

[God Values Propriety](#)

Exodus 20:4–7

Wayne Braudrick

October 18, 2026

[Life Change: We worship God alone](#)

Idolatry up close & personal...

What is idolatry?

4–5

Johannes Vermeer, *Woman Holding a Balance*, 1664; US National Gallery



What is an idol?

4–5

What is divine jealousy?

5, 7

On the other hand, there is a promise of mercy to thousands in [Exodus 20:5]—a promise which is frequently mentioned in Scripture...When, in any single instance, he visits the iniquity of the father on the son, he gives intimation of the judgment which awaits all the reprobate for their own iniquities. Yet the Lord graciously commends the riches of his mercy by extending it to thousands, while he limits his vengeance to four generations. – John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*

What is *hesed*?

6



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A STUDY OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

DECALOGUE





courtesy mystic post - appropriately



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courtesy istock

20:4 Do not make an idol for yourself, whether in the shape of anything in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters under the earth. 5 Do not bow in worship to them, and do not serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, bringing the consequences of the fathers' iniquity on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate me, 6 but showing faithful love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commands. 7 Do not misuse the name of the Lord your God, because the Lord will not leave anyone unpunished who misuses his name.

Idolatry is improper valuation.

Exodus 20: ⁴ Do not make an idol for yourself, whether in the shape of anything in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters under the earth. ⁵ Do not bow in worship to them, and do not serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God

If God doesn't protect His worship, He is contributing to a lie. YHWH is not merely a person, part of creation. It is inappropriate to worship any created thing, just as it is improper to not worship God. Idolatry is improper valuation.



Woman Holding a Balance
Johannes Vermeer
1664



⁴ Do not make an idol for yourself, whether in the shape of anything in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters under the earth. ⁵ Do not bow in worship to them, and do not serve them

Exodus 20 CSB

The Apostle Paul describes idolatry as an exchange. Instead of giving glory to God, it's exchanged for the glory of images of created things. To do this, the worshiper has “exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.” (Rom. 1:25). – Erik Raymond, “What is Idolatry?”

