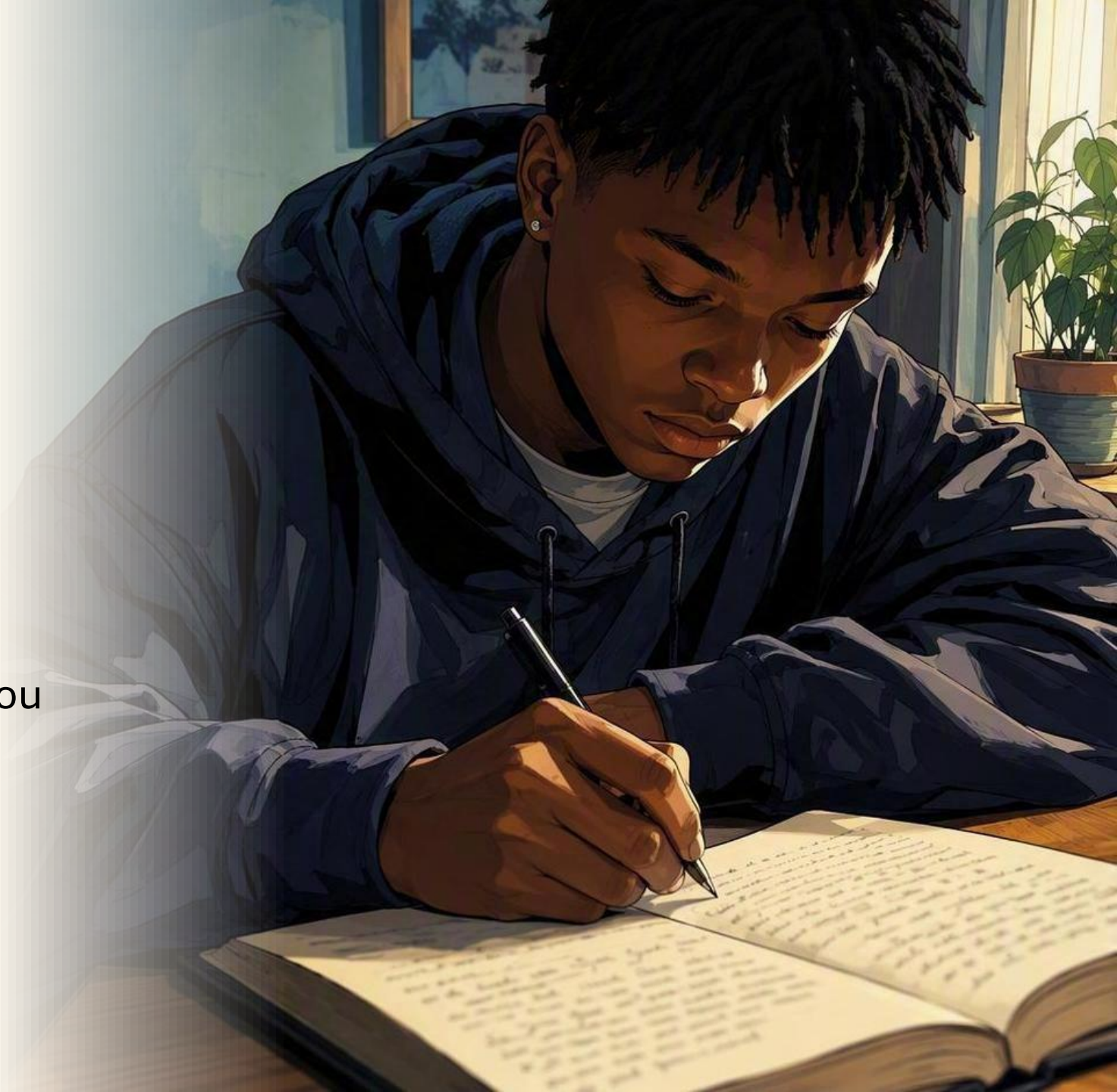
- **Luke 12:4-7**
- Jesus speaks to people who may feel afraid.
- He reminds them that the Father sees, knows and values them.
- Pressure can make you feel invisible.
- Jesus says you are not forgotten.



Fear does not mean forgotten

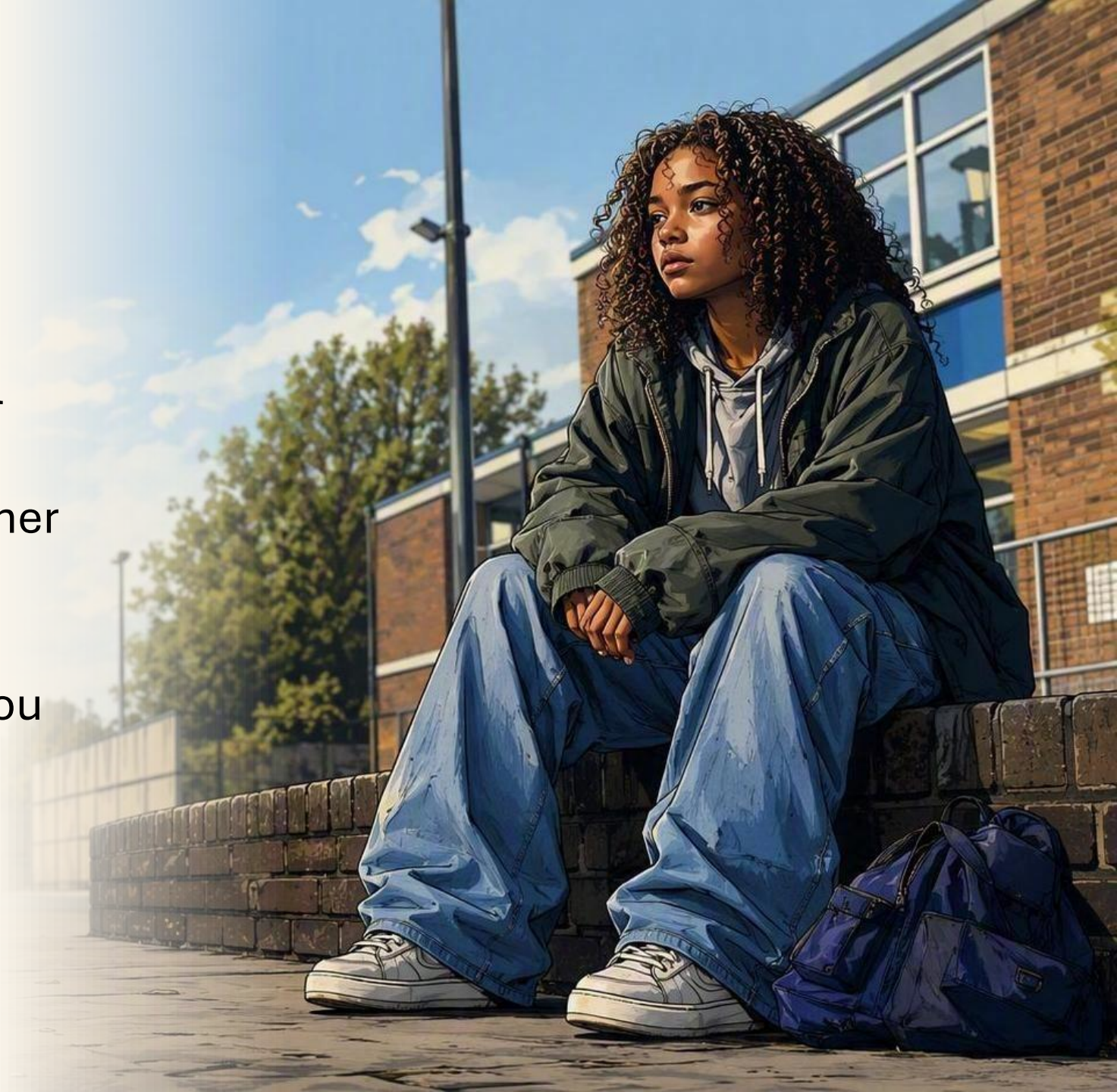
Luke 12:4-7

- Jesus does not pretend fear is unreal.
- He points us to the Father who knows us completely.
- You are worth more to God than you feel when pressure is loud.



Think about it

- What pressures make you feel invisible or forgotten?
- What does Luke 12 say the Father knows?
- How could remembering your value to God change the way you face pressure?



READ

Romans 8:31-39

- As we read, notice:
- What trouble and pressure Paul names.
- What Christ has done.
- What cannot separate us from God's love.



Nothing can separate us from Christ

“Nothing... will be able to separate us from the love of God.”

