

THE WAY OF HOPE

GROWING CLOSE TO GOD THROUGH LOSS

— WORKBOOK —



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INTRODUCTION

Life can be tough and even frightening. Perhaps you agree with those who sigh, “No place is safe.” After all, shootings and bombings take place unexpectedly in schools, workplaces, airports, malls, and parks. It seems the world is hopelessly trapped in a state of fear and uncertainty. Furthermore, we all experience loss of one sort or another. We may encounter loss of a job or career, finances, a relationship, health, friends, a family member, or any number of other situations. As a result, we feel hopeless and helpless.

So what do you need to do in the face of apparent hopelessness? The answer lies in this significant study, *The Way of Hope*. With the help of this workbook, five video sessions, and two books—*Hope in the Midst of Loss* and *The Way of Hope*—you will learn that God has provided hope. His gift of hope is available, resilient, and triumphant.

Grasp this hope firmly and share it freely!

SESSION 1

TESTIMONIALS ABOUT LOSSES

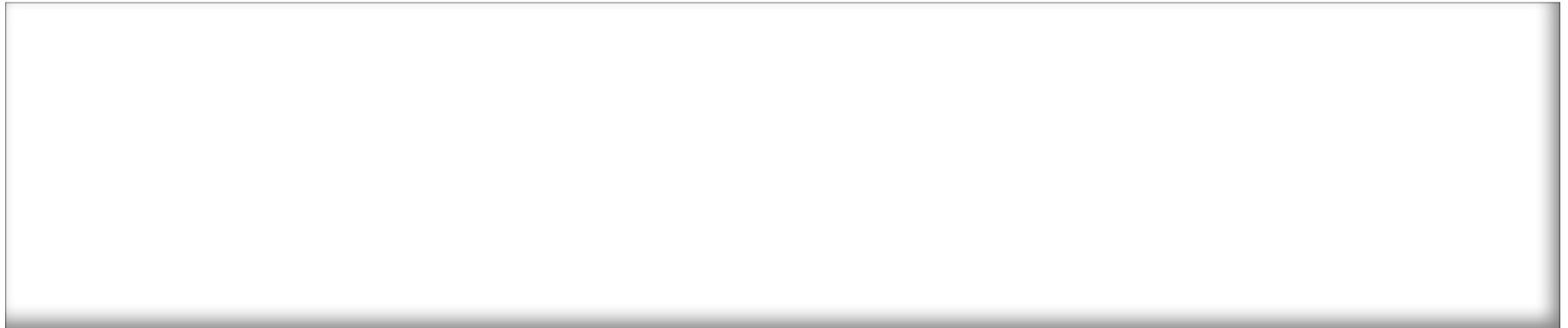
Contrary to the belief that the Christian life includes nothing but prosperity and happiness, the Bible teaches that it includes not only blessings but also burdens. Those we read about in the Bible lived through periods of loss and sorrow. For example, Job was a righteous man, but he experienced colossal losses: his livestock, his servants, his sons and daughters, and his health. Moses, too, had his share of hardship. He went from a privileged position in the palace in Egypt to exile in the desert of Midian. Later, when he led the Hebrews out of Egypt, Pharaoh pursued him with the purpose of destroying him and the Hebrews. During the wilderness wanderings, Moses' life was in jeopardy at the hand of the very people he had delivered from Egypt. He cried out to the Lord: "What shall I do to this people? A little more and they will stone me" (Ex. 17:4). David underwent intense persecution before he became king. And the apostle Paul experienced severe trials as he carried the gospel throughout the Roman Empire (see 2 Cor. 11:23-33).

The testimonies given in the video affirm the truth that personal loss and hardship are realities we must face and handle with God's wisdom and support. The Way of Hope DVD brings us face-to-face with several believers who experienced serious losses.

Theme: "Since we can't escape living with loss, what is God's plan?"

Facilitator's opening prayer

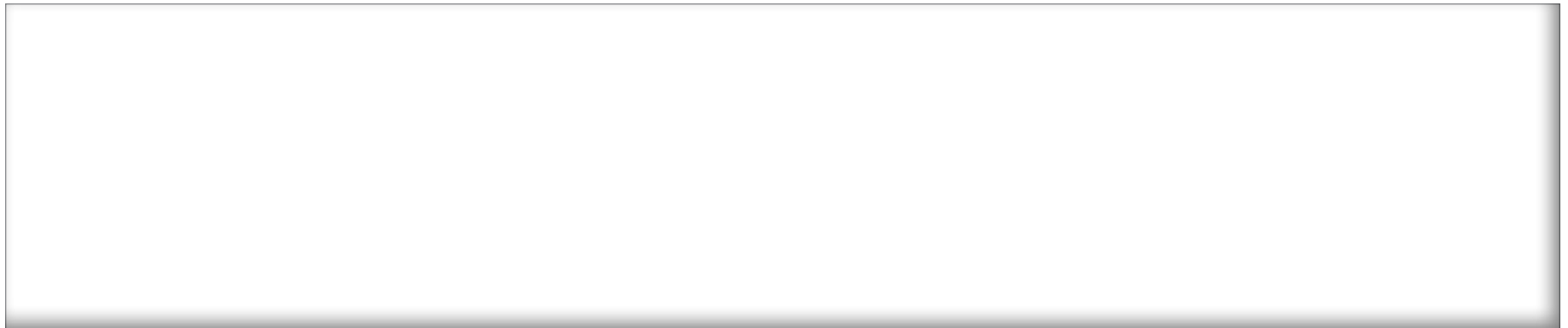
Nuts & Bolts for procedures:



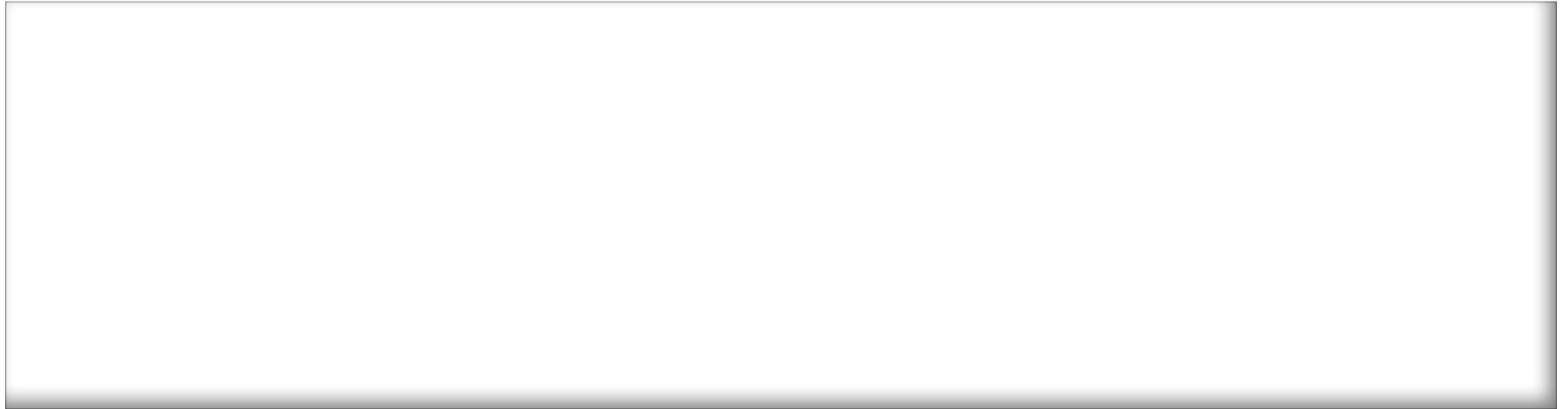
Today's viewing emphasis: Exploring the implications of loss in every life—is God there? Plus, we have “choices” in our loss.

Respond to the following questions as the Facilitator directs. Please, don't answer all of these at once.

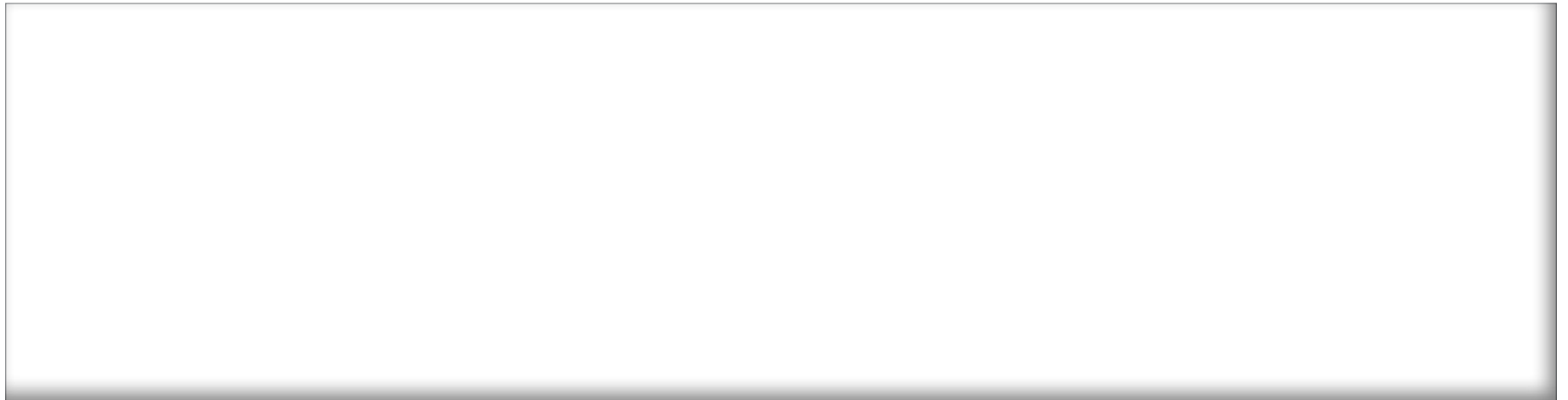
1. Activity 1 (pg. 31 in the book)—List as many words as you can associated with “loss...”



2. What statements in the DVD so far were most meaningful and cause you to want to explore in more depth? (such as, God's broken heart, or other concepts...)



