

Giving It + UP

*A Lenten Sermon Series at Verona UMC -
What are you giving up for Lent?*

FEBRUARY 26

CONTROL

MARCH 18

ENEMIES

MARCH 4

EXPECTATIONS

MARCH 25

OUR LIVES

MARCH 11

SUPERIORITY

APRIL 1

POPULARITY

APRIL 8

DEATH





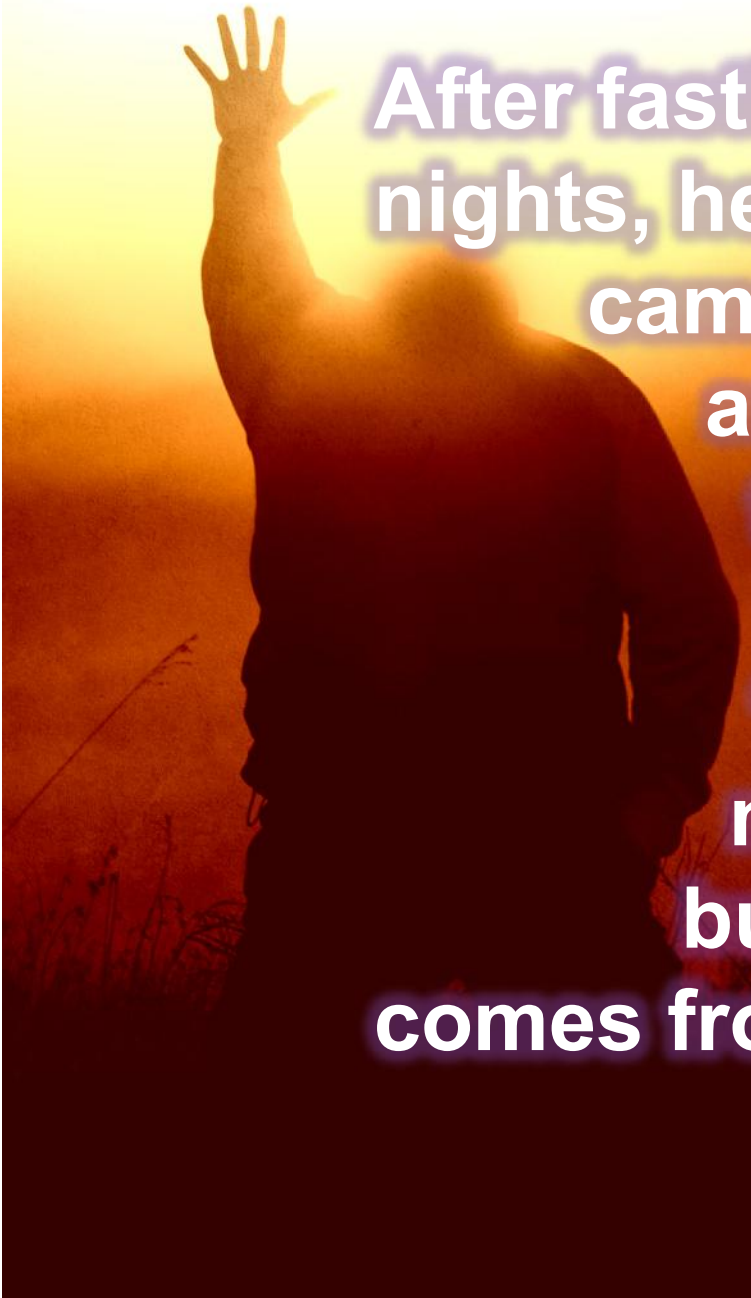
CONTROL
Giving It **UP**

**From Adam and Eve to
Abraham to Moses to
David to Mary and
Joseph to Jesus,
the story of
the Bible is a story of
CONTROL**



**In Matthew 4:1-11,
the Devil creates a series
of temptations to sway
Jesus, weakened by
hunger, to take control
of his life away from
his Heavenly Father.**



A silhouette of a person standing with their back to the camera, their right arm raised with the hand open, palm facing forward. The background is a warm, golden sunset or sunrise over a field of tall grass. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