- **Romans 8:31-39**
- Paul names trouble, pressure, danger and hardship.
- He does not say believers avoid every difficulty.
- He says none of it can separate us from God’s love in Christ.



Pressure is not the final word

Romans 8:31-39

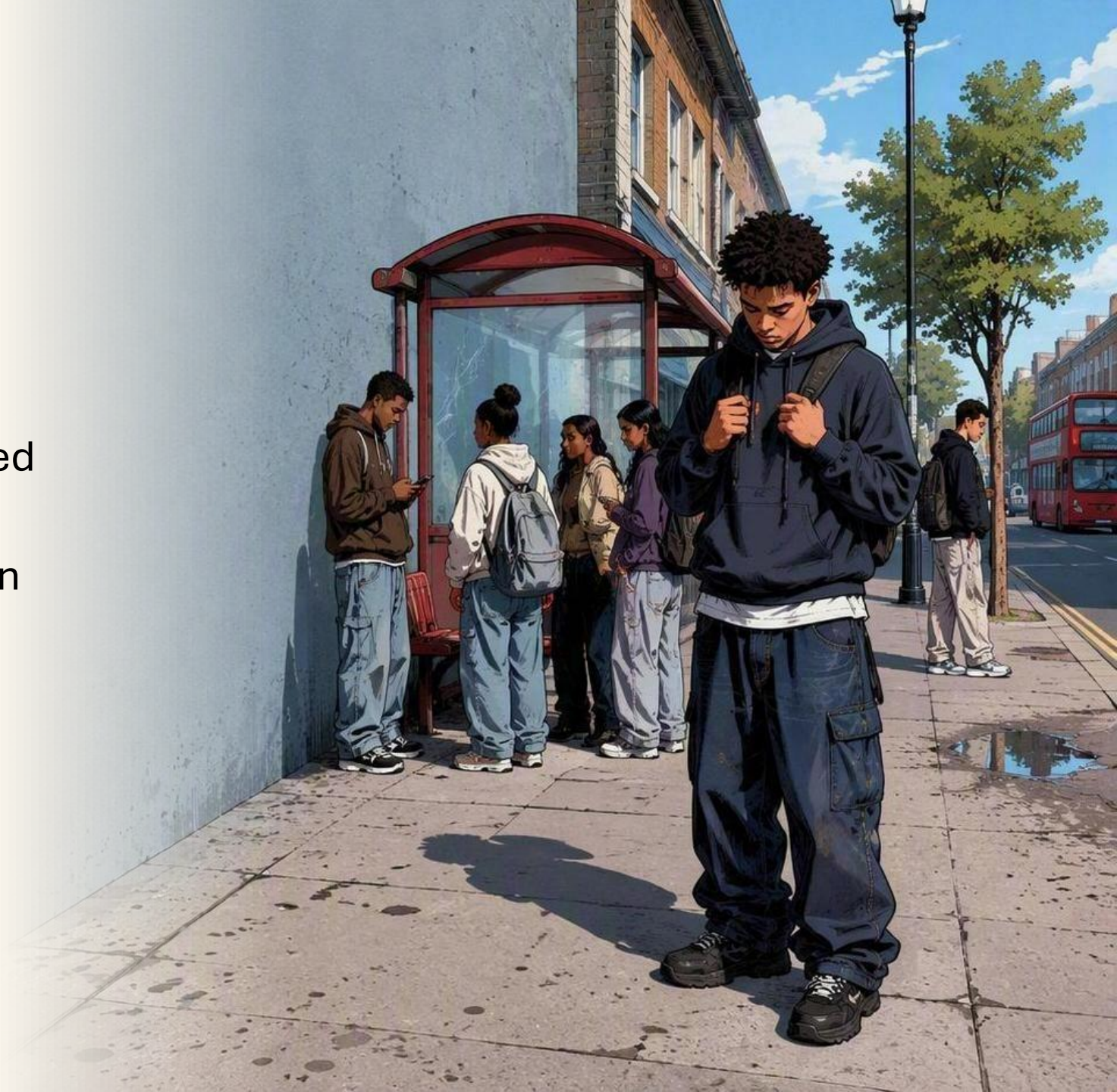
- Pressure can feel bigger than everything else.
- Romans 8 tells us to look at what is stronger:
- **Christ died.**
- **Christ was raised.**
- **Christ is for us.**
- **God's love holds us.**



Christ is for us

Romans 8:31-34

- Pressure can make us feel accused or defeated.
- Paul asks: If God is for us, who can be against us?
- Christ died, was raised and now speaks for us.
- Our confidence rests in him.



Held by a stronger love

Romans 8:35-39

- Trouble is real, but it cannot cut us off from Christ.
- When pressure rises, remember what is true:
- God is for you in Christ.
- Nothing can separate you from his love.
- Take today's next faithful step.



Discuss

- Which pressure feels most powerful right now?
- What does Romans 8 say is stronger?
- What would it look like to remember that God is for you in Christ this week?



Prayer and the mind

Philippians 4:4-9

- Bring specific concerns to God with thanksgiving.
- Receive his peace.
- Direct your mind towards truth.
- Practise what you have learned.



What are you taking in each day?

Philippians 4:4-9

- What we watch, read and scroll through can affect how we think and feel.
- Paul tells us to choose what is true, honourable and good.
- Pray with thanksgiving. Choose what fills your mind. Keep steady habits of sleep, food and study.



You don't have to cope alone

"Carry each other's burdens."

Galatians 6:2

- Strength does not mean handling everything alone.
- Prayer, wise action and support belong together.



Help isn't weakness

Galatians 6:2

Carrying one another's burdens fulfils the law of Christ.

It also means being the friend who notices.

You could speak to a parent or carer, a youth leader, a trusted teacher, the school pastoral team or your GP.



Apply it

- What would it look like to pray specifically rather than generally?
- What do you watch, read or scroll through late at night?
- Who could you speak to this week?
- Who might need you to notice them?



The next faithful step

Naming what is happening is not failure. It is the first step towards change.

When pressure rises:

- Name what is happening.
- Bring it to God.
- Remember what is true.
- Speak to someone.
- Take one wise next step.



Discuss

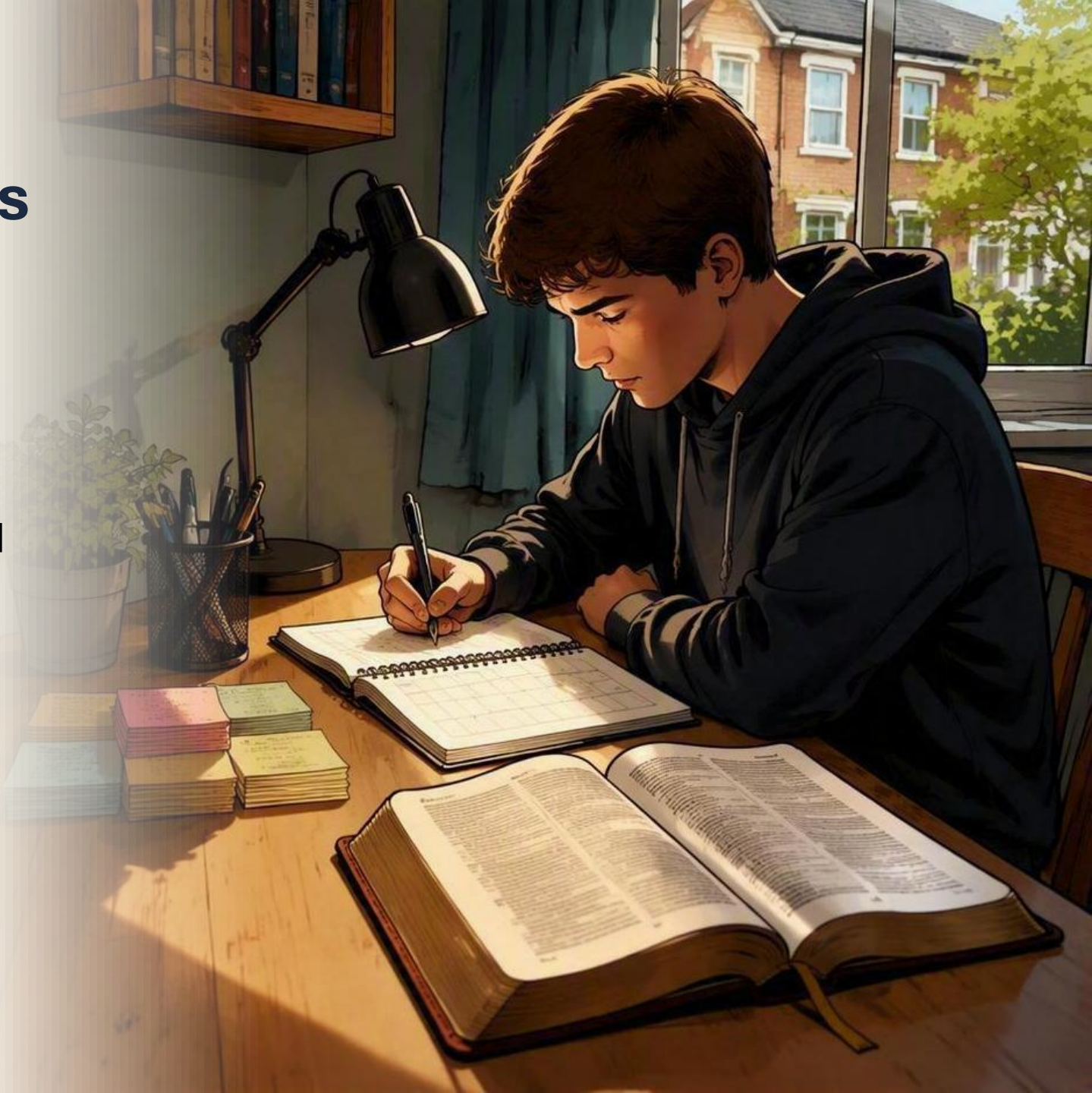
- Which of these five steps do you usually skip?
- What is one small next step you could take this week?



