HOLY SPIRIT IN RENEWAL OF THE CHURCH -

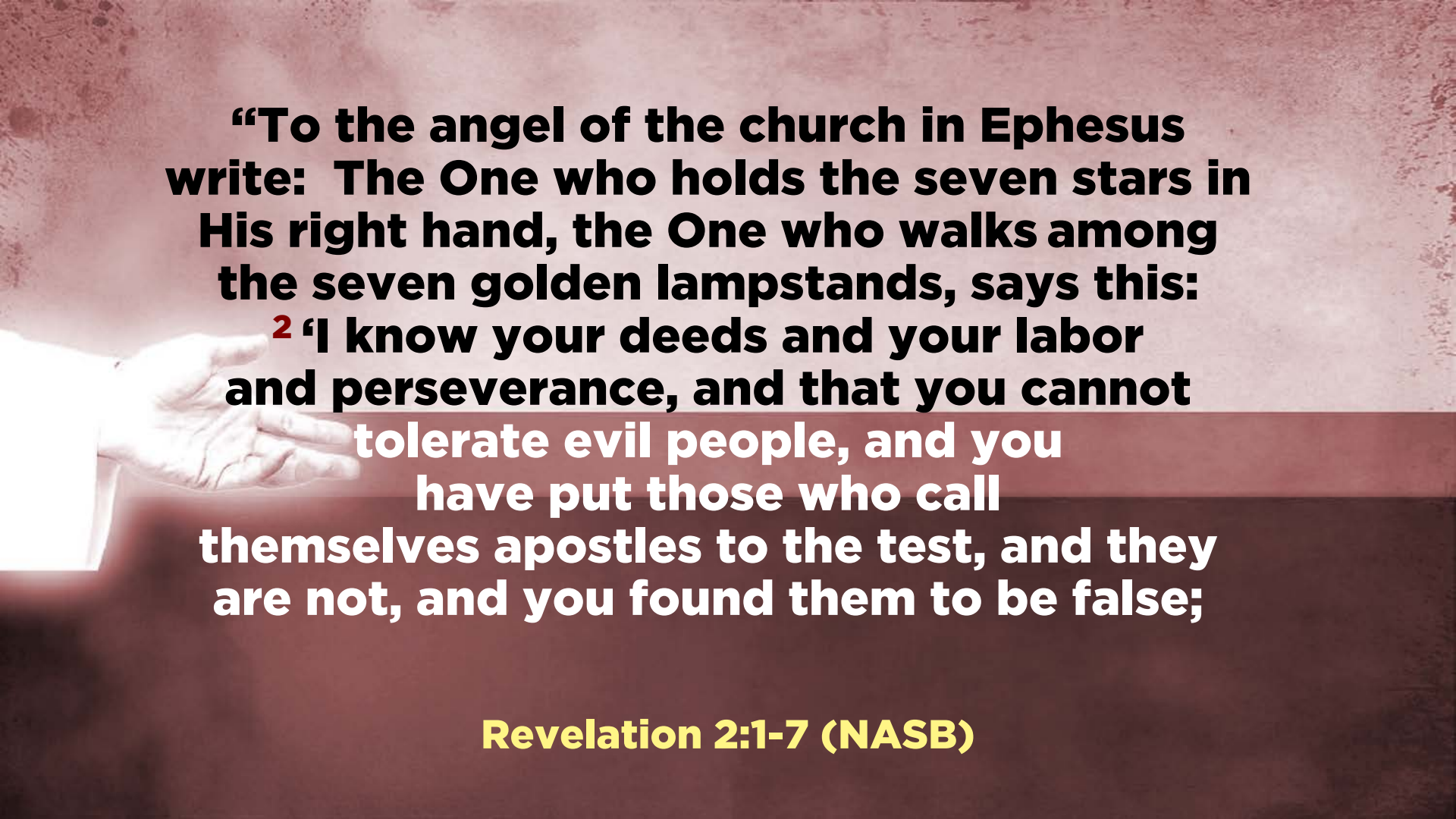
RETURNING TO OUR FIRST LOVE

REVELATION 2:1-7



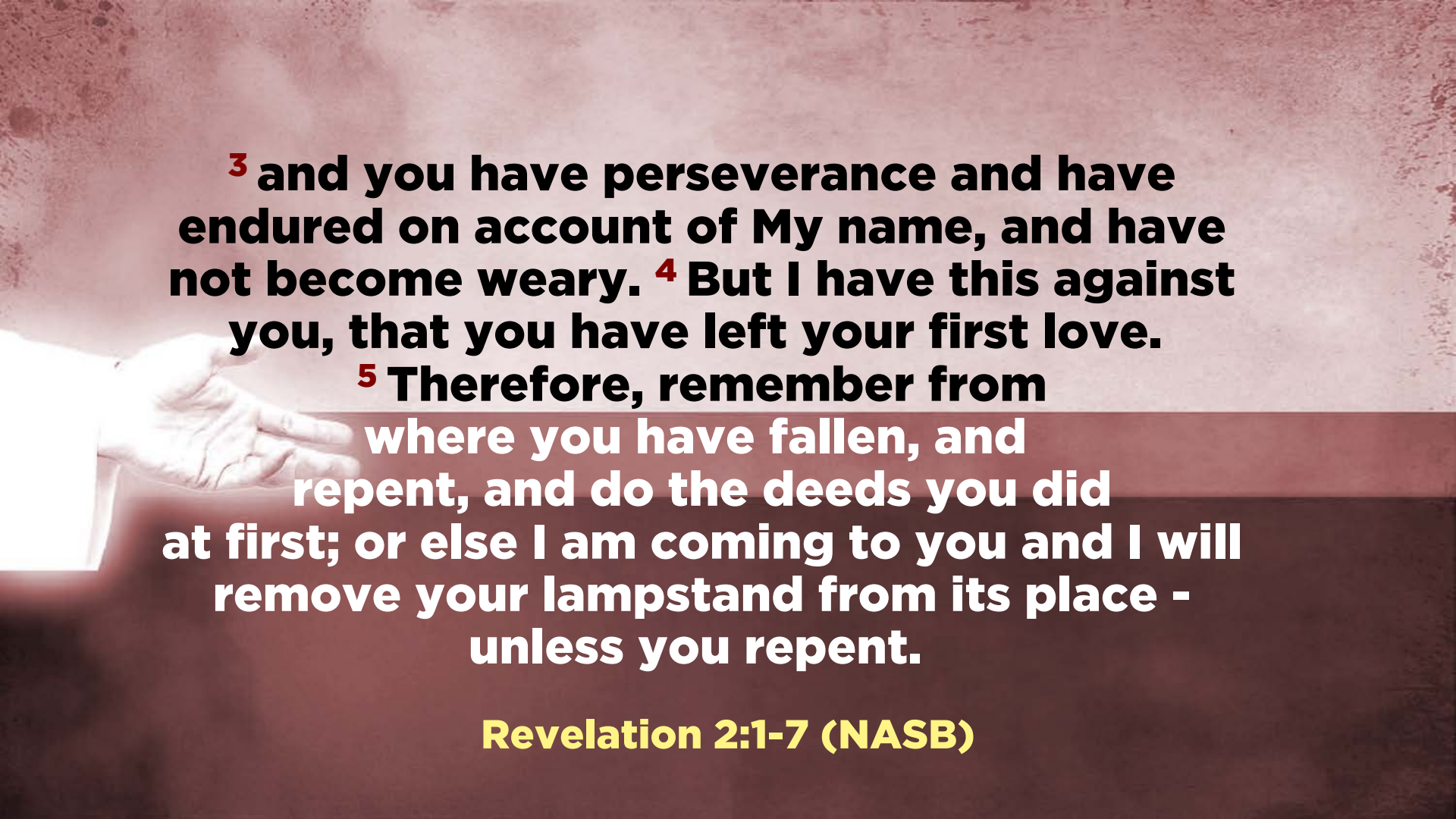
ELDER JAMES LEE

16 APRIL 2023



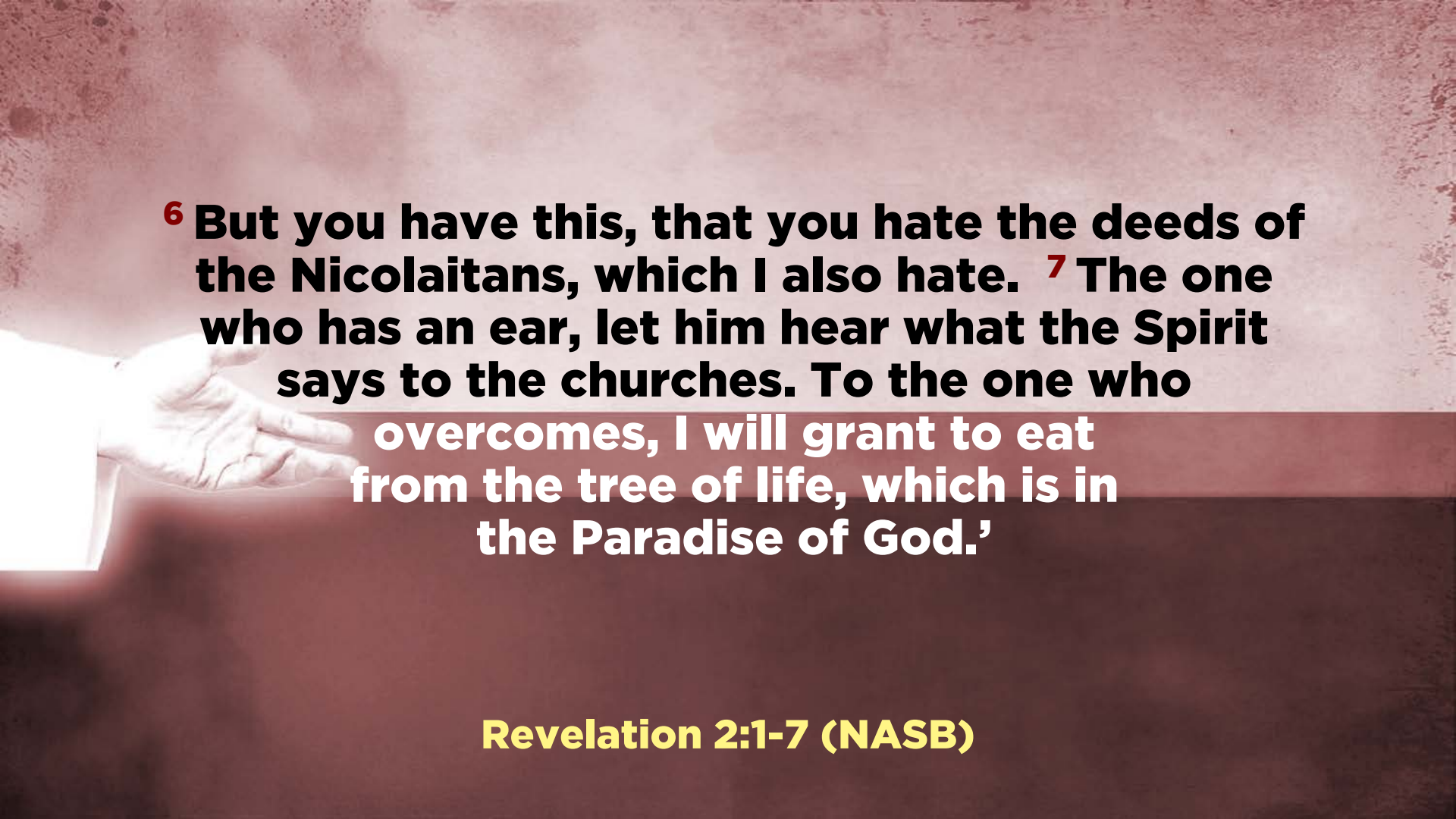
“To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this:
2 ‘I know your deeds and your labor and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil people, and you have put those who call themselves apostles to the test, and they are not, and you found them to be false;

Revelation 2:1-7 (NASB)



3 and you have perseverance and have endured on account of My name, and have not become weary. 4 But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5 Therefore, remember from where you have fallen, and repent, and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and I will remove your lampstand from its place - unless you repent.

