

***“The Gospel of Freedom and the Things That Hinder”***



## ***Hindrances –***

*Obstacles which keep us from  
the freedom God offers*

## ***Highways –***

*Christ's solutions which  
empower us to live in freedom*

***The Performance Trap***

***The Justification Antidote***

***The Approval Trap***

***The Reconciliation Antidote***

***The Blame Trap***

***The Propitiation Antidote***

***The Shame Trap***

***The Regeneration Antidote***

A photograph of a running track in a field. The track is reddish-brown with white lane markings and numbers 1 through 8. It curves into the distance through a grassy field with rolling hills in the background under a cloudy sky.

**“... *run* with endurance the *race* marked out for us...”**

**“*Run* in such a way as to get the *prize*.”**

**“... I do not *run* like someone running aimlessly...”**

**“I press on toward the *goal* to *win* the *prize*...”**

**“You were *running* a good *race*...”**

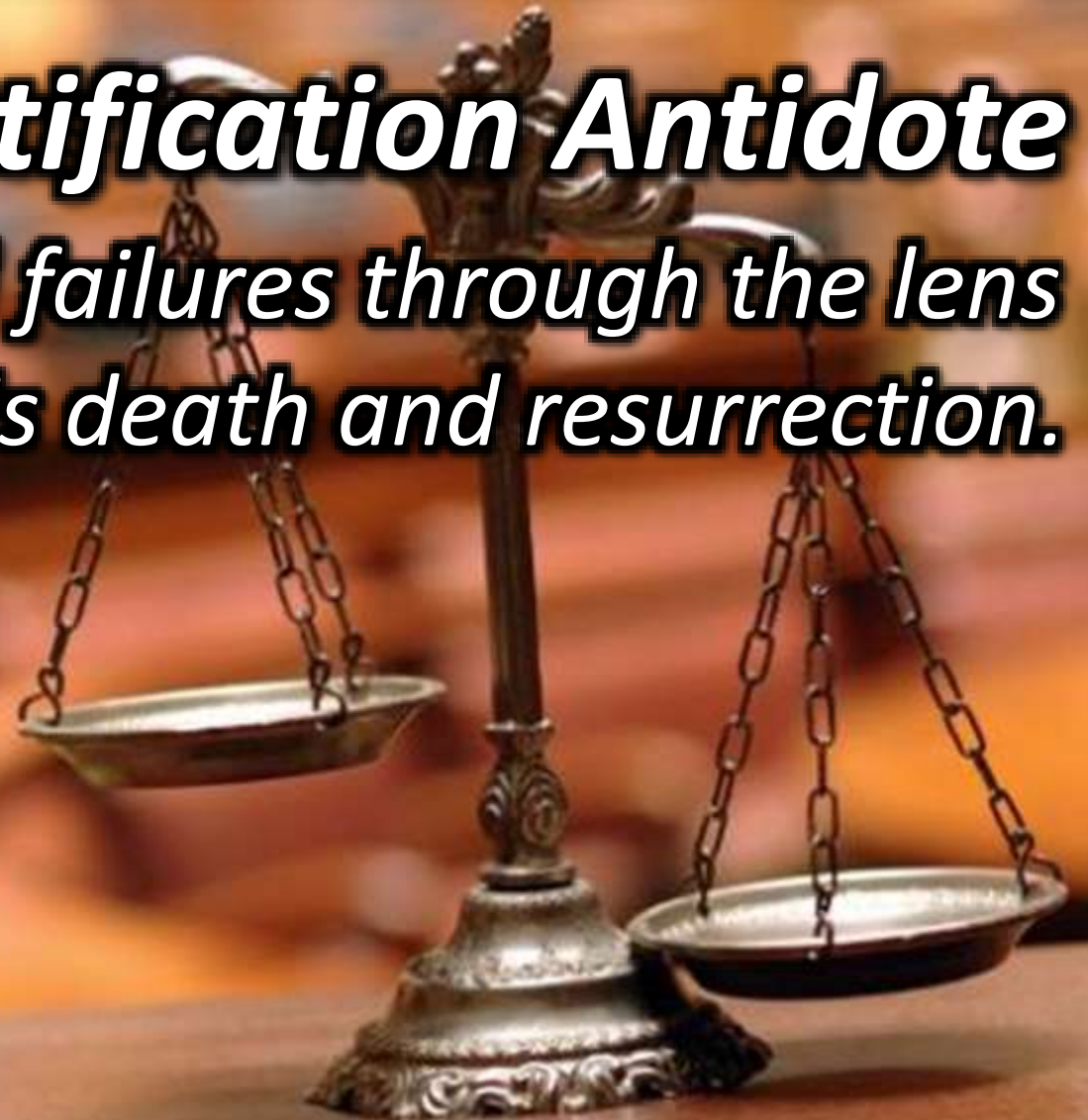
# *The Performance Trap*

*"I must meet **certain standards**  
to feel good about myself."*