Where Scripture takes us

GotQuestions helped us identify the question and pointed us to Bible references.

- We opened Luke 12, Romans 8 and Philippians 4 in context.
- Scripture shows us:
- the Father sees and values us;
- nothing separates us from Christ's love;
- we can pray with thanksgiving and choose what fills our minds.



Case study

A student fears disappointing their family and falling behind friends.

Discuss:

- What are they believing?
- What can they act on?
- What must they entrust to God?
- Who could help?
- What is one wise next step?



Session 2 response

Pressure is real.

**I can bring it to God,
remember what is true, let
people help and take the
next faithful step.**

**One concern to bring to
God:**

One action to take:



Session 3

What Makes Relationships Healthy?

Friendship, dating, sex,
respect and online pressure

Central question:

*What does it mean to honour
God and other people?*



Before we begin

We will speak honestly and respectfully.

Christian teaching starts with God's good design, not just rules.

The gospel offers truth, forgiveness and change.



Healthy or unhealthy?

What belongs in a healthy relationship?

- Trust
- Honesty
- Pressure
- Respect
- Control
- Faithfulness
- Jealousy
- Self-control



When control looks like love

Jealousy can look like care.

Control can look like protection.

Pressure can look like commitment.

This applies to friendships and family, not only to dating.



Discuss

- What makes a friendship feel safe?
- Which unhealthy pattern is easiest to mistake for love?
- Where do you see these patterns online?



A real question online

GotQuestions article:

“Is sexting a sin?”

This article asks whether sexual messages and images fit with a holy Christian life.

It connects digital behaviour with lust, purity, wisdom and honouring God.

[Insert screenshot of article title and opening section.]

QUESTION

Is sexting a sin?



ANSWER

“Sexting” is obscene texting. It is the act of sending sexually explicit messages and/or photographs, usually between mobile phones. Sexting has become so prevalent that, in August 2012, the word *sexting* was listed for the first time in *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*.

Some people view sexting as harmless. After all, there are only a few words and maybe some pictures involved. It’s not as if people are actually committing adultery or fornication, right?

[Matthew 5:28](#) says, “I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” This moral concept also applies to how women look at men, and Jesus clearly equates lust with adultery here. So the fact that “only words or pictures are involved” is obviously immaterial to God. What matters is what is in our hearts. [Colossians 3:5](#) warns us to “put to death” whatever belongs to our earthly nature, including sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires.

[Galatians 5:19–21](#) reveals the severe consequences of disobedience in this matter: “The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity . . . and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

But what about sexting between a married couple? Technically, sexting between a husband and his wife would not be a sin, since a satisfying sex life is a gift God gives to married couples. However, it is still ill-advised. We never know who might read our messages or view our pictures. It’s possible that someone may happen to see nude photos of your spouse over your shoulder, and this may cause lust in that person as a result. Sound unlikely? [James 1:14–15](#) says, “Each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.”

Given recent revelations concerning government surveillance of cellular telephone and internet traffic, as well as the ability of hackers to intercept personal communications, we should be careful in our use of phones and web-enabled devices. Even if we’re not sexting, we still face the problems of identity theft and data privacy.

It’s best to follow the advice of [1 Corinthians 10:31](#), “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”

FOR FURTHER STUDY

- The ESV Study Bible: Helping You Understand the Bible in a Deeper Way

Bible passages in the article

The article uses:

- Matthew 5:28
 - Colossians 3:5
 - 1 Corinthians 10:31
-
- We will study these passages in context:
 - Matthew 5:27-30
 - Colossians 3:1-10
 - 1 Corinthians 10:23-33

[Matthew 5:28](#) says, "I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart." This moral concept also applies to how women look at men, and Jesus clearly equates lust with adultery here. So the fact that "only words or pictures are involved" is obviously immaterial to God. What matters is what is in our hearts. [Colossians 3:5](#) warns us to "put to death" whatever belongs to our earthly nature, including sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires.

[Galatians 5:19–21](#) reveals the severe consequences of disobedience in this matter: "The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity . . . and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God."

Given recent revelations concerning government surveillance of cellular telephone and internet traffic, as well as the ability of hackers to intercept personal communications, we should be careful in our use of phones and web-enabled devices. Even if we're not sexting, we still face the problems of identity theft and data privacy.

It's best to follow the advice of [1 Corinthians 10:31](#), "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."

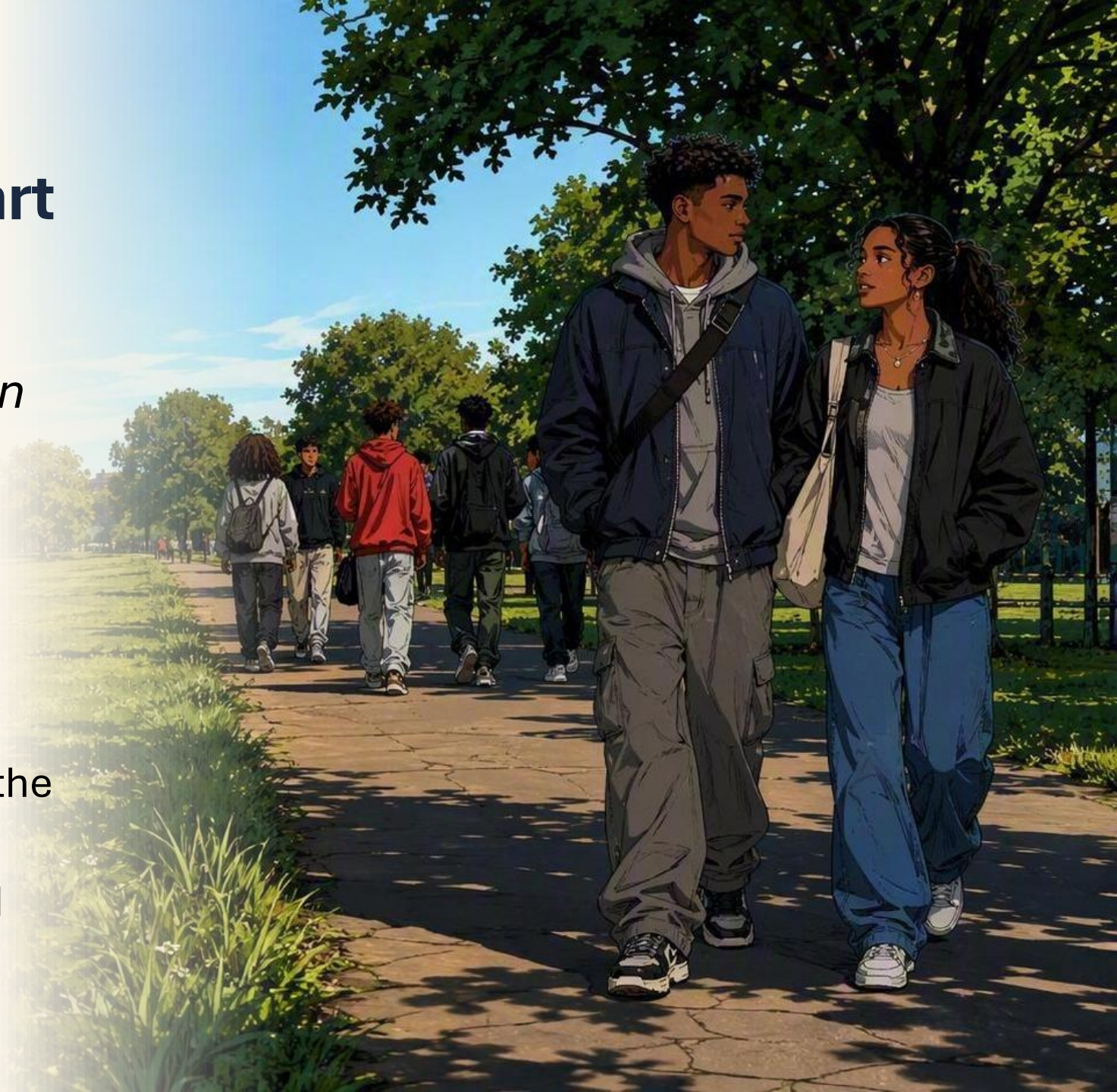
FOR FURTHER STUDY

• The ESV Study Bible: Helping You Understand the Bible in a Deeper Way

Jesus speaks to the heart

“Anyone who looks at a woman lustfully...”

