

The background of the image is a vast desert landscape. In the foreground, a large sand dune with distinct wind-swept ripples dominates the right side. The dunes extend into the distance under a bright blue sky filled with soft, white clouds. The overall color palette is warm and serene, with various shades of orange, tan, and light blue.

# drawing near


A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE JOURNEY

SIMPLICITY

—

*refrain*






“Simplicity is the  
practice to  
*uncomplicate* and  
*untangle* our lives  
so we can focus on  
what really  
matters.”

— *Adele Calhoun,*  
*Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*





“The practice of  
eliminating  
*internal* and  
*external*  
distractions in  
pursuit of a singular  
focus on God.”

— *She Reads Truth,*  
*Faith In Practice*

“We live with a nagging sense that we never have enough – enough time in the day or money in the bank. We feel torn in multiple directions. Tired of low-grade fatigue. Behind on everything. Beset by constant distraction. We all know the cliché that “the most important things in life aren’t things” is true, and yet time and again we fall for advertising’s ploy. Is there a practice from the way of Jesus that could set our heart free from what Jesus called “the deceitfulness of wealth,” the false promise that money and stuff can give us security and satisfaction? To get free of the endless cycle of desire, and find contentment, margin, and life in the kingdom with Jesus?

Yes. It is the practice of simplicity.”

— *John Mark Comer, Practicing The Way*



# CLUTTER!

1. *Steals* our focus and concentration.
2. *Robs* us of time.
3. Is a *thief* of peace.
4. Can cause *embarrassment* and *isolation*.





“Some see clutter as a failure of home cleaning. Moderate clutter, however, might be the by-product of a high-functioning, well-engaged, highly organized mind. The question to ask isn't whether your clutter disturbs someone else, but whether it functions for you.”

—HowStuffWorks.com



Some of the  
ways Jesus  
practiced

SIMPLICITY

1. Powerful *Storytelling*
2. Prioritizing *Relationships*
3. Profound *Actions*



# Matthew 10:1-15

NIV

These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. As you go, proclaim this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.

“Do not get any gold or silver or copper to take with you in your belts— no bag for the journey or extra shirt or sandals or a staff, for the worker is worth his keep. Whatever town or village you enter, search there for some worthy person and stay at their house until you leave.

# Matthew 6:25-34

NIV

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.



*more passages on*  
**SIMPLICITY**

Luke 12:15

Psalms 116:6

1 Corinthians 14:33

1 Timothy 6:6-7

John 6:35

Matthew 22:37

Ecclesiastes 7:29

Heb 13:5



how do we practice  
**SIMPLICITY**

- Create Space in your Life
- Use Simple, Honest Speech
- Find Contentment
- Recognize Our Identity