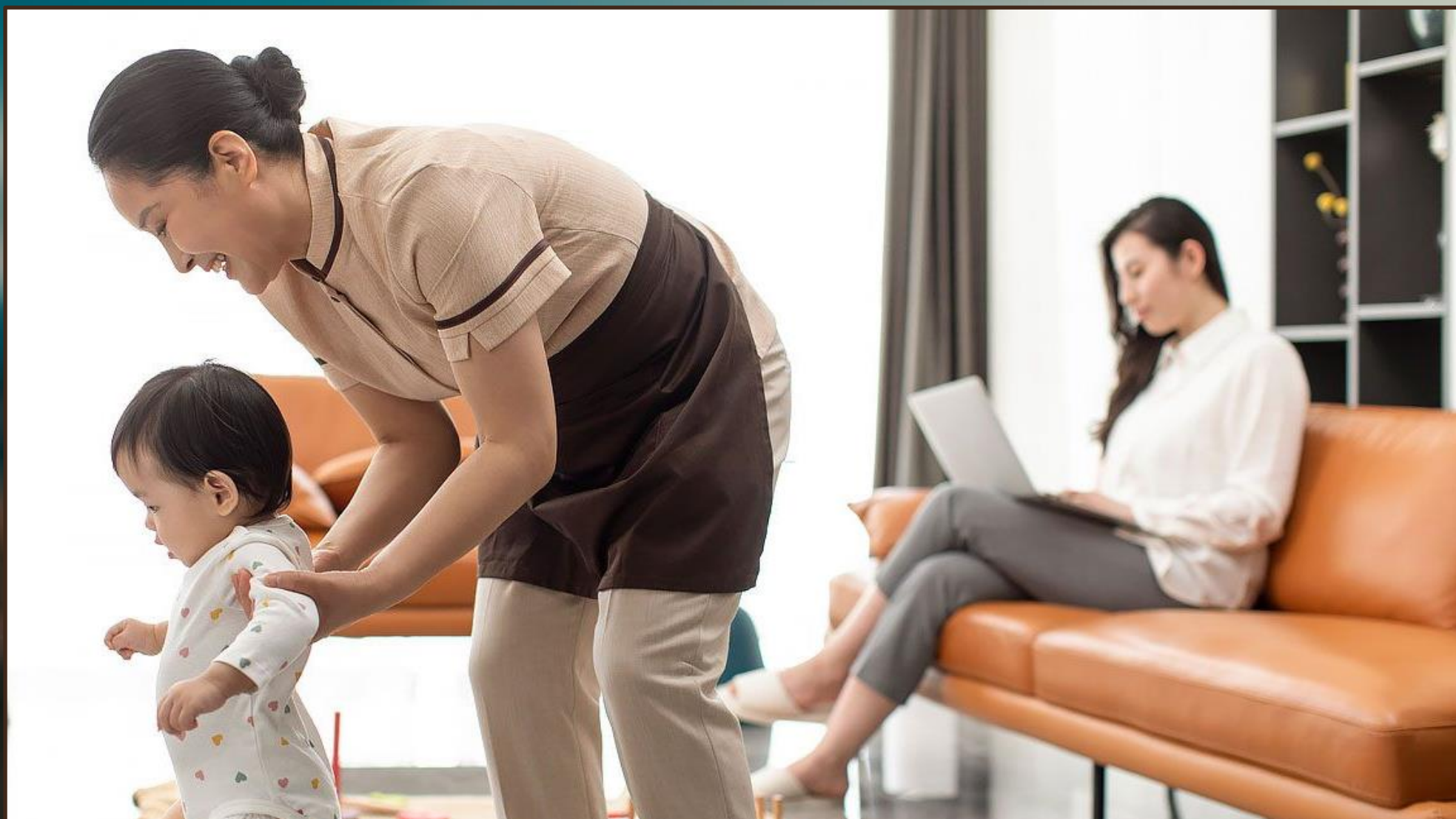


What is an idol?

An idol is something humans make, worship, or serve that is not the Triune God.

Popular examples today include:

- **Money and related items like success, power, fame**
- **Sex**
- **Technology**
- **Creation**
- **Victimization & revenge**
- **Warped love for spouse, children, parents, teams, church, or country**
- **Self**



courtesy bluejeanimages

Popular examples today include:

- **Money and related items like success, power, fame**
 - **continually on the phone, loudly giving directions to various subordinates whom she seemed to treat officiously.**
 - **only Nanny cared for the two children.**
 - **never looked at the children or Nanny, except once to frown when the son tried to show her his cool truck.**
 - **wore very expensive and showy clothes.**
 - **loudly said into her phone, “Oh I am enjoying a great family lunch out.”**
 - **let us all know, “I have power in every nation of western Europe.”**

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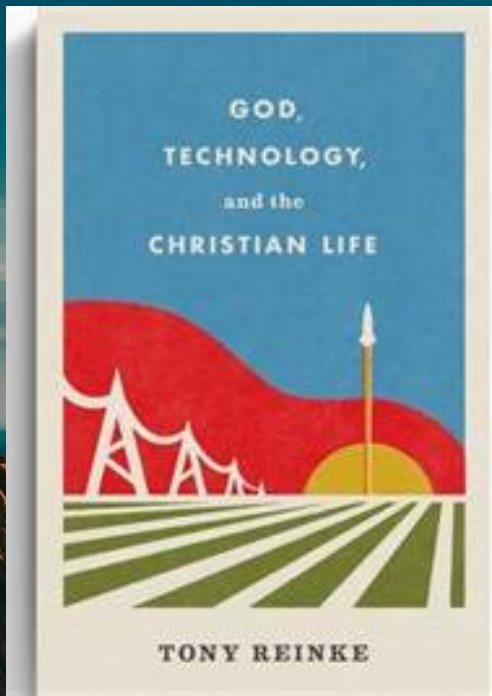
When misused as an idol, sex becomes a practice of selfish taking. It loses the biblical ideal of selfless giving. That's why it devolves into objectification & pornography. As an idol, sex becomes a powerful expression of self-worship.

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Technology is applied technique. It's art and science. It is a way of engaging with God's creation to shepherd it or change it or perfect it or beautify it. – Tony Reinke, *God, Technology, and the Christian Life*



