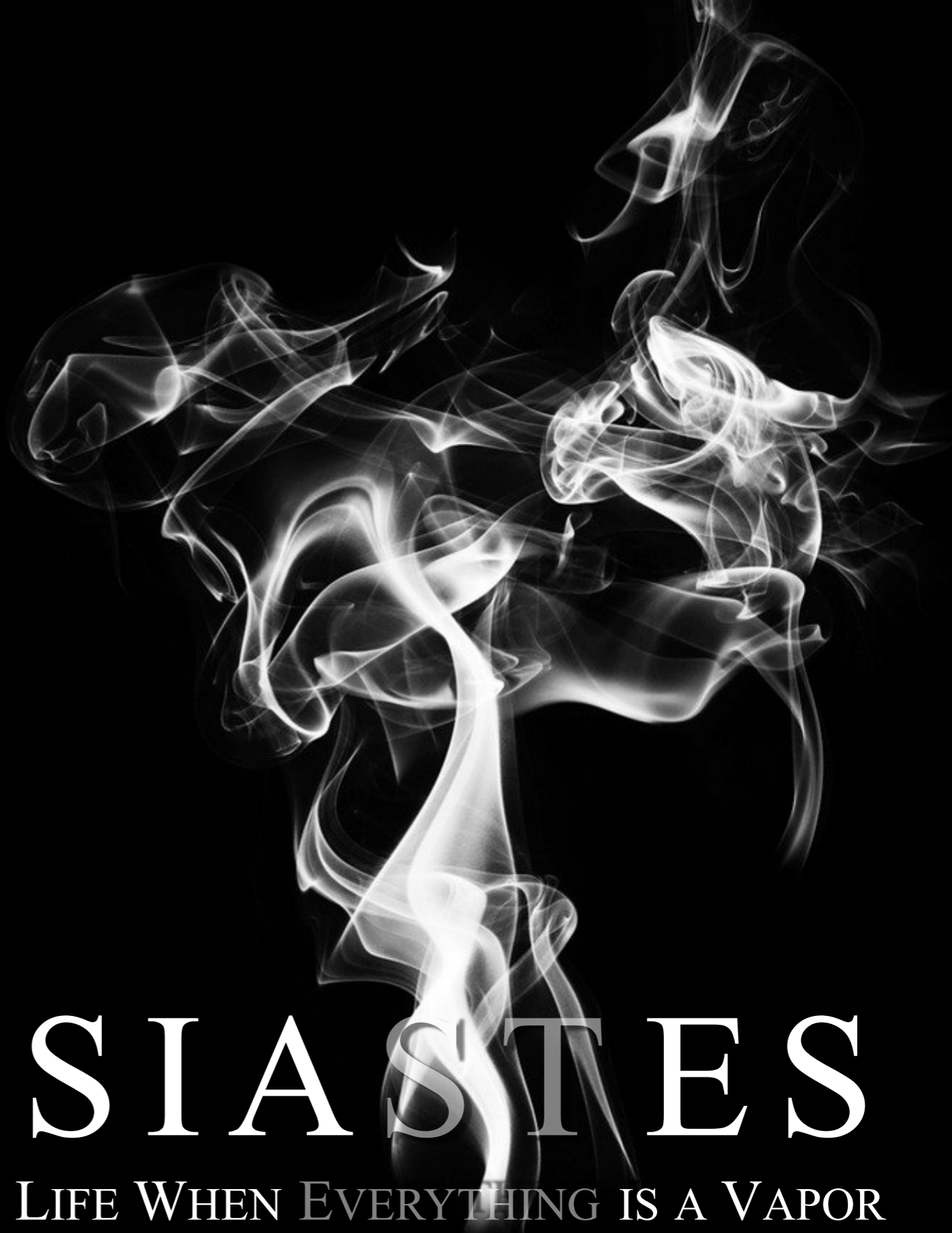




The More
Things Change

ECCLESIASTES 4:1-16



ECCLESIASTES

EXPLORING THE MEANING OF LIFE WHEN EVERYTHING IS A VAPOR

Michelle Obama



**These are not, they
are not fulfilling
times, spiritually.
I know that I am
dealing with some
form of low-grade
depression.**



**I'm waking up in
the middle of the
night because I'm
worrying about
something or
there's a heaviness.**



**The idea that what
this country is going
through shouldn't
have an effect on us—
that we all should just
feel OK all the time—
that just doesn't feel
real to me.**



“

normal.

