

A serene landscape featuring a calm lake that perfectly reflects the surrounding environment. The lake is flanked by lush green mountains and dense forests. In the center of the background, a bright sun is visible, creating a soft, hazy glow that permeates the sky and the water's surface. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and contemplative.

When God Says NO

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

- Matt 7:7-8

*And whatever you ask in prayer,
if you believe, you will receive.*

- Matt 21:22

Read at face value, these passages might be interpreted as saying that God will always answer a faithful prayer with YES. But we know that that is not so. Why does He sometimes answer NO?

Three examples
from Scripture
where God said NO

David - 2 Sam 12:11-17

[Nathan speaking:] This is what the Lord says: 'I am about to bring disaster on you from inside your own household! ... Although you have acted in secret, I will do this thing before all Israel, and in broad daylight.'"

Then David exclaimed to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord!" Nathan replied to David, "Yes, and the Lord has forgiven your sin. You are not going to die."

David - 2 Sam 12:7-16

Nonetheless, because you have treated the Lord with such contempt in this matter, the son who has been born to you will certainly die." Then Nathan went to his home. The Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and the child became very ill.

David - 2 Sam 12:7-16

Then David prayed to God for the child and fasted. He would even go and spend the night lying on the ground. The elders of his house stood over him and tried to lift him from the ground, but he was unwilling, and refused to eat food with them.

Paul – 2 Cor 12:7-9

So that I would not become arrogant, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to trouble me—
so that I would not become arrogant. **I asked the Lord three times about this, that it would depart from me.**

Jesus – Luke 22:41-44

[Jesus] went away from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed, **“Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me.”** ... And in His anguish He prayed **more earnestly, and His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.**

Five hard facts to remember
when God tells you NO

These are indeed hard facts to hear, especially in the time of pain when the NO has just been delivered and you feel crushed. It is important, though, to remember them.

Fact 1

God is the Creator,
I am the created.

You will say to me then, “Why does [God] still find fault? For who has ever resisted His will?” But who indeed are you—a mere human being—to talk back to God? Does what is molded say to the molder, “Why have you made me like this?” Has the potter no right to make from the same lump of clay one vessel for special use and another for ordinary use?

- Rom 9:19-21

*I am not the authority
for how things should be.*

*I have no reason to be upset
if they don't work out
the way I think they should.*

Fact 2

I am not omniscient:
I can't see the big plan.

*Operating from my
limited (finite) viewpoint,
who am I to say
what is for the best?*

Fact 3

I was not promised a life
free from pain and
disappointment.

We also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.

- Romans 5:3-4

*How can I claim that my pain
and suffering is altogether bad?*

*Can I see all the benefits that
come with that pain?*

Am I that wise?

Fact 4

My repentance does not
remove all consequences.

*I cannot expect God to
rearrange the world to undo
the consequences of my sin,
no matter how repentant I am.*

Fact 5

God promises me a fish,
not a serpent.

Is there anyone among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you then, although you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

- Matt 7:9-11

*I can be confident that God
has my best interests at heart,
and will not return me evil
when I ask for good.*

1. I am not in charge.
2. I am not omniscient.
3. I will be disappointed in this life.
4. My sins have consequences.
5. God won't give me a snake for a fish.

How did David, Paul, and
Jesus respond when God
said NO to their requests?

David - 2 Sam 12:18-23

On the seventh day the child died... So David got up from the ground, bathed, put on oil, and changed his clothes. He went to the house of the Lord and worshiped. Then, when he entered his palace, he requested that food be brought to him, and he ate.

*David kept praying until he got
a definite NO.*

He then first worshipped God.

He went on with his life, trusting God.

Paul – 2 Cor 12:8-10

I asked the Lord three times that it would depart. But He said to me, “My grace is enough for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” So then, I will boast most gladly about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may reside in me. **Therefore I am content with weaknesses, with insults, with troubles, with persecutions and difficulties for the sake of Christ, for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.**

Paul recognized his own weakness.

