

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

A man wearing a white long-sleeved shirt, black pants, and a large black backpack is running on a paved road. He is wearing glasses and has a determined expression. The background is a vast, flat green field under a cloudy sky.

***“... let us **throw off everything that hinders...**  
And let us run with perseverance the race...  
**fixing our eyes on Jesus...**”***

# ***The Performance Trap***

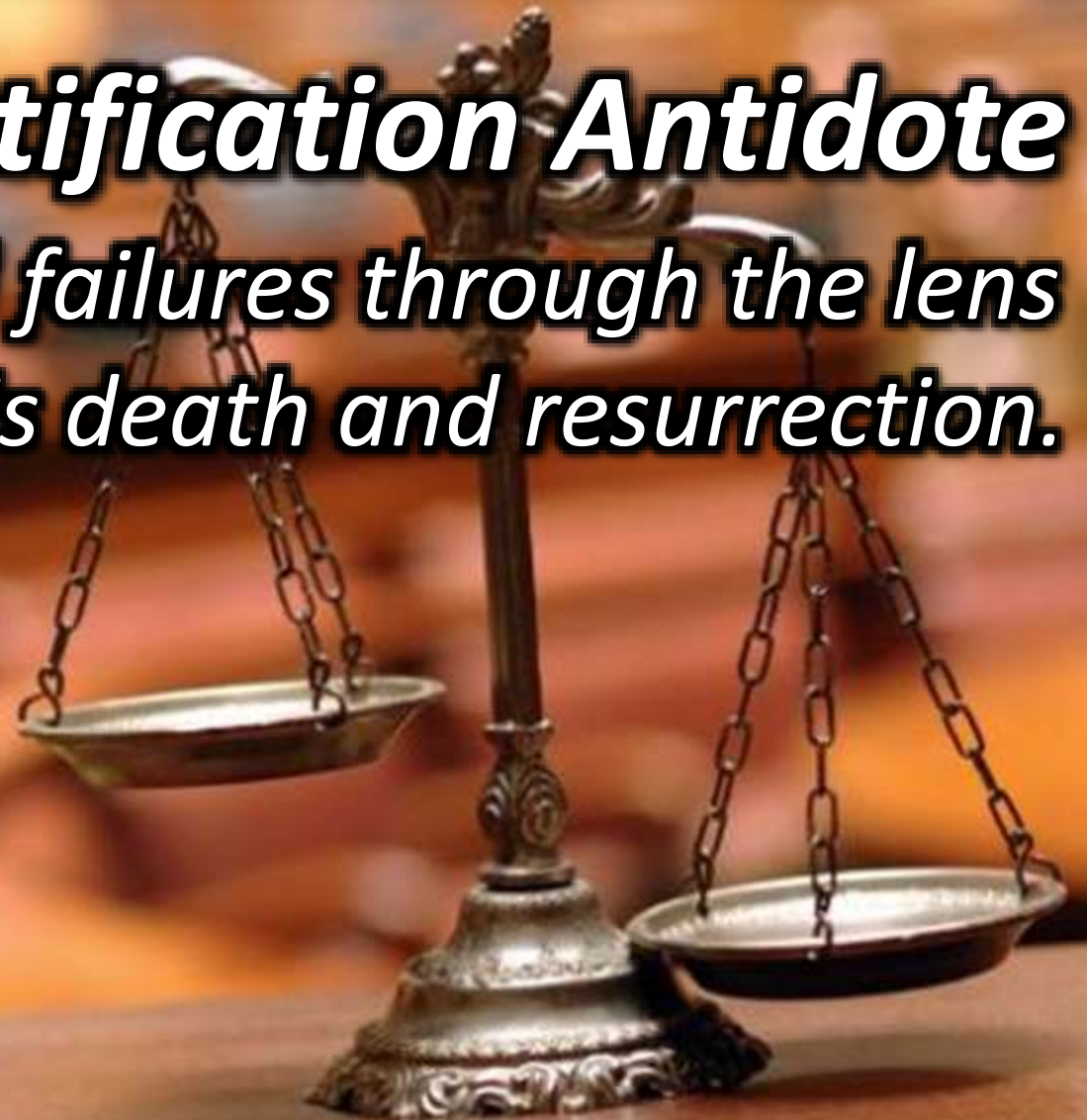
*"I must meet **certain standards**  
to feel good about myself."*





# ***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 Reconciliation Antidote***

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

***Relationship restored***

# ***The Blame Trap***

*“Those who fail are unworthy of love  
and deserve to be punished.”*



# The Old Testament

**Genesis 3:1-13,21**

*Genesis*

**Exodus**

**Leviticus**

**Numbers**

**Deuteronomy**

**Joshua**

**Judges**

**Ruth**

**1/2 Samuel**

**1/2 Kings**

**1/2 Chronicles**

**Ezra**

**Nehemiah**

**Esther**

**Job**

**Psalms**

**Proverbs**

**Ecclesiastes**

**Song of Songs**

**Isaiah**

**Jeremiah**

**Lamentations**

**Ezekiel**

**Daniel**

**Hosea**

**Joel**

**Amos**

**Obadiah**

**Jonah**

**Micah**

**Nahum**

**Habakkuk**

**Zephaniah**

**Haggai**

**Zechariah**

**Malachi**



**“... *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*...”**





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  - In a Garden at the beginning.





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***“Who told you that you were naked?”***





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***Genesis 4:9***

***“Then the Lord said to Cain, ‘Where is your brother Abel?’  
‘I don’t know,’ he replied. ‘Am I my brother’s keeper?’.”***



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- The Bible tells us we are *actually* guilty.
- Our nature is to try and throw off feelings of guilt in whatever way we can.

And blame is one way to do it.



