

## WHAT'S NEXT? – Take the Next Step (Ephesians 1:1-18)

January 5, 2020

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Have you ever felt like something's missing? Are you longing for a clearer sense of purpose in your life? You were created for significance, not just survival. Today we will dig into Scripture and recognize where in our lives we've become spiritually passive and may not be using our gifts to their full potential. We will learn to recognize we are made for significance, and that God gives each of us the vision to pursue the purpose He has us. Together, let's figure out What's Next!

*The righteous **will flourish** like a palm tree, they **will grow** like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the Lord, they **will flourish** in the courts of our God. – Psalm 92:12-13*

*I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, **so that** you may **know him** better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may **be enlightened** in order that you may know the hope to which **he has called you**, the riches of **his glorious inheritance** in his holy people ... – Ephesians 1:17-18*

### Four Steps to Flourish ...

1. \_\_\_\_\_.

*“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven ... Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never **knew you**.’ ...” – Matthew 7:21, 23*

2. \_\_\_\_\_.

*Therefore confess your sins **to each other** and pray for each other so that you may be **healed**. – James 5:16*

3. \_\_\_\_\_.

*We have **different gifts**, according to the grace given to each of us. – Romans 12:6*

4. \_\_\_\_\_.

*“This is to my **Father’s glory**, that you **bear much fruit**, showing yourselves to be my disciples.” – John 15:8*

*“I have told you this so that my **joy may be in you** ...” – John 15:11*

### Questions for individual or group reflection:

Have you ever tried to keep a plant alive? What steps did you take, and how did it go?

Think about a time when you felt stuck in a rut. What made you feel that way?

Read Psalm 92:13. In order to flourish, people need to be in the right environment. What things in your environment are helping you grow, and what things might need to change?

The four steps God has for us to flourish are: know God, find freedom, discover purpose, and make a difference. Of those four steps, which one do you need to pursue?

It's almost impossible to grow when you don't have the right people around you. How can you start relying on others more? How can you start helping others grow?

What is a next step you might need to take? What makes you choose that one?



**Pray:** Father, thank You for never leaving us stuck in a rut. Thank You for encouraging us to continue moving and growing. Show us the next steps all of us can take and help us encourage others to take their next steps as well. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

### Do:

- It's time for you to get moving! Consider the four steps God wants all of us to take and commit to pursuing one of those steps this week.
- If you're in need of support, give the people around you a chance to help you.
- If you know others in need of support, be there for them, and think of specific ways you can show them your support this week.

**Memory Verse:** “This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.” – John 15:8

*This message uses materials provided by Pastor Chris Hodges and open.life.church.*




# WHAT'S NEXT?

Dream a little bigger.

Take the Next Step



An illustration of Alice in Wonderland. Alice, with blonde hair and wearing a white dress with a blue collar and blue skirt, stands on a pink path. She is looking up at a large, striped caterpillar with pink and purple bands, which is perched on a dark, gnarled tree branch. The background is dark and moody, with green foliage and a pink path leading into the distance.

THEN IT DOESN'T MATTER.  
IF YOU DO NOT KNOW WHERE  
YOU ARE GOING, ANY ROAD WILL  
TAKE YOU THERE.