”

The More Things Change

ECCLESIASTES 4:1-16



Ecclesiastes 4:1-16

1 Again I saw all the **oppressions** that are done under the sun. And behold, the tears of the **oppressed**, and they had no one to comfort them! On the side of their **oppressors** was power, and there was no one to comfort them.

the tears
of the oppressed

**ON THE SIDE OF THE
OPPRESSORS WAS POWER**

there was no one
to comfort them

EXODUS CRY

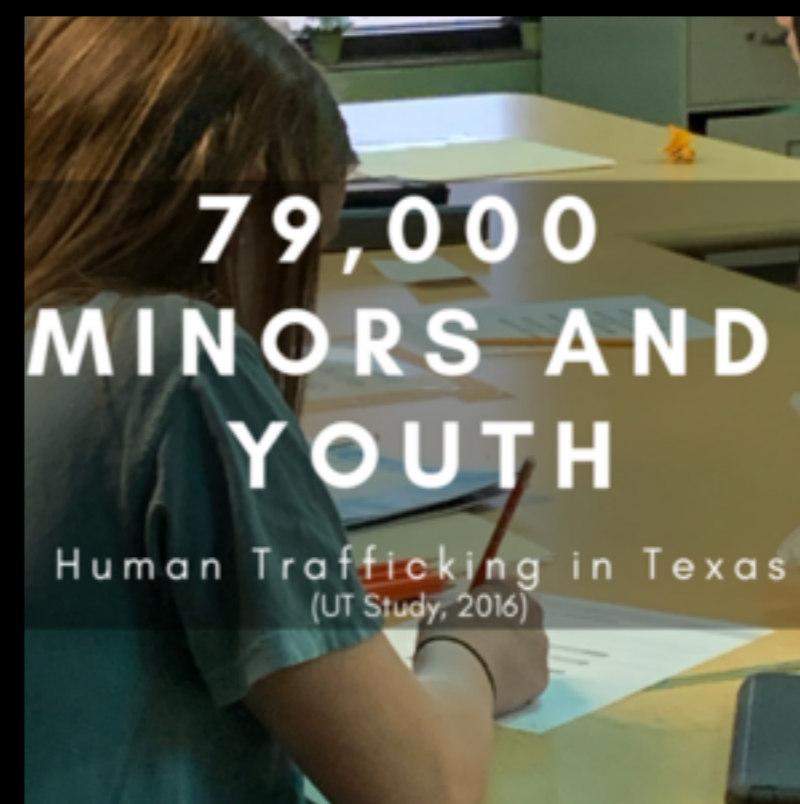
WE FIGHT BECAUSE WE BELIEVE THAT

Every person should be free

**40+ MILLION
IN PROSTITUTION**



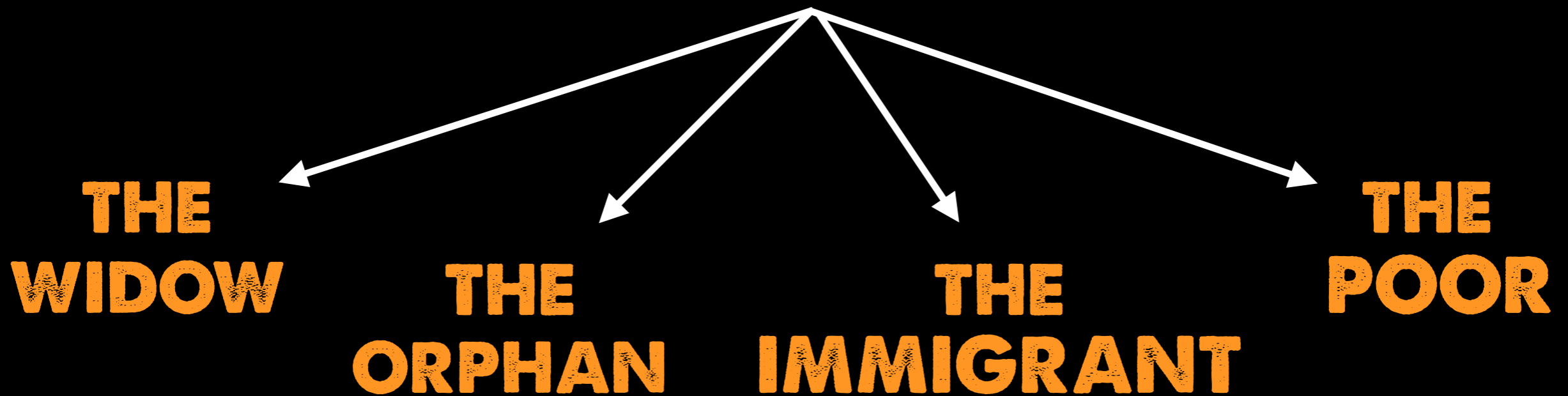
An estimated **40+ million are trapped in prostitution** — **98% are women and girls.**



Source: UnboundBCS.org

“ ”

