

The Pathway to Help Your Anxious Kids

by
Patrick D. Wright. B.A., Th.M.

A Child's Major Anxiety Issues:

- DEATH & GOING TO HEAVEN
- Dealing with CIRCUMSTANCES OUT OF THEIR CONTROL
- REJECTION

Assurance

Anxiety killer #1



The fear of death is man's greatest fear.
The assurance of eternal life is the only
antidote for that fear, and a host of others.

“Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.”

- Heb. 2:14-15

Two Anxieties:

- The dread of what's going to happen when they die
- The anxiety of trying to 'be good enough' for God through performance or keeping rules



Good news: You can know for sure
you are going to heaven... BUT

...if we want to get to heaven, we must cooperate with God's terms. His terms are that we receive it as a gift, or not at all.

We receive eternal life by putting our trust in Jesus Christ as our ONLY hope of getting to heaven. When we do that, we are "born again." God removes our sins from our account and makes us acceptable to Him... not because we have been worthy, or good, or have kept rules.

"God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it."

Q. How does a person get assurance anyway?

A. By choosing to take God at His Word

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”

— John 5:24

“And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

— 1 John 5:11-13

When a child has assurance of his or her salvation, it de-activates their fear of death along with the anxiety that they might be punished by God now or in the future.

They have eternal life NOW. It relieves them of the fear of having to 'wait and see' if they go to heaven or not.



Because salvation is a gift, it contradicts what the child assumes... that they can and must *earn* love through performance. We can't earn God's love. He already loves us. He doesn't want us to do something for Him to get to heaven. He wants to do something for us.

THE GOSPEL TEACHES GOD'S GRACE and dissolves the anxiety that results from **the impossible job** of trying to earn God's love and acceptance, and other's love and acceptance.



Anxiety killer #1

A child can have assurance that they have eternal life NOW so they won't have to be worried about death, or a judgment that will send them to hell.

They can also know that they don't have to worry about whether or not they have to try to be 'good enough' if they want to go to heaven.