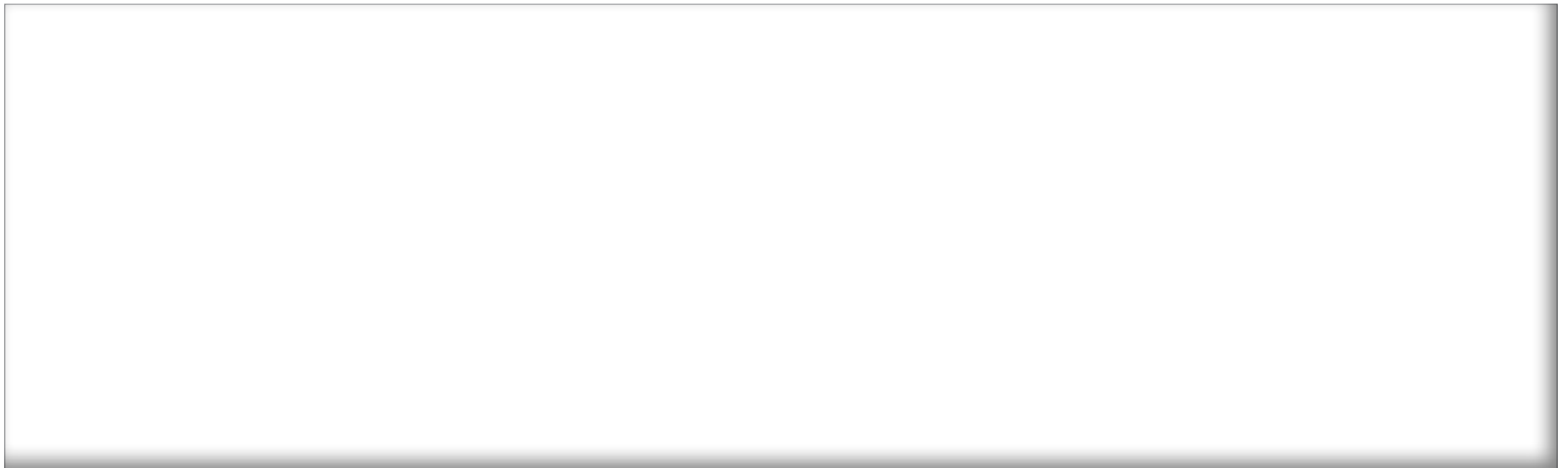
3. Activity 2 (pg. 38)—Make a list of the losses you are walking with today...



4. How can we draw hope from Job's experience with trials and multiple losses?



Notes:



Homework for next time: Follow up reading from *The Way of Hope*, pages 13-46, chapters 1-3. In addition, complete the “Personal Reflections” sections as they occur (pages 37-38, 43, and 44), as well as Activity 3 (pg. 45-46)—Identify your desires and dare to dream again.

Personal Reflection (pg. 37-38):



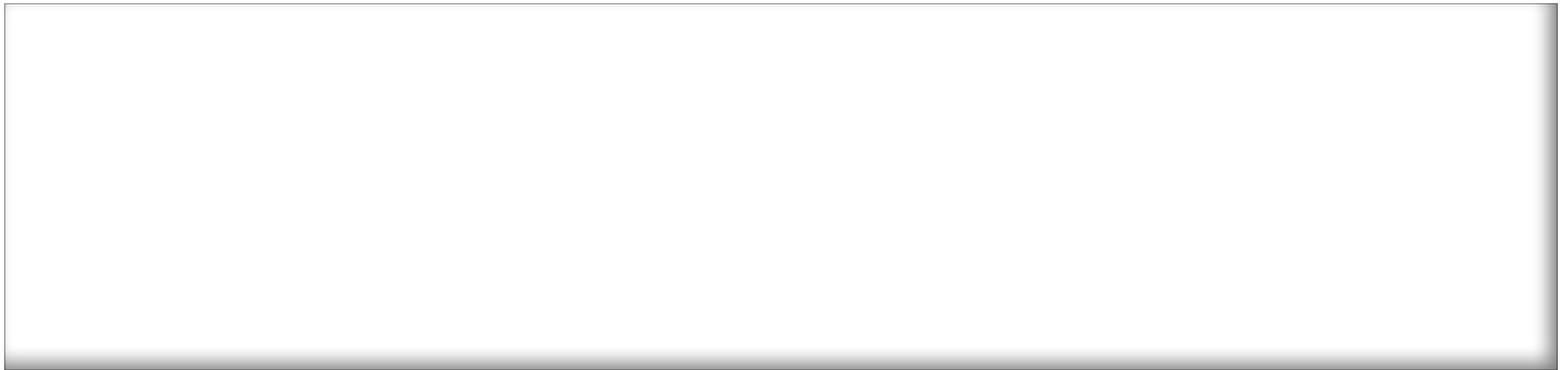
Personal Reflection (pg. 43):



Personal Reflection (pg. 44):

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Activity 3 (pgs. 45-46):

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Preview for next time: Gifts from God that reach our hearts and ease our way.

SESSION 2

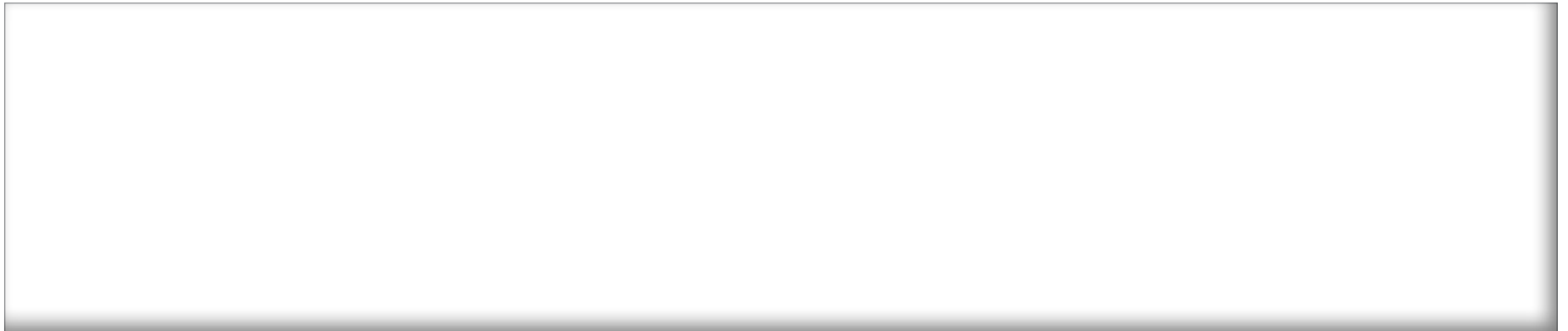
FINDING BLESSINGS

Theme: “Who else cares?”

Facilitator’s opening prayer

Questions for discussion from the homework reading:

1. The reading mentioned that there is a myth you might have heard before, “time heals all wounds.” (pg. 42) Anyone believe that? Time doesn’t necessarily heal all wounds. Time helps sometimes when you get some distance from an event. But, wounds which have been yielded to God can heal. How do you yield wounds to God?



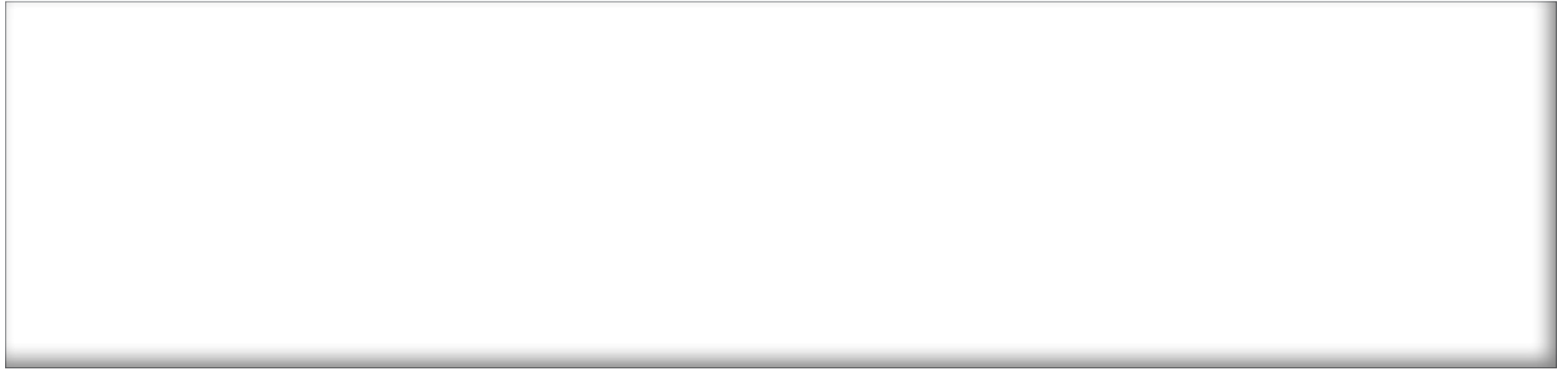
2. Two concepts the book wants you to keep track of are “choices” & “knowing.” Look for these throughout the material. We still have choices in loss—every day. There are big choices or small choices, but they are your choices. The other concept means what do I still know? What can I stand on regardless of my emotions and the temptation I have to run away?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the student to write their reflections on the concepts of choices and knowing in the context of loss.

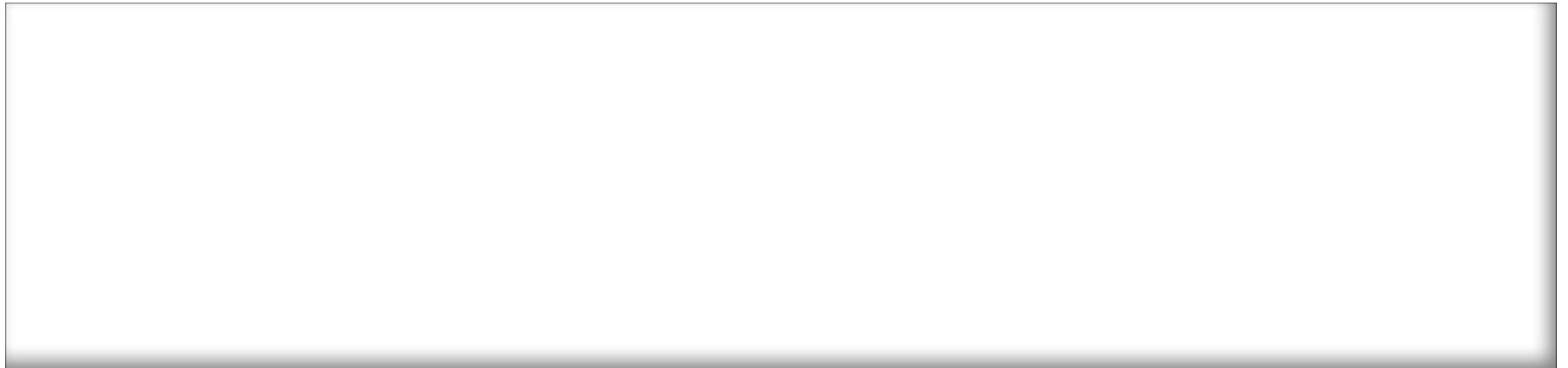
Today’s viewing emphasis: How do my losses affect others? Plus, what is God using to bless me personally?

Respond to the following DVD questions as the Facilitator directs. Please, don't answer all these at once:

3. Do Activity 4 (pg. 48)—Try to remember the ways others have shown love to you as a result of a loss or difficulty. Who, specifically, is God using in this way?



4. Do Activity 5 (pg. 52)—Think about how God is expanding your life and service as a result of loss.



5. Do Activity 6 (pg. 54)—Try to list songs/hymns that reach into your heart and give words to feelings you can't express any other way? Write some of the lyrics and phrases that speak to you.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the student to write their responses to Activity 6.