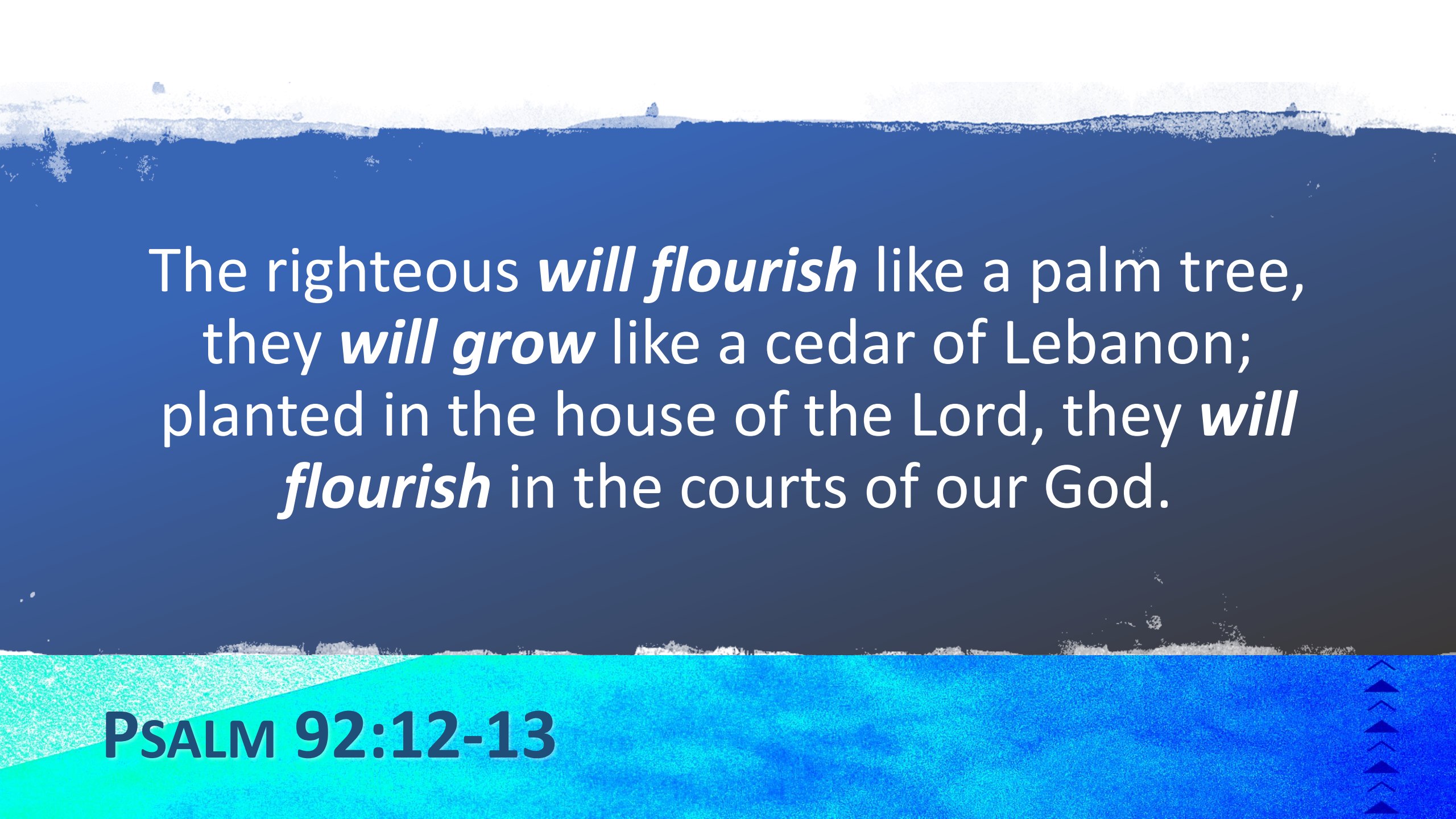


# WHAT'S NEXT?

Dream a little bigger.

Take the Next Step





The righteous *will flourish* like a palm tree,  
they *will grow* like a cedar of Lebanon;  
planted in the house of the Lord, they *will  
flourish* in the courts of our God.

