

# **MAXIMS OF PERFECTION**

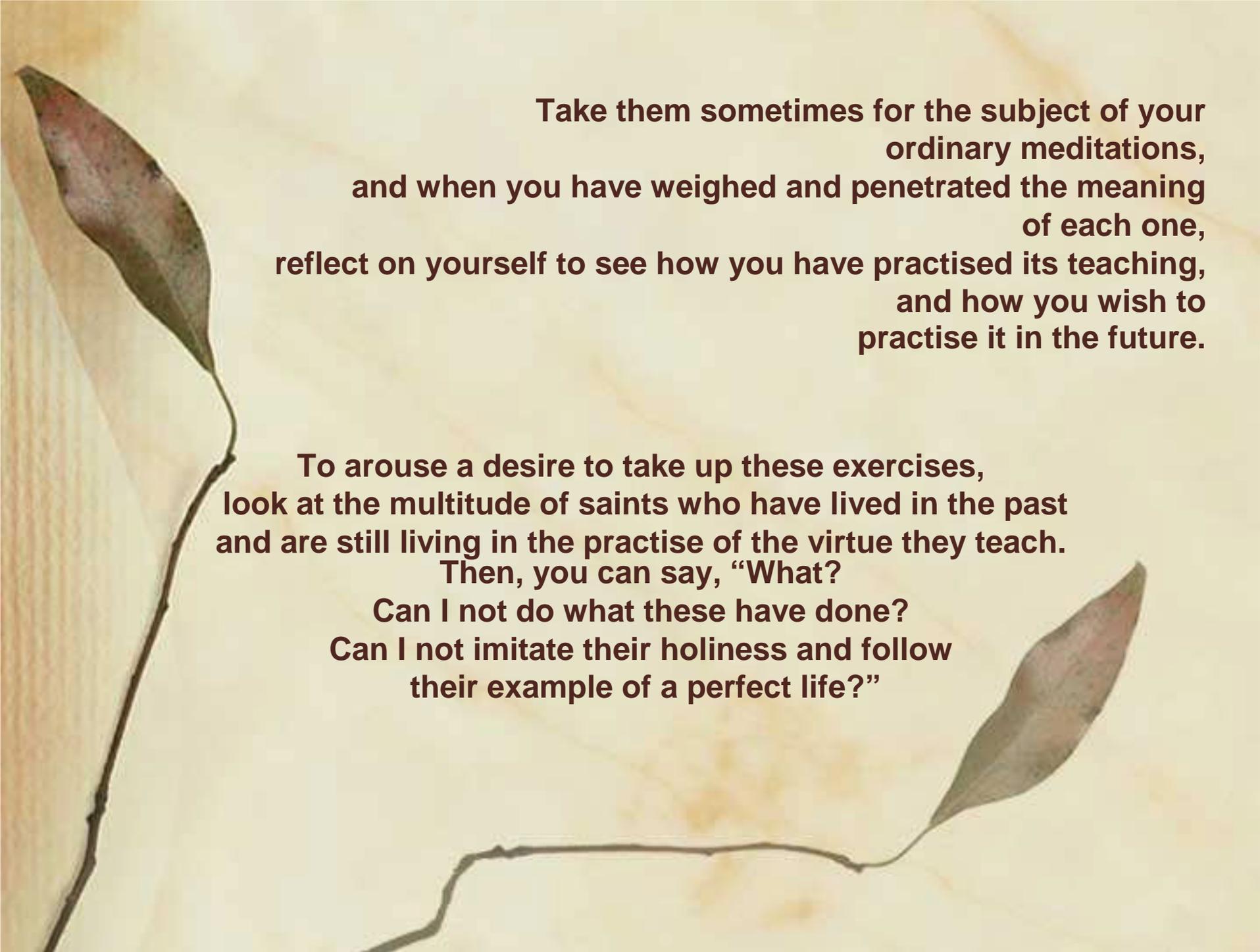
**JEAN-PIERRE MEDAILLE, S.J.**



## THE PREFACE

**Christian soul, chosen by God to live the perfection of the Gospel in religious life or in the world, read the following Maxims attentively, meditate on them frequently and I hope through Divine Goodness that they will enlighten you, let you know in what great virtue consists, and help you to practise it.**

**Read and re-read them often with profound attention, weighing even their least words. There are very few words that do not have their own special meaning and that do not shed new light on truths which they explain...**

A dried leaf on a stem, positioned vertically on the left side of the page. The leaf is brown and curled, with a thin stem extending downwards. The background is a light, textured surface, possibly paper or parchment, with some faint, darker spots.

**Take them sometimes for the subject of your  
ordinary meditations,  
and when you have weighed and penetrated the meaning  
of each one,  
reflect on yourself to see how you have practised its teaching,  
and how you wish to  
practise it in the future.**

**To arouse a desire to take up these exercises,  
look at the multitude of saints who have lived in the past  
and are still living in the practise of the virtue they teach.  
Then, you can say, “What?  
Can I not do what these have done?  
Can I not imitate their holiness and follow  
their example of a perfect life?”**



**You can be sure, dear Reader, that if you use these Maxims in this way, the truths in these Maxims will purify your heart, free it from attachment to creatures, enable it to perceive great virtue and provide help for its practice.**

**In a word, they will fill you with Jesus Christ by stripping you of self in order to be clothed with him, and in the fullness of the Divine Spirit they will establish you in the possession of perfect peace, crown you with merit and lead you to the happiness of the glory of eternity.**

**This is the good I wish for you with all my heart.**

***- J.P. Medaille, SJ***



# THE MAXIMS OF PERFECTION

PART ONE contains MAXIMS of varying length,  
grouped according to the virtues they recommend.

*This is the 'bouquet of virtues' our Abba Jean-Pierre  
picked from the Gospel...*

- *The End for souls aspiring to high virtue*
- *The Means to arrive at this end*
- *Humility*                      *Patience*                      *Hope*
- *Love of God*                      *Love of Neighbour*                      *Zeal*
- *Good Use of Time*      *Obedience to Grace*      *Peace of Heart*
- *Conformity to God's will*                      *Purity of Intention*
- *Faith* (*mixed maxims – spiritual direction, leisure, discernment*)



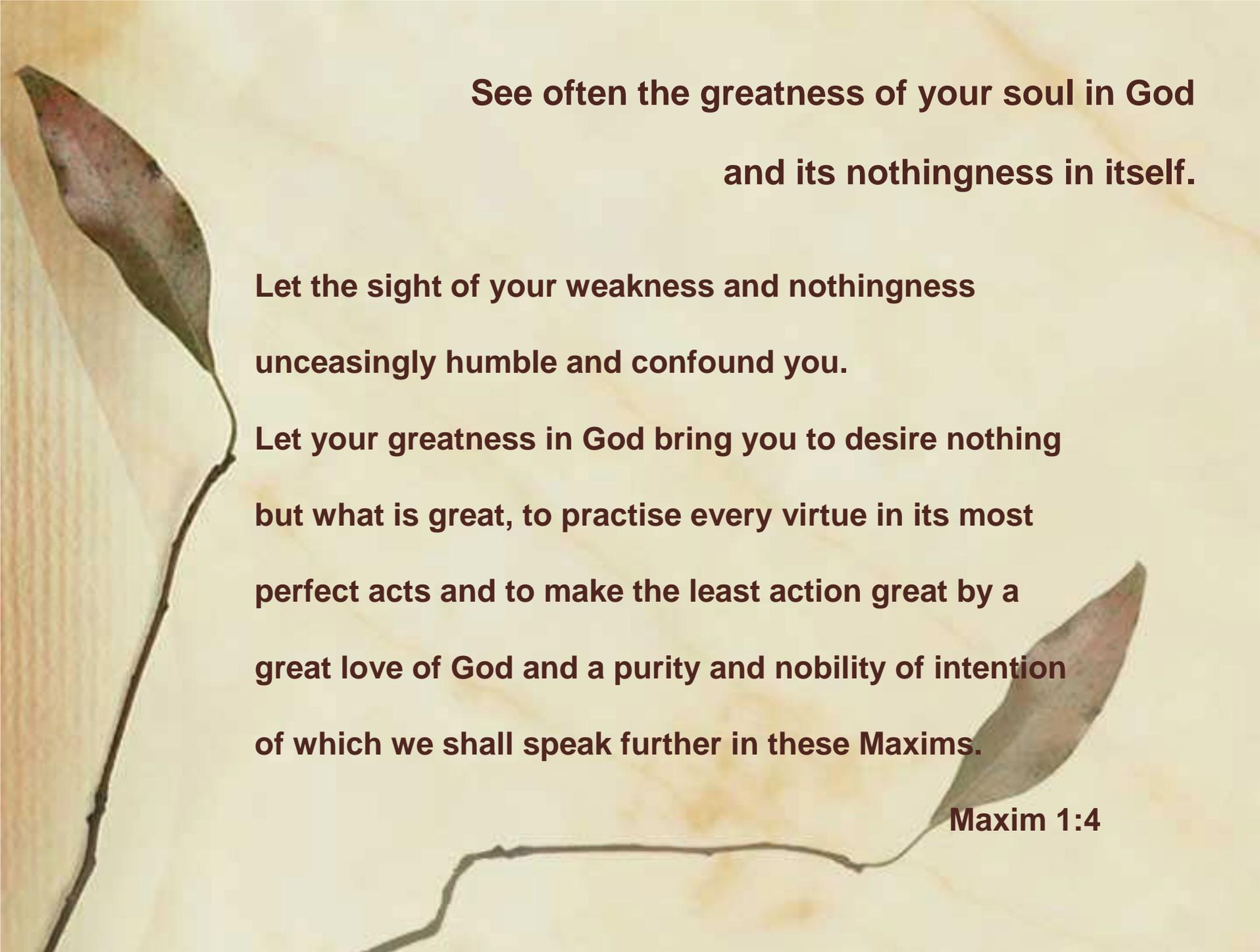
## **THE GOAL**

**Have always before your eyes  
the sublime end of your Christian commitment.**

**See your particular vocation  
and the attraction of divine grace  
which draws you gently but firmly  
to the practice of great virtue.**

**Do nothing that might distance you from  
or make you undeserving of the graces  
with which the divine Goodness has been favouring you,  
perhaps for some time and with little effect.**

**Maxim 1:1**

A dried leaf and stem are positioned on the left side of the page, extending from the top left towards the bottom center. The leaf is dark brown and curled, while the stem is thin and dark. The background is a light, textured surface with some faint, darker spots.