courtesy renaissance Rachel

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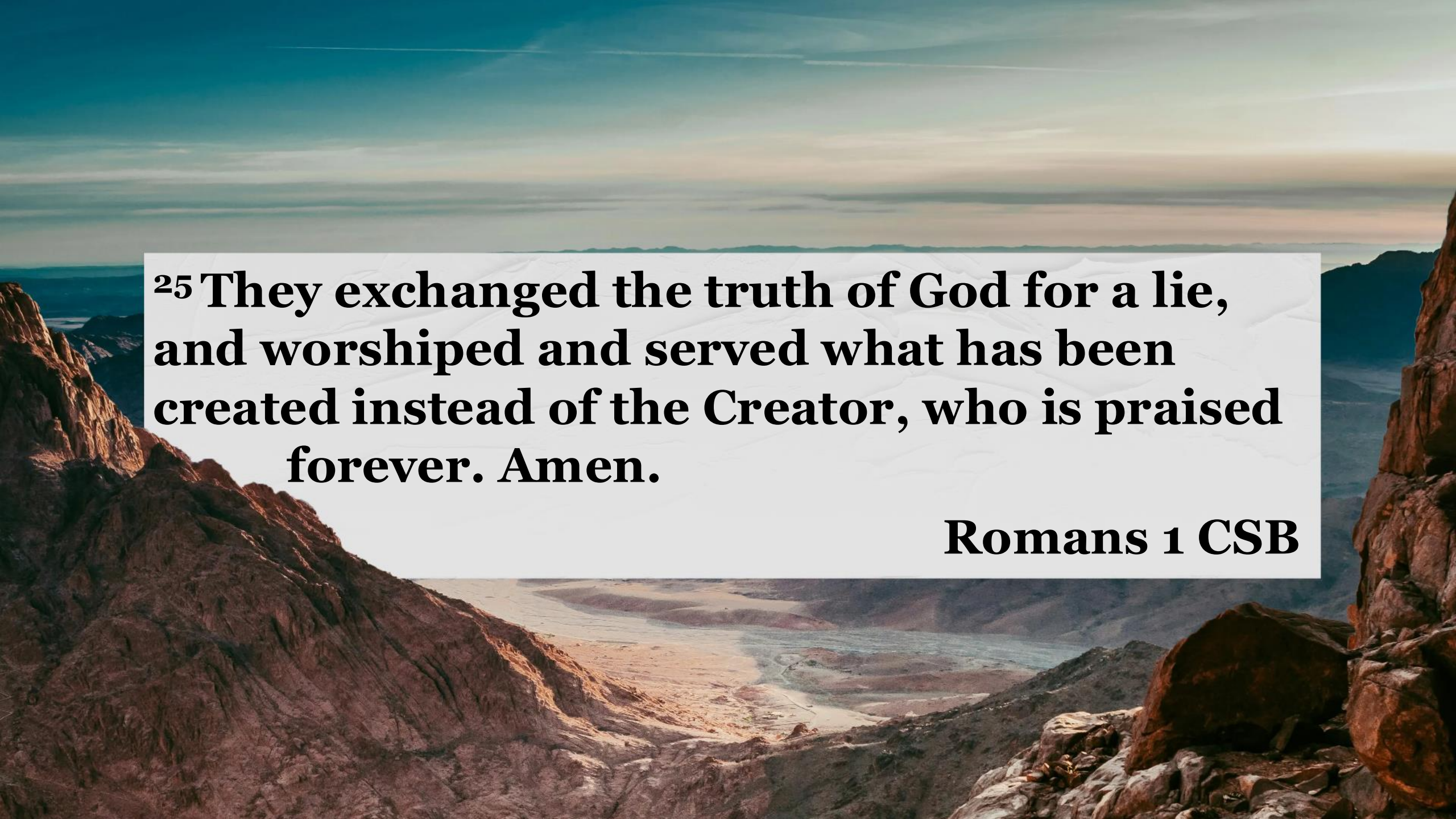
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Popular examples today include:

- **Creation**



**Diocese Day
to Worship
All Creation**

A dramatic landscape featuring a white rectangular text box centered over a view of a valley and mountains. The foreground shows rugged, reddish-brown rock formations. The middle ground is a wide, sandy valley with a winding river or path. The background consists of distant, hazy mountains under a sky with soft, wispy clouds. The text is in a bold, black, serif font.

**²⁵ They exchanged the truth of God for a lie,
and worshiped and served what has been
created instead of the Creator, who is praised
forever. Amen.**

