

DOUBT IS NOT UNBELIEF!

Love Is the Movement; Doubt Is the Method

(from Richard Rohr's CAC devotional - Feb. 2nd 2021)

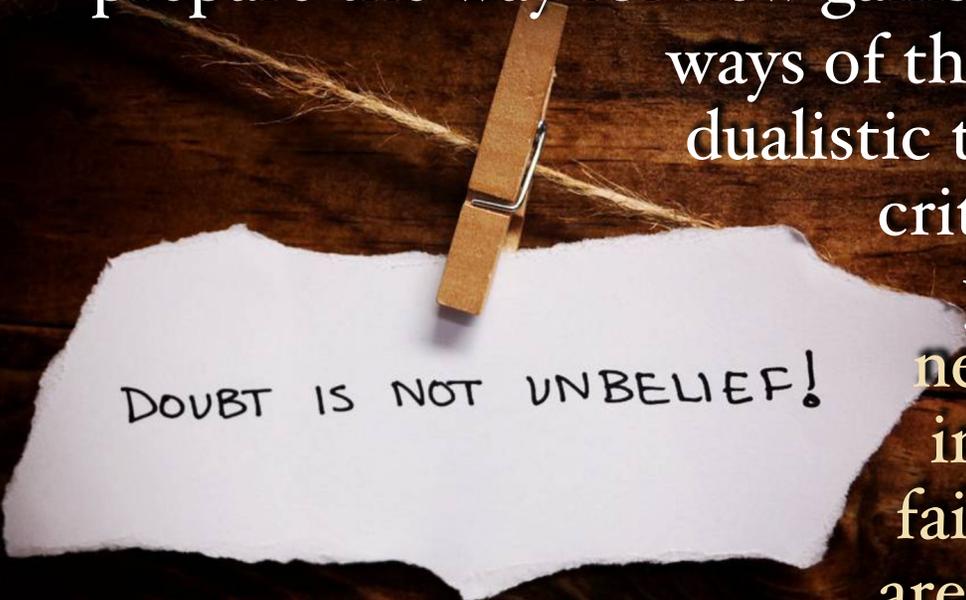
Brian McLaren continues: “I wish I could go back to that younger, agonized me (*i.e. in Stage Three Perplexity*) and bring this message: I know that your perplexity feels like a dead end. But wait, wait, endure, persist, do your work, see it through, hang in there, trust the process, and it will become a passageway, a birth canal. You actually need this purgation and unknowing to prepare you for a new depth of living, knowing, and loving. There is much that deserves to be doubted, and if you really care about the truth, you must pursue it, using doubt as a necessary tool. (It's not your only tool, but it is one of your tools.)



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Brian McLaren again: “I know you feel that everything you value is slipping through your fingers. But don't clench your fists. Open your hands. Your open hands, open eyes, and open heart will prepare the way for new gains, not just new thoughts, but new ways of thinking. You have already added dualistic thinking, pragmatic thinking, and critical/deconstructive thinking to your skill set. You will soon learn a new skill: unitive or nondual seeing, in which knowing and unknowing, faith and doubt, clarity and mystery are not opposites, but complements.

