



EZRA 3:2

&

NEHEMIAH

4: 21-23 - 5: 1-18

EZRA 3:2

2 Then stood up Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and his brethren, and builded the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings thereon, as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God.

NEHEMIAH 4: 21-23

21 So we laboured in the work: and half of them held the spears from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared.

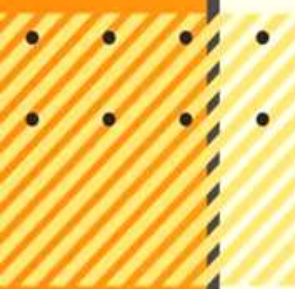
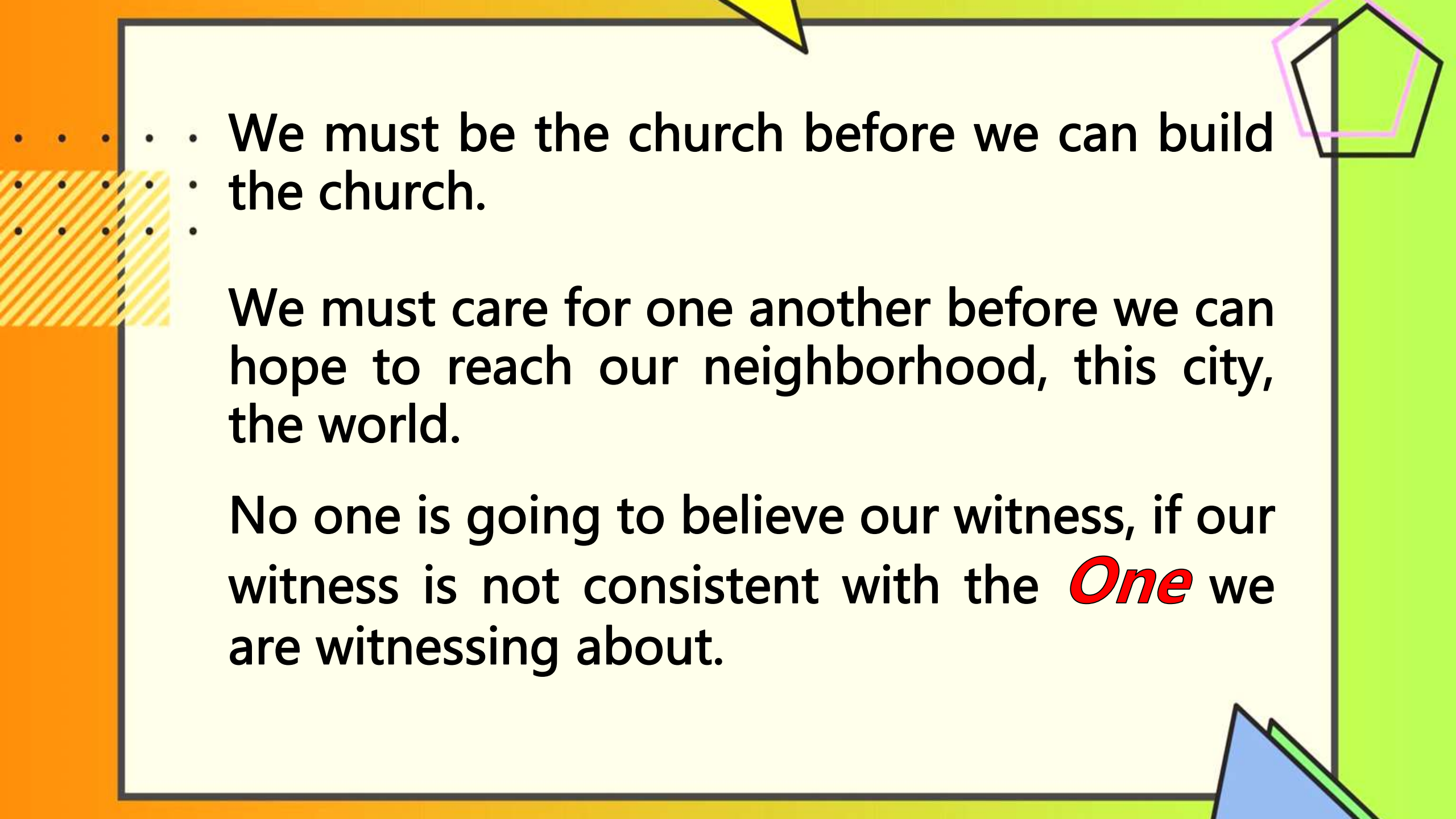
22 Likewise at the same time said I unto the people, Let every one with his servant lodge within Jerusalem, that in the night they may be a guard to us, and labour on the day.

NEHEMIAH 4: 21-23

23 So neither I, nor my brethren, nor my servants, nor the men of the guard which followed me, none of us put off our clothes, saving that every one put them off for washing.

NEHEMIAH 5: 1-18

5:1 And there was a great cry of the people and of their wives against their brethren the Jews.



• • • • •
• We must be the church before we can build
• the church.
•

We must care for one another before we can hope to reach our neighborhood, this city, the world.

No one is going to believe our witness, if our witness is not consistent with the *One* we are witnessing about.

BECOMING THE CHURCH



Altar Before the Wall



ACTION



— BEFORE THE —

WEARY

3

ATTITUDE

BEFORE THE

WORLD

The Jews had been exiled for many years and they were given the chance to rebuild Jerusalem.

It took years to complete Jerusalem's wall.



It began with the construction of the altar so the priests could offer sacrifices to God.



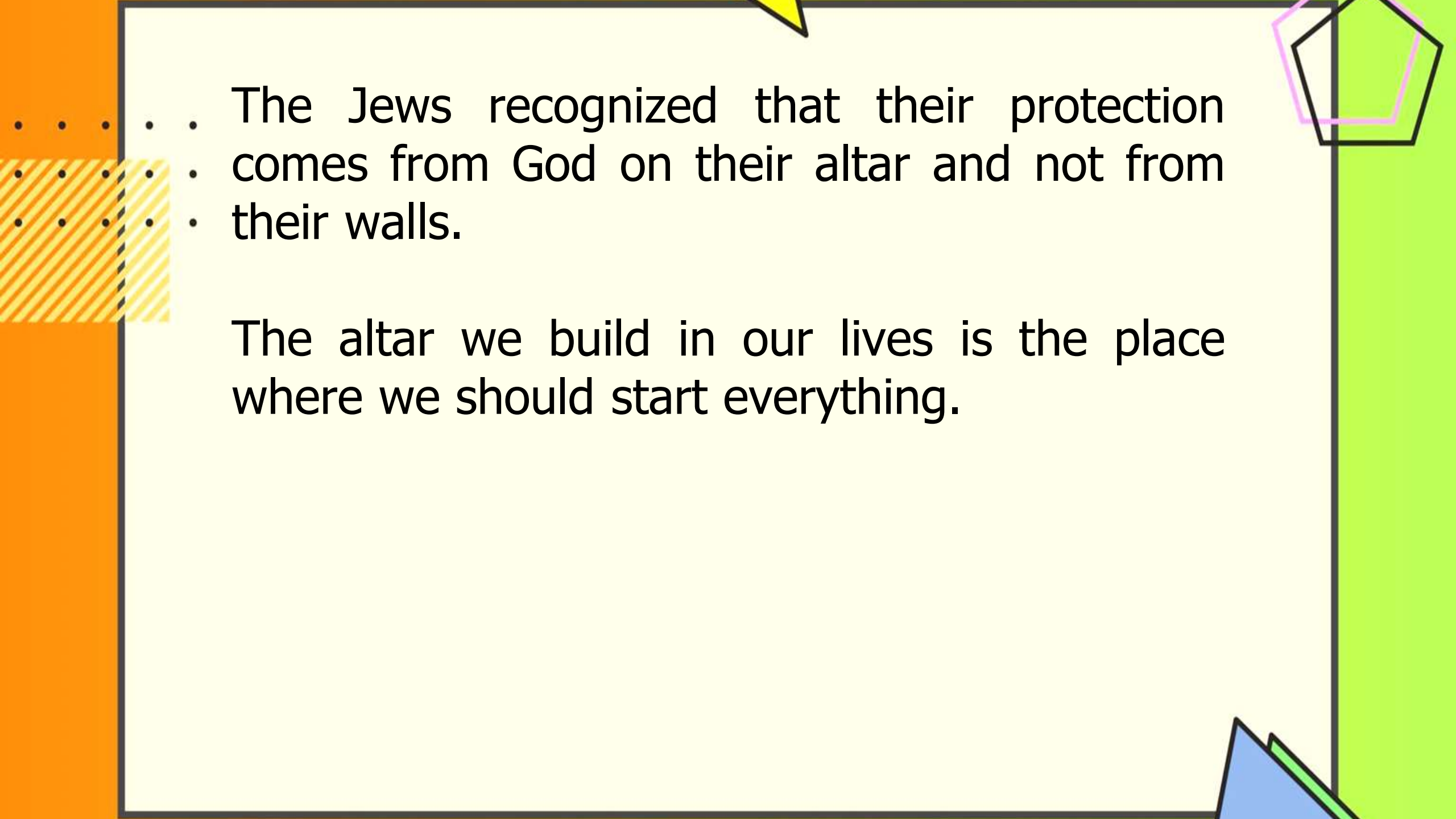
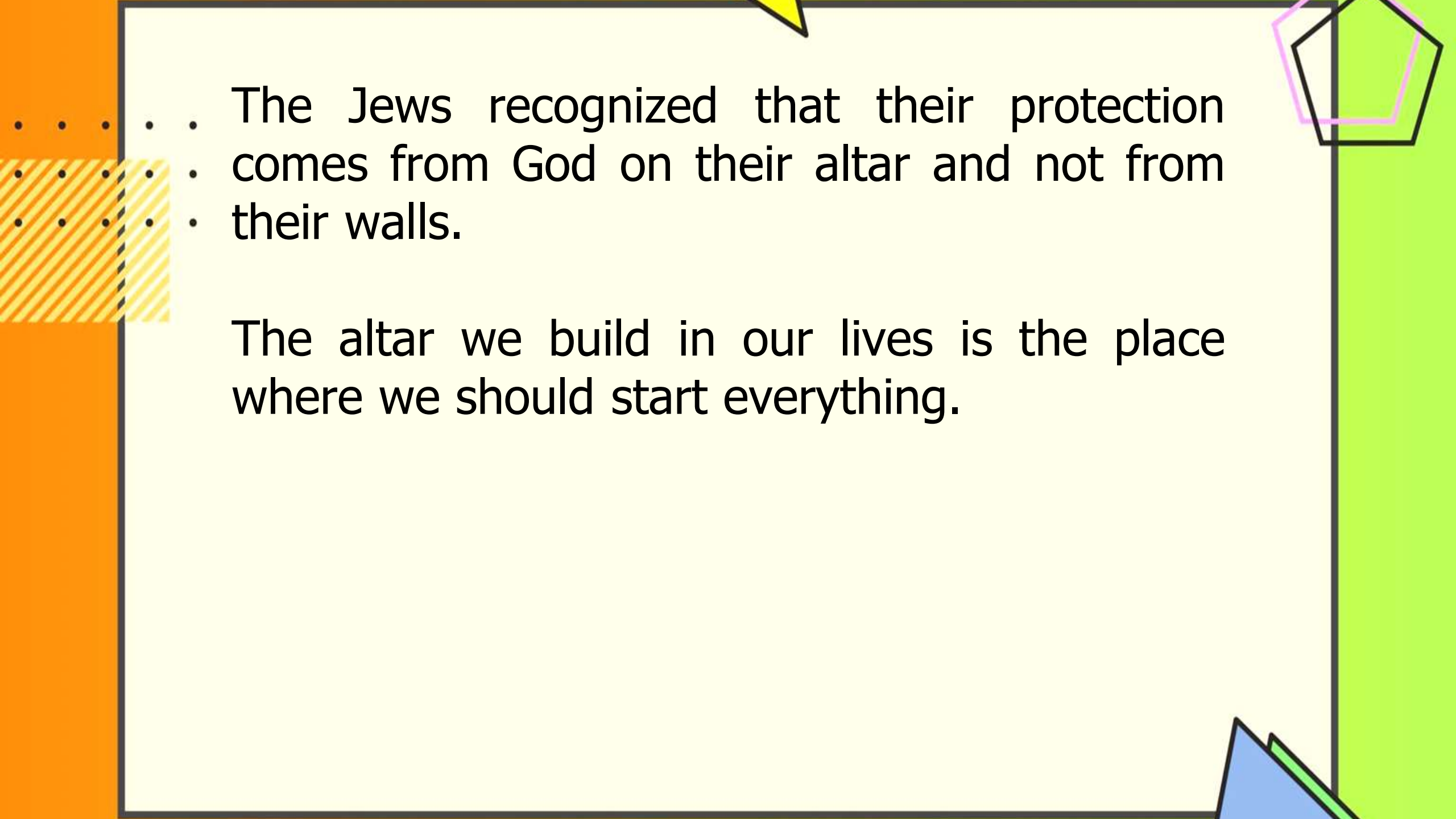
Altar Before the Wall



They built the **altar first**.



Without the massive walls needed for protection, the Jews labored on the foundation.

- 
- 
- • • • •
 - • • • •
 - • • • •
 - The Jews recognized that their protection
 - comes from God on their altar and not from
 - their walls.

The altar we build in our lives is the place where we should start everything.

Importance of the altar:

Altars represent moments where people express their devotion, thanksgiving, or seek forgiveness from God.