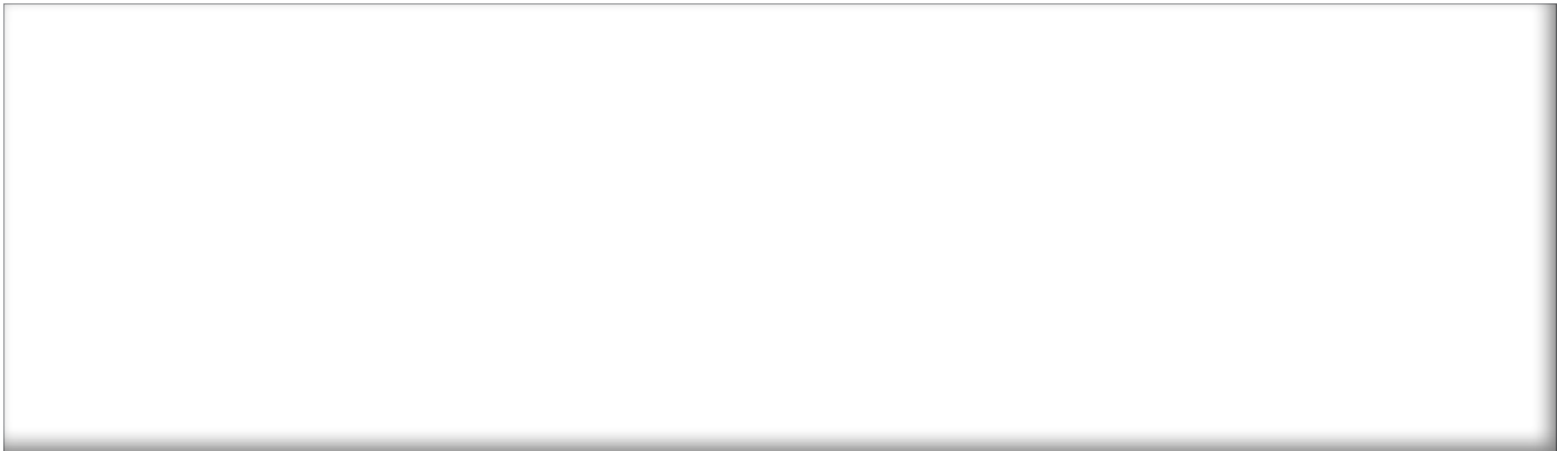
6. On page 70 of *Hope in the Midst of Loss*, Beth Weikel writes: “We all have our experiences with loss, some worse than others, but it’s not about us. It’s about the truth that hard times can introduce in tangible ways... As we are afforded a widening sphere of influence to help others in disastrous and dangerous circumstances, we count on the fact that He goes with us and lives within.”

Read 2 Corinthians 1:3–5 aloud together.

How do Beth Weikel's words affirm the truth of this passage of Scripture?



Notes:

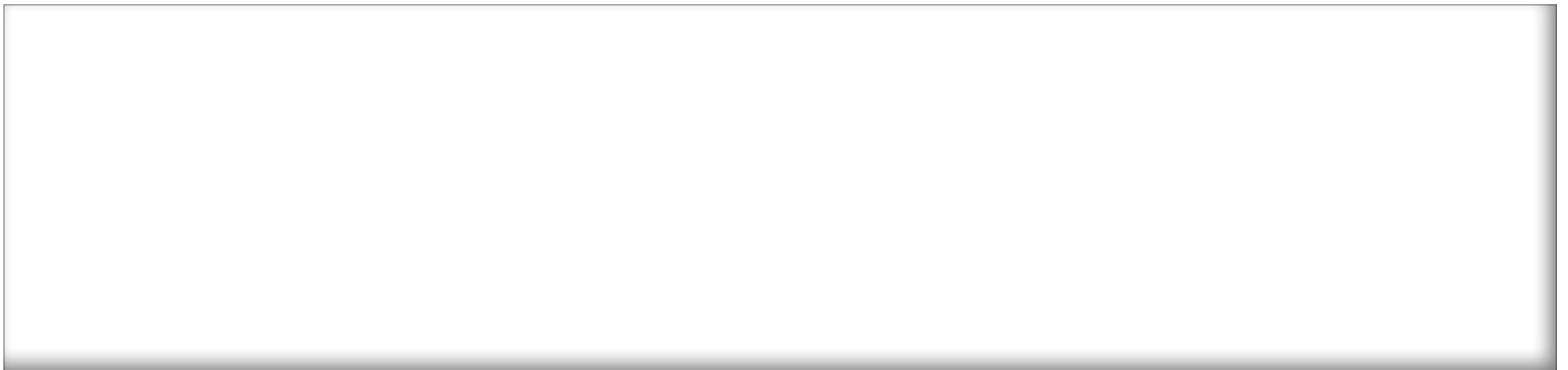


Homework: Reading chapters 4-6, pgs. 47-69. Complete “Personal Reflections” as they appear (pgs, 48-49, 60-61, and 65. Then do Activity 7 (pgs. 68-69) –Pray: write out each part of your prayer.

Personal Reflection (pg. 48-49):



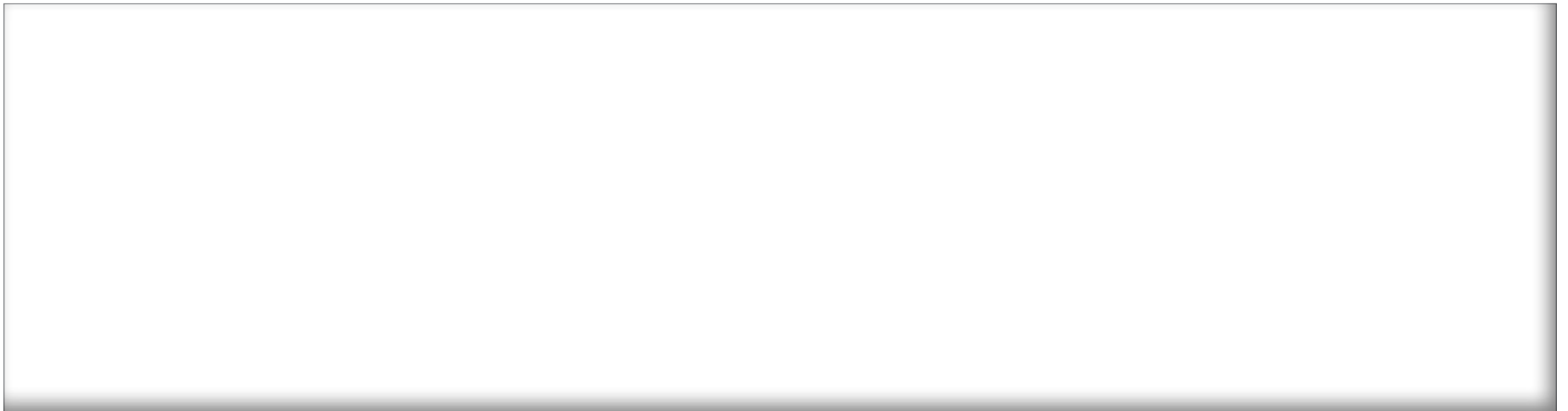
Personal Reflection (pg. 60-61):



Personal Reflection (pg. 65):



Activity 7 (pg. 68-69) –Pray: write out each part of your prayer.



Preview for next time: Hearing about a Recovery Plan and building a future.

SESSION 3

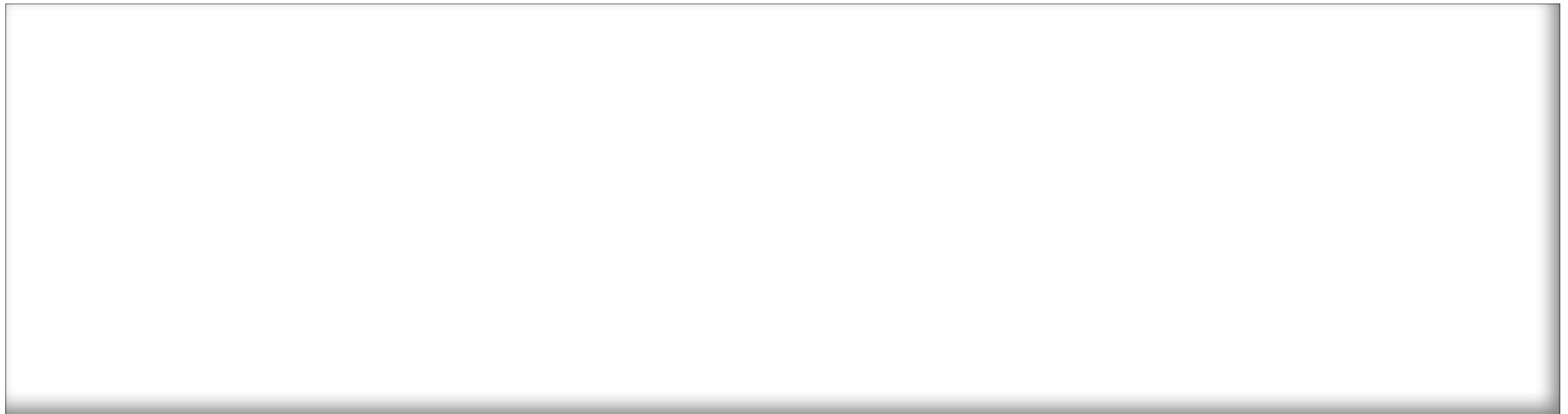
A SOUL'S RECOVERY PLAN

Theme: “Hard-won Insights and Wisdom for the Battle”

Facilitator's opening prayer and reading:

Questions for discussion from the homework reading:

1. What do we know that never changes about God?



2. When Beth quoted Jill Briscoe, “We don’t want to get life and God mixed up,” how do we get these two confused?



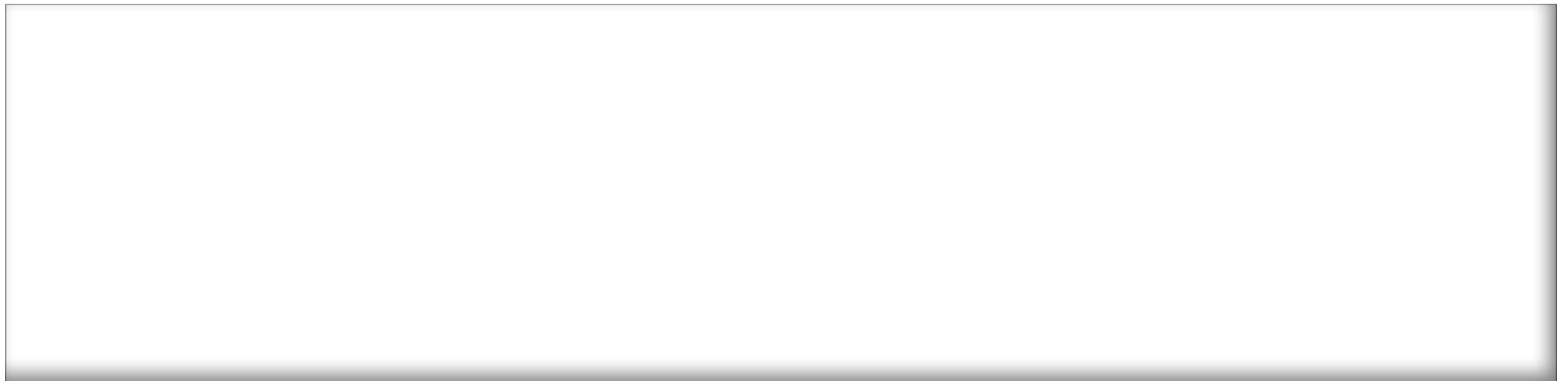
Today’s viewing emphasis: In the battle, what do I have control of? Plus, take stock of these suggestions for healthy strategies in the faith walk of loss. Which ones can I employ at this stage?