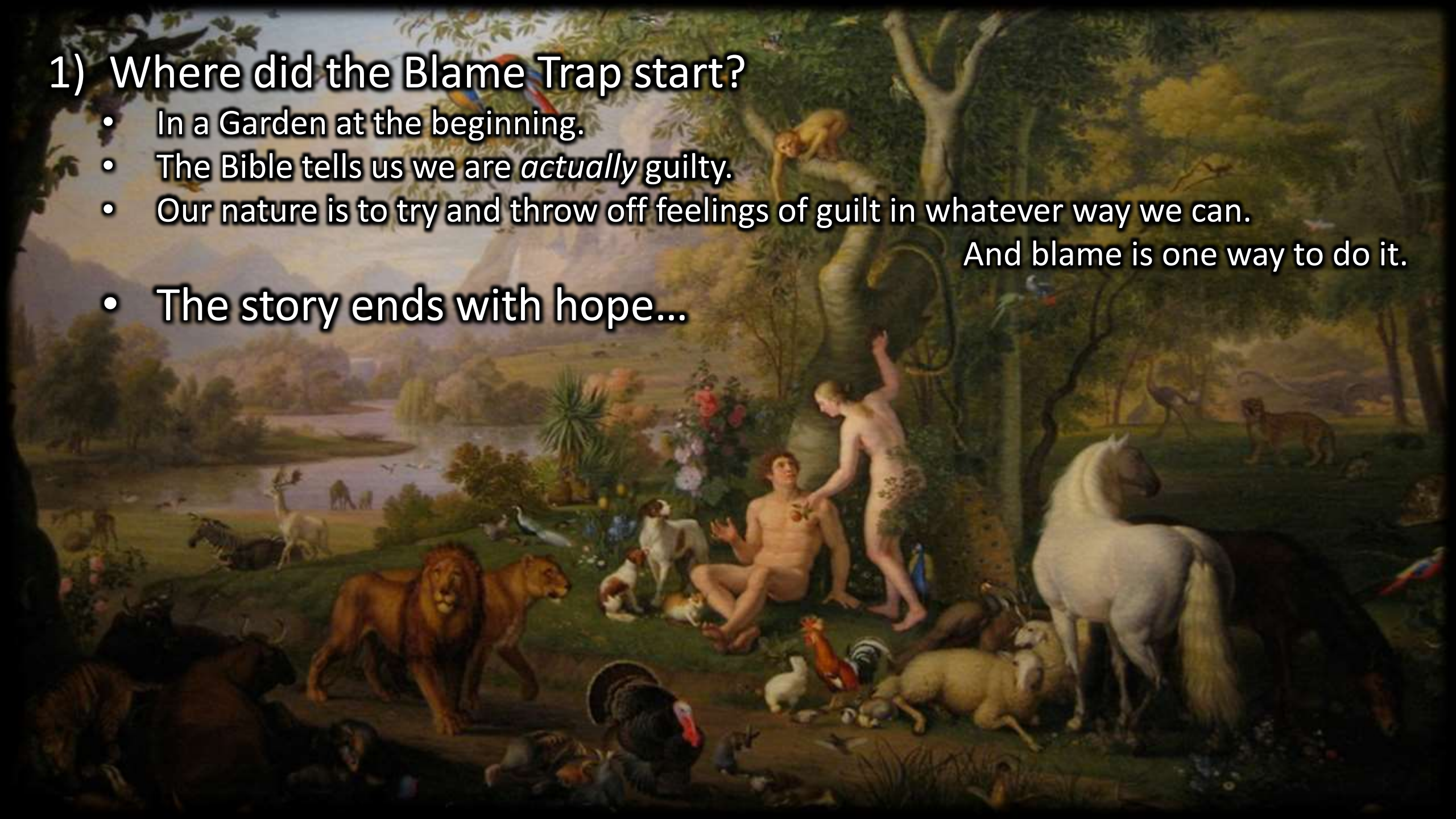


# 1) Where did the Blame Trap start?

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- The story ends with hope...

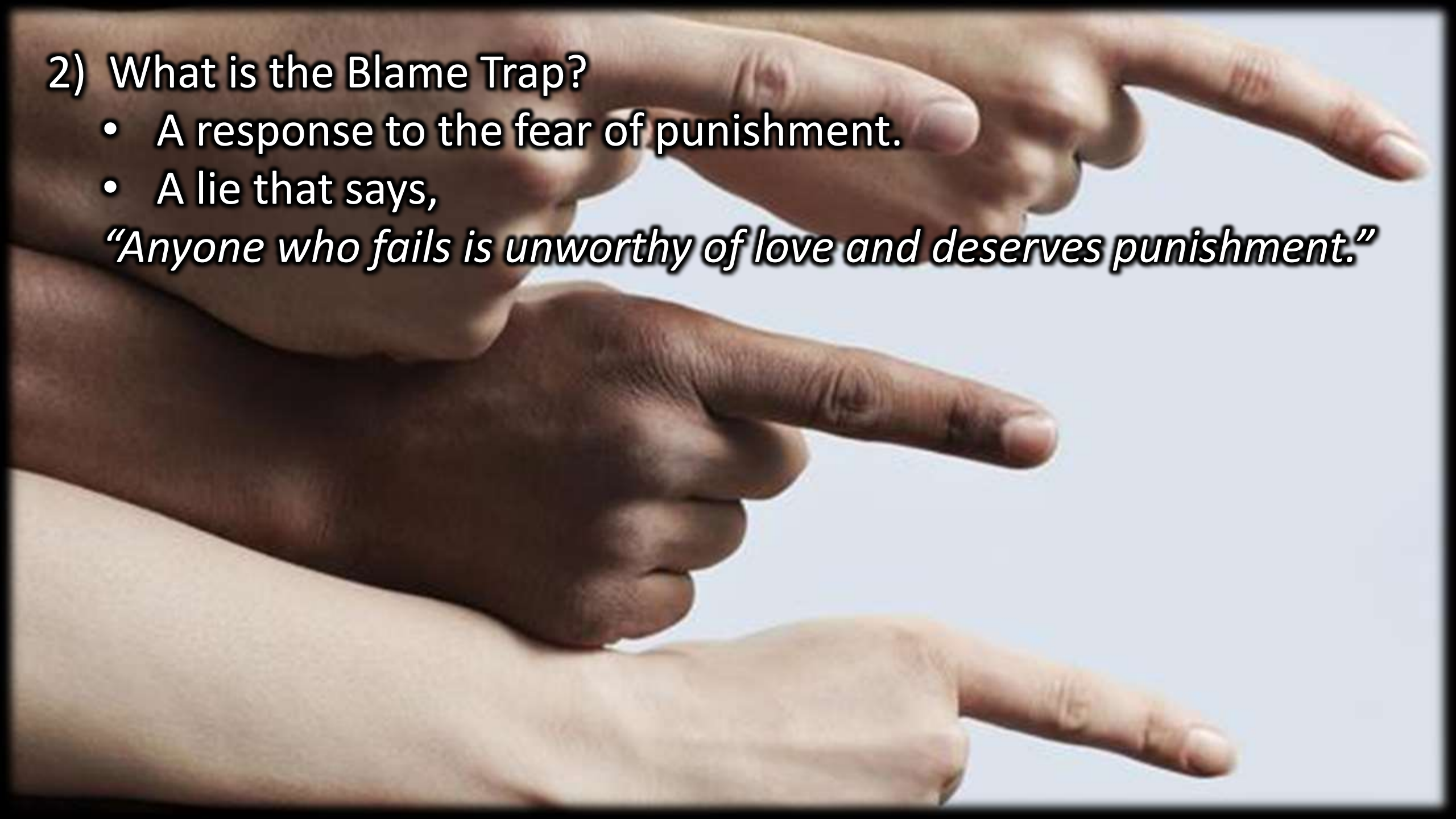




## 2) What is the Blame Trap?

- A response to the fear of punishment.



A close-up photograph of three hands from different people, each with a different skin tone (light, medium, and dark), pointing their index fingers towards the right. The hands are positioned in a way that they appear to be pointing at a common point off-camera. The background is a plain, light blue-grey color.