- **Matthew 5:27-30**
- Jesus does not only speak about outward behaviour.
- He speaks about the direction of the heart.
- What we desire, imagine and feed matters to God.



Do not feed what harms you

Matthew 5:27-30

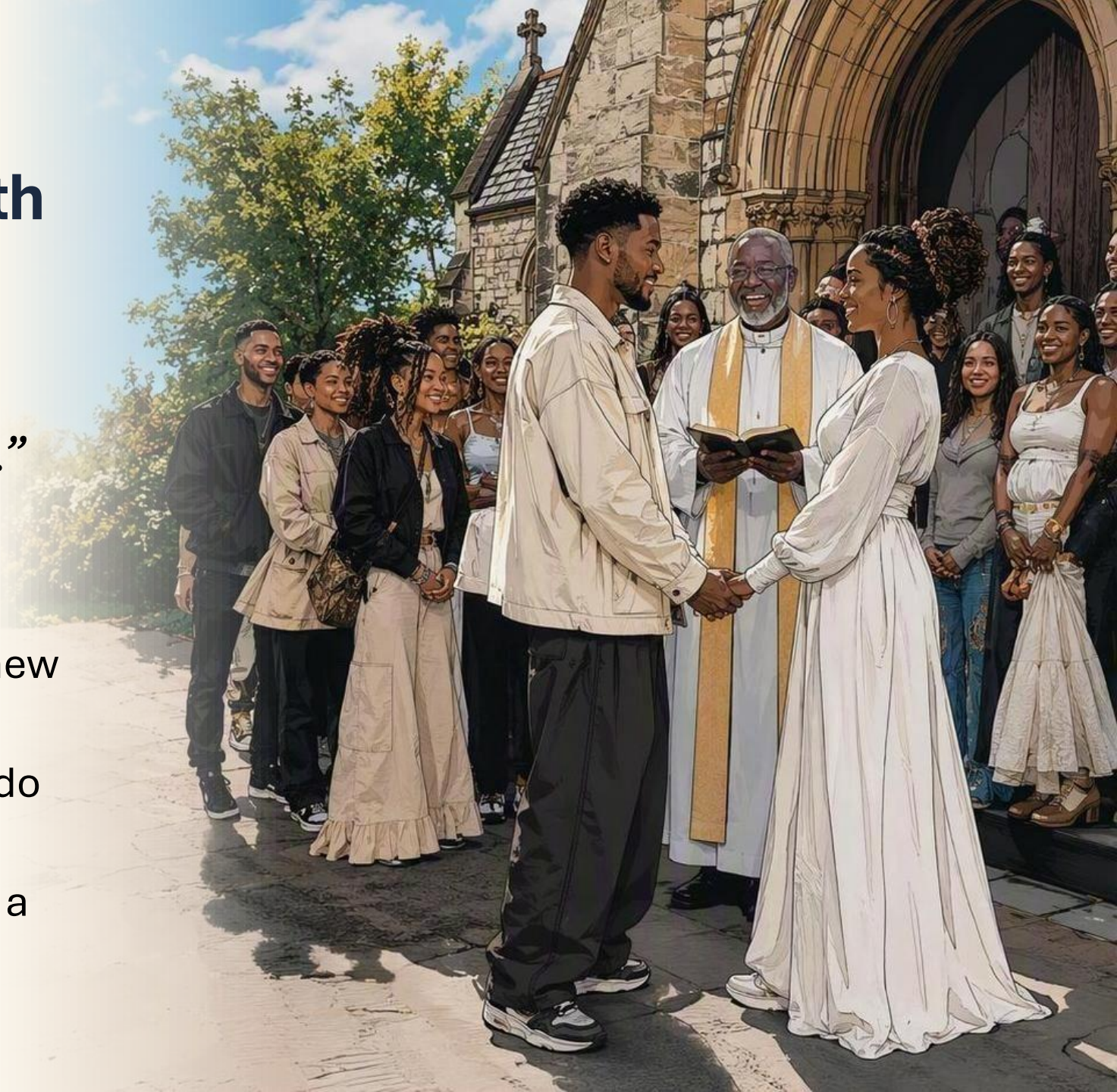
- Jesus uses strong language because sin is serious.
- The point is not self-hatred.
- The point is refusing what pulls the heart away from God and harms other people.



Put sinful desire to death

“Put to death... whatever belongs to your earthly nature.”

- **Colossians 3:1-10**
- Paul connects holiness with our new life in Christ.
- Because we belong to Christ, we do not let sinful desires rule us.
- Christ gives us a new identity and a new way to live.



Freedom is not selfishness

“Not everything is beneficial.”

- **1 Corinthians 10:23-33**
- Paul says Christian freedom asks better questions.
- Does this help?
- Does this honour God?
- Does this love other people?
- Does this build others up?



Discuss

- What does it say about God that he made us for companionship?
- Why do you think the Bible ties sex to covenant?
- Why does Jesus answer a question about rules by going back to creation?



Holiness means honour

1 Thessalonians 4:3-8

Sexual holiness includes:

- Self-control and honour
- Not using anyone; treating others as people, not objects
- Real strength does not pressure or control.
- It serves, protects and honours.



Holiness protects other people

1 Thessalonians 4:3-8

Two ideas stand out: controlling your own body in a way that is honourable, and not wronging or taking advantage of anyone.

Choices in this area can hurt us and other people.

Verse 8: God calls us to live this way, and his Spirit helps us. We do not depend on willpower alone.



Discuss

- How does holiness protect other people?
- Where do people get treated as objects in your world?



Do not be mastered

“I will not be mastered by anything.”

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

- Not everything possible is beneficial.
- The body belongs to Christ.
- Private habits still shape the person we become.



The test of mastery

1 Corinthians 6:12

Paul answers a slogan about freedom twice: not everything is good for us, and “I will not be mastered by anything.”

Ask yourself: is this starting to control me?

Habits formed in private shape who we are in public.



Discuss

- How can you tell when something has started to master you?
- What could help you step away from it?
- How do private habits shape who we become?



It's still pressure, even online

Online choices affect real people.

- Sexual content online can shape what we expect and desire.
- Images can be used as pressure.
- Messages can manipulate.



Sexual images and the law

It can be illegal to take, create, keep or share a sexual image of anyone under 18.

This can still apply when the young person made the image themselves.



When messages become pressure

Flattery can become manipulation.

Guilt can be used to force agreement.

Threats and repeated requests are not signs of love.



You are still following Jesus online

Online choices affect real people.
Following Jesus includes what you
do on your phone.