**See often the greatness of your soul in God  
and its nothingness in itself.**

**Let the sight of your weakness and nothingness  
unceasingly humble and confound you.**

**Let your greatness in God bring you to desire nothing  
but what is great, to practise every virtue in its most  
perfect acts and to make the least action great by a  
great love of God and a purity and nobility of intention  
of which we shall speak further in these Maxims.**

**Maxim 1:4**



## THE MEANS

**Strip yourself of the old self so that you can put on the new.**

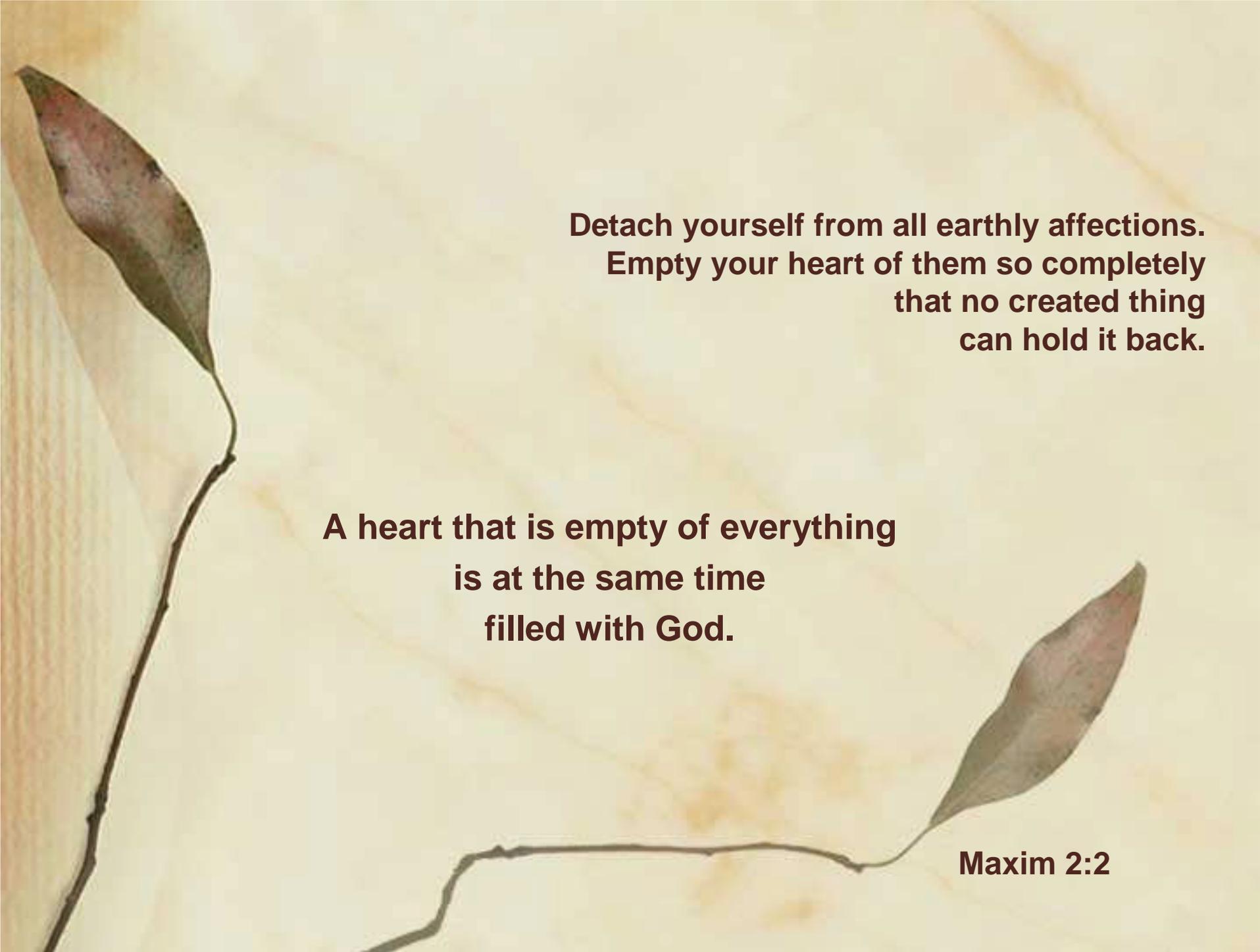
**In order to live in the perfection of this Maxim,  
die to all self-love and to every movement of the heart  
that comes from a wounded nature  
resistant to the grace of the Holy Spirit.**

**When you have died to nature and to the old self,  
live the life of Christ Jesus,  
putting on his humility, gentleness, simplicity  
and all his other virtues.**

**Then you can say with Saint Paul:**

***“I live, no, not I, it is Christ who lives in me.”***

**Maxim 2: 4**

A dried, brown leaf is attached to a thin, dark stem. The leaf is positioned in the upper left corner, and the stem extends horizontally across the lower half of the image. The background is a light, textured surface with subtle, wavy patterns in shades of beige and cream.

**Detach yourself from all earthly affections.  
Empty your heart of them so completely  
that no created thing  
can hold it back.**

**A heart that is empty of everything  
is at the same time  
filled with God.**

**Maxim 2:2**

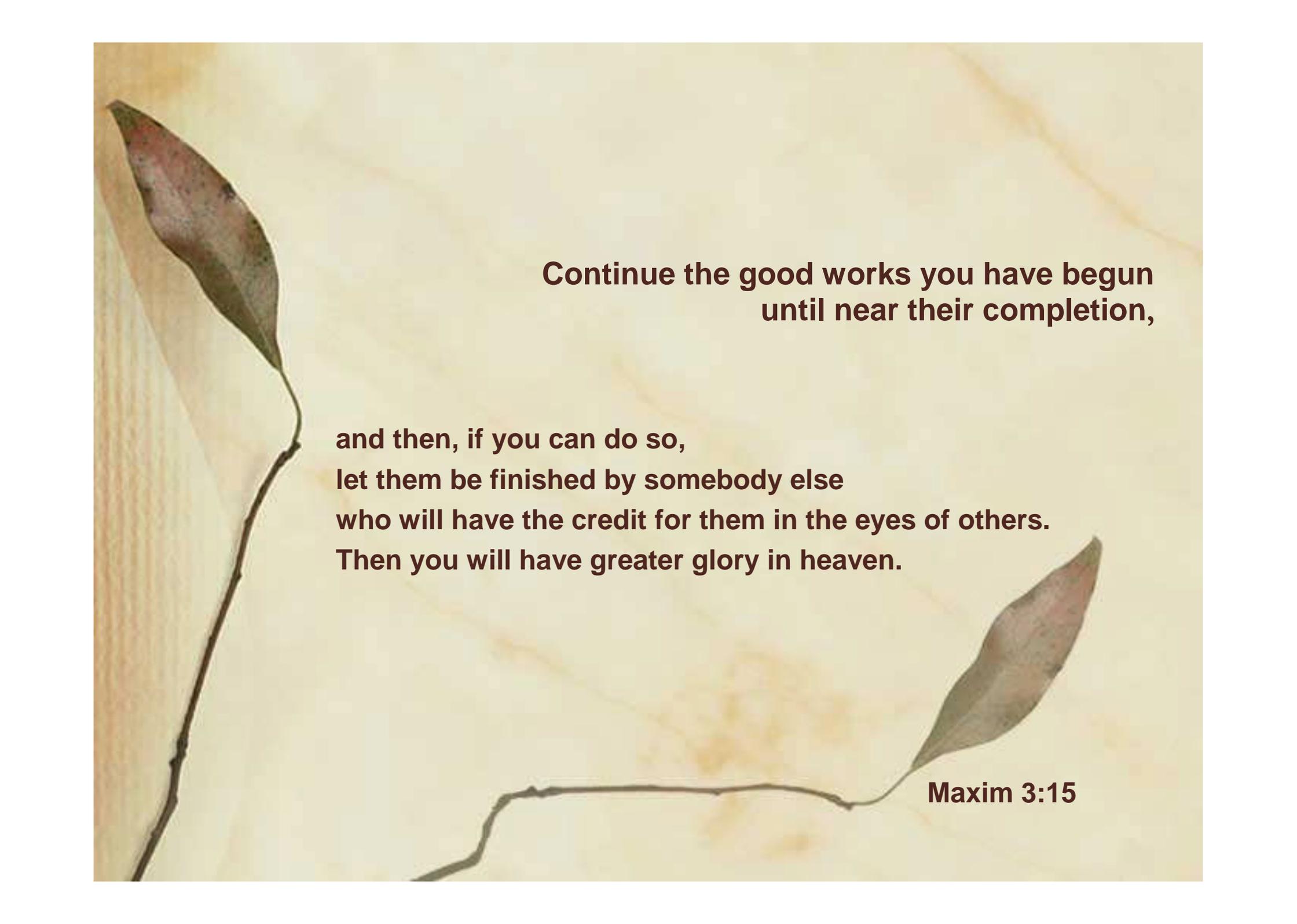


## HUMILITY

**However pure your views and intentions  
may appear,  
be persuaded that you seek yourself  
in some recess of your self-love.**

