

# Abide Discovery Session: The Literal Guardrail

Bridging the ancient there and then to the here and now.



Meditate & Obey. Study & Apply. Hear & Do.

# The Heart of Abiding

Have you ever opened your Bible to a sharp warning or a complex proverb and felt your heart sink? The words can feel like a locked door. But God created us for fellowship, and He wants to be understood.



# Taking God at His Word



## Private Interpretation

We often exhaust ourselves trying to make the Bible say what we want it to say, or worrying we have invented the wrong meaning.



## The Literal Guardrail

Taking God at His Word is an act of trust. We seek the Author's intended meaning, exactly the way He chose to communicate it.

"All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be equipped, having been thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16-17, LSB)

# The Divine Library: Understanding Genre

Reading the Bible literally does not mean reading a poem like a newspaper. It means honoring the Author by reading each passage according to its literary genre.



## History

Ask "What actually happened?" Trust the historical account as fact, not allegory.

## Poetry

Look through the vivid image to find the literal emotional or spiritual truth.

## Wisdom

Approach as divine principles and instruction for flourishing, not absolute guarantees.

## Parable

Seek the central spiritual reality. Do not allegorize every minor detail.

## Epistle

Treat as personal, situational correspondence. Ask, "Who was this written to, and why?"

# Practice Case 1: The Parable

*"And if your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off... if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out..." (Matthew 18:8–9, LSB).*



## Without the Guardrail

**Reading:** Literal physical self-mutilation.

**Result:** Harmful, fear-based confusion that contradicts God's care for the body.



## With the Guardrail

**Reading:** Recognizing Hyperbole. Jesus is using vivid exaggeration to reveal a literal, urgent truth.

**Result:** Radical, unsentimental obedience. We learn that sin is an extreme threat, leading to grace-empowered action to remove it from our lives.

# Practice Case 2: The Proverb

*"Do not answer a fool according to his folly... Answer a fool according to his folly..."*  
(Proverbs 26:4–5, LSB).

**Do not answer  
a fool**

**Discernment**

**Answer a fool**

## **Without the Guardrail**

**Reading:** Universal rules applied identically to every situation.

**Result:** An impossible contradiction that undermines the authority of Scripture.

## **With the Guardrail**

**Reading:** Recognizing Wisdom Literature. These are two sides of the same coin of discernment, not legal statutes.

**Result:** We choose our response based on what benefits the other person. Silence to avoid being dragged down; speaking up to humbly correct arrogance.

