

God's  
eye view on



**RESPONSIBILITY**

Matt Rawlins<sup>PhD</sup>

**A little book that's yours to give away.**



This ebook is sponsored by friends of our family who have given finances to make this possible. Please give it away to as many people as you want. It is a gift.

A special thanks to Scott Tompkins for his editing work and wisdom.

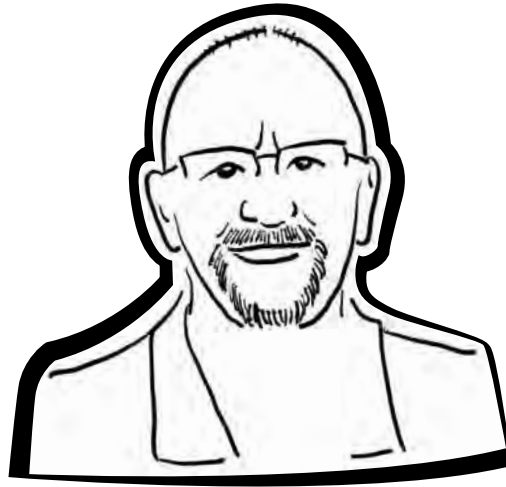
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Hi, My name is Matt.  
I'm a grown man, and



I've always struggled with being responsible.

As I grew up, I was expected  
to be responsible in my  
family, school and work.

*(Weren't we all?)*



*But, what does  
that mean?*

To me it meant things like: **Be nice.** **Do what others say.**  
**Show up on time.** **Succeed.**

When I was a kid my strongest feelings were about this issue.



I can remember once as an eight year old walking home from school I was walking with a friend and they just talked about sharing Jesus in Sunday school the day before.

I felt this weight that I had to share the gospel and couldn't do it. I eventually turned to go home and the deep sense of shame, fear and guilt I felt was like a weight on me.

I was going to hell for sure. (Not really, but it felt like it)



To this day, I still have feelings around this whole subject.

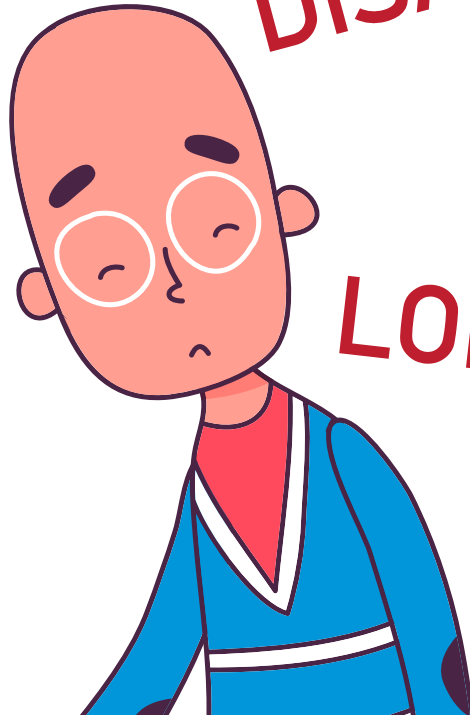
**GUILT**

**DISAPPOINTMENT**

**FEAR**

**SHAME**

**LONELINESS**



The background is a deep green underwater scene. Sunlight rays stream down from the top, creating a bright, ethereal glow. On the left side, there is a faint, dark silhouette of a shark swimming towards the right.

What does my heart say about being responsible?

*A deep dive*

*I couldn't put it into words in my childhood years, but...*

I always felt like I would fail and disappoint  
those who expected something of me.

So I decided it was better not to try and to  
pretend I didn't care.

This is what got me in trouble and caused much of my struggle.



*Even today, there are so many issues out there tugging away at my emotions, demanding responsibility.*

**Climate change**

**Racism**

**Poverty**

**Corruption**

**Violence**



*I have friends who seem to do it naturally.*




## **My friend Elifadhili and his wife Jenny**

They run an organization called Zuia Trafficking for vulnerable women and children in Tanzania.

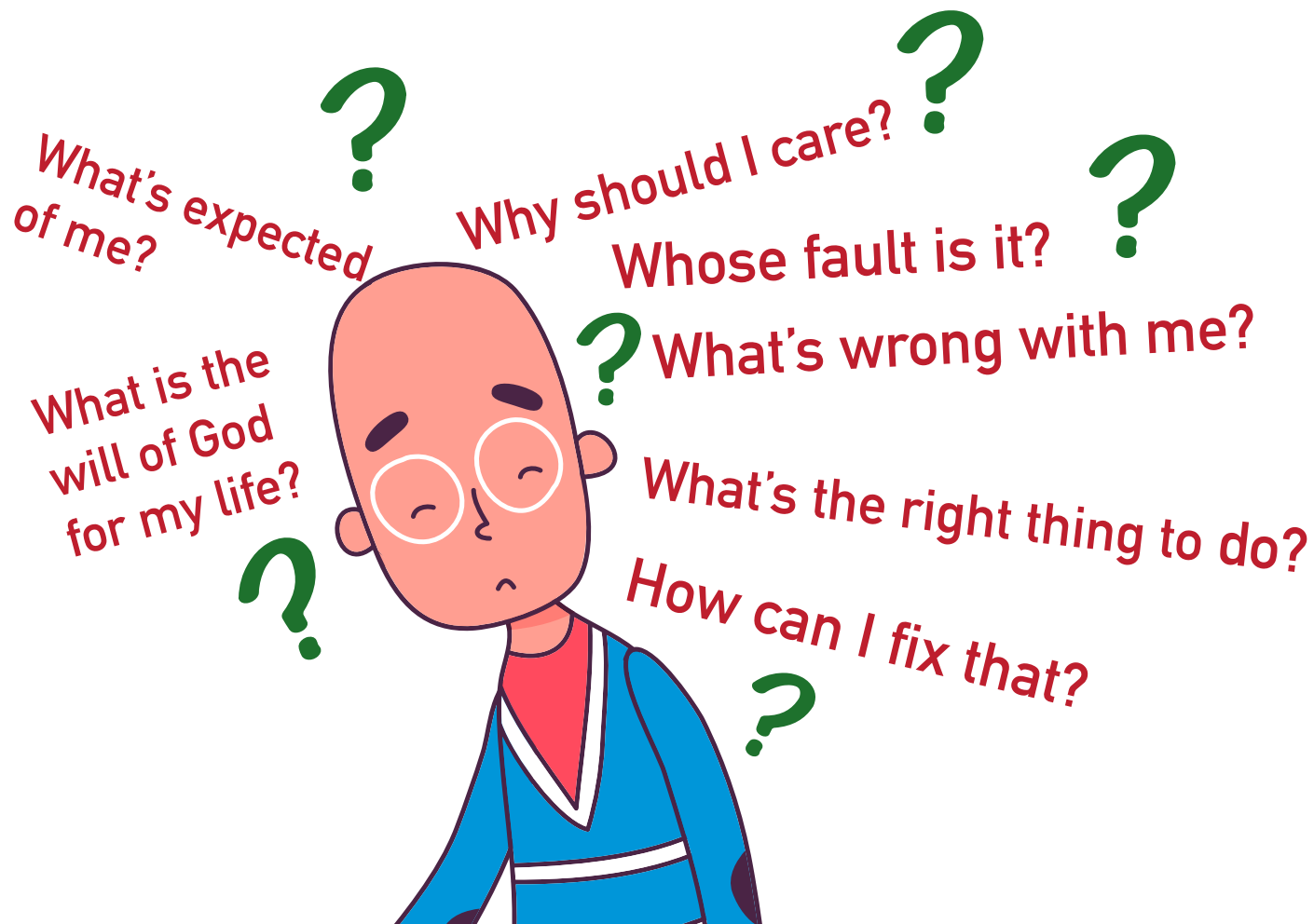


## **Another friend Steve Loh**

He is in charge of the Lien Centre for Social innovation at Singapore Management University. They are pushing businesses to be socially responsible.

The background of the image is a soft-focus photograph of green foliage. Several large, vibrant green leaves are visible, particularly on the right side and bottom, with their veins clearly defined. The overall tone is a light, airy green, creating a natural and serene atmosphere.

As I have worked with  
many different people over the years,  
I found common questions that grow out of  
this struggle with responsibility.



*I see similar struggles in the Bible.*

*Abraham's question.*

**“Far be it from You to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?”**

**Genesis 18:25**

*I think of the prophet Jeremiah,  
who wrestled with it.*

Righteous are You, O Lord, that I would  
plead my case with You; Indeed I would  
discuss matters of justice with You:  
Why has the way of the wicked  
prospered? Why are all those who deal in  
treachery at ease?

Jeremiah 12:1

As I got older  
and had  
no other choice,  
I developed a  
love-hate relationship  
with it.