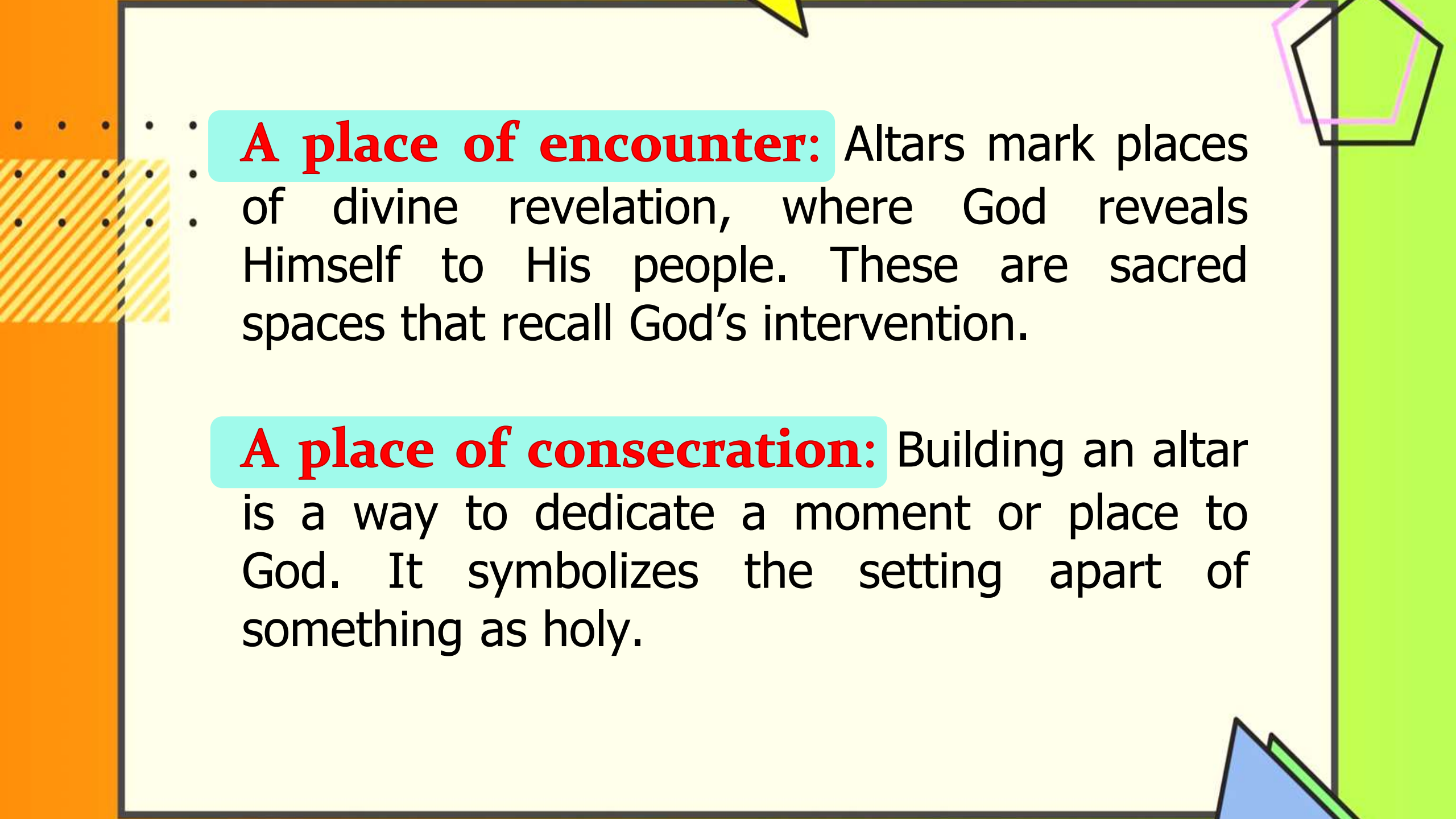


A place of sacrifice: Altars are used for sacrifices, symbolizing atonement for sin and thanksgiving.

A place of worship: It shows surrender and submission, acknowledging God's power and goodness.

A place of covenant: They are symbols of God's promises and human commitment.





A place of encounter: Altars mark places of divine revelation, where God reveals Himself to His people. These are sacred spaces that recall God's intervention.

A place of consecration: Building an altar is a way to dedicate a moment or place to God. It symbolizes the setting apart of something as holy.



A symbol of communion with God:

Altars also represent fellowship, where people seek God's presence.

God honors altars when they are built with the right heart and purpose.

He accepts sacrifices offered on altars, showing His forgiveness and blessing.

God reveals Himself at altars, manifesting His presence.

Altars are built in repentance.

-
-
-
-
-

These are moments where God's mercy is shown in response to sincere acts of devotion.

When the Jews were done with building the altar, the **wall** would begin.

To protect themselves, and simultaneously work on the wall, the laborers on the wall would work in bricks, mortar and stone with one hand and with the other they would hold a spear.

-

To protect themselves, and simultaneously work on the wall, the laborers on the wall would work in bricks, mortar and stone with one hand and with the other they would hold a spear.

Nehemiah 5:1-5 *And there was a great cry of the people and of their wives against their brethren the Jews. For there were that said, We, our sons, and our daughters, are many: therefore we take up corn for them, that we may eat, and live. Some also there were that said, We have mortgaged our lands, vineyards, and houses, that we might buy corn, because of the dearth.*

There were also that said, We have borrowed money for the king's tribute, and that upon our lands and vineyards. Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children: and, lo, we bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants, and some of our daughters are brought unto bondage already: neither is it in our power to redeem them; for other men have our lands and vineyards.

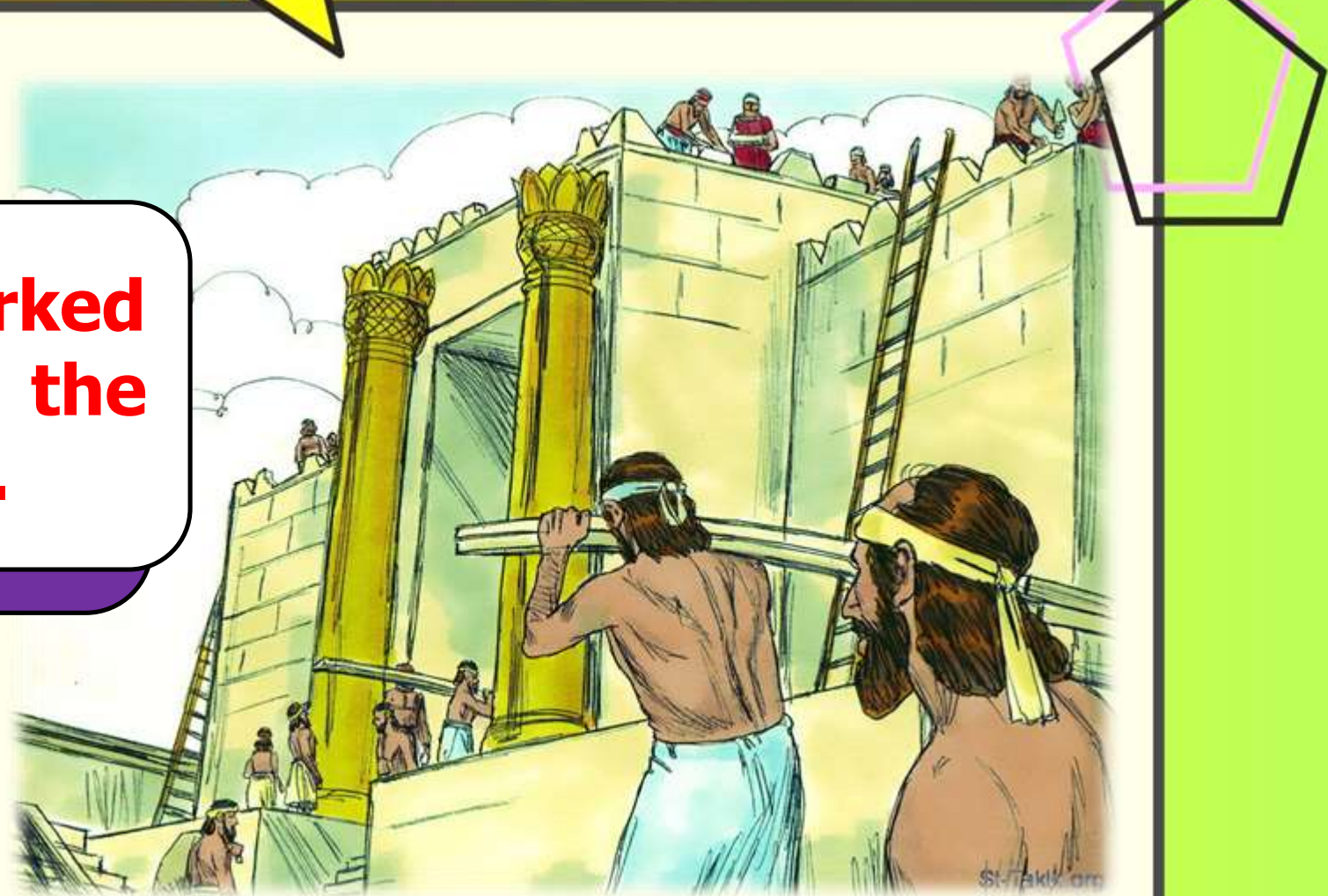
ACTION



— BEFORE THE —

WEARY

The people had worked wholeheartedly on the temple and the wall.



While the wall was being built by dedicated, faithful people who loved God and Nehemiah, the people were being swallowed up by debt..

The wall was their life.

Nehemiah had emphasized that there was nothing more important than doing this work for the Lord God of Israel.

The people were in overwhelming debt.

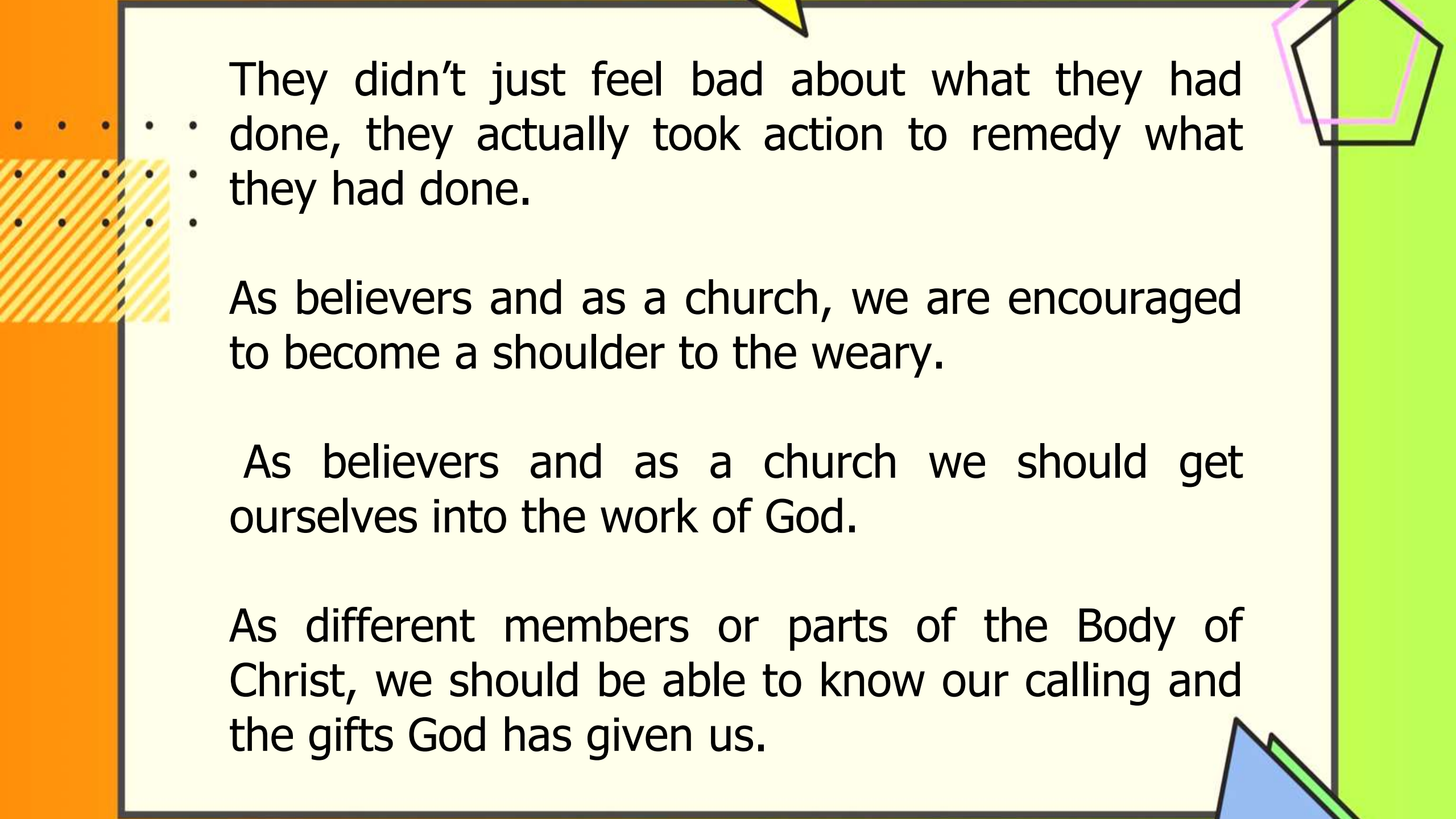
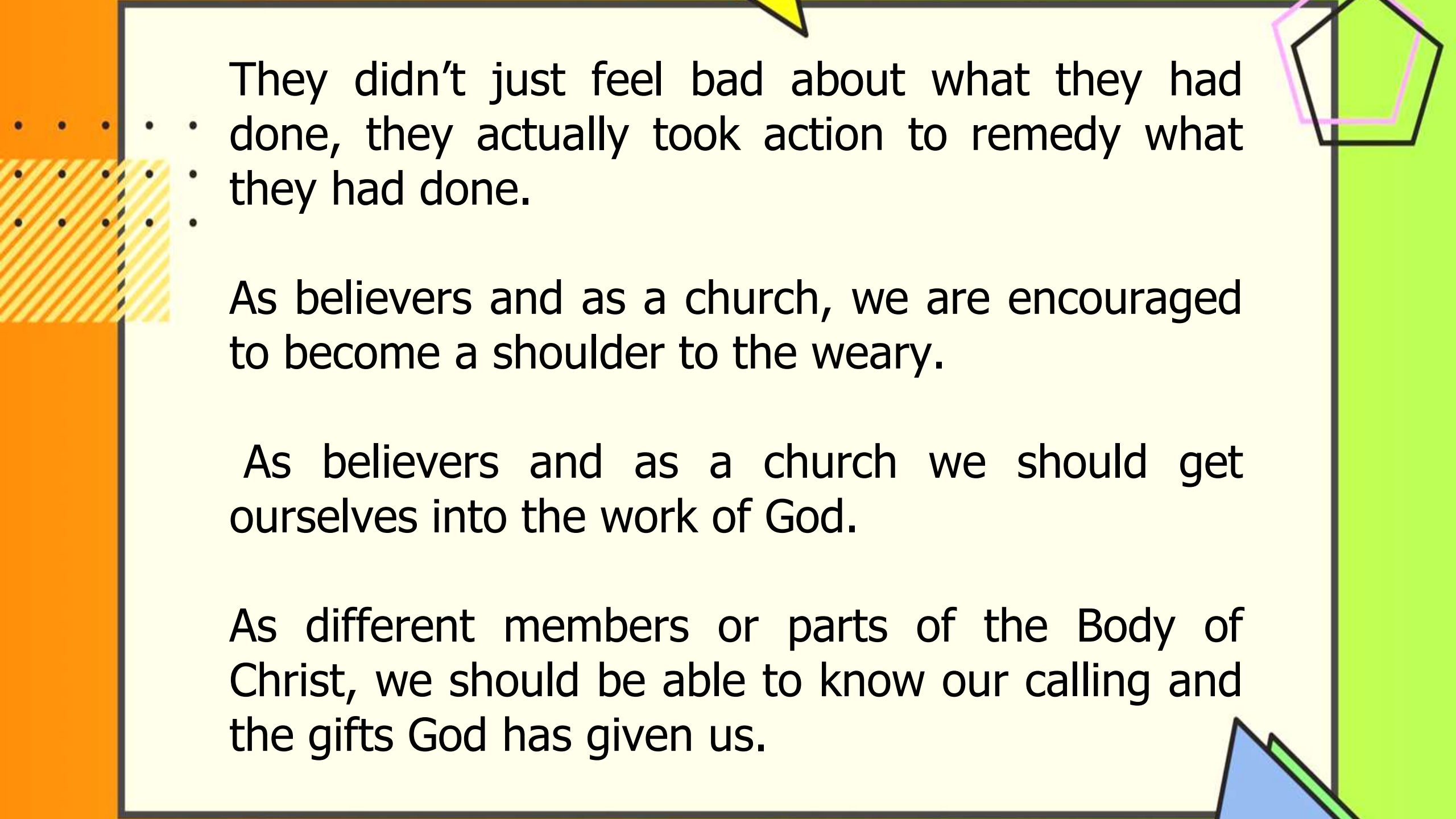
Nehemiah responded...