# ***The Justification Antidote***

*“God sees my successes and failures through the lens of **Jesus “performance”** – His death and resurrection.*





# ***The Approval Trap***

*“I must gain the **approval** of certain people in order to feel good about myself.”*

## The Performance Trap

"I must meet **certain standards** to feel good about myself."



## The Approval Trap

"I must gain the **approval** of certain people in order to feel good about myself."





# ***The Approval Trap***





***The Approval Trap***



***The Disapproval Trap***

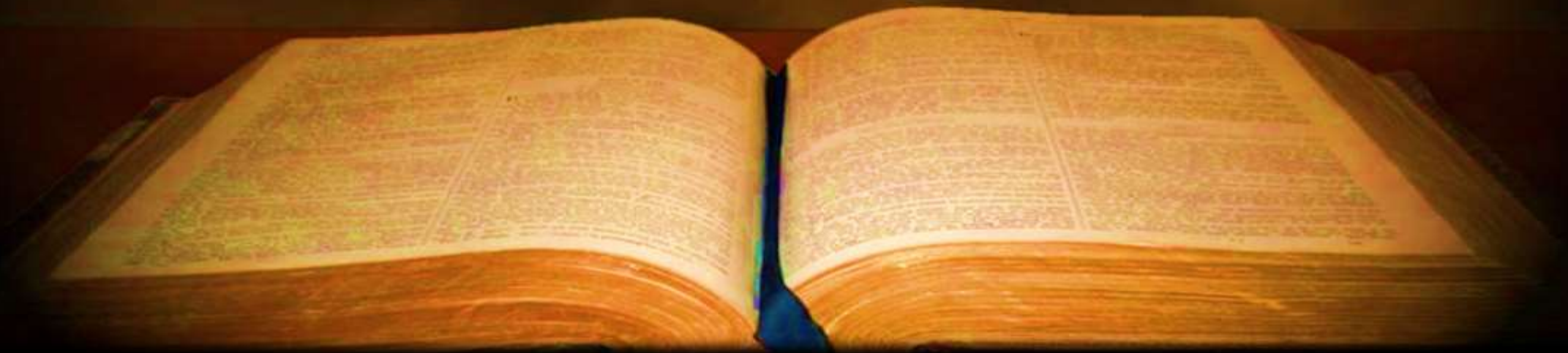
# ***The Reconciliation Antidote***

*“Jesus died to bring me back to God,  
so now **God approves of me just like Jesus.**”*

*Relationship restored*

## Romans 8:38-39

*“For I am convinced that neither death nor life,  
neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future,  
nor any powers, neither height nor depth,  
**nor anything else in all creation,**  
**will be able to separate us from the love of God**  
**that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”***



*Once we gain God's approval through Jesus,  
it cannot be removed from the outside.*