**Nature is always intermingled  
in the workings of grace,  
and indeed there are few virtues  
that are wholly free of self-love.**

**Maxim 3: 14**



**Continue the good works you have begun  
until near their completion,**

**and then, if you can do so,  
let them be finished by somebody else  
who will have the credit for them in the eyes of others.  
Then you will have greater glory in heaven.**

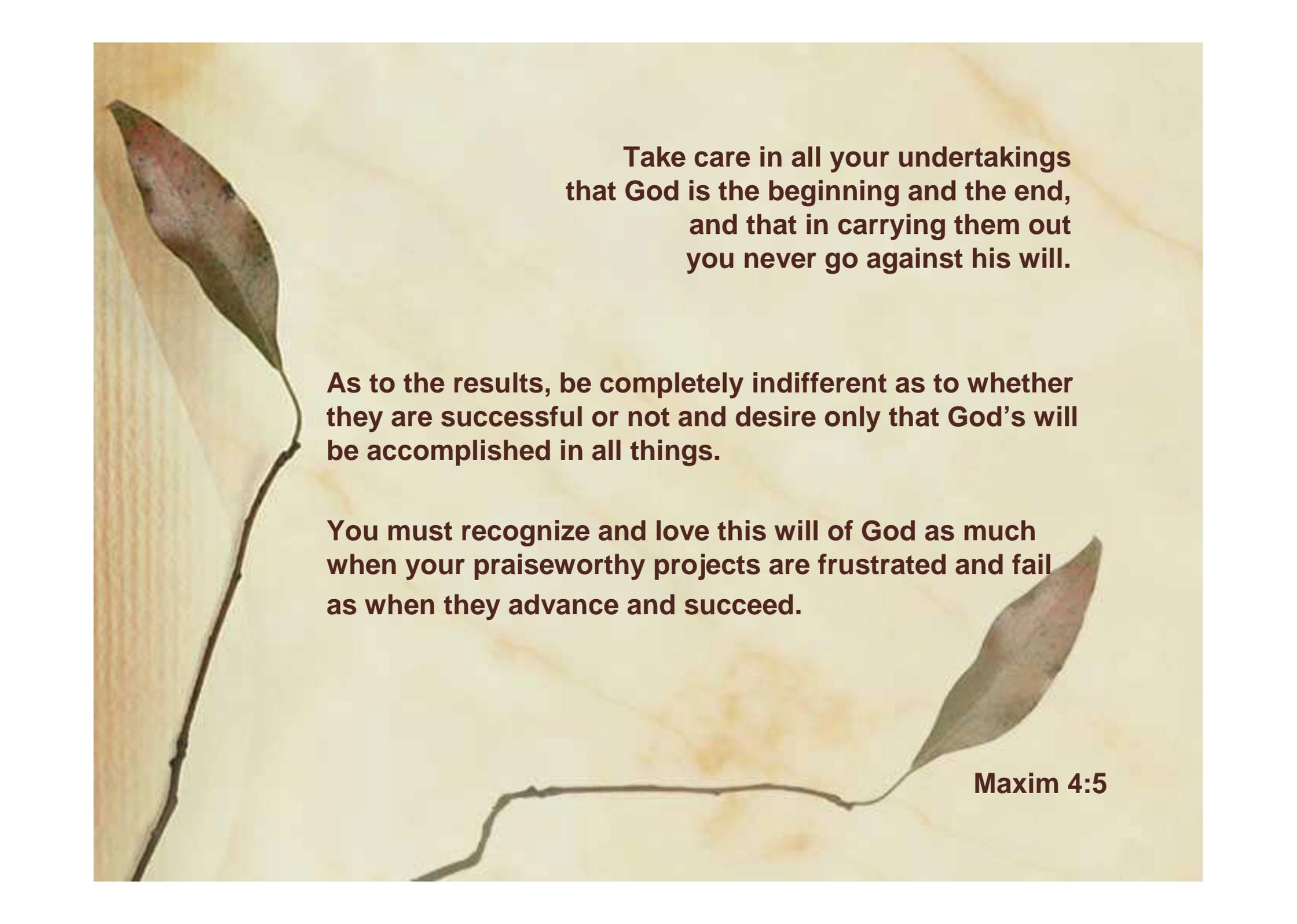
**Maxim 3:15**



## **PURITY OF INTENTION**

**Have God alone  
before your eyes,  
God's good pleasure,  
God's glory,  
and make no account  
of anything else.**

**Maxim 4:4**



**Take care in all your undertakings  
that God is the beginning and the end,  
and that in carrying them out  
you never go against his will.**

**As to the results, be completely indifferent as to whether  
they are successful or not and desire only that God's will  
be accomplished in all things.**

**You must recognize and love this will of God as much  
when your praiseworthy projects are frustrated and fail  
as when they advance and succeed.**

**Maxim 4:5**



## **PATIENCE**

**Sufferings accepted well are like the wood which serves to kindle the fire of love.**

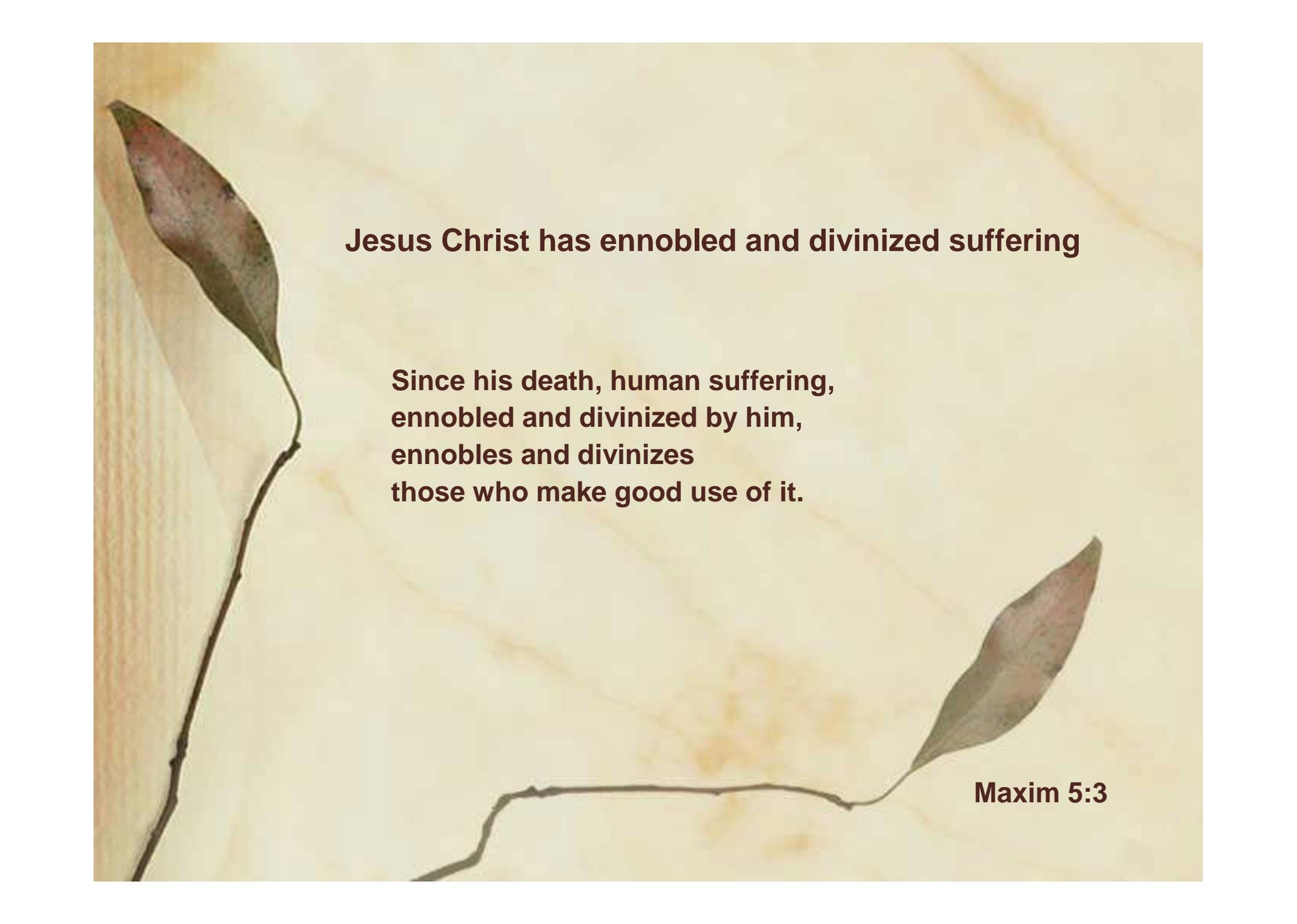
**To the extent that you endure faithfully and make good use of your crosses, you will see the sacred fire of love grow in your heart.**