*He recognized that what
troubled him glorified God.*

*He committed to live contentedly,
trusting God to supply his needs.*

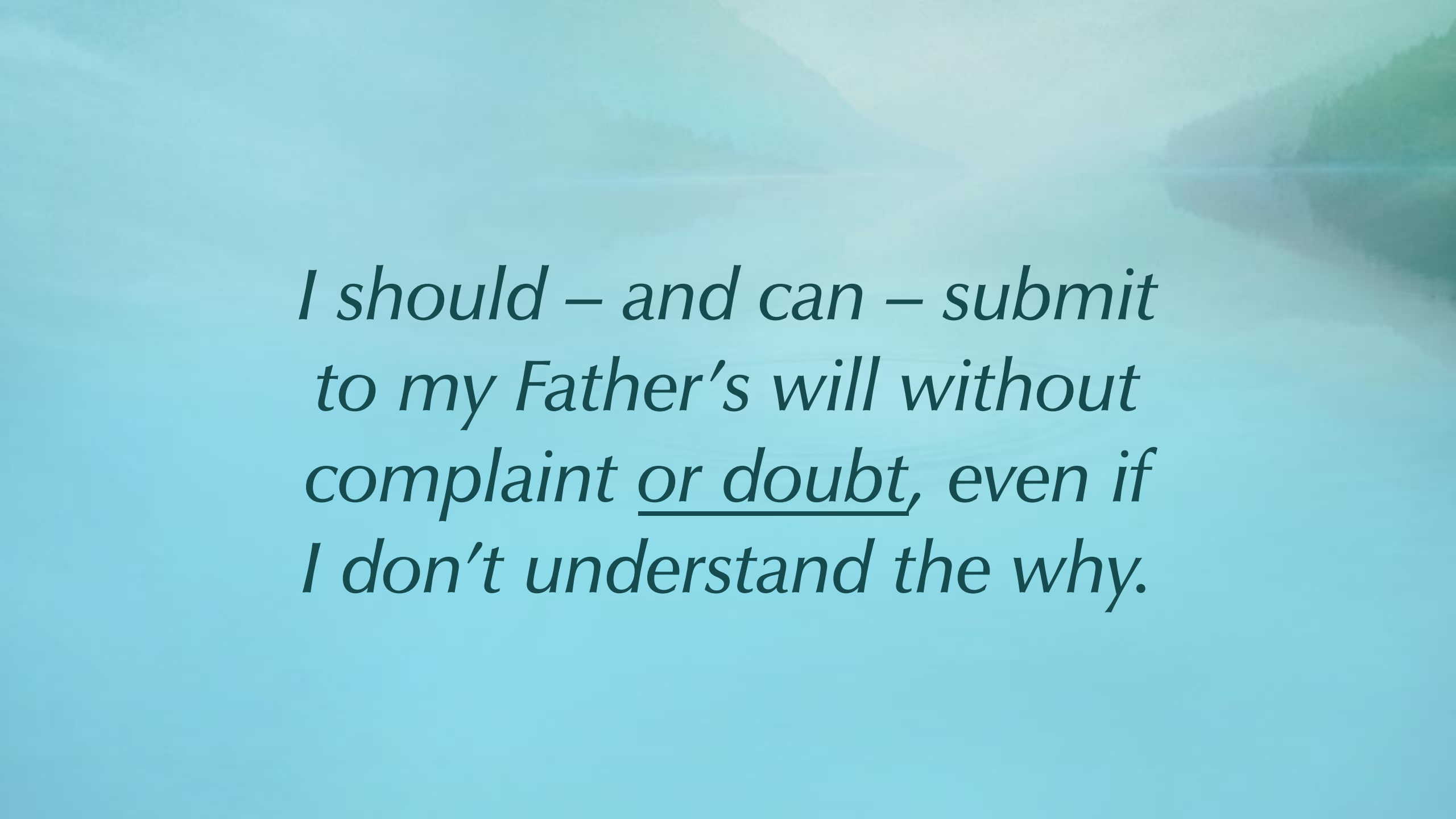
Jesus – Luke 22:41-42

He went away from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me. **Yet not my will but yours be done.**"