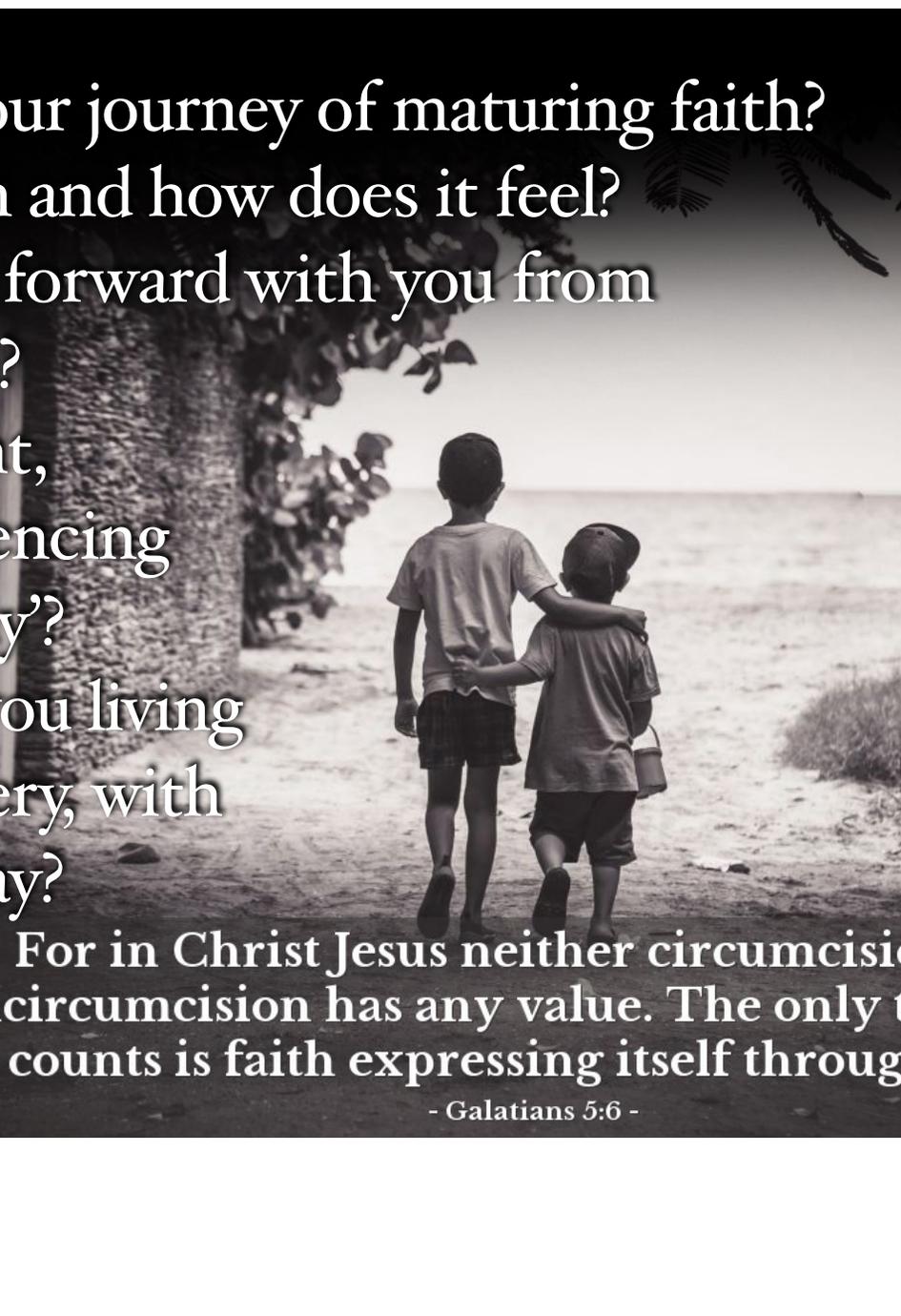


DOUBT IS NOT UNBELIEF!



DOUBT DOESN'T MEAN YOU DON'T
have faith;
DOUBT MEANS YOU ARE WORKING OUT
your faith.

1. Where are you at on your journey of maturing faith?
2. What season are you in and how does it feel?
3. What are you bringing forward with you from earlier seasons of faith?
4. Have you at some point, or are you now experiencing a measure of 'Harmony'?
5. How comfortable are you living with doubt, with mystery, with perplexity along the way?



For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

- Galatians 5:6 -

Lesslie Newbigin

Proper Confidence

Faith, **Doubt**, and Certainty
in Christian Discipleship

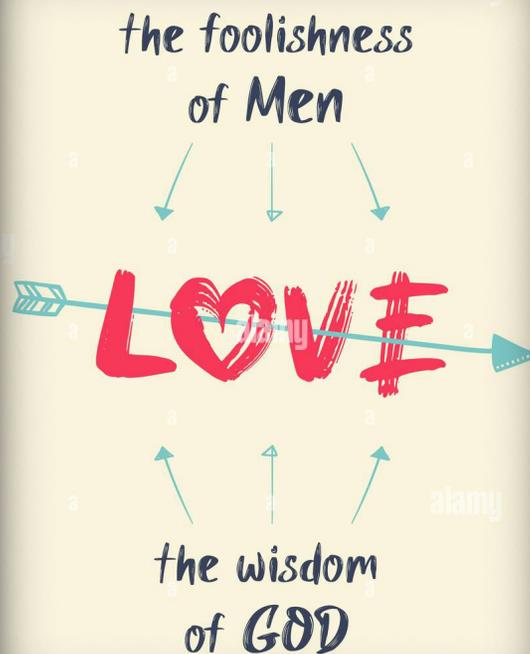
Lesslie Newbigin (1909-1998) was an internationally renowned British missionary, pastor, and scholar. He began as a village evangelist in India, and eventually held such positions as bishop of the Church of South India and associate general secretary of the WCC.

Because he spent so many years sharing the gospel in cultures that were unencumbered by Western philosophical baggage, Newbigin was in a privileged position to perceive our contemporary post-Enlightenment assumptions about knowledge and certainty as merely one ideology among many, open to challenge.



“Proper Confidence” - by Lesslie Newbigin (p.93; p.10)

“I am writing this book as a missionary who is concerned to commend the truth of the gospel in a culture that has sought for absolute certainty as the ideal of true knowledge but now despairs of the possibility of knowing truth at all, a culture that therefore responds to the Christian story by asking, *“But how can we know that it is true?”*”



“... But there is another kind of knowing which, in many languages, is designated by a different word. It is the kind of knowing that we seek in our relations with other people. In this kind of knowing we are not in full control. We may ask questions, but we must also answer the questions put by the other.”