JOY

—

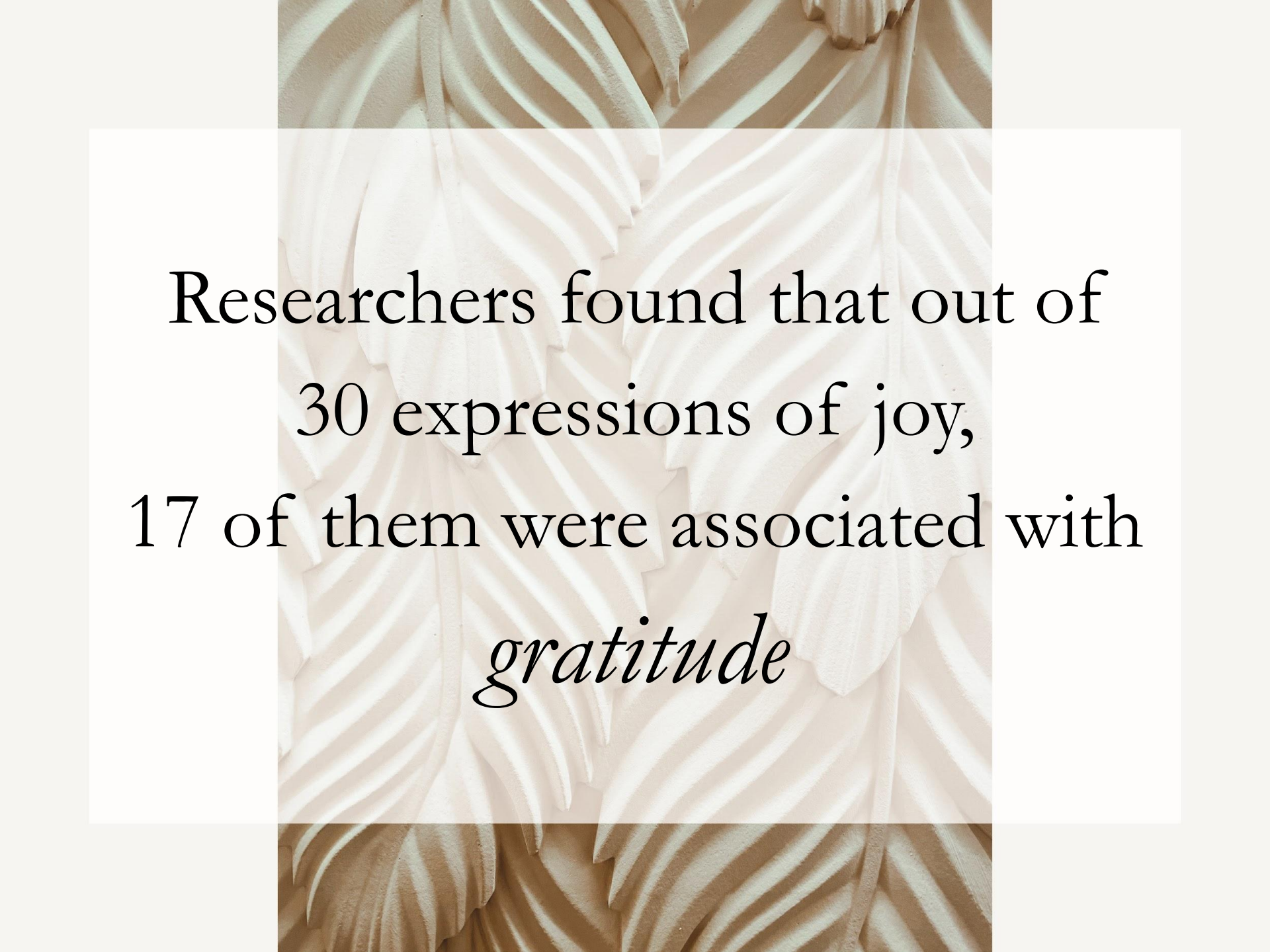
*engage*



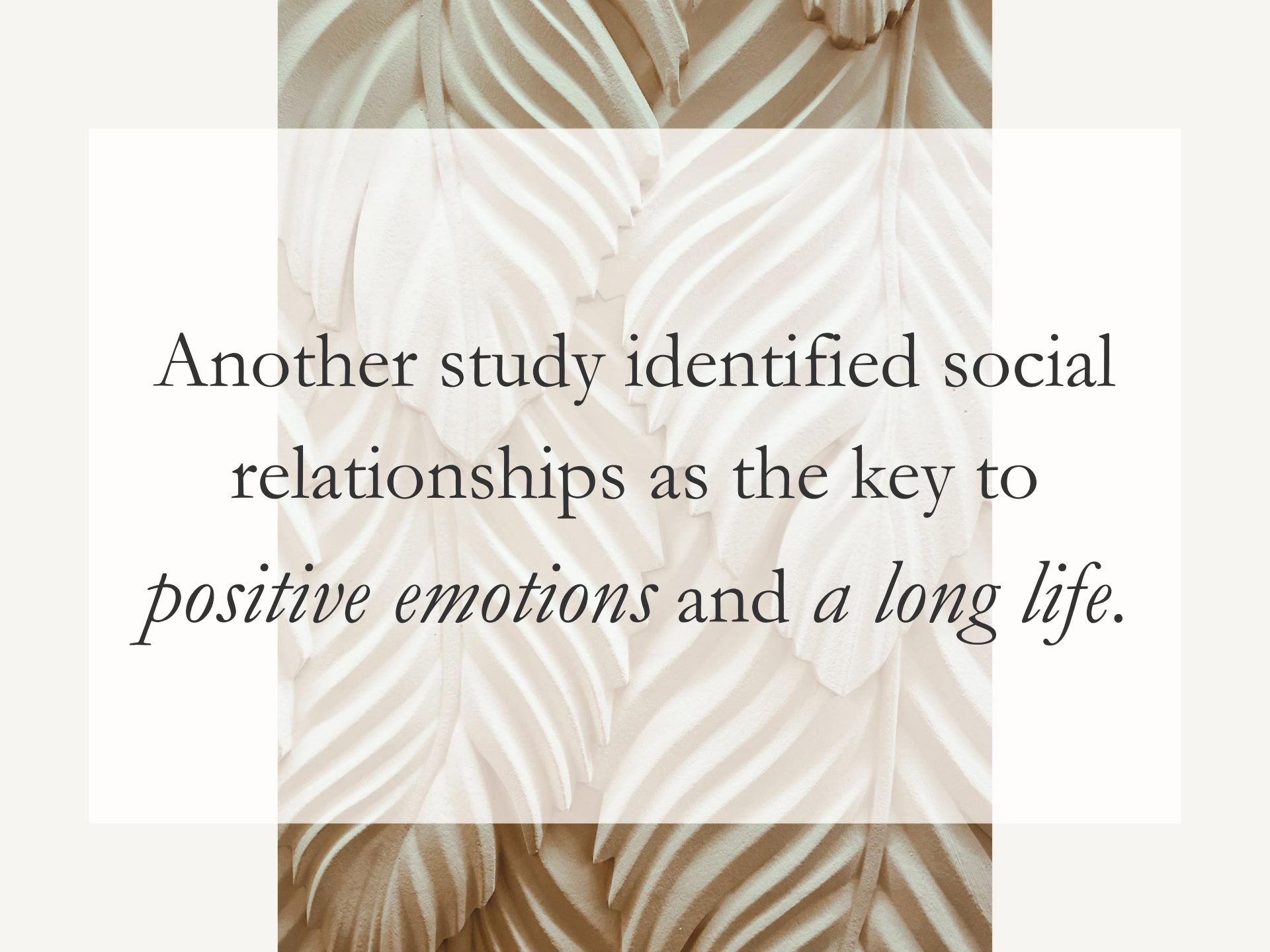


# TENACITY

- Someone who just won't quit
- Determination
- Perseverance
- Willingness to carry on despite danger, difficulty, or obstacles



Researchers found that out of  
30 expressions of joy,  
17 of them were associated with  
*gratitude*

A background image showing a close-up of a person's hands clasped together in a prayer-like gesture. The hands are positioned at the top center, with fingers interlaced. The skin tone is light. The background is a soft, warm, golden-brown color with a subtle, wavy, textured pattern that resembles ripples in water or a soft fabric. A large, semi-transparent white rectangular box is centered over the image, containing the text.

Another study identified social  
relationships as the key to  
*positive emotions and a long life.*





Happy people become  
happier through *kindness*.