Revelation 2:1-7 (NASB)



6 But you have this, that you hate the deeds of
the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. 7 The one
who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit
says to the churches. To the one who
overcomes, I will grant to eat
from the tree of life, which is in
the Paradise of God.’

Revelation 2:1-7 (NASB)

Introduction

- Spiritual renewal we are currently experiencing fundamentally about restoring our love relationship with the Lord



Introduction

- The church is prone to degradation in our spiritual fervour and growing cold in our love for the Lord



Introduction

- We need a special touch from the Lord
- Renew our motivation to obey Him and serve Him



Introduction

- Call of every believer is to love the Lord with all our hearts and all our soul and all our minds (*Matthew 22:37*)
- Spiritual renewal is fundamentally about returning to our first love with God


Road Map
i) Have We Left Our First Love?
ii) Remembering and Repenting – Renewing Our Minds
iii) Returning and Remaining in our First Love – Re-directing Our Lives

i) Have we left our first love?

- A question that is likely to yield a varied response
- God does not condemn us even when our love for Him has grown cold



i) Have we left our first love?

- 3 things:
  - Remember
  - Repent
  - Return

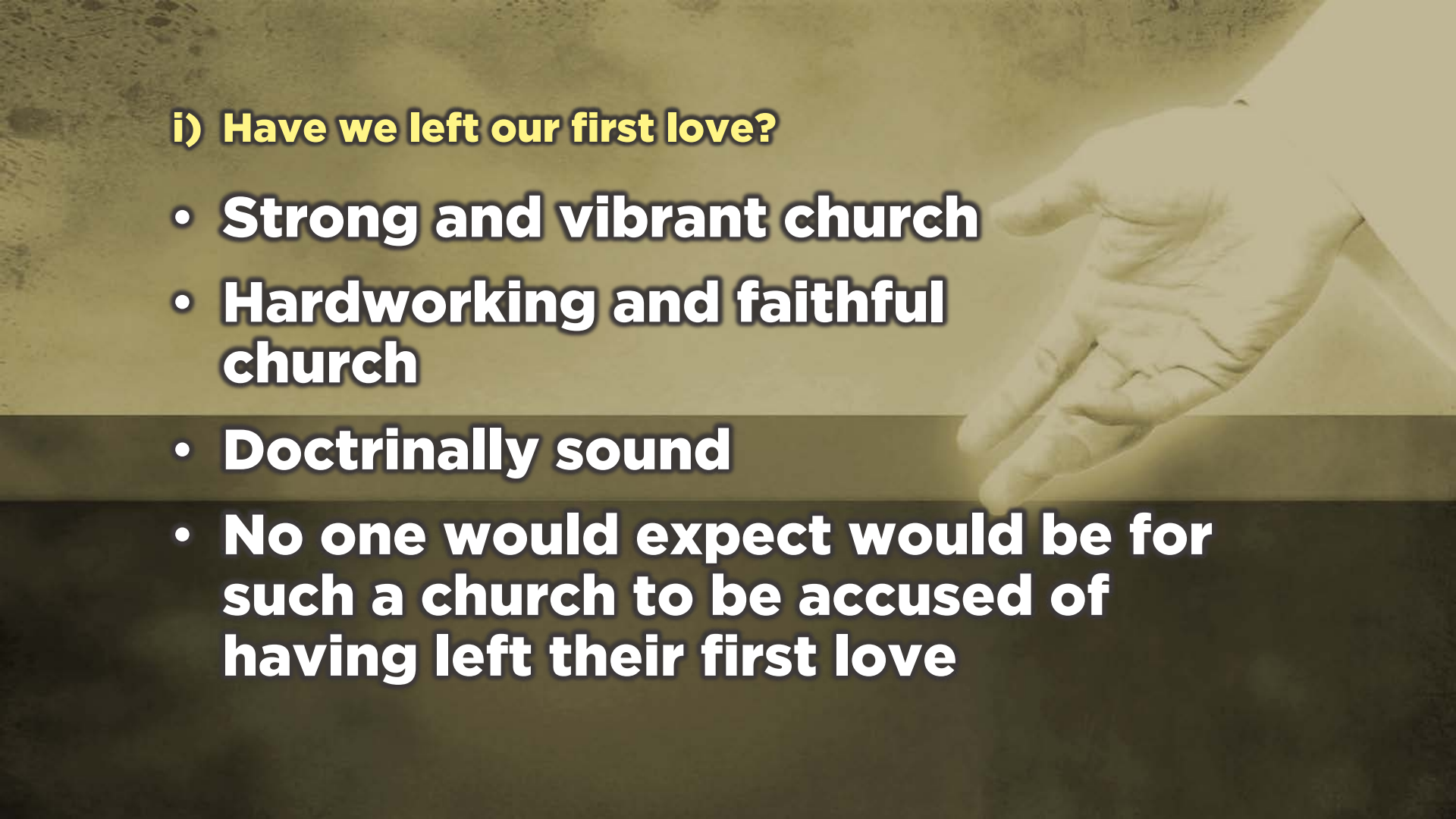


i) Have we left our first love?

- All He wants is for us to turn our hearts back to Him
- All of us are susceptible to growing cold in our love for the Lord.

