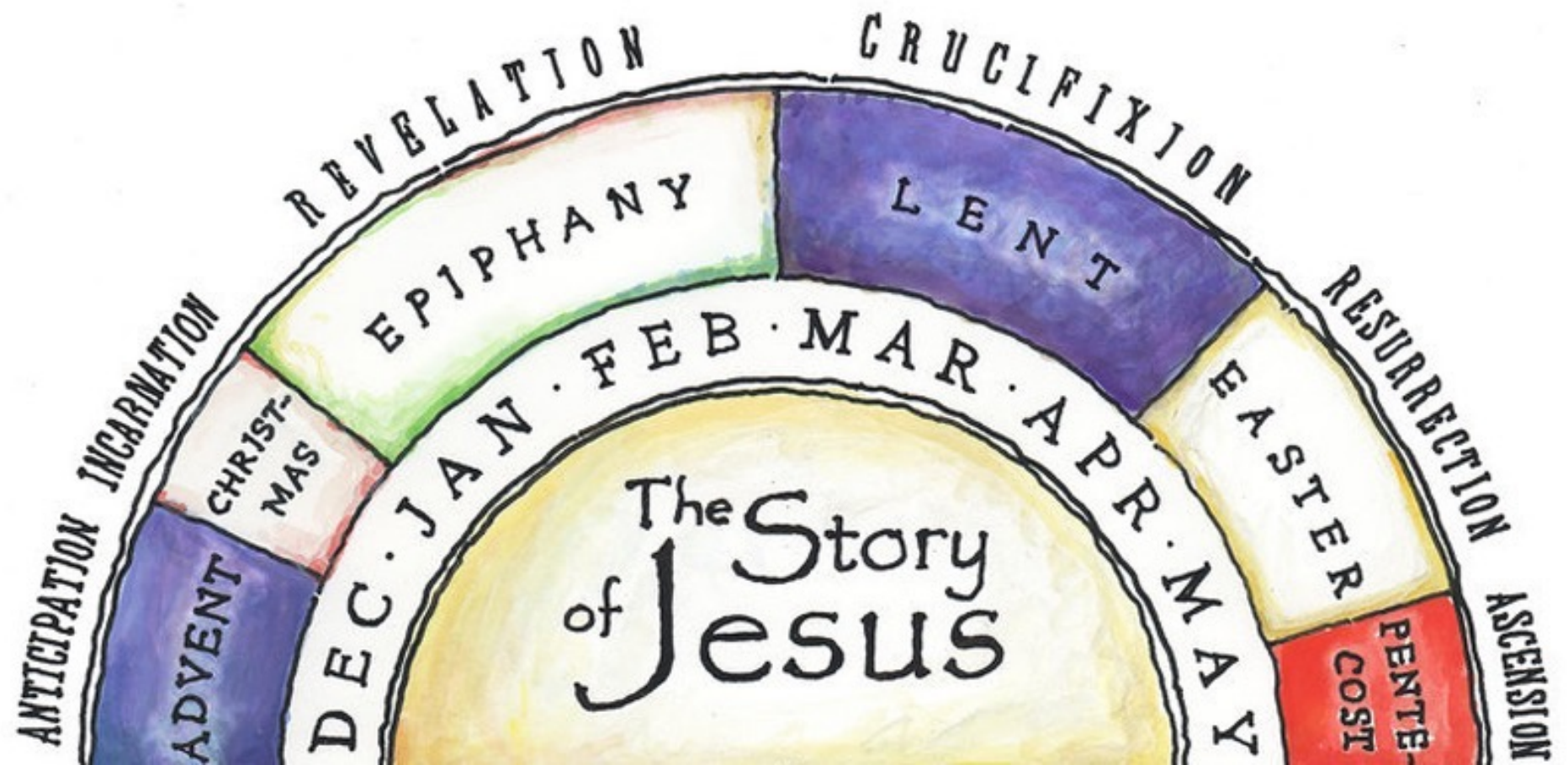


Holy God, you have called us
to follow in the way of your risen Son,
and to care for those who are
companions and strangers alike.
Fill us with your spirit that we may
love you as we love our neighbor,
not only with words of comfort,
but with acts of generosity and love. Amen

Opening Prayer

A decorative banner at the bottom of the page features a dark background with white line art of hands holding each other. Overlaid on this are several overlapping circles in red, green, blue, and purple, and a white fishnet pattern on the right side.