“Proper Confidence” - by Lesslie Newbigin (p.10)

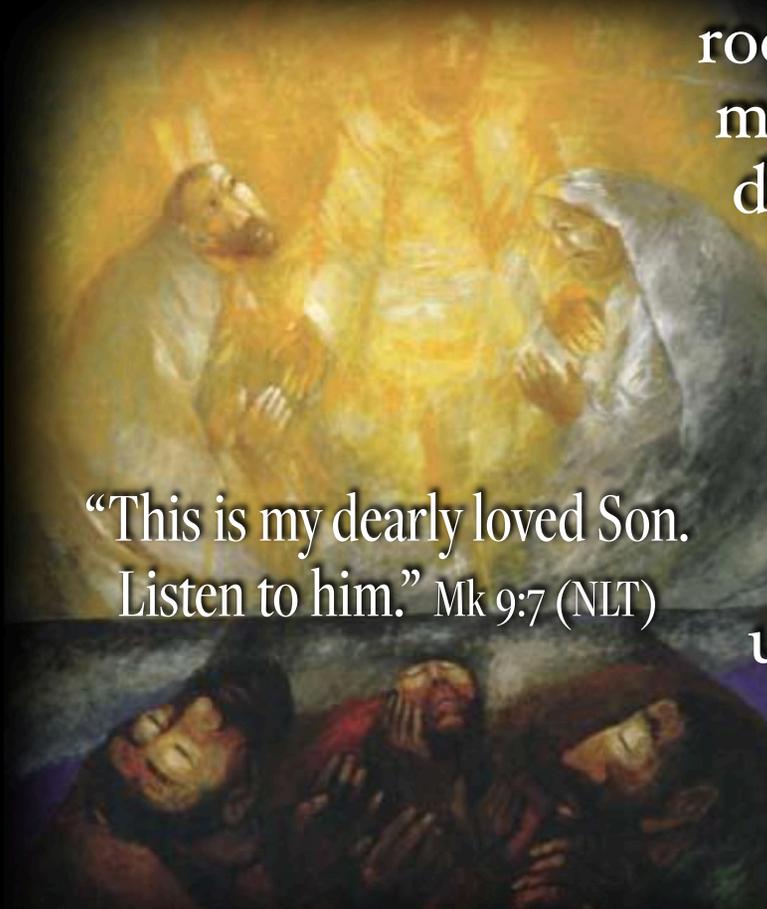
“We can only come to know others in the measure in which they are willing to share. The resulting knowledge is not simply our own achievement; it is also the gift of others. And even in the mutual relations of ordinary human beings, it is never complete. There are always further depths of knowledge that only long friendship and mutual trust can reach, if indeed they can be reached at all.

“No one has ever seen God. The one and only Son of God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has led us to the Father’s face, sharing His own unspeakable knowing of His Father with us.” - Jn 1:18 (CBK)

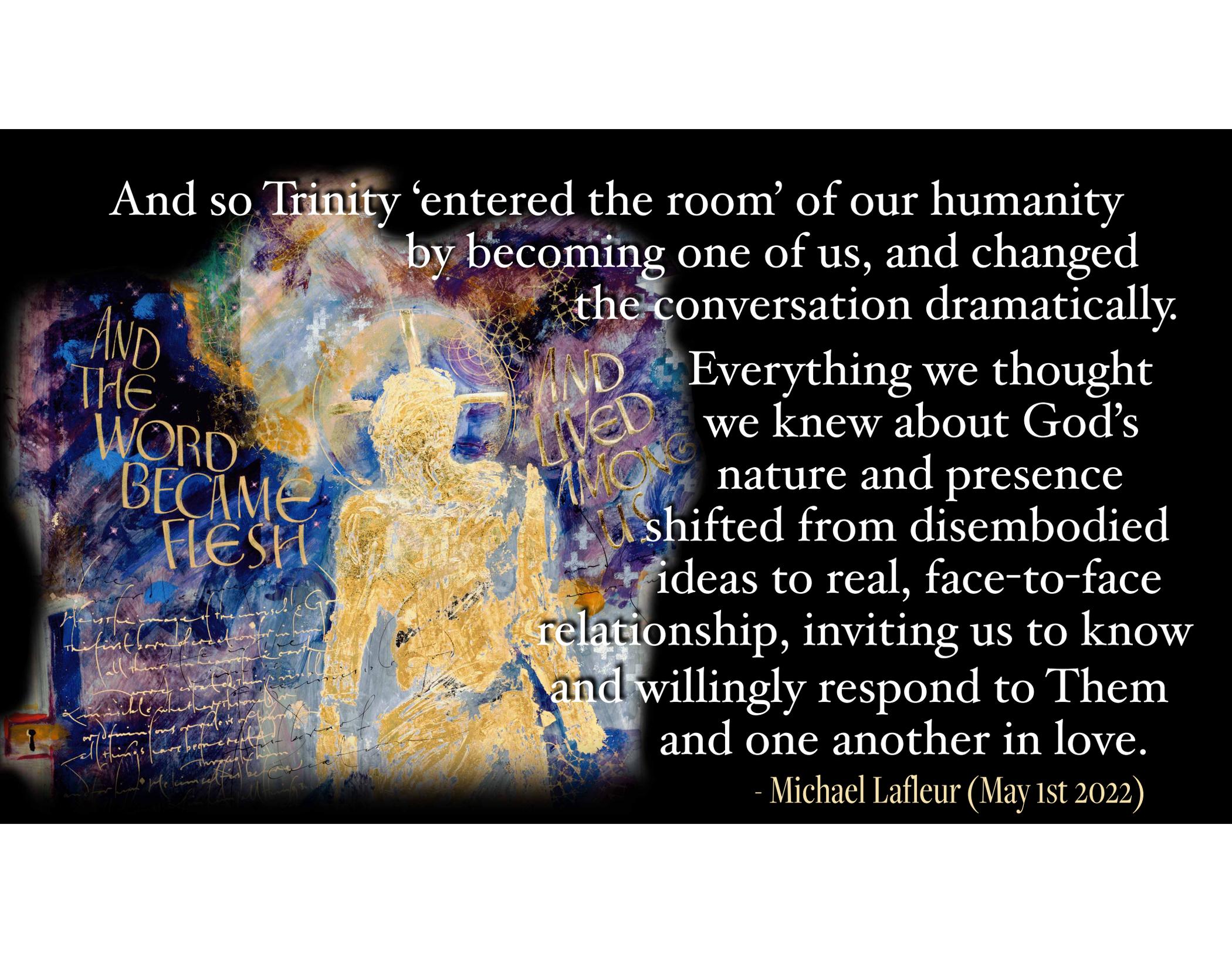
There is a radical break between these two kinds of knowing: the knowing often associated with the natural sciences and the knowing involved in personal relations.”