On the one side  
I accepted being responsible  
as I found it gave me a sense of  
security and control.

On the other side,  
as I already said,  
I know I am going to disappoint you  
so I don't even want to try.



One of the nice things about wrestling with it for 44 years, is that I have the luxury of looking back on my struggles and making sense of them.

Hopefully, as I do that, it will allow you to do it quicker in your life and not have to wait so long to get understanding.

(There is no need to carry shame and guilt for as many years as I did.)



Things got wonderfully  
complicated when I was 20.

I fell in love with God.



I had no idea how  
“dangerous” it was to awaken  
a love for God within me.

To value someone more than  
myself exposes me. I began to  
see who I really am and that  
includes all the feelings  
I tried to hide.

God's love is vulnerable.  
It makes space for me and  
invites me to show up.

ALL OF ME



It requires dealing  
with areas I have tucked away  
and not wanted to deal with...  
EVER.



I genuinely want to  
be responsible,  
but my heart fears  
and fights it.

For me the hardest part is: How do I OWN it?

Even as I write that, I have to chuckle.  
I realise I'm struggling to be  
responsible for being responsible.

What to do lah?

As they say in Singapore...



Said another way



I can't think rightly about  
responsibility until I'm ready to  
deal with past irresponsibilities.



This means that the pain of  
thinking rightly about  
responsibility may get worse  
before it gets better.

One more version  
as it is vital to understand.

*I can't understand the light of God  
until I am willing to deal with the darkness within.*





C.S. Lewis

When a man is getting better he understands more and more clearly the evil that is still left in him. When a man is getting worse, he understands his own badness less and less. A moderately bad man knows he is not very good: a thoroughly bad man thinks he is all right. This is common sense, really. You understand sleep when you are awake, not while you are sleeping...

You can understand the nature of drunkenness when you are sober, not when you are drunk. Good people know about both good and evil: bad people do not know about either.

We all have a self-perception problem about responsibility.



From [mikeysfunnies.com](http://mikeysfunnies.com)

*I love this example I read recently.*

“My friend Ann and I were eating at a Chinese restaurant. When an elderly waiter set chopsticks at our places, Ann made a point of reaching into her purse and pulling out her own pair.

“As an environmentalist,” she declared, “I do not approve of destroying bamboo forests for throwaway utensils.”

The waiter inspected her chopsticks. “Very beautiful,” he said politely. “Ivory.””

Genesis -  
In the beginning

Genesis 1:28

**God blessed them**; and God said to them,  
“Be fruitful and multiply, and fill **the earth**,  
and **subdue it; and rule** over the fish of the sea and  
over the birds of the sky and over every living thing  
that moves on the earth.”

*God's blessing came with a job,  
a responsibility to steward our world.*





## Technical clarification:

You can't "give"  
someone responsibility.

It is not a "thing."

You create a space for them  
to grow it in their own heart.  
It becomes an expression of  
who they are.



# Responsibility =

You give something of value to someone, it is theirs, and ask them to take care of it.

*The greater the value,  
the greater the need for responsibility.*

To give me something of great value with no responsibility.



You would be a fool  
for giving it to me.

I wouldn't know what to do with it.