Romans 1 CSB



Worship All Creation

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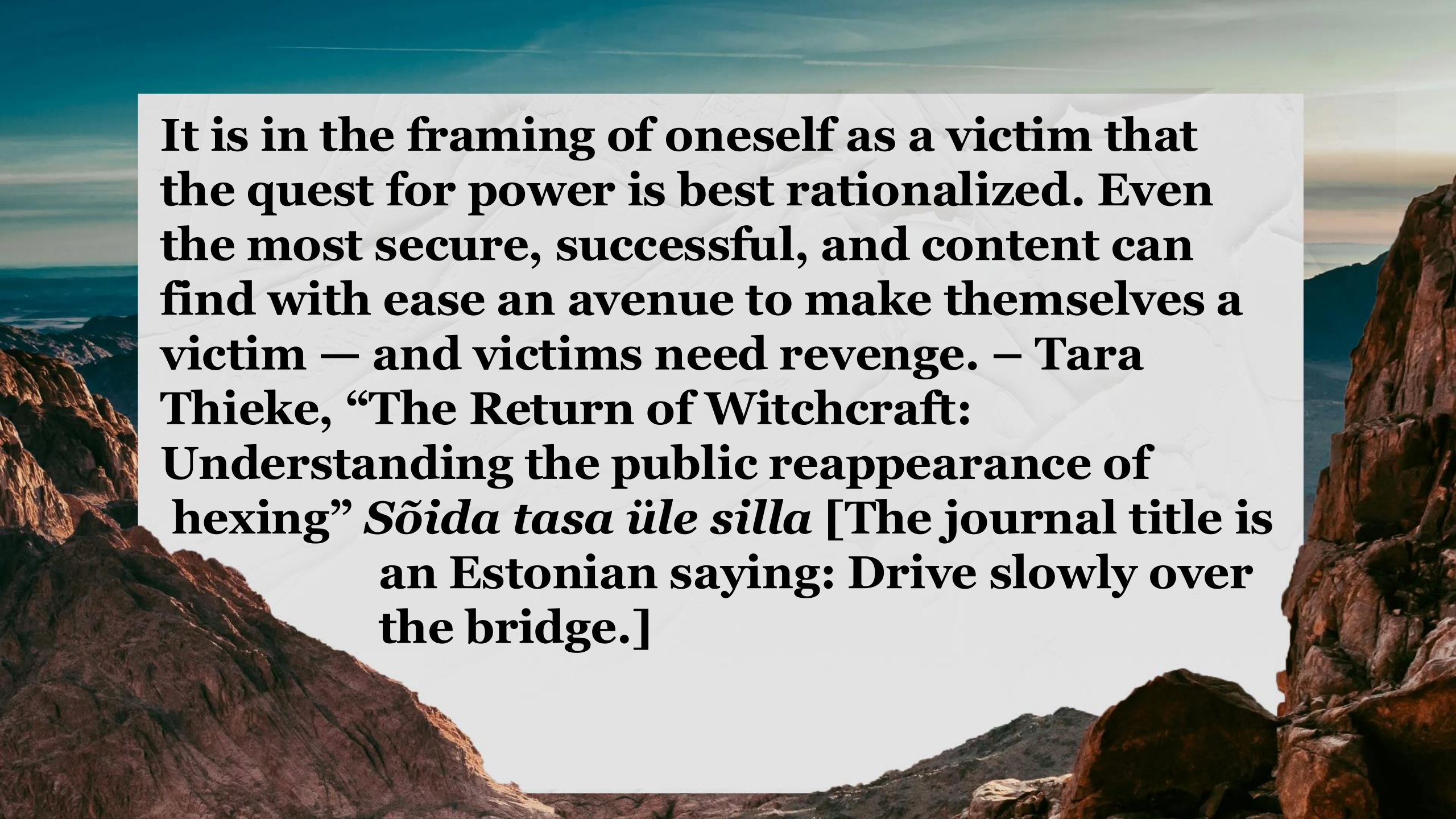
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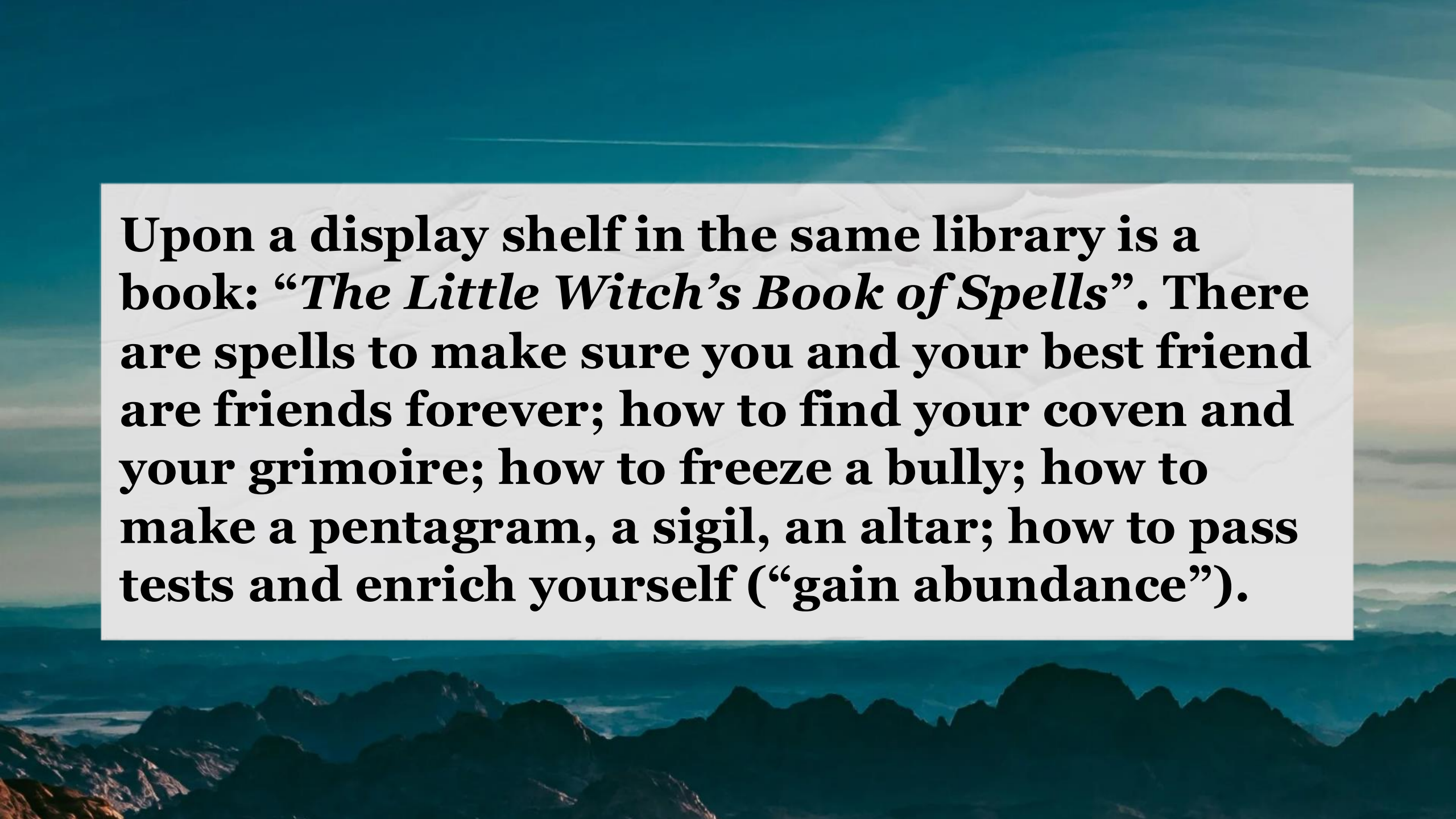
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It is in the framing of oneself as a victim that the quest for power is best rationalized. Even the most secure, successful, and content can find with ease an avenue to make themselves a victim — and victims need revenge. – Tara Thieke, “The Return of Witchcraft: Understanding the public reappearance of hexing” *Sõida tasa üle silla* [The journal title is an Estonian saying: Drive slowly over the bridge.]