“Proper Confidence” - by Lesslie Newbigin (p.11)

“We experience this radical break, for example, when someone about whom we have been talking unexpectedly comes into the room. We can discuss an absent person in a manner that leaves us in full control of the discussion. But if the person comes into the room, we must either break off the discussion or change into a different mode of talking. This is a proper analogy of the break involved in the move from the classical to the Christian way of understanding the world. If, so to say, the Idea of the Good has actually entered the room and spoken, **we have to stop our former discussion and listen.**”



“This is my dearly loved Son.
Listen to him.” Mk 9:7 (NLT)



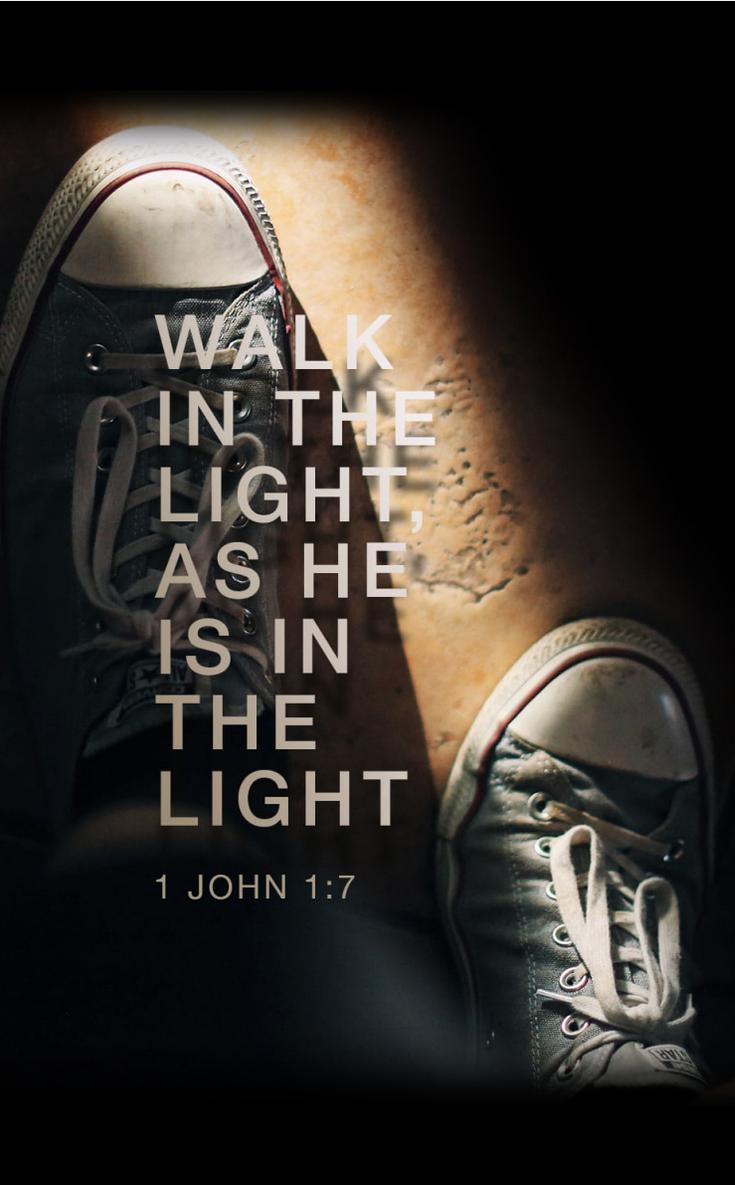
And so Trinity 'entered the room' of our humanity
by becoming one of us, and changed
the conversation dramatically.

Everything we thought
we knew about God's
nature and presence
shifted from disembodied
ideas to real, face-to-face
relationship, inviting us to know
and willingly respond to Them
and one another in love.