**Souls who have this great love are usually led through great sufferings. Grasp this truth well and profit from it.**

**A great fire cannot keep burning unless someone continues to throw wood on it.**

**Likewise to sustain a great love of God throughout life, it is necessary to endure great suffering.**

**Maxim 5: 2**



**Jesus Christ has ennobled and divinized suffering**

**Since his death, human suffering,  
ennobled and divinized by him,  
ennobles and divinizes  
those who make good use of it.**

**Maxim 5:3**

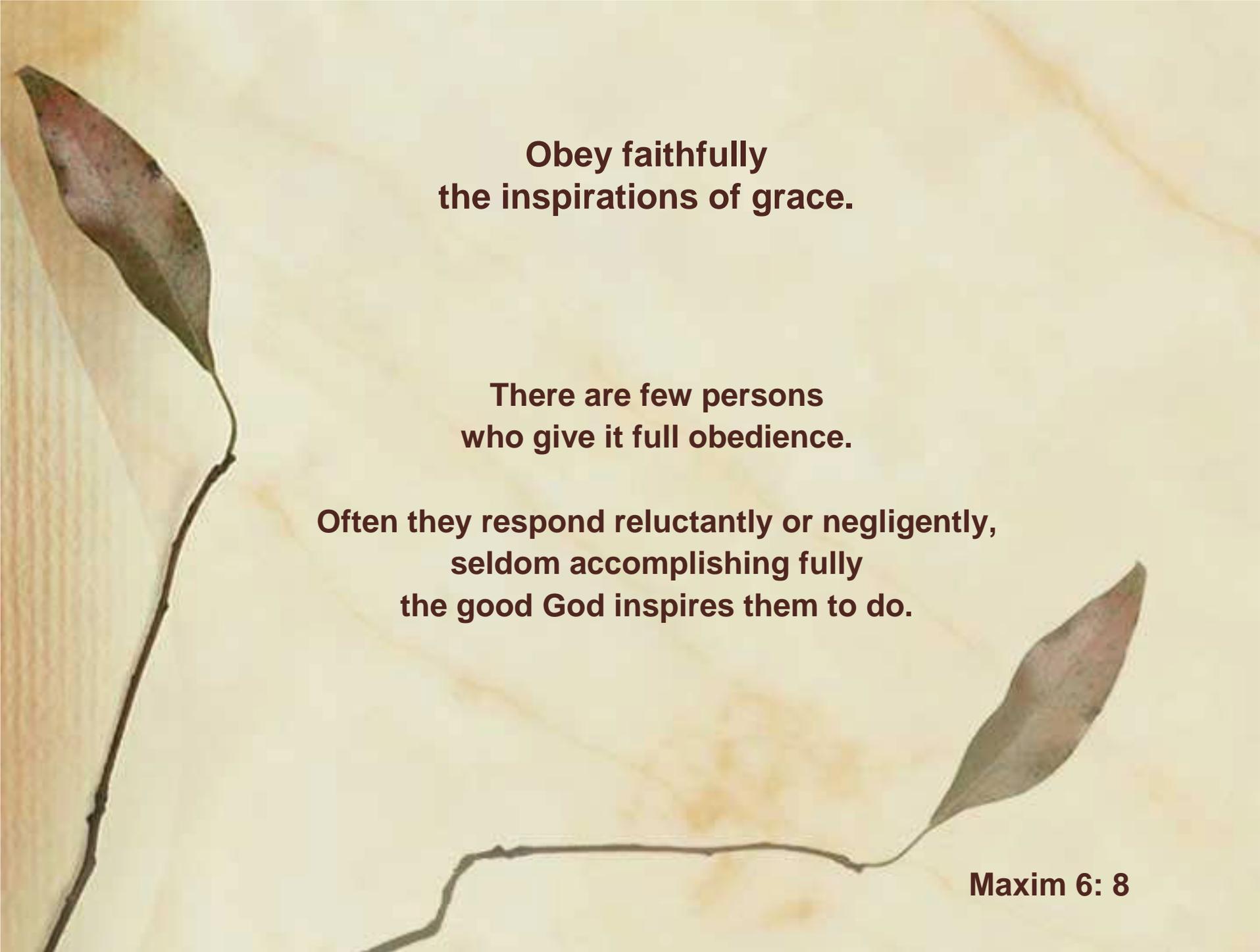


## **OBEDIENCE TO GRACE**

**Never go ahead of grace through imprudent eagerness  
but await its moment in peace,  
and when it comes to you,  
follow it with great gentleness and courage.**

**Once you have obeyed,  
take care lest complacency  
rob you of the fruit of your obedience.**

**Maxim 6:9**

A dried leaf on a stem, positioned vertically on the left side of the image. The leaf is brown and curled, with a dark stem extending downwards. The background is a light, textured surface with some faint, darker spots.

**Obey faithfully  
the inspirations of grace.**

**There are few persons  
who give it full obedience.**

**Often they respond reluctantly or negligently,  
seldom accomplishing fully  
the good God inspires them to do.**

**Maxim 6: 8**



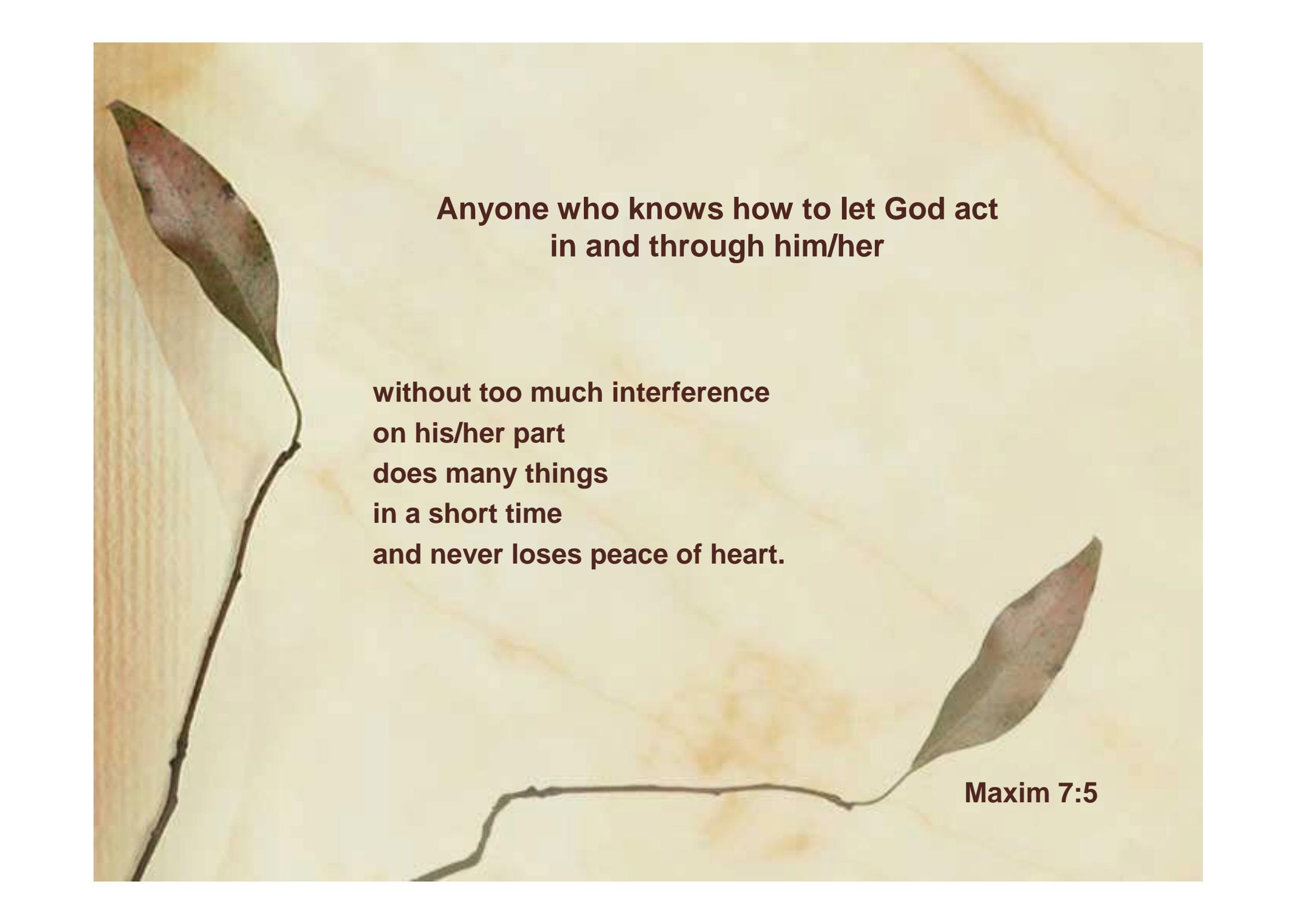
## **PEACE OF HEART**

**Live in peace and inner tranquility.**

**Show this by acting without rush  
or too great eagerness.**

**Suffer what you have to suffer peacefully,  
in perfect tranquility of spirit in God,  
and loving acceptance of all that  
God's holy will ordains.**