Discuss

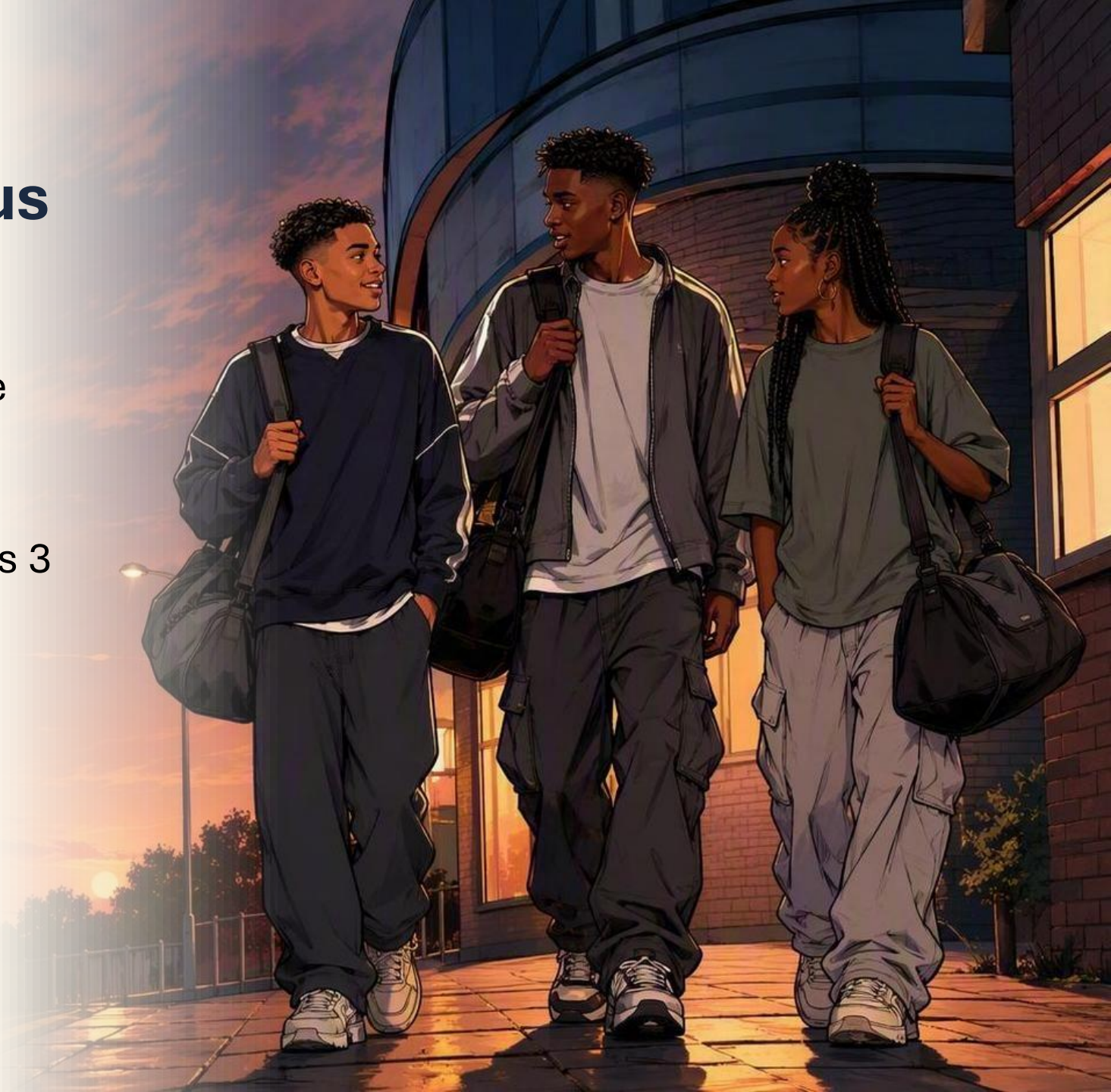
- Why do people behave differently online?
- What would change if we assumed there is a real person on the other side?



Where Scripture takes us

GotQuestions helped us identify the question and pointed us to Bible references.

- We opened Matthew 5, Colossians 3 and 1 Corinthians 10 in context.
- Scripture shows us:
- guard the direction of the heart;
- put sinful desire to death;
- use freedom to honour God and build others up.



God's boundaries are for our good

Sex is God's gift for marriage.
Until then, Christians are called to:
practise self-control;
set wise boundaries;
treat others with honour;
refuse pressure and manipulation;
protect their own dignity and the
dignity of others.



How Christ cleanses us

“While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Romans 5:8

Jesus took the guilt of our sin and died in our place.

He rose again so that everyone who trusts him can be washed clean and begin again.

We do not earn this gift. We receive it by trusting him.



Grace and a new way to live

“But you were washed...”

1 Corinthians 6:11

The gospel offers:

- Truth
- Repentance
- Forgiveness
- A new way of living
- God shows us what is wrong to free us, not to shame us.



Grace means a new start

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Paul reminds the church that no one is beyond Christ's forgiveness and change.

- Truth: naming things honestly.
- Repentance: turning.
- Forgiveness: real and complete in Christ.
- God changes us over time.



Discuss

- Why does Paul remind them of what they were?
- What is the difference between shame and repentance?
- What is one boundary you want to set this week?



Session 3 response

Healthy relationships are shaped by:

- Love
- Faithfulness
- Honour
- Holiness
- Self-control

One boundary that protects dignity:

One message I need to reject:



Session 4

What Does a Good Future Look Like?

**Purpose, education, work,
money and God's guidance**

Central question:

*How do I make wise choices
without allowing fear or success
to define me?*



Which path is success?

- University offer
- Apprenticeship
- Starting work
- Changing A-level choices
- Unexpected results
- Still unsure

Which person is succeeding? What information would you need?



Why do we rank so quickly?

From this information alone we cannot tell who is succeeding.

We do not know why they chose it, what their situation is or how faithful they are.

An apprenticeship or skilled trade is not a lesser path than university. Starting work, or still being unsure, is not failure.



Discuss

- What decision is closest for you right now?
- What do people around you assume success looks like?
- Why do we rank these paths so quickly?



A real question online

GotQuestions article:

“How can I know God’s will for my life?”

The article says God’s will is not hidden from us.

Much of God’s will is already revealed in Scripture.

[Insert screenshot of article title and opening section.]

QUESTION

How can I know God’s will for my life?



ANSWER

It is important to know God’s will. Jesus said that His true relations are those who know and do the Father’s will: “Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother” ([Mark 3:35](#)). In the [parable of the two sons](#), Jesus rebukes the chief priests and elders for failing to do the will of the Father; specifically, they “did not repent and believe” ([Matthew 21:32](#)). At its most basic, the will of God is to repent of our sin and trust in Christ. If we have not taken that first step, then we have not yet accepted God’s will.



Once we receive Christ by faith, we are made God’s children ([John 1:12](#)), and He desires to lead us in His way ([Psalm 143:10](#)). God is not trying to hide His will from us; He wants to reveal it. In fact, He has already given us many, many directions in His Word. We are to “give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you” ([1 Thessalonians 5:18](#)). We are to do good works ([1 Peter 2:15](#)). And “it is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality” ([1 Thessalonians 4:3](#)).

Bible passages in the article

The article uses:

- Romans 12:2
 - Psalm 143:10
 - James 4:17
-
- We will study these passages in context:
 - Romans 12:1-2
 - Psalm 143:8-10
 - James 4:13-17

Once we receive Christ by faith, we are made God's children ([John 1:12](#)), and He desires to lead us in His way ([Psalm 143:10](#)). God is not trying to hide His will from us; He wants to reveal it. In fact, He has already given us many, many directions in His Word. We are to "give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you" ([1 Thessalonians 5:18](#)). We are to do good works ([1 Peter 2:15](#)). And "it is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality" ([1 Thessalonians 4:3](#)).