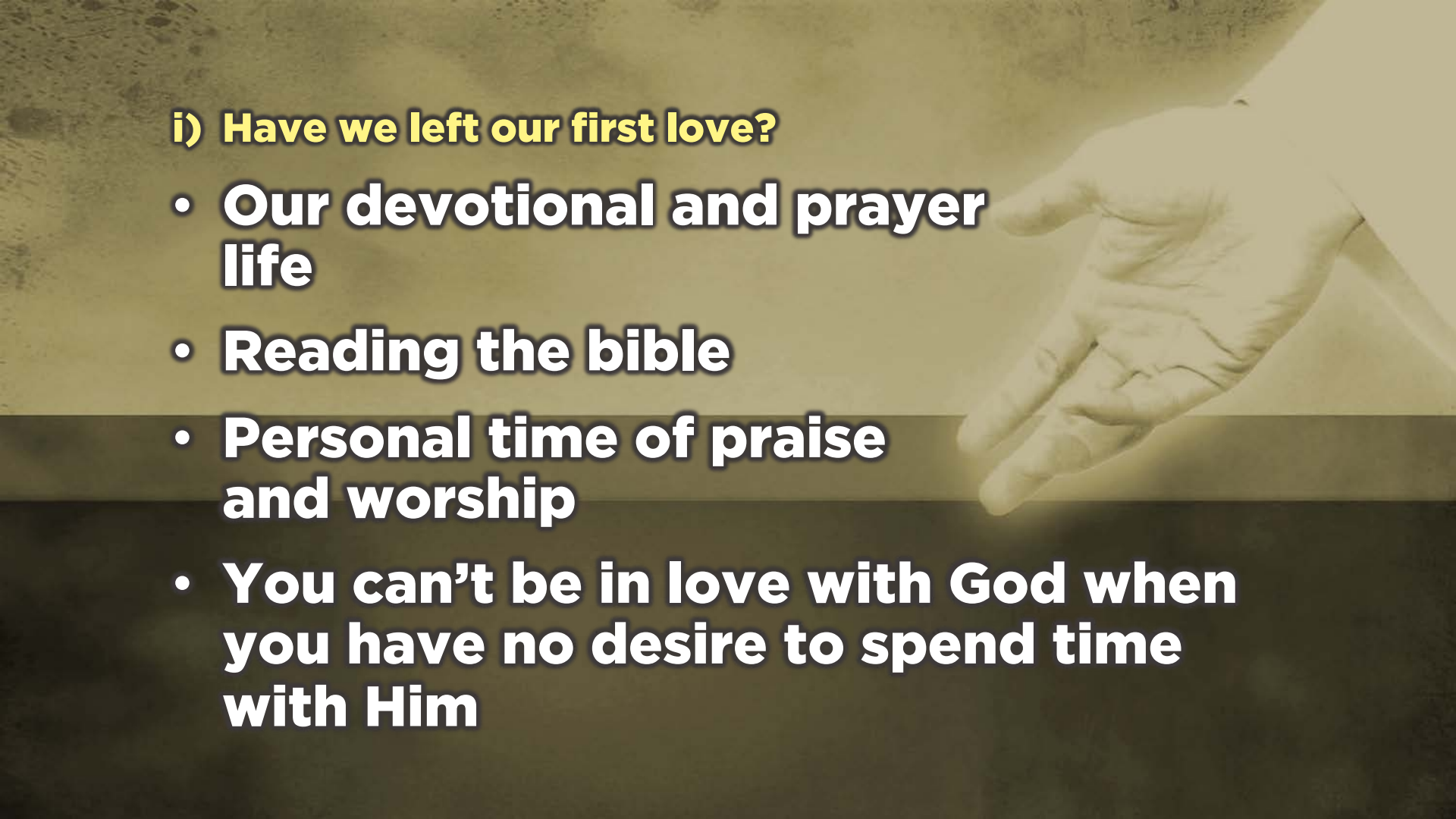
i) Have we left our first love?

- The church of Ephesus was an impressive church
- Birthed, with miracles and a mighty move of God
- Grown both in numbers and maturity



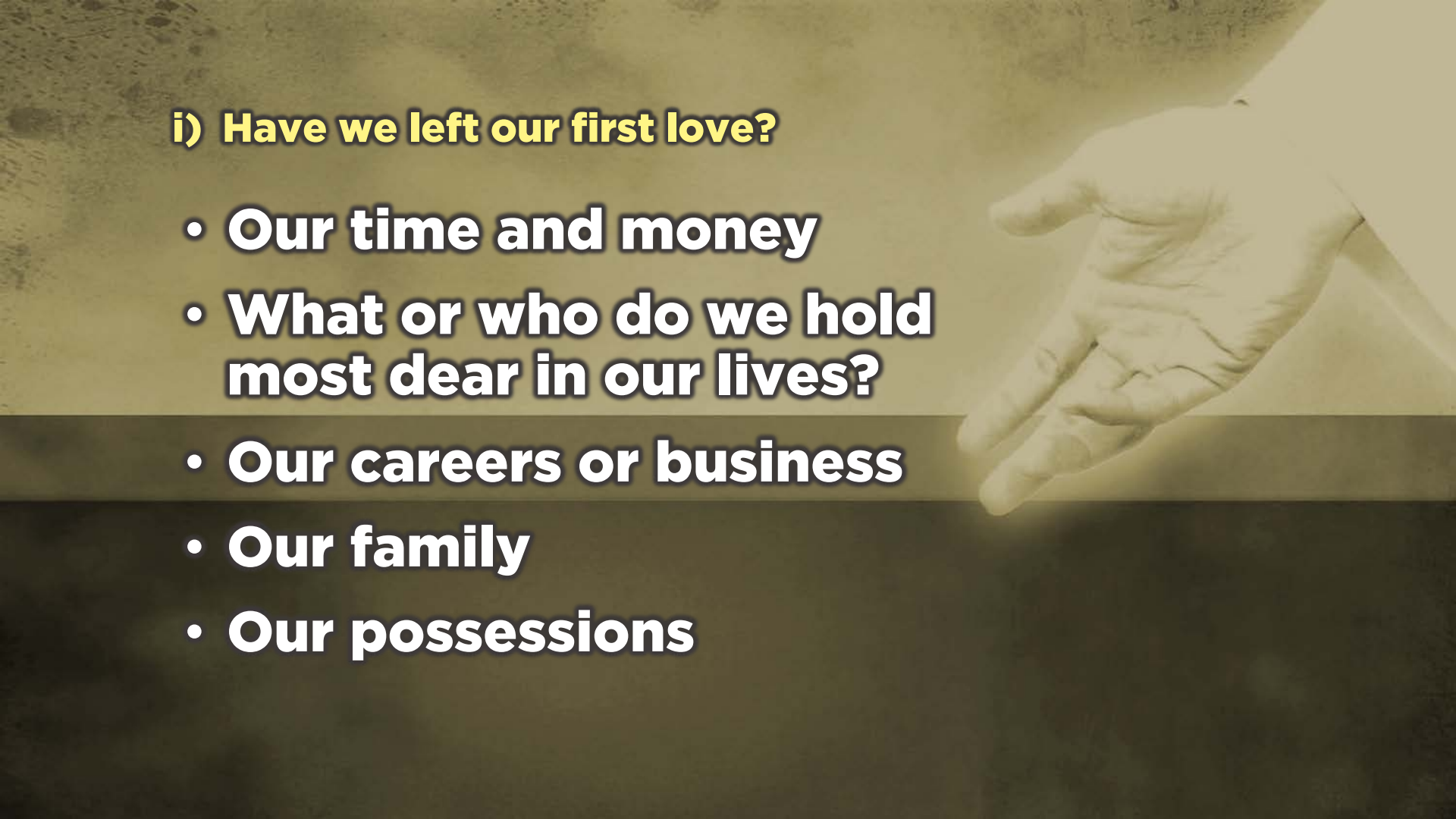
i) Have we left our first love?