Confidence

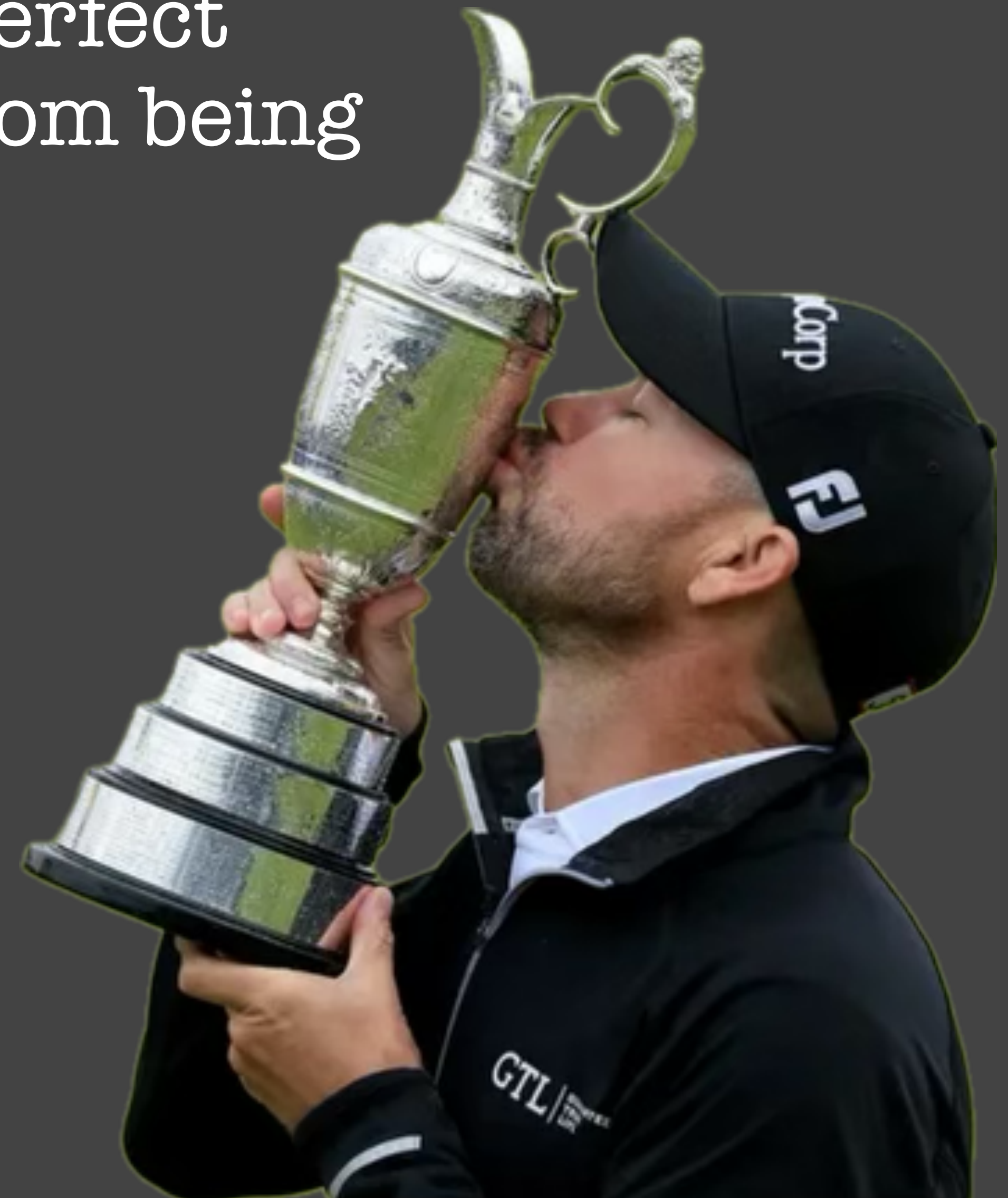
Anxiety killer #2



Confidence doesn't come from being perfect or the 'best' at something. It comes from being in-step with how God wired us.

"The wicked run away when no one is chasing them, but the godly are as bold as lions."

- Proverbs 28:1



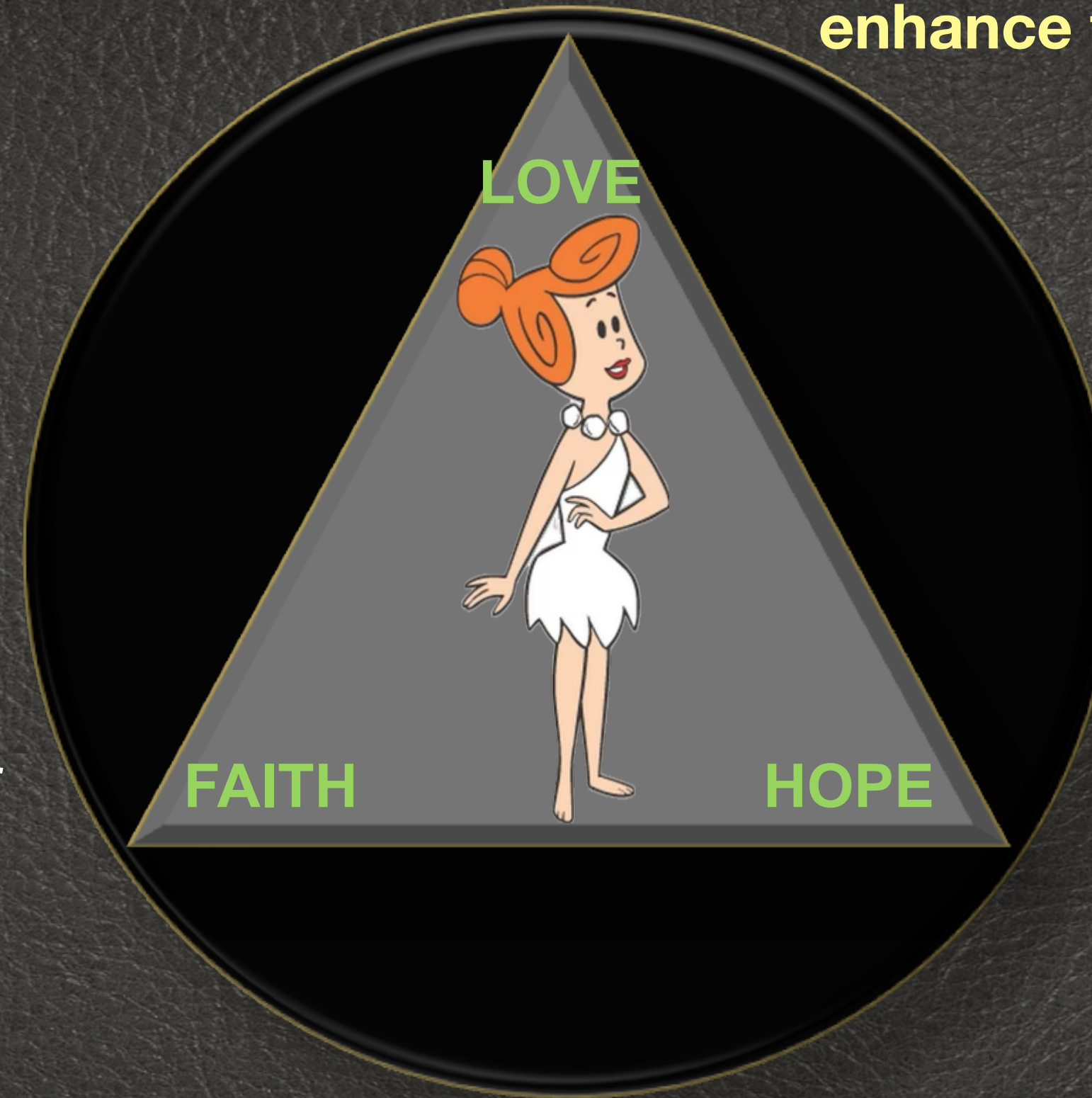
Nourishment - fulfillment through knowing God and investing in others