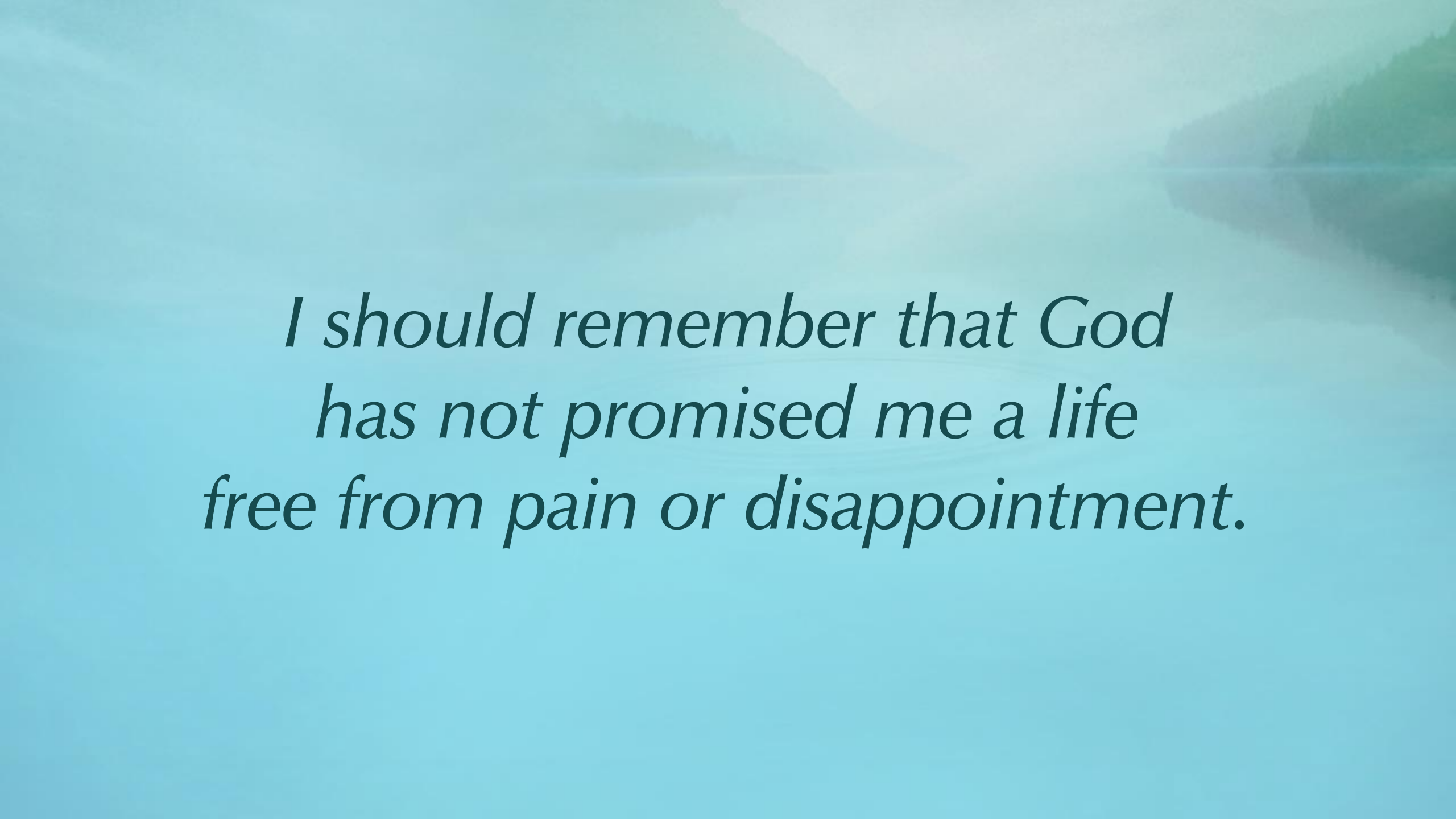
*Jesus submitted to the Father's
will without complaint.*