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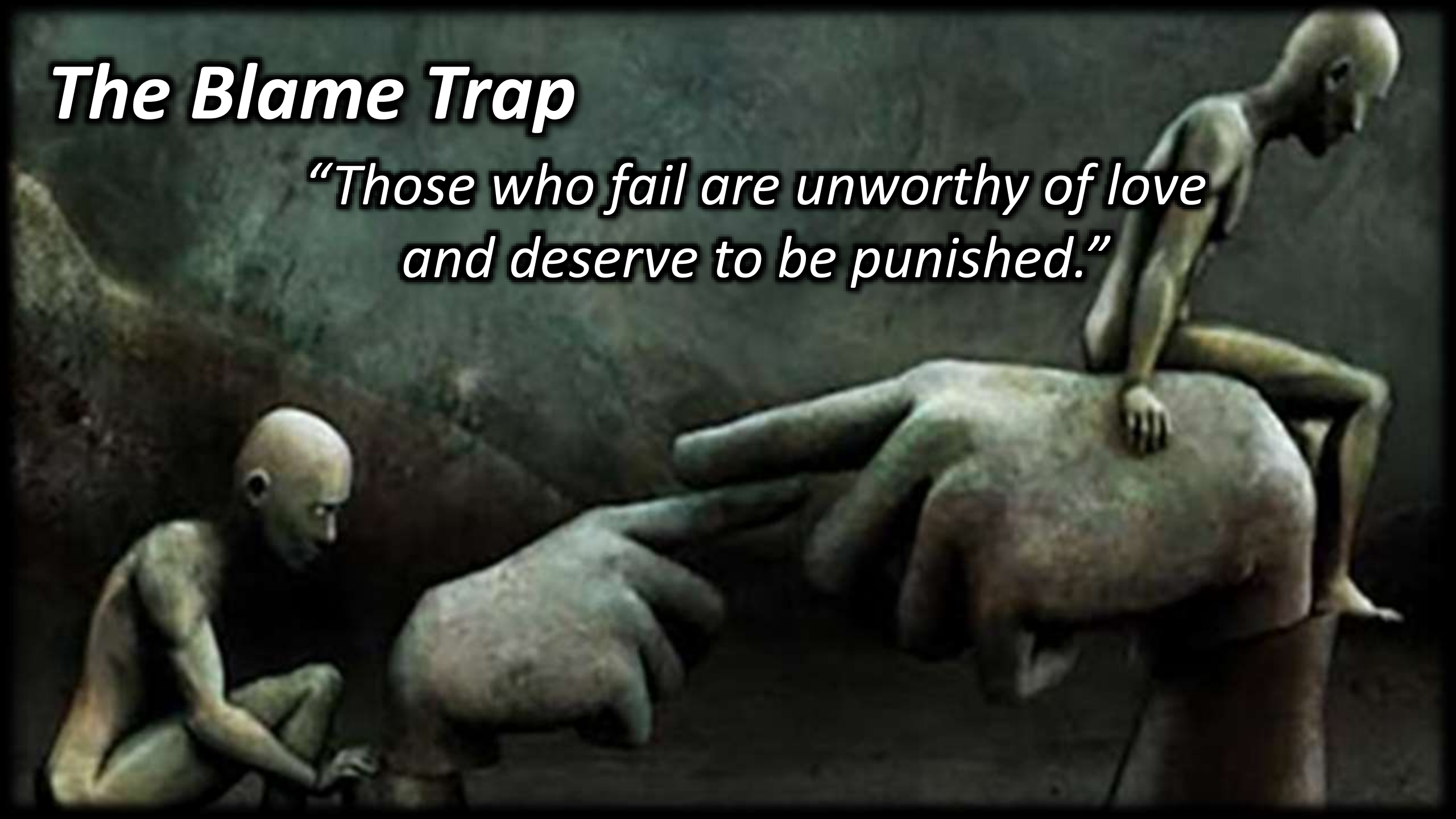
- A response to the fear of punishment.
- A lie that says,

*“Anyone who fails is unworthy of love and deserves punishment.”*



# ***The Blame Trap***

*"Those who fail are unworthy of love  
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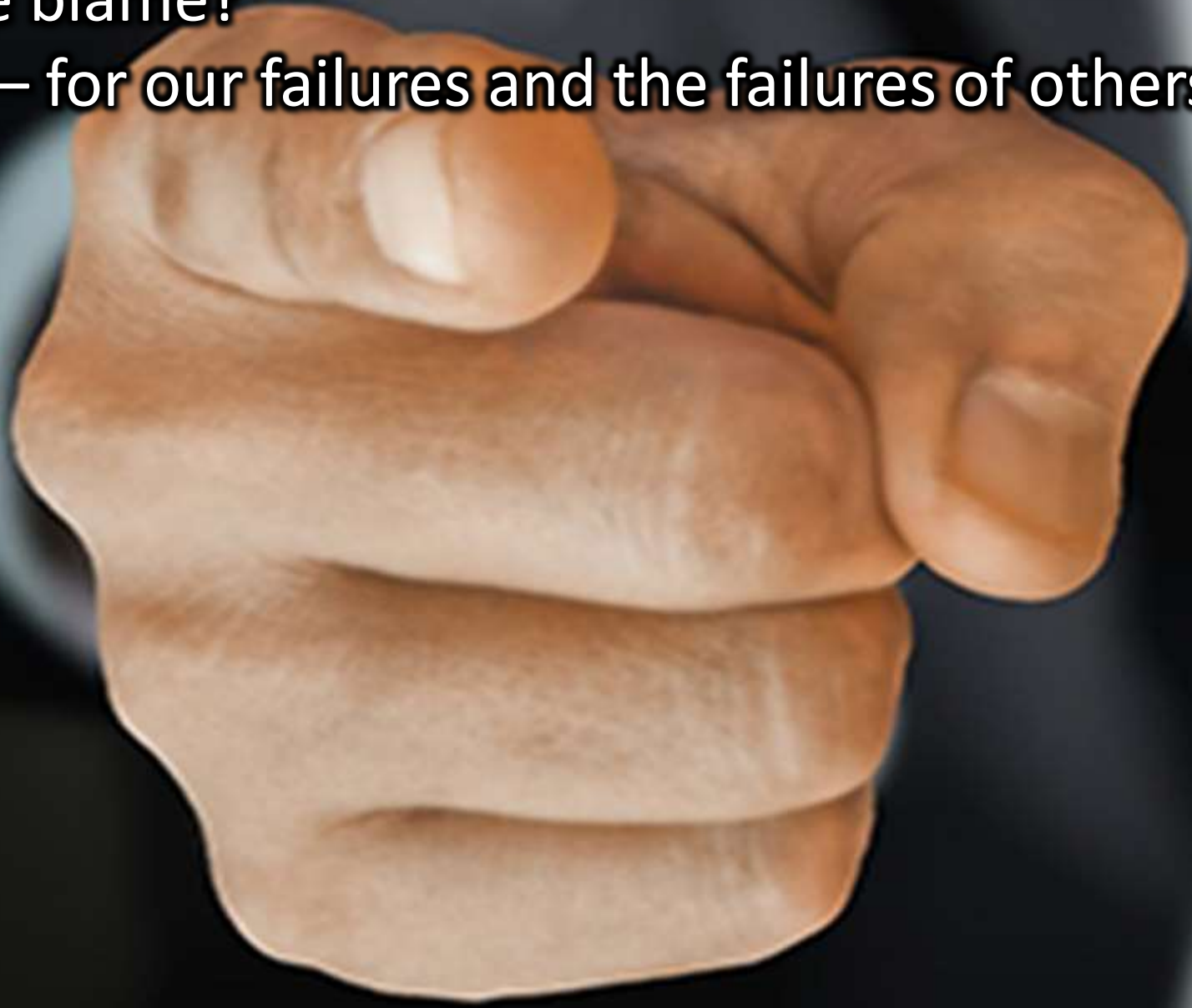
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- Others – for their failures and for causing our failure. 3:12,13
- God – for allowing the possibility of failure. 3:12



4) What makes blaming / deflecting blame a trap?