# Practice Case 3: The Epistle

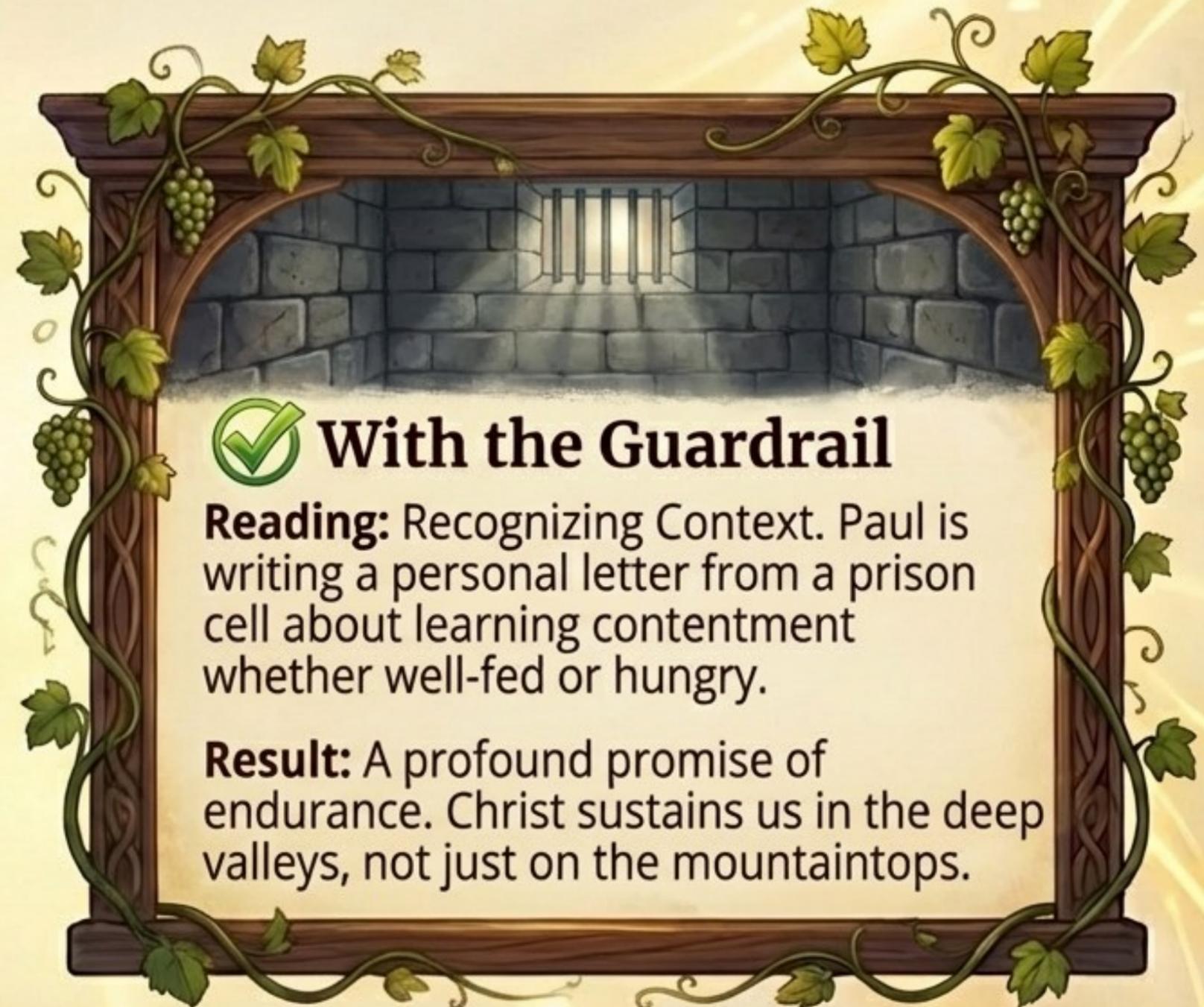
*"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."* (Philippians 4:13, LSB).