- Michael Lafleur (May 1st 2022)

The
GOSPEL *of* **JOHN**

SO THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE



WALK
IN THE
LIGHT,
AS HE
IS IN
THE
LIGHT

1 JOHN 1:7



1 JOHN 1:3

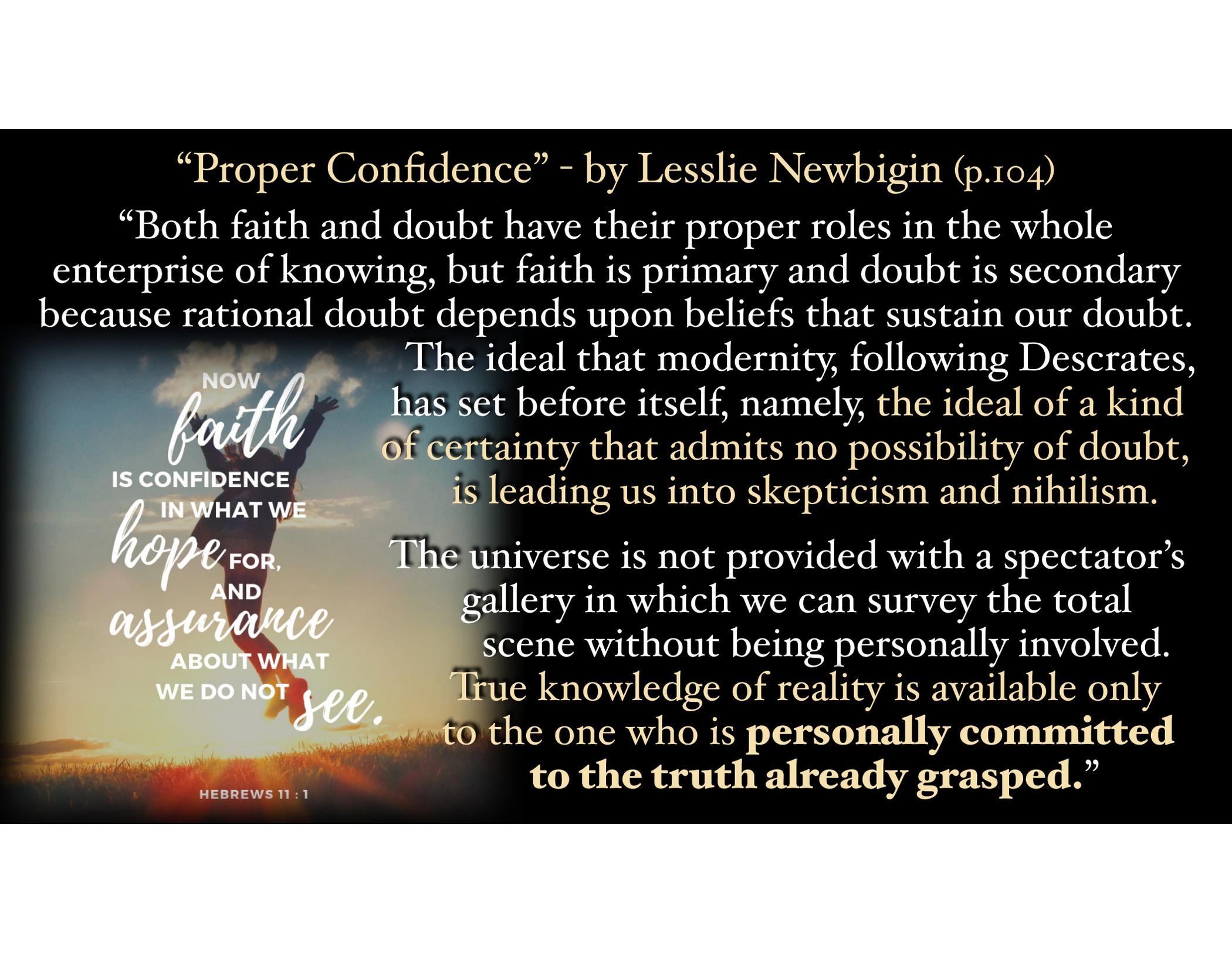
³WE PROCLAIM TO YOU WHAT WE HAVE SEEN AND HEARD, SO THAT YOU ALSO MAY HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH US. AND OUR FELLOWSHIP IS WITH THE FATHER AND WITH HIS SON, JESUS CHRIST. - NIV

“Proper Confidence” - by Lesslie Newbigin (p.104)

“Both faith and doubt have their proper roles in the whole enterprise of knowing, but faith is primary and doubt is secondary because rational doubt depends upon beliefs that sustain our doubt.

The ideal that modernity, following Descartes, has set before itself, namely, the ideal of a kind of certainty that admits no possibility of doubt, is leading us into skepticism and nihilism.