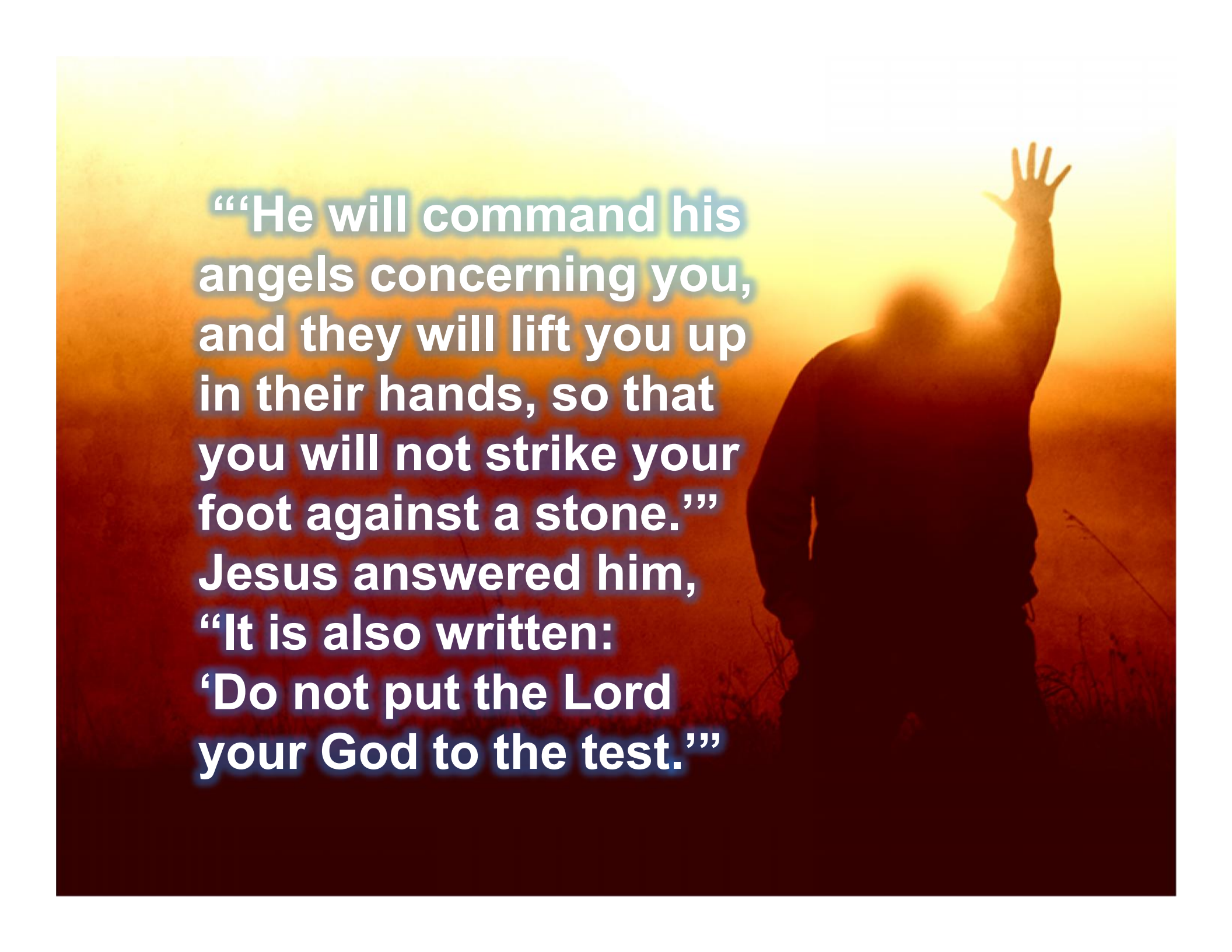
After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

**Giving up control of
our lives begins with
a desire for God's
Word and the
acknowledgement
that true life can
only be sustained
through that Word.**



Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written:



A silhouette of a person standing in a field, with their right hand raised towards a bright, glowing sun in a hazy, golden landscape. The person's hand is open, palm facing forward, as if reaching towards the light. The background is a soft, warm glow of orange and yellow, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The overall mood is one of hope, faith, and reaching for the divine.

““He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.””
Jesus answered him,
“It is also written:
‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