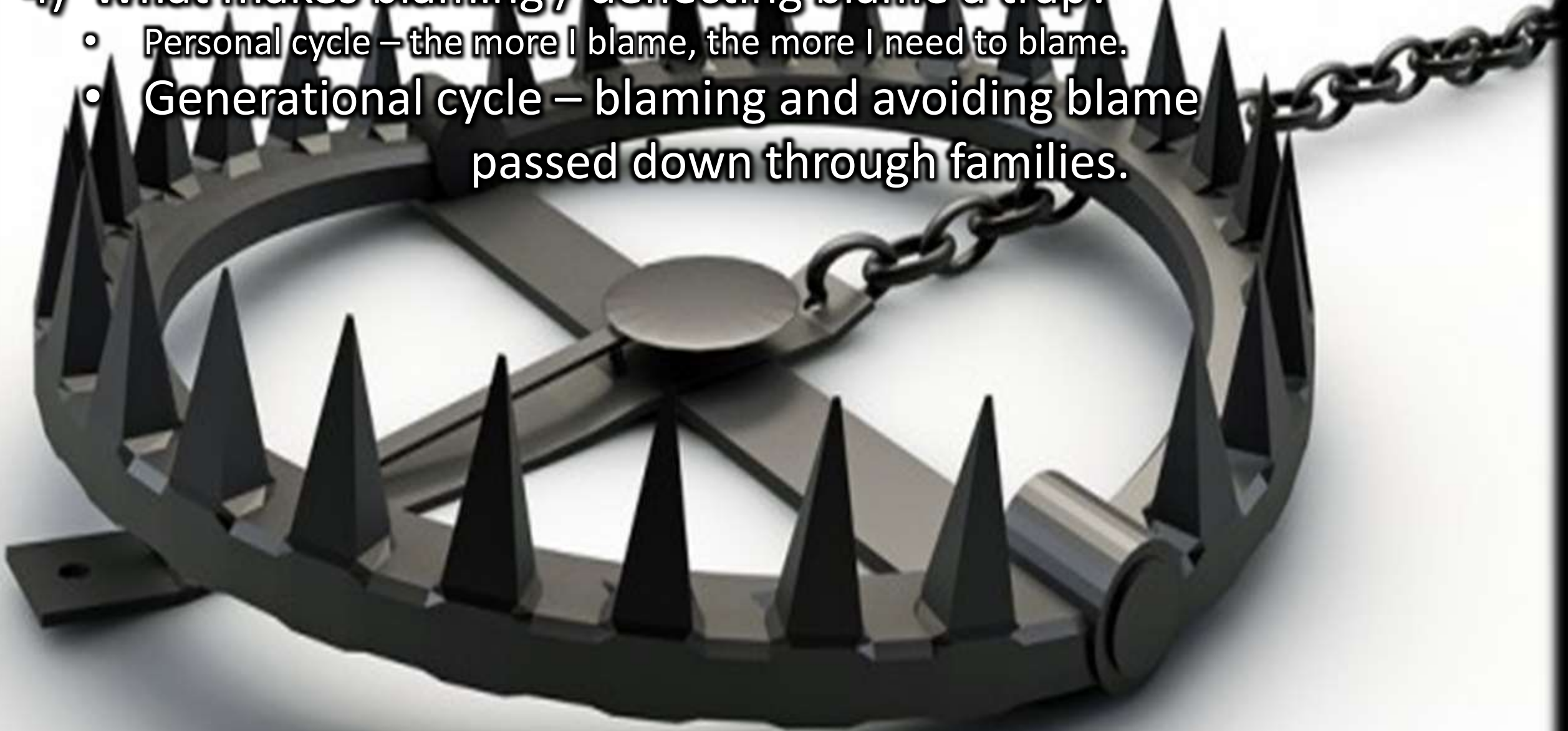
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- Personal cycle – the more I blame, the more I need to blame.
- Generational cycle – blaming and avoiding blame passed down through families.
- The futility of placing or receiving blame.



5) How and why do we blame?

**HIS FAULT**

**HER FAULT**

**THEIR FAULT**

**NOT ME**



5) How and why do we blame?

- Distract – keep others from noticing us.

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- Compete – stay ahead of the worst.



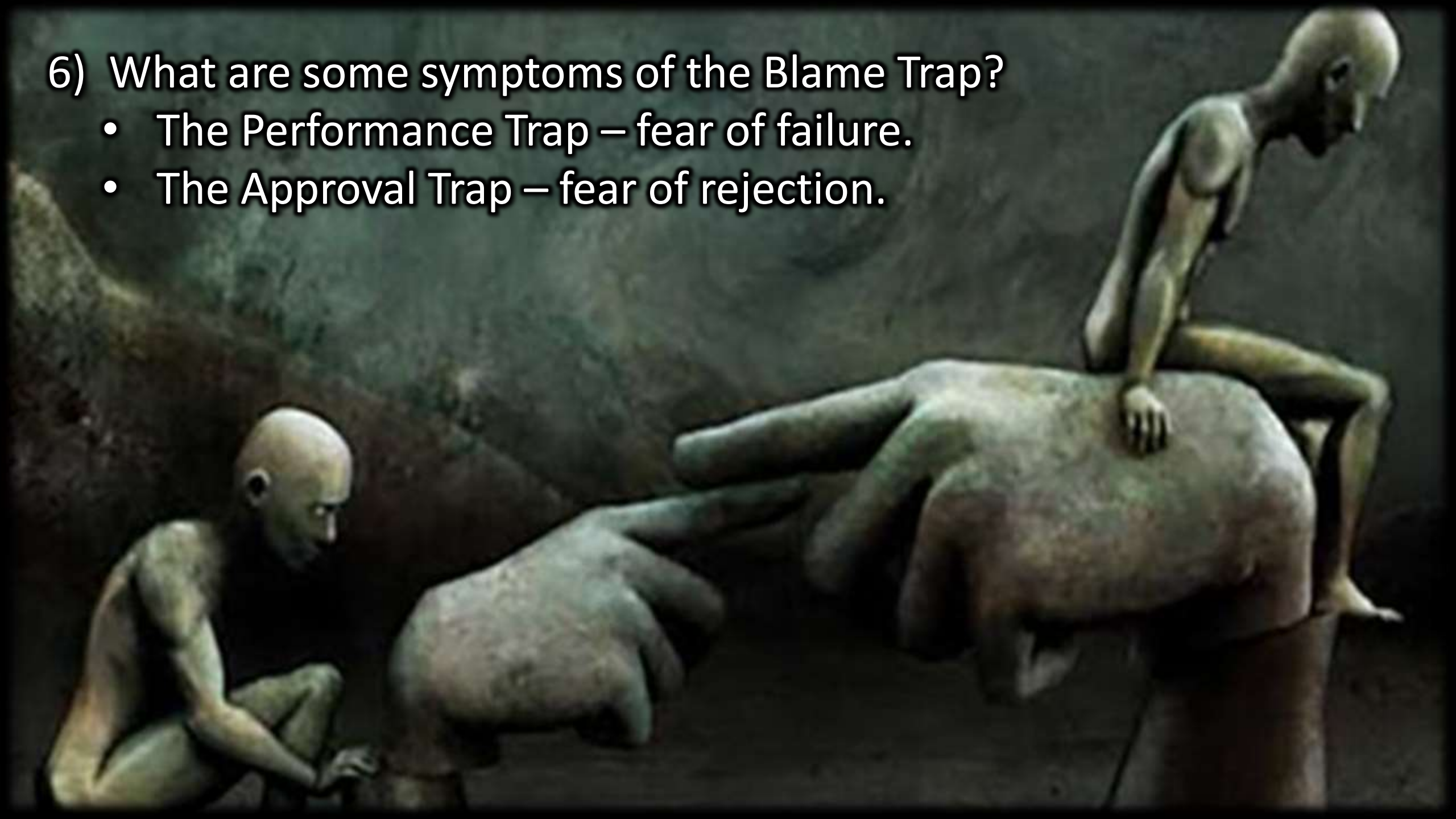


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- The Approval Trap – fear of rejection.