“While there are choices we can make that increase the odds of feeling joy, *there is a simple fact that eliminates the idea that joy is a choice.* Joy happens predominantly in the relational right hemisphere of the brain, while choices and cognition happen in the left. One of the reasons this is significant is that the data flow in the brain moves from right to left, not the other way around. Right-brain activity informs left-brain activity, not the reverse... Our point here is that joy is primarily a relational experience that is more like a reflex anchored in the relational part of our brain.”

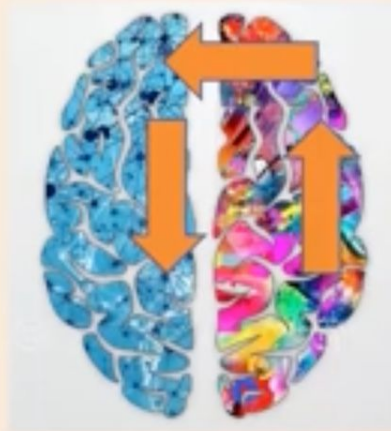
— *The 4 Habits of Joy-Filled People*, Marcus Warner and Chris Coursey

# The Brain Jesus Designed



## Left (Slow Track)

- Conscious thought
- Explanations/words
- Strategies
- Logic
- Stories



## Right (Fast Track)

- Identity, Return to Joy
- Mutual Mind (Attunement)
- Assessment (Good, bad, scary)
- Attachment (What is personal to me)