Respond to the following DVD questions as the Facilitator directs. Please, don't answer all these at once:

3. What does a "Recovery Plan" mean for you?



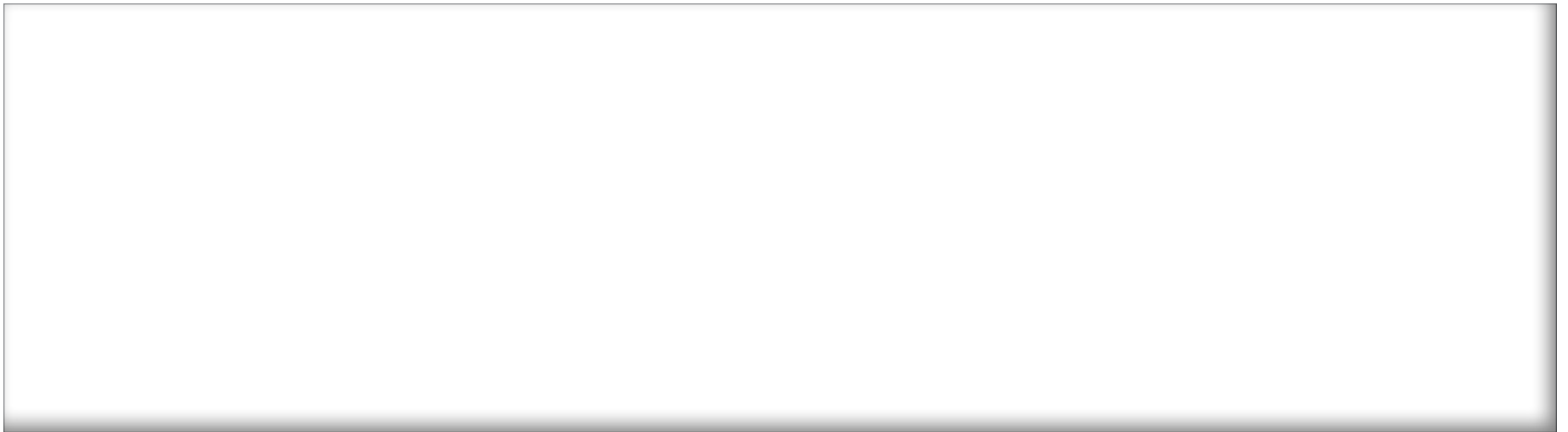
4. How have you run from your loss?



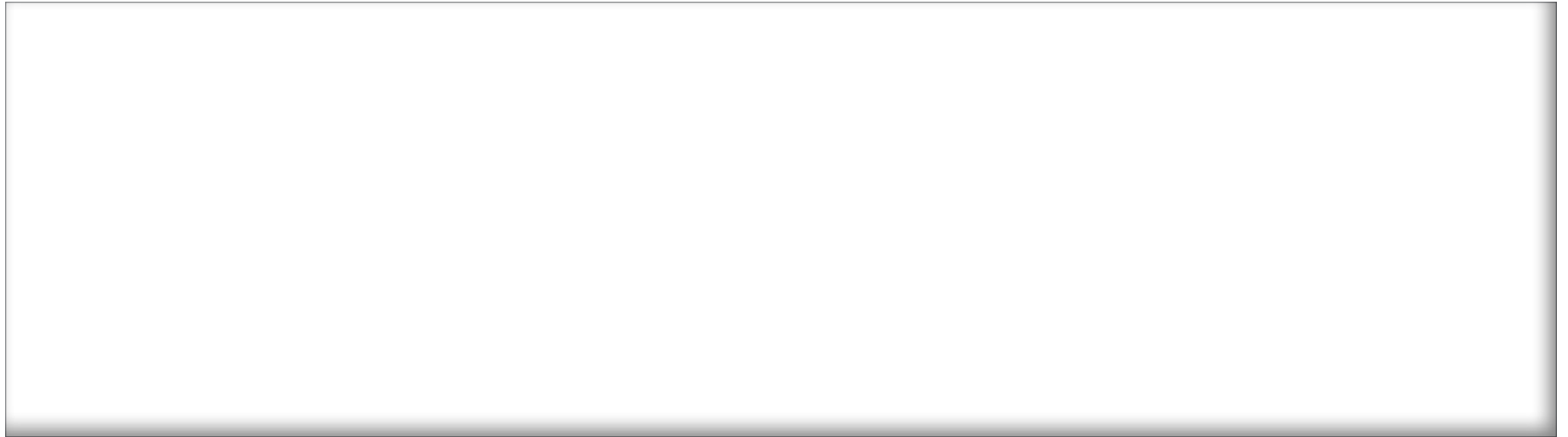
5. When have you blamed someone or something for your loss?



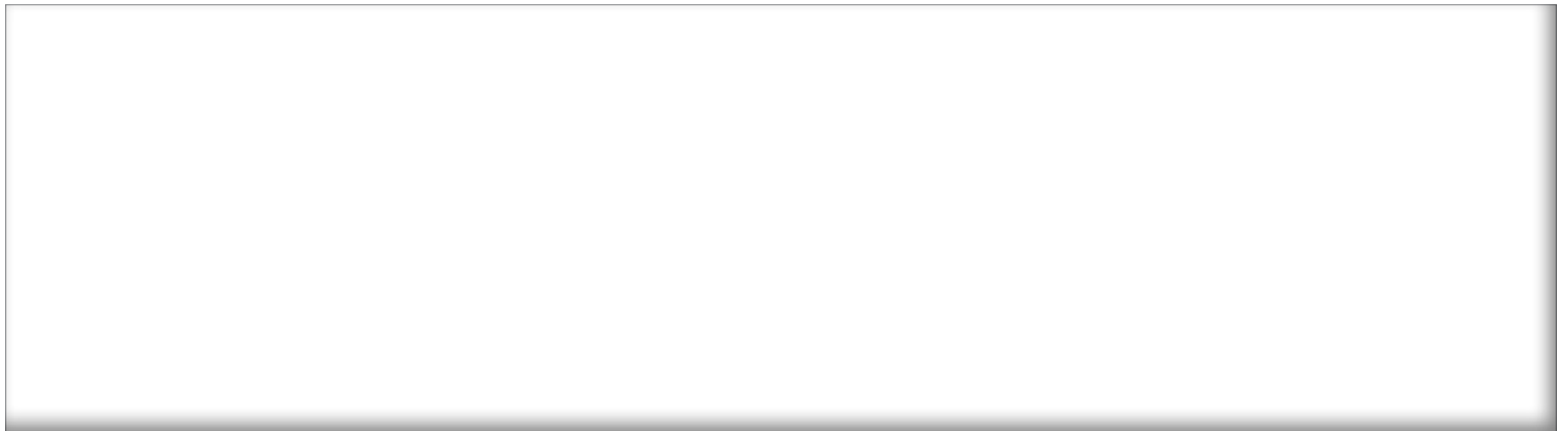
6. How do you pray honestly? Have you done this? Remember, God can handle your being honest with Him.



7. Where have you avoided feeling the pain?



8. What did you learn about “focus” from the testimonies? —or from Dave’s points?

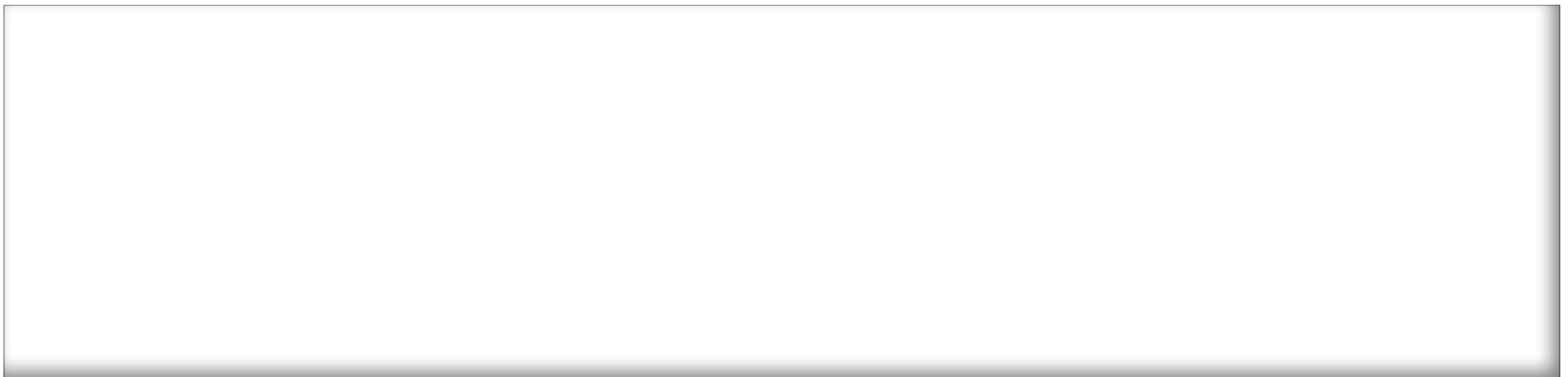


9. In the book, read together pgs. 83-84, from “Finding Your Calling...” to the 1st paragraph (on pg. 84) ending with “...prepare us for a calling that is unique.” Also, look up the I Cor. 15:10 passage and read it.

Where have you seen God do this for you? Or, is this a new idea?



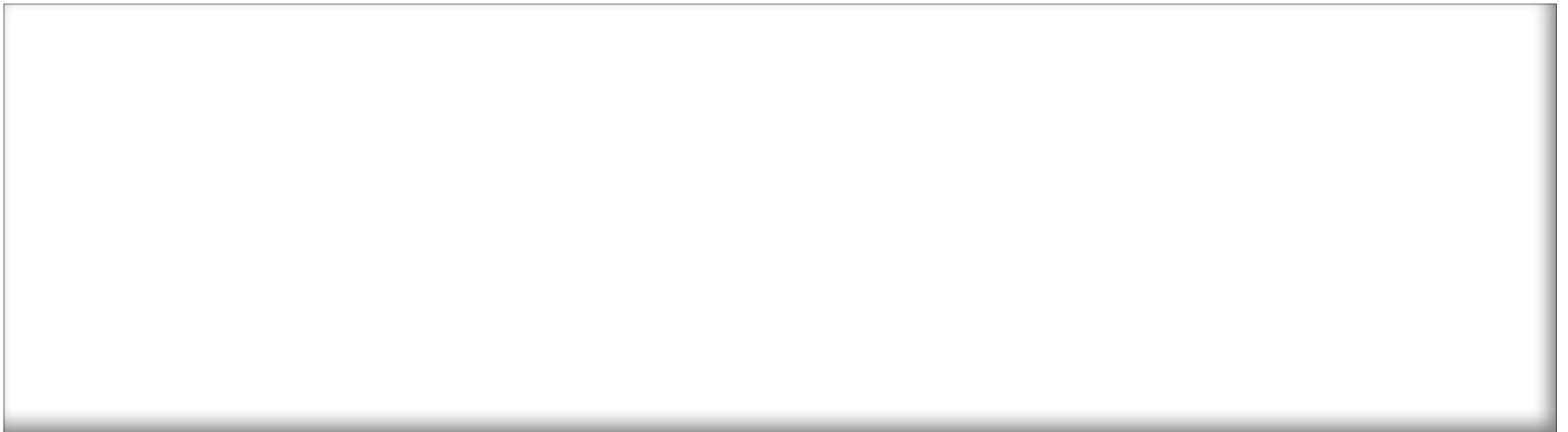
10. How have you allowed the Good Shepherd to stay yoked with you?