Result: Confidence and joy in what God is able to do through me to enhance the lives of others

WIRED FOR...

Security - fulfillment through embracing our limitations and placing our trust in God

Result: Confidence in the midst of the struggles, conflicts and mysteries of life



Purpose - fulfillment through managing our lives; confident that God will provide what we need to accomplish His will in and through us now & forever

Result: Confidence in the goodness that God has purposed for me today and in the future

Where do I start?

INSIGHT BEFORE WE MOVE ON...

All the issues you are now facing in your personal life...

- something going on that is or seems not fair
- something going on that brings sadness
- something going on that is 'blocking you'

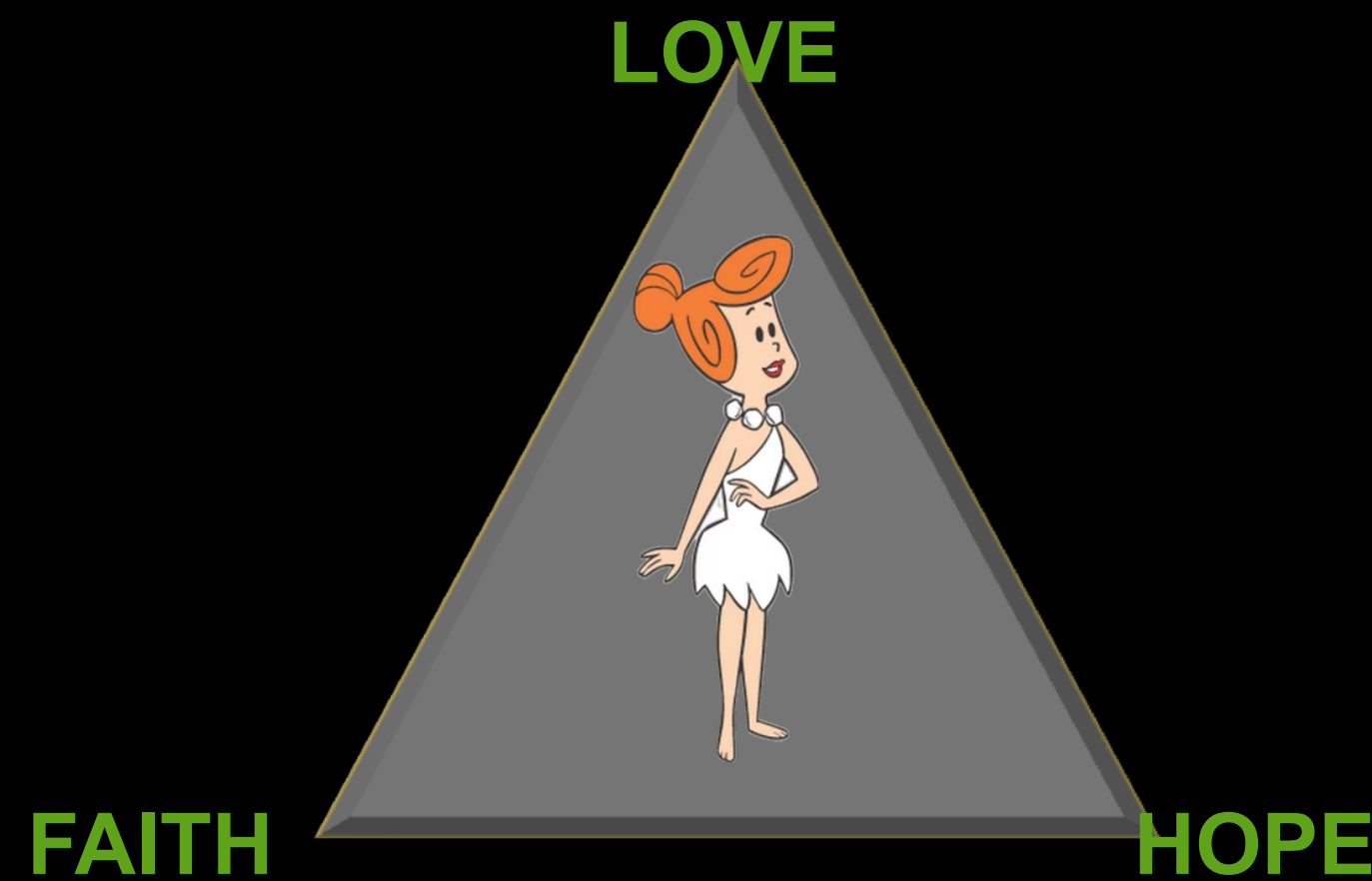
...are strategically designed by God to enable you to 'find' Him as he wants **you** to find Him now... and know Him as he wants **you** to know Him now.