The universe is not provided with a spectator’s gallery in which we can survey the total scene without being personally involved. True knowledge of reality is available only to the one who is **personally committed to the truth already grasped.**”



NOW
faith
IS CONFIDENCE
IN WHAT WE
hope FOR,
AND
assurance
ABOUT WHAT
WE DO NOT *see.*

“Proper Confidence” - by Lesslie Newbigin (p.105)

“Knowing cannot be severed from living and acting, for we cannot know the truth unless we seek it with love and unless our love commits us to action. Faith is the only certainty because faith involves personal commitment. The point has often been made that there is a distinction between the cognitive and the affective elements in belief, between *“I believe that ...”* and *“I believe in....”*

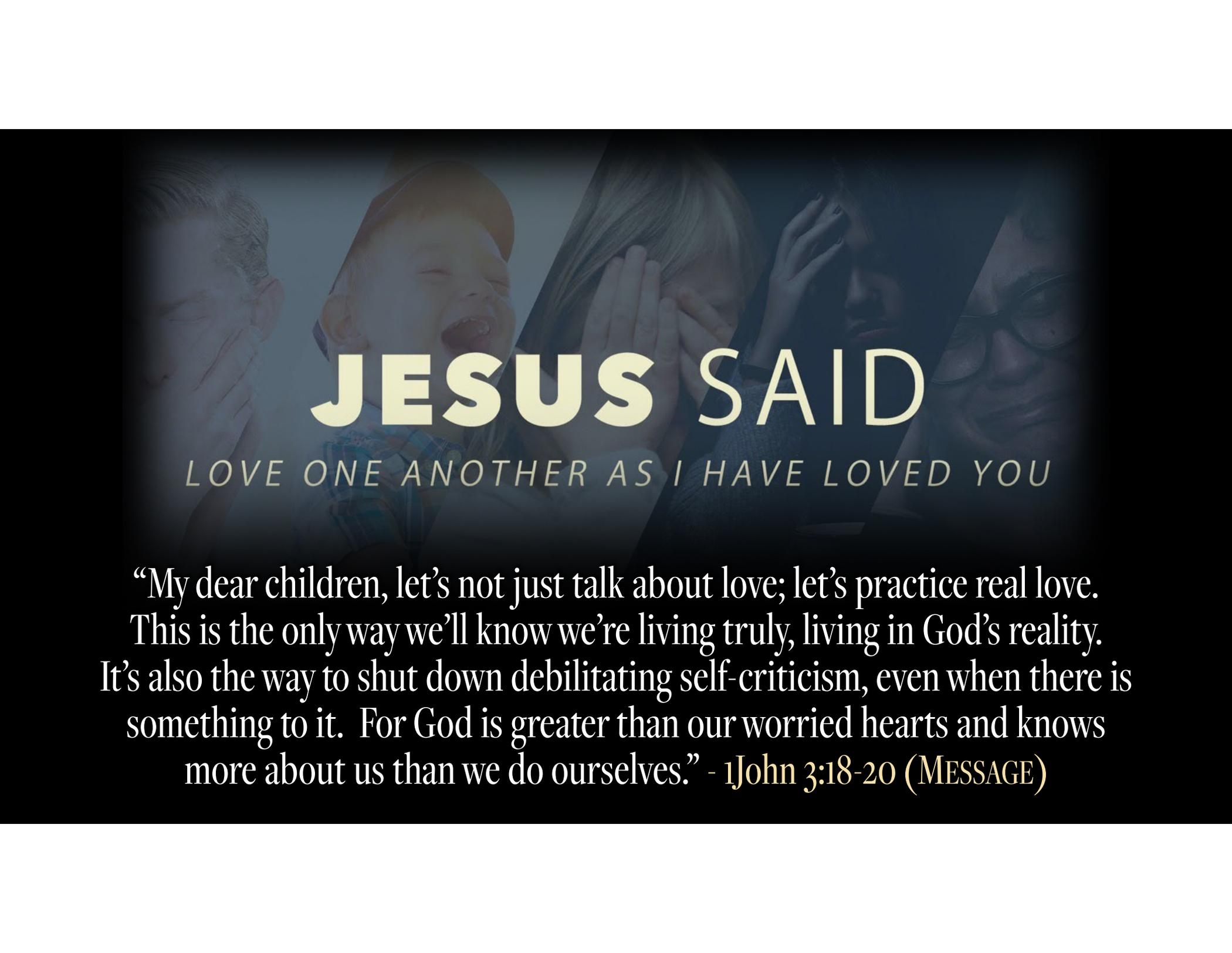
But faith holds both together; to separate them is to deny oneself

access to truth. The confidence proper to a Christian is **not** the confidence of one who claims possession of demonstrable and indubitable knowledge. It is the confidence of one who had heard and answered the call that comes from the God through whom and for whom all things were made: **“Follow me.”**



Dear children,
let's not
merely say
that we
love each
other;
let us show the truth
by our actions.