THE QUARTET OF THE VULNERABLE

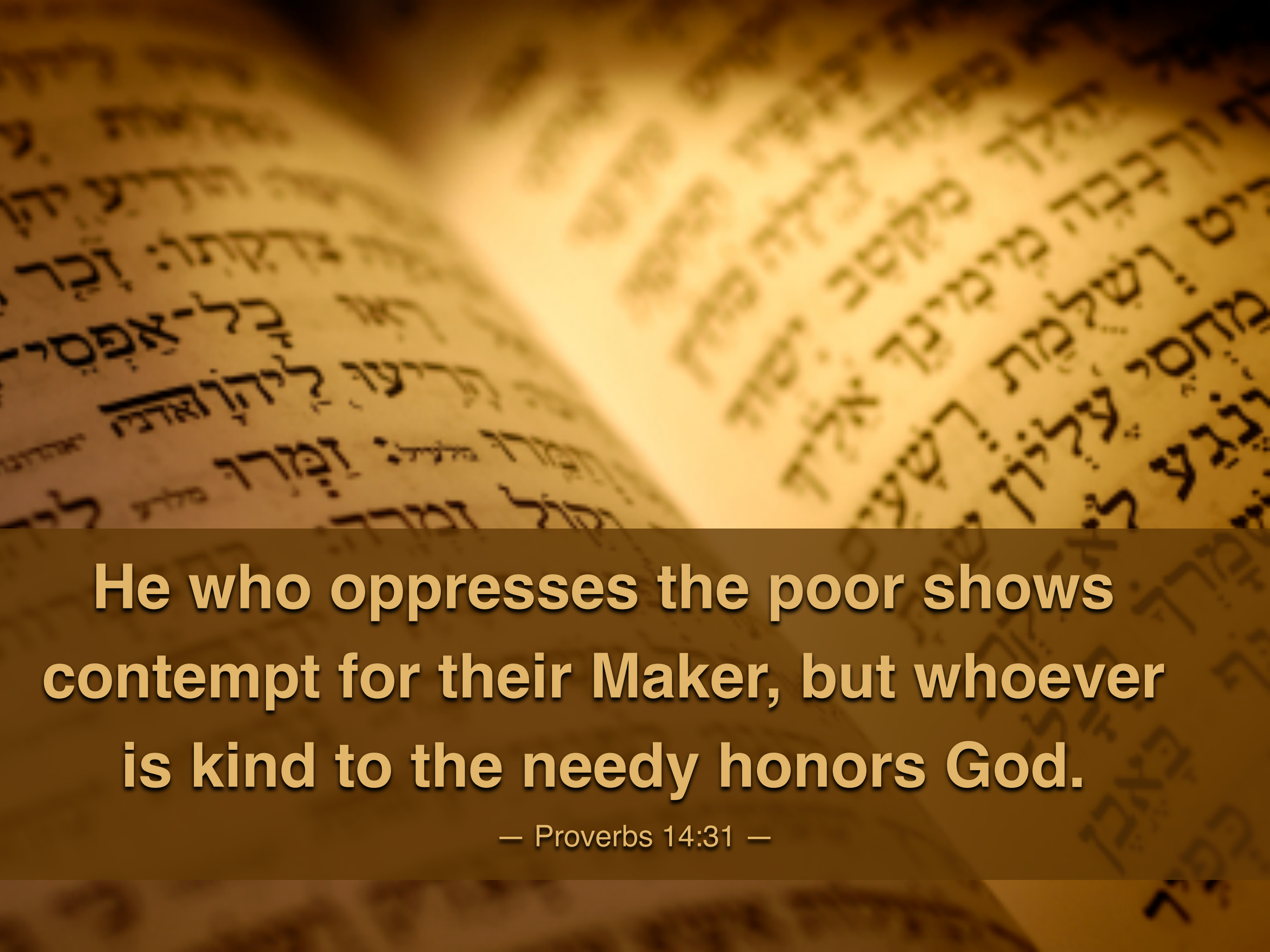


Dr. Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Justice: Rights and Wrongs*



**Do not oppress the widow,
the fatherless, the sojourner,
or the poor.**

— Zechariah 7:10 —



**He who oppresses the poor shows
contempt for their Maker, but whoever
is kind to the needy honors God.**

— Proverbs 14:31 —

the tears
of the oppressed

**ON THE SIDE OF THE
OPPRESSORS WAS POWER**

there was no one
to comfort them

Ecclesiastes 4:1-16

2 And I thought...

Ecclesiastes 4:1-16

2 And I thought the dead who are already dead more fortunate than the living who are still alive. 3 But better than both is he who has not yet been born and has not seen the evil deeds that are done under the sun.

**OPPRESSION AND THE ABUSE
OF POWER ARE "NORMAL,"
BUT THAT'S NOT THE WAY
IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE.**