"And we know that God causes **everything** to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them."

God has already been involved in 'setting up' perfectly designed situations in your life so you can practice getting in-step with whom He wired you to be...

He will engineer a **RELATIONAL CHALLENGE** so that we will learn to love others as He loves us

He will engineer a **TRUST CHALLENGE** that will necessitate a shift from trusting our own resources, to trusting the Holy Spirit and His resources

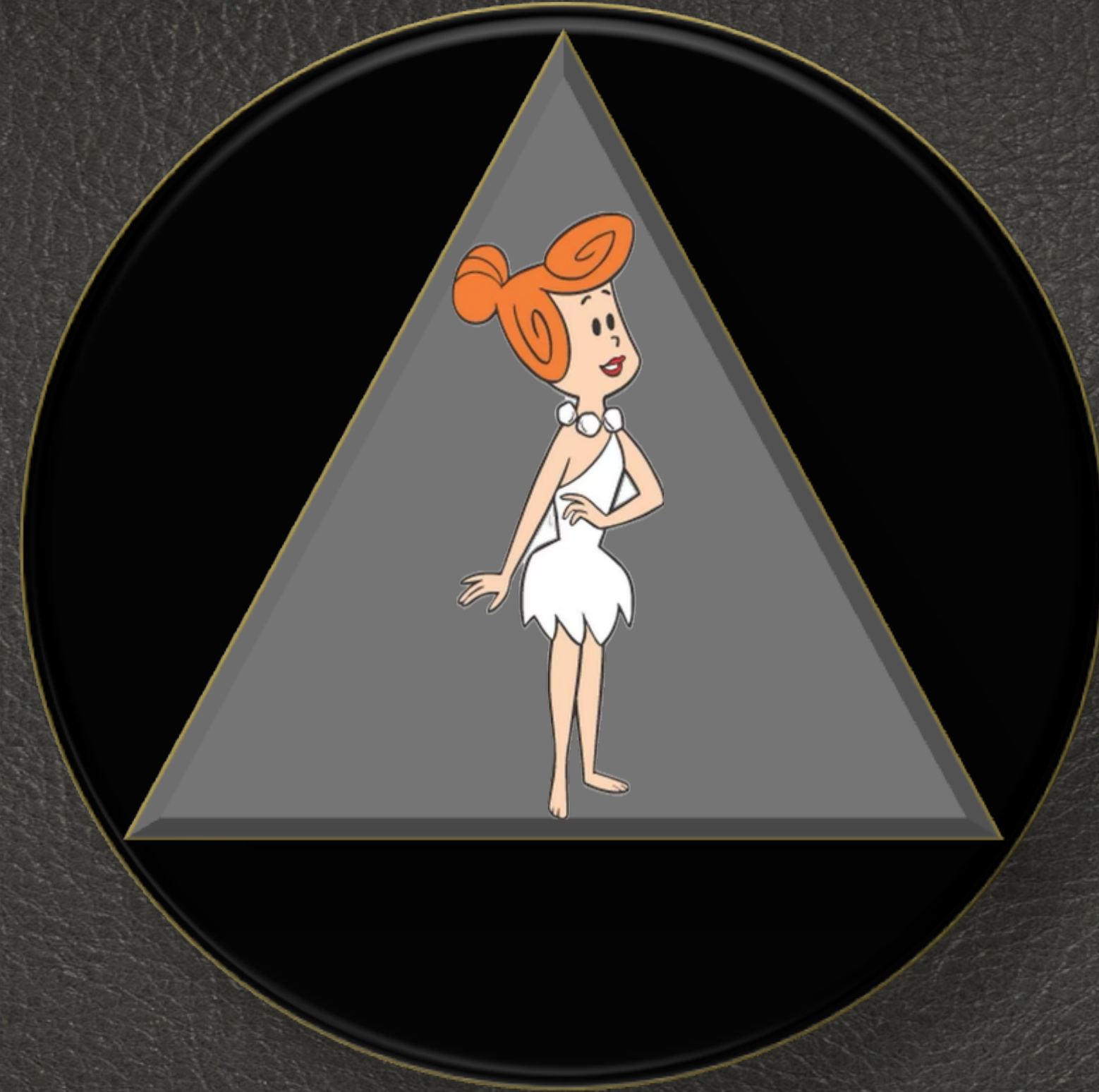


He will engineer a **DECISION/ACTION CHALLENGE** that needs the perspective of Biblical truth & wisdom