**PSALM 92:12-13**



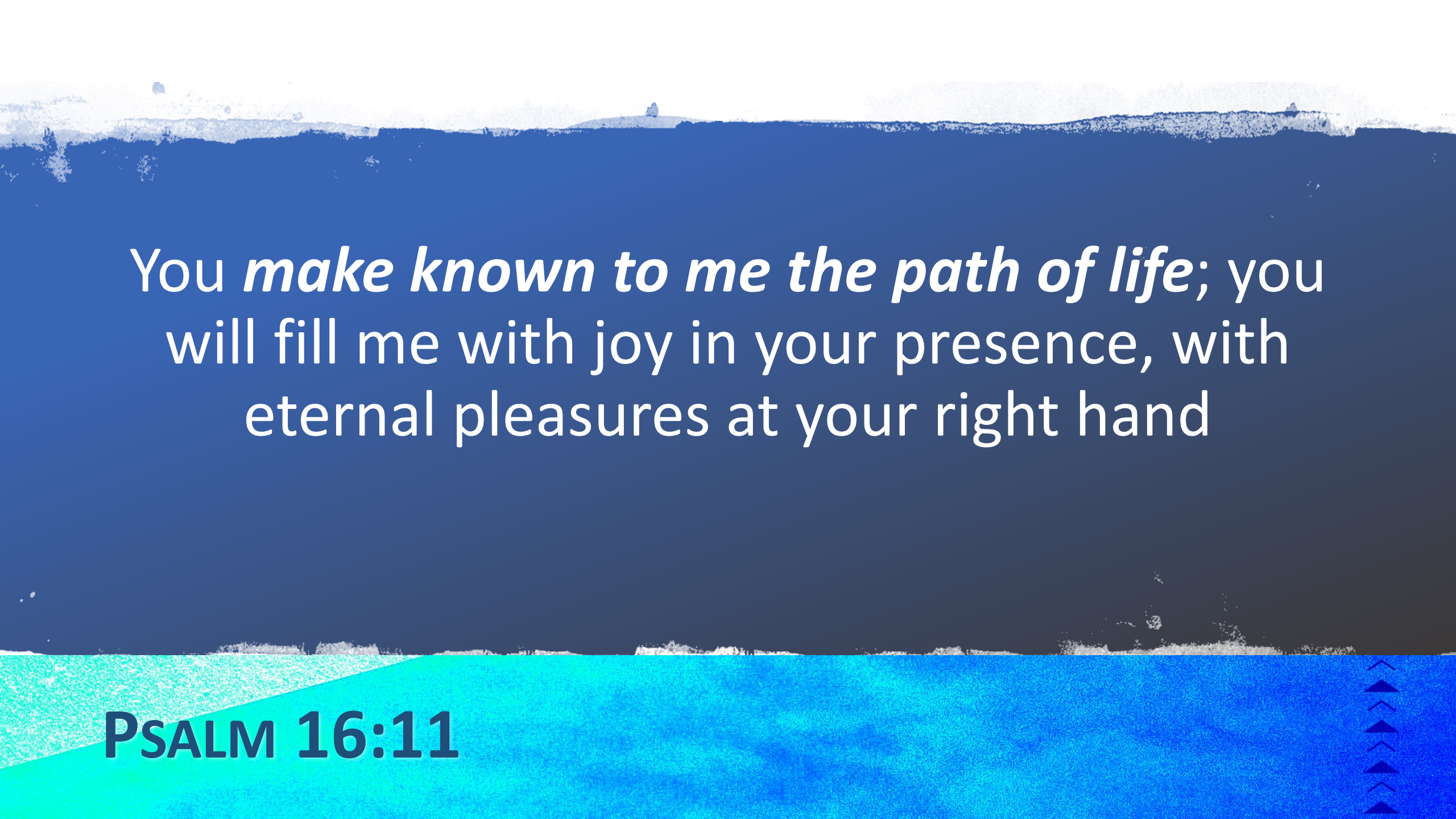












You *make known to me the path of life*; you  
will fill me with joy in your presence, with  
eternal pleasures at your right hand

**PSALM 16:11**





I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, *so that* you may *know him* better.