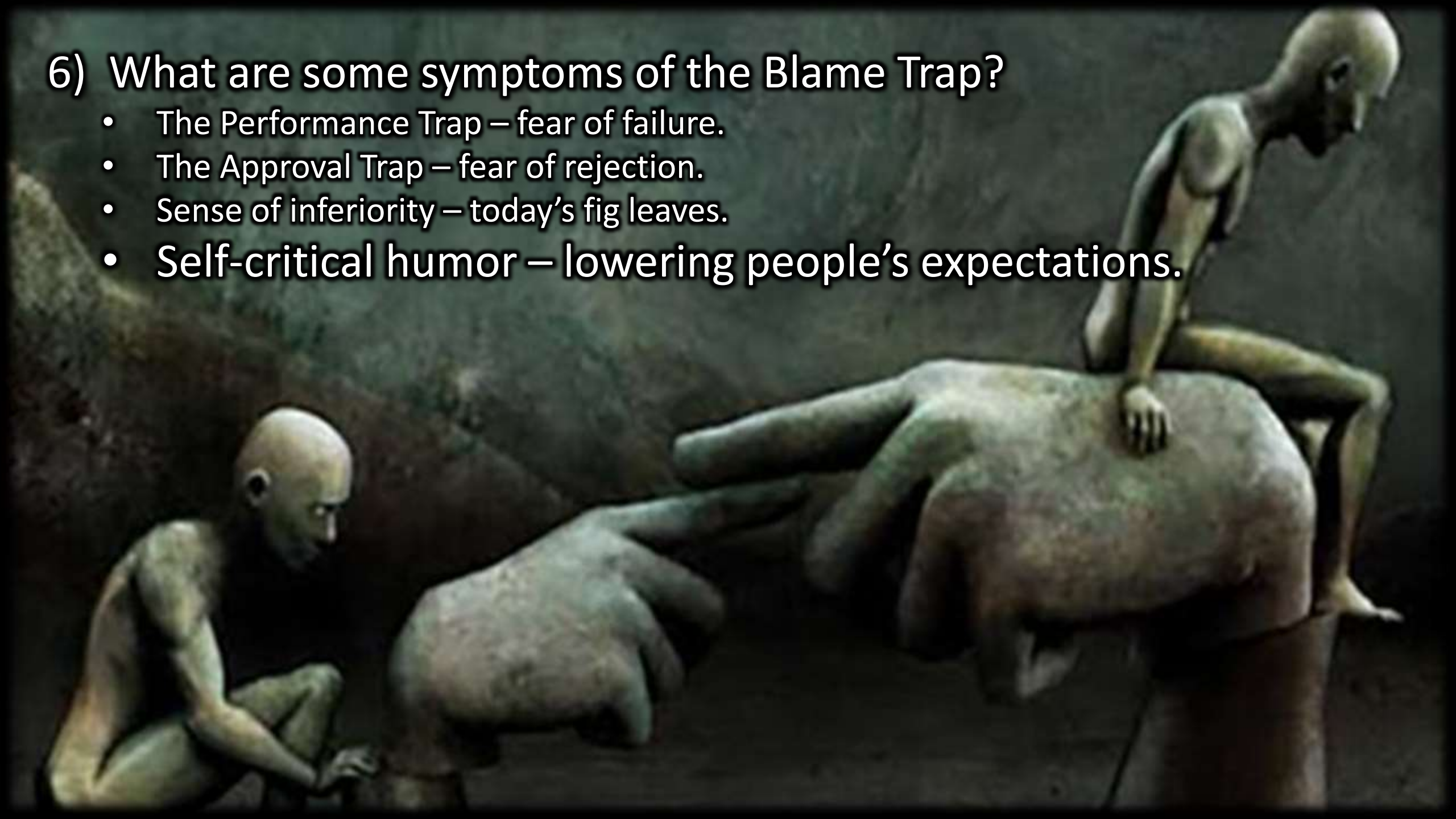
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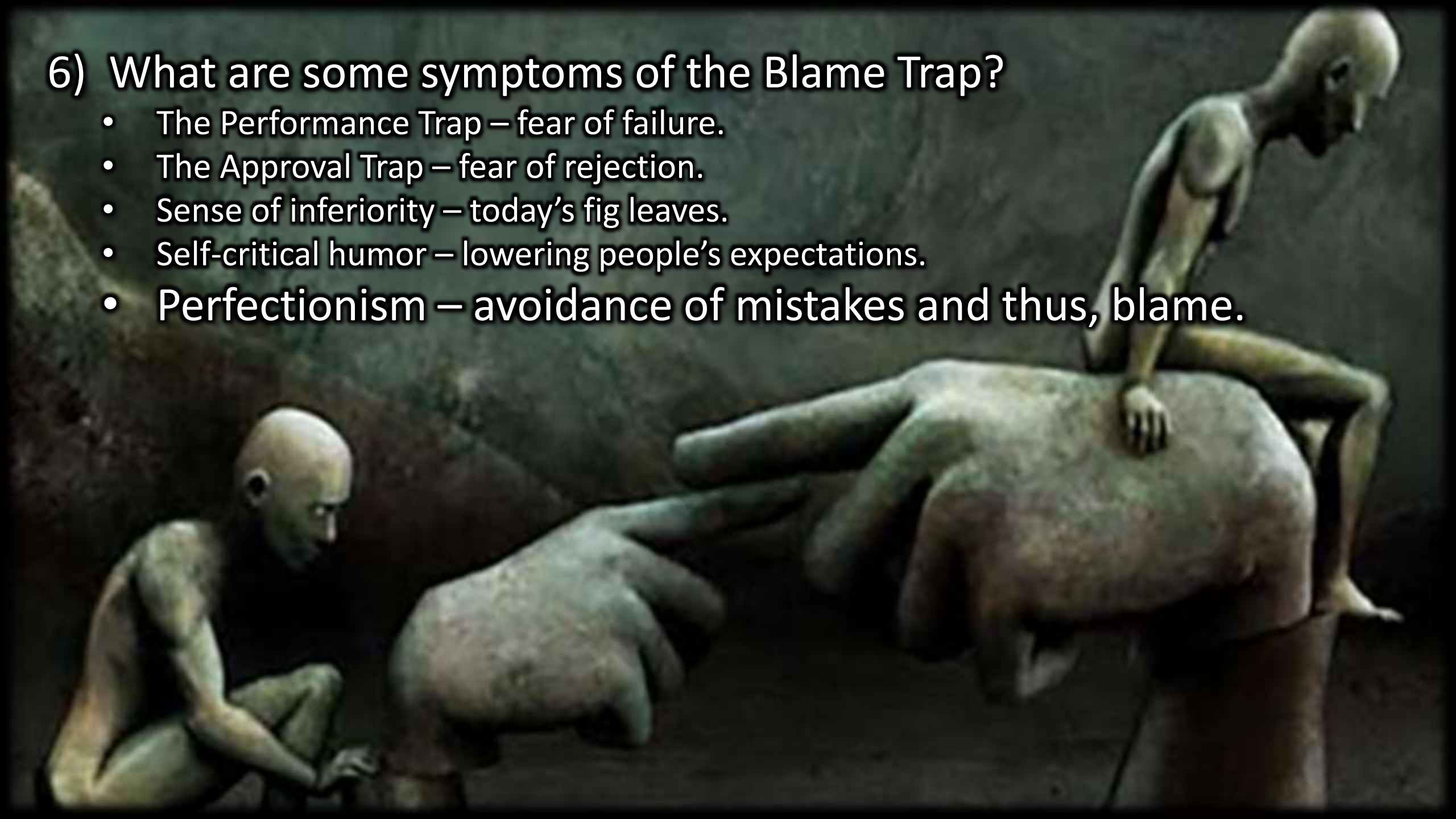
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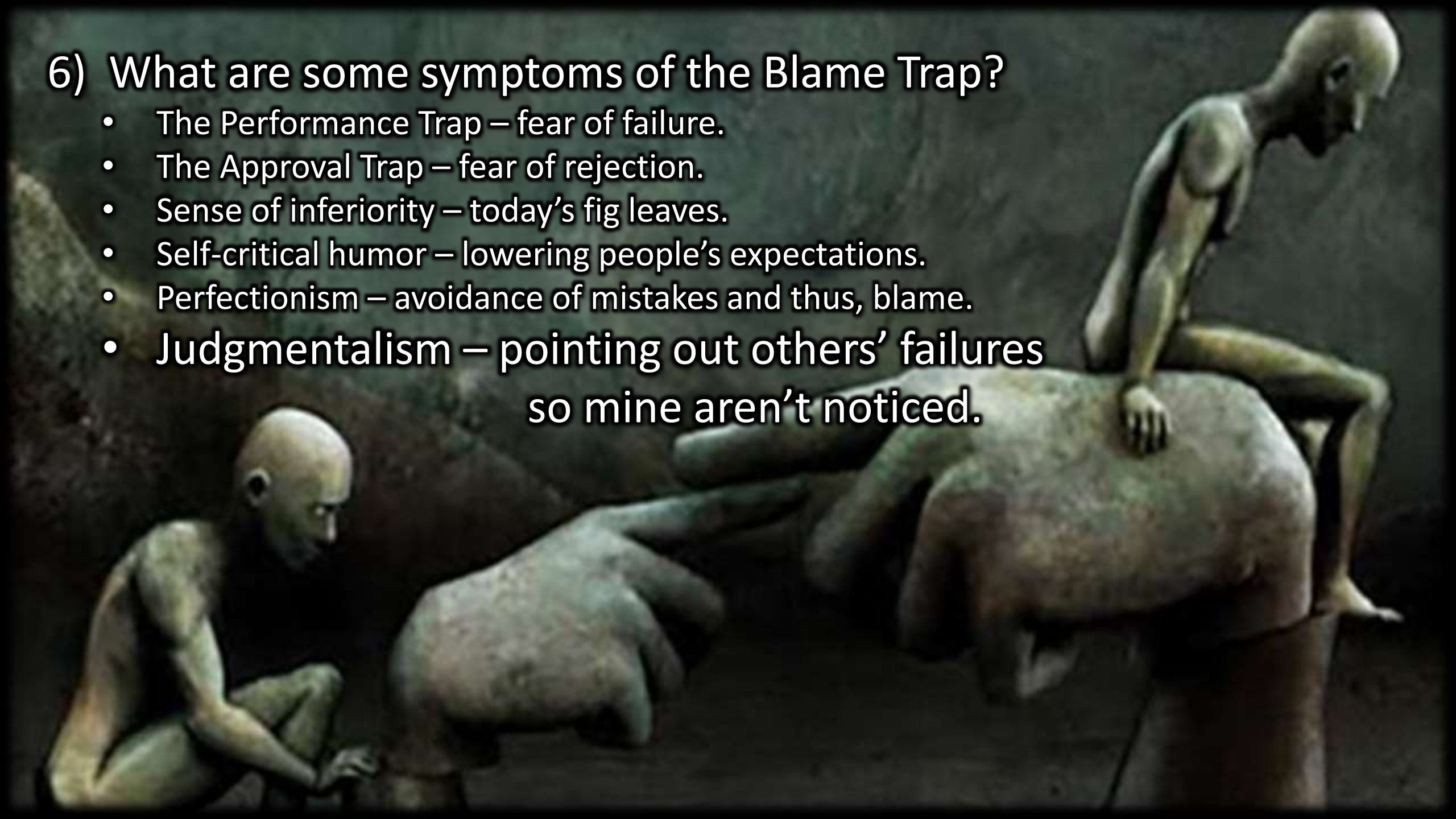
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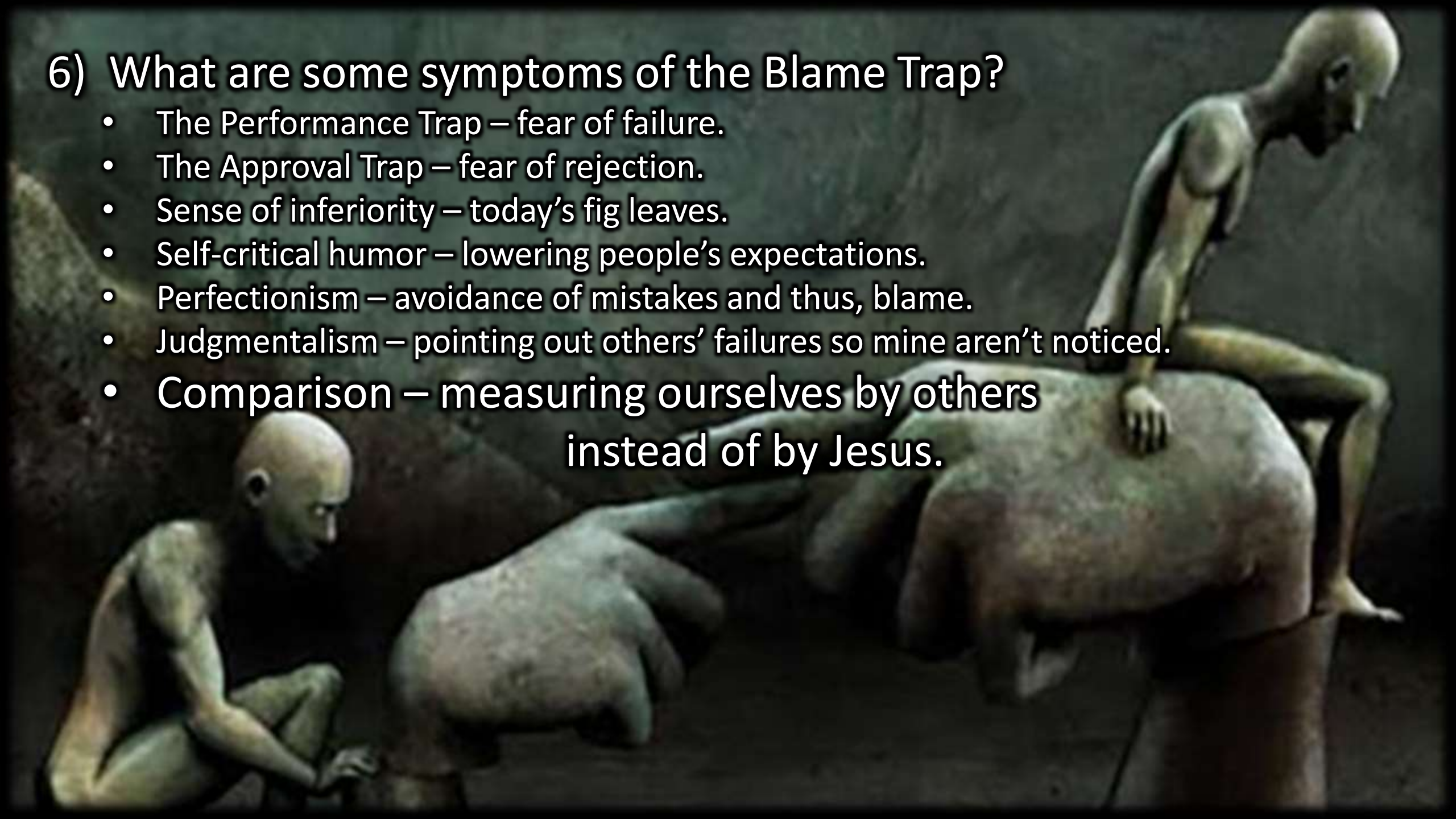