**Maxim 7:1**



**Anyone who knows how to let God act  
in and through him/her**

**without too much interference  
on his/her part  
does many things  
in a short time  
and never loses peace of heart.**

**Maxim 7:5**



**CHARITY  
TOWARD THE  
NEIGHBOUR**

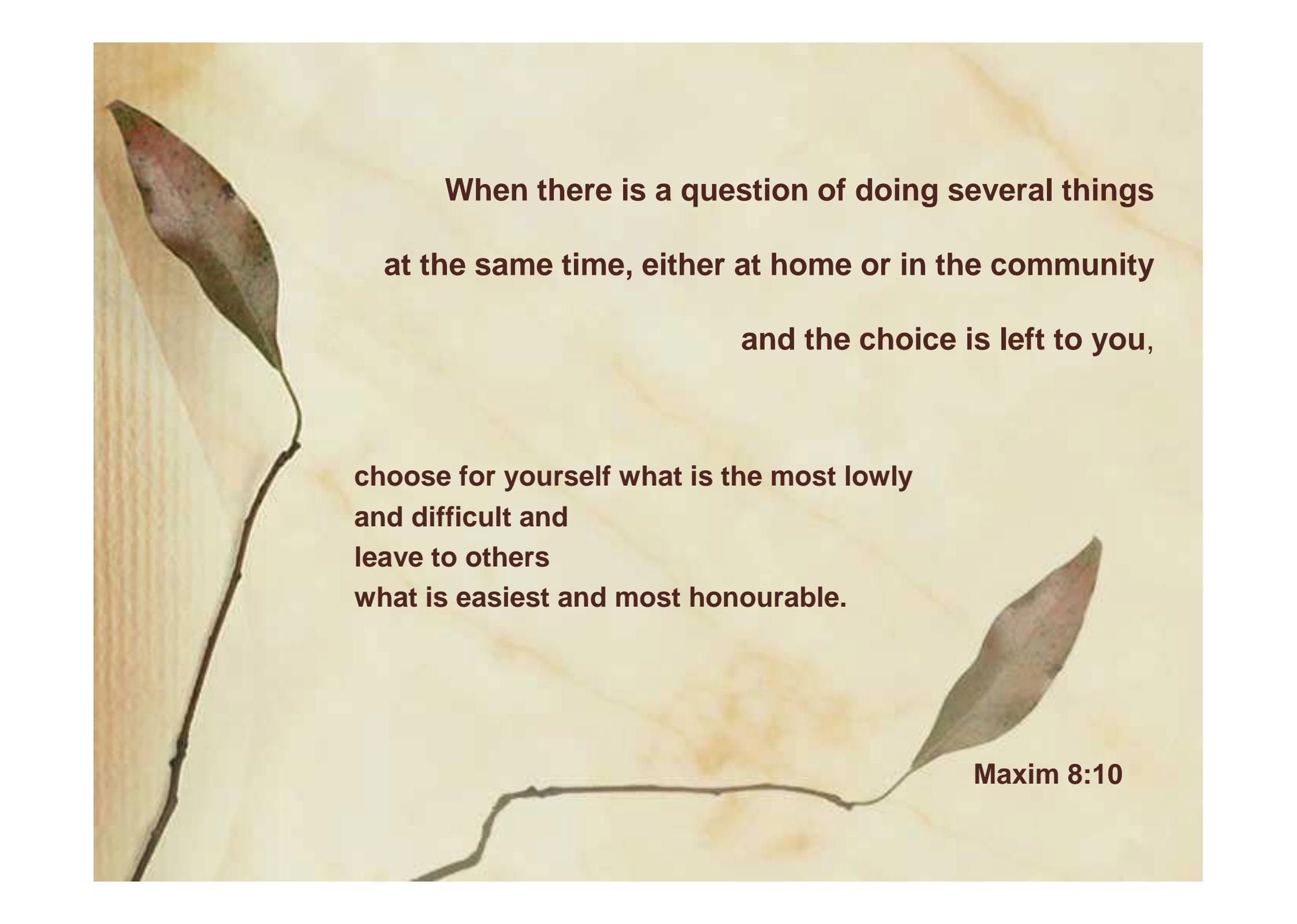
**Always have a good opinion of others.**

**Speak well of them.**

**Excuse and conceal as well as you can any wrong  
that you see in them.**

**Be obliging to everyone and never be discourteous  
toward anyone.**

**Maxim 8: 4**



**When there is a question of doing several things  
at the same time, either at home or in the community  
and the choice is left to you,**

**choose for yourself what is the most lowly  
and difficult and  
leave to others  
what is easiest and most honourable.**

**Maxim 8:10**

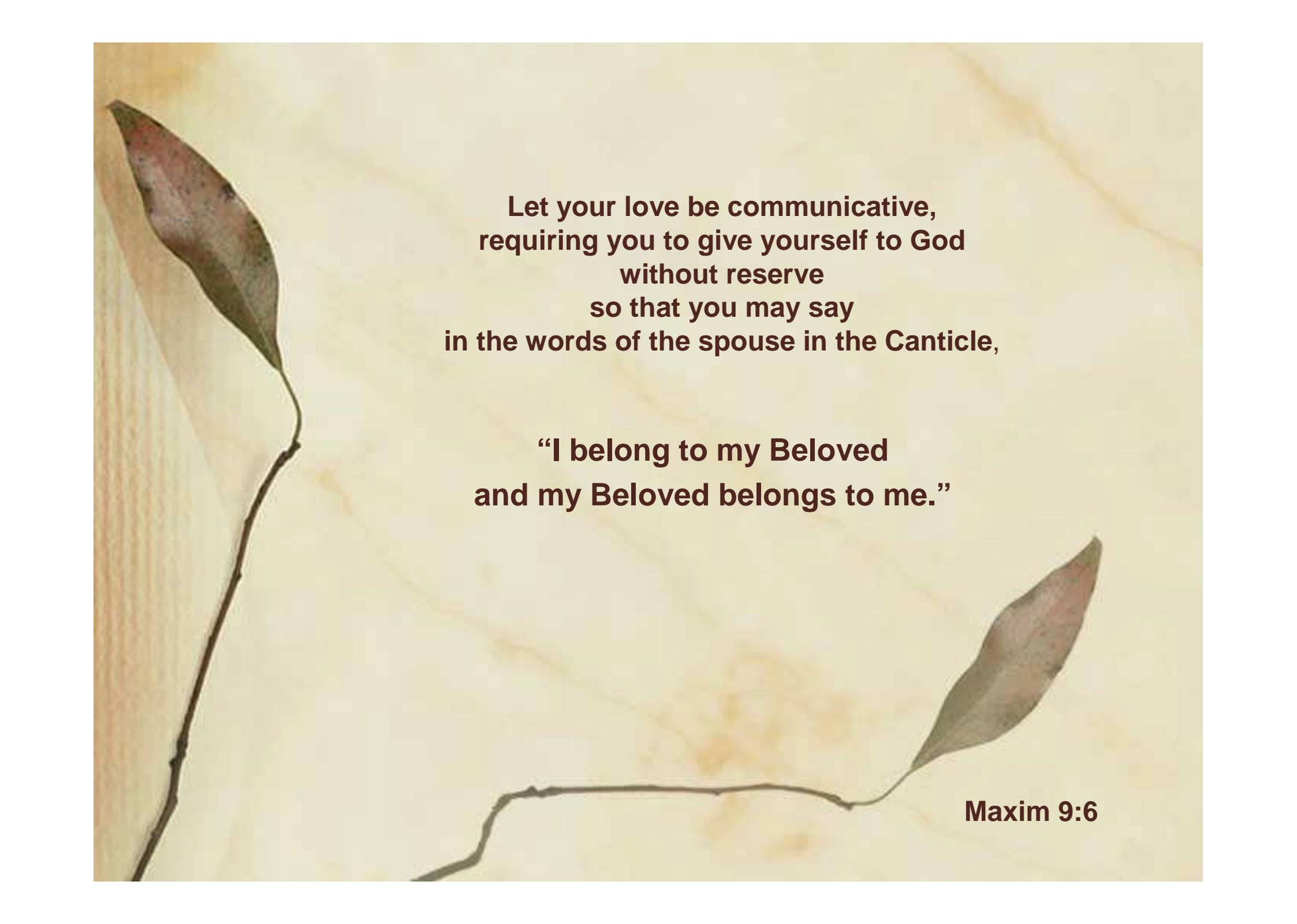


## **LOVE OF GOD**

**Have for God a love that is generous,  
embracing all that love is capable of and  
all that a heart can love in God and for God;**

- sublime, full of purpose and ardour,  
transcending all created beings;**
- profound, residing in the centre of your heart and  
unable to be uprooted by any created power.**

**Maxim 9:2**

The background features a pressed leaf on aged, yellowish paper. The leaf is dark brown and elongated, with a thin stem extending across the page. Faint, large-scale text is visible in the background, including the words "I belong to my Beloved" and "and my Beloved belongs to me."