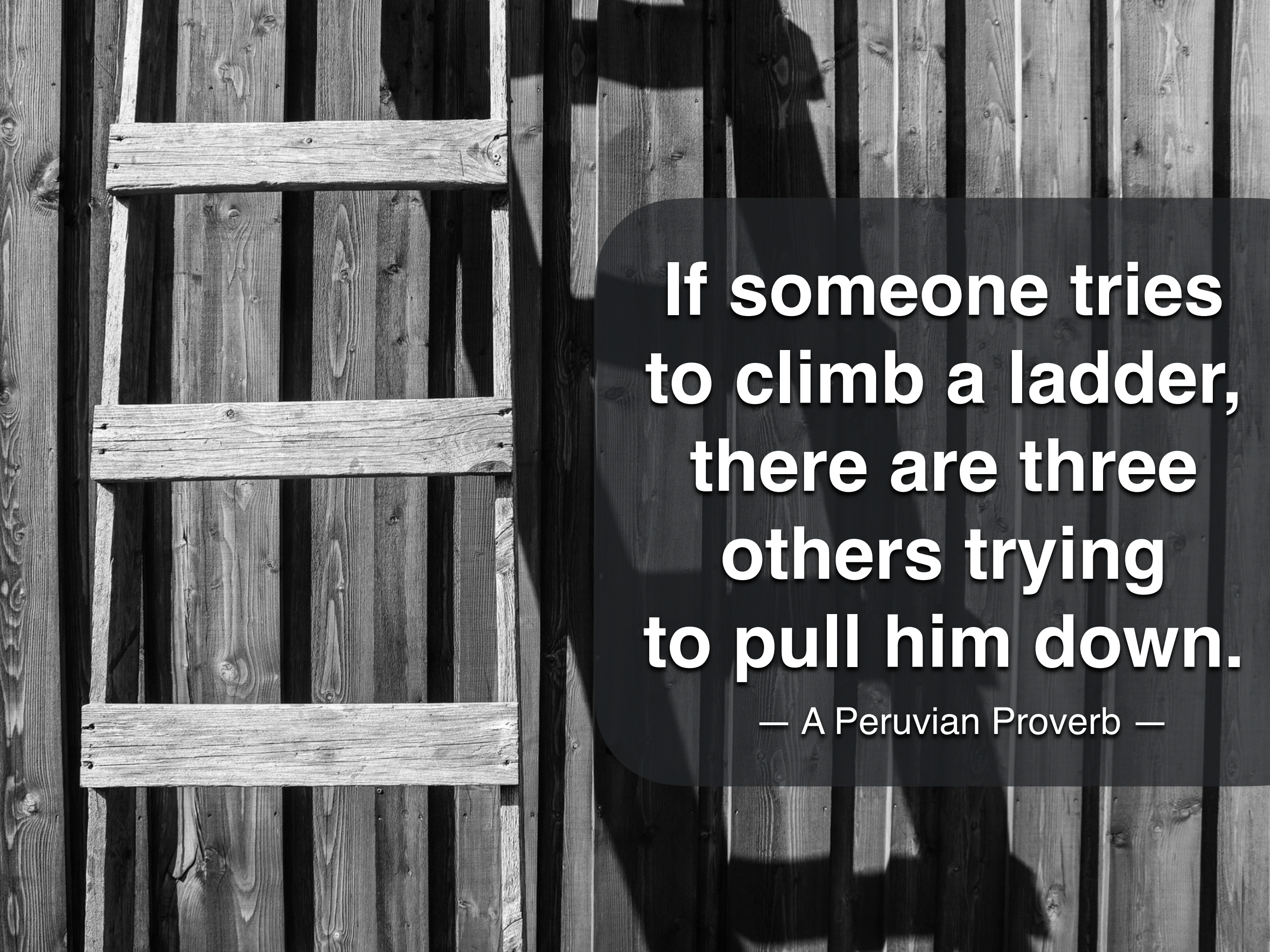
Ecclesiastes 4:1-16

4 Then I saw that all toil and all skill in work come from a man's envy of his neighbor. This also is vanity and a striving after the wind.

ENVY

It is the suspicion or realization that others are gaining more from life that we are that leads us to compete with them in the insane rat race, striving to outdo them.

— Ian Provan —



**If someone tries
to climb a ladder,
there are three
others trying
to pull him down.**

— A Peruvian Proverb —

Ecclesiastes 4:1-16

4 Then I saw that all toil and all skill in work come from a man's envy of his neighbor. This also is vanity and a striving after the wind.

Ecclesiastes 4:1-16

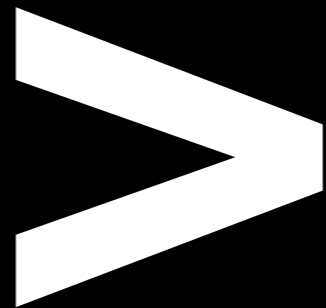
4 Then I saw that all toil and all skill in work come from a man's envy of his neighbor. This also is vanity and a striving after the wind. 5 The fool folds his hands and eats his own flesh.

**ENVY AND LAZINESS ARE BOTH
SELF-CENTERED AND "NORMAL,"
BUT THAT'S NOT THE WAY
IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE.**

Ecclesiastes 4:1-16

6 Better is a handful of quietness than two handfuls of toil and a striving after wind.

One handful of quietness



**Two handfuls of toil &
striving after the wind**



**A heart at peace gives
life to the body, but
envy rots the bones.**

— Proverbs 14:30 —

7 Again, I saw vanity under the sun:
8 one person who has no other, either
son or brother, yes there is no end to
all his toil, and his eyes are never satis-
fied with riches, so that he never asks,
“For whom am I toiling and depriving
myself of pleasure?” This also is vanity
and an unhappy business.

If there was a way that I could not eat, so I could work more, I would not eat. I wish there was a way to get nutrients without sitting down for a meal.

Elon Musk
SpaceX & Tesla



Psychology Today

“Workaholism is a soul-destroying addiction that changes people’s personality and the values they live by.”