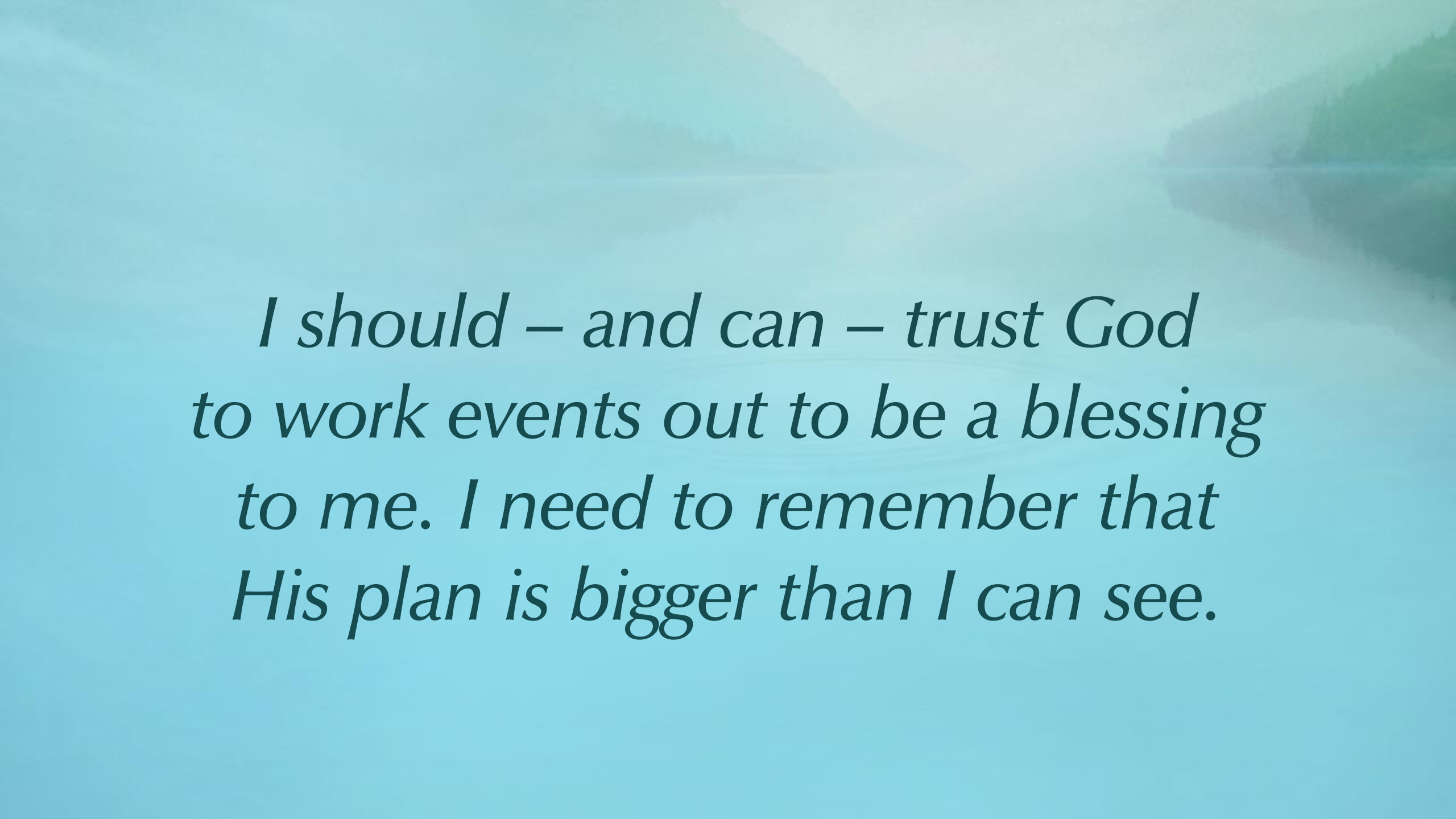
So what do I do when
God says NO to me?