Next: Biblical thinking & a question

love - "God has been good to me in so many ways,
I want to treat others as He has treated me."

WHAT DOES LOVE LOOK LIKE IN MY SITUATION?



faith - "My weaknesses
and limitations are giving
God an opportunity to 'show
up' and reveal to me
something wonderful about
Himself (the God I need; not
The God I want)

**IN WHAT WAY CAN I SHOW
MY TRUST IN GOD IN THIS
SITUATION?**

hope - Are my views of reality &
purpose in line with God's Word?

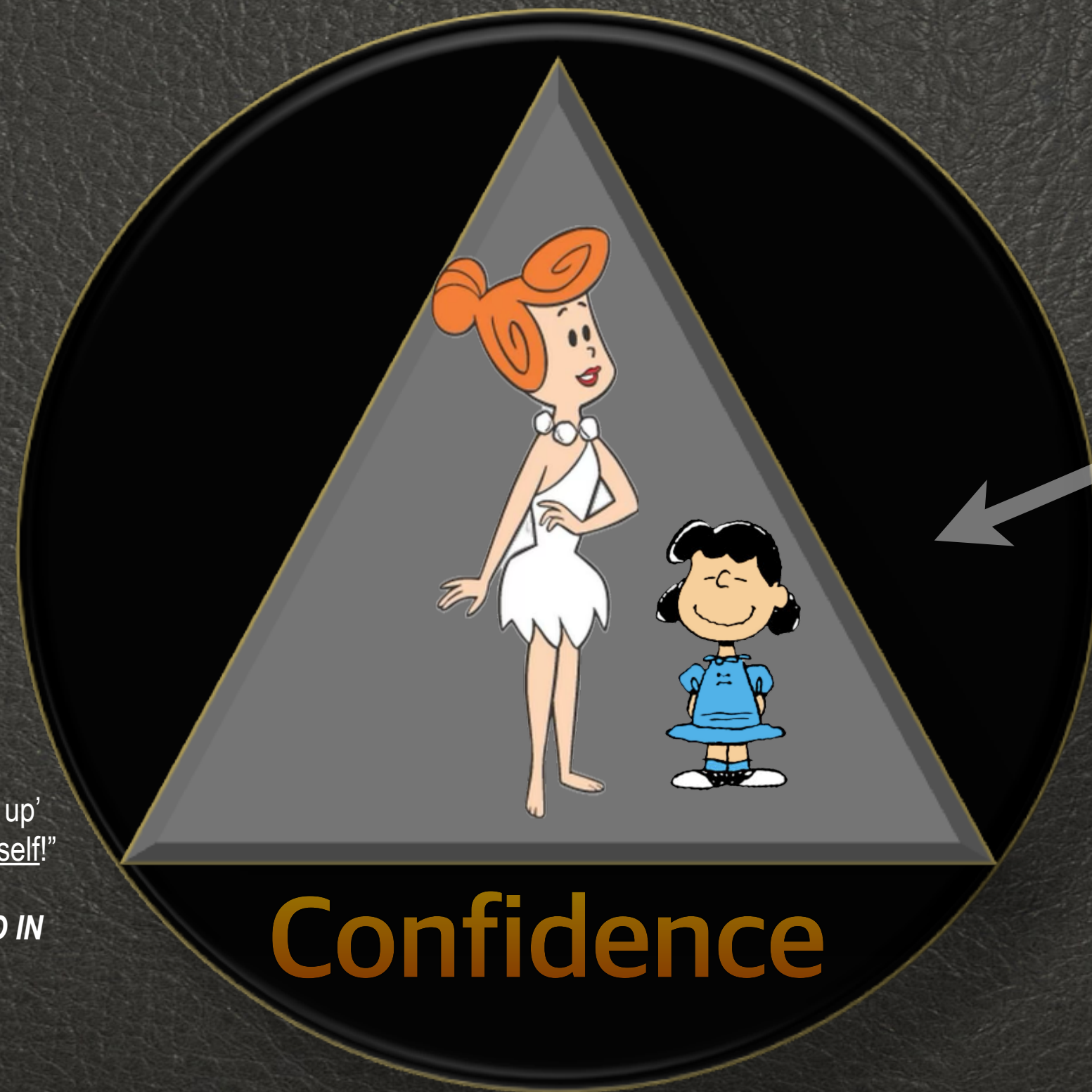
**WHAT DO I NEED TO BELIEVE AND
HOPE-IN THAT WILL MOTIVATE ME
TO TAKE A STEP OF OBEDIENCE?"**