— Dr Barbara Killenger —

9 Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil
10 For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up...!

Ecclesiastes 4:1-16

11 Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? 12 And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

Ecclesiastes 4:1-16

11 Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? 12 And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

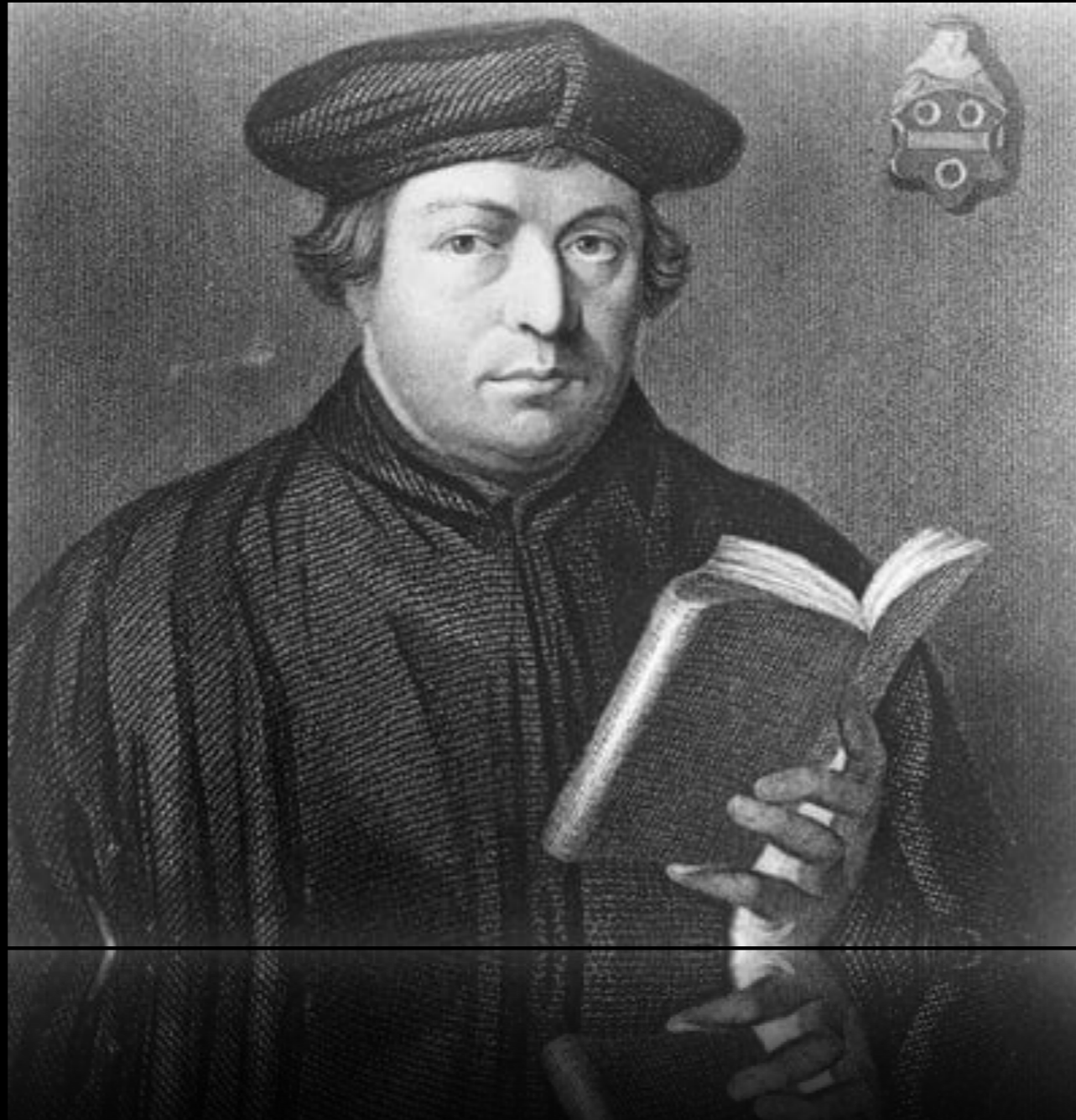
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l o n e l i n e s s