**EPHESIANS 1:17**





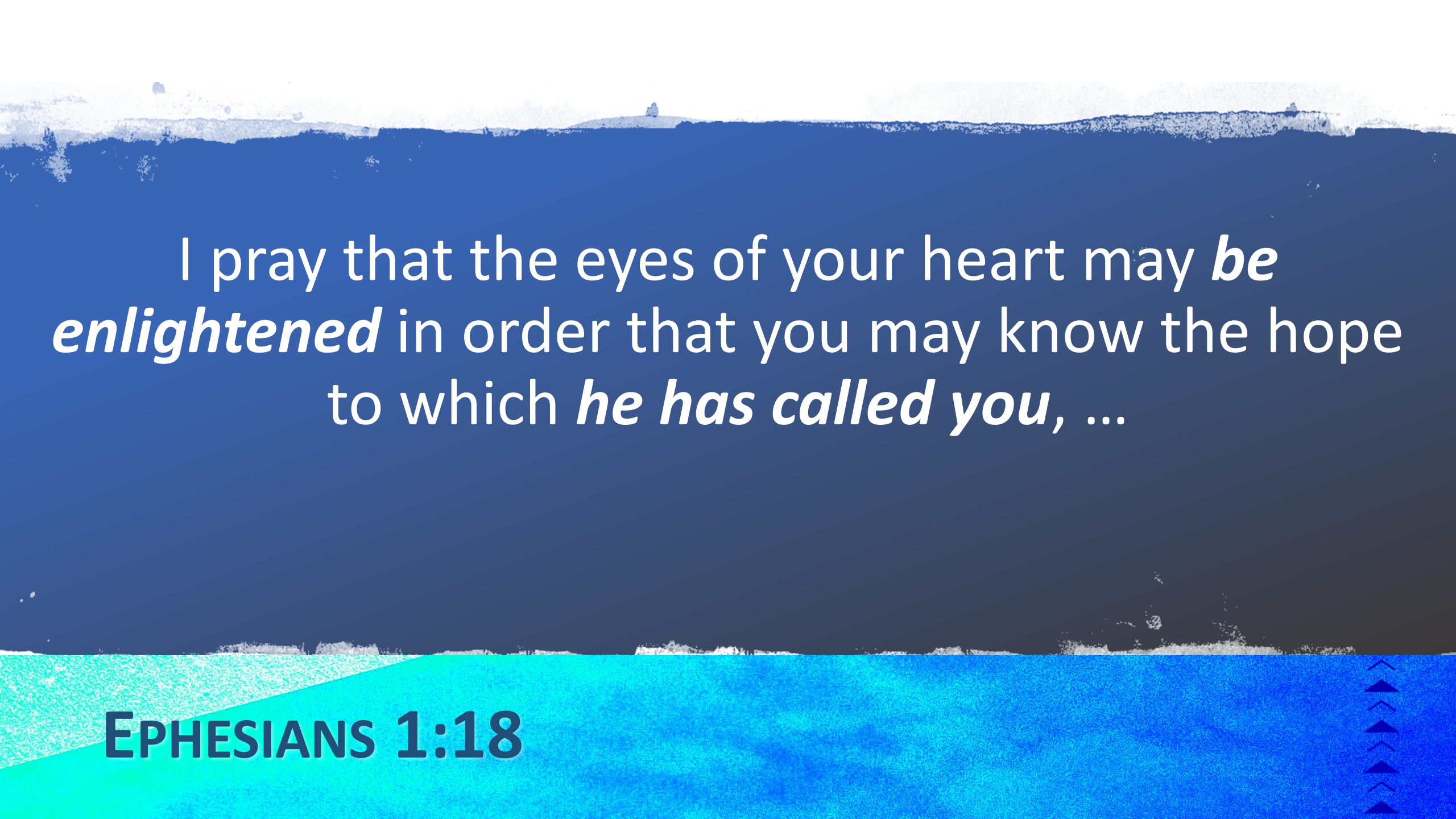


I pray that the eyes of your heart may *be  
enlightened* ...