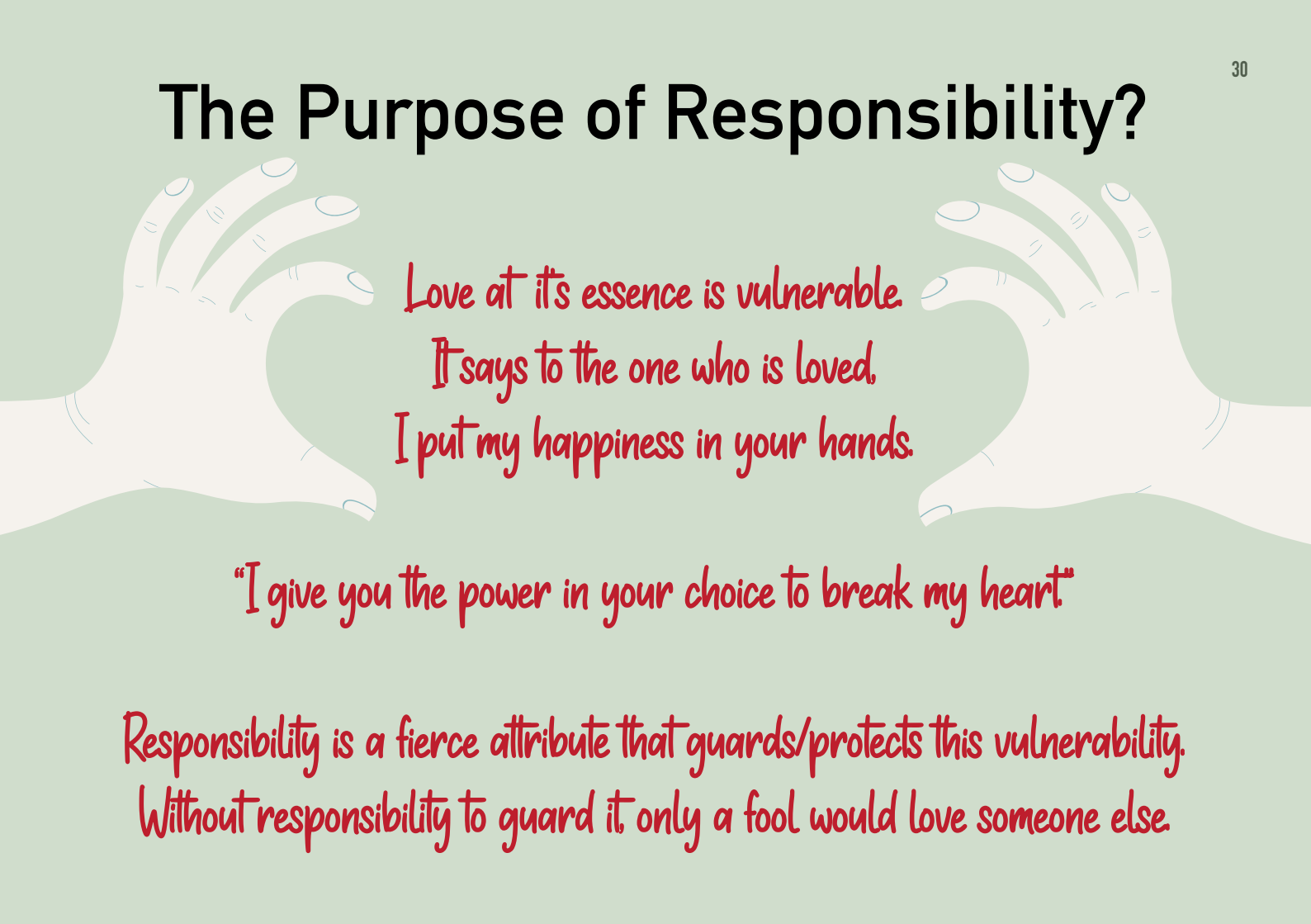
**God gave us life.**

**We are valuable because we have the breath of God in us, a heart with creative power.**

**This makes us the image of God.  
A wonder with unimaginable value.**

**It is ours. We are responsible for it.**

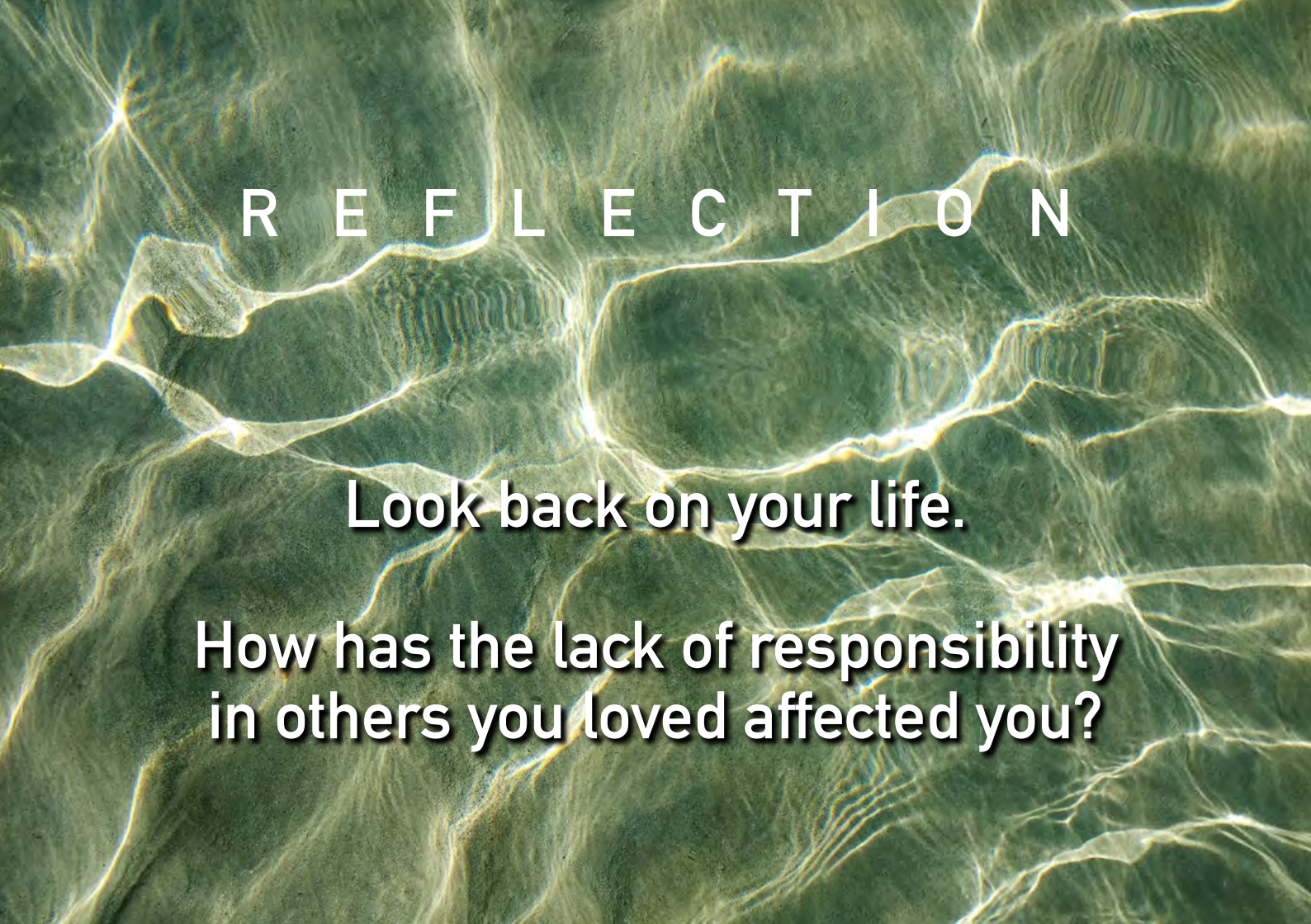
# The Purpose of Responsibility?

An illustration of two white hands with blue outlines, palms facing each other, holding a large green heart. The hands are positioned on the left and right sides of the frame, with the heart centered between them. The background is a solid light green color.

*Love at its essence is vulnerable.  
It says to the one who is loved,  
I put my happiness in your hands.*

*"I give you the power in your choice to break my heart"*

*Responsibility is a fierce attribute that guards/protects this vulnerability.  
Without responsibility to guard it, only a fool would love someone else.*



# R E F L E C T I O N

**Look back on your life.**

**How has the lack of responsibility  
in others you loved affected you?**





# WITH VERY FEW EXCEPTIONS,

the pain in our relationships  
is because of a lack of clear  
responsibility in ourselves  
or those we wanted to love  
or get love from.

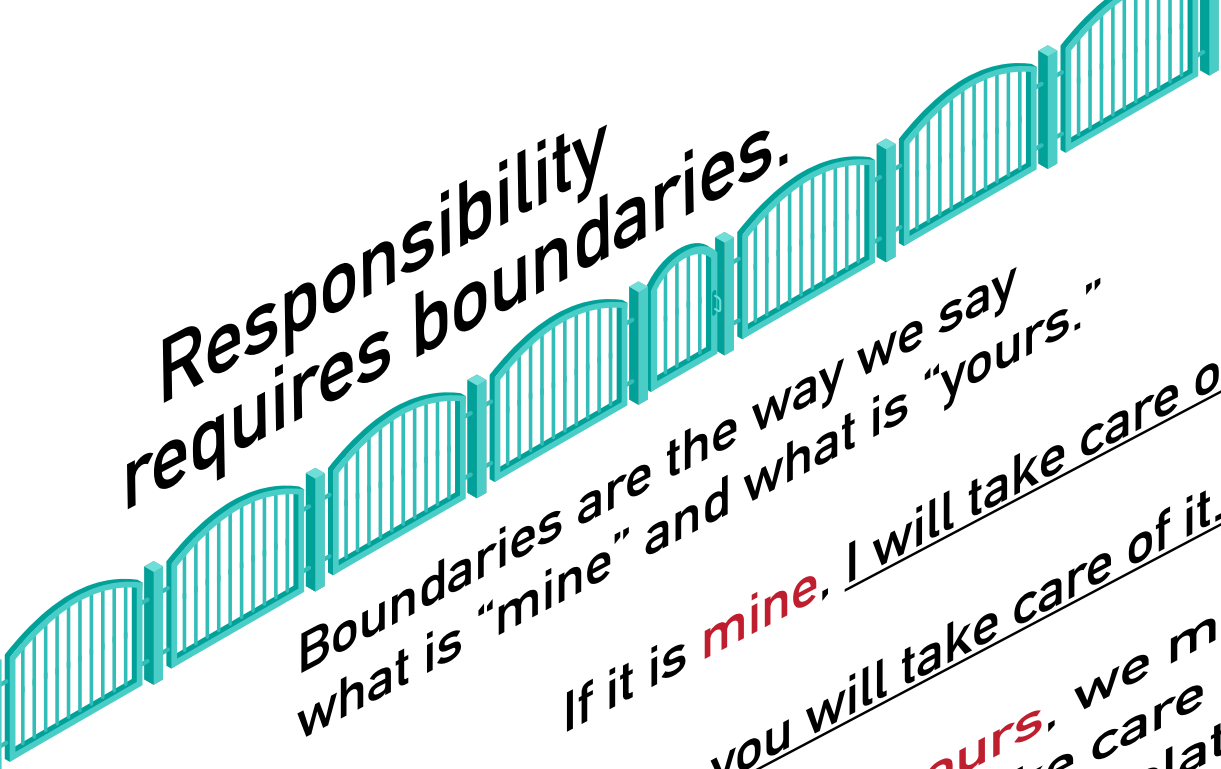




## Humour break

A man went for a job interview  
and the manager said,  
“We’re looking for someone who is  
responsible.”  
“Well I’m your man” he replied,  
“In the last job, whenever anything  
went wrong they said I was responsible.”

*A key way to get clarity for responsibility  
is through boundaries.*



# Responsibility requires boundaries.

Boundaries are the way we say  
what is "mine" and what is "yours."

If it is **mine**, I will take care of it.

If it is **ours**, we must  
take care of it.  
(It's called a relationship)

When I am trying to be responsible and there are no boundaries.  
I become responsible for everything (or nothing).

The weight or absence of it kills me.

OUCH





**So how does it work with God?**

*He starts small*

# A tree



*God creates boundaries in the garden through a tree.*

God put one tree in the garden with one purpose.

It was **HIS** tree.

All the other trees were ours.

**HIS** tree was there to teach us that there must always be limits on our appetites.

*I am responsible for my appetites and fears. (my choices)*

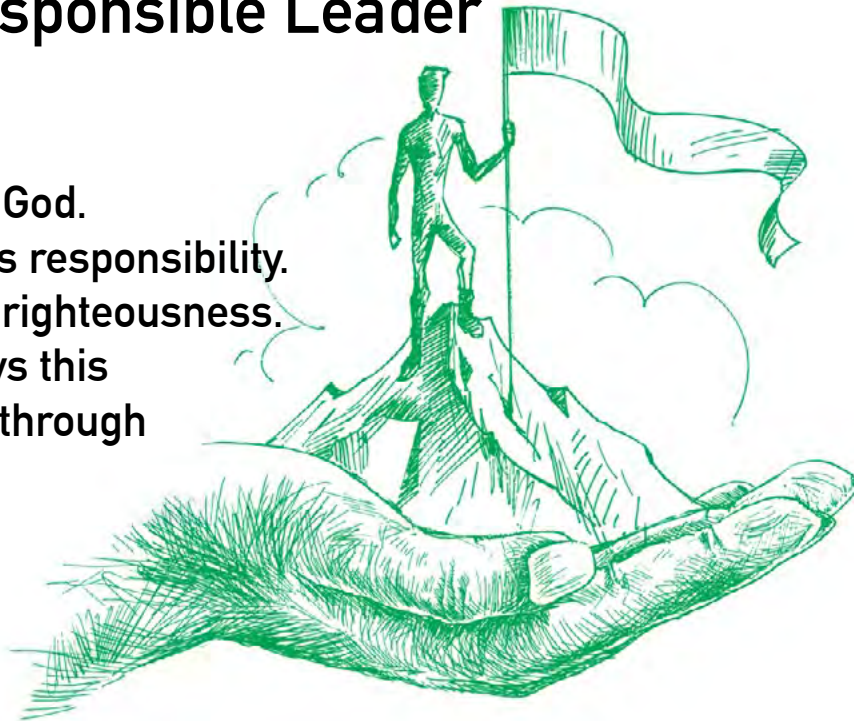
**We must build our responsibility for  
“The Other” by limiting ourself.**