- Strong and vibrant church
- Hardworking and faithful church
- Doctrinally sound
- No one would expect would be for such a church to be accused of having left their first love



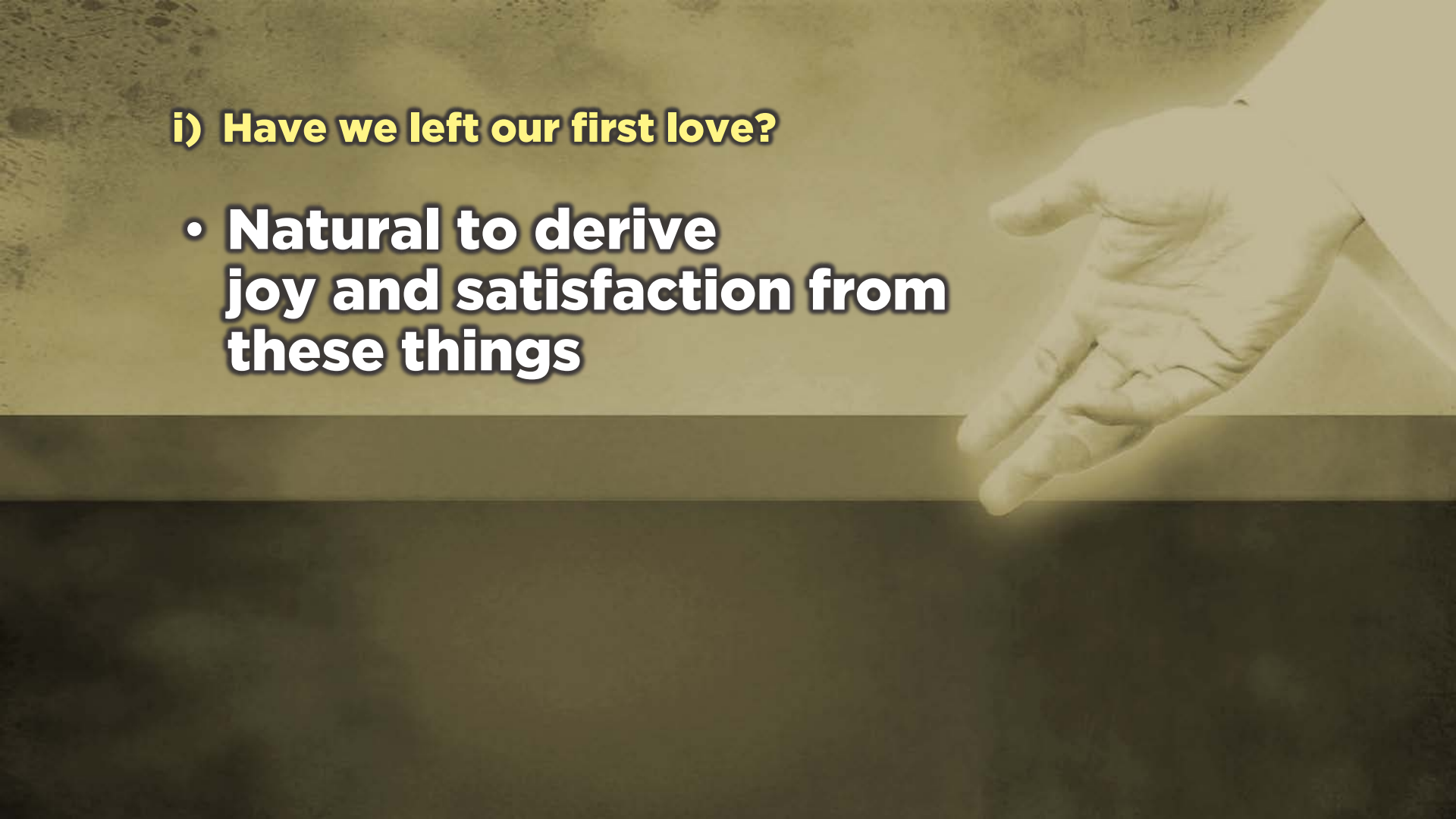
i) Have we left our first love?

- Our devotional and prayer life
- Reading the bible
- Personal time of praise and worship
- You can't be in love with God when you have no desire to spend time with Him