CHURCH CALENDAR



Two ripe peaches are shown against a white background. The peach in the foreground is more prominent, showing its characteristic fuzzy texture and a mix of red and yellow-orange colors. A single green leaf is attached to its stem. Another peach is partially visible behind it to the left. The text "THE GOOD and BEAUTIFUL GOD" is overlaid in the center in a white, bold, sans-serif font.

THE GOOD and
BEAUTIFUL GOD

*“What commandment is the foremost of all?” Jesus answered, “The foremost is, ‘HEAR, ISRAEL! THE LORD IS OUR GOD, THE LORD IS ONE; AND **YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.**’ The second is this: ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”*

HOLY
BIBLE

MARK
10:37-38

*In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days God has spoken to us by the Son, whom God appointed heir of all things, and through whom also God made the universe. **The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of God's being...***

HOLY
BIBLE

HEB
1:1-3

THE TRUE NARRATIVES OF JESUS

God is **GOOD** ✓

God is **TRUSTWORTHY** ✓

God is **GENEROUS** ✓

God is **LOVE** ✓

God is **HOLY** ✓

God is **SELF-SACRIFICING**

God is **TRANSFORMATIVE**



James Bryan Smith

The Good and Beautiful

GOD

FALLING IN LOVE WITH
THE GOD JESUS KNOWS

"The best practice I have seen in Christian spiritual formation."

—DALLAS WILLARD

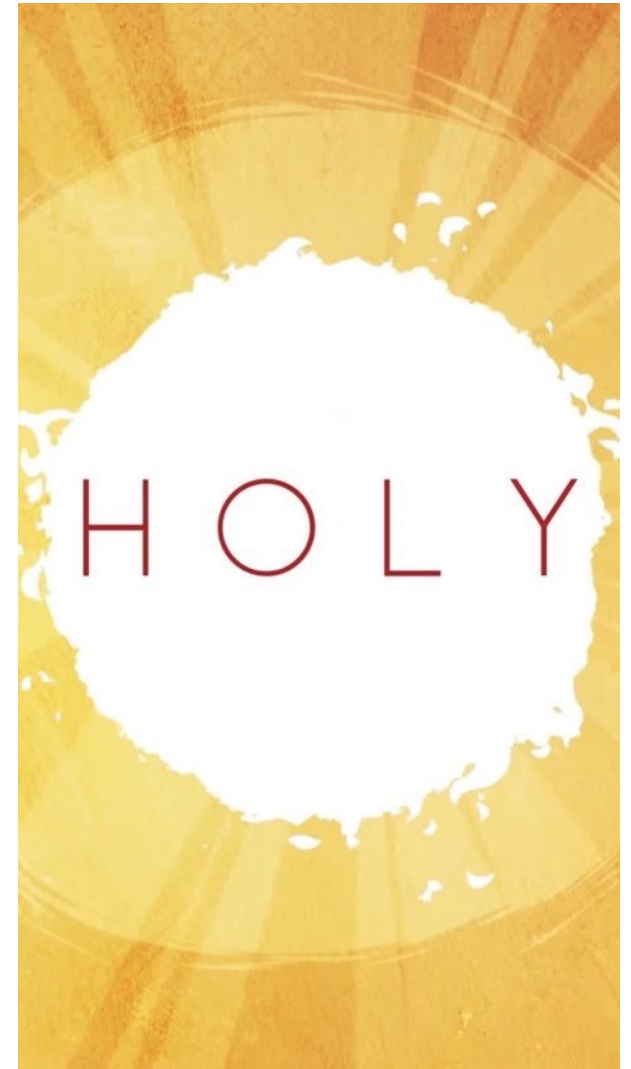
*Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." **Lev 11, 19***

**HOLY
BIBLE**

1 PET
1:13-16

HOLINESS

To be set apart for a specific, sacred purpose; God's moral purity, God's "other-ness" or uniqueness



FALSE NARRATIVE #6

God is either:

*(a) **WRATHFUL** because of our sin,
or (b) **INDIFFERENT** about our sin.*



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The Good and Beautiful

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FALSE NARRATIVE #6

God is either:

*(a) **WRATHFUL** because of our sin,
or (b) **INDIFFERENT** about our sin.*

I.E. God is either:

*(a) an **UNCONTROLLABLY** angry
monster or (b) a **FECKLESS** thug
who, in either case, is unworthy
of trust, love, worship, etc.*



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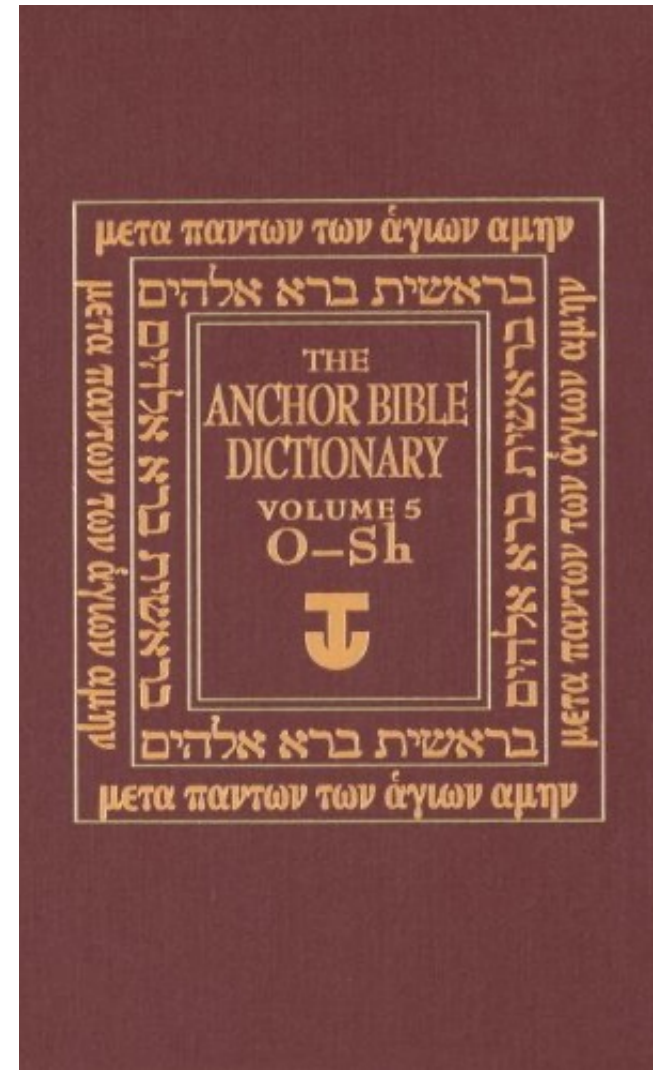
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ANCHOR BIBLE DICTIONARY

PASSION is an emotional convulsion, a loss of **SELF-CONTROL**.

PATHOS is an act formed with care and intention, the result of determination and decision.



AN IMPORTANT CAVEAT

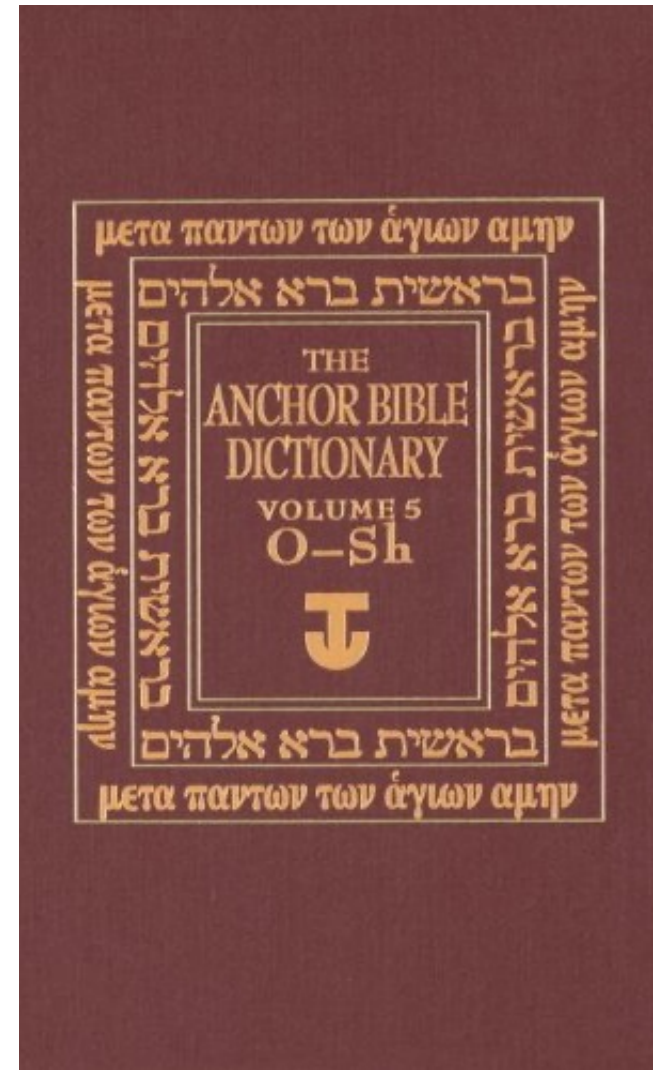
God's **HOLINESS** is never
CONTRADICTORY to God's **LOVE**.