# The **New** Testament

## Colossians 1:15-23

**Matthew**

**Mark**

**Luke**

**John**

**Acts**

**Romans**

**1/2 Corinthians**

**Galatians**

**Ephesians**

**Philippians**

***Colossians***

**1/2 Thessalonians**

**1/2 Timothy**

**Titus**

**Philemon**

**Hebrews**

**James**

**1/2 Peter**

**1/2/3 John**

**Jude**

**Revelation**

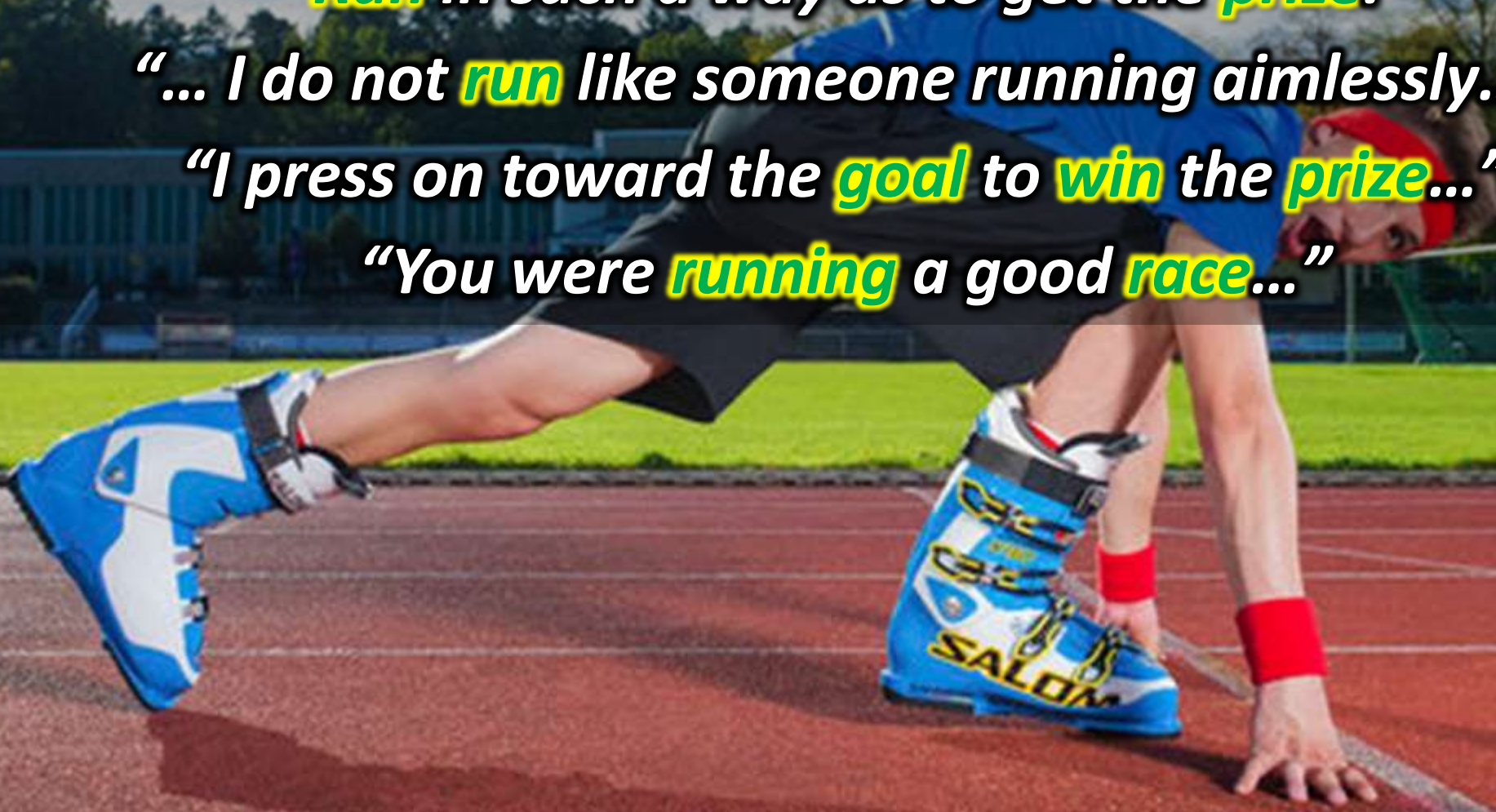
*“... **run** with endurance the **race** marked out for us...”*

*“**Run** in such a way as to get the **prize.**”*

*“... I do not **run** like someone running aimlessly...”*

*“I press on toward the **goal** to **win** the **prize...**”*

*“You were **running** a good **race...**”*



1) What does reconciliation mean?

Relationship restored

- 1) What does reconciliation mean?
  - A restored relationship with God.

*Relationship* **restored**



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- A restored relationship with God.
- God's eternal, unconditional approval.