*This is not the loss of freedom,  
but the expression of **Love.***

**This is the image of God in us.  
He did this for us and asks us to do the same.**

# A Responsible Leader

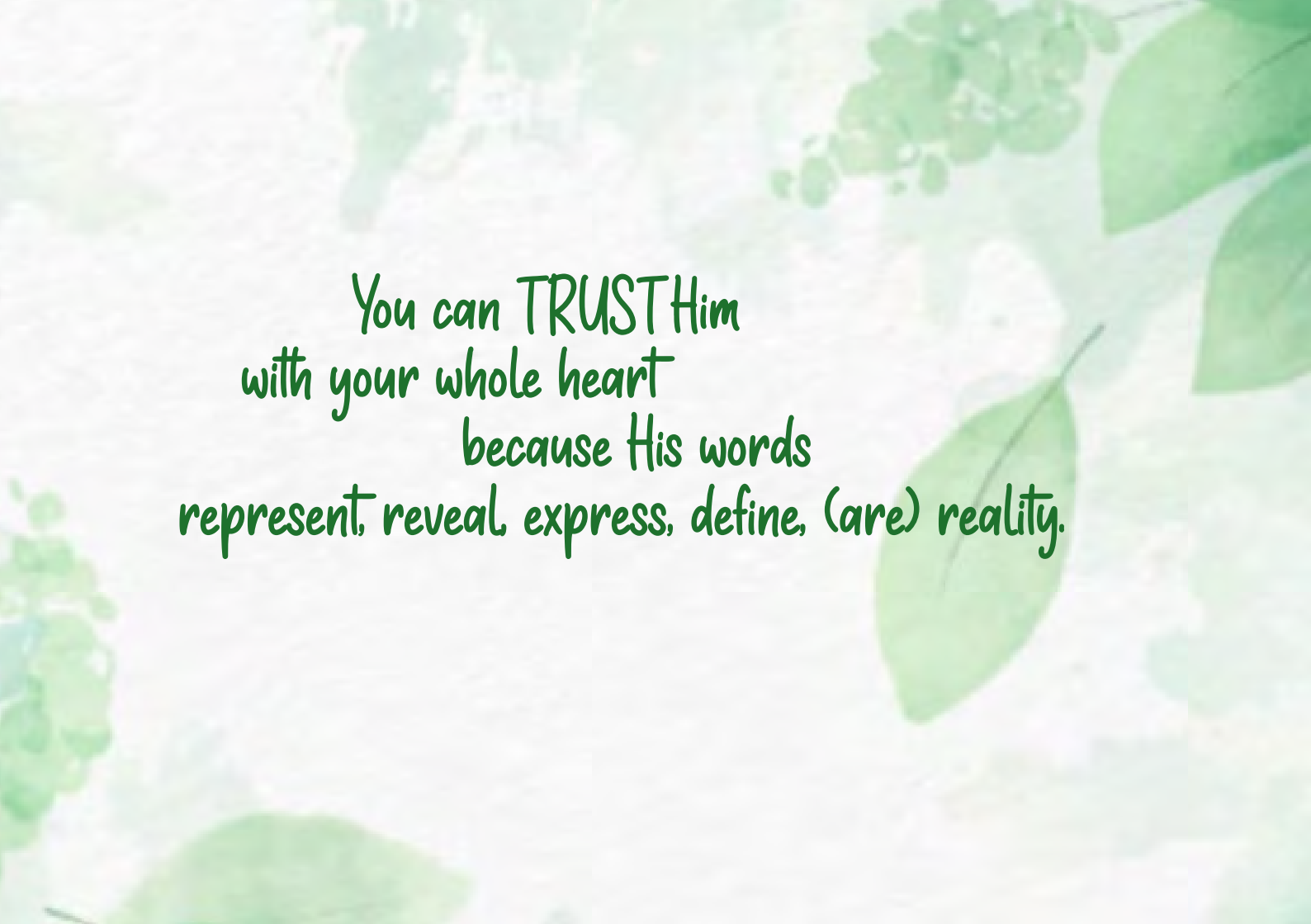
As God is God.  
He models responsibility.  
It's called righteousness.  
He conveys this  
primarily through  
His Word.



What God says is  
true, correct, accurate, right.

There are  
**NO**  
exceptions.





You can TRUST Him  
with your whole heart  
because His words  
represent, reveal, express, define, (are) reality.



## Summary: The Law

God expresses all we have talked about  
in a very simple word = Law.

A law is a word God uses to describe  
a boundary for a group of people that  
must not be broken or it will cause great pain.



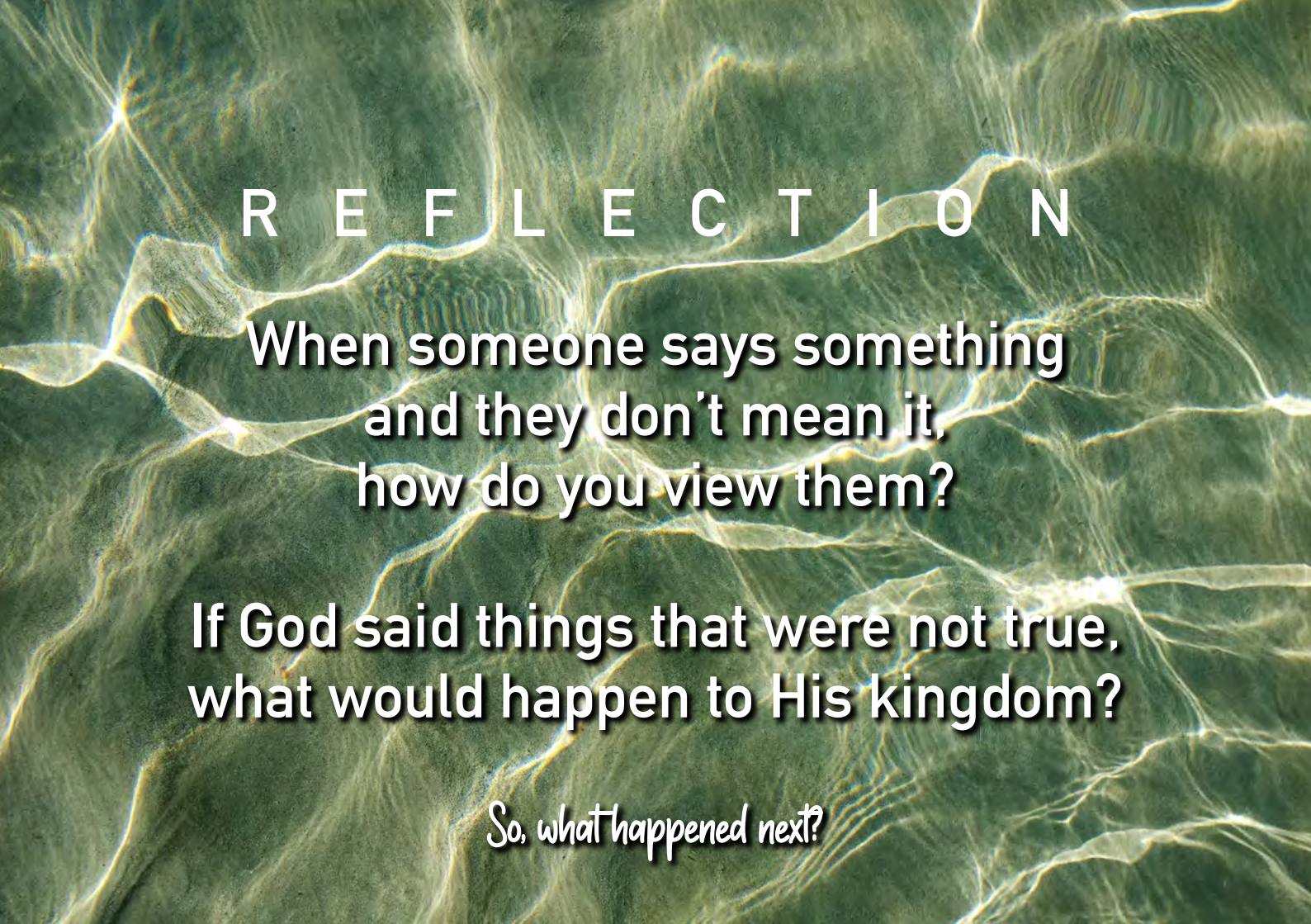
God wants to keep us from pain and suffering,  
so he gives us boundaries (laws)  
and creates consequences to stop us from insanity.