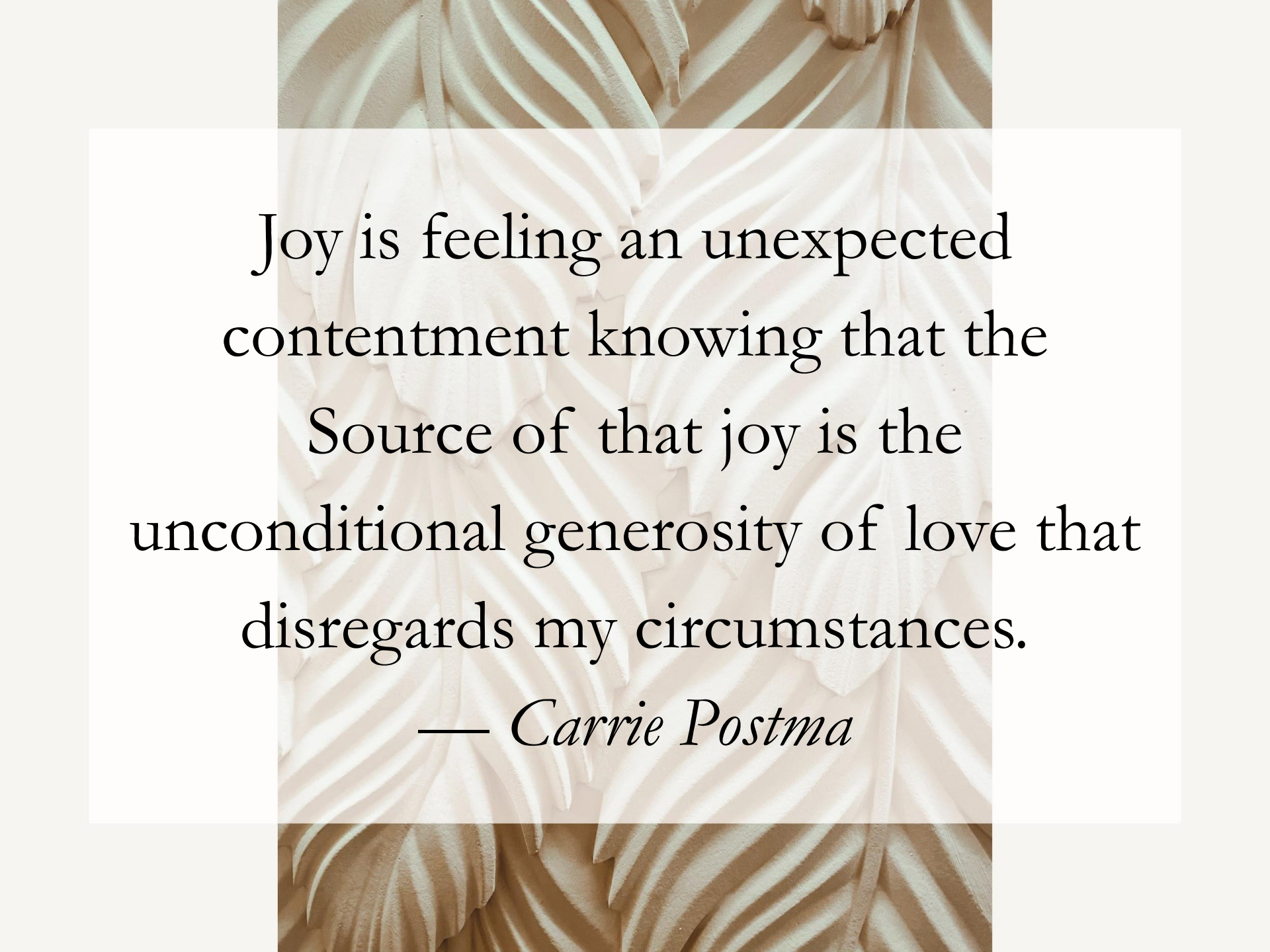




The background of the image features a close-up of white flowers, possibly daisies, with their petals overlapping and creating a textured, layered appearance. The lighting is soft, highlighting the delicate structure of the petals. A large, semi-transparent white rectangular box is centered over the image, serving as a backdrop for the text.

*Chara*

joy and delight, gladness or  
cheerfulness



Joy is feeling an unexpected  
contentment knowing that the  
Source of that joy is the  
unconditional generosity of love that  
disregards my circumstances.