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- God's eternal, unconditional approval.
- Three kinds of reconciliation:

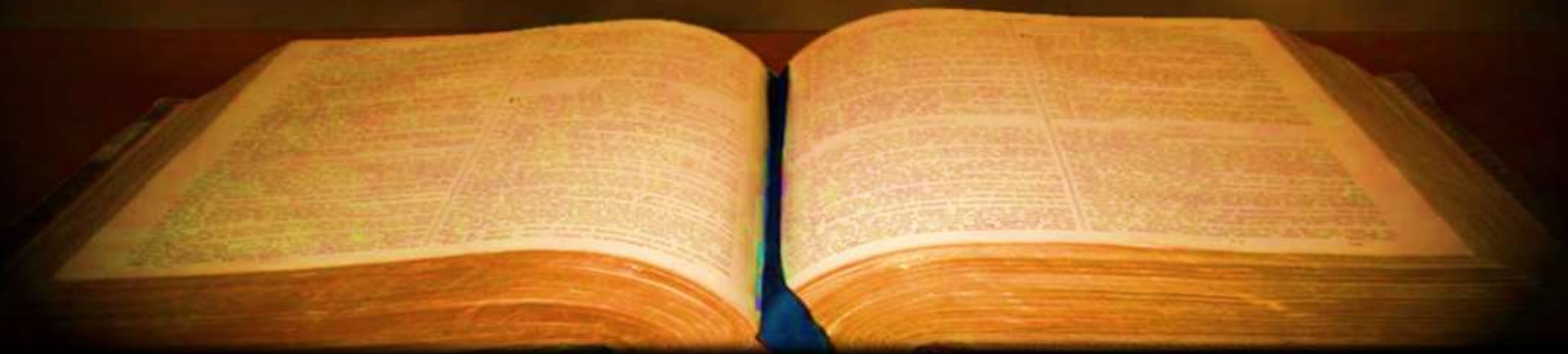
- Us to God.

Colossians 1:21-22; Romans 5:6-11

*Relationship* **restored**

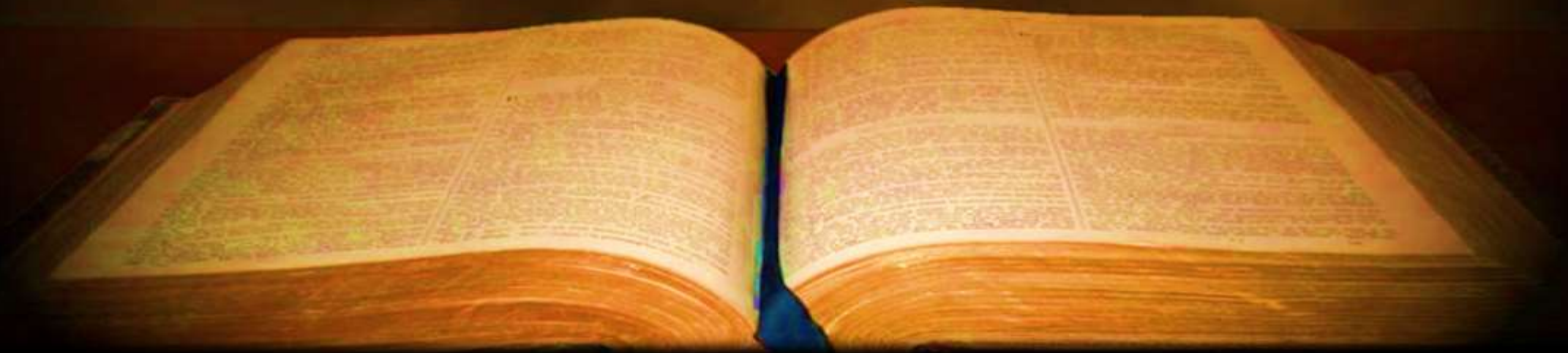
## Colossians 1:21-22

*“... remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, ...  
without hope and without God in the world.  
But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away  
have been **brought near by the blood of Christ.**”*



## Romans 5:10-11

*“For if, while we were God’s enemies, we were **reconciled** to him through the death of his Son, how much more, **having been reconciled**, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received **reconciliation**.”*