In order to put the maximum pressure on us to be responsible,  
He makes the penalty of breaking the Law as strong as possible.

DEATH



*If you eat the fruit, you will die!*



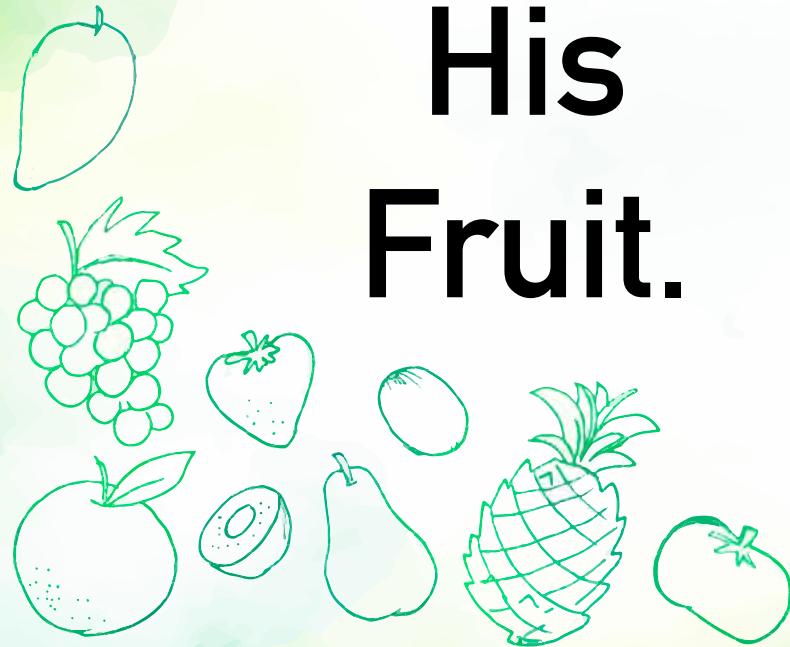
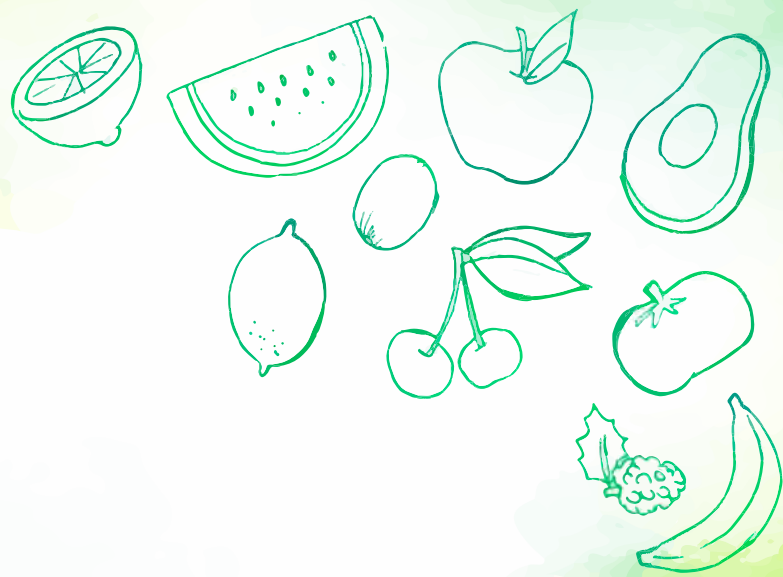
# R E F L E C T I O N

When someone says something  
and they don't mean it,  
how do you view them?

If God said things that were not true,  
what would happen to His kingdom?

*So, what happened next?*

# We Stole His Fruit.



*On a deeper level  
what we really stole from Him was our life.  
That is called rebellion.*

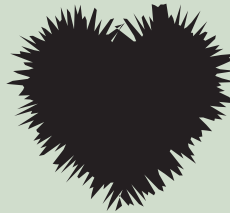


**We Broke The Law.**



We can no longer be trusted  
with a vulnerable love.  
Our heart has turned away  
and wants to hide.  
We don't want to talk about it.

*Not being willing to talk about*



*heart issues is the essence of darkness.*





How did we respond  
when God asked us to  
own our choices?



Adam  
Denied responsibility

Eve  
Refused responsibility



# Cain

He blamed his brother for  
making him look  
irresponsible.



Rather than  
own his heart,  
he killed  
his brother.

# Sarah

She took responsibility  
(when she shouldn't have).



She blamed herself  
for being childless and  
tried to fix the problem  
by giving her maid to Abraham.  
Then she got angry when  
he had a child with the maid.

*You can almost hear Abraham mumbling,  
"You tell me what to do and then get mad when I do it"*

# Esau

He shirked responsibility.

He blamed his brother  
for “deceiving” him,  
but he carelessly sold  
his birthright  
for a bowl of soup.

*It is amazing how “selective”  
our memory is about things like this.*



Ran from responsibility.

# Nation of Israel

The people  
**refused God's direction**  
for the Promised Land and  
ended up wondering around  
in the desert for 40 years.



*There are whole  
communities / nations  
that refuse responsibility.*

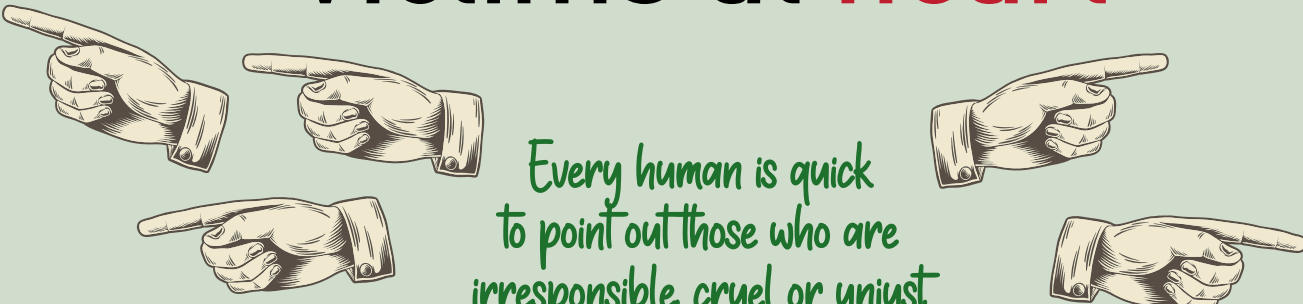
It's a loooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooong list.

Saul blames David.

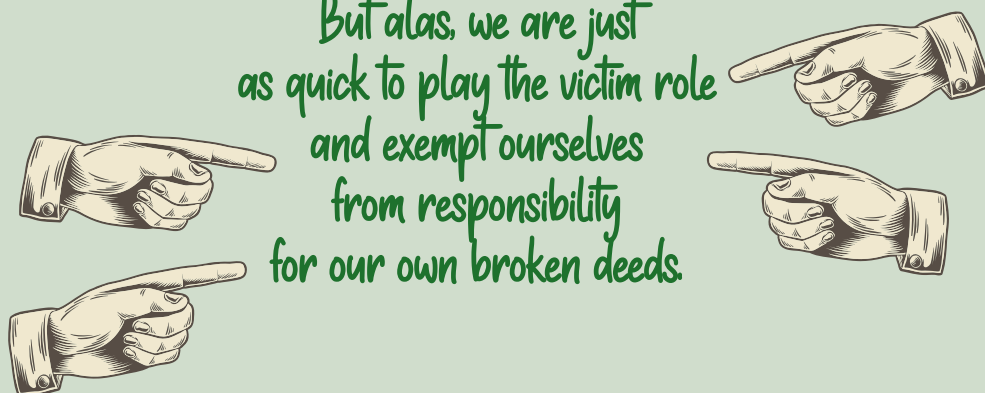
David kills Uriah  
to cover up his irresponsibility.

Solomon's life becomes  
meaningless as he conveniently  
forgets his responsibility with  
hundreds of woman and unfathomable wealth.

# Victims at heart



Every human is quick  
to point out those who are  
irresponsible, cruel or unjust.



But alas, we are just  
as quick to play the victim role  
and exempt ourselves  
from responsibility  
for our own broken deeds.

**We act like God is  
stupid and blind.**

**He's NOT**



Is the whole point of the story  
to tell us we don't want to be  
responsible?

Okay,  
I get it if it is.



# Image of God

We've got issues with responsibility,  
and we don't want to know it.



Welcome to the Human Race



Now What?