— *Carrie Postma*

# JOY *vs* HAPPINESS

<i>Joy</i>	<i>Happiness</i>
of the soul	of the moment
transcends	reacts
overflows	a hug
profound <i>“Don’t worry, Rejoice!”</i>	comes and goes <i>“Don’t worry, Be happy!”</i>
inner feeling	outward expression



A background image showing a person from the chest down, wearing a white, flowing robe. Their hands are clasped together in front of them. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the fabric.

## Galatians 5:22–23 ESV

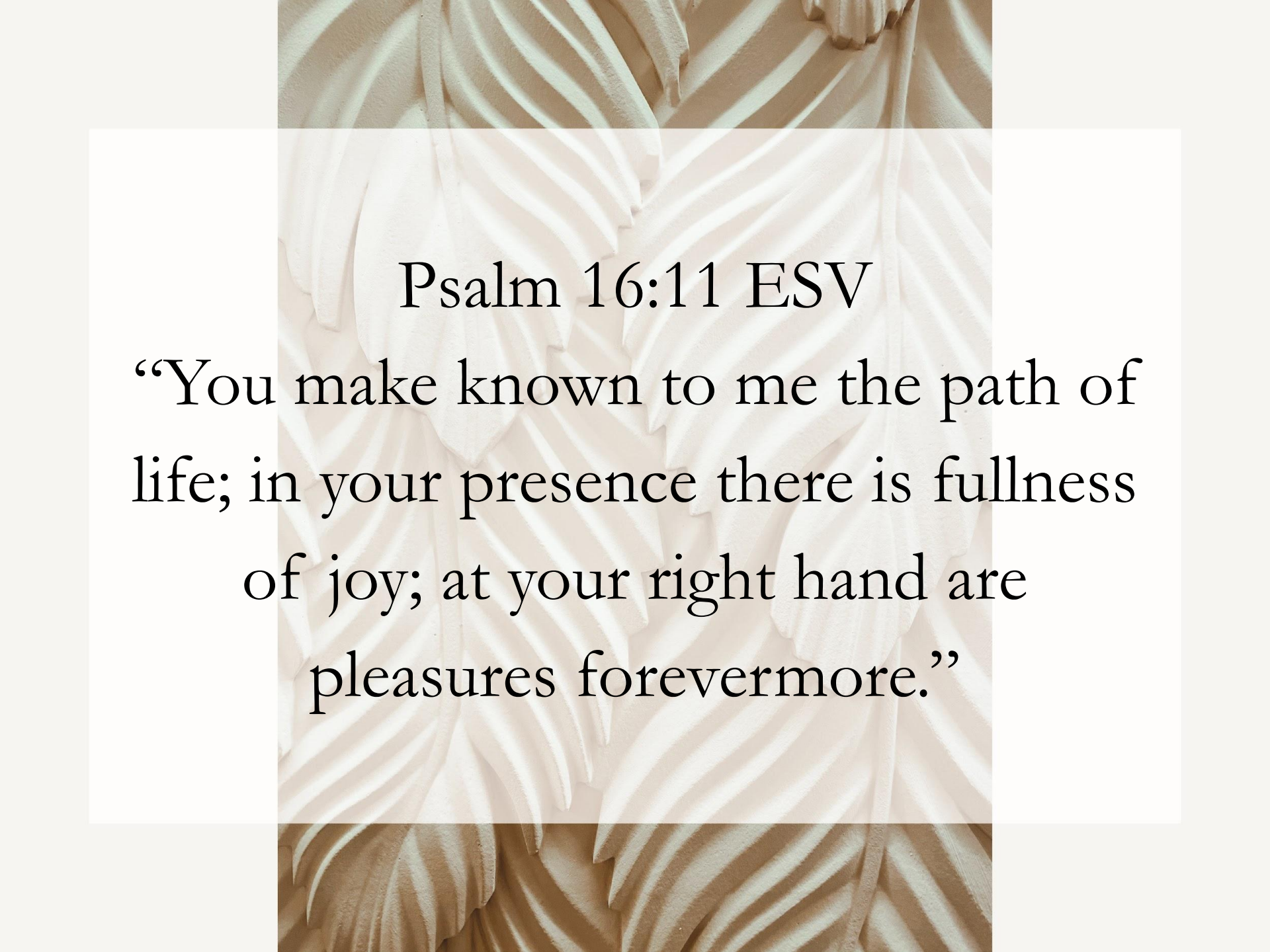
“But the fruit of the Spirit is love,  
joy, peace, patience, kindness,  
goodness, faithfulness, gentleness,  
self-control; against such things there  
is no law.”