# 1) What does reconciliation mean?

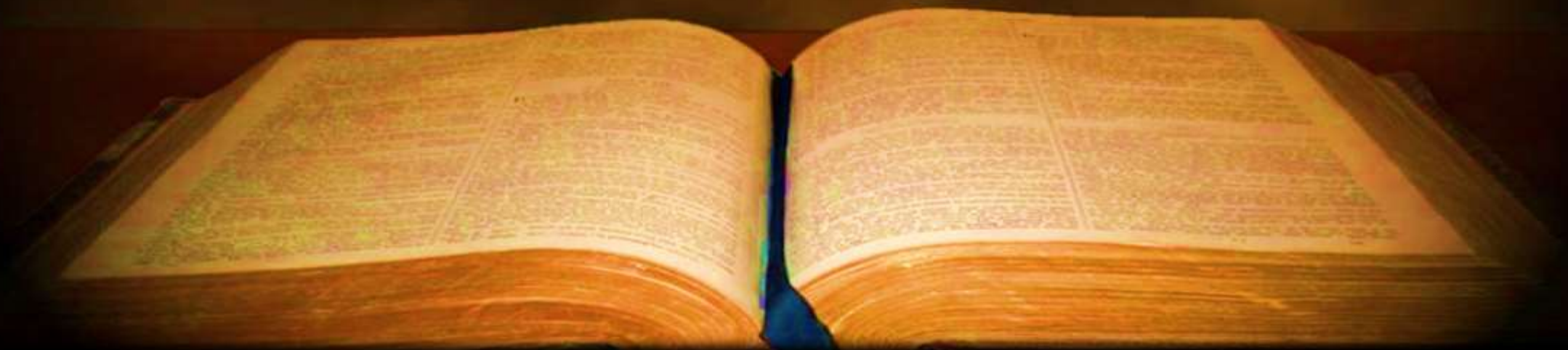
- A restored relationship with God.
- God's eternal, unconditional approval.
- Three kinds of reconciliation:
  - Us to God.
  - Us to one another.

Ephesians 2:14-15

Relationship restored

## Ephesians 2:14-15

*“For [Jesus] himself is our **peace**,  
who has made the two groups [Jews and Gentiles] one  
and has **destroyed the barrier**, the **dividing wall of hostility**,...  
His purpose was to create in himself  
**one new humanity out of the two**, thus making **peace**,...  
in **one body**.”*



# 1) What does reconciliation mean?

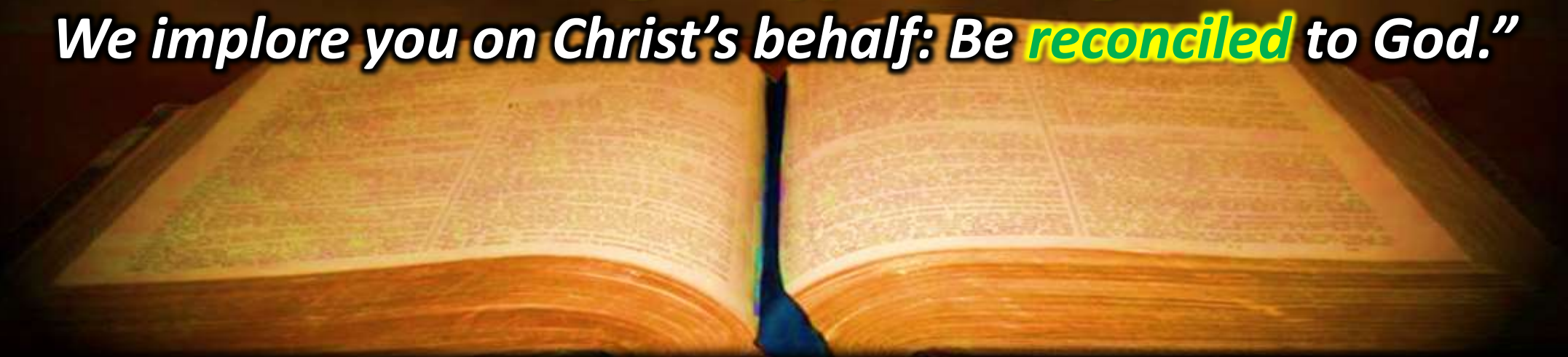
- A restored relationship with God.
- God's eternal, unconditional approval.
- Three kinds of reconciliation:
  - Us to God.
  - Us to one another.
  - Us to the world.