**EPHESIANS 1:18**





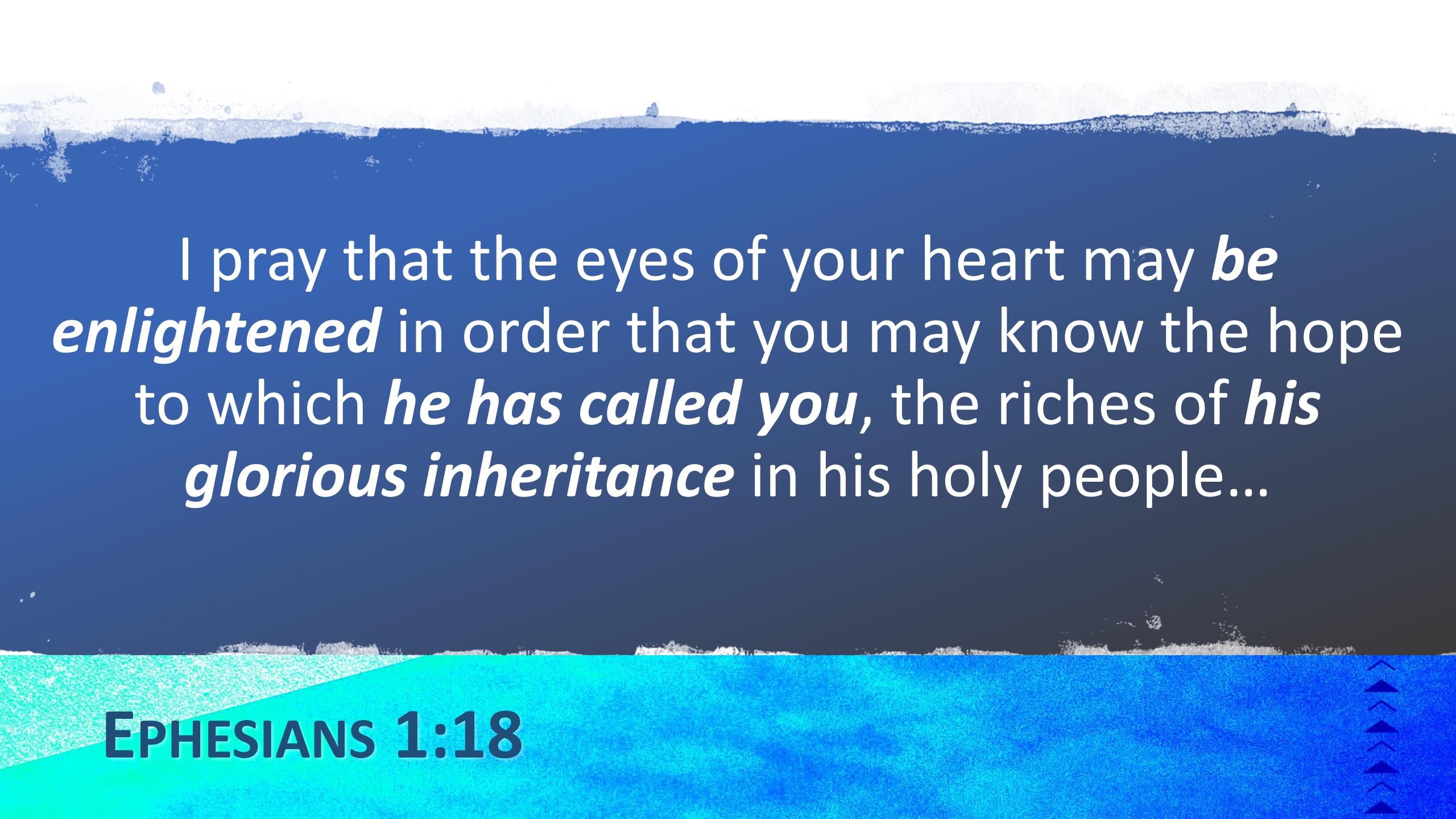


I pray that the eyes of your heart may *be enlightened* in order that you may know the hope to which *he has called you*, ...

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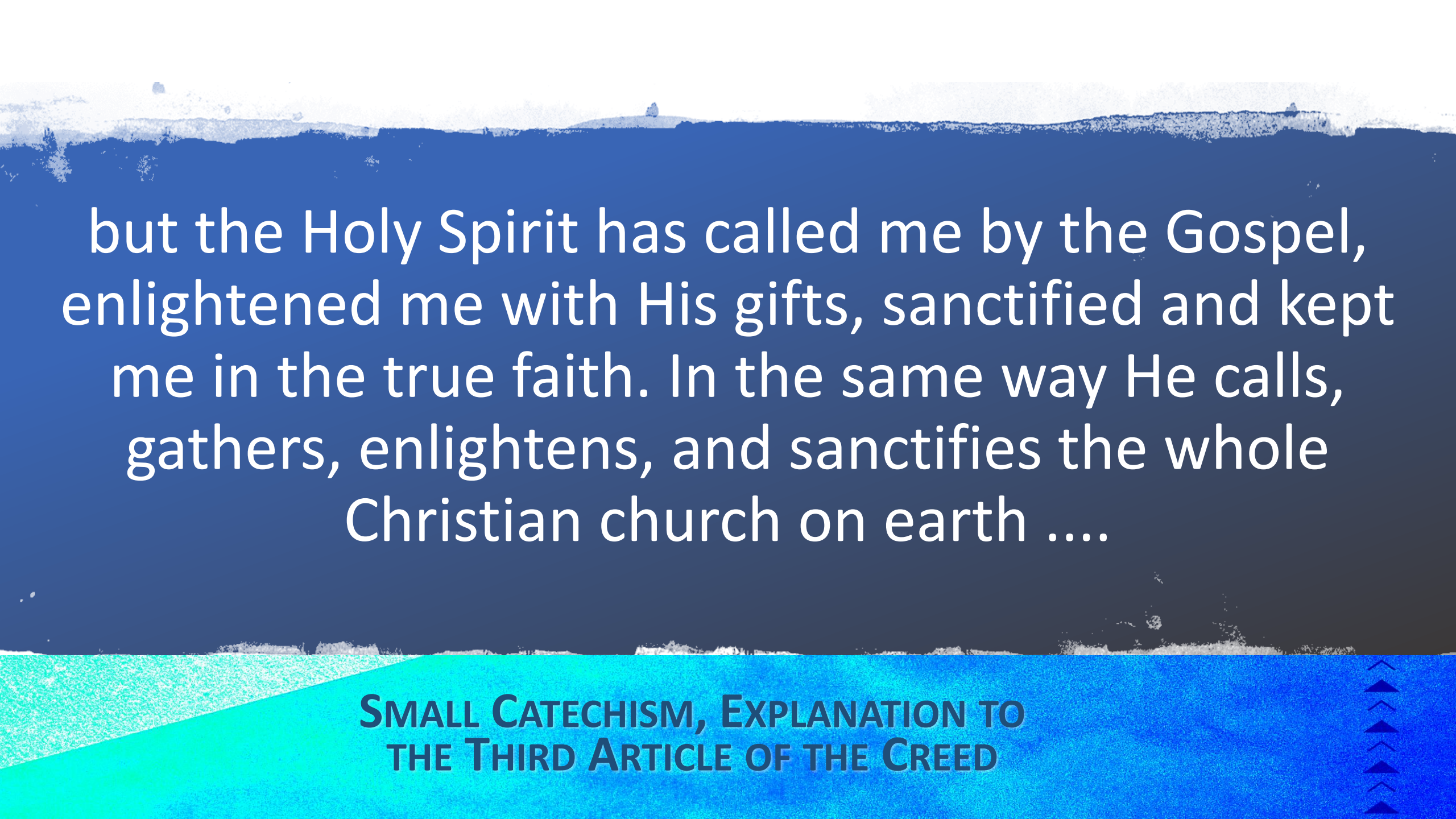