Nehemiah 5:6-8 *And I was very angry when I heard their cry and these words. Then I consulted with myself, and I rebuked the nobles, and the rulers, and said unto them, Ye exact usury, every one of his brother. And I set a great assembly against them. And I said unto them, We after our ability have redeemed our brethren the Jews, which were sold unto the heathen; and will ye even sell your brethren? or shall they be sold unto us? Then held they their peace, and found nothing to answer.*

Nehemiah 5:9-13 *Also I said, It is not good that ye do: ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies? I likewise, and my brethren, and my servants, might exact of them money and corn: I pray you, let us leave off this usury. Restore, I pray you, to them, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, their oliveyards, and their houses, also the hundredth part of the money, and of the corn, the wine, and the oil, that ye exact of them.*

Then said they, We will restore them, and will require nothing of them; so will we do as thou sayest. Then I called the priests, and took an oath of them, that they should do according to this promise. Also I shook my lap, and said, So God shake out every man from his house, and from his labour, that performeth not this promise, even thus be he shaken out, and emptied. And all the congregation said, Amen, and praised the Lord. And the people did according to this promise.



They didn't just feel bad about what they had done, they actually took action to remedy what they had done.

As believers and as a church, we are encouraged to become a shoulder to the weary.

As believers and as a church we should get ourselves into the work of God.

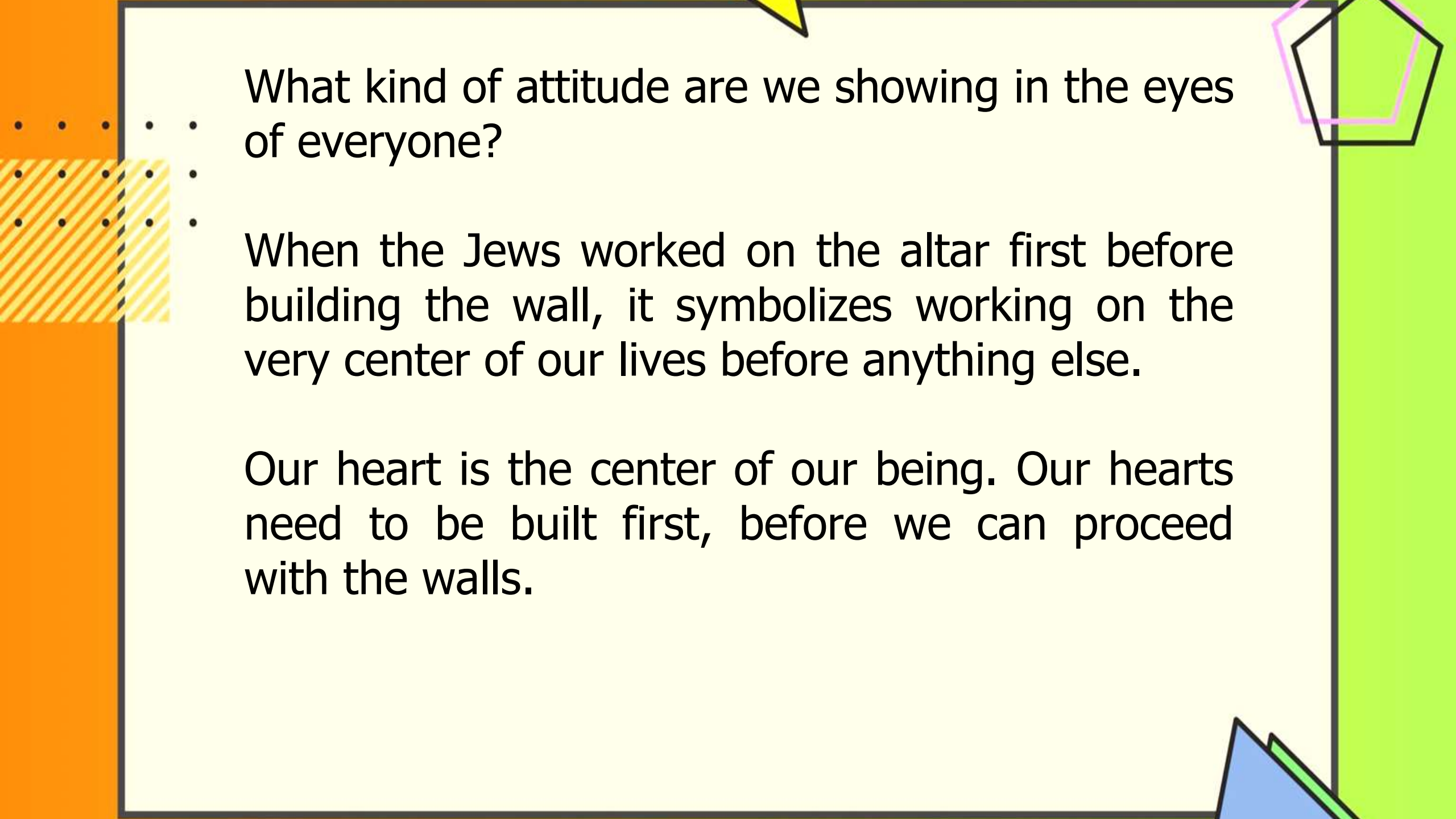
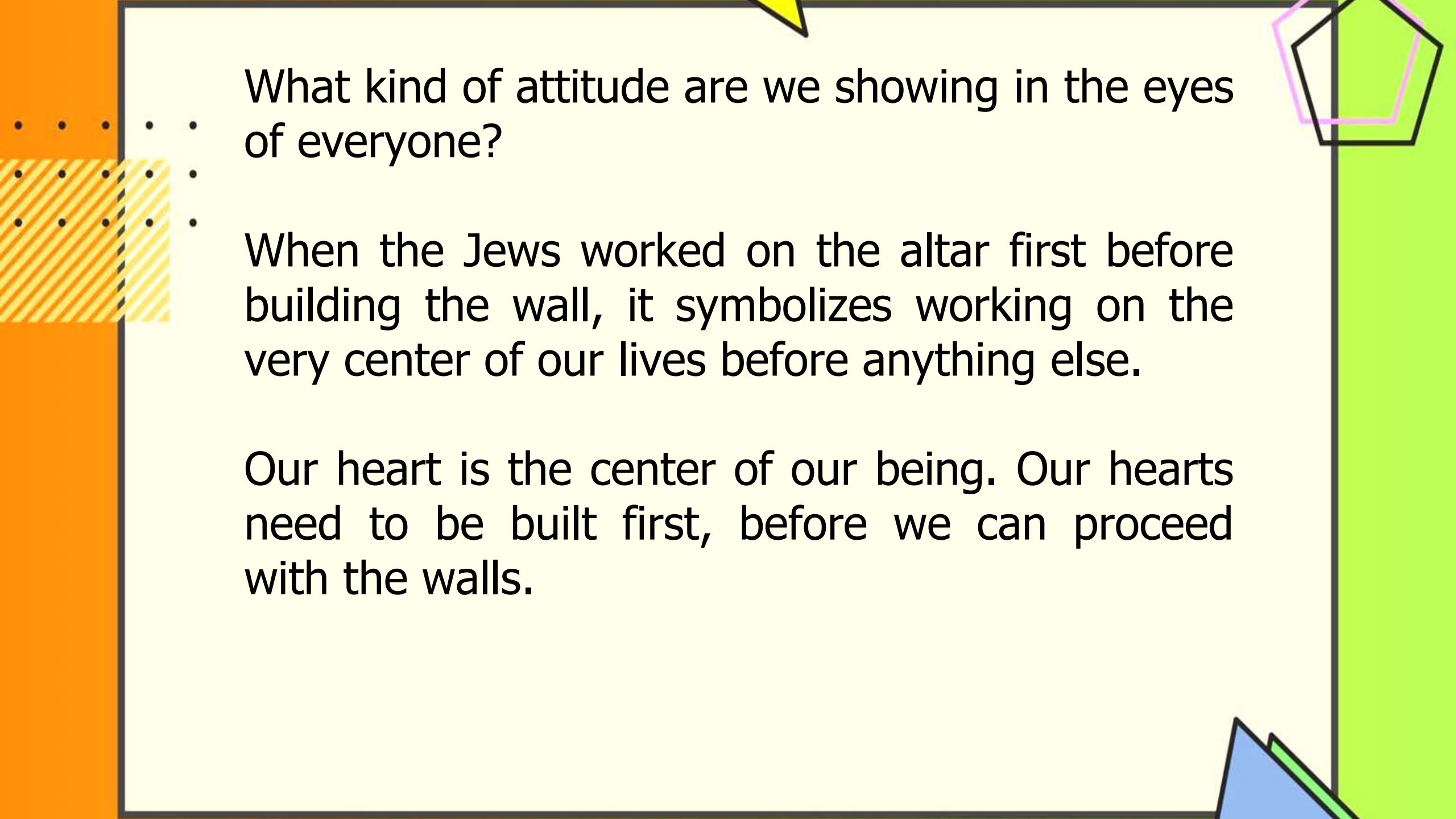
As different members or parts of the Body of Christ, we should be able to know our calling and the gifts God has given us.

3

ATTITUDE

BEFORE THE

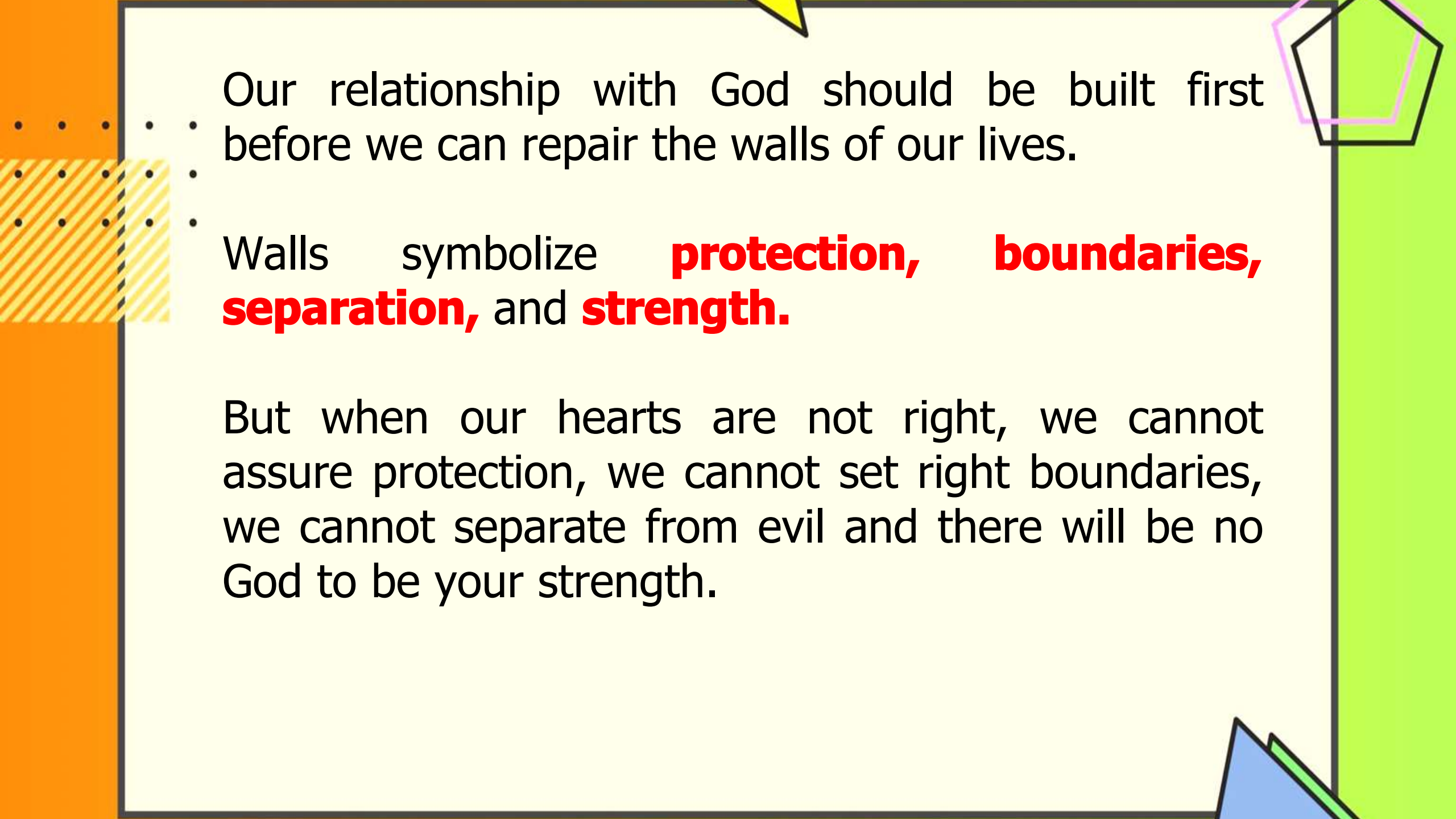
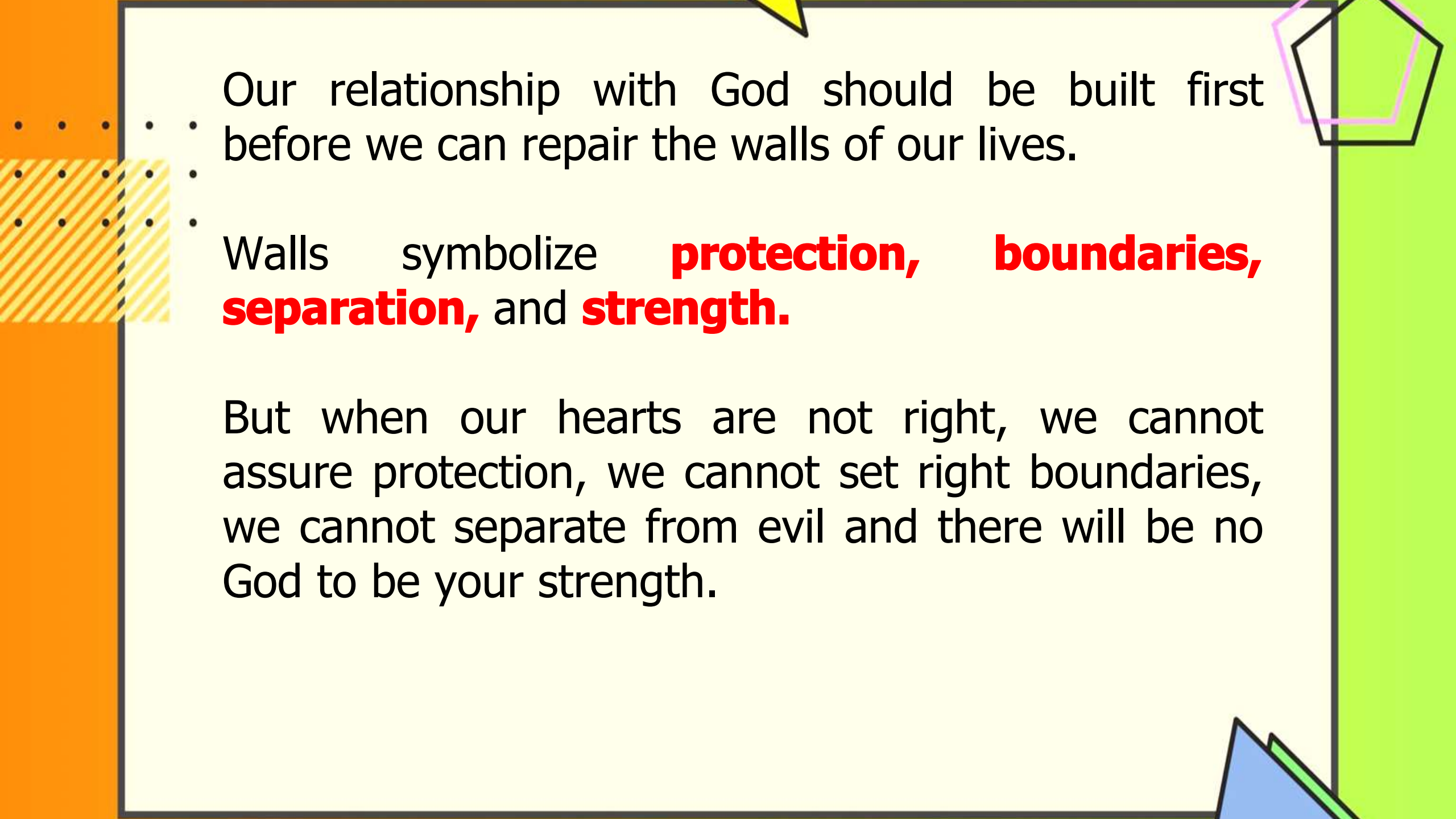
WORLD