2 Corinthians 5:18-19

Relationship restored

## 2 Corinthians 5:18-19

*“All this is from God, who **reconciled** us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of **reconciliation**: that God was **reconciling the world** to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of **reconciliation**. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were **making his appeal through us**. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be **reconciled** to God.”*





# 1) What does reconciliation mean?

- A restored relationship with God.
- God's eternal, unconditional approval.
- Three kinds of reconciliation
- **God has rejected all the rejection in our lives  
and given us His complete approval.**

*Relationship* **restored**

2) How does reconciliation counter disapproval?



2) How does reconciliation counter disapproval?

- It points us back to God's approving voice.

Zephaniah 3:17;

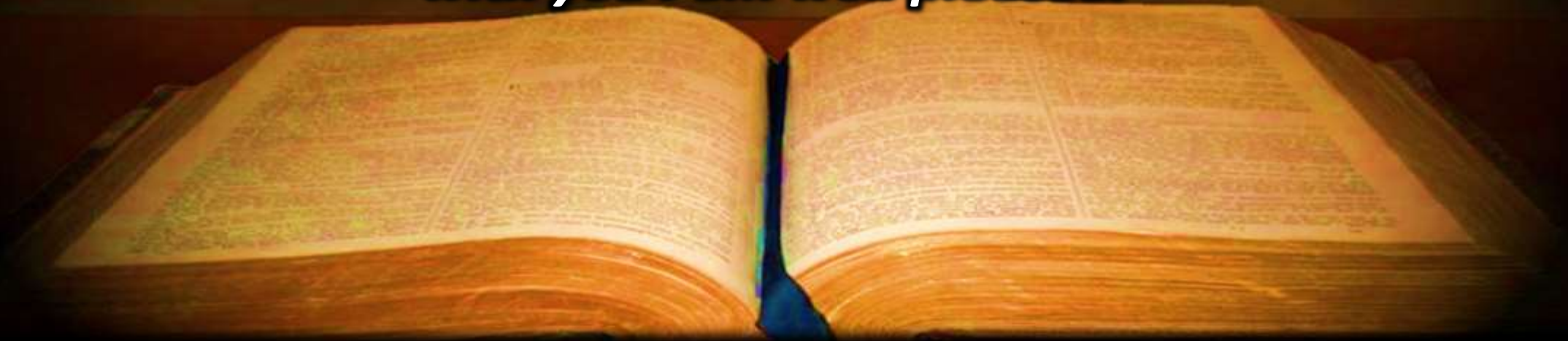
Matthew 3:17



## Zephaniah 3:17; Mark 1:11

***“The Lord your God is with you,  
the Mighty Warrior who saves.  
He will take great delight in you;  
in his love he will no longer rebuke you,  
but will rejoice over you with singing.”***

***“You are my Son [son/daughter], whom I love;  
with you I am well pleased.”***



## 2) How does reconciliation counter disapproval?

- It points us back to God's approving voice.
- It is a filter for criticism to discern the truth.



3) How does reconciliation help us face approval?



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- It points us back to God's reason for approval.



### 3) How does reconciliation help us face approval?

- It points us back to God's reason for approval.
- It filters out flattery and compliments and gives us the truth of edification.





### 3) How does reconciliation help us face approval?

- It points us back to God's reason for approval.
- It filters out flattery and compliments and gives us the truth of edification.
- It turns us away from living **to be approved**,  
toward living **as approved**.

1 Thessalonians 2:6;  
2 Timothy 2:15

*"... we speak as **those approved** by God..."*

*"Do your best to present yourself to God as **one approved** ..."*

4) What is the risk of relationships?



**HIGH RISK  
RELATIONSHIPS**

A woman in a black dress and high heels and a man in a suit and jeans are walking on a tightrope. The woman is in the foreground, and the man is behind her. They are both looking down at the rope. The background is a blurred cityscape.

4) What is the risk of relationships?

- The approval of people can attach us to people rather than to Christ.

**HIGH RISK  
RELATIONSHIPS**



#### 4) What is the risk of relationships?

- The approval of people can attach us to people rather than to Christ.
- The disapproval of people can block the approving voice of God in our lives.

**HIGH RISK  
RELATIONSHIPS**

#### 4) What is the risk of relationships?

- The approval of people can attach us to people rather than to Christ.
- The disapproval of people can block the approving voice of God in our lives.
- **All meaningful and lasting relationships have a Kingdom purpose.**



**HIGH RISK  
RELATIONSHIPS**



5) What is God's purpose for relationships?