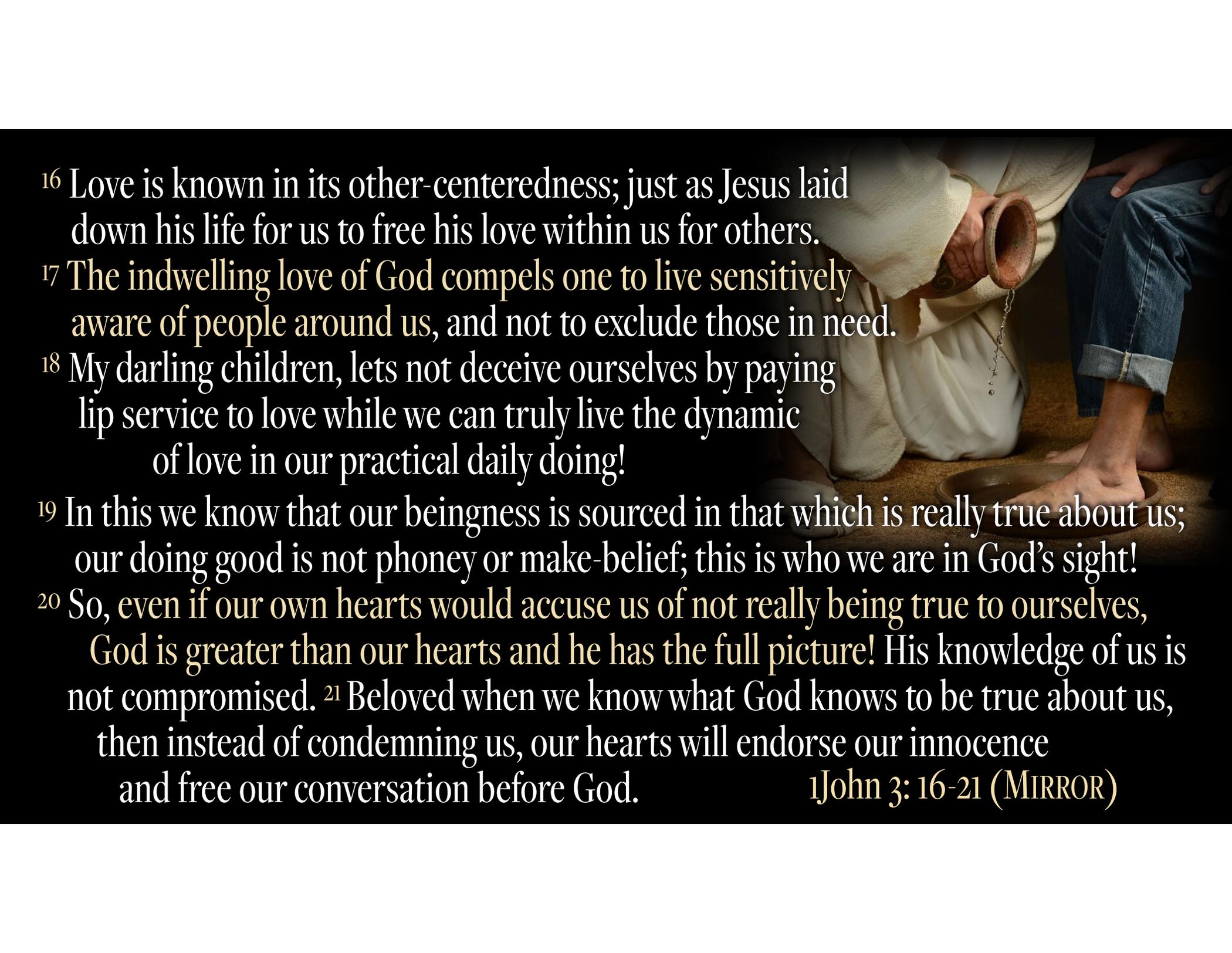
1 John 3:18



JESUS SAID

LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS I HAVE LOVED YOU

“My dear children, let’s not just talk about love; let’s practice real love. This is the only way we’ll know we’re living truly, living in God’s reality. It’s also the way to shut down debilitating self-criticism, even when there is something to it. For God is greater than our worried hearts and knows more about us than we do ourselves.” - 1John 3:18-20 (MESSAGE)

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- A photograph showing a person in a white robe kneeling and pouring water from a clay jug into a metal basin. Another person's foot is visible in the basin, suggesting a scene of foot washing. The background is dark, and the lighting is focused on the action.
- ¹⁶ Love is known in its other-centeredness; just as Jesus laid down his life for us to free his love within us for others.
- ¹⁷ The indwelling love of God compels one to live sensitively aware of people around us, and not to exclude those in need.
- ¹⁸ My darling children, let's not deceive ourselves by paying lip service to love while we can truly live the dynamic of love in our practical daily doing!
- ¹⁹ In this we know that our beingness is sourced in that which is really true about us; our doing good is not phoney or make-belief; this is who we are in God's sight!
- ²⁰ So, even if our own hearts would accuse us of not really being true to ourselves, God is greater than our hearts and he has the full picture! His knowledge of us is not compromised. ²¹ Beloved when we know what God knows to be true about us, then instead of condemning us, our hearts will endorse our innocence and free our conversation before God.

1John 3: 16-21 (MIRROR)



BEAUTY AND WONDER BEYOND WORDS

THE DIVINE DILEMMA:

How does Trinity reveal and share Their infinite Love and relational Glory with us as frail, finite and often doubtful human beings?

BY BECOMING ONE OF US
AND FULLY ENTERING INTO
OUR WORLD **AS IT IS.**

Some... celestial event. No - no words. No words to describe it.