**LONELINESS IS "NORMAL,"
BUT THAT'S NOT THE WAY
IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE.**

Ecclesiastes 4:1-16

13 Better was a poor and wise youth than an old and foolish king who no longer knew how to take advice.



**I would rather be ruled by a just Turk
than by an unjust Christian.**

— The Reformer Martin Luther —

Ecclesiastes 4:1-16

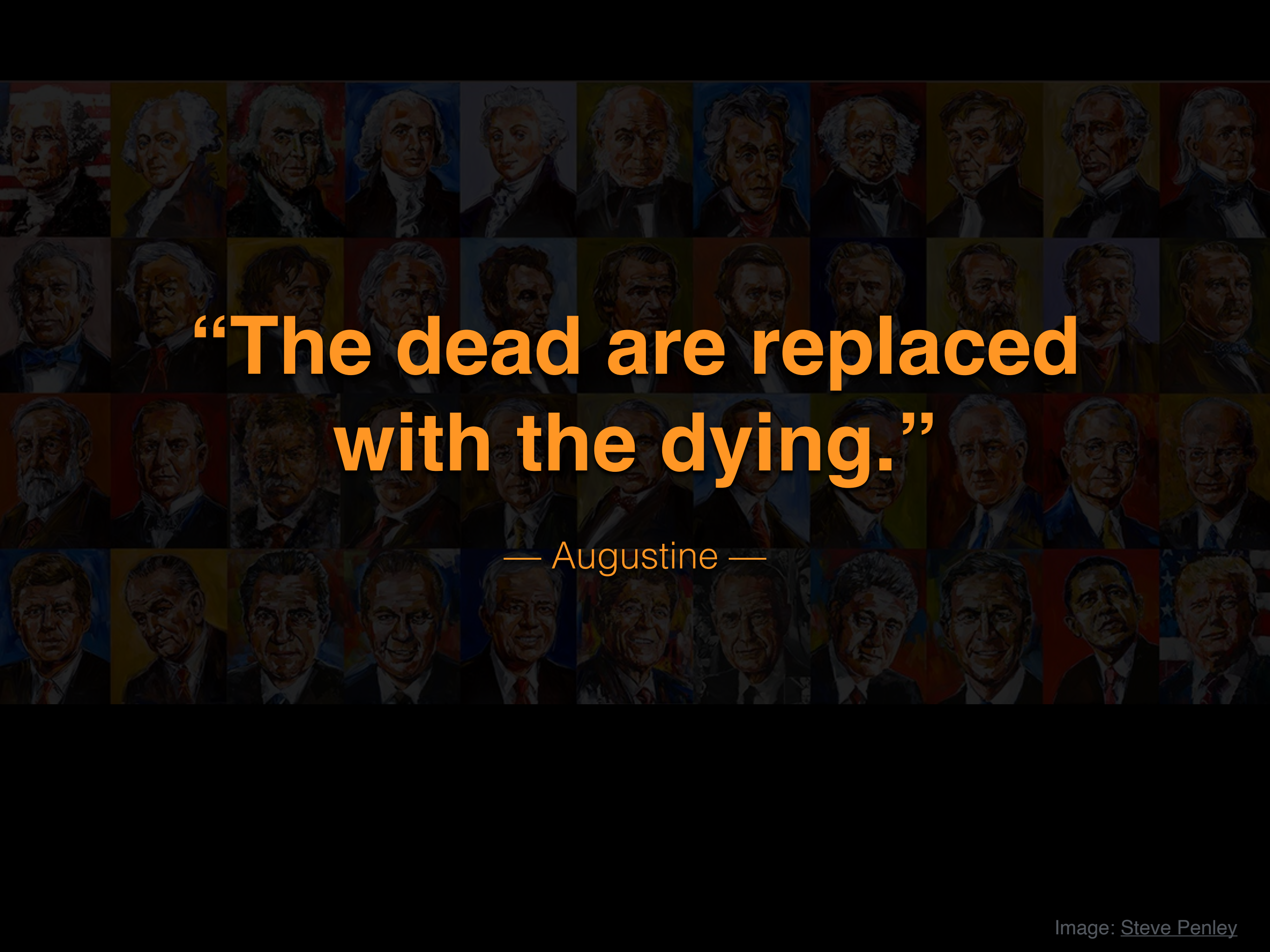
14 For he [i.e., the poor and wise youth] went from prison to the throne, though in his own kingdom he had been poor.