Psalm 30:11 NIV

“You turned my wailing into  
dancing; you removed my sackcloth  
and clothed me with joy.”

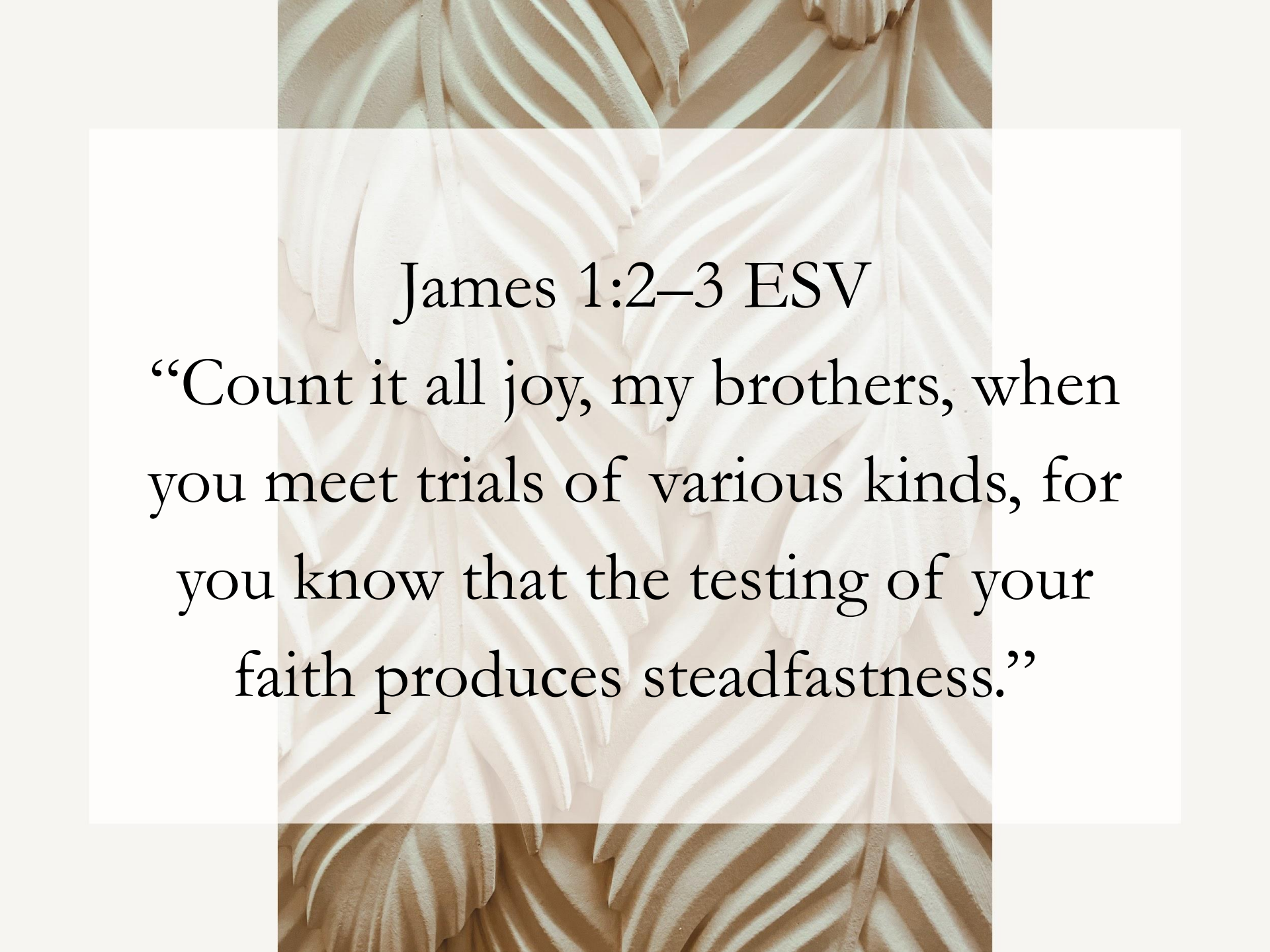




Psalm 16:11 ESV

“You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”





James 1:2–3 ESV

“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.”