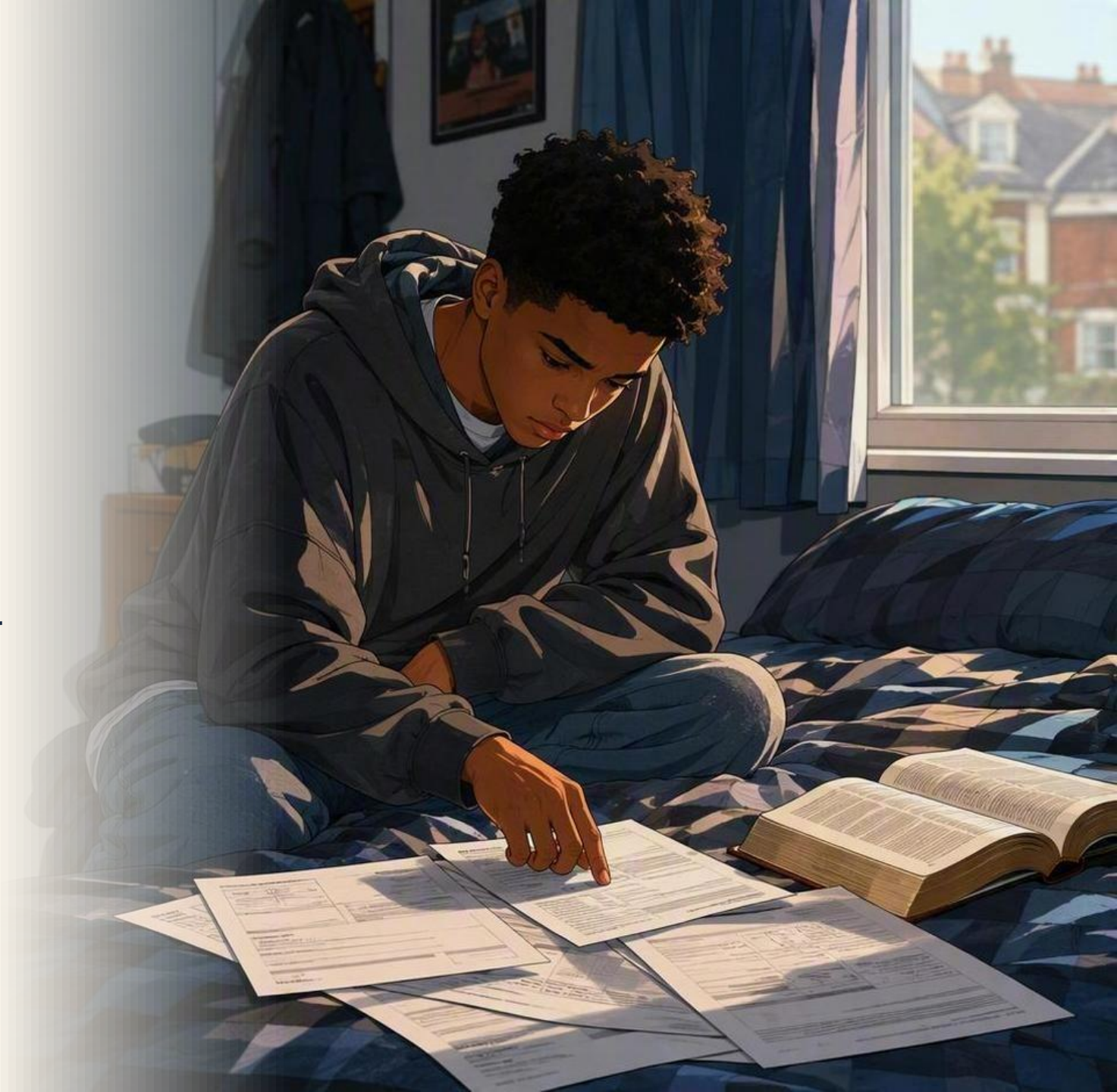
God's will is knowable and provable. [Romans 12:2](#) says, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will." This passage gives us an important sequence: the child of God refuses to be conformed to the world and instead allows himself to be transformed by the Spirit. As his [mind is renewed](#) according to the things of God, *then* he can know God's perfect will.

Knowing God's will is sometimes difficult because it requires patience. It's natural to want to know all of God's will at once, but that's not how He usually works. He reveals to us a step at a time—each move a step of faith—and allows us to continue to trust Him. The important thing is that, as we wait for further direction, we are busy doing the good that we know to do ([James 4:17](#)).

Purpose comes first

Romans 12:1-2

- Our first calling is not a particular university or job.
- It is to belong to God and offer the whole of life to him.



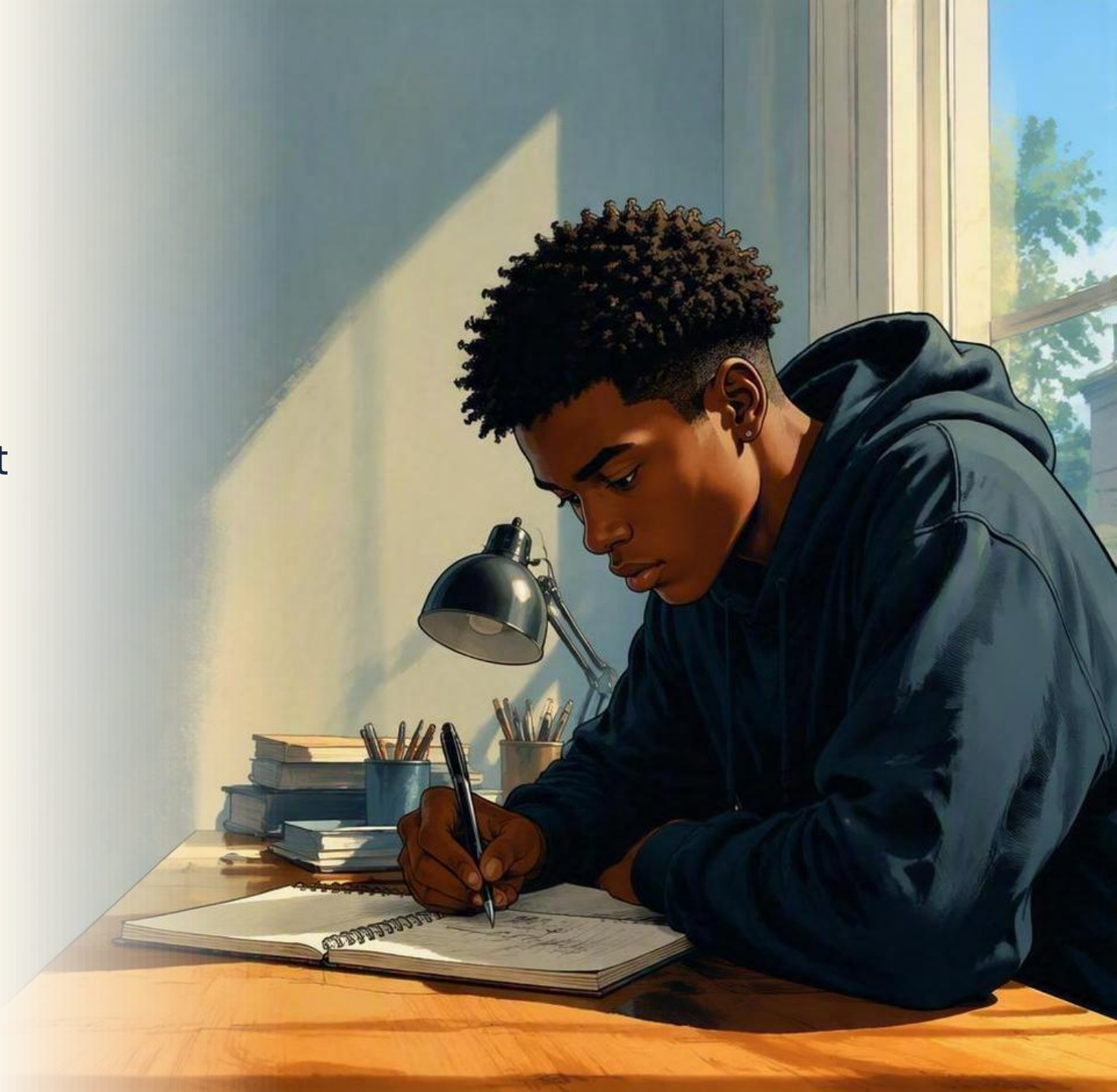
The first question is “whose am I?”

Romans 12:1-2

The first Christian question is not
“what career should I choose?”

It is “whose life is this?”

University, apprenticeships and
jobs matter, but none of them is
our deepest purpose.