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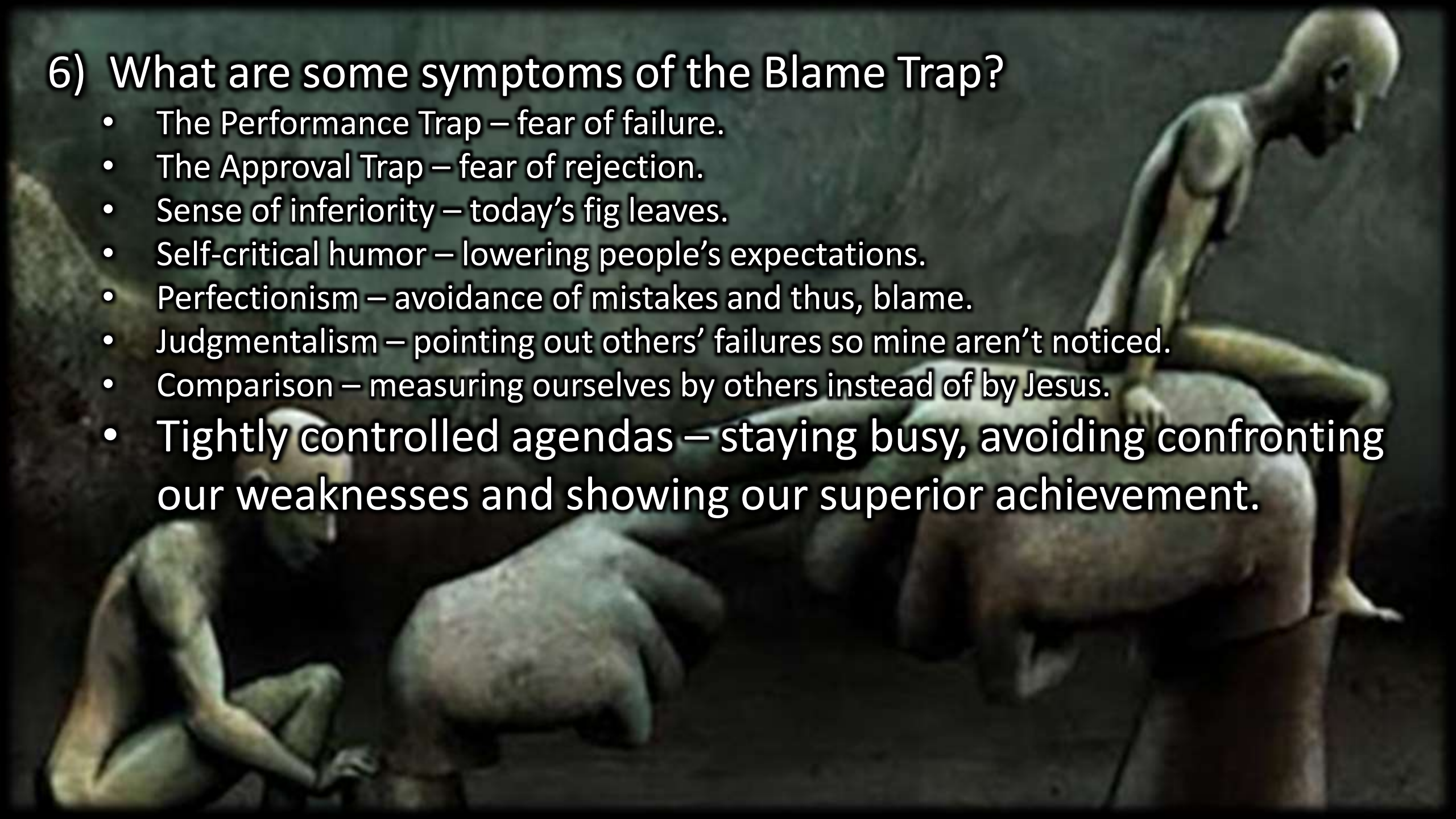
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- Tightly controlled agendas – staying busy, avoiding confronting our weaknesses and showing our superior achievement.