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**EPHESIANS 1:18**





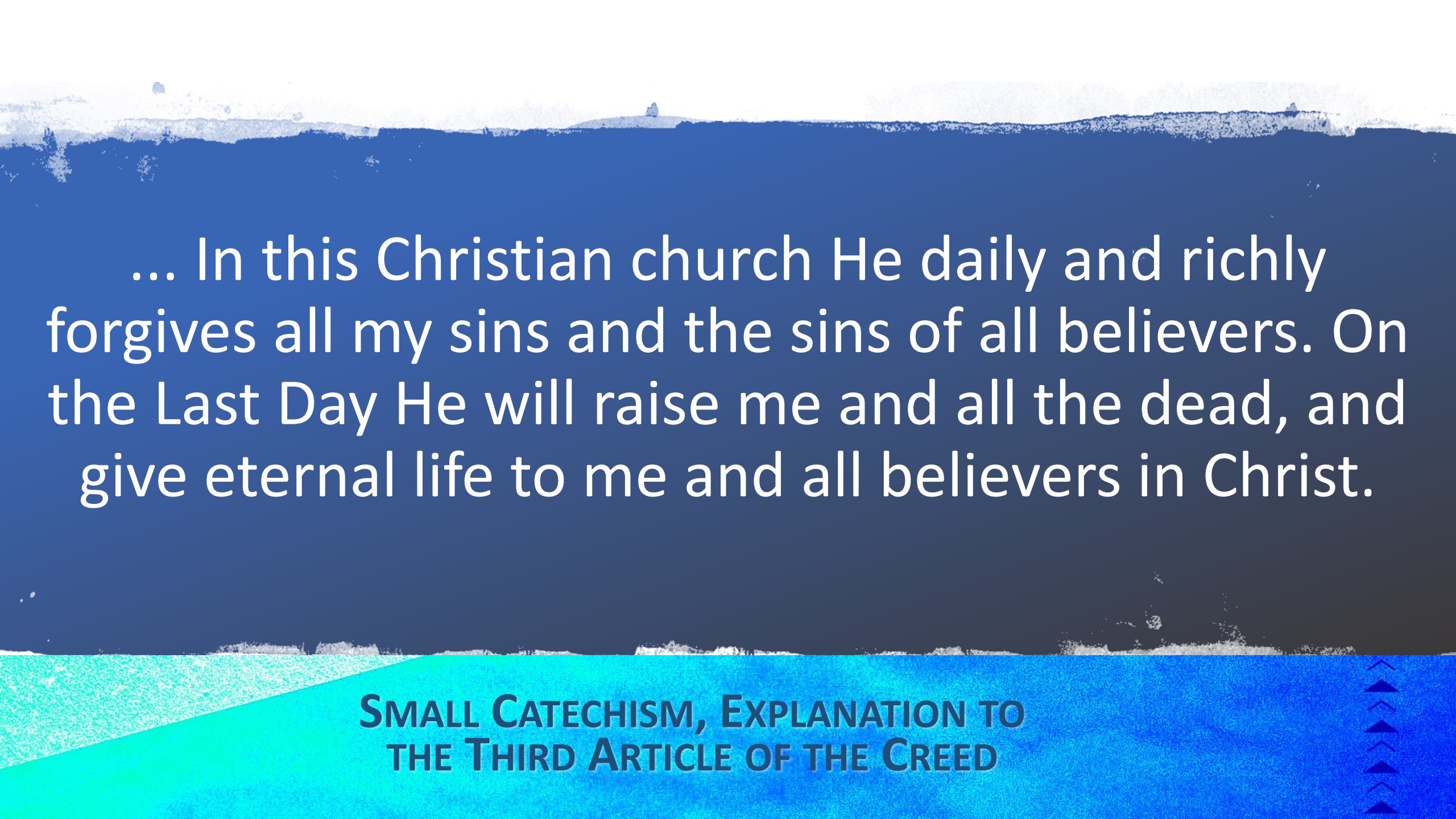


but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel,  
enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept  
me in the true faith. In the same way He calls,  
gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole  
Christian church on earth ....

**SMALL CATECHISM, EXPLANATION TO  
THE THIRD ARTICLE OF THE CREED**







... In this Christian church He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers. On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ.