11. What one suggestion in this series of building blocks resonated with you? Why?



12. When Beth asks, “Do you have a Comforter...a Guide...The Helper?” what does that mean to you?

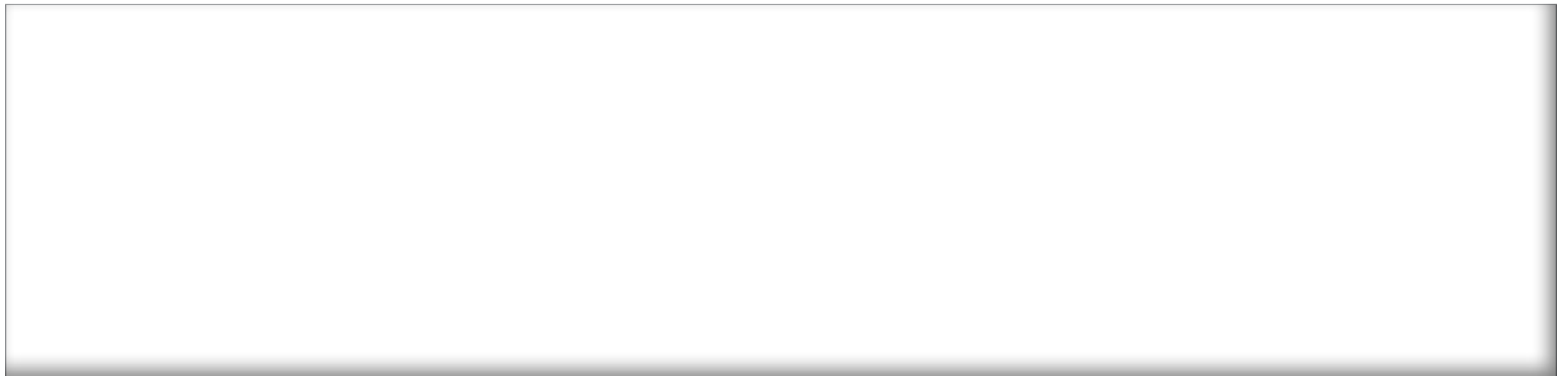


Notes:



Homework: Reading chapters 7-9, pgs. 71-102 and chapter 14, pgs. 151-158 and do the “Personal Reflection” (pgs 151-152).

Personal Reflection:



Preview for next time—Be ready to spend time in the Garden, examining compost, weeds, and abiding in the Vine in all seasons.

SESSION 4

THE GARDEN ANALOGY

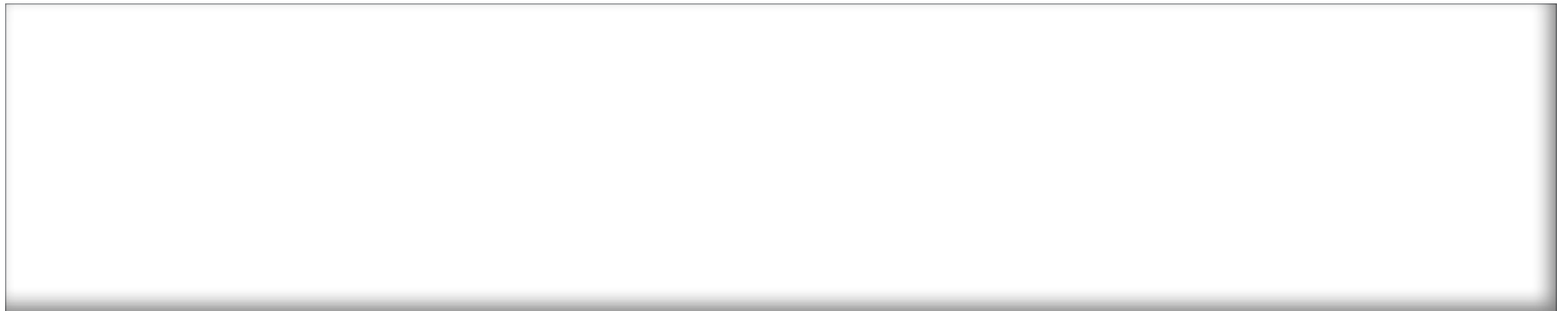
Theme: Abiding in the Vine

Facilitator's opening prayer and reading:

Today's viewing emphasis: There will be literal and figurative sections alternating, which include growth in adversity, how to "remain," toxic substances and traps, our weeds, and attending to the "garden."

Respond to the following DVD questions as the Facilitator directs. Please, don't answer all these at once.

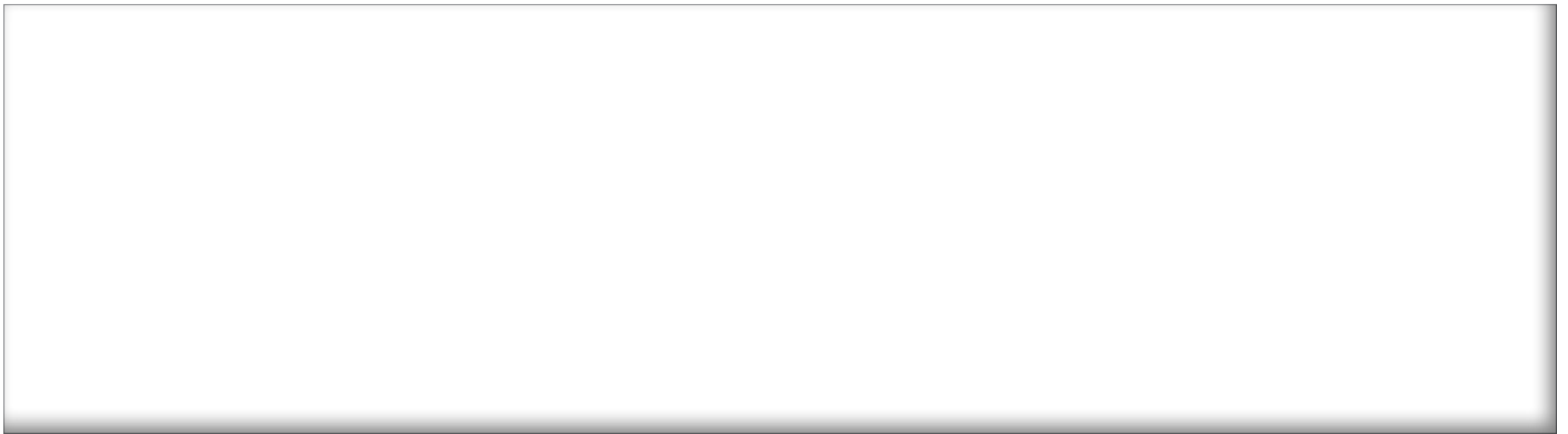
1. In regard to "living matter needs to be stirred," why does grief want to keep us stuck?



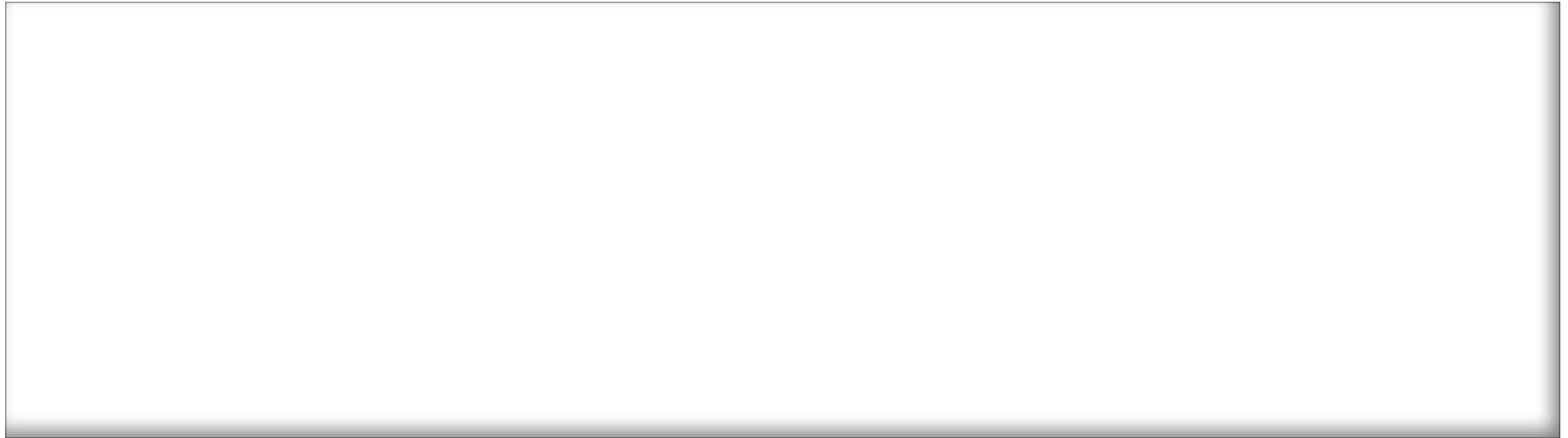
2. How is grief an opportunity?



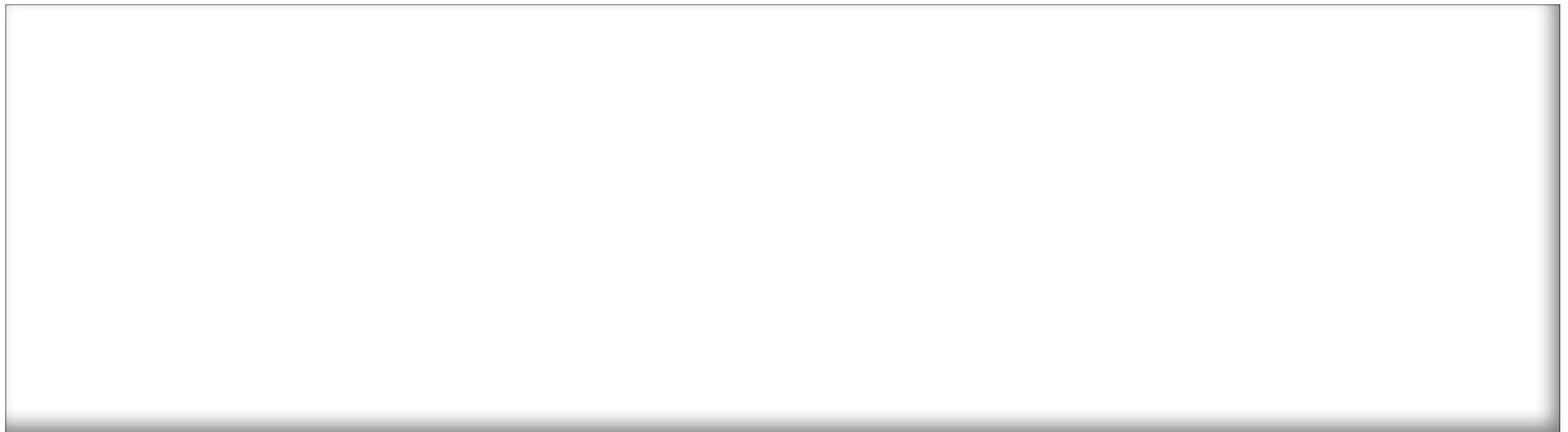
3. “Adversity is an ideal medium for life.” Do you agree or disagree? Explain.