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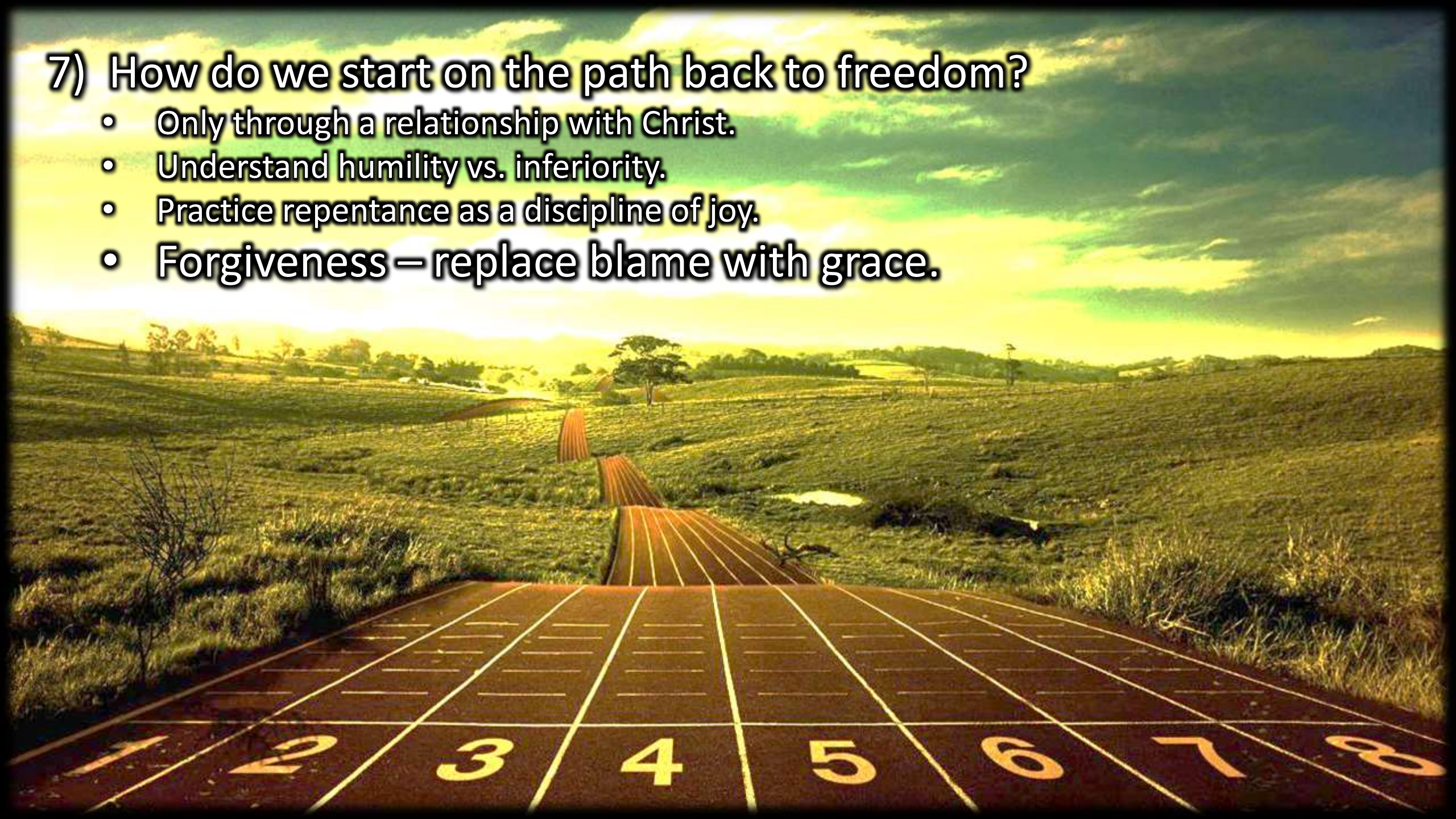
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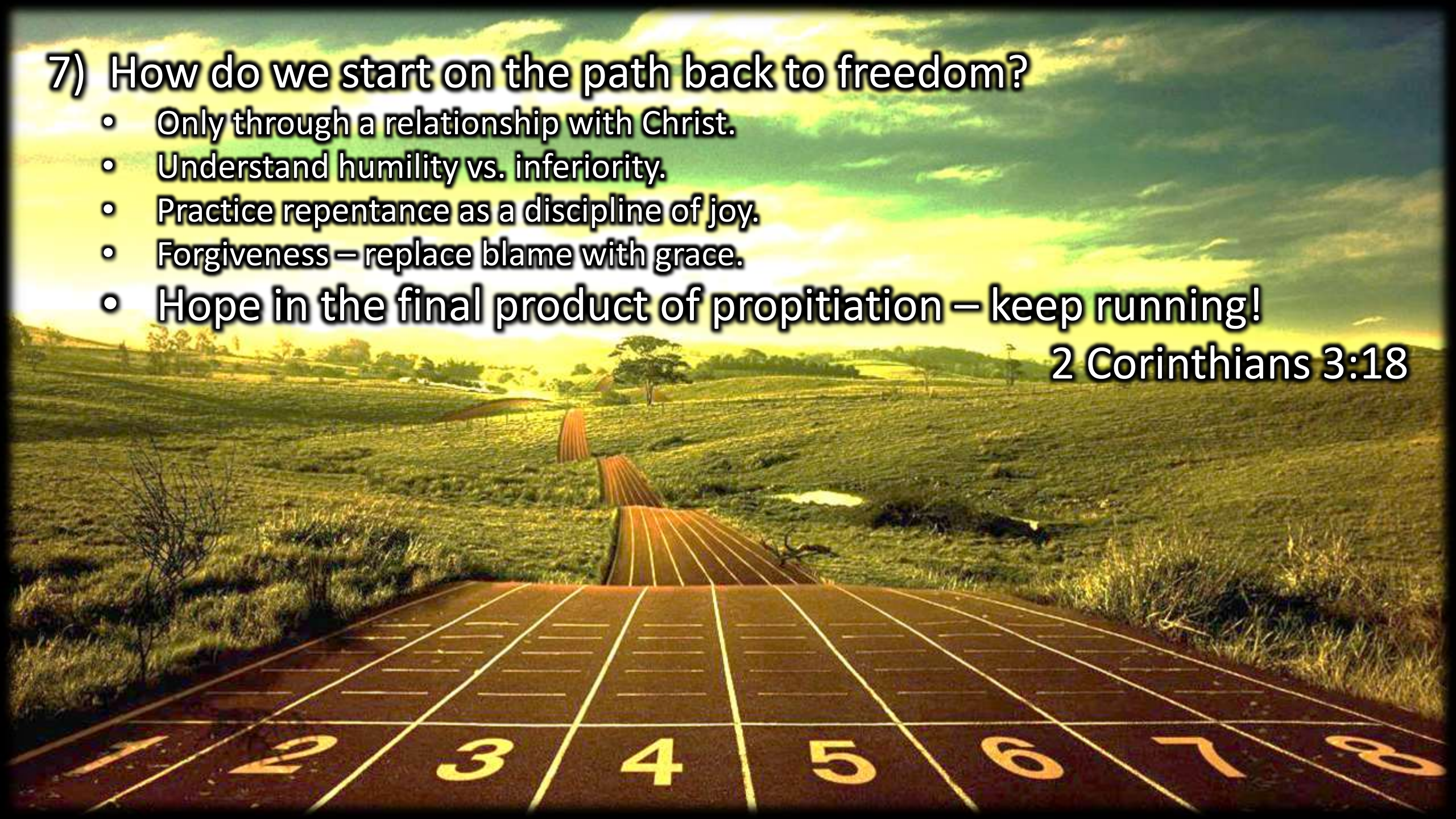