**Let your love be communicative,  
requiring you to give yourself to God  
without reserve  
so that you may say  
in the words of the spouse in the Canticle,**

**“I belong to my Beloved  
and my Beloved belongs to me.”**

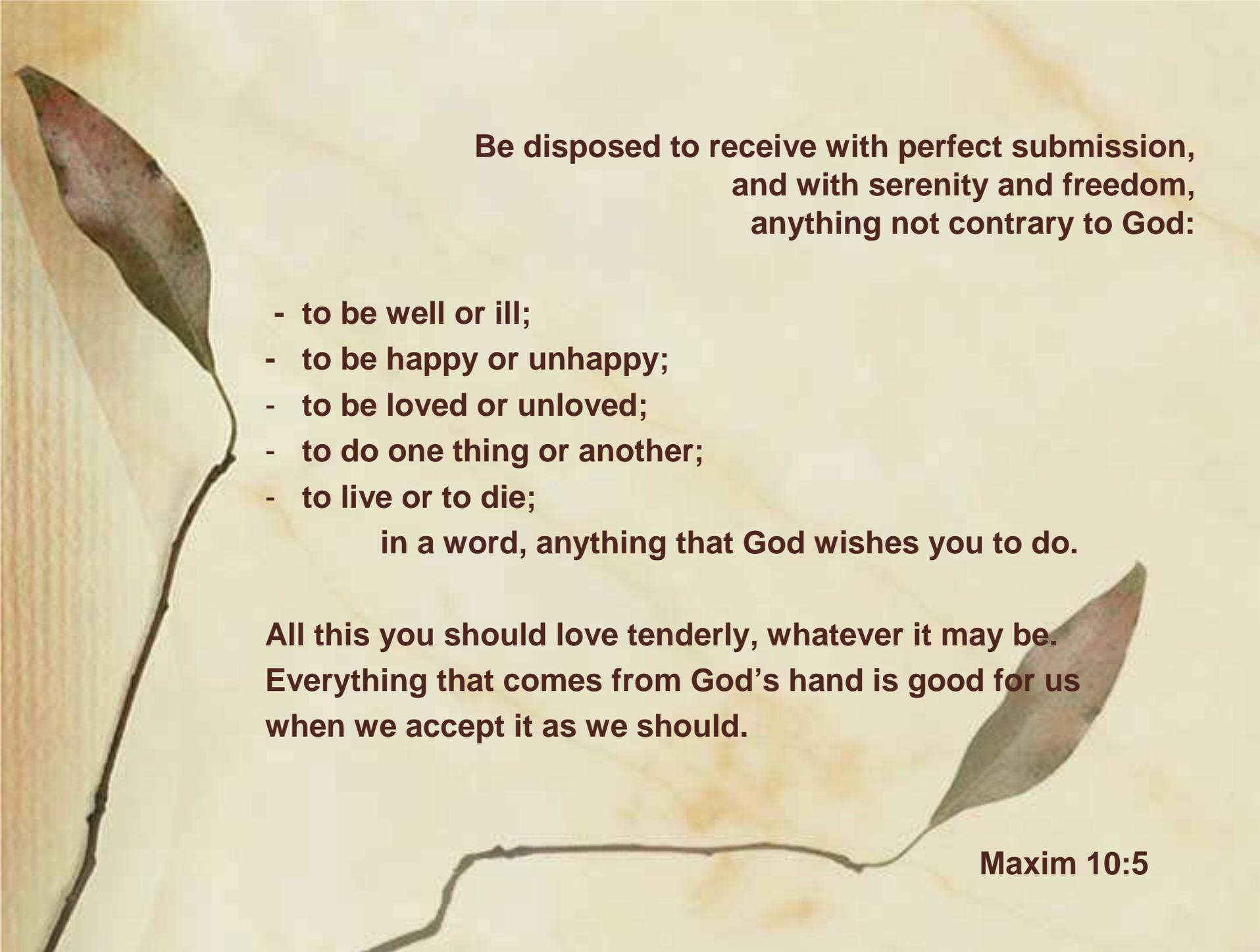
**Maxim 9:6**



**CONFORMITY TO  
GOD'S WILL**

**Have only one desire throughout your life:  
to be and to become,  
what God wants you to be  
in nature,  
in grace,  
in glory,  
for time and for eternity.**

**Maxim 10:6**

A dried, pressed leaf on a stem, positioned vertically on the left side of the page. The leaf is brown and slightly curled, with a prominent vein running down its length. The stem is thin and dark, extending from the bottom left towards the center. The background is a light, textured surface, possibly parchment or aged paper, with some faint, irregular brown spots.

**Be disposed to receive with perfect submission,  
and with serenity and freedom,  
anything not contrary to God:**

- to be well or ill;**
- to be happy or unhappy;**
- to be loved or unloved;**
- to do one thing or another;**
- to live or to die;**

**in a word, anything that God wishes you to do.**

**All this you should love tenderly, whatever it may be.  
Everything that comes from God's hand is good for us  
when we accept it as we should.**

**Maxim 10:5**

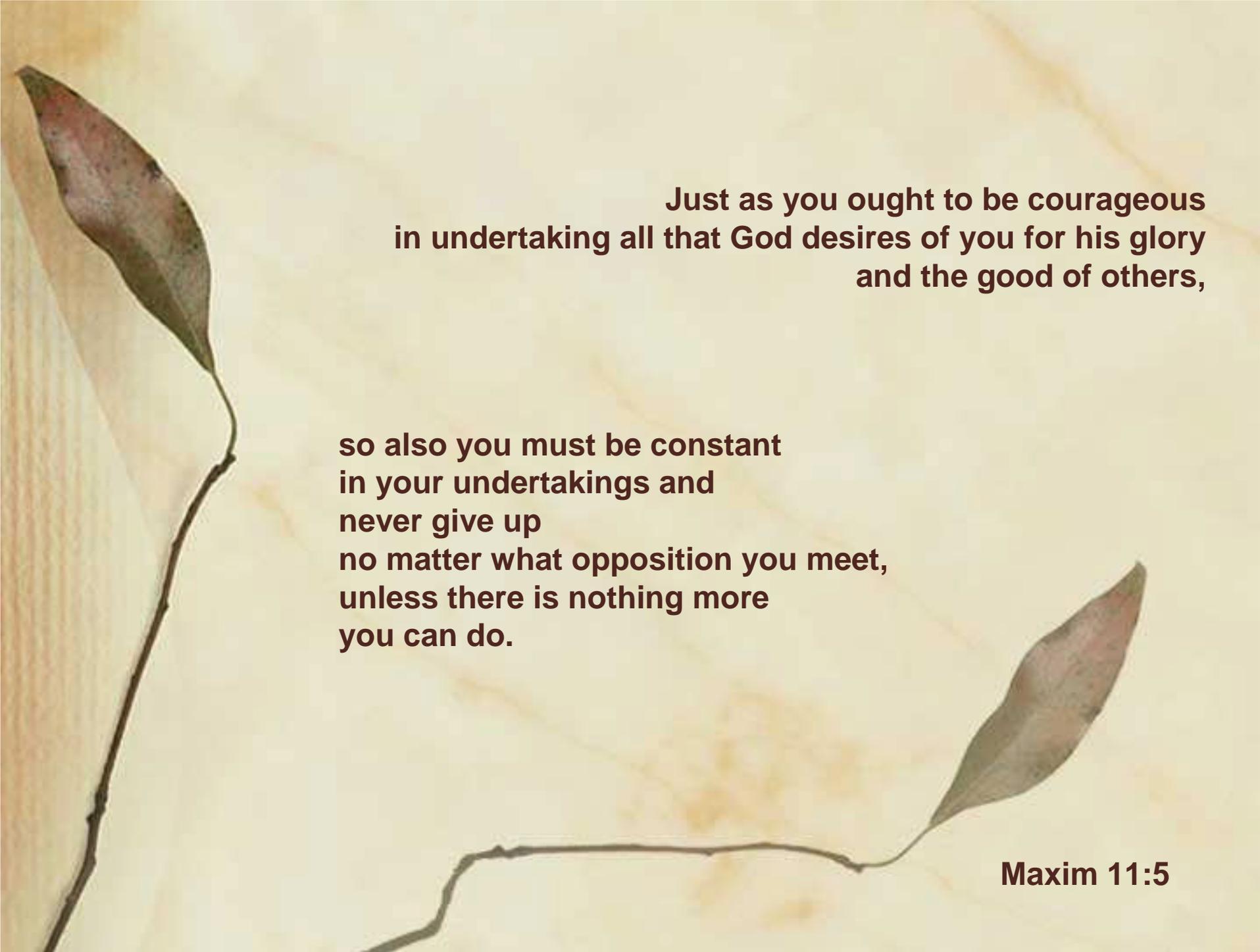


## **ZEAL**

**Your zeal will always be in proportion  
to the love of God  
you have in your heart.**

**If it springs from a great love,  
then it will be great.**

**Maxim 11:1**

A dried branch with two leaves is positioned vertically on the left side of the image. The branch extends from the bottom left towards the top left, with a single leaf at the top. A second branch extends horizontally from the bottom center towards the right, ending in a single leaf. The background is a light, textured surface with subtle brown and tan patterns.