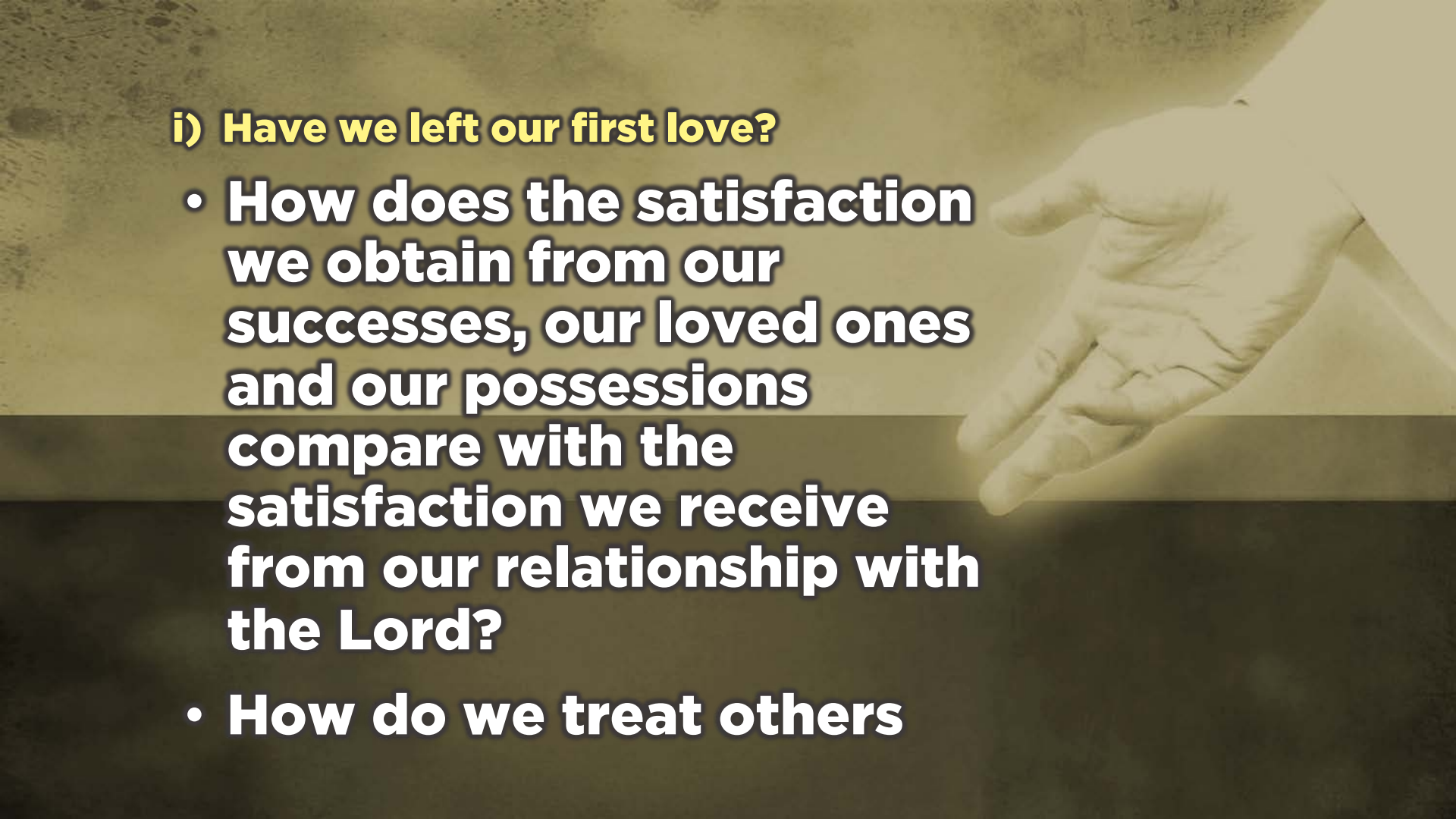
i) Have we left our first love?

- Our time and money
- What or who do we hold most dear in our lives?
- Our careers or business
- Our family
- Our possessions



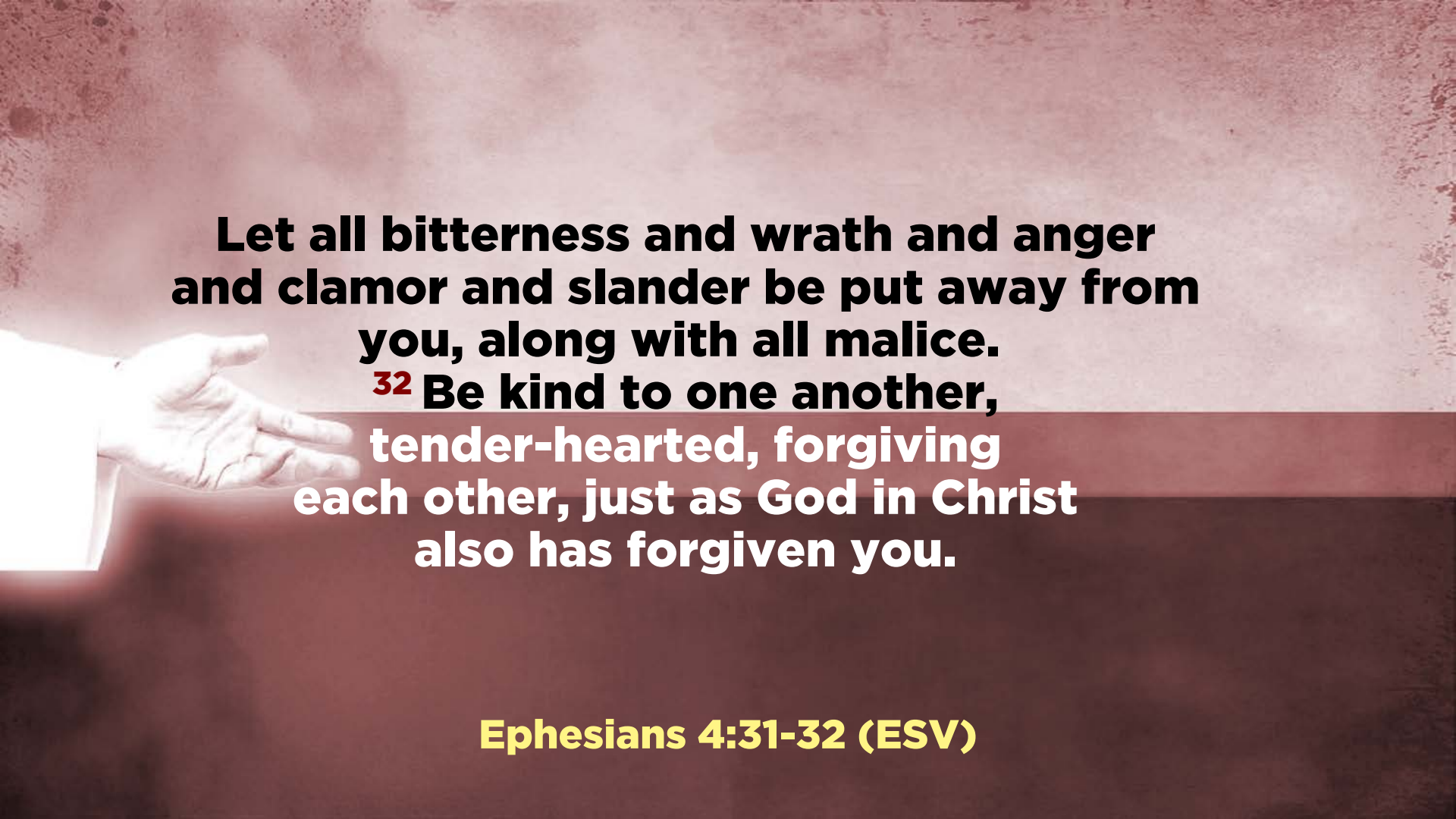
i) Have we left our first love?