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- Only through a relationship with Christ.
- Understand humility vs. inferiority.
- Practice repentance as a discipline of joy.
- Forgiveness – replace blame with grace.
- Hope in the final product of propitiation – keep running!

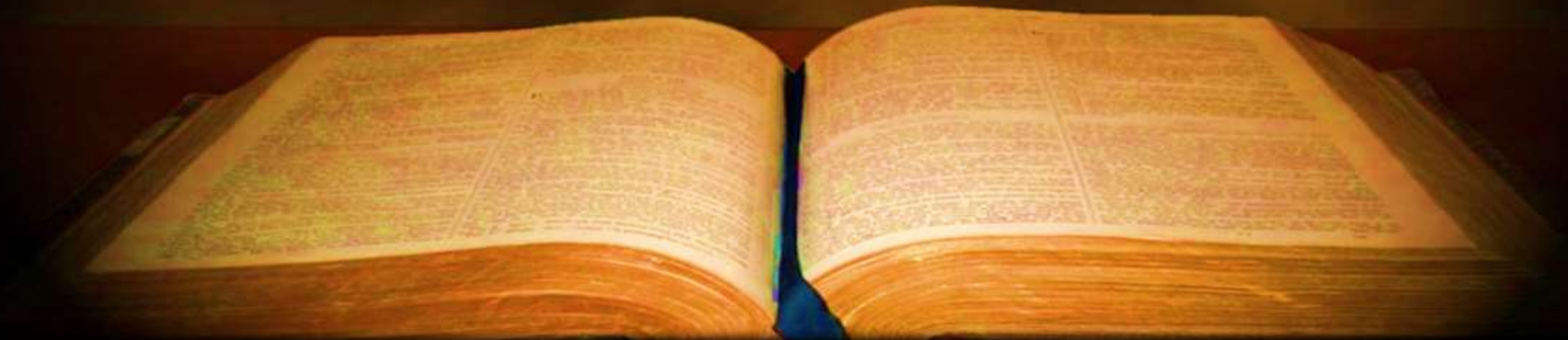
2 Corinthians 3:18





## 2 Corinthians 3:18

*“And we all, who with unveiled faces  
contemplate the Lord’s glory,  
are **being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory,**  
which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”*





A photograph of a red running track with white lane markings, stretching into the distance through a green field. The track has numbers 1 through 8 painted on the lanes. In the background, there are rolling green hills under a cloudy sky.

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