**SMALL CATECHISM, EXPLANATION TO  
THE THIRD ARTICLE OF THE CREED**





**WHAT'S  
NEXT?**

## **FOUR STEPS TO FLOURISH**

1. Know God.
2. Find freedom.
3. Discover purpose.
4. Make a difference.



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**FOUR STEPS TO FLOURISH**





**WHAT'S  
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## **FOUR STEPS TO FLOURISH**

**1. Know God.**





*“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven ... Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never **knew you.**’ ...”*

**MATTHEW 7:21, 23**



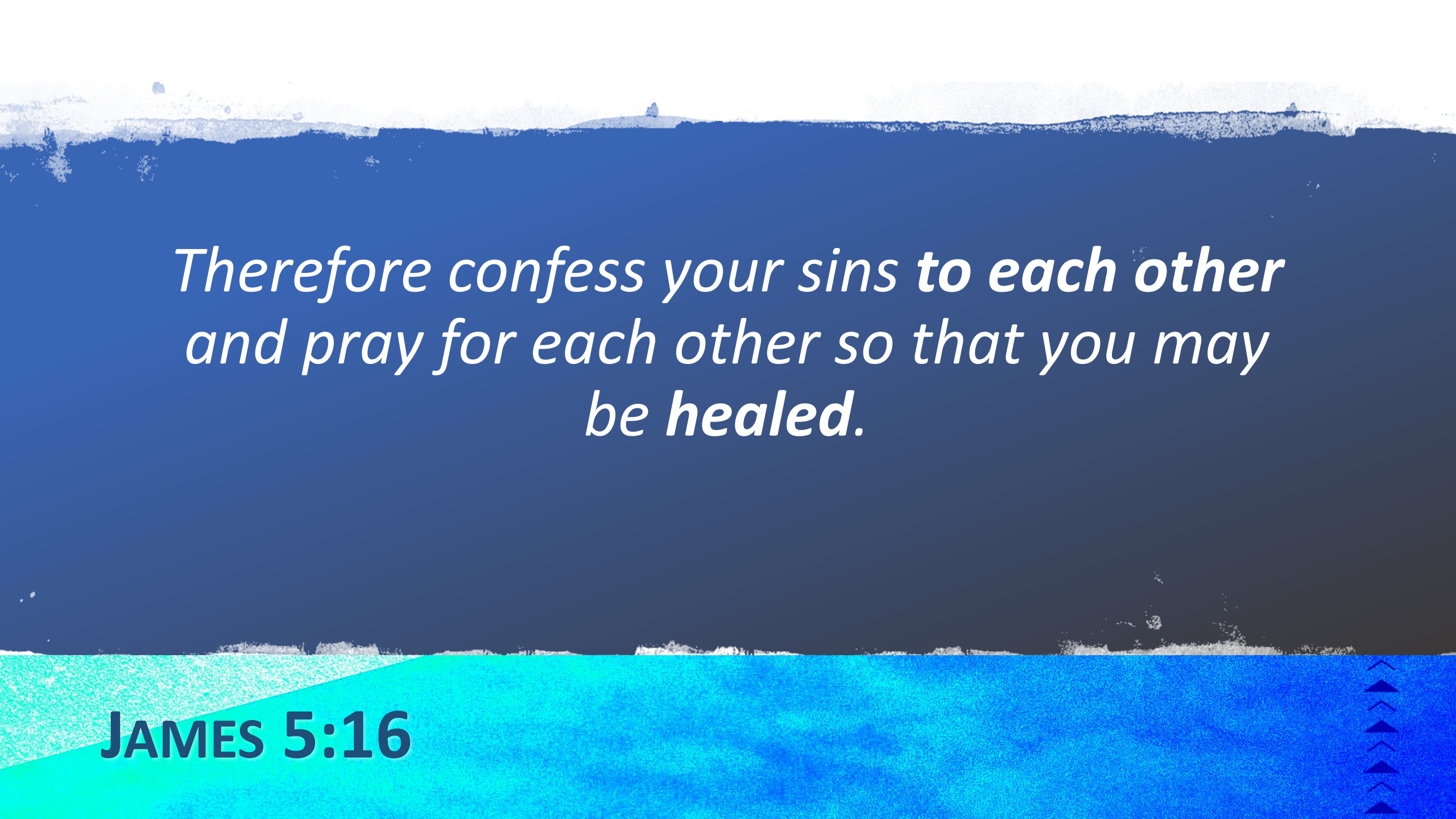


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## **FOUR STEPS TO FLOURISH**

1. Know God.
2. Find freedom.





*Therefore confess your sins **to each other**  
and pray for each other so that you may  
**be healed.***

**JAMES 5:16**





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## **FOUR STEPS TO FLOURISH**

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2. Find freedom.
3. Discover purpose.