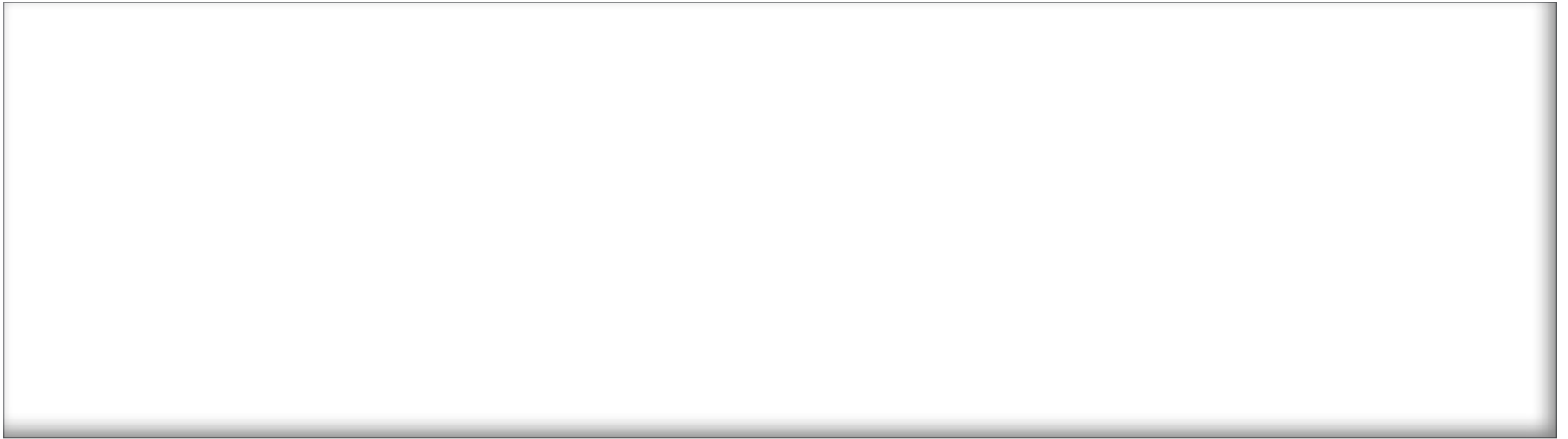
4. List some toxic presuppositions you think of around loss.



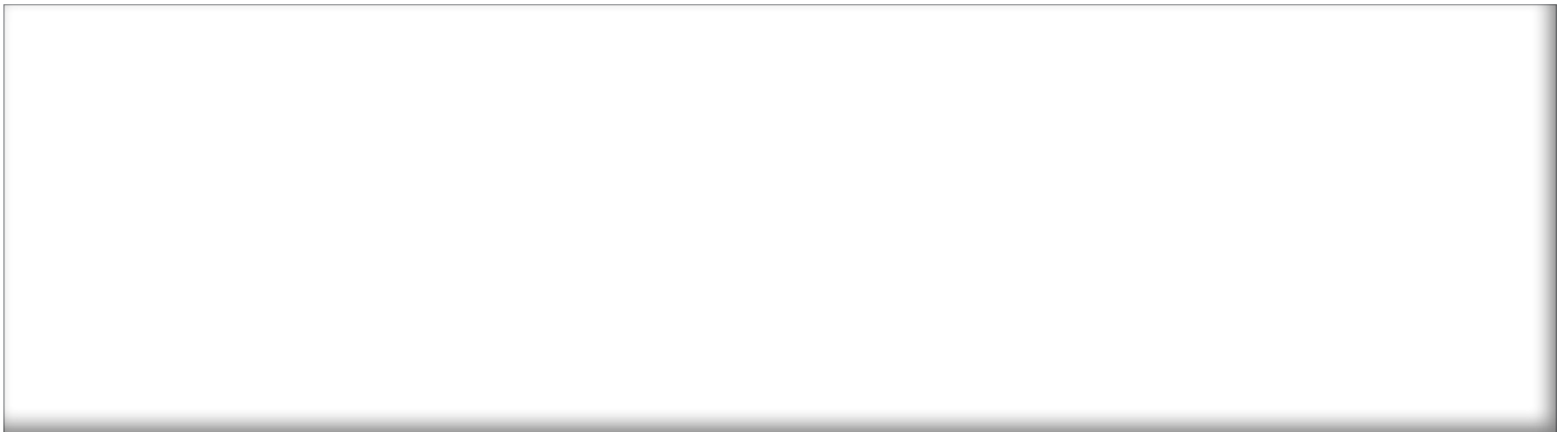
5. Describe our being on the “straight path” (Prov. 3:5-6).



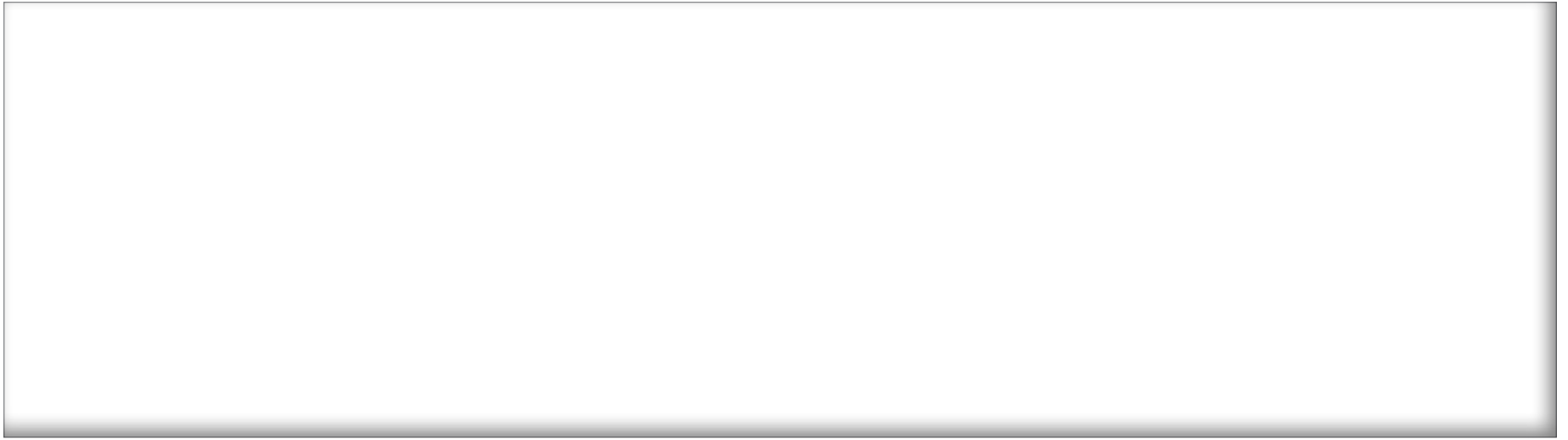
6. How can you tell the difference between New Growth and Weeds?



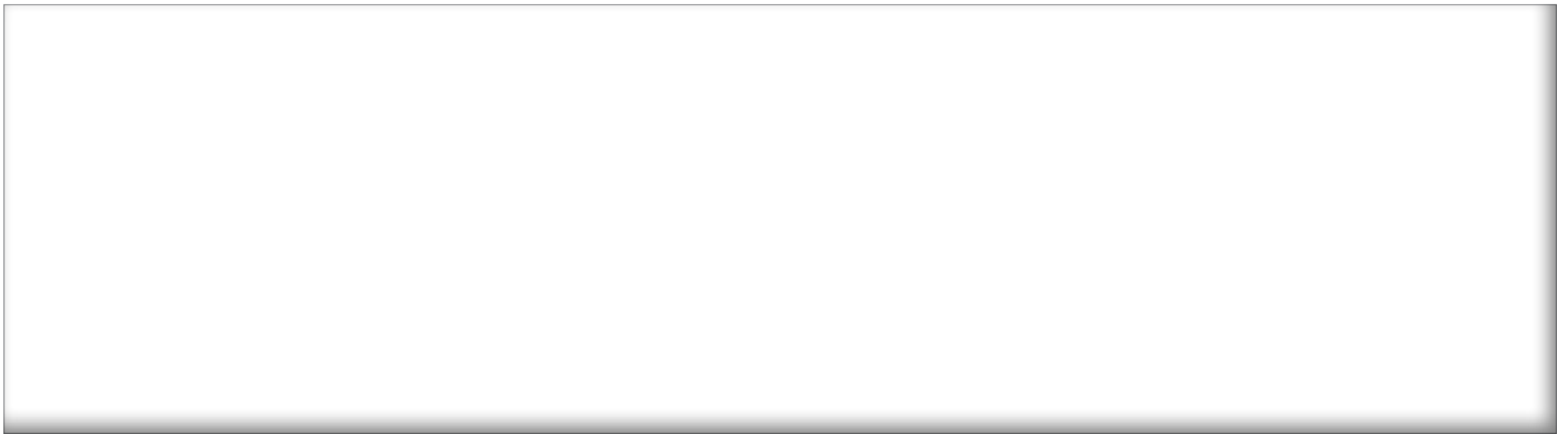
7. What are you hanging onto because it's comfortable or convenient?



8. What other barriers can you identify?



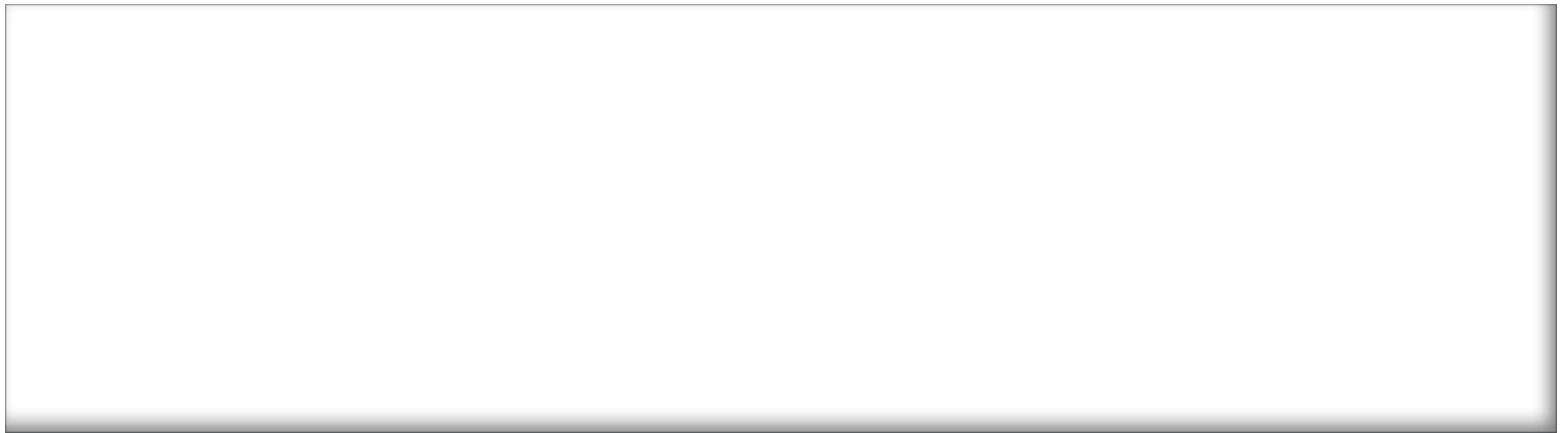
9. What steps need to be repeated seasonally?