EMBRACE THIS PATHWAY IN **YOUR LIFE** FIRST...**THEN TEACH IT TO YOUR CHILD:**

God has arranged opportunities + Biblical thinking + a Biblical choice

RELATIONAL CHALLENGE - "God has been good to me in so many ways, I want to treat others as He has treated me."

WHAT DOES LOVE LOOK LIKE IN MY SITUATION?



TRUST CHALLENGE - "My weaknesses and limitations are giving God an opportunity to 'show up' and reveal to me something wonderful about Himself!"

IN WHAT WAY CAN I SHOW MY TRUST IN GOD IN THIS SITUATION?

DECISION/ACTION CHALLENGE - Are my views of reality & purpose in line with God's Word?

WHAT DO I NEED TO BELIEVE AND HOPE-IN THAT WILL MOTIVATE ME TO TAKE A STEP OF OBEDIENCE?"

Anxiety killer #2

Confidence will replace the child's anxiety when they are *less* focused on the factors beyond their control, and more focused on the growth choices within their control.



Reassurance

Anxiety killer #3



The power of reassurance does not lie in just hearing words of advice and comfort. The greatest impact occurs when we hear them from the right person.

“Every part of this plan,” David told Solomon, “was given to me in writing from the hand of the LORD.” Then David continued, “Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Don’t be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. He will see to it that all the work related to the Temple of the LORD is finished correctly.

- 1 Chron. 28:19-20



You are the right person. Here's what reassurance looks like...

PURSUIT - WHEN THEY'RE AT THEIR WORST

This teaches grace. It shows them what God is like. It builds a bridge.

“But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)”

- Eph. 2:4-5

PATHWAY - OUT OF FAILURE

GENUINE FAILURE - ‘My motives & actions are worthless’ (see Jer. 2:5)

Lecture-less accountability, understanding, & insight. *Emphasize life*; not rules

“Jesus answered and said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.”

- John 4:13-14

PSEUDO (false) FAILURE - 'My very being has no worth' ... I'm a mistake, cursed, good-for-nothing, inferior, insignificant, etc.

A TRUTH YOU NEED & YOUR CHILD NEEDS - Nobody is worthy; but everyone has infinite worth.

*"What is man that You take thought of him,
And the son of man that You care for him?
Yet You have made him a little lower than God,
And You crown him with glory and majesty!"*
— Psalm 8:4-5

PRONOUNCEMENT - "DON'T BE AFRAID"

Say the words. Help them envision what God has in store for them.

*"...Simon Peter... fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, "Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!"
...And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men."*