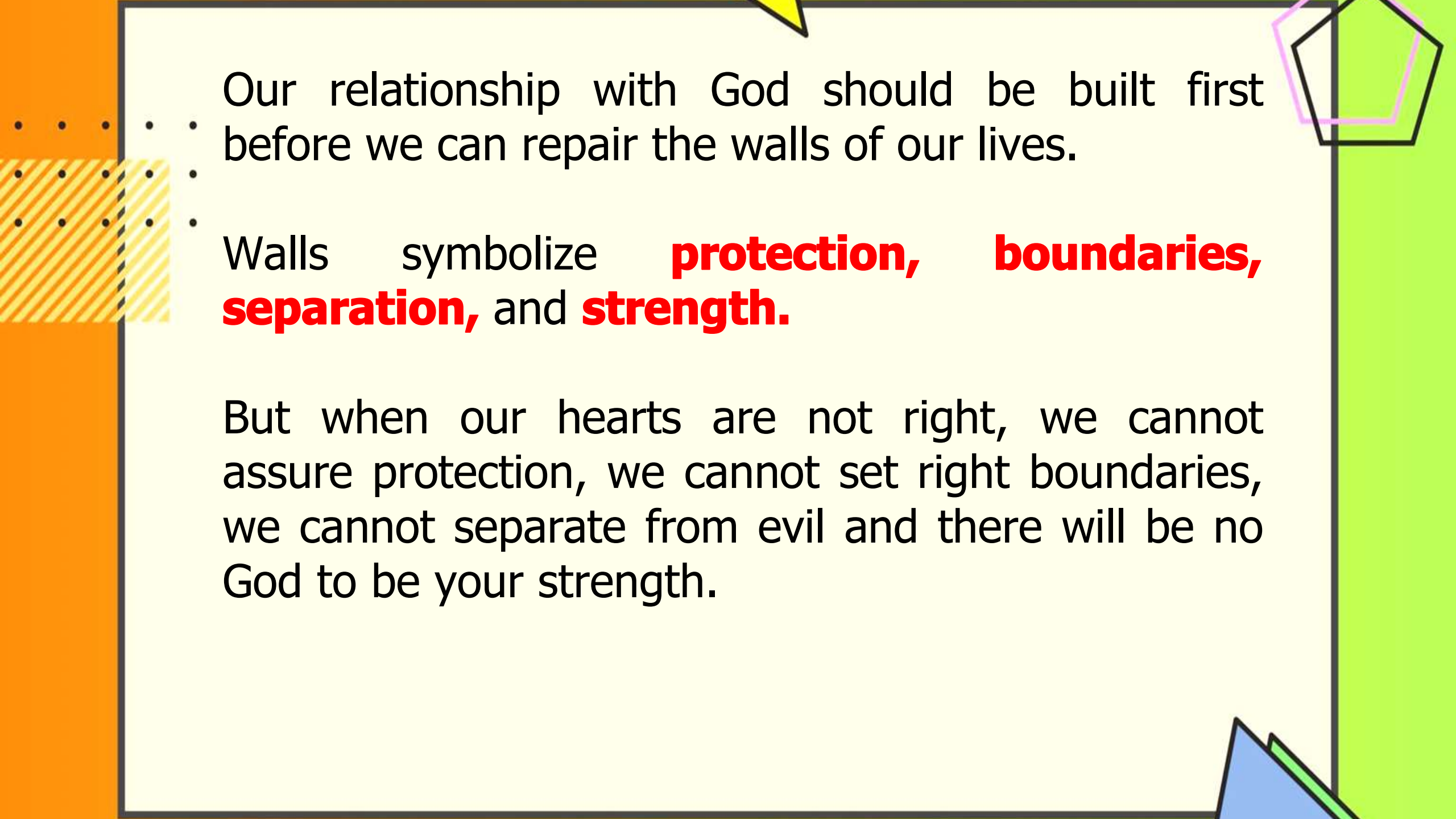
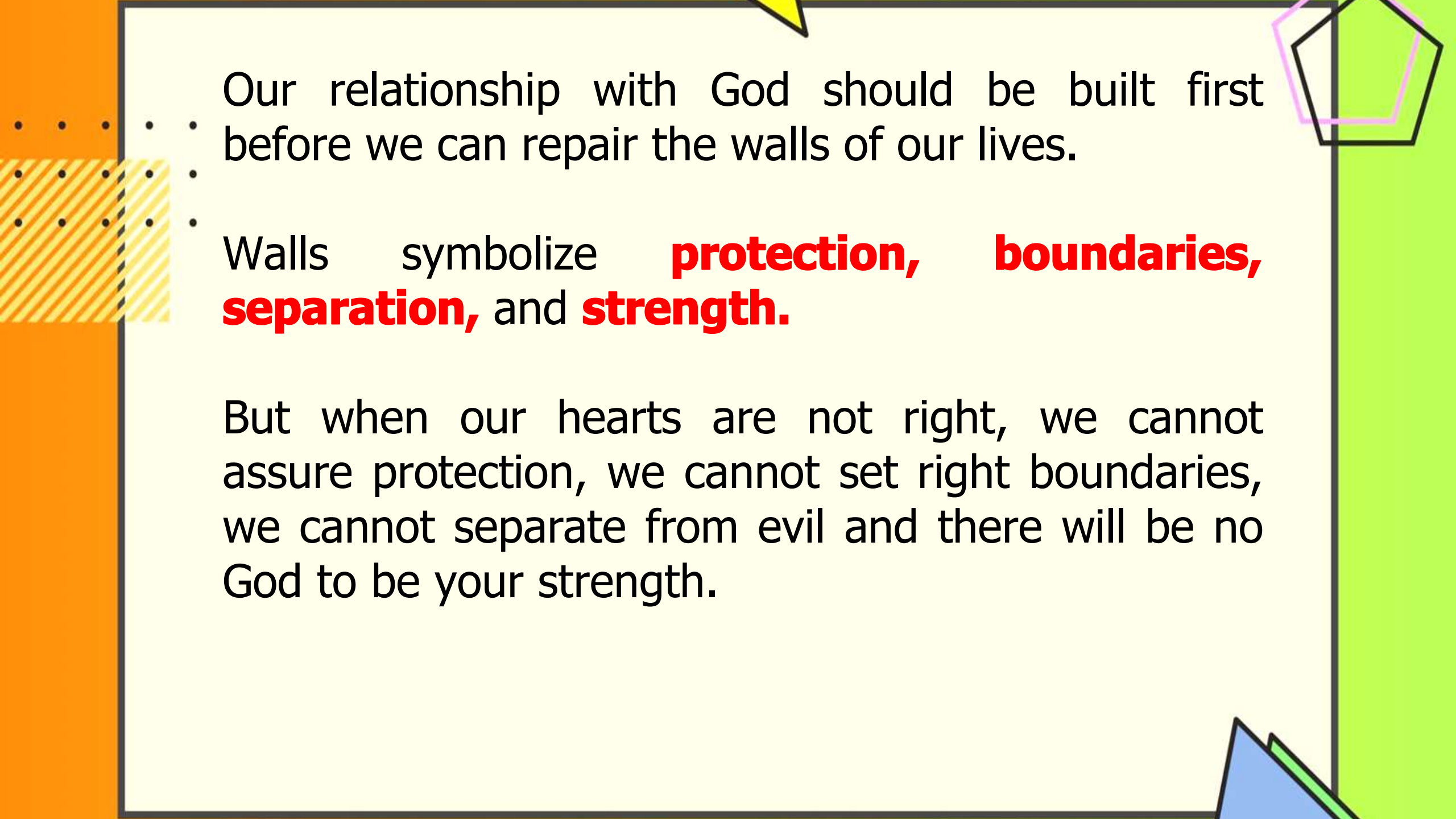
What kind of attitude are we showing in the eyes of everyone?

When the Jews worked on the altar first before building the wall, it symbolizes working on the very center of our lives before anything else.

Our heart is the center of our being. Our hearts need to be built first, before we can proceed with the walls.



Our relationship with God should be built first before we can repair the walls of our lives.



Walls symbolize **protection, boundaries, separation,** and **strength.**

But when our hearts are not right, we cannot assure protection, we cannot set right boundaries, we cannot separate from evil and there will be no God to be your strength.

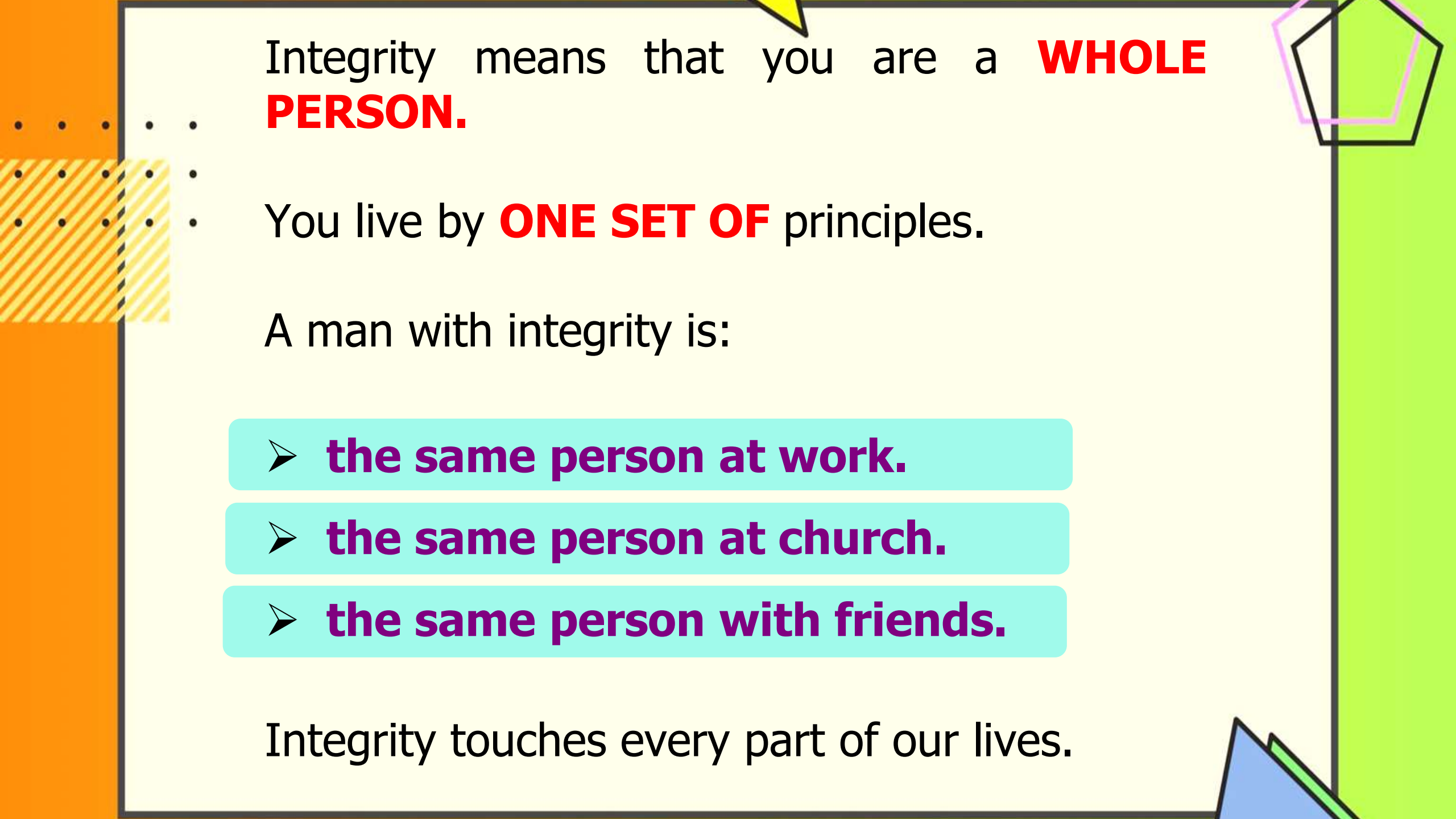


3 things about Nehemiah

I. Integrity

Nehemiah revealed that the empire had been paying him for his work as governor of Jerusalem but told them that he had not accepted any compensation that he didn't have to.

Integrity comes from another English word '**integer**' which means a whole number.



Integrity means that you are a **WHOLE PERSON.**

You live by **ONE SET OF** principles.