John 16:19-24 ESV

“Until now you have asked nothing  
in my name. Ask, and you will  
receive, that your joy may be full.”



FUN FACTS!

“Joy”, “Joyful”, or “Rejoice”

430 times

“Happy” or “Happiness”

10 times

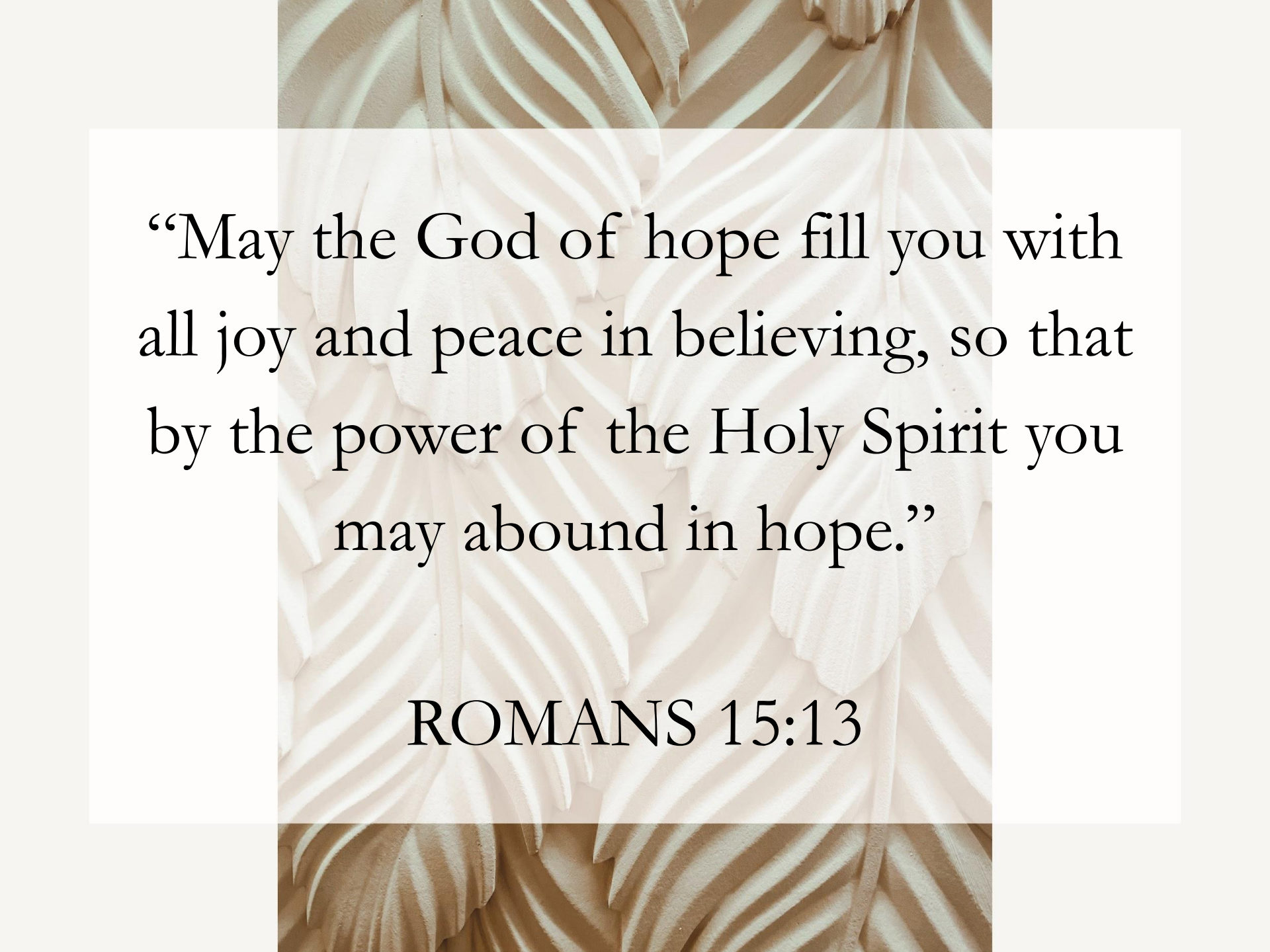
*(English Standard Version)*