courtesy printwear

The background of the image is a scenic landscape featuring a range of dark, jagged mountains in the foreground and middle ground. The sky above is a deep teal color with some wispy white clouds. A large, white, semi-transparent rectangular box is centered in the upper half of the image, containing the text. The text is written in a bold, black, serif font.

Upon a display shelf in the same library is a book: “*The Little Witch’s Book of Spells*”. There are spells to make sure you and your best friend are friends forever; how to find your coven and your grimoire; how to freeze a bully; how to make a pentagram, a sigil, an altar; how to pass tests and enrich yourself (“gain abundance”).

In popular narrative this cult drenches itself in light and liberation, of love and shimmer and transcendence. In practice it looks a little different: manipulation, power, self-worship, and closed-heartedness. [It manifests] in female jurors running to the press to complain about the mystifying male holdout juror of the infamous Clancy case who “had the hardest time getting off the fact that Lindsay viciously killed her children.” After all, any self-giving [is conflated] with persecution. Note that both Clancy and her copycat killer described their small sons as being “the antichrist” or “devil.”

Here is an army willing to do battle against *any* moral restraint on itself. The Sisterhood rebukes the concept of examination of conscience, preferring therapy which validates one's grievances. It is a massive, massive cultural shift. Wiccans outnumber Presbyterians, and that is without counting the countless women who don't formally identify with the religion but are being drawn into the practice. The rise of this Sisterhood in tandem with the growth of the "women can do no wrong" belief has life or death repercussions.

The yuppie dabblers of witchcraft and Satanism are the heralds of a changing social reaction to witchcraft, but what unites all practitioners is the culture of victimization...The witches I knew came to their beliefs out of a response to pain, i.e., seeking revenge on an entire society whom they blamed. What has changed is that it is now not a few souls closing their hearts and choosing power; the culture of victimization is mainstream. – Tara Thieke, “The Return of Witchcraft: Understanding the public reappearance of hexing” *Sõida tasa üle silla* [The journal title is an Estonian saying: Drive slowly over the bridge.]