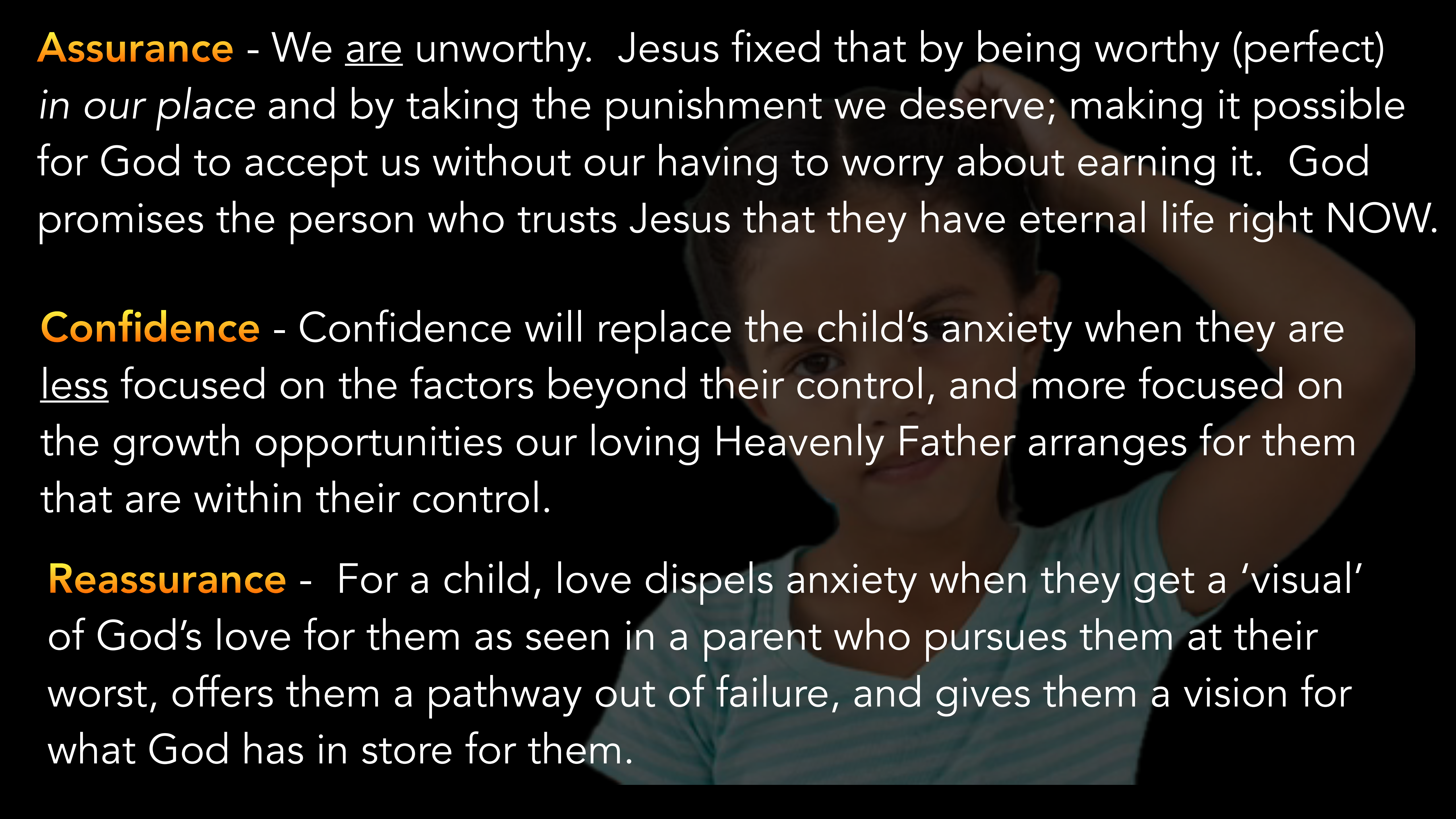
- Luke 5:10

Anxiety killer #3

Reassurance is aimed at calming the anxieties that accompany a child's failures leading to self-rejection or other-rejection.

Reassurance demonstrates to the child that they are desired & accepted, that they are infinitely worth your help and God's help, and that God has a destiny for them despite the messes they may have gotten themselves into.



A young boy with short brown hair is shown from the chest up. He is wearing a light blue t-shirt. His right hand is pressed against his forehead, and he has a slightly distressed or thoughtful expression on his face. The background is dark and out of focus.

Assurance - We are unworthy. Jesus fixed that by being worthy (perfect) *in our place* and by taking the punishment we deserve; making it possible for God to accept us without our having to worry about earning it. God promises the person who trusts Jesus that they have eternal life right NOW.

Confidence - Confidence will replace the child's anxiety when they are less focused on the factors beyond their control, and more focused on the growth opportunities our loving Heavenly Father arranges for them that are within their control.

Reassurance - For a child, love dispels anxiety when they get a 'visual' of God's love for them as seen in a parent who pursues them at their worst, offers them a pathway out of failure, and gives them a vision for what God has in store for them.

ADDITIONAL ANXIETY COMMENTS

The bottom of the slide features a decorative graphic consisting of several overlapping, wavy, light blue shapes that resemble stylized waves or hills, creating a sense of movement and depth against the dark blue background.

“There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear”

- 1 JOHN 4:18

- The ‘remedy’ for anxiety is not Faith. It is possible, in some instances, to exercise faith in God and choose to be obedient; yet still be afraid and ‘not looking forward to the process’ at the same time!
- Crippling anxiety is fundamentally a by-product of self-absorption. It results from a refusal to focus outside oneself and one’s personal needs. It also results from refusing to face one’s real issues.
- Spiritually, it actually involves the *worship* (obsession) of one’s own needs, all the while exaggerating, minimizing, or ignoring reality in an effort to satisfy those needs. This alteration of reality requires the creation of a host of habits and rules designed to ‘keep us safe.’ These become the *true god* of our life, yet produce even more anxiety.