A man with integrity is:

- **the same person at work.**
- **the same person at church.**
- **the same person with friends.**

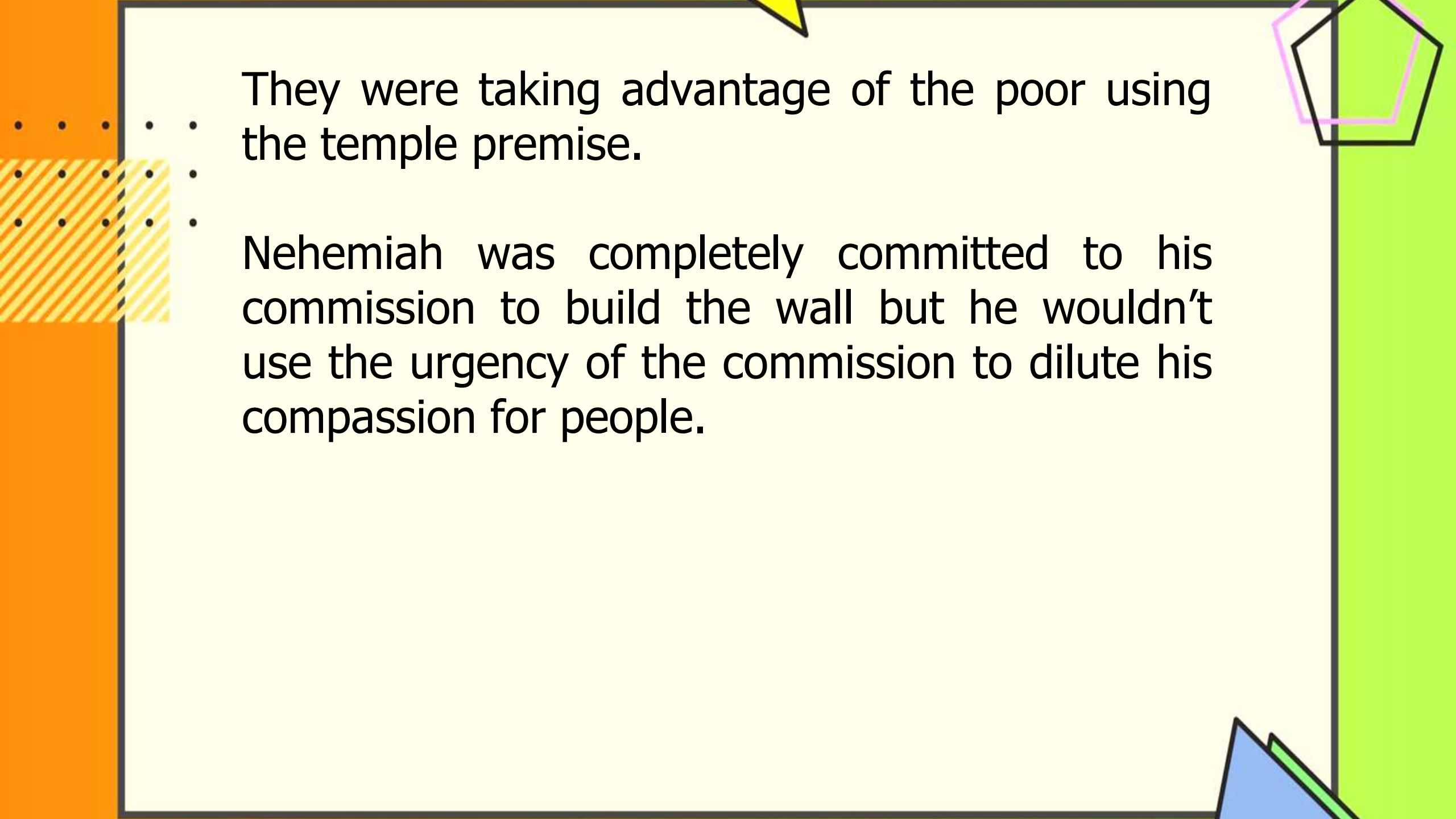
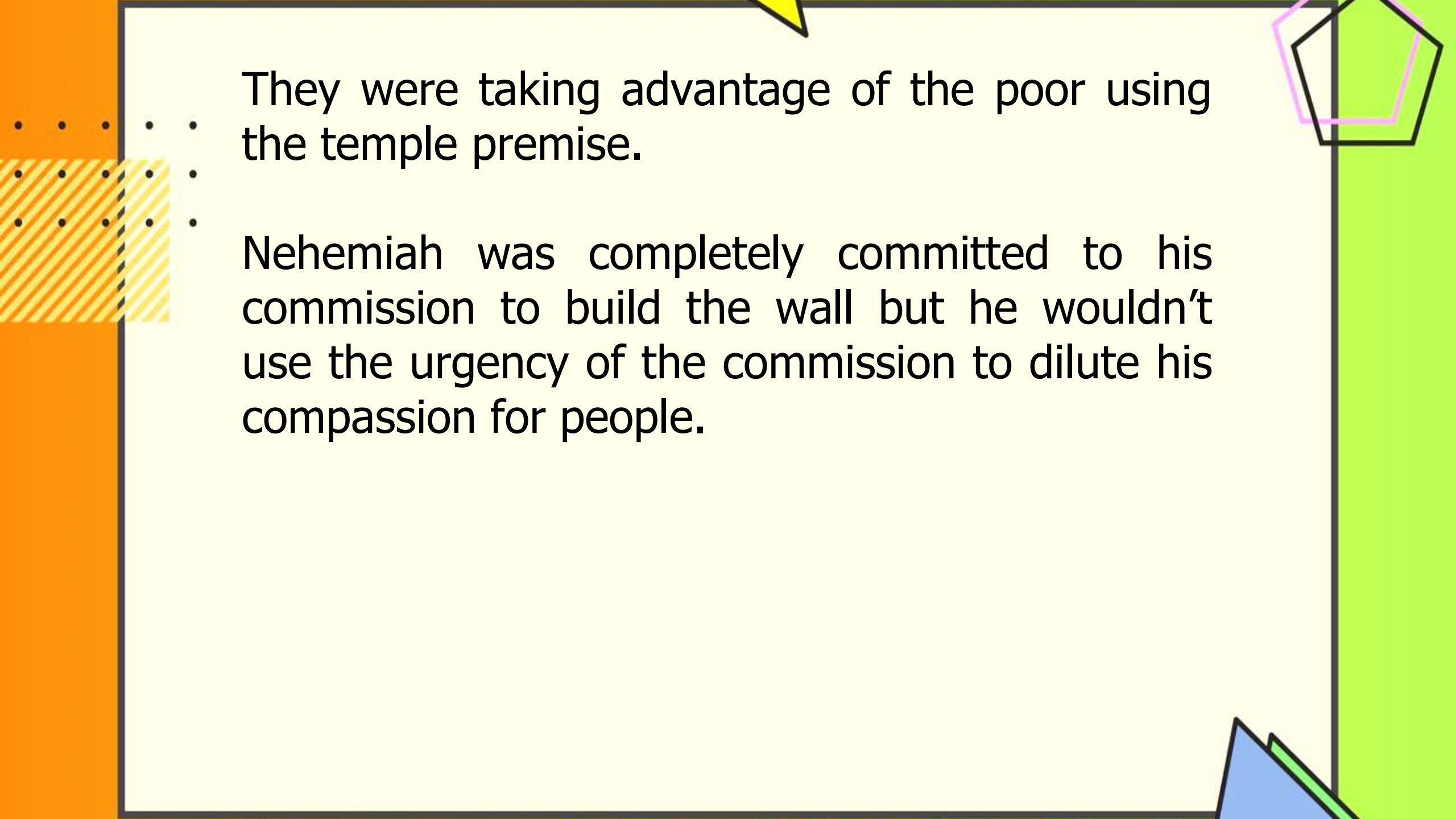
Integrity touches every part of our lives.

James 2:1-4 *“My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, “Here’s a good seat for you,” but say to the poor man, “You stand there” or “Sit on the floor by my feet,” have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?*

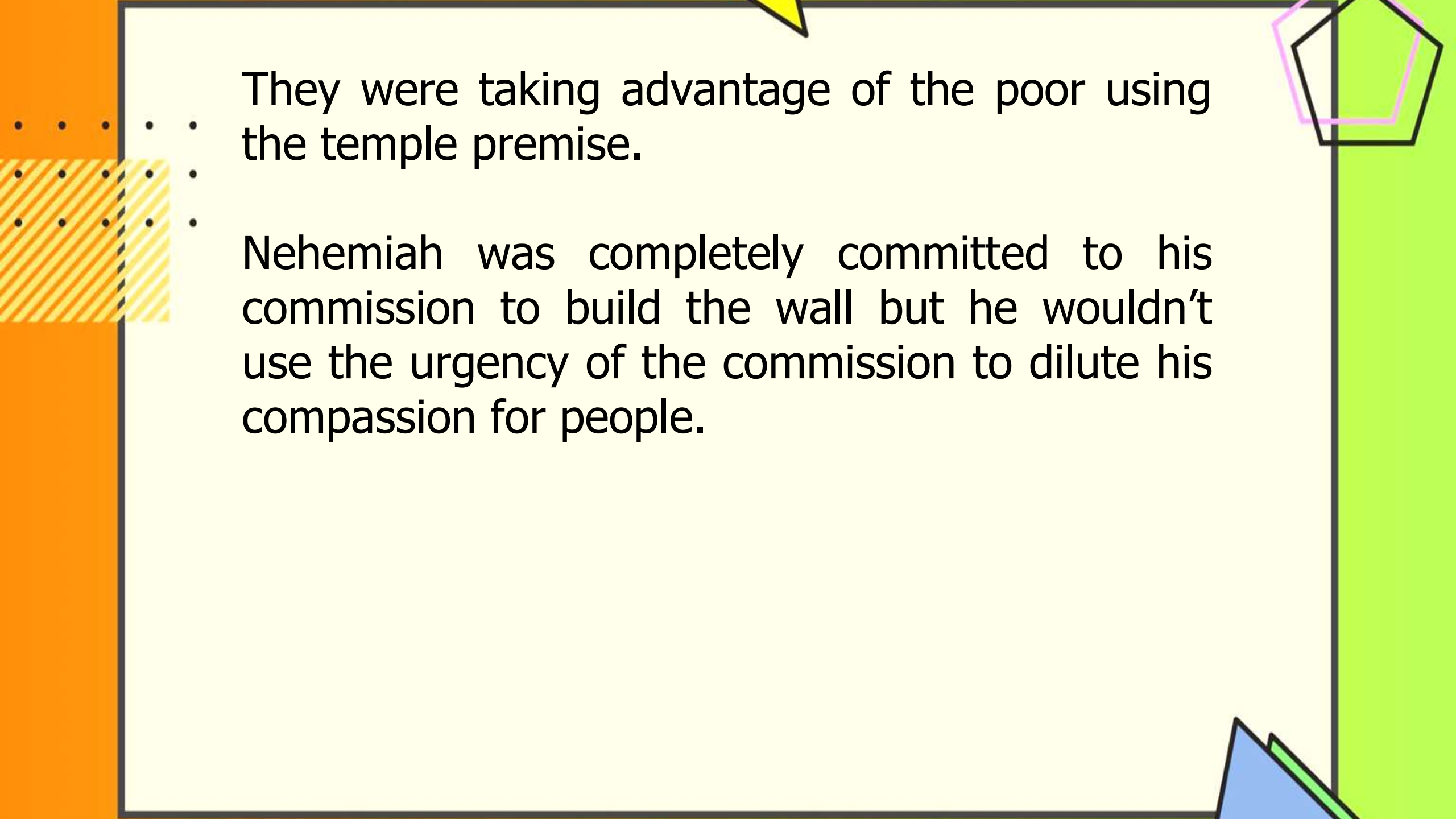
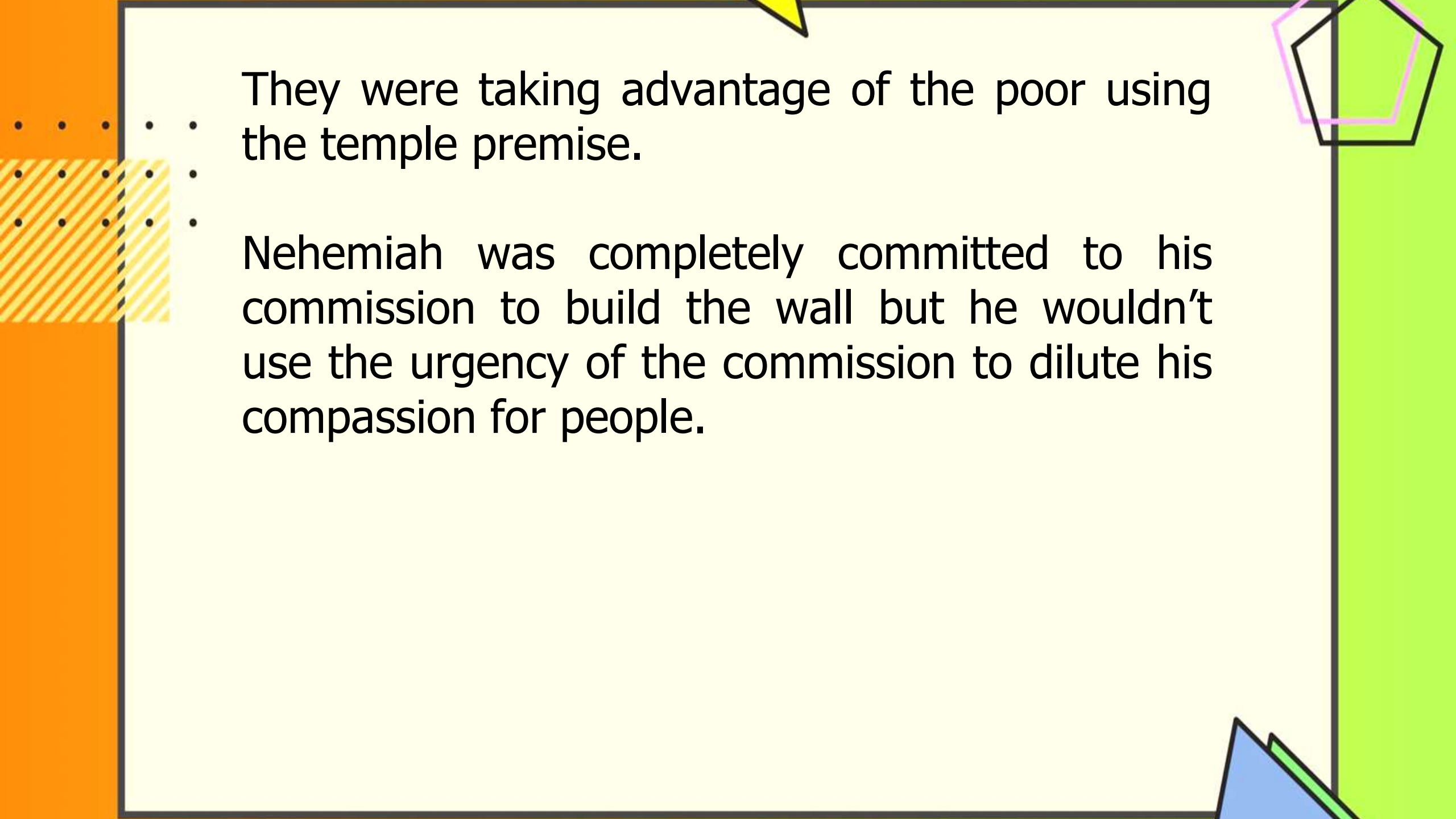
II. Compassion

Nehemiah cared enough to get angry about the mistreatment of the average person.