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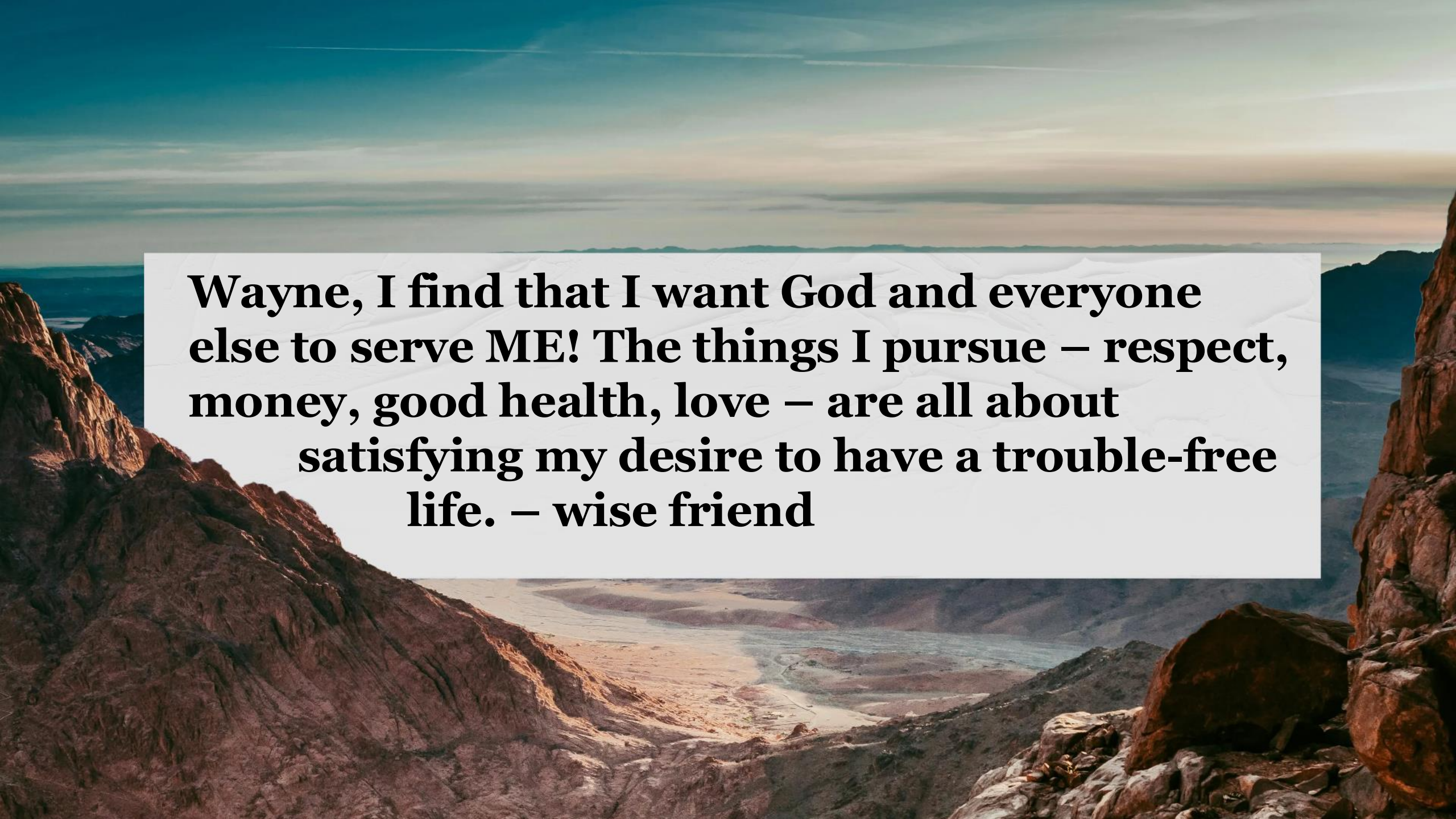
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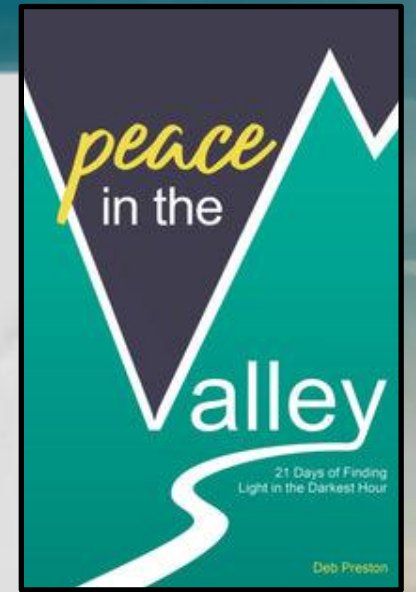
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The background of the image is a vast, scenic landscape. In the foreground, there are rugged, reddish-brown rock formations and cliffs. Beyond the rocks, a wide, flat valley or desert floor stretches out, with a winding river or path visible in the distance. The horizon is marked by low, rolling hills under a sky with soft, wispy clouds. The overall lighting suggests a late afternoon or early morning setting, with a warm, golden glow. A large, white rectangular text box is centered in the middle of the image, containing a quote in a bold, black, serif font.

Wayne, I find that I want God and everyone else to serve ME! The things I pursue – respect, money, good health, love – are all about satisfying my desire to have a trouble-free life. – wise friend

Ways Christians subtly (or not so subtly) make an idol of self:

- Look out for #1 (oneself).
- Refuse to help others carry their burdens.
(That's *their* responsibility, right?)
- Cut from our lives people who don't please us.
- "Find ourselves."
- "Treat" ourselves excessively.
(“You deserve it, queen!”)
- Obsess over weight and/or looks.
- Excuse excess in emotions like anger, happiness, or romance.





courtesy kidlo



⁵ Do not bow in worship to them, and do not serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God
Exodus 20 CSB

What is divine jealousy?

Propriety. It is the right response to wrong worship.

²⁴ God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and in truth.

John 4 CSB



If you're a human, you worship. It's what you do!