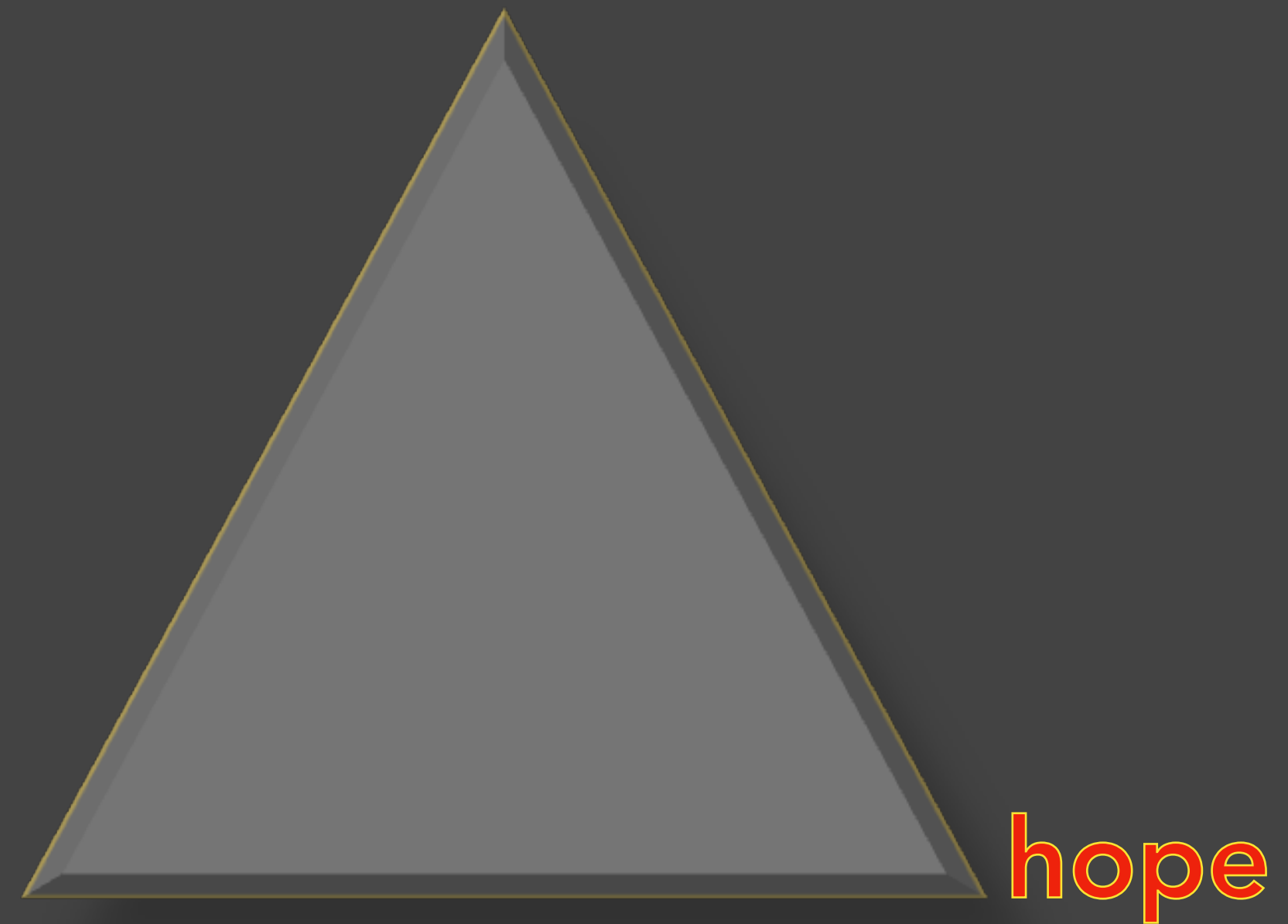


The way out? Not disciplining
our thoughts...

But confessing our *idolatry*
and *lust* for safety.

See James 4:1-5

COMMENTS REGARDING OUR 'HOPE' WIRING



"If any man is in Christ, he becomes a new creation..."

- 2 Cor. 5:17

HOPE develops within me as I intentionally use my gifts, individuality, and creativity to enhance the lives of others in God's kingdom-work now. As God enables me to do this through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, the result is an increased experience of life and newness, and assurance that MORE newness and life is certain to come my way in this age and throughout the one to come, as promised In the Scriptures.

See Eph. 2:7