When Jesus the Christ lost his cool in the temple the week of his crucifixion and overturned the money changers tables and drove out the people who were selling pigeons for sacrifices.



They were taking advantage of the poor using the temple premise.

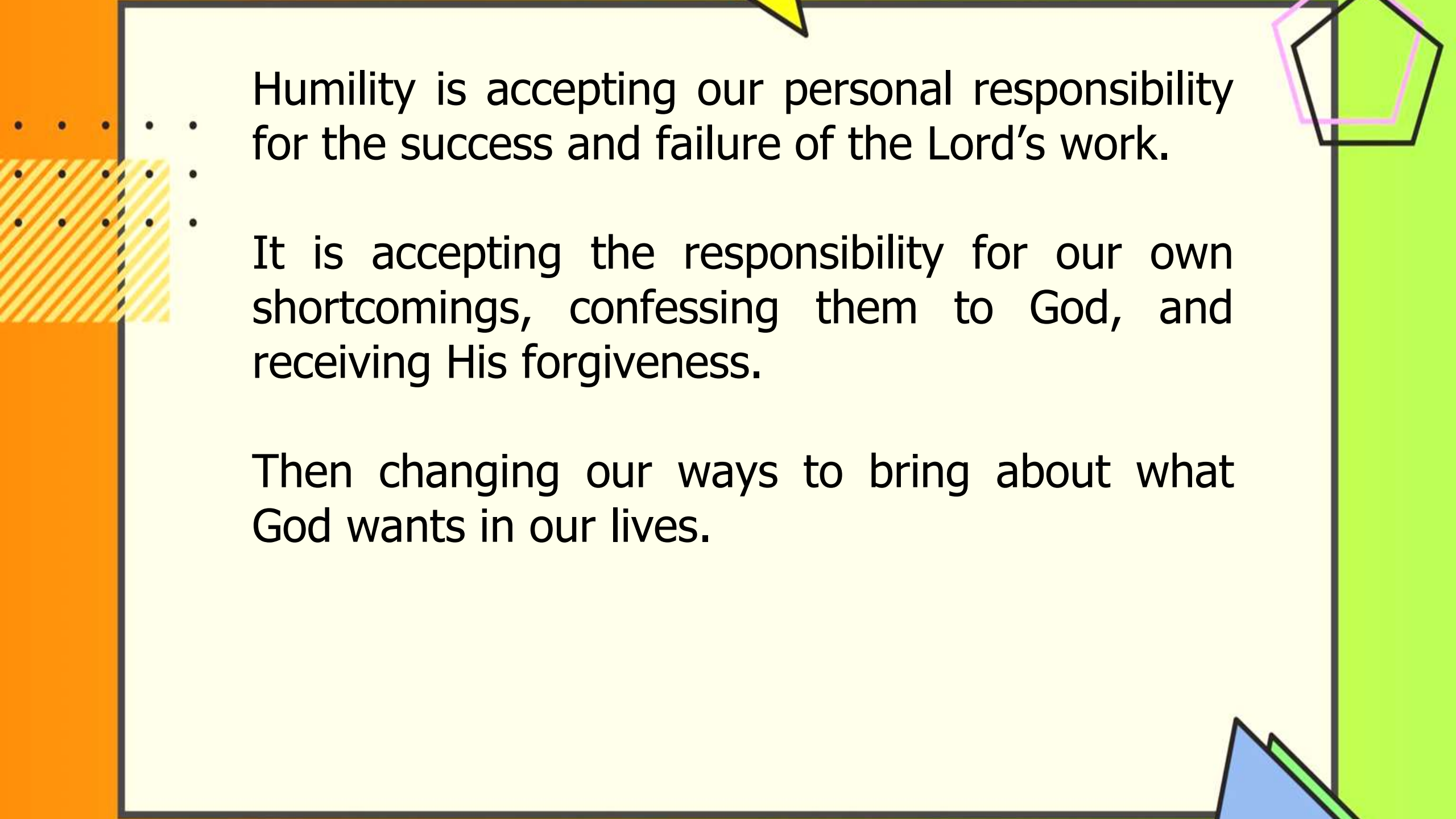
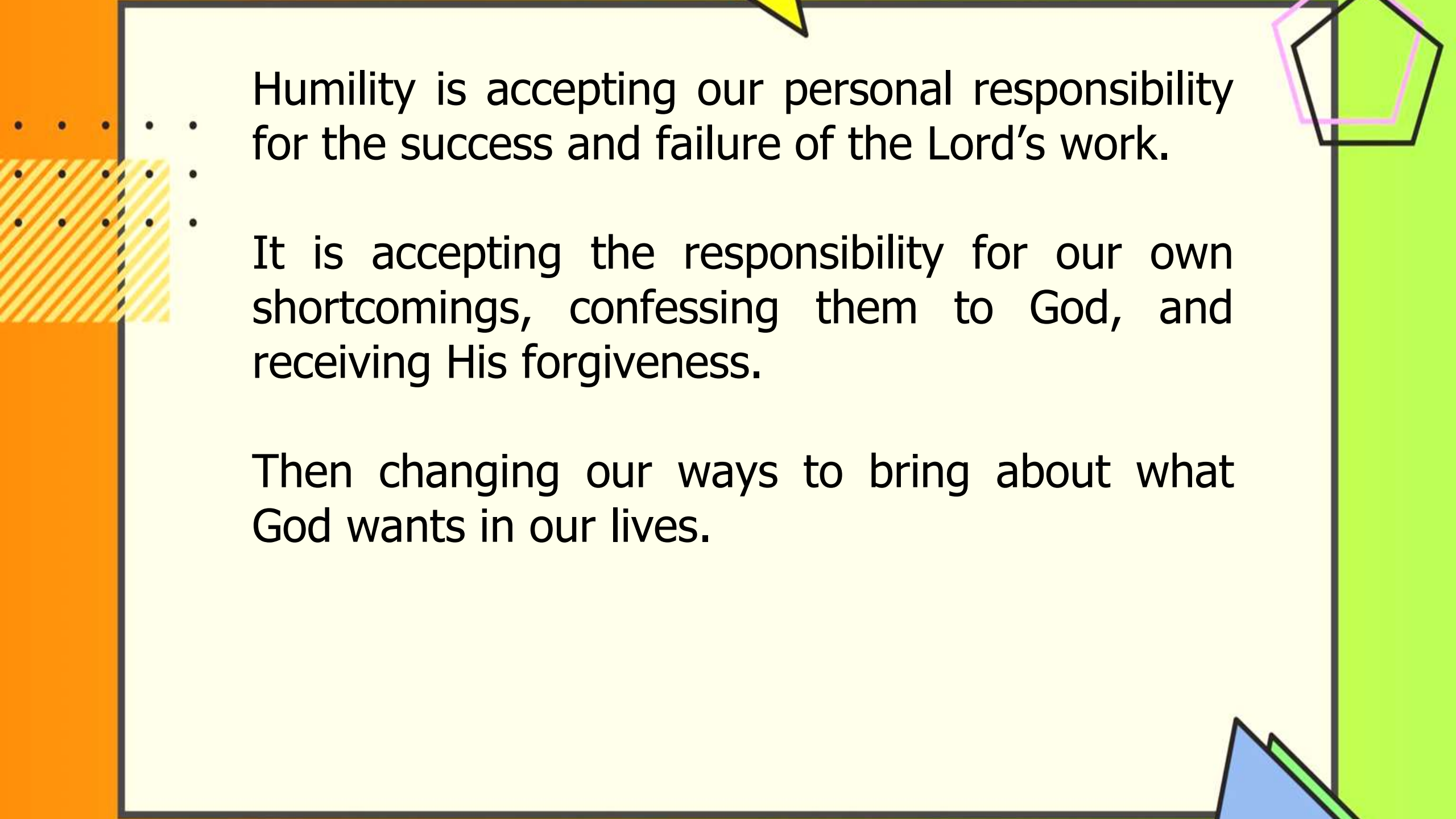


Nehemiah was completely committed to his commission to build the wall but he wouldn't use the urgency of the commission to dilute his compassion for people.

III. Humility

Nehemiah took personal responsibility for the plight of those who were treated unjustly.

Admitting our wrongs may not completely fix a problem in our family, at our work, in our home, with our friends, or in the church, but it always starts with **ME,** and **YOU.**

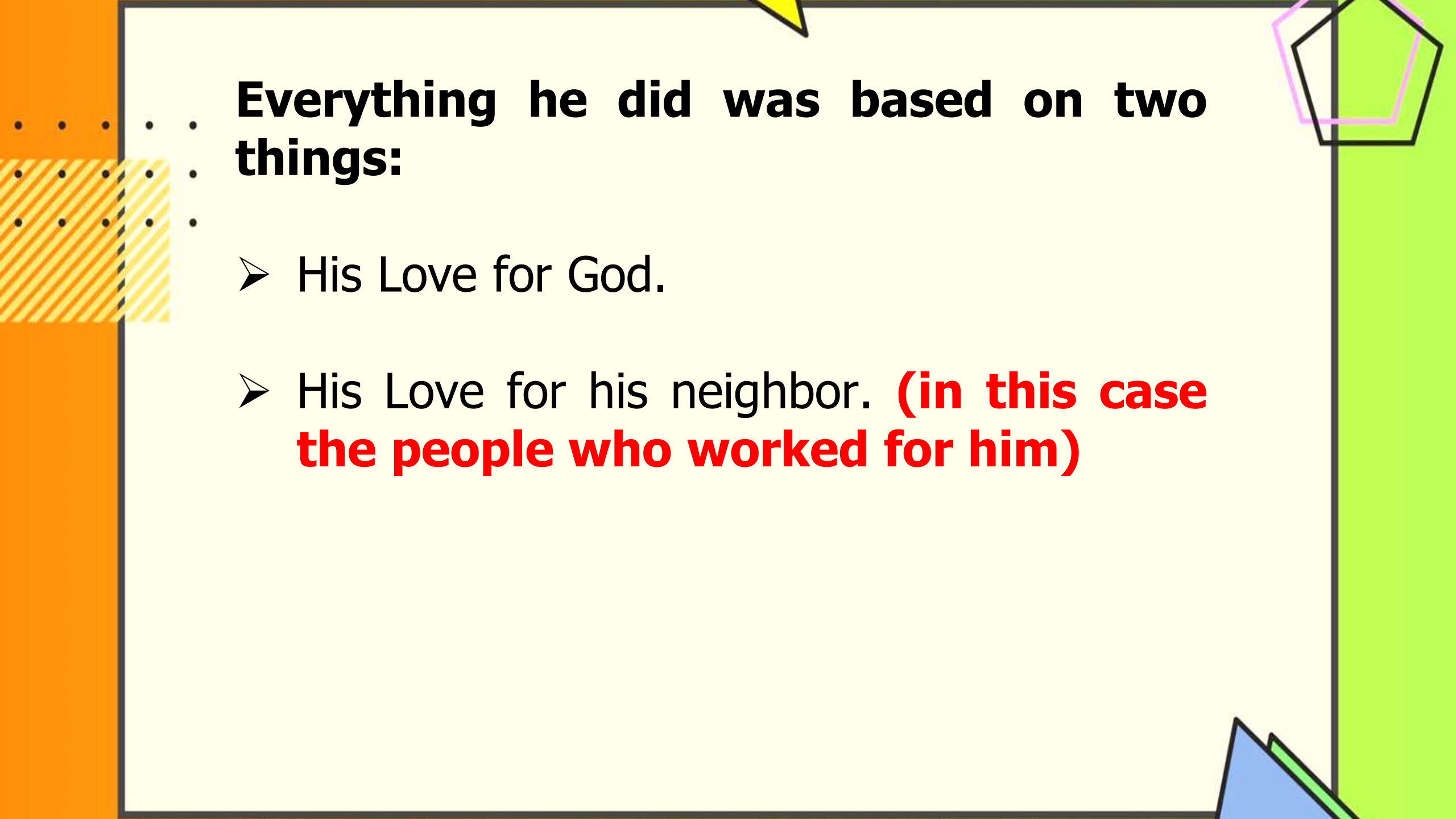


Humility is accepting our personal responsibility for the success and failure of the Lord's work.

It is accepting the responsibility for our own shortcomings, confessing them to God, and receiving His forgiveness.