 **Without the Guardrail**

**Reading:** A superhero slogan for unlimited human capability or personal achievement.

**Result:** Shallow faith that fractures when hardship arrives.



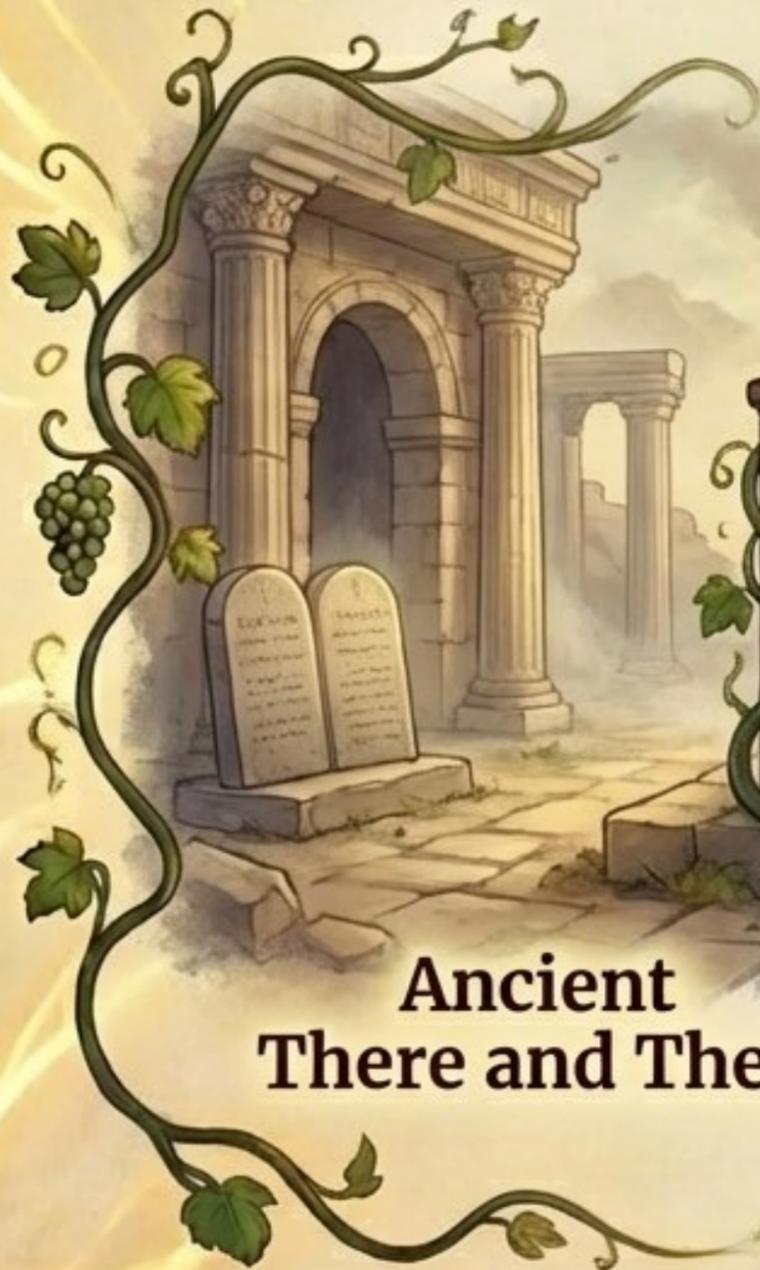
 **With the Guardrail**

**Reading:** Recognizing Context. Paul is writing a personal letter from a prison cell about learning contentment whether well-fed or hungry.