10. When have trials ultimately yielded great value in your life?



Notes:



Homework: Read chapter 10, pgs. 103-109. Be aware that as you spend time on this (read more than once), God may keep revealing things He wants to address. It's His gift to you. Pray and meditate on this passage as it relates to the material.



Preview for next time: We will see how to pack our personal toolkit with attitudes and practices that will sustain our recovery process. It will become obvious how we partner with God, much like those we read about in the Scriptures, to move into *this* new life.

SESSION 5

A RECOVERY PLAN APPLIED

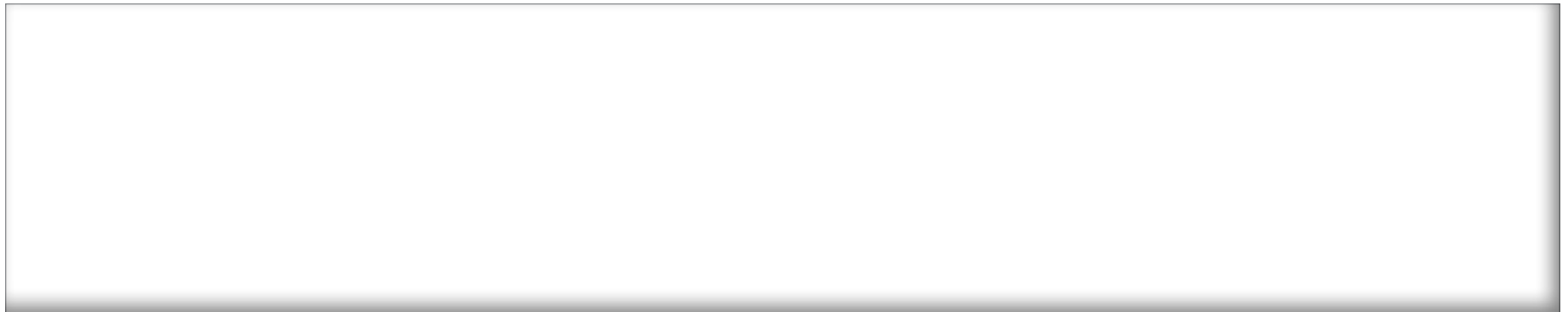
Theme: Learning to Live in Hope

Facilitator's prayer

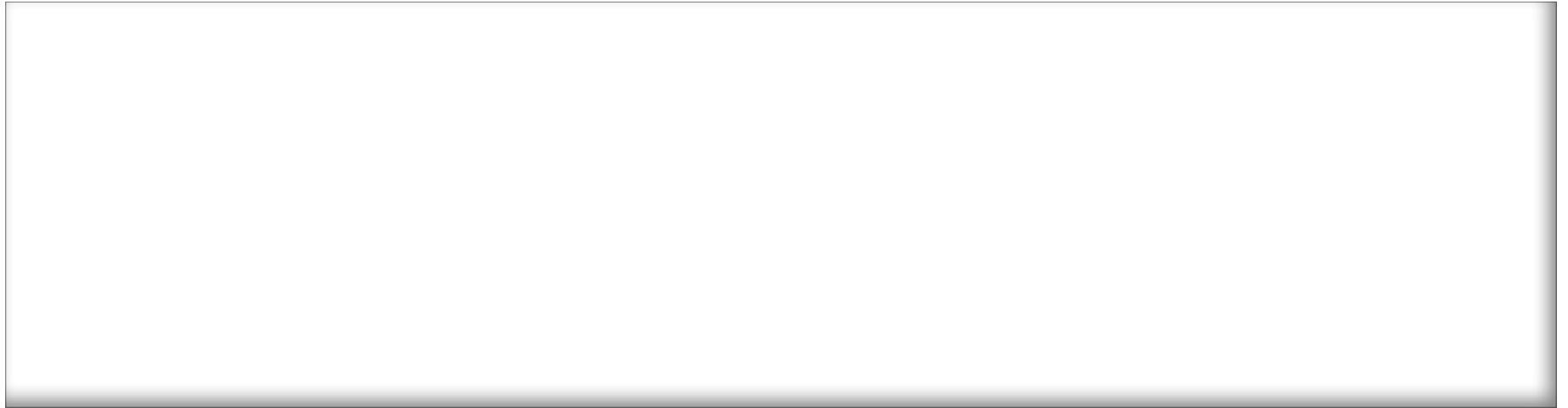
Today's viewing emphasis: Restoration as a lifestyle! Determining our true desire for transformation and the ability to perceive lessons in loss.

Respond to the following DVD questions as the Facilitator directs. Please, don't answer all these at once:

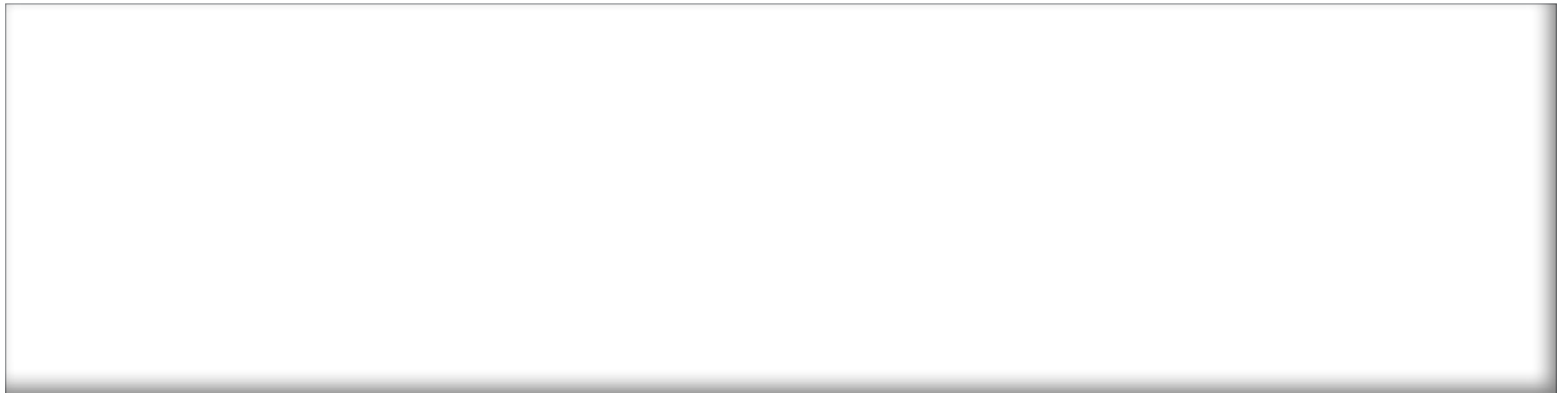
1. Beth talked about insensitive things people do and the judging that can be associated with loss, and then gave us a picture of forgiveness. What was helpful about this for you?



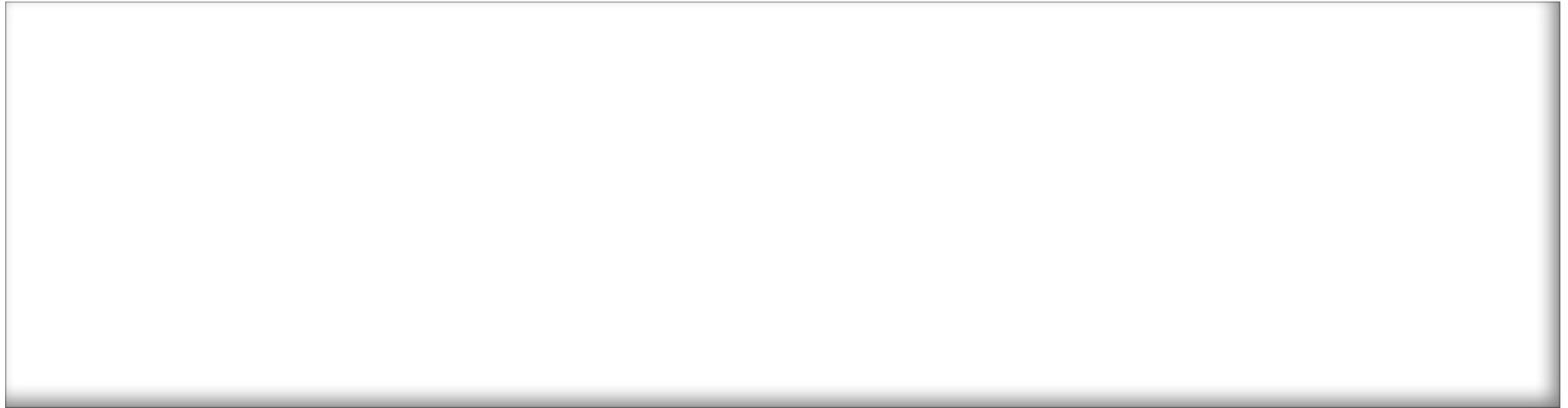
2. What happens when our wounds are re-opened? What reassurance did you hear the Lord give Beth? How has this happened for you?



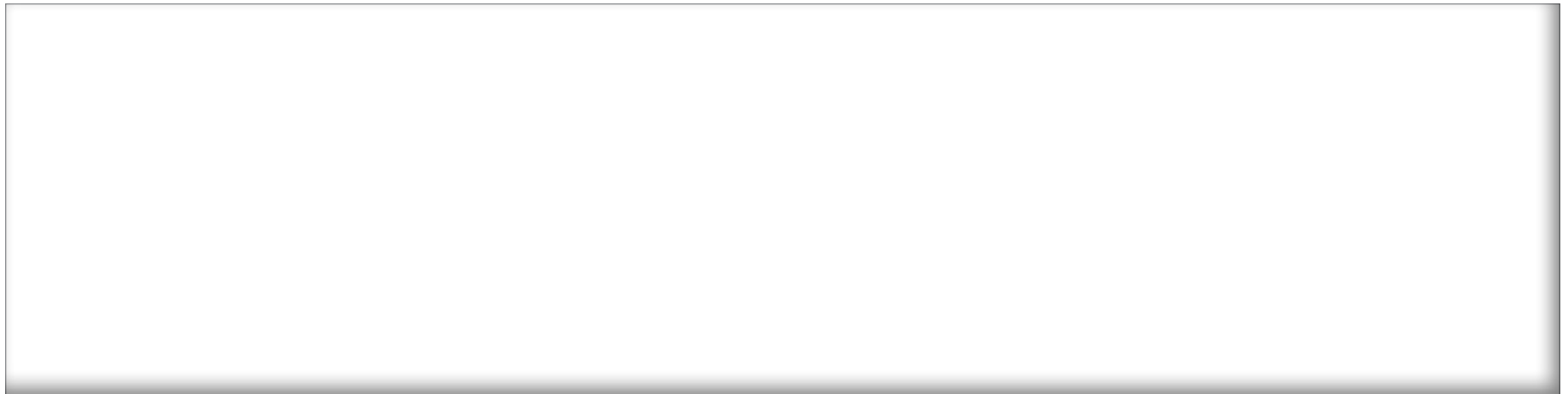
3. Why is restoration such a gift? What does this mean to us?