*practicing* JOY

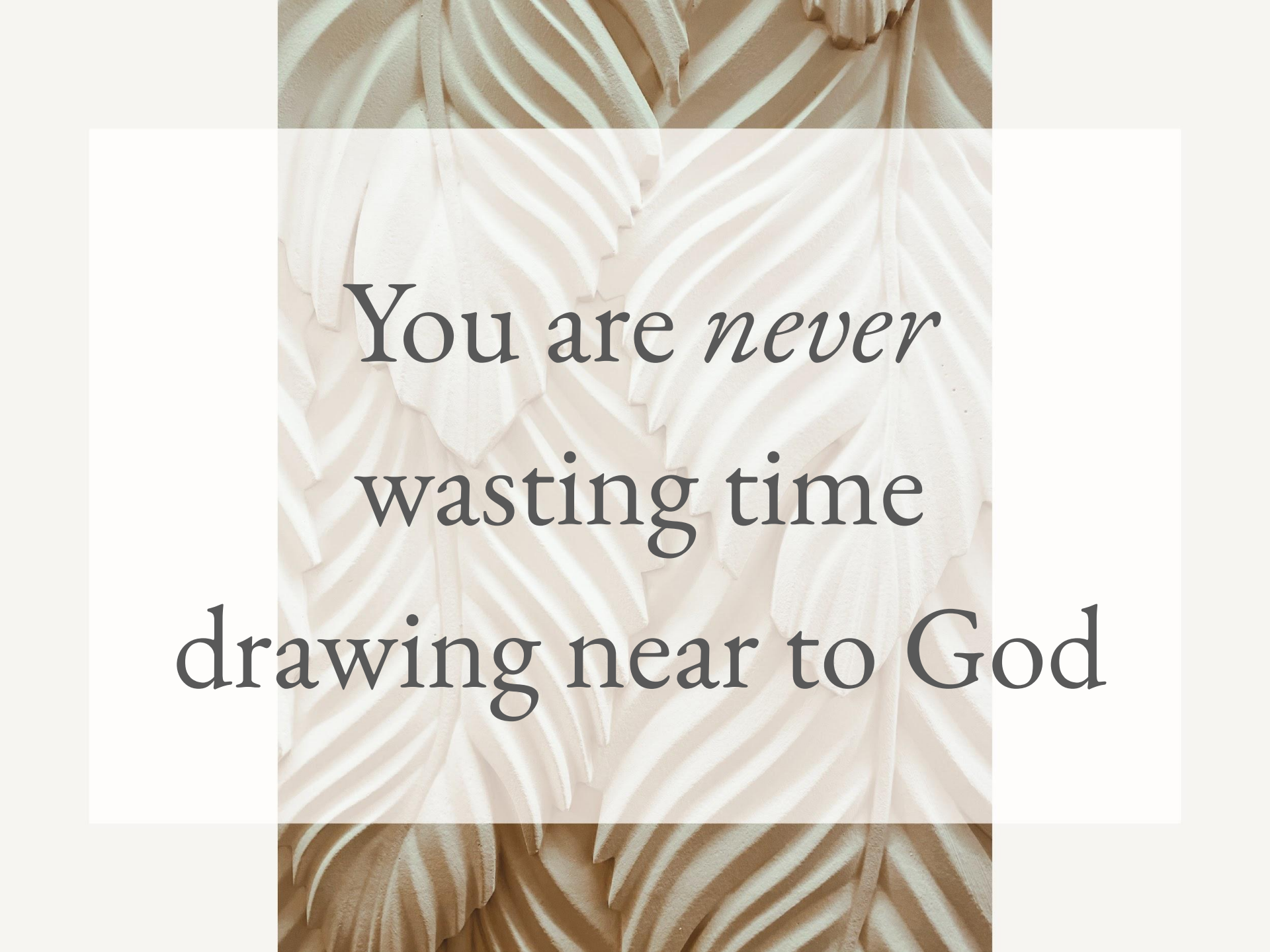
1. Spend 5 minutes a day focused on JOY.
2. Gratitude  
Exercise:
  - a. Jar
  - b. List



“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.”

ROMANS 15:13





You are *never*  
wasting time  
drawing near to God