**Giving up control
means having
trusting faith that
relies on God
without putting
God to the test.**

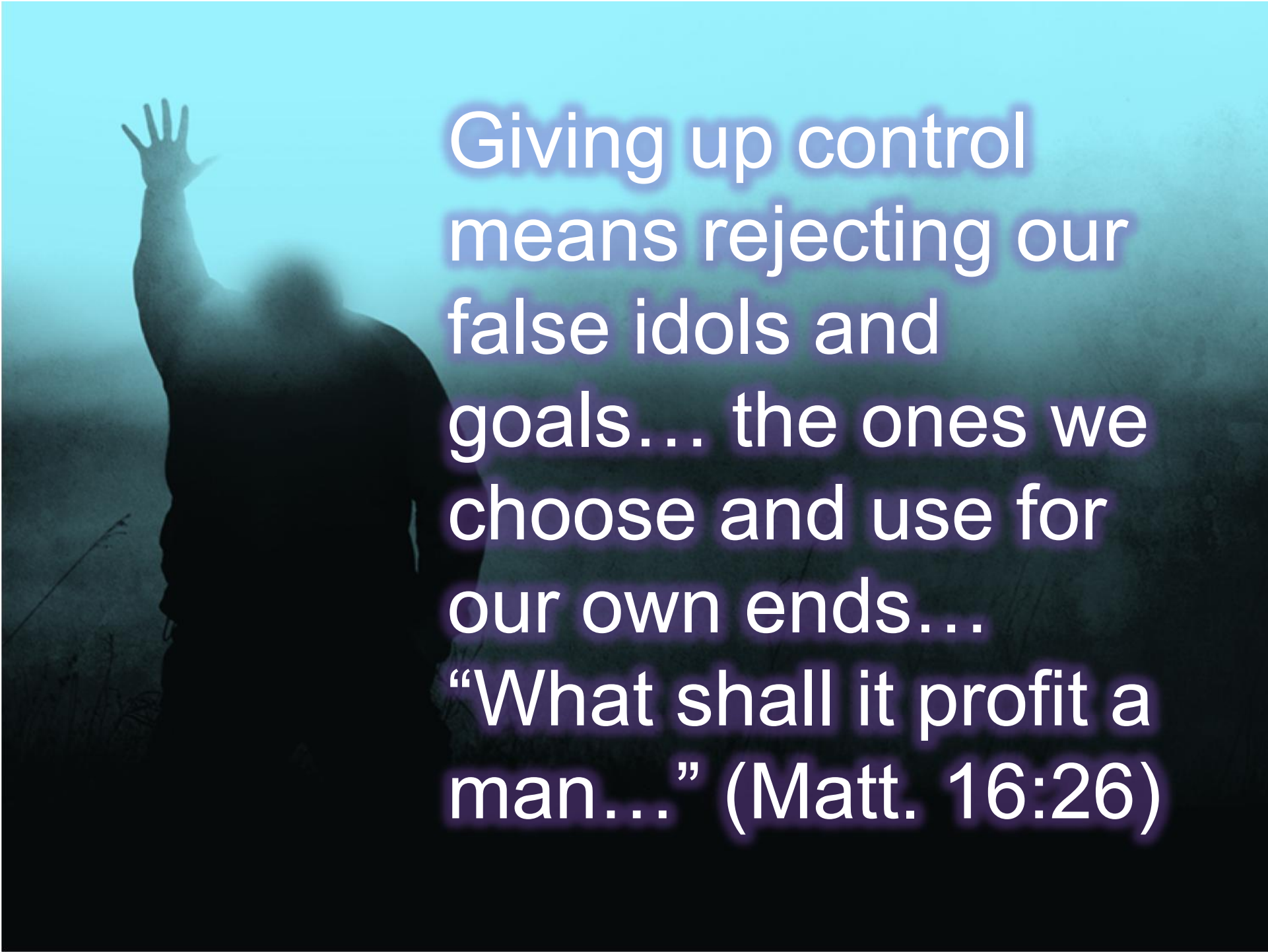




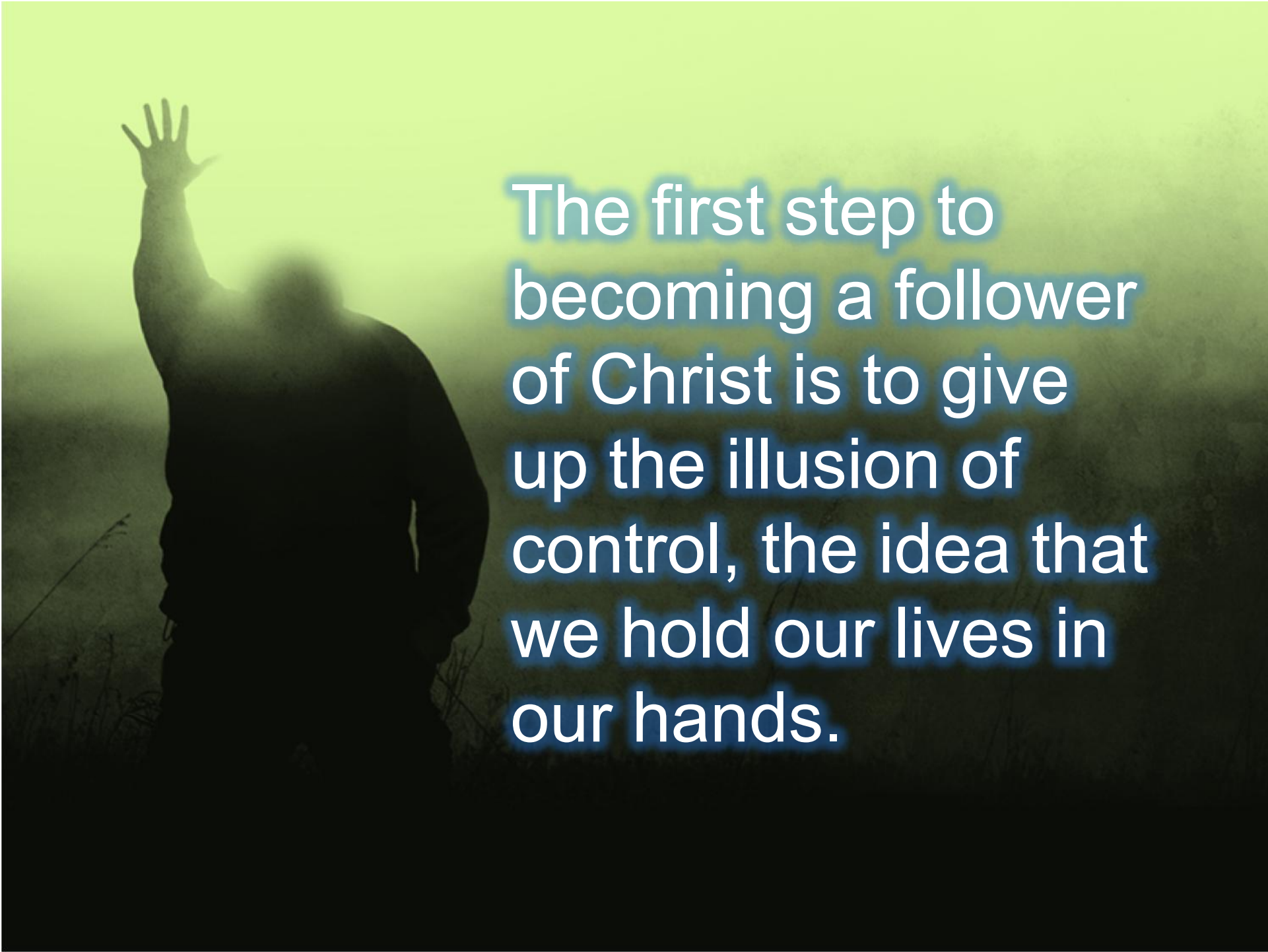
Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor.