God can be holy, just, wrathful, etc.,
but those emotions and actions
will never contradict **LOVE**;
God's holiness is to be respected,
but it's not something to be **FEARED**.



ANCHOR BIBLE DICTIONARY

God' **WRATH** is never
a "fly off the handle"
or "out of control"
response



FALSE NARRATIVE #6

God is either:

*(a) **WRATHFUL** because of our sin,
or (b) **INDIFFERENT** about our sin.*

TRUE NARRATIVE #6

*Wrath is God's **RIGHTFUL** response
to the **DESTRUCTIVE** power of sin
and its impact on those
God made and loves.*



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TRUE NARRATIVE #6

God is neither uncontrollably:
WRATHFUL, or fecklessly
INDIFFERENT about our sin.

God is appropriately **ANGRY**
but that anger is rooted in,
and governed by, **LOVE**.



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LEVELS OF s/SIN

Cosmic

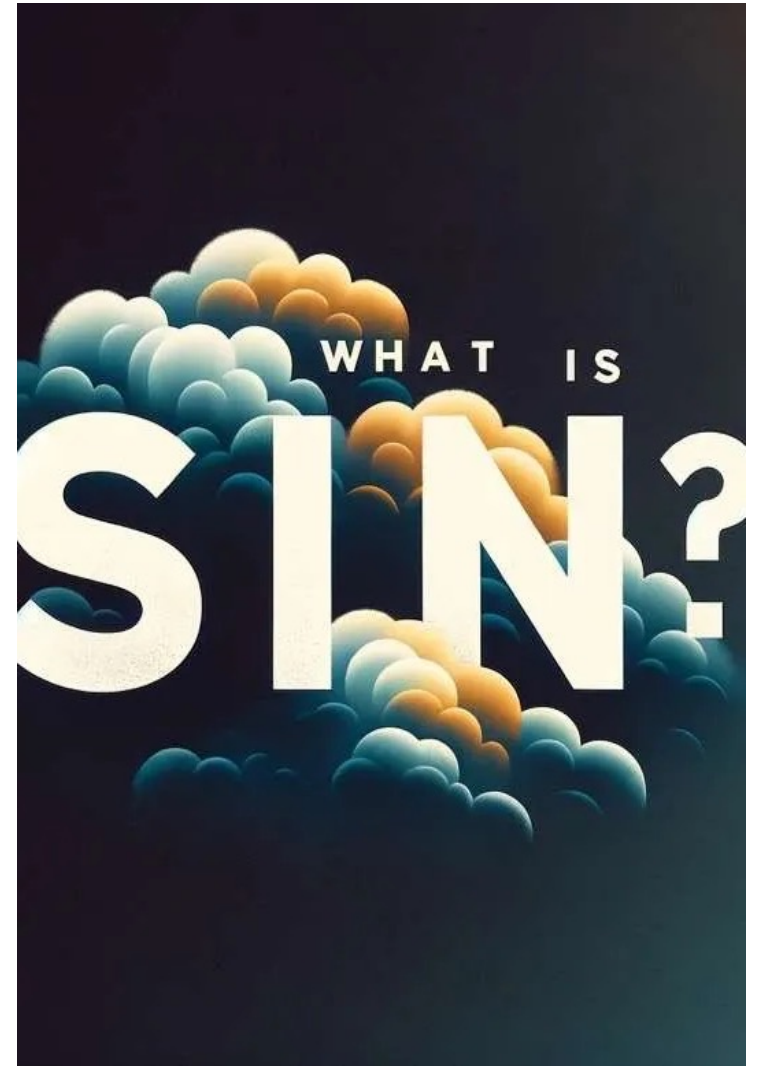
*Evil that is
separate-and-related*

Social

*What we do-or-don't-do
as a society*

Individual

Things I do-or-don't-do



LEVELS OF s/SIN

Cosmic

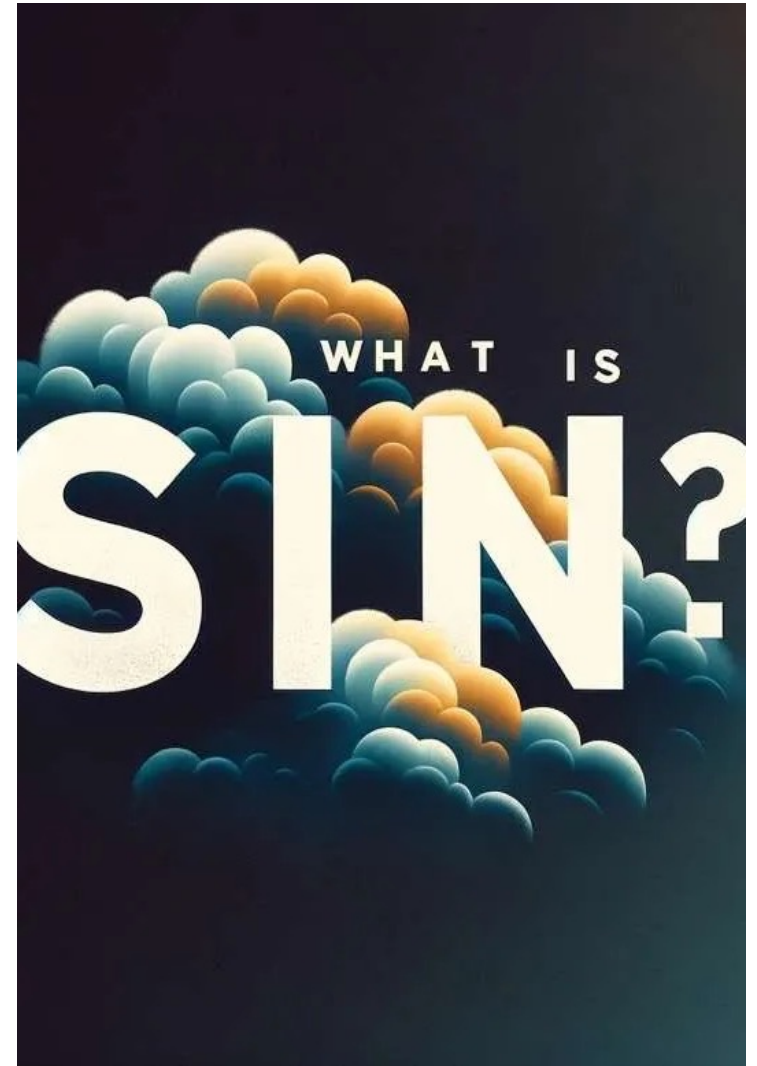
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OUR COMPLEX REALITY