Poetry... They should have sent... a poet.

So beautiful. Beautiful. So beautiful. So beautiful.

I had no idea. I had... no idea. I had no idea...

By allowing us to tell our stories of encountering God, wherever we are on our deepening journey of knowing.

CHRISTIAN CONFIDENCE & EPISTEMOLOGY

We Come to Know God as Revealed in Jesus by Trusting the Indwelling Witness of the Spirit and Apostolic Testimony.

¹ We saw him with our very own eyes. We gazed upon him and heard him speak. Our hands actually touched him, the one who was from the beginning, the Living Expression of God.

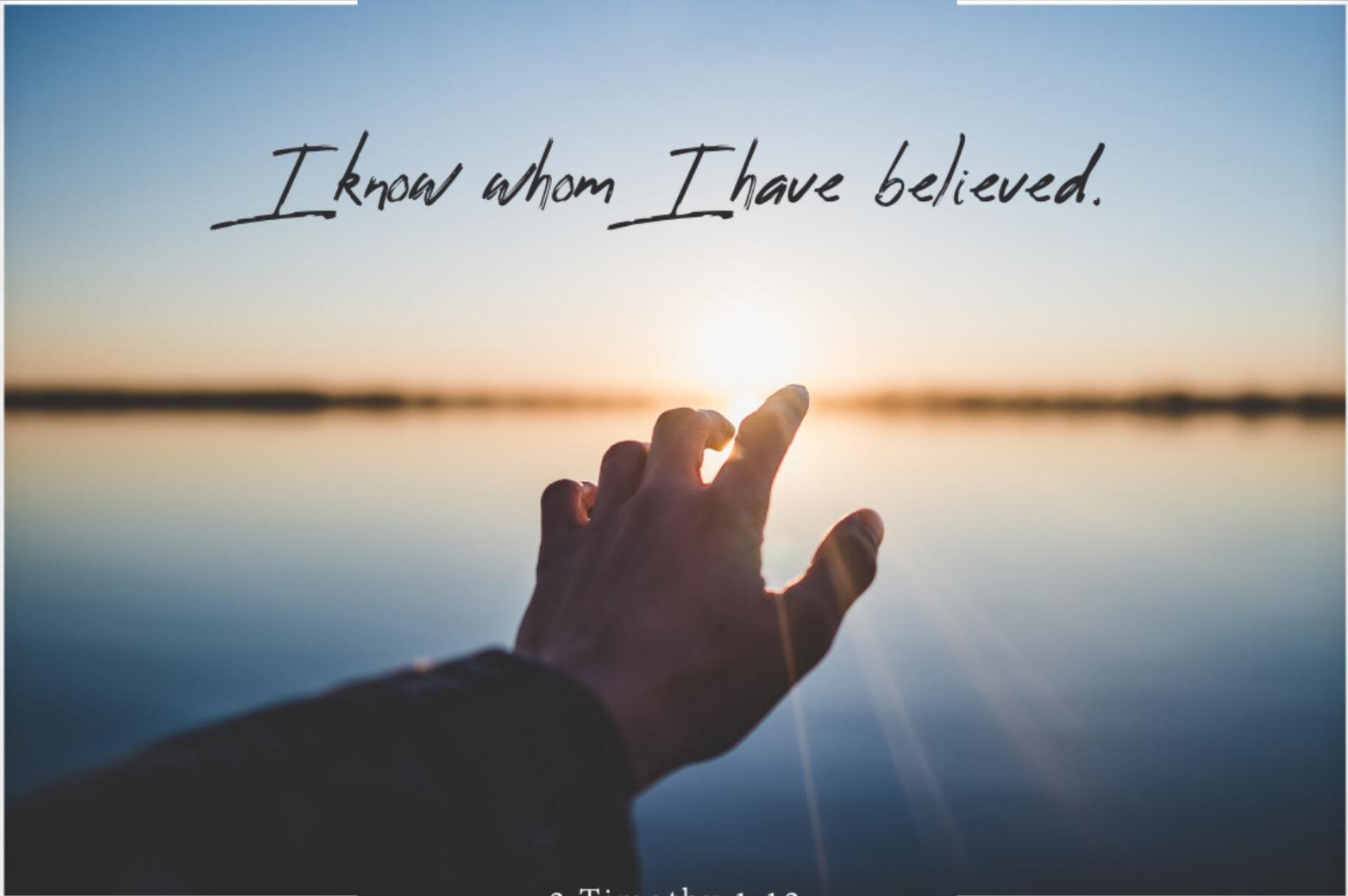
² This Life-Giver was made visible and we have seen him.

We testify to this truth: the eternal Life-Giver lived face-to-face with the Father and has now dawned upon us.

³ So we proclaim to you what we have seen and heard about this Life-Giver so that we may share and enjoy this life together.

For truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus, the Anointed One.

- 1st John 1:1-3 in The PASSION

A photograph of a hand reaching out towards a bright sun setting over a body of water. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a lens flare effect. The water is calm and reflects the light. The sky is a mix of blue and orange. The entire scene is framed by a white border.

I know whom I have believed.

2 Timothy 1:12