- **Natural to derive joy and satisfaction from these things**



i) Have we left our first love?

- How does the satisfaction we obtain from our successes, our loved ones and our possessions compare with the satisfaction we receive from our relationship with the Lord?
- How do we treat others


Let all bitterness and wrath and anger
and clamor and slander be put away from
you, along with all malice.
32 Be kind to one another,
tender-hearted, forgiving
each other, just as God in Christ
also has forgiven you.
Ephesians 4:31-32 (ESV)

ii) Remembering and Repenting – Renewing Our Minds

- Do you still recall how it felt when you first fell in love with the Lord?
- Do you remember how it was when you were on fire for God?

ii) Remembering and Repenting – Renewing Our Minds

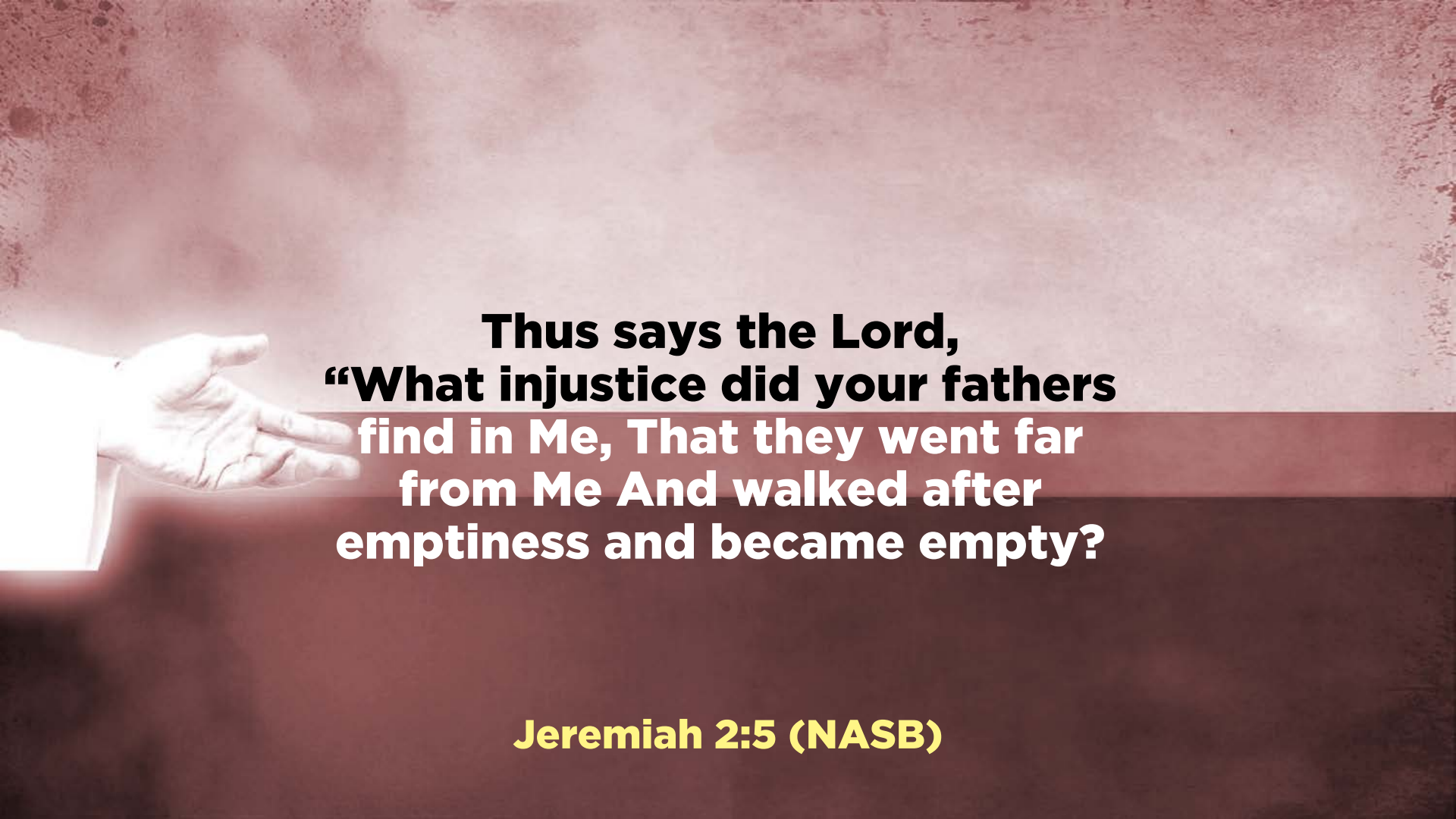
- Unhappiness with church leaders
- Temptations of the world
- Major disappointments or adversities in life
- Apathy - things have become too familiar

ii) Remembering and Repenting – Renewing Our Minds

- Other things in our lives starts to take the place that rightfully belongs to God
- Minor and seemingly harmless deviations, if left unchecked and uncorrected, can eventually shipwreck our relationship with the Lord

ii) Remembering and Repenting – Renewing Our Minds

- To repent is not to feel condemned.
- To repent is to acknowledge our wrong in having left our first love.