“All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”

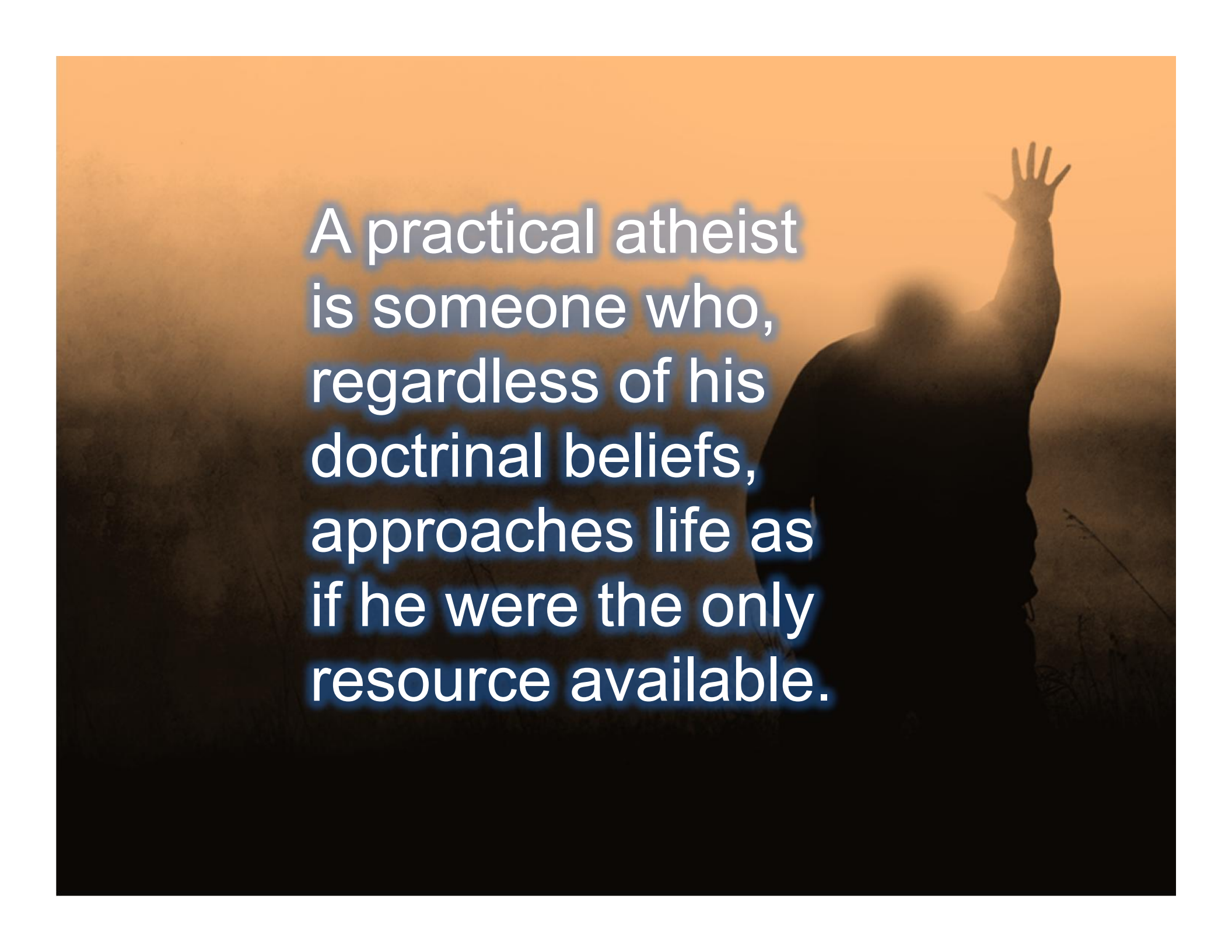
Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”

A silhouette of a person standing with their right arm raised, palm facing forward, against a blue gradient background. The person is positioned on the left side of the frame. The background transitions from a light blue at the top to a dark blue at the bottom.