**Strangely, God has not given up on us.**



Has God stopped loving us?



Has God stopped responsible?



Responsibility is now more important than ever.  
He is not going to take the easy way out.





# R E F L E C T I O N

Can you feel the challenge  
God is confronted with?

It is not a question of power,  
all the power in the universe  
cannot make someone responsible.

It is a question of love.  
He loves us deeply and wants to help us.  
(Save us)



Now He must figure out a new, deeper, more  
challenging way to teach us the importance of responsibility.

He starts over.

This will take thousands of years. He is in no hurry.

# God chose a Man



To teach responsibility God  
started with an individual

He chose a man.

A good and faithful man named

Abraham

And invites him into a radical life of faith.

Out of that man, God created a nation.



Abraham's children become a nation.  
Israel is born. A Jewish nation.

To be a nation of faith.

# God gave them laws.

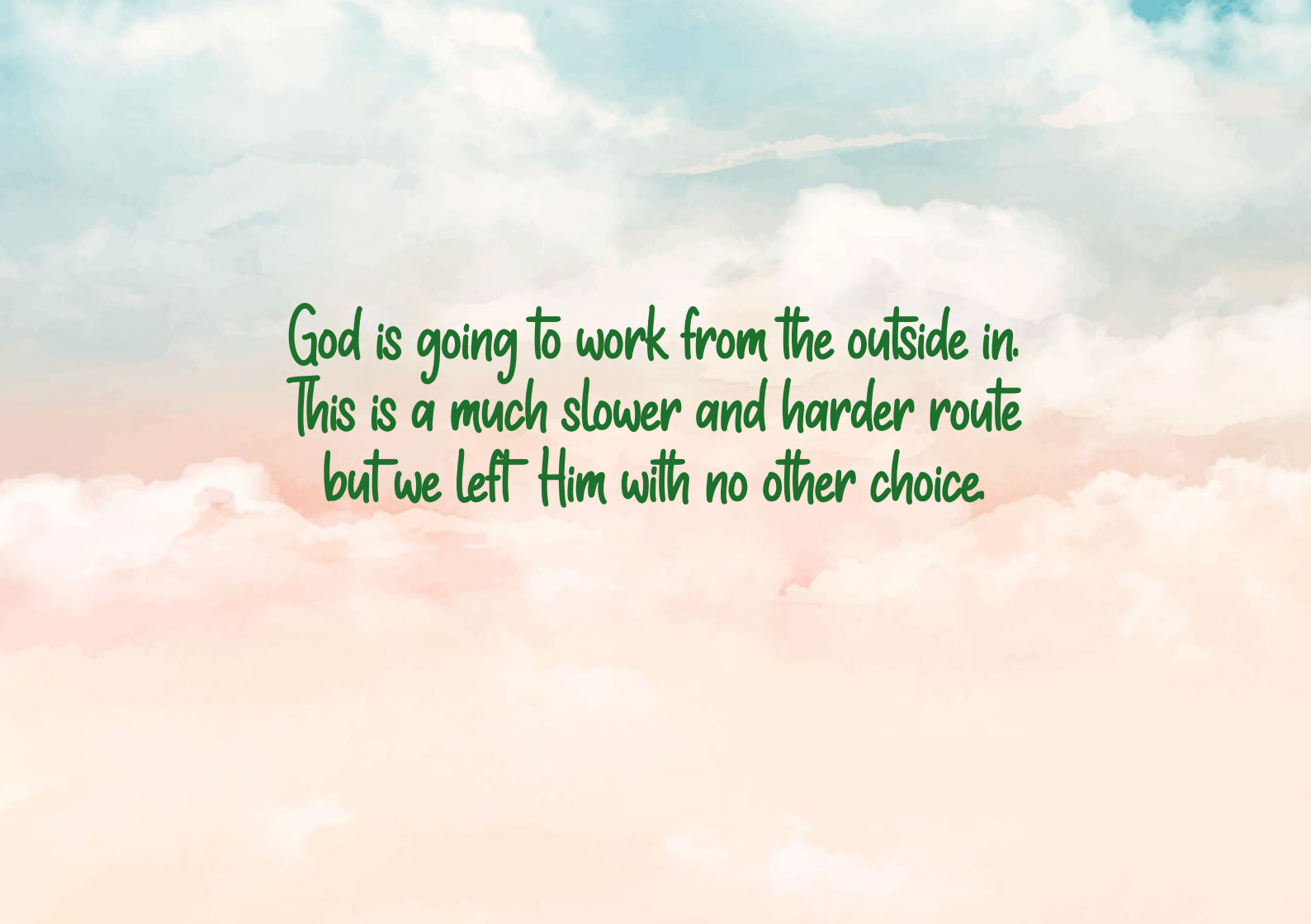
He gave them 10 Commandments,  
which was the moral law.

This grew into civic laws that  
governed the daily social life of the Jews.

This also grew into the ceremonial laws  
which governed the sanctuary.

Then the Rabbis' penned their own laws  
based on the Ten Commandments.  
It grew to 613 laws.





God is going to work from the outside in.  
This is a much slower and harder route  
but we left Him with no other choice.

These “models” to the world show how an individual or nation can thrive if they are responsible.



He gave us laws not to ruin our fun, but to help us see that if our heart was responsible, how we might live.

God tells us story after story to inspire us.  
There are a few who make it a few short steps and  
express the beauty of life through these actions.



## *The Problem is*

There is no one  
righteous  
(responsible)  
not even one.  
(Romans 3:10)

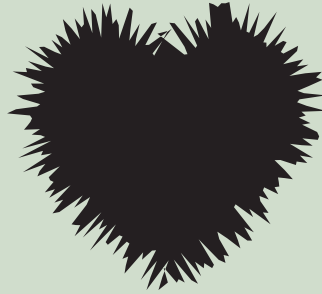
As I read the Old Testament  
I see that we are cunning,  
creative, deceptive and  
avoid the light any chance  
we can get.



*Okay, all I have to do is look around me and I can see that.*



We need help.  
Our hearts are corrupt.



God took an unimaginable  
step and did the  
unthinkable to teach us  
about responsibility.

*The whole point of the LAW was not to make us good, but to reveal our heart to us.*

God became a Man

Radical

Outside the box

Unique

No limits

High Risk

A mystery, wrapped in a dilemma

He emptied Himself of power.

## Jesus



He came to earth to  
teach us the heart of God  
for being responsible.

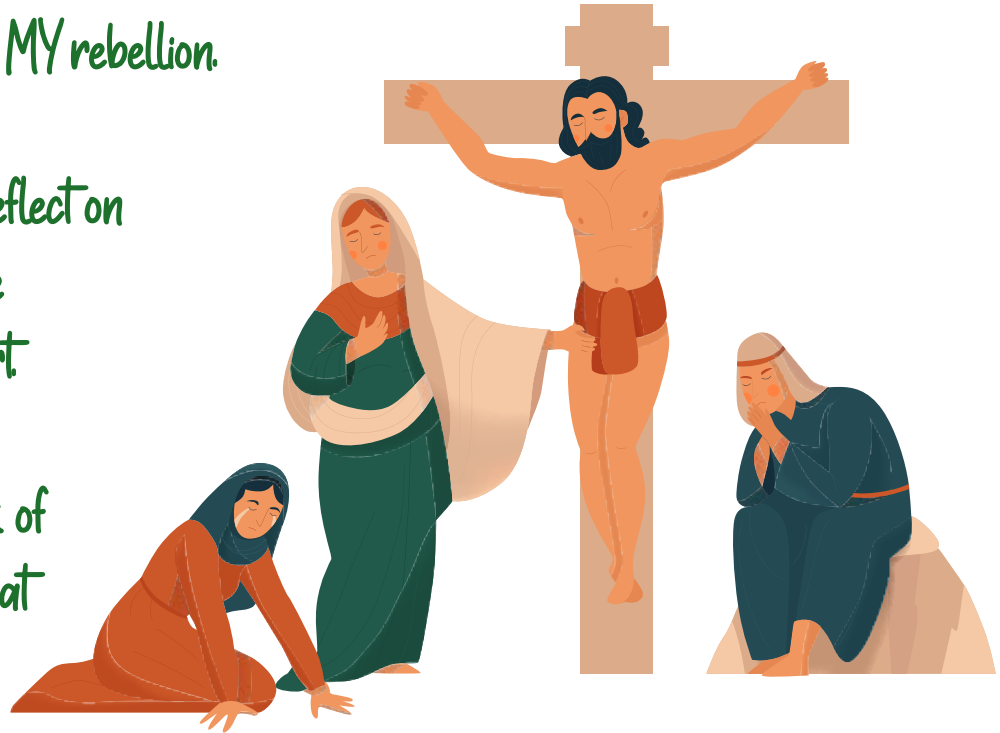
*\* See the ebook, Jesus, Fully Present to look at the power of His life among us.*

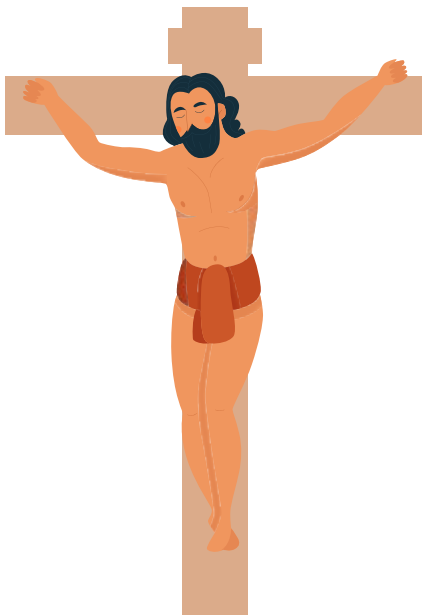
# He came to die.