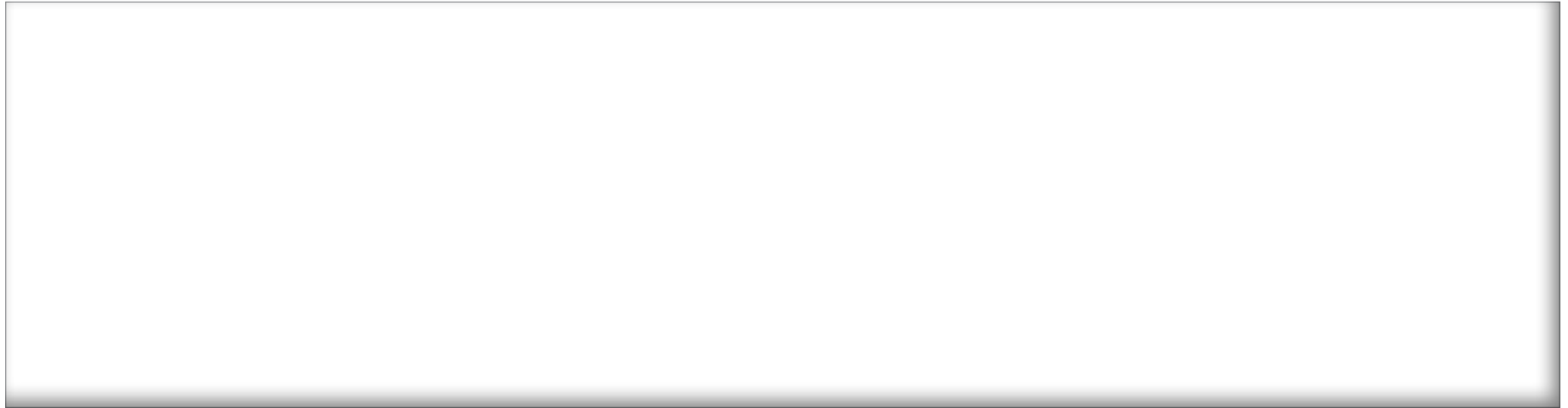
4. What does the phrase Dot used, “just today,” mean as we consider living in intimacy with God? How does He prove to be enough when we come to Him?



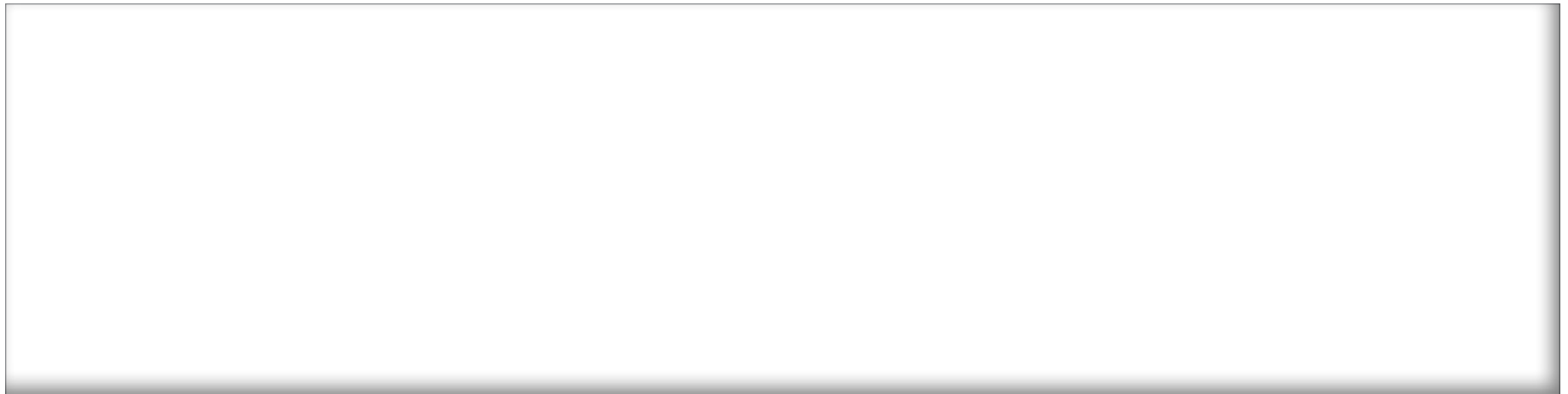
5. Where do you struggle with “head-to-heart” communication?



6. “Lord, to whom shall we go...” Have you ever felt like asking God, like soldier Dave, “I’m still here—are You still there?” If so, what happened then?



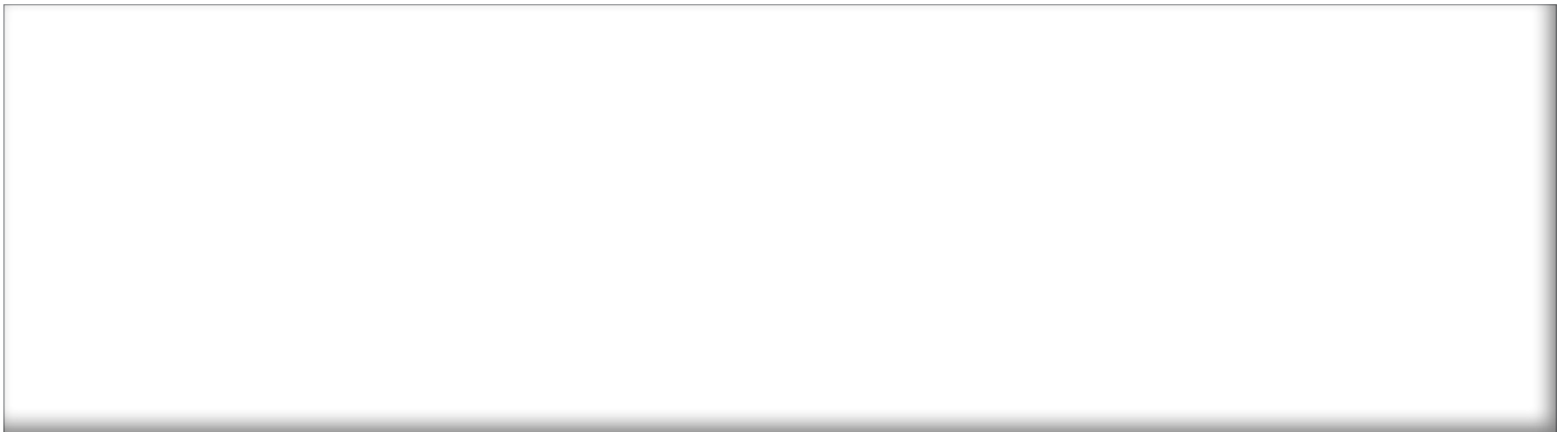
7. How will you practice “tasting His goodness” in the small things—unplanned for, but not unrecognized? (“Oh, that’s from the Lord.”)



8. When “I don’t even understand it,” how do I appreciate that “He’s still in control?”



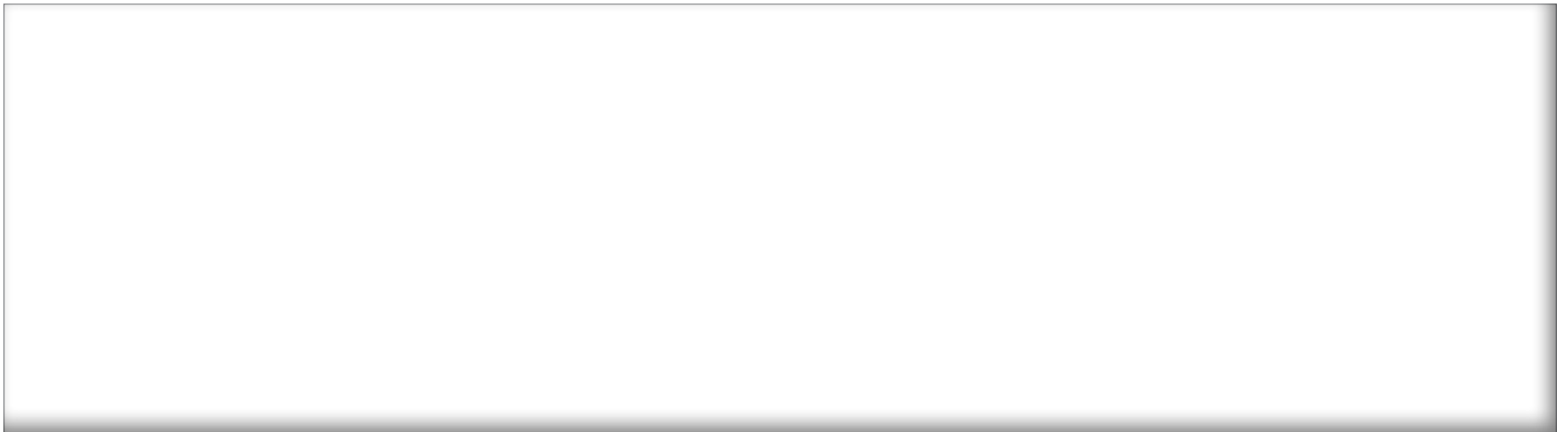
9. What are some steps to “Being Still” as explained in the DVD?



10. Who are your role models? Why?



11. How has loss enabled you to “let things on earth recede?”



Notes:



Homework: Reading chapters 11-13, pgs. 111-150. Take time to digest and mull over these points with their examples. Remember, the book expands on the DVD and contains additional teaching relevant to our topics.

Preview for next time: You may want to review everything you've been learning so far, since we'll be putting this all together. Expect additional insights and applications as we work through a hands-on exercise.

SESSION 6

TAKING INVENTORY

Theme: “Created for Renewal”

Facilitator’s prayer

Today’s emphasis: Learning to live in the aftermath of significant loss requires “Authenticity” (pgs. 129-139) and “Living Deep” (pgs. 141-150).

Group readings in preparation

Taking Inventory: Turn to Appendix A: by His design—A Recovery Plan (pgs. 159-165) and follow the Facilitator’s directions step by step in completing your personal recovery plan. You will be writing in the book, *The Way of Hope*.

Preview: *Hope in the Midst of Loss*, the deeper devotional

For those who wish to extend meeting as a group, or even invite others to join in, we want to offer the next six-week study using the other book in The Way of Hope Kit. *Hope in the Midst of Loss* contains six weeks of short readings around themes looking for hope in everyday experience and in the lives of those we find in Scripture. It is story-based and inspirational reading.

Participants will be doing six days of devotionals each week and respond to the handful of questions at the end of each one before meeting with a Facilitator and their group to selectively share their insights. And everyone should expect to discover theirs, then enjoy mutual edification as a result.

This format differs significantly from a workshop setting. It's more like a book group, and a refreshing follow-up to what participants have been doing to recover their lives from loss. Please encourage anyone who wants to keep going for a few more weeks. We are so pleased to be able to offer this option.