GOD

Supernatural World

SIN

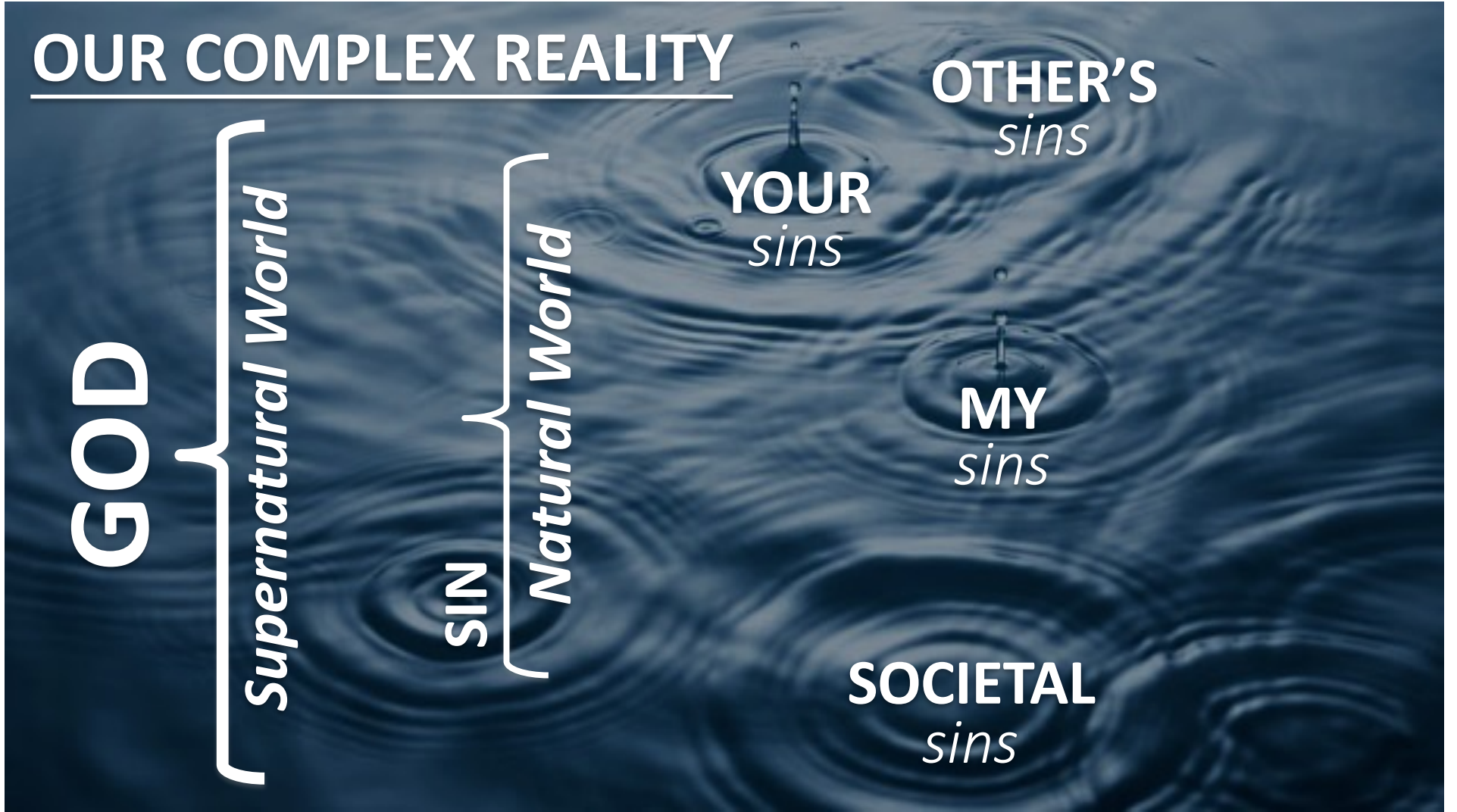
Natural World

YOUR
sins

OTHER'S
sins

MY
sins

SOCIETAL
sins



WHAT THIS MEANS FOR US...

1. HUMILITY

due to our shared experience



WHAT THIS MEANS FOR US...

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due to our shared experience

2. GRACE/PATIENCE

w/ourselves/others as a result



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w/ourselves/others as a result

3. GRATITUDE/WORSHIP

for God's mercy in Christ's victory



WHAT THIS MEANS FOR US...

1. HUMILITY

due to our shared experience

2. GRACE/PATIENCE

w/ourselves/others as a result

3. GRATITUDE/WORSHIP

for God's mercy in Christ's victory

4. COMMITMENT

to combat s/Sin in us/society



Holiness is essentially wholeness—
a life that works. Sin is dysfunction
or sickness. The number one spiritual
sickness of our day is “hurry sickness.”
We are constantly in a hurry because
we have overloaded our schedule.
When we lack margin in our lives
we become tired/lonely/joyless,
which seems to invite temptation.
We need margin (to) restore balance
to our soul (which leads to) joy...



SOUL TRAINING EXERCISE

Establishing some MARGIN:

- Getting up 10min early to create space for silence
- Cut out unnecessary media, social media, gaming, etc.
- Scale back responsibilities
- Reduce frequency of activity



james bryan smith

The Good and Beautiful

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Creator of the universe,
you made the world in beauty,
and restore all things in glory
through the victory of Jesus Christ.

We pray that, wherever your image is still disfigured
by poverty, sickness, selfishness, war and greed,
the new creation in Jesus Christ may appear in justice,
love, and peace, to the glory of your name.

Amen.

Closing Prayer