**Result:** A profound promise of endurance. Christ sustains us in the deep valleys, not just on the mountaintops.

# The Fruit of the Guardrail

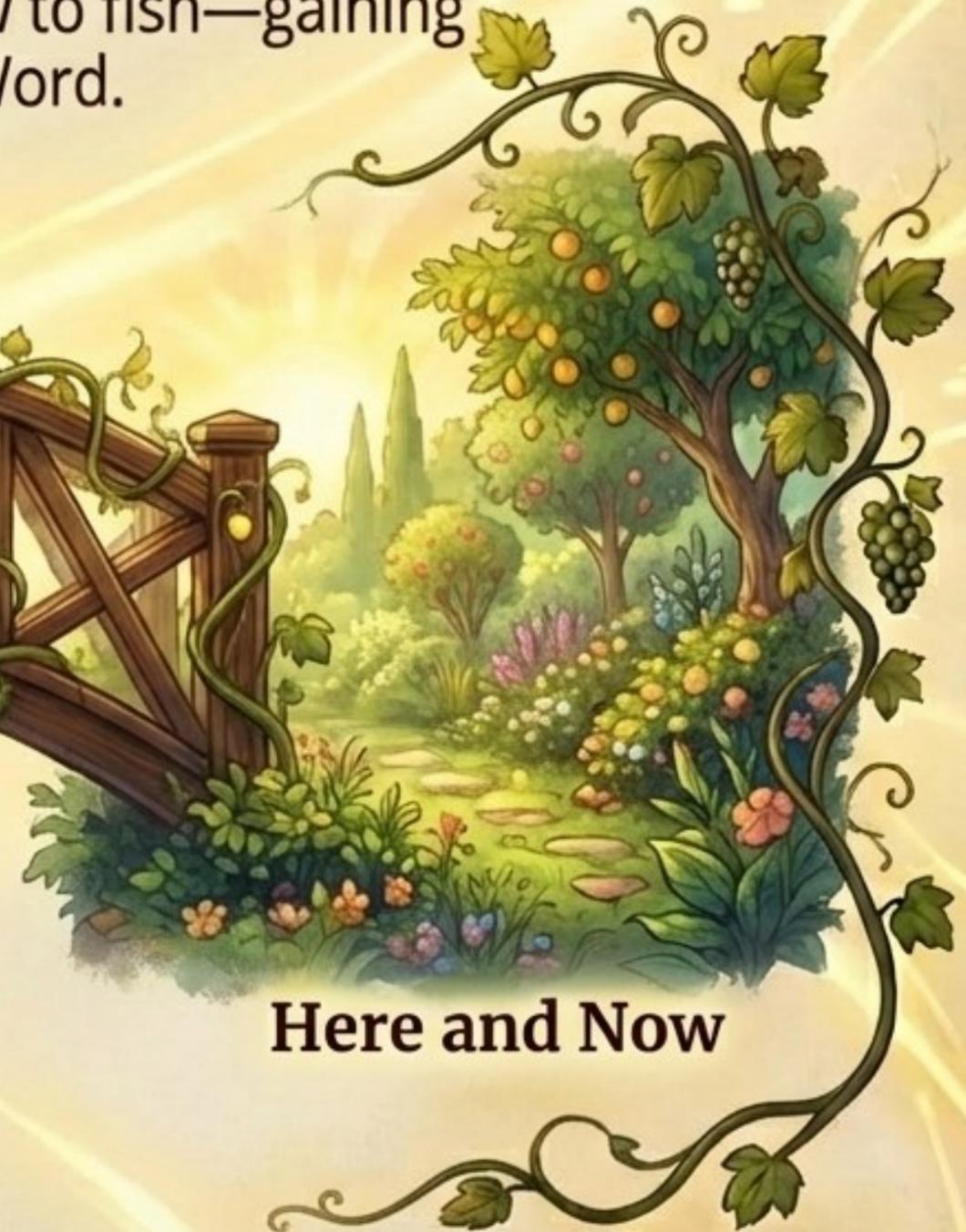
The guardrails do not flatten the Bible; they rescue it. By honoring the creativity and intentionality of the Author, we are learning how to fish—gaining the tools to feed ourselves from God's Word.



**Ancient  
There and Then**

## The Literal Guardrail

- Turns anxiety into clarity.
- Protects us from making universal rules out of specific wisdom.
- Replaces shallow slogans with profound, anchoring truth.



**Here and Now**

# Walking with the Teacher

You are not navigating this library alone. You have not been handed a set of rules and left to figure them out by effort alone.

The guardrails are the structure; the Holy Spirit is the life that flows through them.



# The Posture of a Student

Every time you apply the Literal Guardrail, you are partnering with the One who inspired the words.

This requires a specific posture of the heart:

## Step 3: Ask for Focus

*"...Unite my heart to fear Your name."  
(Psalm 86:11c, LSB).*

We surrender the divided readings we prefer in favor of the truth God actually spoke.

## Step 2: Commit to Obedience

*"...I will walk in Your truth..." (Psalm 86:11b, LSB).*

We decide to obey the truth before we even read it.

## Step 1: Receive Instruction

*"Teach me Your way, O Yahweh..." (Psalm 86:11a, LSB).*

We humbly ask the Spirit to open the right genre and context to our understanding.

# Final Invitation: Deep Joy

The purpose of the Literal Guardrail is not intellectual precision; it is **intimacy**. There is a deep, abiding joy for the person who builds their life on what God actually said.