He suffered and died,  
taking responsibility for MY rebellion.

I must slow down and reflect on  
His unthinkable sacrifice  
with the eyes of my heart.

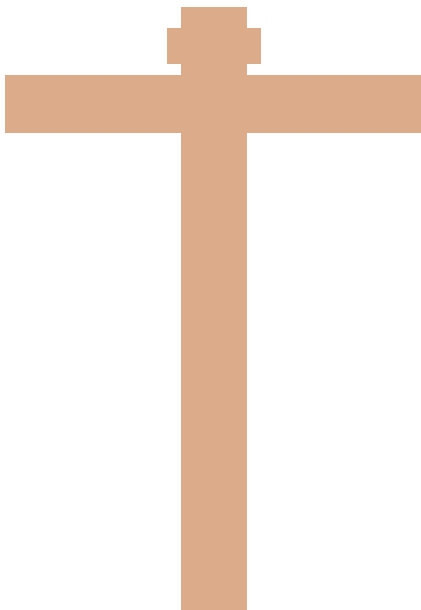
For His death will speak of  
responsibility in ways that  
I cannot even dream of.





Though He was / is the  
Almighty Eternal King of the Universe,  
He emptied Himself of all that power  
(see Philippians 2).

## His Death on a Cross



What could that possibly accomplish?

To make sense of it.

You must understand how much God values responsibility.

He knows the beauty of a relationship can only be found  
in a vulnerable love.

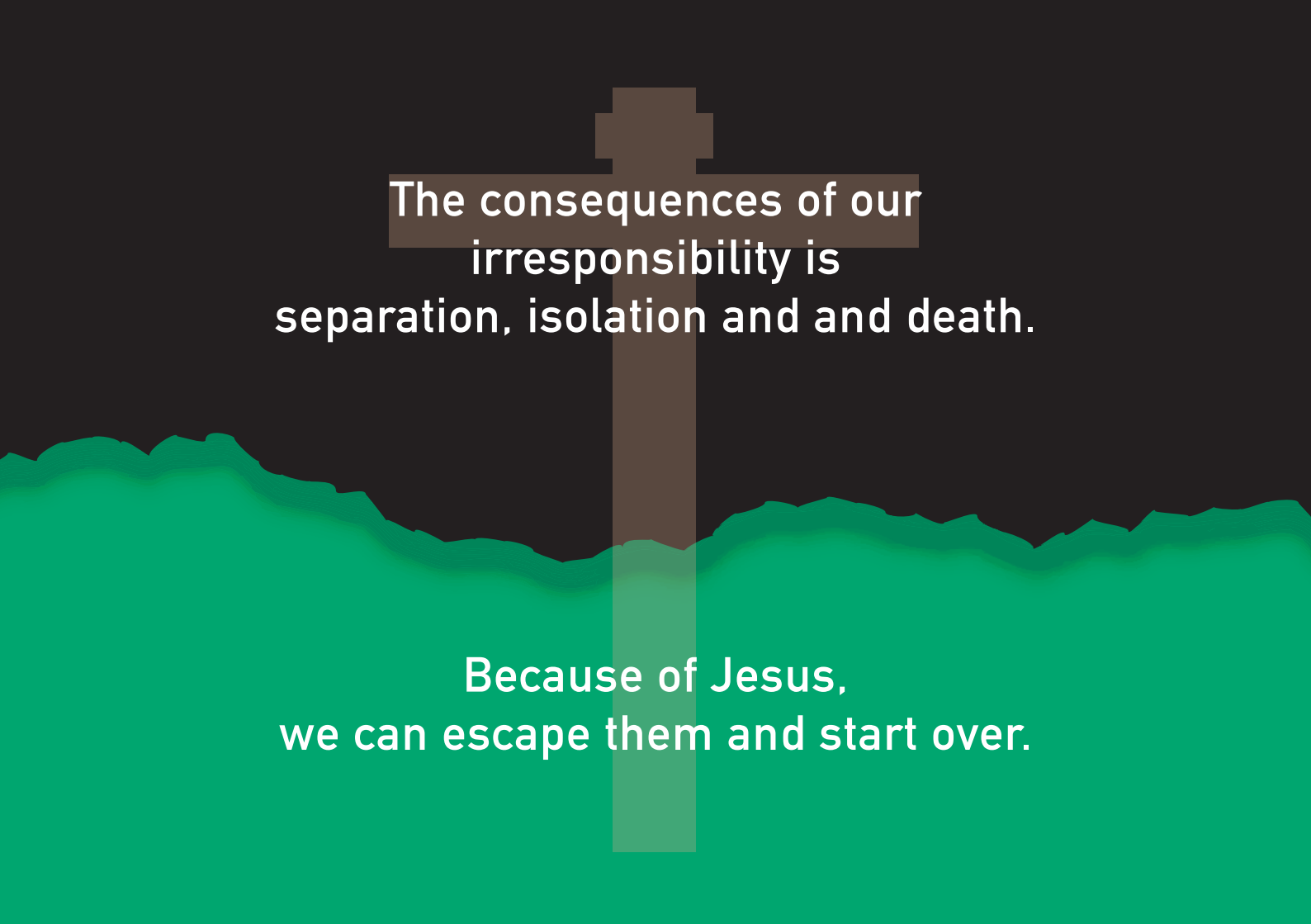
*No stranger tale will ever be told on earth.*

## Jesus

In Him we see a perfect union of responsibility and vulnerability.





A brown cross is centered in the image. The top horizontal bar of the cross contains the first text block. The vertical stem of the cross extends downwards, passing through the second text block. The background is dark grey at the top and transitions into a bright green field at the bottom, which has a jagged, torn-paper-like edge separating the two sections.

The consequences of our  
irresponsibility is  
separation, isolation and and death.

Because of Jesus,  
we can escape them and start over.



**By Faith**

**We receive a new heart,  
grafted in by Jesus**

**We exchange our  
irresponsibility for  
His responsibility.**



God  
hates  
**IRRESPONSIBILITY.**

**We must exchange our heart,  
grow up, or wither and die.**



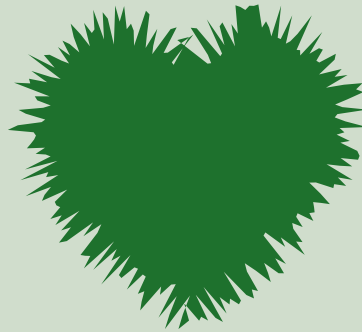
A new Man, Nation and Law is given.

*Jesus is the new Adam.*

*The Body of Christ is a new nation.*

*Grace restores the heart to responsibility.*

# Radical heart surgery



God's primary goal is still the same.

He wants to make us responsible.

Able to protect the vulnerable love that we all deeply long for.

Now we don't earn it. It is a free gift, grafted in by faith.

Why it is so important.

For not knowing about  
God's righteousness  
and seeking to establish  
their own, they did not  
subject themselves to  
the righteousness of God.

Romans 10:3

For I am not ashamed of the gospel,  
for it is the power of God for

salvation to everyone who believes...

For in it the righteousness of God  
is revealed from faith to faith; ...