Thus says the Lord,
“What injustice did your fathers
find in Me, That they went far
from Me And walked after
emptiness and became empty?
Jeremiah 2:5 (NASB)

ii) Remembering and Repenting – Renewing Our Minds

- King David went through many hardships
- He often cried out and complained to God
- Totally honest in telling God how he felt

ii) Remembering and Repenting – Renewing Our Minds

- Clinging on to God's promises
- Continued to trust Him
- Never blamed God
- Never harboured any anger or resentment towards God

iii) Returning and Remaining in our First Love – Re-directing Our Lives

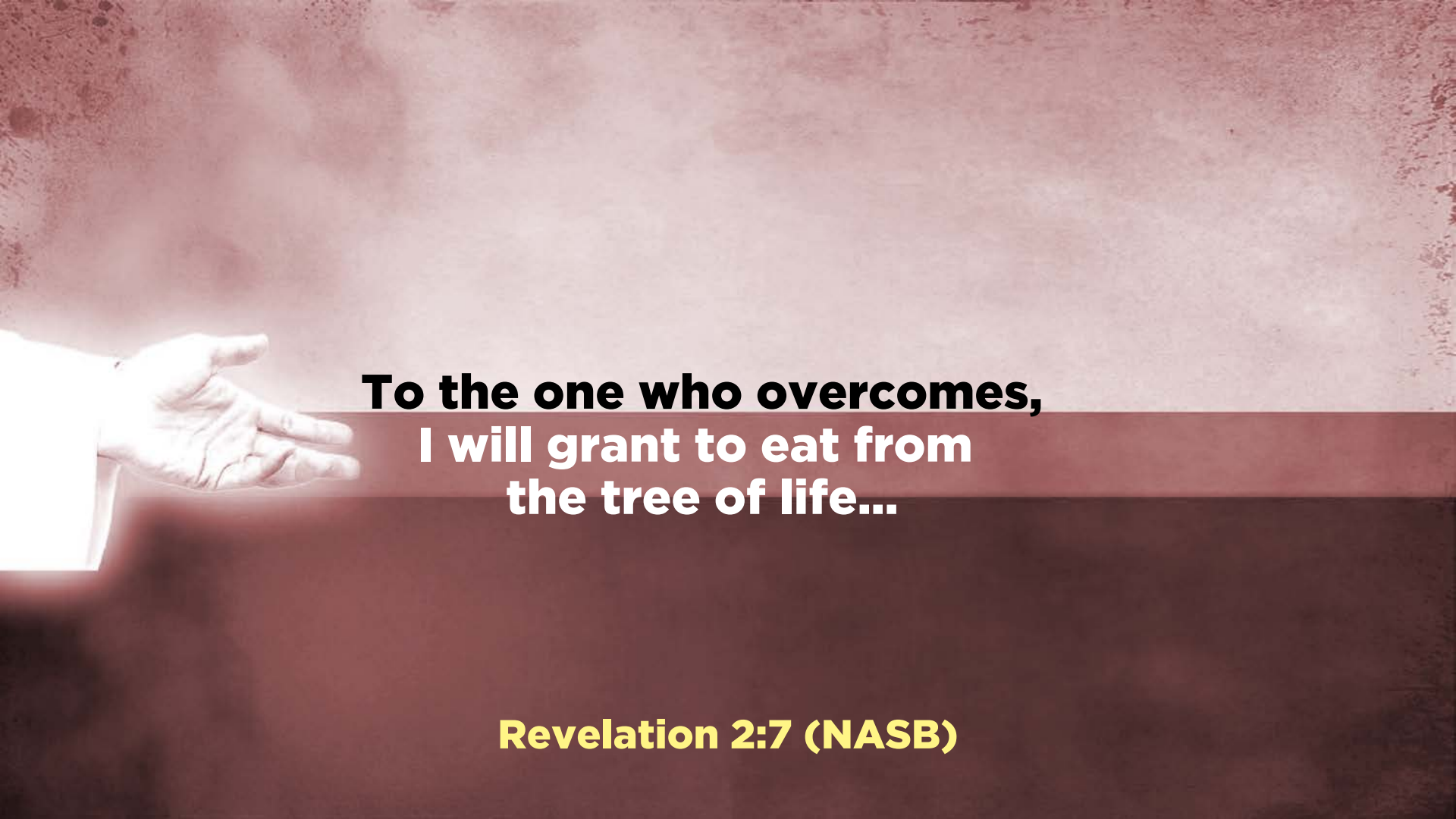
- "do the deeds you did at first"
- God does not condemn us
- He does not sugar coat the truth
- but He does so in love



iii) Returning and Remaining in our First Love – Re-directing Our Lives

- Go back to the intimacy we used to enjoy with the Lord
- We need to take action
- We need to steer ourselves back on course in our spiritual journey




To the one who overcomes,
I will grant to eat from
the tree of life...
Revelation 2:7 (NASB)

iii) Returning and Remaining in our First Love – Re-directing Our Lives

- Greek word for “overcome” is “nikao” or “nikeo” :
  - Conquer
  - Prevail
  - Victorious



iii) Returning and Remaining in our First Love – Re-directing Our Lives

- "Nike" is derived from "nikeo".
- "Just Do It"



iii) Returning and Remaining in our First Love – Re-directing Our Lives

- Returning to and remaining in our first love with God is about making Jesus the center of our lives.
- Centredness in Jesus in our lives



iii) Returning and Remaining in our First Love – Re-directing Our Lives

- Consistent focus on the Lord
- Subscribing to God's values and truths
- Planning our lives and schedules around Him



iii) Returning and Remaining in our First Love – Re-directing Our Lives

- Allowing ourselves to be guided by Him in our careers
- Willing to surrender our will to Him



iii) Returning and Remaining in our First Love – Re-directing Our Lives

- Willing to live our lives for Him
- Requires effort on our part



iii) Returning and Remaining in our First Love – Re-directing Our Lives

When God is involved
in every aspect of our lives,
the balancing will take care of itself.




Conclusion

Conclusion

- Return to our first love
- Remember, Repent and to Return to Him
- Re-direct our lives
- Make Jesus the center of our lives