A hand is shown writing on a scroll with a quill pen. The scroll is unrolled and lies on a surface. A faint, light-colored geometric pattern, resembling a wireframe or a grid, is overlaid on the scene. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue and white.

**GOD'S DESIGN FOR  
RELATIONSHIPS**

5) What is God's purpose for relationships?

- To point us back to our ultimate, created relationship with God.

# **GOD'S DESIGN FOR RELATIONSHIPS**



## 5) What is God's purpose for relationships?

- To point us back to our ultimate, created relationship with God.
- To reflect God's approval of us and work in our lives.

**GOD'S DESIGN FOR  
RELATIONSHIPS**

6) How can we implement this antidote?

Relationship restored

6) How can we implement this antidote?

- Embrace God's approval.

*Relationship* **restored**

6) How can we implement this antidote?

- Embrace God's approval.
- Filter the horizontal through the vertical.

*Relationship* **restored**

## 6) How can we implement this antidote?

- Embrace God's approval.
- Filter the horizontal through the vertical.
- Rehearse the reconciliation of the Father.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8a

*Relationship* **restored**

## 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a

**“Love** is patient, **love** is kind.  
**It** does not envy, **it** does not boast, **it** is not proud.  
**It** does not dishonor others, **it** is not self-seeking,  
**it** is not easily angered, **it** keeps no record of wrongs.  
**Love** does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.  
**It** always protects, always trusts,  
always hopes, always perseveres.  
**Love** never fails.”



1 Corinthians 13:4-8a / replace "love" with "my Father".

**"My Father** is patient, **my Father** is kind.

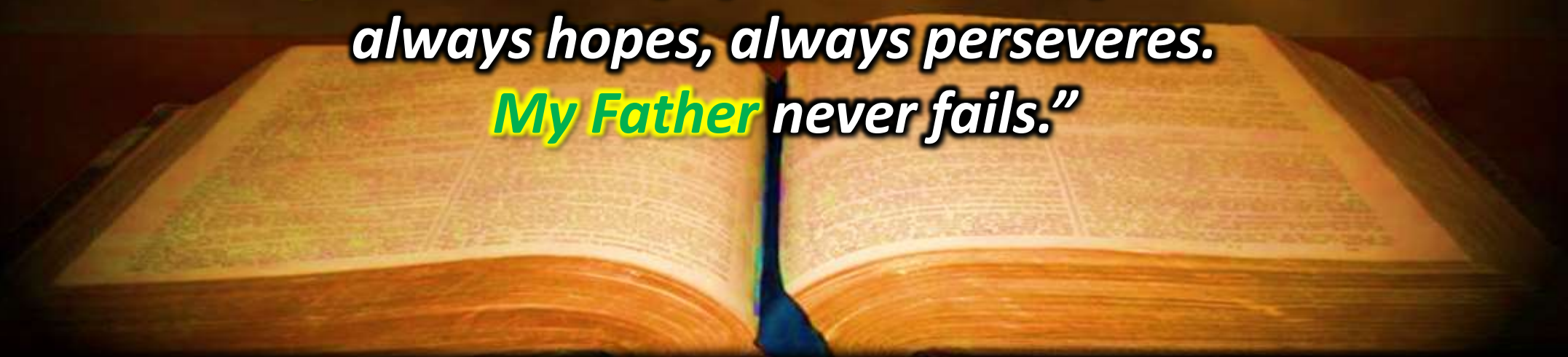
**My Father** does not envy, **my Father** does not boast,  
**my Father** is not proud.

**My Father** does not dishonor others, **my Father** is not self-seeking,  
**my Father** is not easily angered, **my Father** keeps no record of wrongs.

**My Father** does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

**My Father** always protects, always trusts,  
always hopes, always perseveres.

**My Father** never fails."



## 6) How can we implement this antidote?

- Embrace God's approval.
- Filter the horizontal through the vertical.
- Rehearse the reconciliation of the Father. 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a
  - Replace "love" with "my Father".
  - Pray the Psalms out loud.