Romans 1:16-17





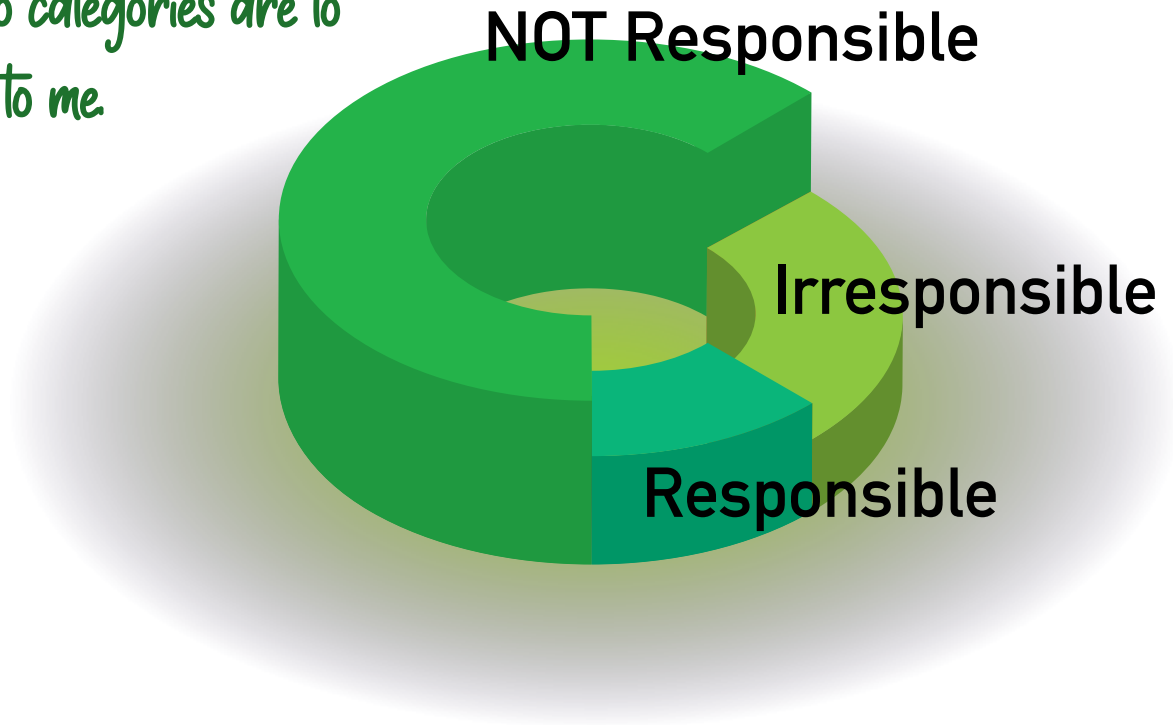
# Fear of Man

I am more afraid of what  
people will think than what  
God will think

My responsibility is more  
rooted in the fear of man  
than the fear of God.  
I am slowly changing this.



I must have a category of the things I am not responsible for if the other two categories are to make sense to me.



# Guilt

something specific  
I have done wrong.  
I can repent and change.



# Shame

Who I am is wrong and there is  
nothing I can do about it.  
As I can't change me  
I am damned just for  
being me. It's a lie.

# Works

I want to prove how responsible I am  
and thus avoid the painful grace part.

I don't want to be indebted to God.

It is a fight daily to die to my  
need to "justify" myself and to  
receive an intimate love that  
I didn't earn.





Now the real work begins.

The grafted heart of Jesus must grow deep roots and slowly transform us into a vulnerable community who can express God's love to a dying world.

One nagging thought that still comes to us who are  
seeking to be responsible and please the Lord

*"Have I done enough?"*

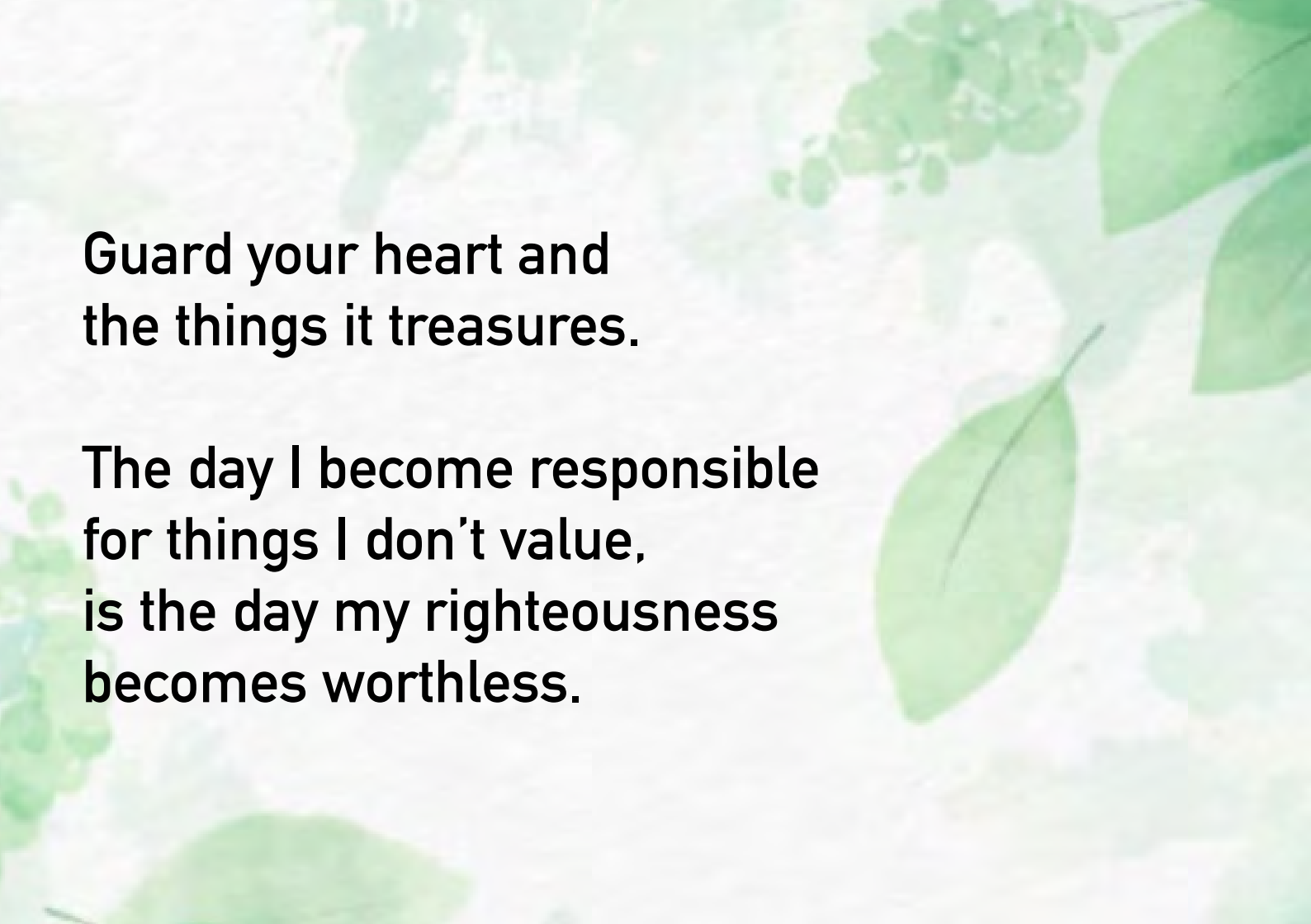
My mind says,

*"Just a little bit more."*

Jesus says,

*"Rest in me*

*My grace manifested in you is enough."*

The background of the image features a light green, textured surface. On the right side, there are several large, vibrant green leaves with visible veins. On the left side, there are smaller, more delicate green leaves. In the center, a faint, light green world map is visible, showing the continents. The overall aesthetic is clean and natural.

**Guard your heart and  
the things it treasures.**

**The day I become responsible  
for things I don't value,  
is the day my righteousness  
becomes worthless.**

**What am I responsible for?**

**I am responsible to be  
who God made me to be in Christ.**

**I am responsible to love my neighbours,  
reflecting to them the image of Christ.**

**I am responsible to receive from God  
all that He has for me and to then use it  
in ways that my faith stirs me to so that  
I can bless the body of Christ and my nation.**



# Is God Responsible?

**“The Rock! His work is perfect,  
For all His ways are just;  
A God of faithfulness and without injustice,  
Righteous and upright is He.”  
Deuteronomy 32:4**



Online Marketplace training: [www.matthewrawlins.com](http://www.matthewrawlins.com) (It's on Thinkific)

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Marketplace work: [www.thegreenbench.com](http://www.thegreenbench.com)

email: [mrawlins@mac.com](mailto:mrawlins@mac.com)

## Other books I wrote to help Christians deepen their relationship with God.

### **Rediscovering Reverence**

The path to intimacy

### **The Question**

Is God good to all?

### **The Namer**

How do I find my true identity?

### **Emails from Hell**

Evil schemes to undermine a leader

### **Walked Naked into the Land of Uncertainty**

5 keys for leadership into the unknown

### **Guardian**

A journey to the heart

### **Humility**

### **Emails from Heaven**

An angels advice to his young apprentice.

### **The Long Sacred Journey:**

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