*We have different gifts, according to the  
grace given to each of us.*

**ROMANS 12:6**



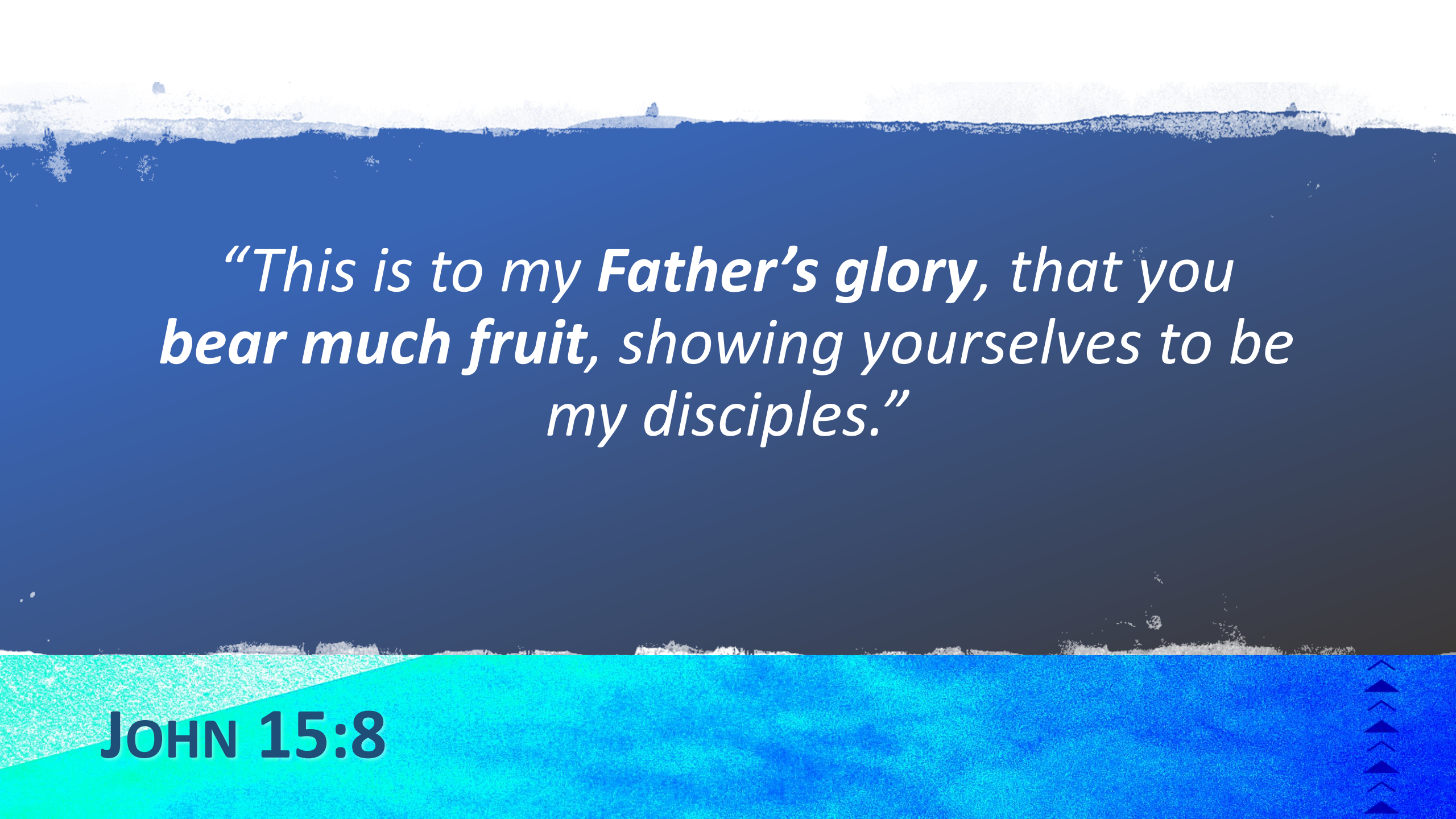


**WHAT'S  
NEXT?**

## **FOUR STEPS TO FLOURISH**

1. Know God.
2. Find freedom.
3. Discover purpose.
4. Make a difference.



The background of the slide is a landscape. The top half features a bright blue sky with a few wispy white clouds. Below the sky is a range of dark blue, silhouetted hills. The bottom half of the image is a vibrant green field, which appears to be a grassy slope. The text is centered in the upper half of the image, over the sky and hills.

*“This is to my Father’s glory, that you  
bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be  
my disciples.”*

**JOHN 15:8**







*“I have told you this so that my joy  
may be in you...”*

**JOHN 15:11**





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<https://www.biblestudytools.com/bible-stories/birth-of-jesus.html>