*Relationship* **restored**



## 6) How can we implement this antidote?

- Embrace God's approval.
- Filter the horizontal through the vertical.
- Rehearse the reconciliation of the Father.
- **Reflect reconciliation to other Christians and pre-Christians.**

1 Corinthians 13:4-8a; Colossians 4:6

*Relationship* **restored**

1 Corinthians 13:4-8a / replace "My Father" with your name.

**"David** is patient, **David** is kind.

**David** does not envy, **David** does not boast,

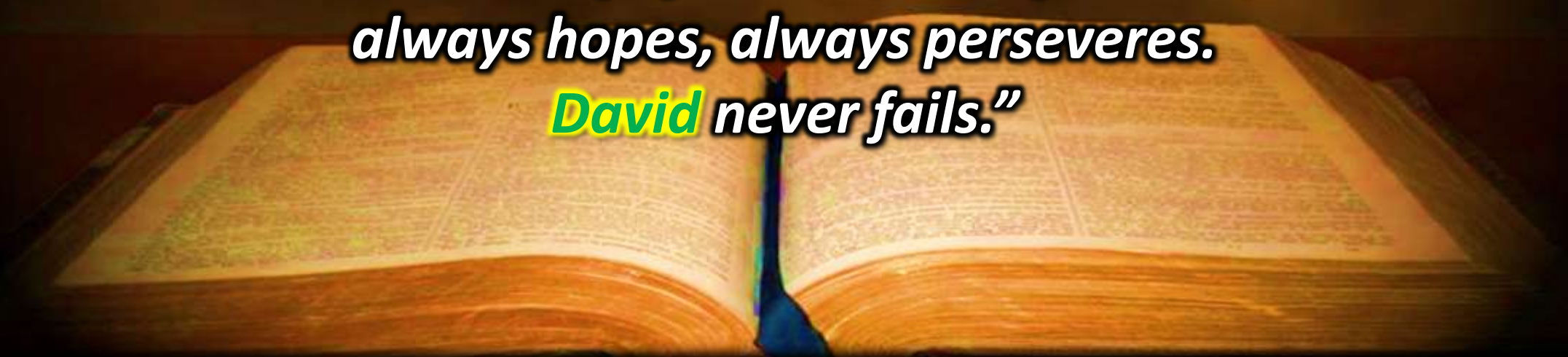
**David** is not proud.

**David** does not dishonor others, **David** is not self-seeking,  
**David** is not easily angered, **David** keeps no record of wrongs.

**David** does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

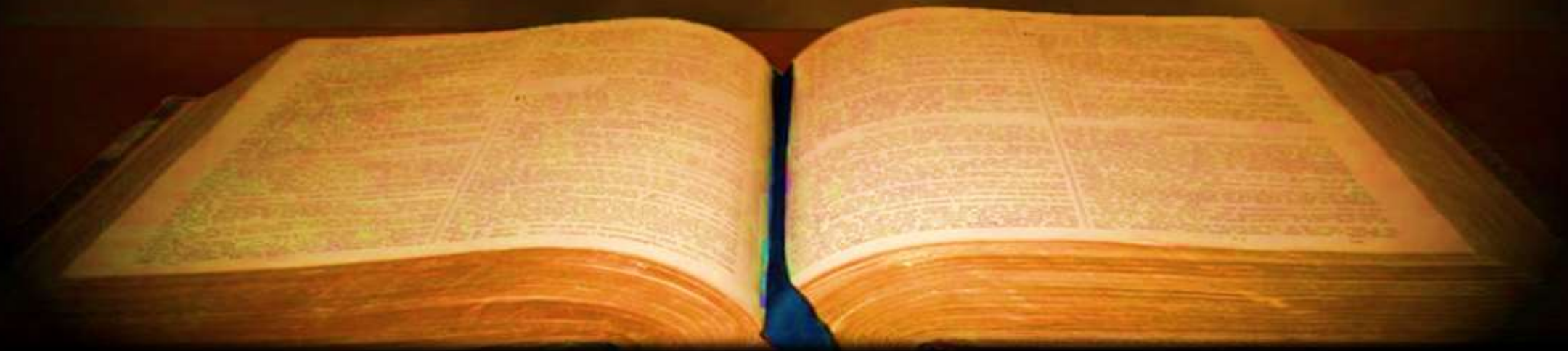
**David** always protects, always trusts,  
always hopes, always perseveres.

**David** never fails."



## Colossians 4:6

*“Let your conversation be always **full of grace,**  
**seasoned with salt,** so that you may know  
how to answer everyone.”*



***“The Gospel of Freedom and the Things That Hinder”***