Giving up control
means rejecting our
false idols and
goals... the ones we
choose and use for
our own ends...
“What shall it profit a
man...” (Matt. 16:26)

A silhouette of a person standing with their right hand raised, palm facing forward, against a bright green background. The person's left hand is at their side. The background is a gradient of green, lighter at the top and darker at the bottom. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

The first step to becoming a follower of Christ is to give up the illusion of control, the idea that we hold our lives in our hands.



A practical atheist is someone who, regardless of his doctrinal beliefs, approaches life as if he were the only resource available.

A silhouette of a person standing with their right hand raised, palm facing forward, against a blue sky background. The person is positioned on the right side of the frame, and their hand is raised high, reaching towards the top of the image. The overall scene is dimly lit, with the person appearing as a dark shape against the lighter sky.

Then Jesus said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."

- Luke 9:23

A silhouette of a person standing in a field, with their right hand raised towards the sky. The background is a clear blue sky with some faint clouds. The overall mood is contemplative and hopeful.

Jesus never asks us
to do anything he
hasn't already done.

In the temptations
in the Wilderness,
Jesus doesn't
attack his enemy.
He doesn't rage.
He simply quotes
Scripture.
Calmly.



Further, he doesn't
feel the need to exert
control. Trusting in
the Word of God is
Enough.



Further, he doesn't feel the need to exert control. The eternal Word of God is in control.