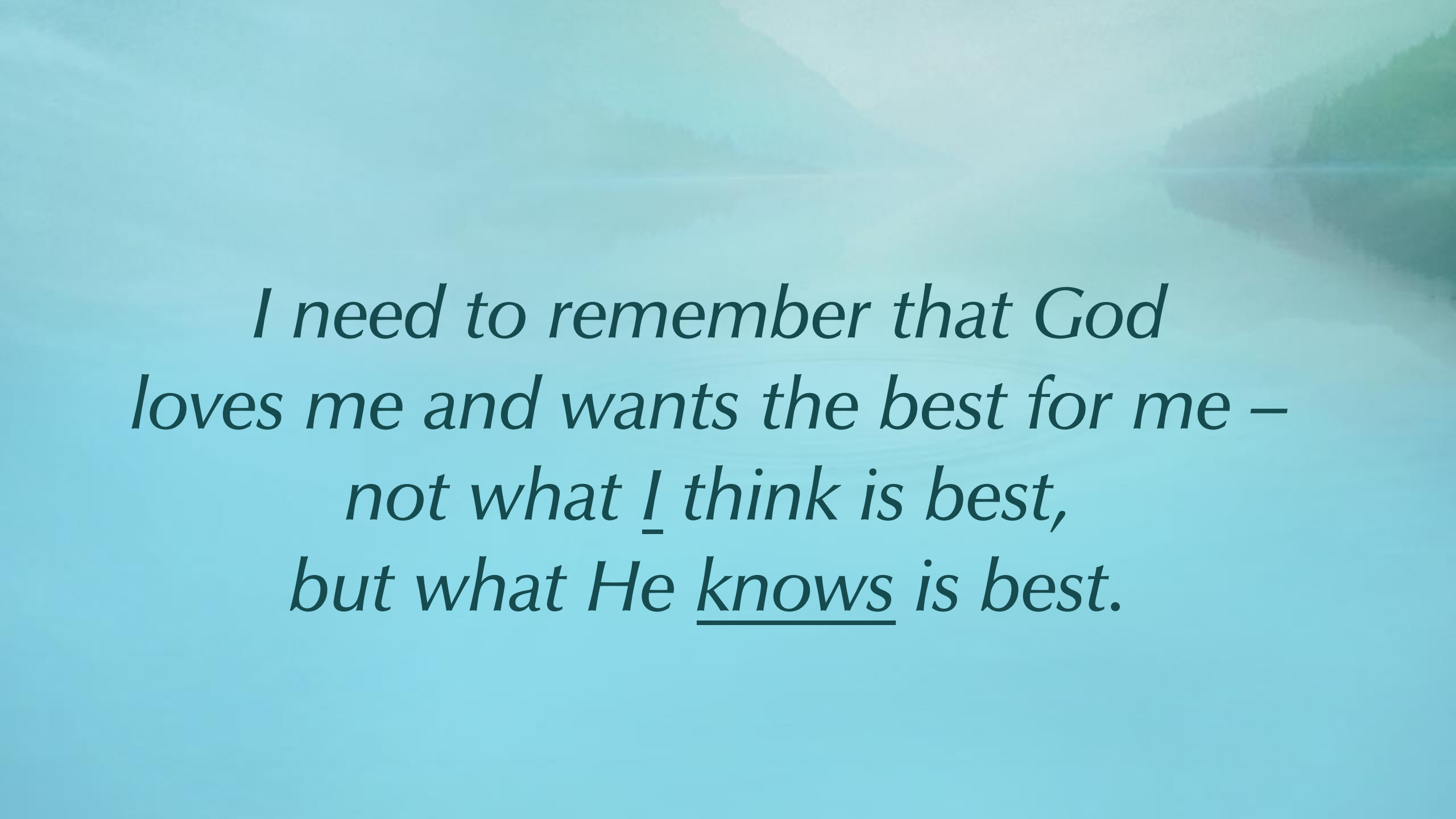
*I should – and can – submit
to my Father's will without
complaint or doubt, even if
I don't understand the why.*



*I should remember that God
has not promised me a life
free from pain or disappointment.*



*I should – and can – trust God
to work events out to be a blessing
to me. I need to remember that
His plan is bigger than I can see.*



*I need to remember that God
loves me and wants the best for me –
not what I think is best,
but what He knows is best.*

God moves in a mysterious way

His wonders to perform.

He plants His footsteps in the sea

And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines

Of never-failing skill

He treasures up His bright designs

And works His sovereign will.

Dios se mueve de una manera

misteriosa Sus maravillas para realizar.

Planta Sus pasos en el mar

y monta sobre la tormenta.

Profundamente en minas insondables

de la destreza que nunca falla

Él atesora sus brillantes diseños

y trabaja su voluntad soberana.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take:
The clouds you so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break
In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense
But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.

Vosotros, santos temerosos, corazones
nuevos! Las nubes que tanto teméis son
grandes con misericordia y se romperán
en bendición en vuestras cabezas.

No juzgues al Señor por tu sentido débil,
pero confía en Él por Su gracia:
Detrás de una providencia fruncida
oculta una cara sonriente.

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour.

The bud may have a bitter taste
But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err
And scan His work in vain;
God is His own interpreter
And He will make it plain.

Sus propósitos maduran rápidamente,
desplegando cada hora.

El brote puede tener un sabor amargo
pero dulce será la flor.

La incredulidad ciega está segura de errar
y escanear Su obra en vano:
Dios es Su propio interprete
y Él hará claro.