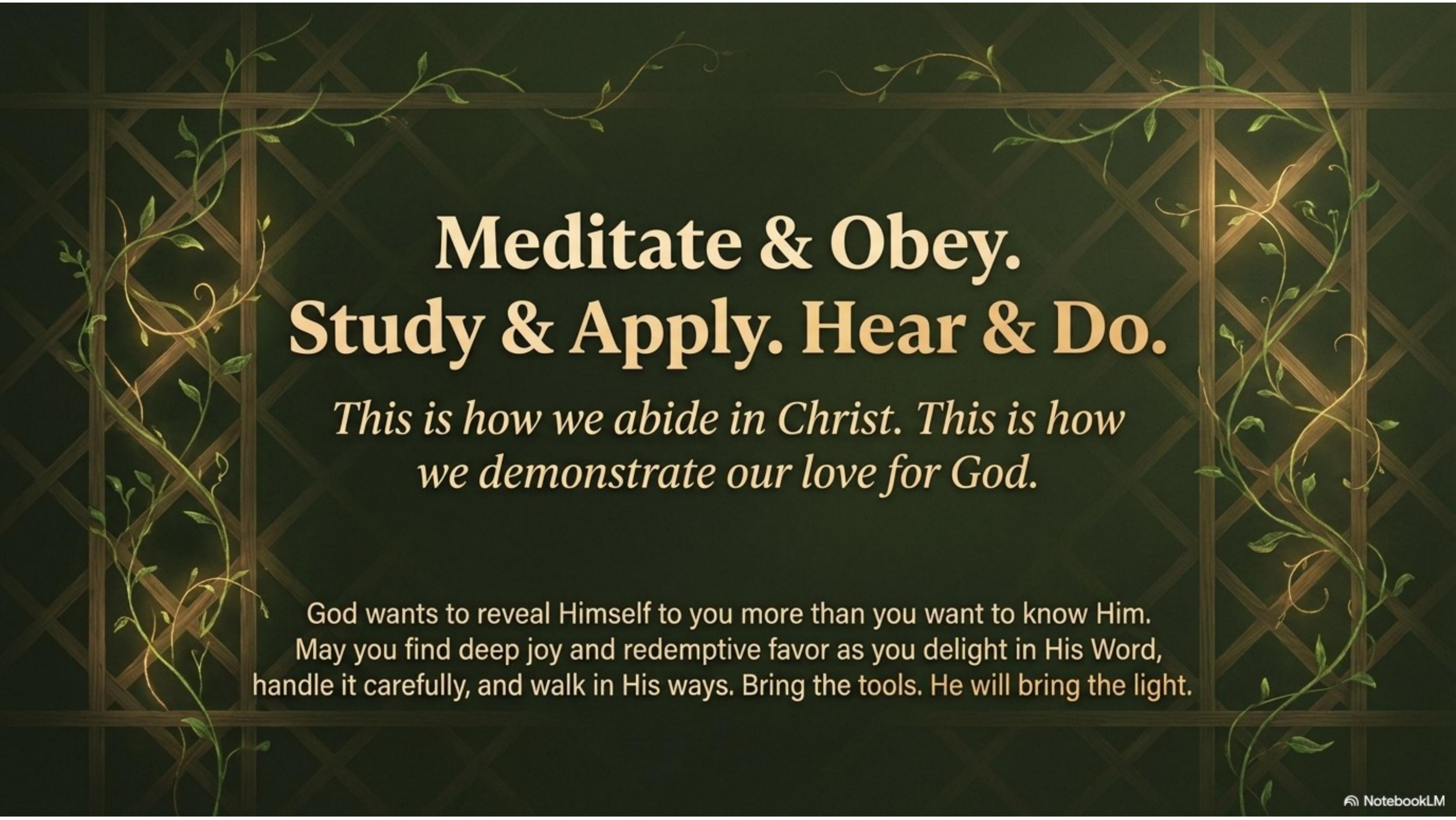
## The Action:

"But his delight is in the law of Yahweh, And in His law he meditates day and night."  
(Psalm 1:2, LSB)

## The Result:

"But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of freedom, and abides by it... this man will be blessed in what he does."  
(James 1:25, LSB)

**The tool is just the road. The destination is Jesus.**



**Meditate & Obey.  
Study & Apply. Hear & Do.**

*This is how we abide in Christ. This is how  
we demonstrate our love for God.*

God wants to reveal Himself to you more than you want to know Him.  
May you find deep joy and redemptive favor as you delight in His Word,  
handle it carefully, and walk in His ways. Bring the tools. He will bring the light.