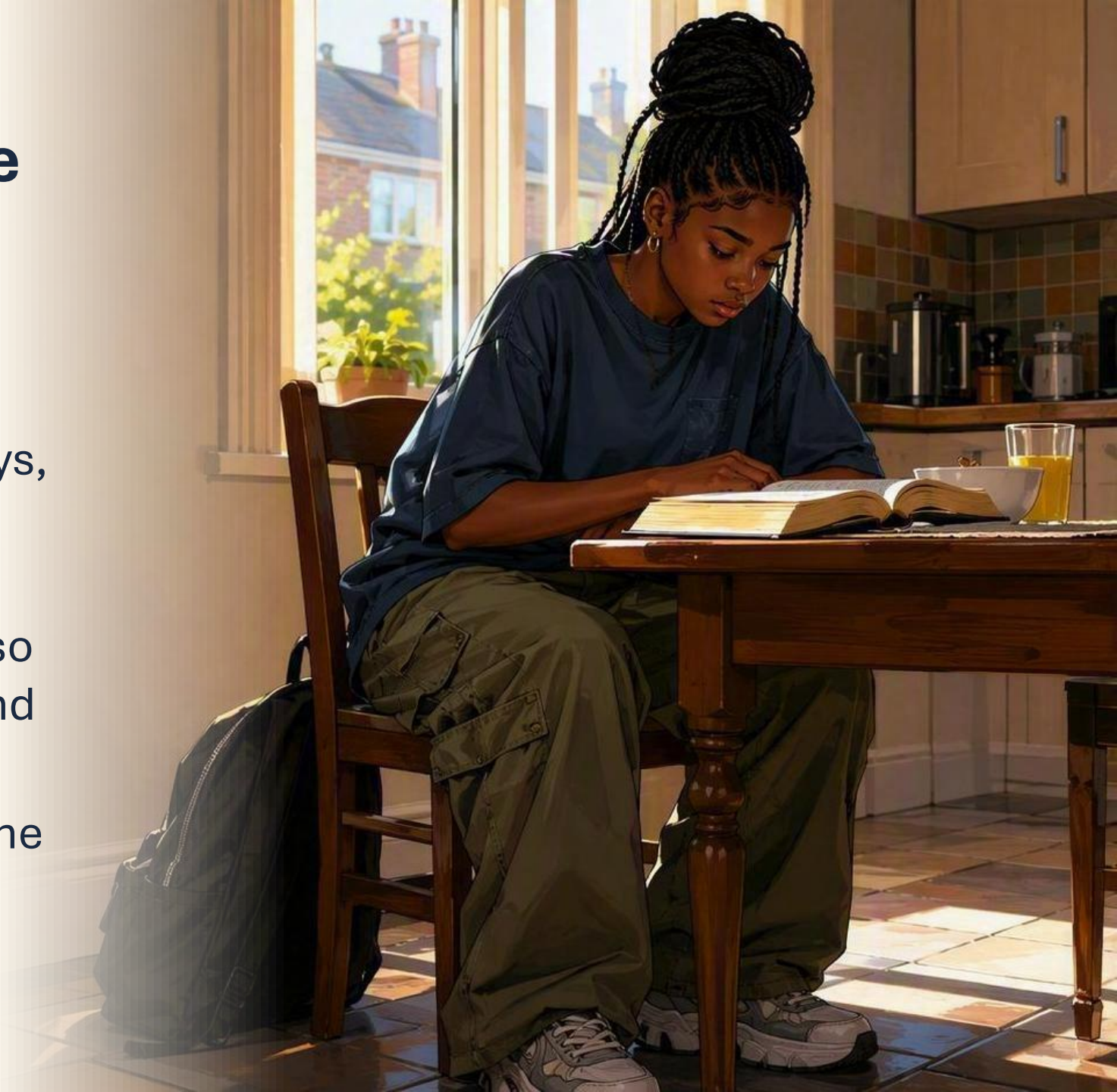
Think differently, decide differently

Romans 12:2

God can guide us in different ways, but he has already given us clear wisdom in the Bible.

The Bible shapes how we think, so we can see what is good, wise and pleasing to God.

This frees us from the fear that one wrong choice will ruin our future.



Think about it

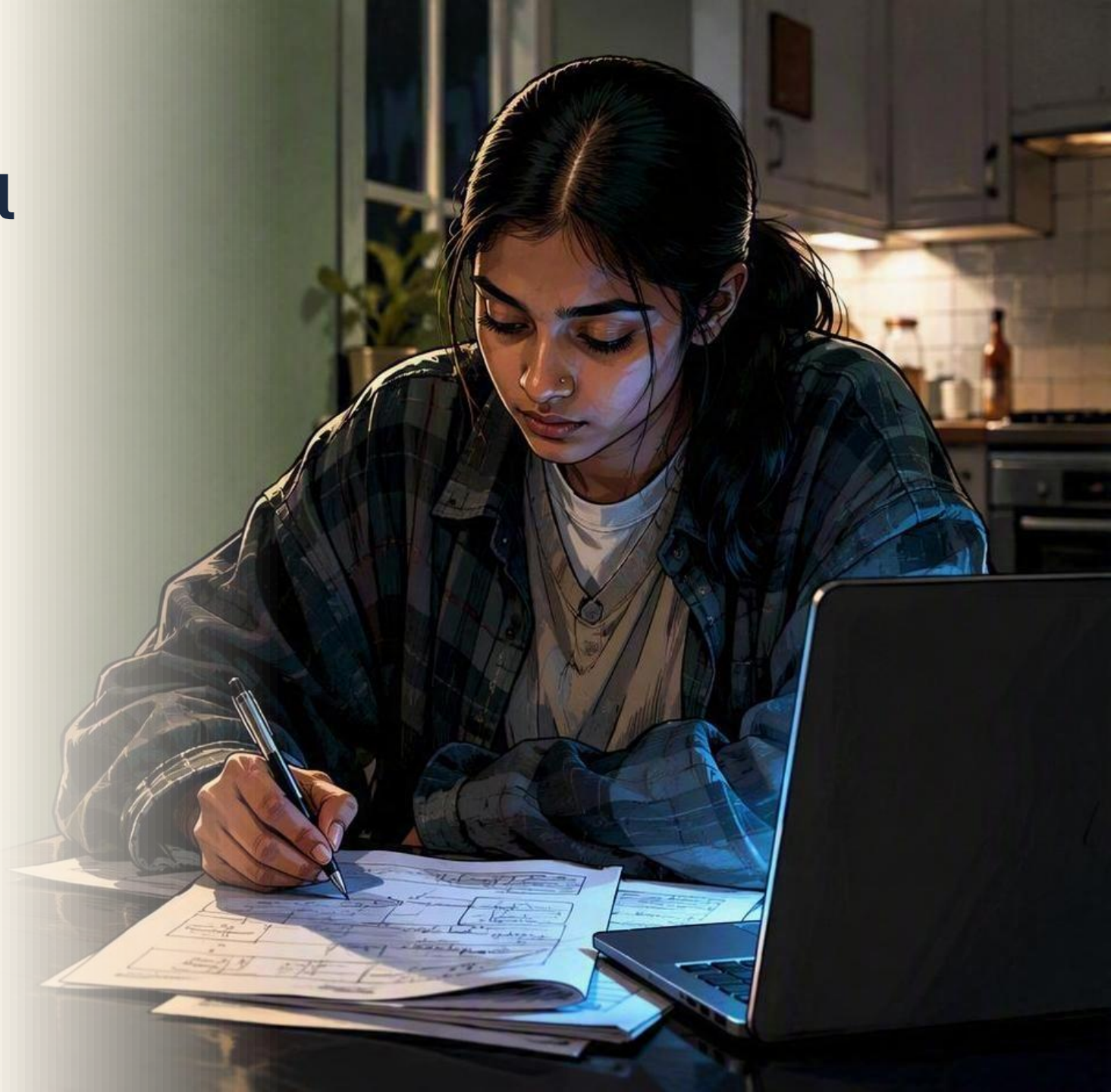
- How would your decision-making change if the first question were “Whose am I?”
- What messages around you shape how you think about your future?



Teach me to do your will

“Teach me to do your will...”

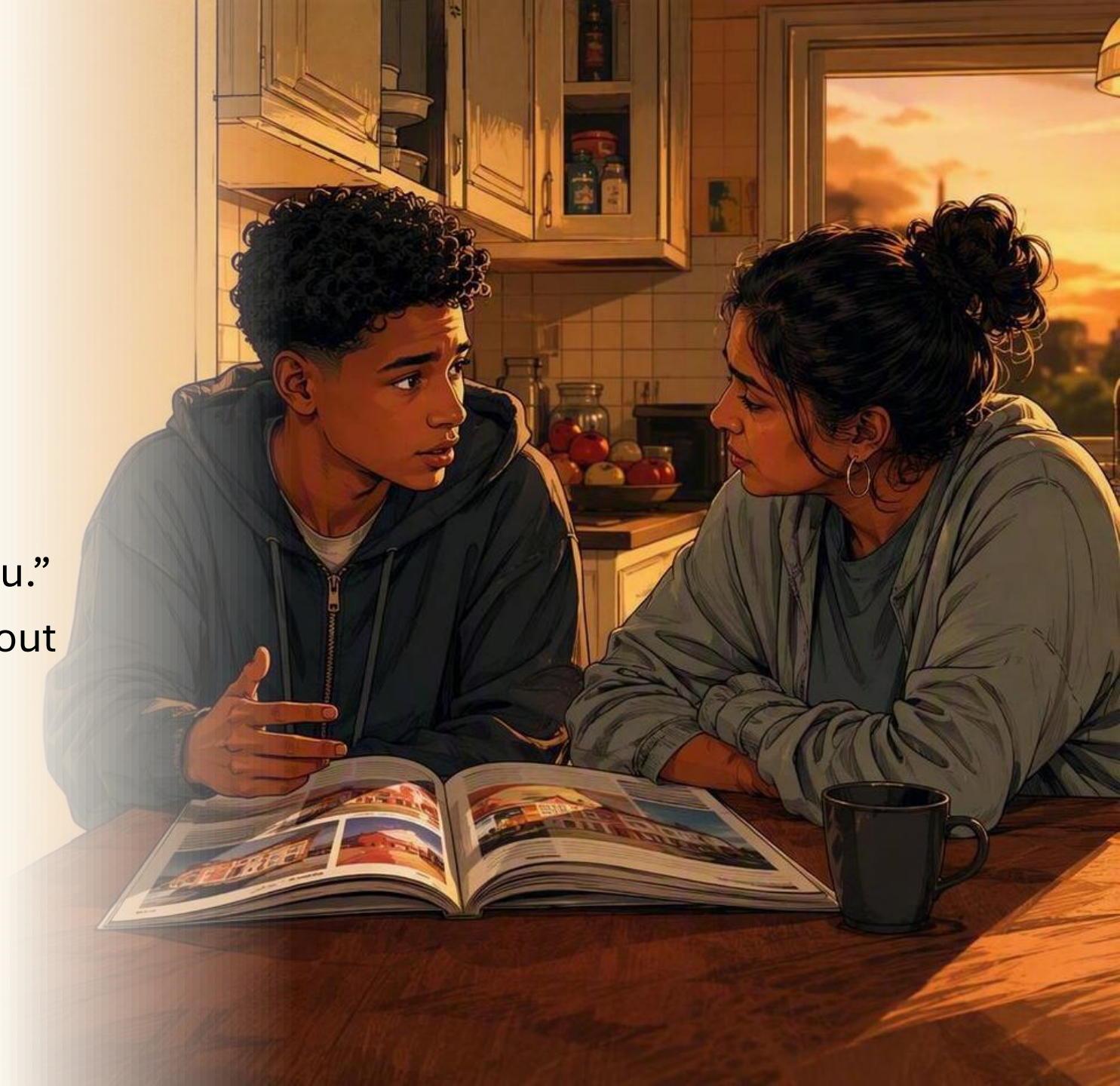
- **Psalm 143:8-10**
- David asks God to lead him.
- He does not treat guidance as guesswork.
- He asks for God’s love, God’s direction and God’s Spirit.