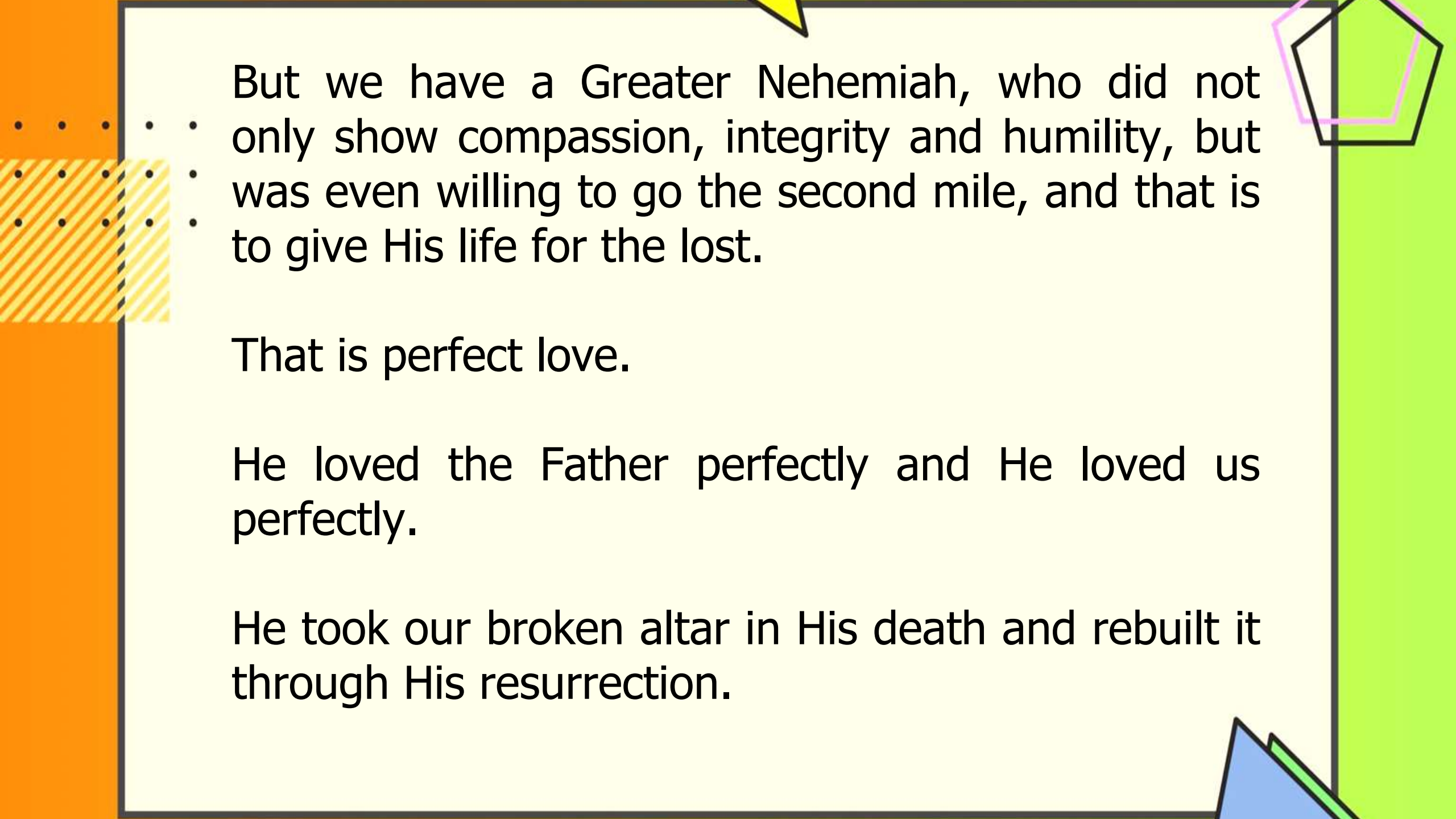
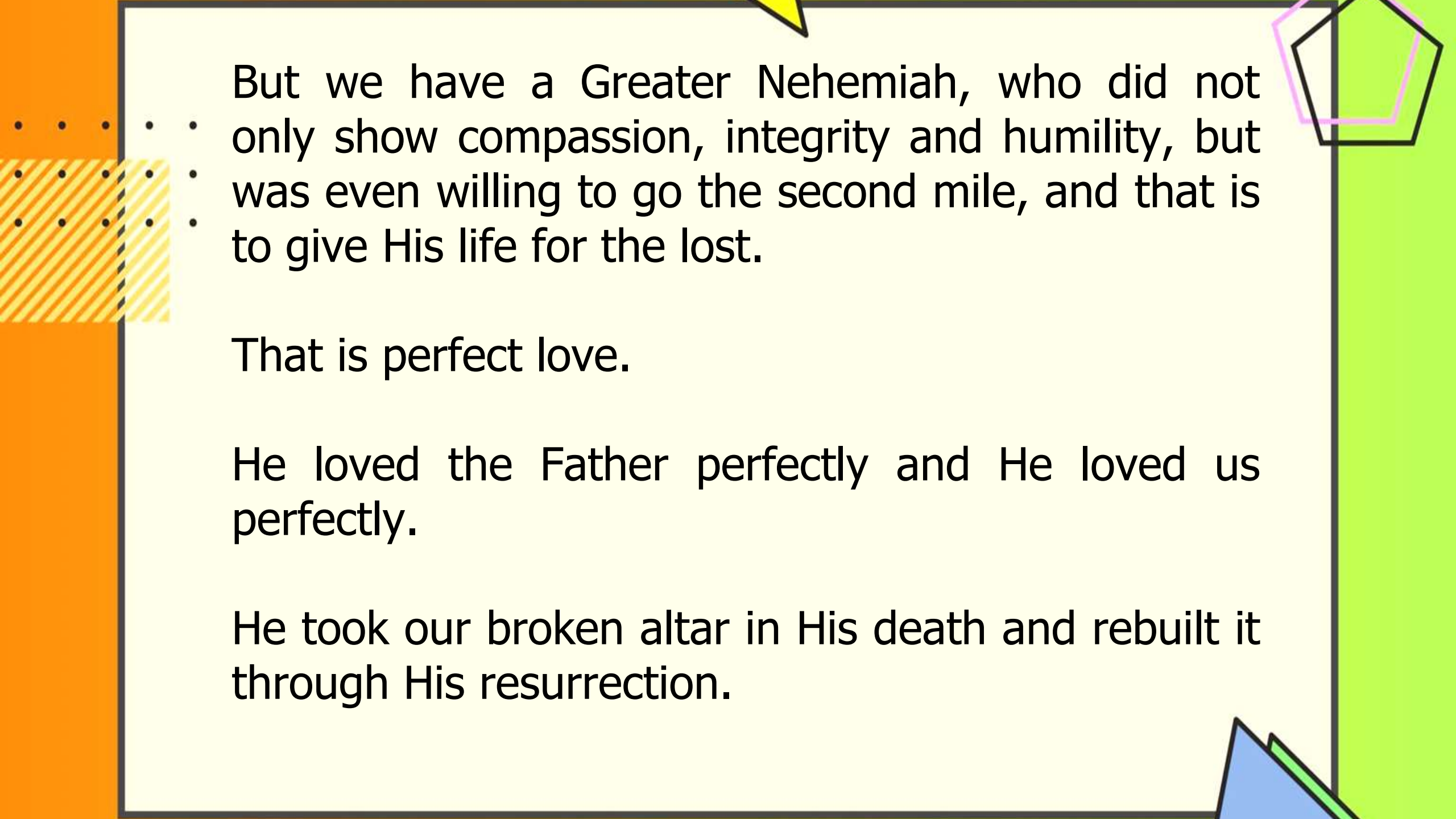
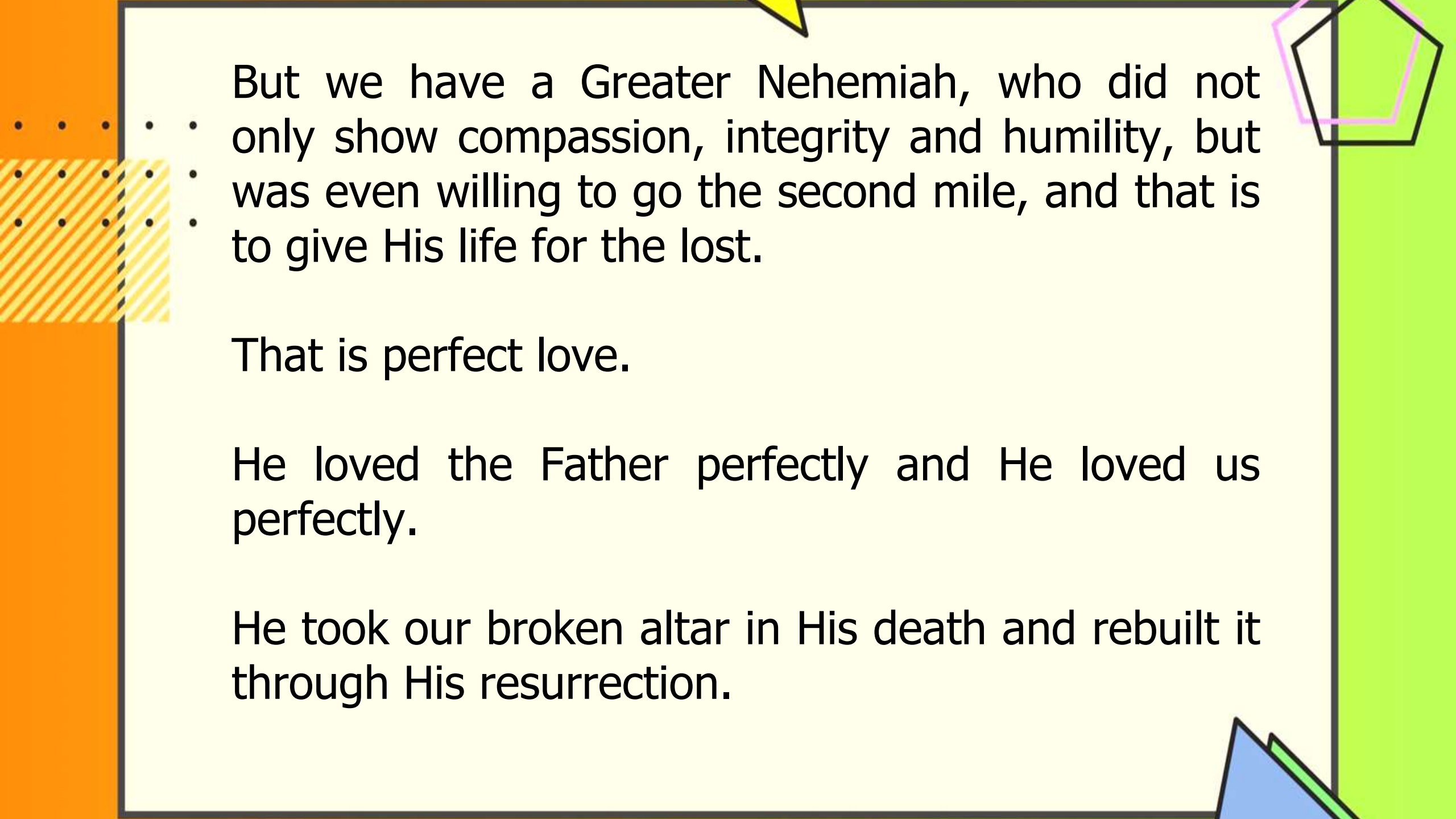
Then changing our ways to bring about what God wants in our lives.

Nehemiah 5:17-18 *“And at my table were one hundred and fifty Jews and rulers, besides those who came to us from the nations around us. Now that which was prepared daily was one ox and six choice sheep. Also fowl were prepared for me, and once every ten days an abundance of all kinds of wine. Yet in spite of this I did not demand the governor’s provisions, because the bondage was heavy on this people.”*



Everything he did was based on two things:

- His Love for God.
- His Love for his neighbor. **(in this case the people who worked for him)**

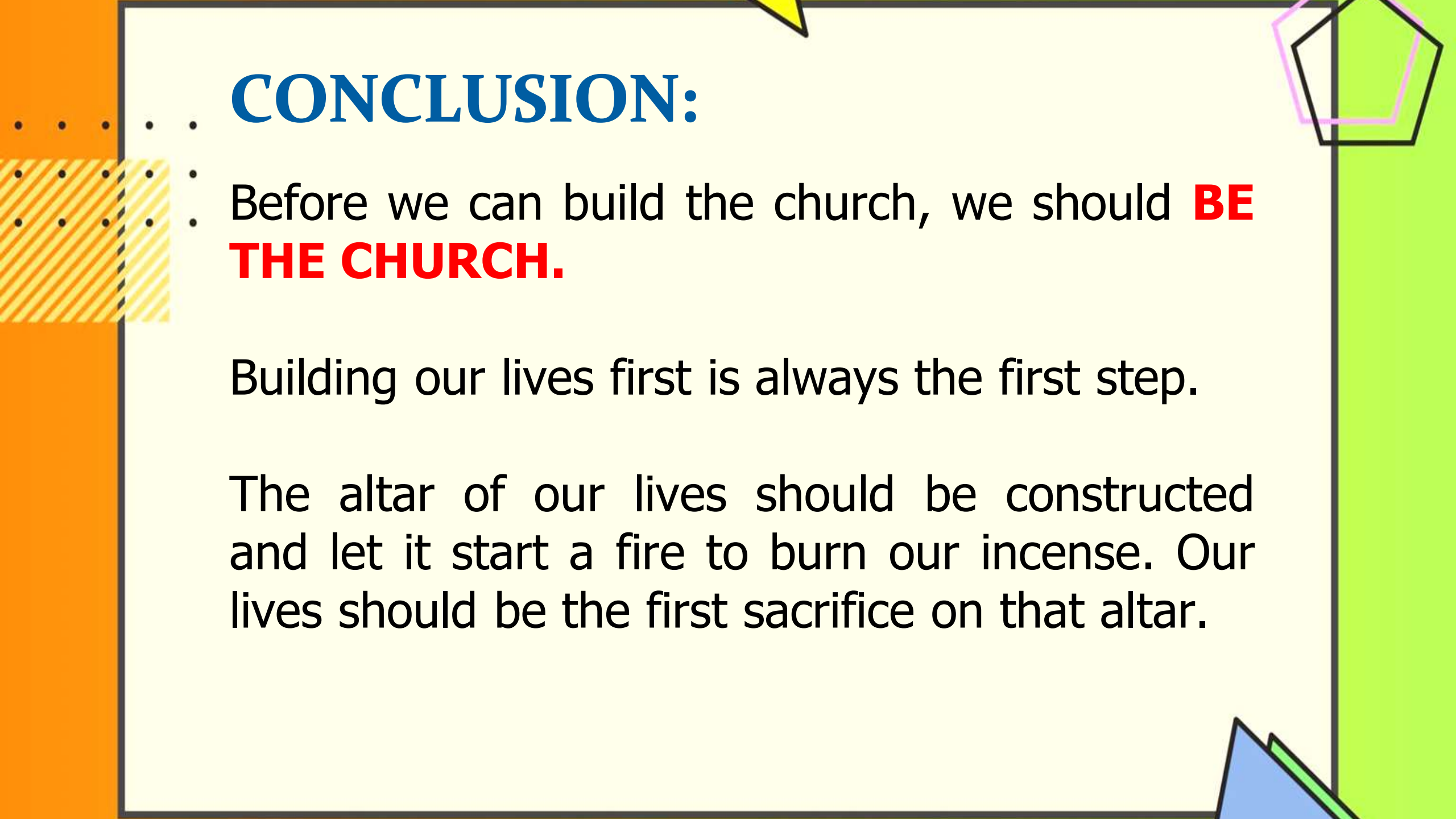


But we have a Greater Nehemiah, who did not only show compassion, integrity and humility, but was even willing to go the second mile, and that is to give His life for the lost.

That is perfect love.

He loved the Father perfectly and He loved us perfectly.

He took our broken altar in His death and rebuilt it through His resurrection.