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John 4 CSB

**4 Their idols are merely things of silver and gold,
shaped by human hands.**

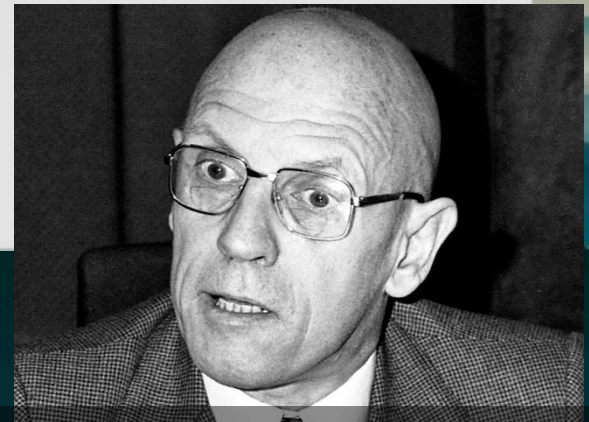
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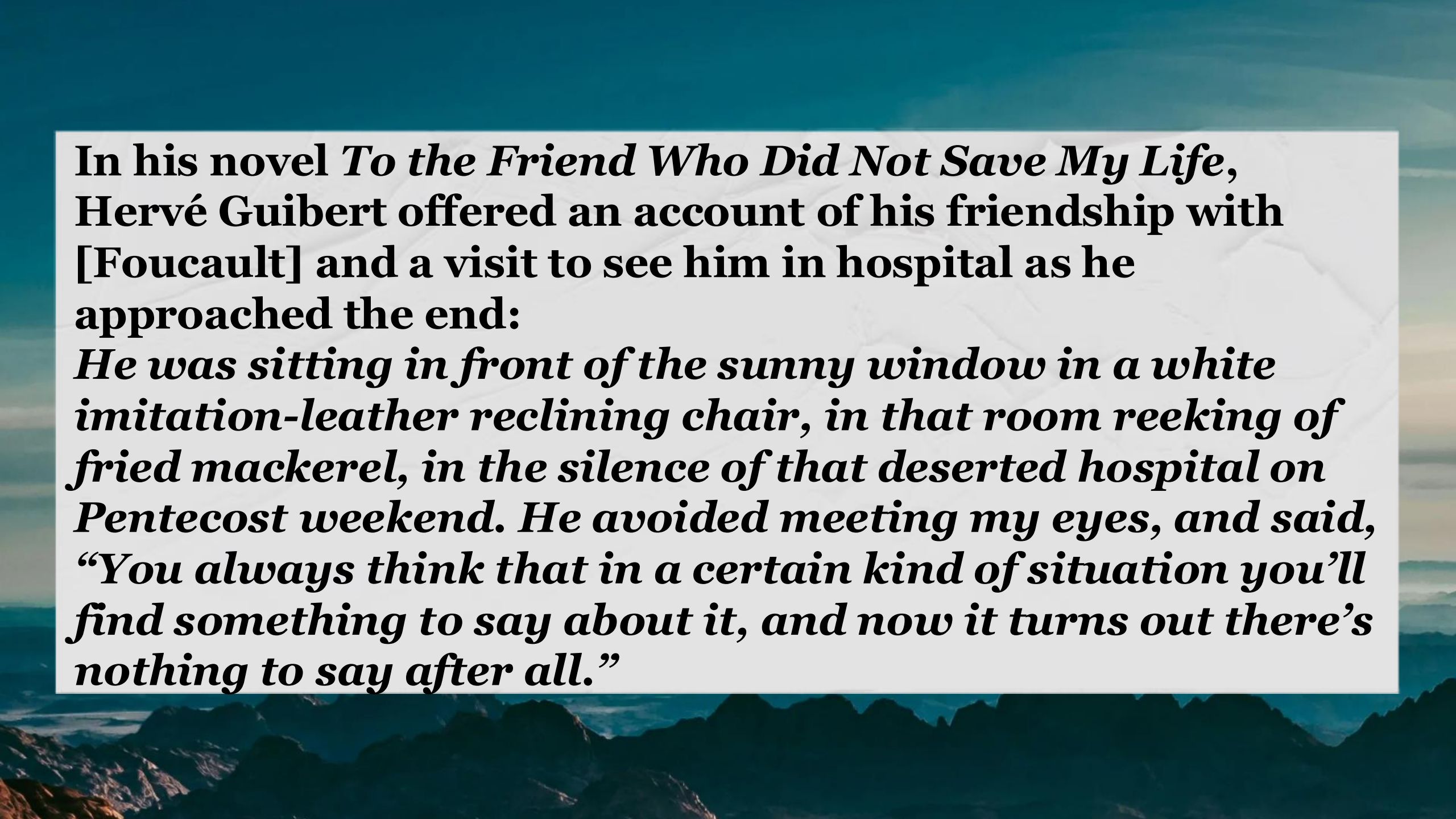
**6 They have ears but cannot hear,
and mouths but cannot breathe.**