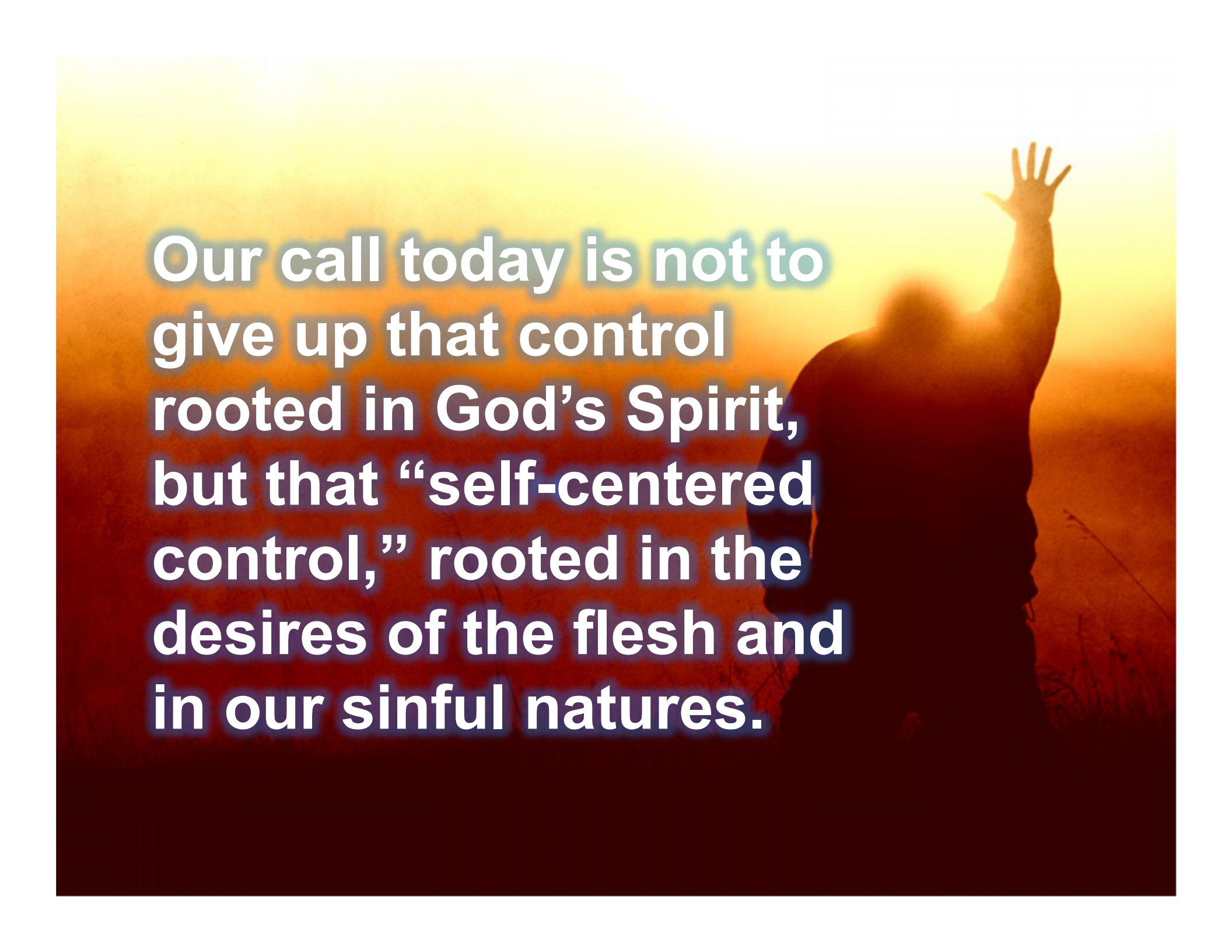
**SELF-CONTROL (EGKRATEIA)
IS FOUND 3 TIMES IN THE
NEW TESTAMENT...**

Egkrateia from Kratos = Strength

Acts 24:25 included along with
"righteousness" and "discernment"

Galatians 5:23 a fruit of the Spirit

2 Peter 1:6 knowledge must be
accompanied by self-control

A silhouette of a person with their hand raised towards a bright, glowing sun in a hazy, golden landscape. The person is positioned on the right side of the frame, with their right arm extended upwards. The background is a soft, warm glow of yellow and orange, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The overall mood is contemplative and spiritual.

Our call today is not to give up that control rooted in God's Spirit, but that "self-centered control," rooted in the desires of the flesh and in our sinful natures.



**The signs and fruits of
self-centered control
apart from God's Spirit:**

- 1) Increased anxiety and frustration**
- 2) Alienation**
- 3) Projection of Superiority**
- 4) Hypocrisy**
- 5) Self-loathing**



The signs and fruits of Spirit-led and fed self-control

- 1) Continually seeking the leading of God's Spirit
- 2) Cooperative attitude
- 3) Other fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5)
- 4) A calm spirit marked by joy and a desire to serve others
- 5) Sincerity of purpose



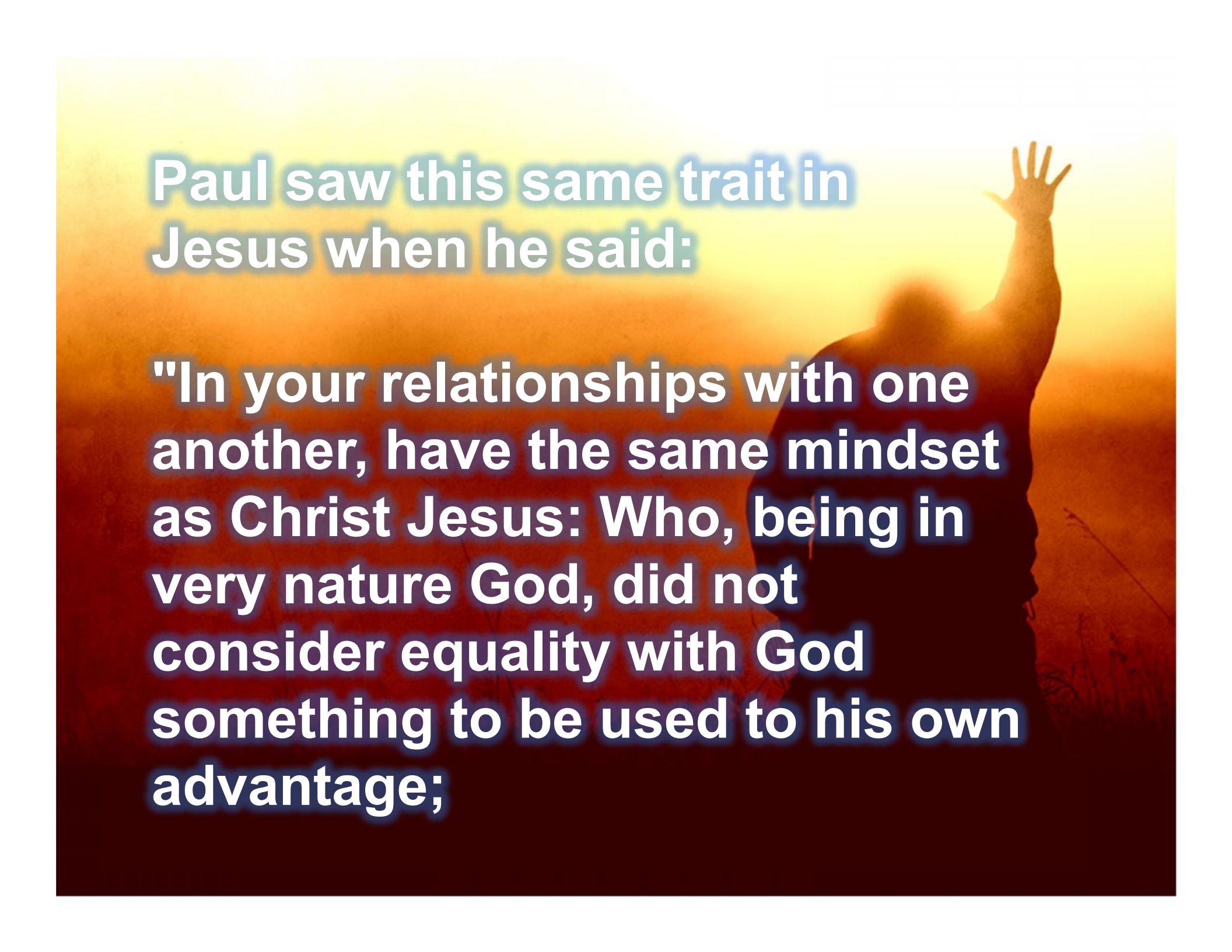
The **self-centered** person seeks control by any means possible.