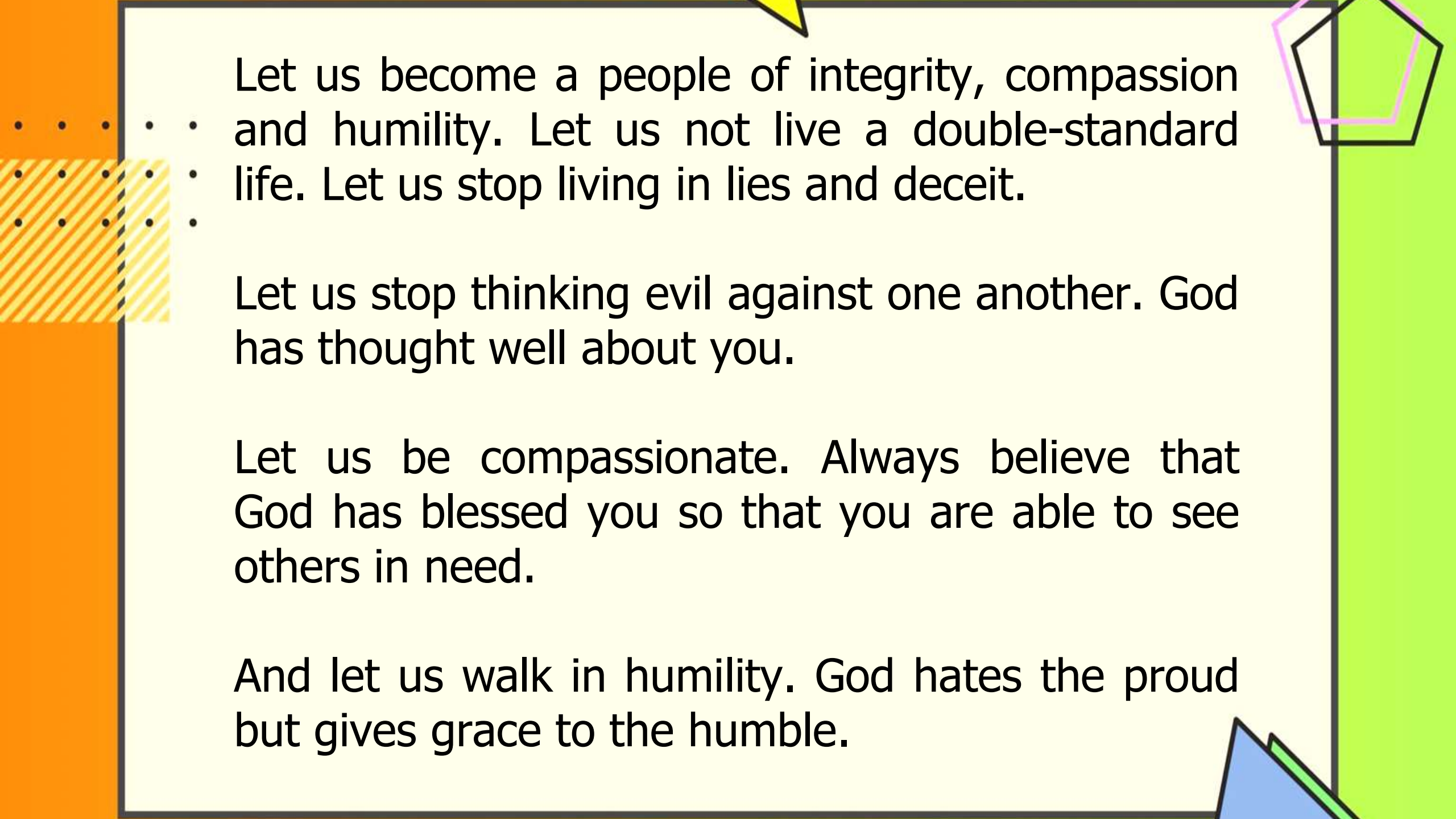
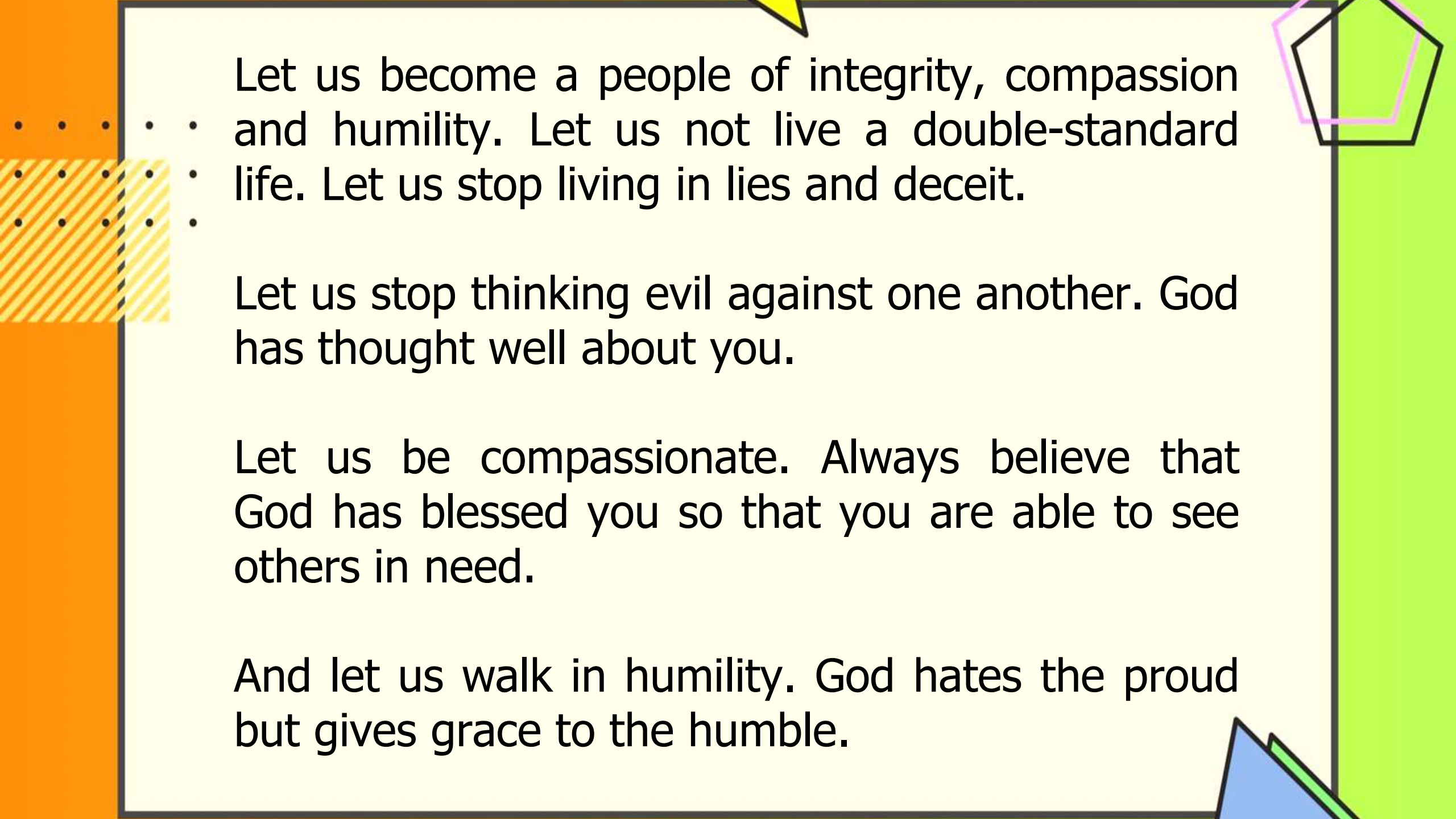


CONCLUSION:

Before we can build the church, we should **BE THE CHURCH.**

Building our lives first is always the first step.

The altar of our lives should be constructed and let it start a fire to burn our incense. Our lives should be the first sacrifice on that altar.

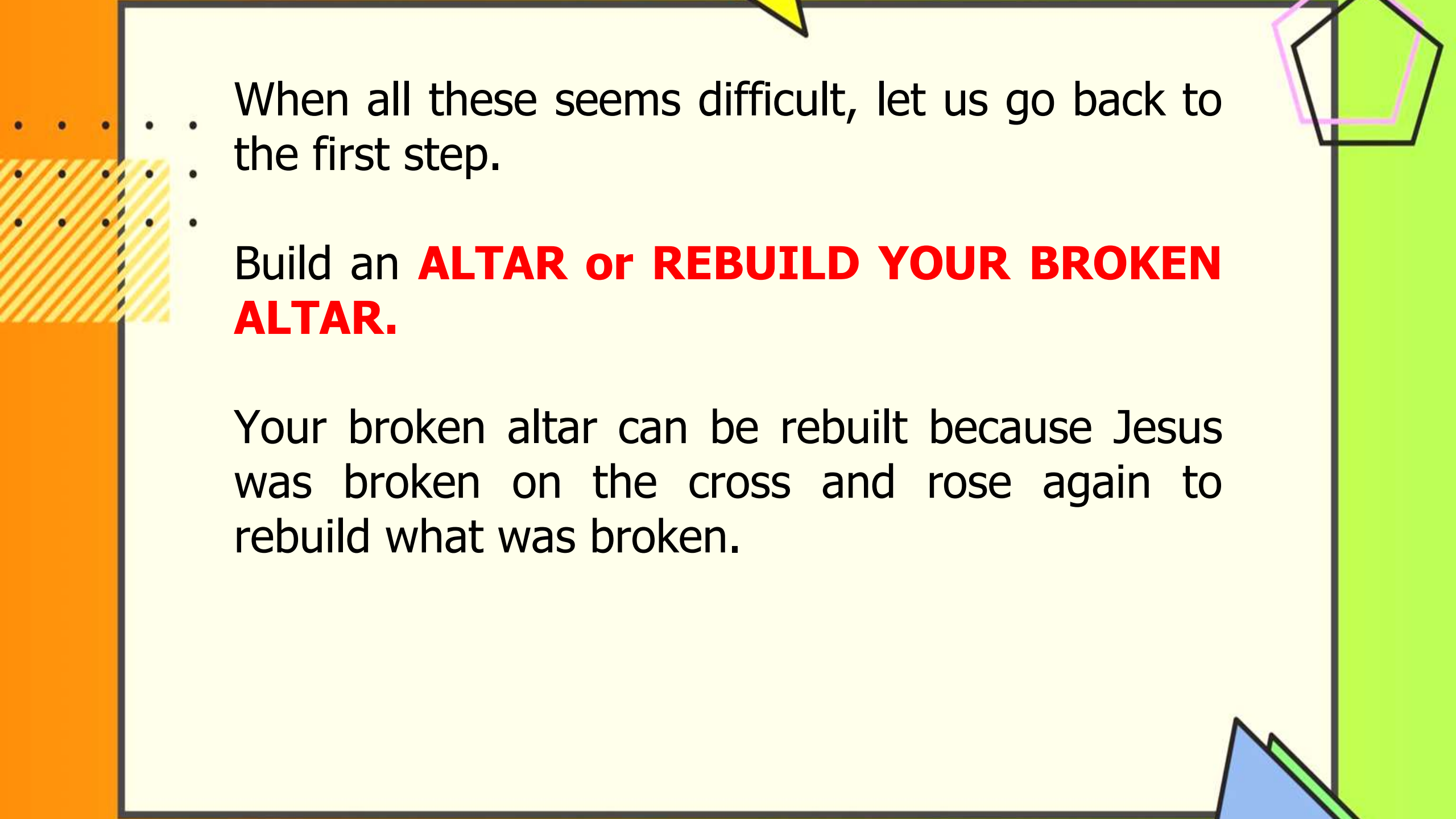
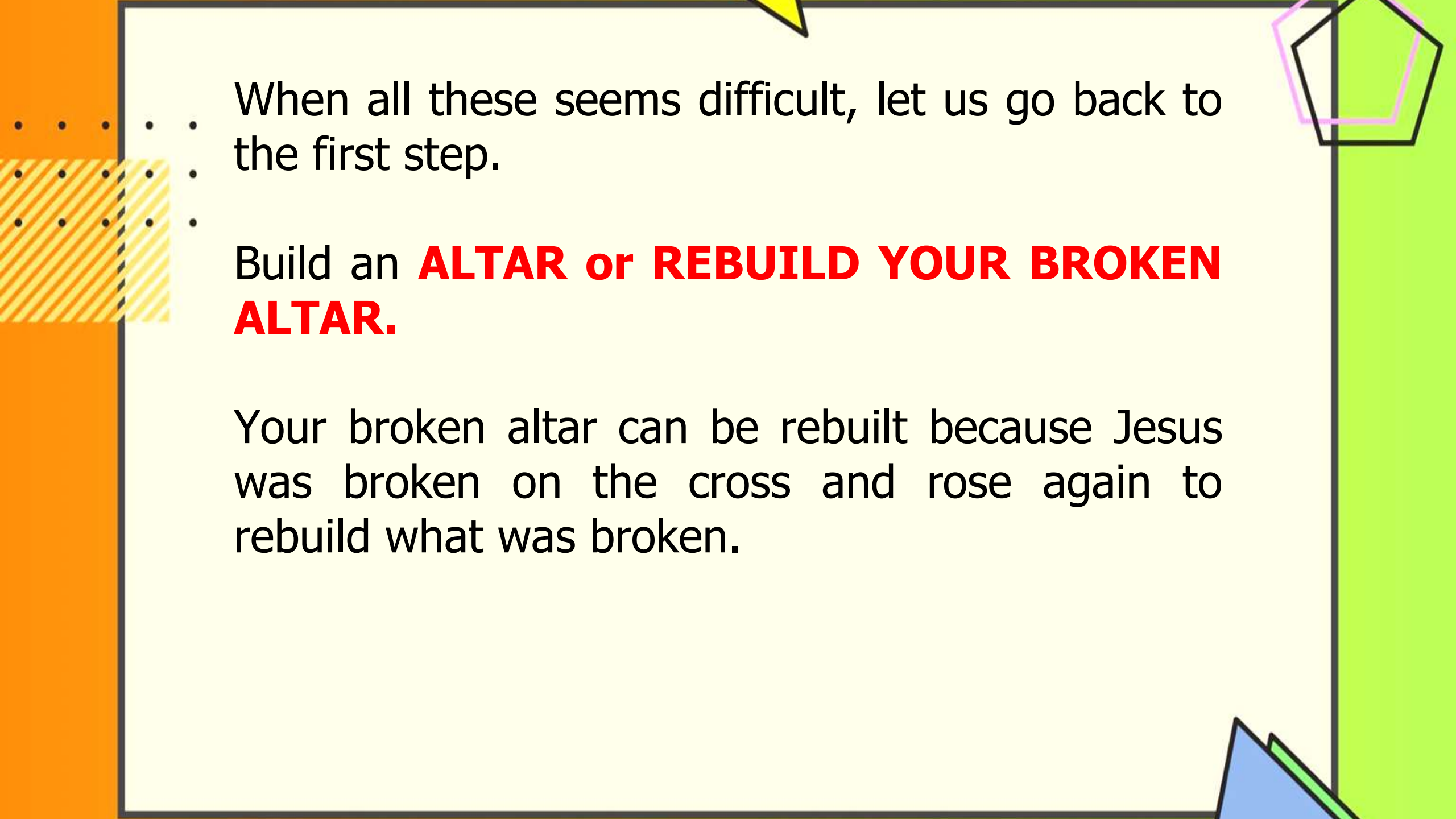


Let us become a people of integrity, compassion and humility. Let us not live a double-standard life. Let us stop living in lies and deceit.

Let us stop thinking evil against one another. God has thought well about you.

Let us be compassionate. Always believe that God has blessed you so that you are able to see others in need.

And let us walk in humility. God hates the proud but gives grace to the humble.



When all these seems difficult, let us go back to the first step.

Build an **ALTAR or REBUILD YOUR BROKEN ALTAR.**

Your broken altar can be rebuilt because Jesus was broken on the cross and rose again to rebuild what was broken.