Ecclesiastes 4:1-16

15 I saw all the living who move under the sun, along with that youth who was to stand in the king's place. 16 There was no end of all people, all of whom he led. Yet those who come later will not rejoice in him. Surely this also is **vanity and a striving after the wind.**




Image: [Steve Penley](#)



**“The dead are replaced
with the dying.”**

— Augustine —

**“NORMAL” POLITICS IS BOTH
FLEETING AND WEARYING,
BUT IT’S NOT THE WAY
IT’S SUPPOSED TO BE.**

The background of the image is a close-up, slightly blurred view of the American flag, showing the stars and stripes in a wavy pattern. The text is overlaid on this background.

**One day America and all
its presidents will be
a footnote in history,
but God's kingdom
will never end.**

—John Piper —

**One day America and all
its presidents will be
a footnote in history,
but God's kingdom
will never end.**

—John Piper —

Vanity of vanities.
Everything is vanity.
There is nothing
new under the sun.



Don't you hunger
and thirst for a
“new normal?”







**O holy night the stars are brightly shining
It is the night of our dear Savior's birth
Long lay the world in sin and error pining
'Til He appeared and the soul felt its worth**



**A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices
For yonder breaks, a new and glorious morn
Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices
O night divine, O night when Christ was born**



**Led by the light of faith serenely beaming
with glowing hearts by His cradle we stand
Led by the light of a star sweetly gleaming
Here come the wise men from Orient land**



**The King of king lay thus in lowly manger
In all our trials born to be our Friend
He knows our need, to our weaknesses
no stranger**



**Behold your King! Before Him lowly bend!
Behold your King! Before Him lowly bend!**



**Truly He taught us to love one another
His law is love and His gospel is peace
Chains shall He break for the slave
is our brother**



**And in His Name, all oppression shall cease
Sweet hymns of joy
in grateful chorus raise we
Let all within us praise His holy Name!**



Christ is the Lord!

O praise His Name forever!

His power and glory evermore proclaim!

His power and glory evermore proclaim!



The Way Things Are
Under “Normally” the Sun

**The Difference Christ
Makes in our Lives**

Where there is injustice...

...we pursue justice



The Way Things Are
Under “Normally” the Sun

**The Difference Christ
Makes in our Lives**

Where there is injustice...

...we pursue justice

Where there is oppression...

...we bring comfort



The Way Things Are
Under “Normally” the Sun

**The Difference Christ
Makes in our Lives**

Where there is injustice...

...we pursue justice

Where there is oppression...

...we bring comfort

Where people are motivated
by envy & love of riches...

**...we work out of
love for others
and the glory of God**

The Way Things Are
Under “Normally” the Sun

**The Difference Christ
Makes in our Lives**

Where there is injustice...

...we pursue justice

Where there is oppression...

...we bring comfort

Where people are motivated
by envy & love of riches...

**...we work out of
love for others
and the glory of God**

Where there is loneliness...

...we bring friendship

The Way Things Are
Under “Normally” the Sun

**The Difference Christ
Makes in our Lives**

Where there is injustice...

...we pursue justice

Where there is oppression...

...we bring comfort

Where people are motivated
by envy & love of riches...

**...we work out of
love for others
and the glory of God**

Where there is loneliness...

...we bring friendship

Where there are
temporary kingdoms...

**...we seek first Christ
and His Kingdom**

**THE DAY IS COMING WHEN WHAT
IS "NORMAL" UNDER THE SUN
WILL GIVE WAY TO THE "NEW
NORMAL" OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM**