The **Spirit-controlled** person seeks the reign of God in the world through God's power alone.

A silhouette of a person with their hand raised against a bright, glowing sunset or sunrise background. The person is positioned on the right side of the frame, with their right arm extended upwards. The background is a gradient of warm colors, from deep red at the bottom to bright yellow and white at the top, suggesting a low sun. The overall mood is one of hope, surrender, or prayer.

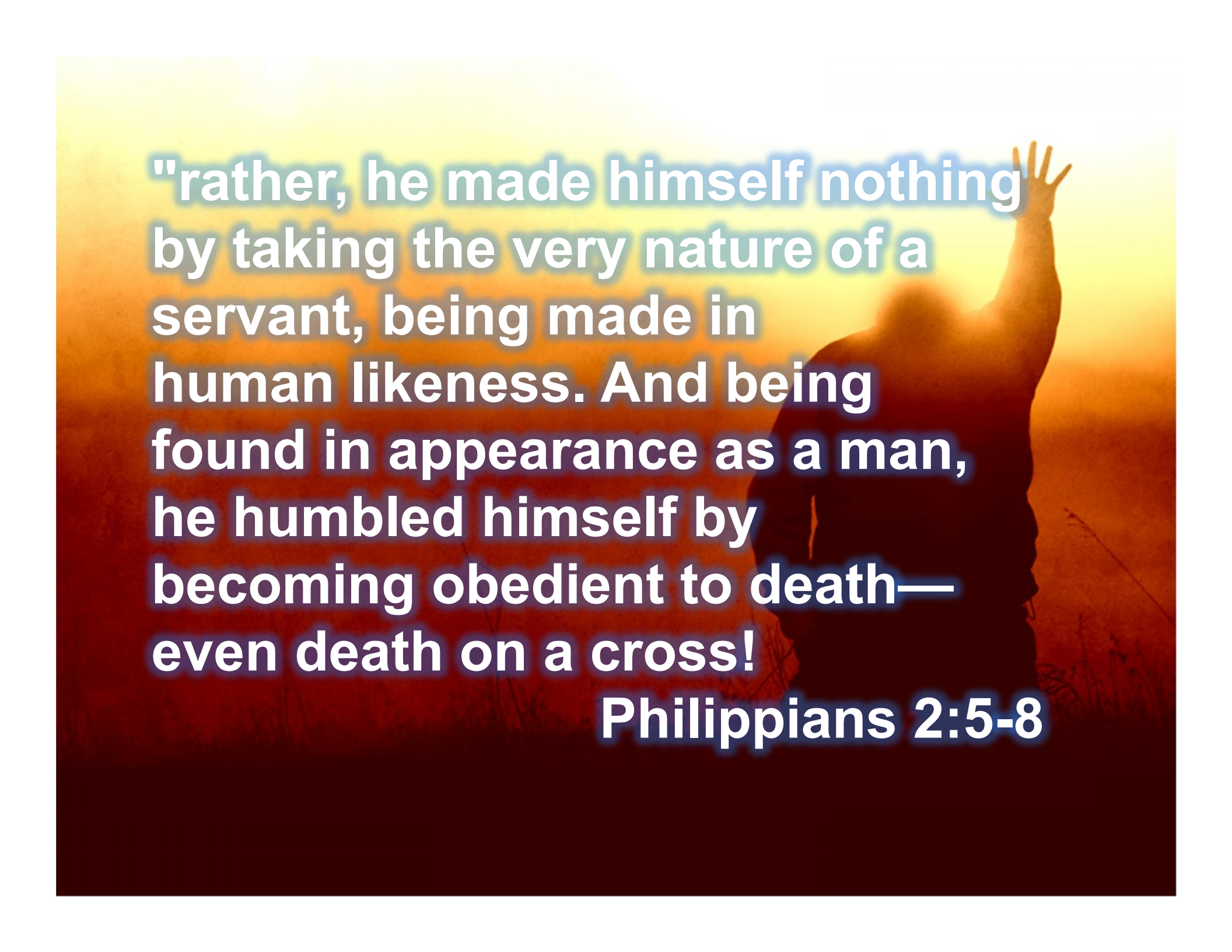
**In the hardest trial of all,
Jesus left control in the
Father's hands:**