**Just as you ought to be courageous  
in undertaking all that God desires of you for his glory  
and the good of others,**

**so also you must be constant  
in your undertakings and  
never give up  
no matter what opposition you meet,  
unless there is nothing more  
you can do.**

**Maxim 11:5**

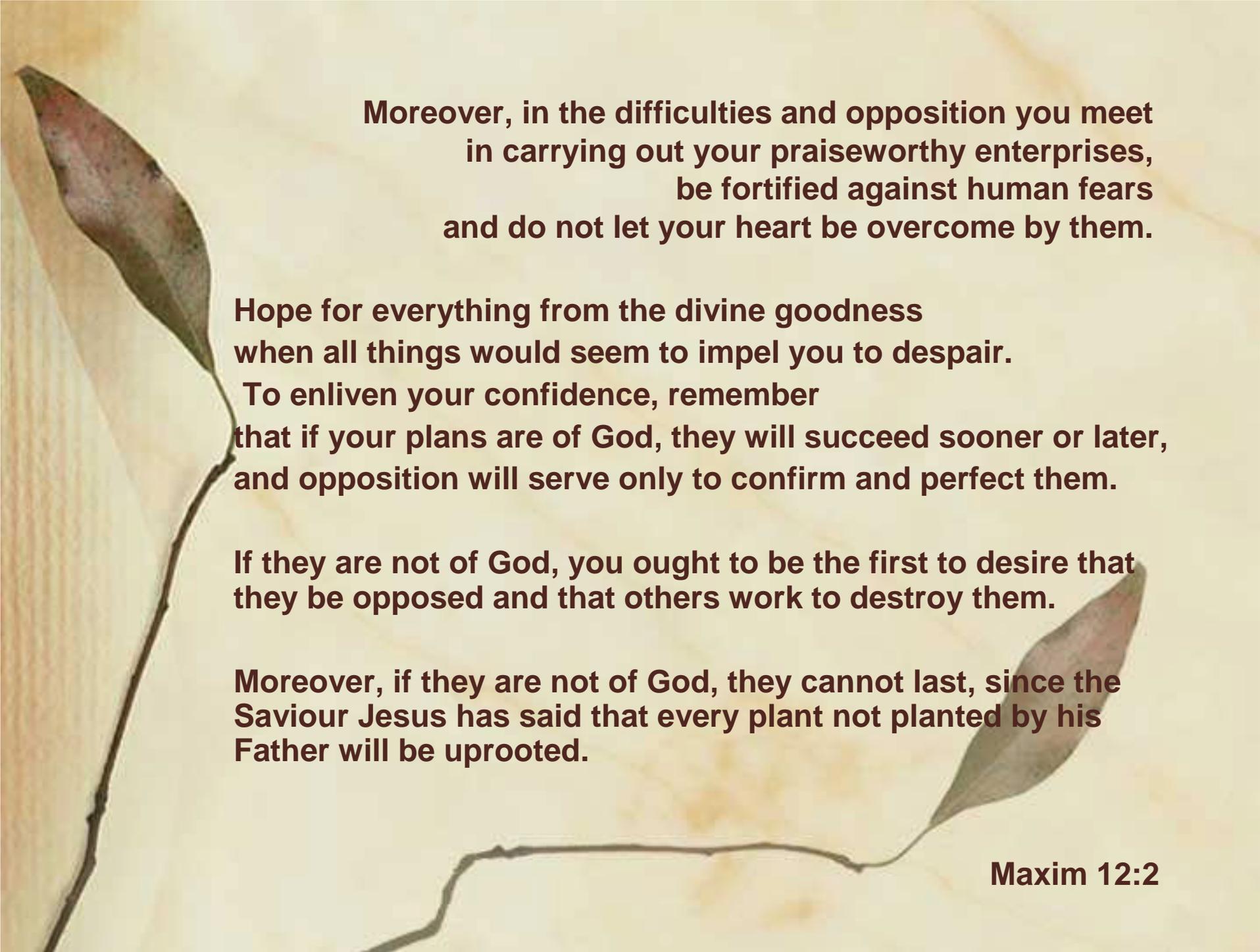


## HOPE

**In the practice of hope, confide more in God  
when in your trials and difficulties  
there is less likelihood of human aid.  
However, in your greatest afflictions,  
dangers and difficulties,  
do not always hope that God will deliver you, or  
comfort you, or make your undertakings succeed,  
but hope that he will accomplish in you and by you  
his adorable will.**

**Live content with this thought.**

**Maxim 12: 1**

A dried leaf on a stem, positioned vertically on the left side of the page. The leaf is brown and slightly curled. The stem is thin and dark. The background is a light, textured surface, possibly paper or parchment.

**Moreover, in the difficulties and opposition you meet  
in carrying out your praiseworthy enterprises,  
be fortified against human fears  
and do not let your heart be overcome by them.**

**Hope for everything from the divine goodness  
when all things would seem to impel you to despair.  
To enliven your confidence, remember  
that if your plans are of God, they will succeed sooner or later,  
and opposition will serve only to confirm and perfect them.**

**If they are not of God, you ought to be the first to desire that  
they be opposed and that others work to destroy them.**

**Moreover, if they are not of God, they cannot last, since the  
Saviour Jesus has said that every plant not planted by his  
Father will be uprooted.**

**Maxim 12:2**



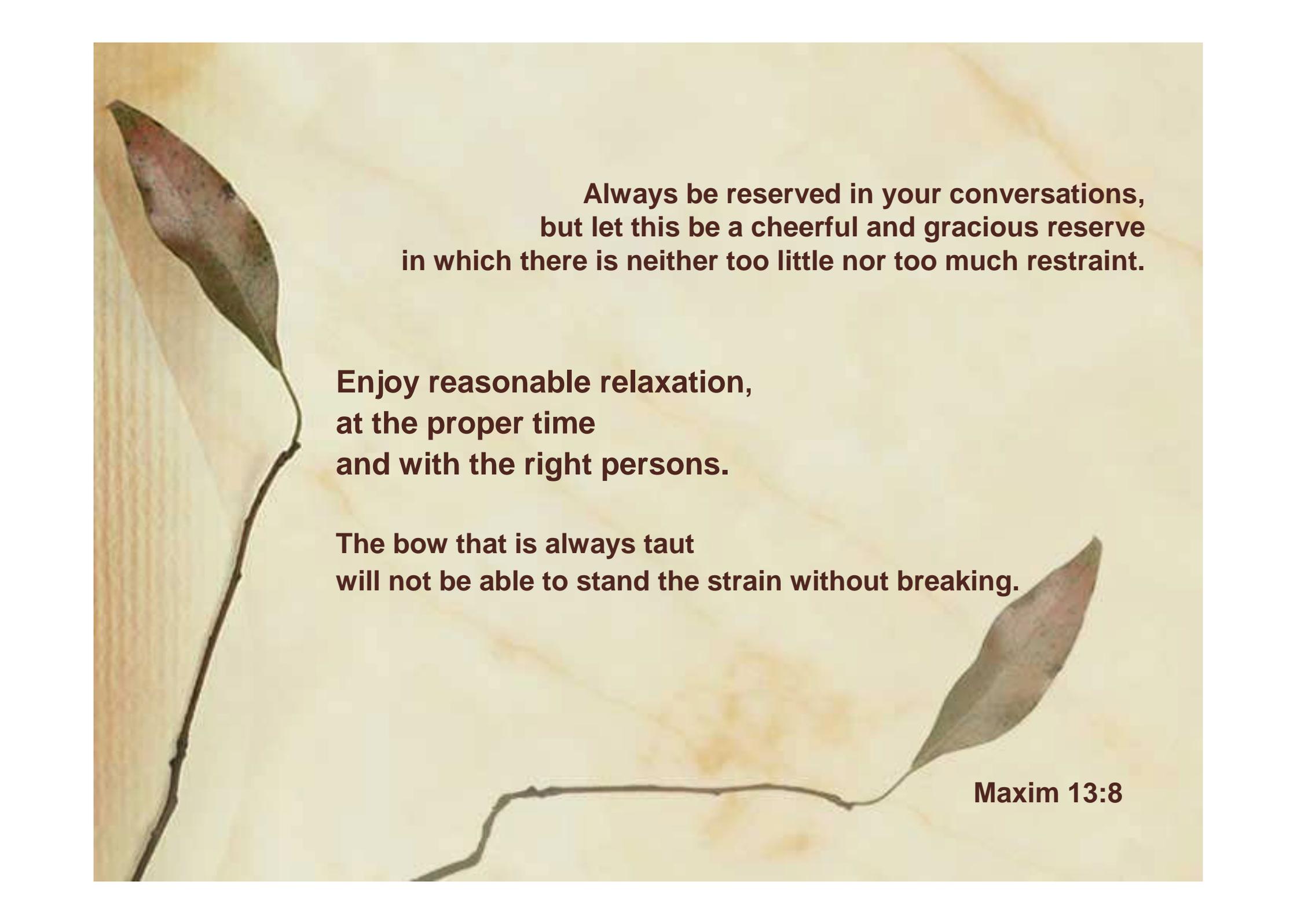
**FAITH**

**MIXED MAXIMS**

**Believe the truths of the Gospel  
with a stronger faith  
the more incomprehensible they are.**

**Believe them with a living faith  
which grasps, as it must,  
the inexpressible  
and awesome mysteries  
revealed to us.**