**7 They have hands but cannot feel,
and feet but cannot walk,
and throats but cannot make a sound.**

**8 And those who make idols are just like them,
as are all who trust in them.**

Michel Foucault...remains a force with which academics must reckon. From postcolonialism to queer theory, he remains one of the most cited and influential figures in the humanities. Indeed, he remade them in his own image. Foucault saw history as lacking providential shape and a meaningful destiny, being nothing more than the result of “the iron hand of necessity shaking the dice-box of chance.” Well, if history means nothing, neither do those who make it. – Carl Trueman, “Foucault’s Idol of Nothingness” in First Things Oct. 15, 2026





In his novel *To the Friend Who Did Not Save My Life*, Hervé Guibert offered an account of his friendship with [Foucault] and a visit to see him in hospital as he approached the end:

He was sitting in front of the sunny window in a white imitation-leather reclining chair, in that room reeking of fried mackerel, in the silence of that deserted hospital on Pentecost weekend. He avoided meeting my eyes, and said, "You always think that in a certain kind of situation you'll find something to say about it, and now it turns out there's nothing to say after all."

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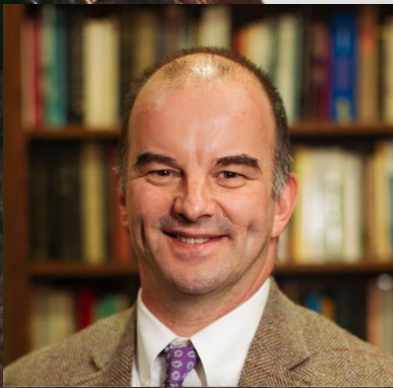
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Foucault had made an idol of nothingness. Thus, for all his fascinating insights, dazzling intellect, and vast influence, it was his nihilism that had the last word—or, perhaps better, stripped him of his last words. – Carl Trueman, “Foucault’s Idol of Nothingness”



⁶ They have ears but cannot hear, and mouths but cannot breathe.

⁷ They have hands but cannot feel, and feet but cannot walk, and throats but cannot make a sound.

⁸ And those who make idols are just like them, as are all who trust in them.

**¹⁸ But we can praise the Lord both now and forever!
Praise the Lord!**

⁵ Do not bow in worship to them, and do not serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, bringing the consequences of the fathers' iniquity on the children to the third and fourth generations of **those who hate me, ⁶ but showing faithful love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commands. ⁷ Do not misuse the name of the Lord your God, because the Lord will not leave anyone unpunished **who misuses his name**.**

Exodus 20 CSB

7 Do not misuse the name of the Lord your God, because the Lord will not leave anyone unpunished who misuses his name.

Exodus 20 CSB

- What exactly is meant by taking YHWH's name in vain/misusing it?**
- What is the significance of his “name?”**

Yahweh's name signified his essence. In any culture, modern or ancient, a name is a verbal symbol for a person or thing, and the ancients in particular appreciated the way names connoted the very value, character, and influence of a person or thing. – Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*

**7 Do not misuse the name of the Lord your God,
because the Lord will not leave anyone unpunished
who misuses his name.**

Exodus 20 CSB

**Hebrew: *nāśāh šēm Yahweh* = raise up Yahweh's
name for no good.**



⁵ Do not bow in worship to them, and do not serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, bringing the consequences of the fathers' iniquity on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate me

Exodus 20 CSB

If human nature is universally condemned, those on whom the Lord does not bestow the communication of his grace must be doomed to destruction; nevertheless, they perish by their own iniquity, not by unjust hatred on the part of God...

The Lord, on the contrary, declares, that the son shall not suffer for the father's sin (Ezek. 18:20.) Observe the scope of that passage. The Israelites, [seeing] themselves as righteous and innocent, declared they were paying the penalty of sins committed by their parents. The prophet [Ezekiel] declares it was not so: that they were punished for their own wickedness; that it was not in accordance with the justice of God that a righteous son should suffer for the iniquity of a wicked father; and that nothing of the kind was exemplified in what they suffered.

On the other hand, there is a promise of mercy to thousands in [Exodus 20:5]—a promise which is frequently mentioned in Scripture...When, in any single instance, he visits the iniquity of the father on the son, he gives intimation of the judgment which awaits all the reprobate for their own iniquities. Yet the Lord graciously commends the riches of his mercy by extending it to thousands, while he limits his vengeance to four generations.
– John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*

⁶ but showing faithful love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commands.

Exodus 20 CSB

Hebrew: אֱהָבָה hesed = loyal-love. Hesed is the kind of merciful, fiercely-loyal commitment that stays engaged. Throughout the Bible, Triune God is described as the LORD of hesed.

Hesed
introduced

**God the Son
will come as
Messiah.**

**He will conquer death
& ascend back to the
heavenly dimension.**

**Great question:
how can holy
God offer *hesed*
to people?**

**He will one
day pay the
price for sin.**

**He offers *hesed*
covenant to those
who trust the Lord.**

A STUDY OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

DECALOGUE