Guidance begins with trust

Psalm 143:8-10

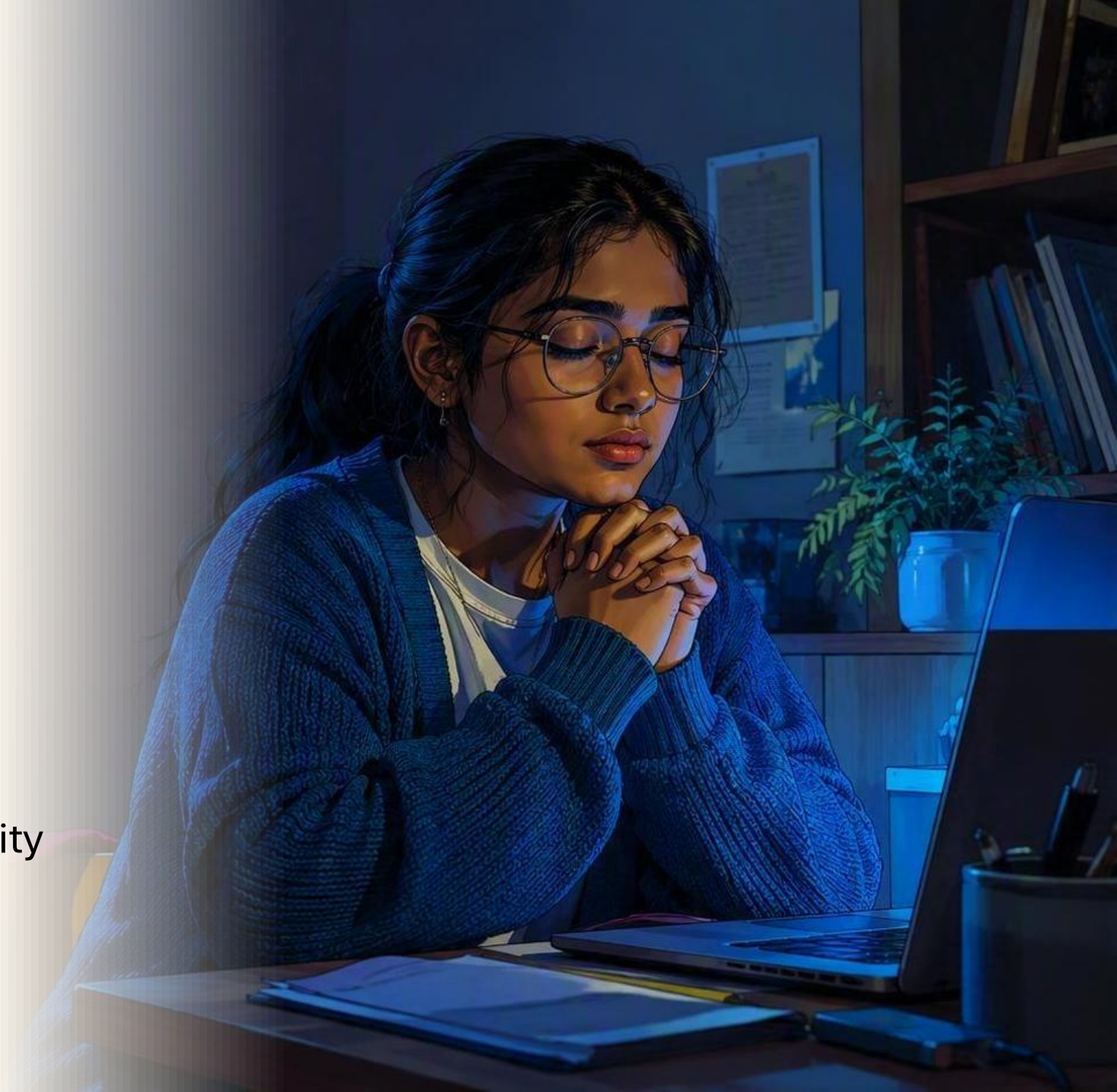
- David asks God to show him the way.
- He also says, “I put my trust in you.”
- Christian guidance is not only about getting information.
- It is about trusting God while we take the next faithful step.



Plan humbly

“If it is the Lord’s will...”

- **James 4:13-17**
- James does not say planning is wrong.
- He warns against planning as though we control everything.
- Christians make plans with humility before God.



Do the good you know

James 4:17

- Sometimes we want God to reveal every future detail.
- James reminds us to obey the good we already know.
- The next faithful step matters.



Discuss

- What does Romans 12 say should shape our decisions?
- How does Psalm 143 describe guidance?
- What does James 4 say about planning and doing good?



Made to work, made to honour God

Colossians 3:17, 23-24

God can be served through:

- Study
- Skilled trades
- Business
- Technology
- Care
- Creative work
- Public service



How we work matters, not only what we do

Colossians 3:23-24

Following Jesus does not erase your gifts. He teaches you how to use them well.

God is not only honoured through impressive or highly paid work.

An electrician, nurse, teacher, developer, shop worker or student can all serve God through honesty, hard work and care.



What does success really mean?

Culture often measures success by:

Income

Status

Qualifications

Being seen

Speed

The Bible puts being faithful to God first.

Success is not proof of who you are. It is something to use wisely.



You do not need to have everything sorted now

Income, qualifications and being seen are not evil. They become a problem when they measure a person.

There is also pressure to have everything sorted quickly.

Jesus commends the servant who was faithful, not the one who was fastest.

Following God does not guarantee wealth, and being poor does not prove failure.



Discuss

- Have you ever thought of your subject or job as service to God?
- Which of these makes you feel most judged?
- What would a faithful year look like for you?
- What could God use in you to help people in your generation?



Decision scenarios

Discuss one situation:

- University or apprenticeship?
- Waiting for a sign before making a decision?
- More money or work that suits you better?
- Plans changed by unexpected results?

What biblical principles apply?



Try it yourself

Choose one question:

- How do I know God's will?
- What if I choose wrongly?
- Is university always best?
- Should I follow my passion?

Then:

- find one Christian answer;
- identify the Bible passages it uses;
- open one passage for yourself;
- explain the biblical answer in your own words.



Four biblical answers

- I am created by God and called to belong to Christ.
- I can bring pressure to God and take the next faithful step.
- Healthy relationships require love, holiness, honour and self-control.
- My purpose is to know God and serve him faithfully.

Final challenge

Keep asking important questions.
Keep opening the Bible. Keep putting
God's Word into practice.



One thing underneath all four answers

Every answer in this course comes back to Jesus.

He died for our sin and rose again so that everyone who trusts him is forgiven, made new and secure in him.

You can trust Jesus with your life today.

If you already have, this is the foundation everything else stands on.



Discuss

- Which of the four course answers do you most need this year?
- What is one habit you will keep after this course?