**Maxim 13:1**



**Always be reserved in your conversations,  
but let this be a cheerful and gracious reserve  
in which there is neither too little nor too much restraint.**

**Enjoy reasonable relaxation,  
at the proper time  
and with the right persons.**

**The bow that is always taut  
will not be able to stand the strain without breaking.**

**Maxim 13:8**



**THE GOOD USE  
OF TIME**

**Be concerned  
about the good use of time.**

**It is precious  
and its loss is irreparable.**

**Maxim 14:1**

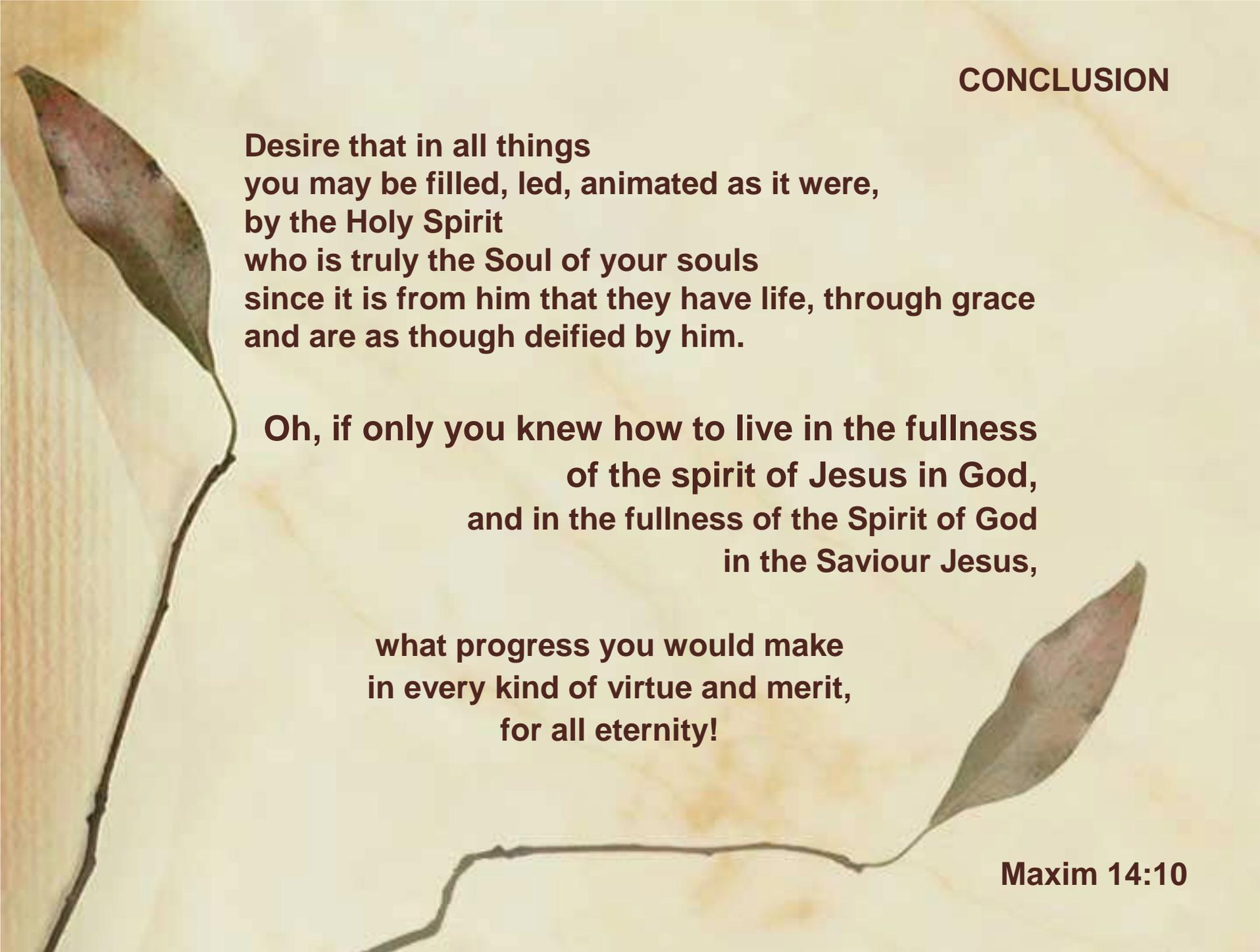


**Give your full attention  
to the actions you perform.**

**Remove from them the slightest imperfections,  
and try to observe all conditions  
necessary to make them perfect.**

**One action done well is worth a thousand  
done half-heartedly.**

**Maxim 14:4**



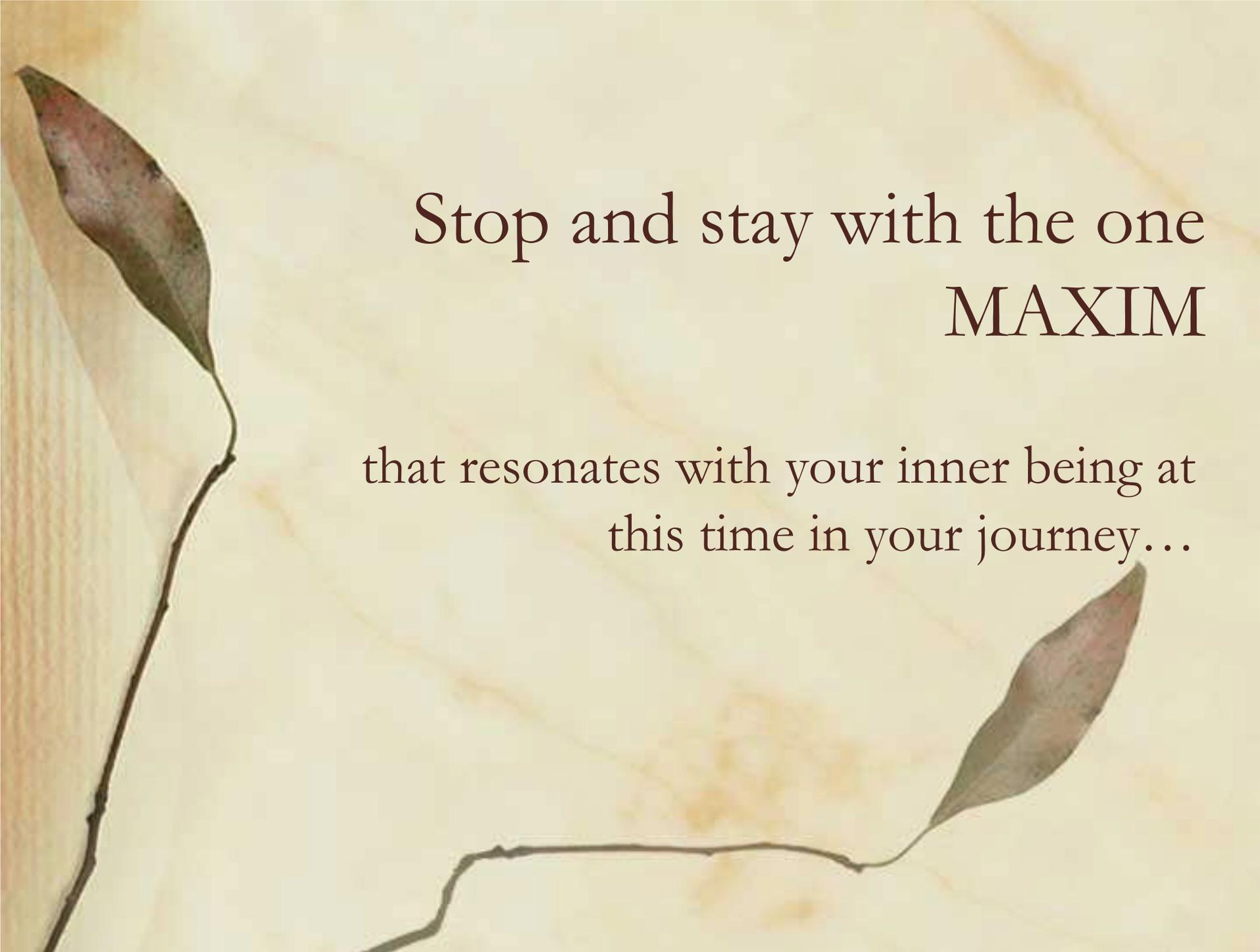
## CONCLUSION

**Desire that in all things  
you may be filled, led, animated as it were,  
by the Holy Spirit  
who is truly the Soul of your souls  
since it is from him that they have life, through grace  
and are as though deified by him.**

**Oh, if only you knew how to live in the fullness  
of the spirit of Jesus in God,  
and in the fullness of the Spirit of God  
in the Saviour Jesus,**

**what progress you would make  
in every kind of virtue and merit,  
for all eternity!**

**Maxim 14:10**

A dried branch with two leaves is positioned on the left side of the image, extending from the top left towards the bottom center. The leaves are dark brown and appear to be pressed against a light beige, textured background. The branch is thin and dark brown. The overall composition is simple and artistic.

Stop and stay with the one  
MAXIM

that resonates with your inner being at  
this time in your journey...



**“Read  
and re-read  
these Maxims often...**

**and they will lead you to the  
happiness and the glory  
of eternity”**

**-J.P. Medaille**