**"Abba Father, everything is
possible for you. Take this cup
from me. Yet, not what I will, but
what you will."**



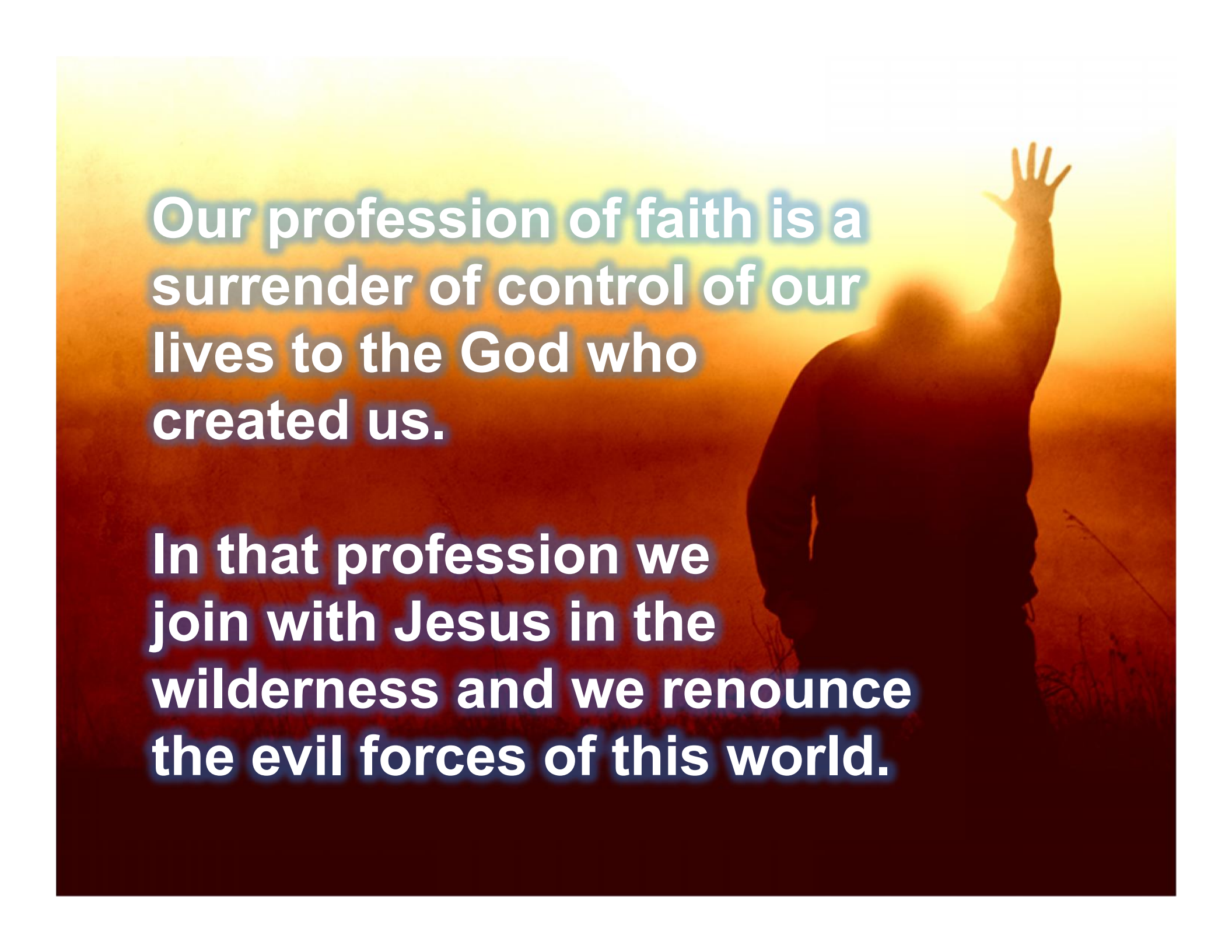
Paul saw this same trait in Jesus when he said:

"In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;



**"rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a
servant, being made in
human likeness. And being
found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself by
becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!**

Philippians 2:5-8

A person is silhouetted against a bright, glowing sunset or sunrise. The person's right arm is raised, with their hand open and fingers spread, reaching towards the sun. The background is a gradient of warm colors, from deep orange at the bottom to bright yellow and white at the top where the sun is. The overall mood is one of awe, hope, and surrender.

**Our profession of faith is a
surrender of control of our
lives to the God who
created us.**

**In that profession we
join with Jesus in the
wilderness and we renounce
the evil forces of this world.**

CONTROL

... Give It **UP!**

