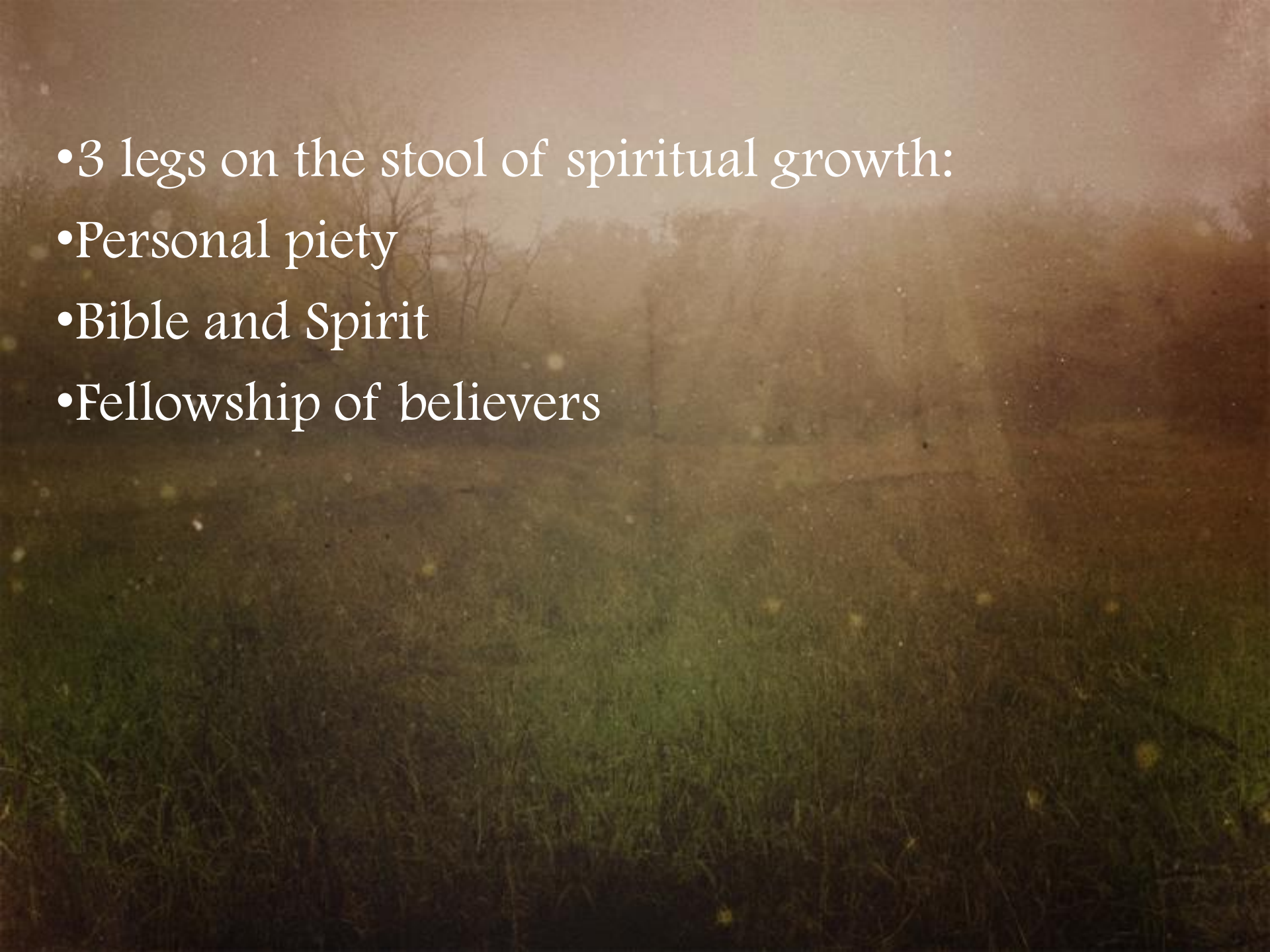




Don't Waste Your Church

- Why don't people go to church?
- What might keep you away?
- There has been a major shift toward individuality and against church
- How do we not waste our church?

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- A misty, sepia-toned landscape with a field in the foreground and trees in the background. The scene is hazy and atmospheric, with a warm, brownish-gold color palette. The foreground shows a field of grass or low vegetation, and the background features a line of trees under a soft, overcast sky.
- 3 legs on the stool of spiritual growth:
 - Personal piety
 - Bible and Spirit
 - Fellowship of believers

- 
- A misty, sepia-toned landscape with a field in the foreground and trees in the background. The text is overlaid on the upper left portion of the image.
- What is the Church?
 - Visible
 - Invisible
 - What is the Church good for?
 - Augustine; “The Church is your mother”

- How does God feel about the Church?
- Loved and died for it
- Calls it His bride
- Uses it to show Himself to the world
- Loving the Church isn't in passing or from afar; it's in a committed relationship
- What else does Scripture say?

1 Corinthians 14:20

²⁰ Brethren, do not be children in your thinking;
yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be
mature.

- 
- Grow up and mature
 - Titus 2 talks about mentoring and teaching

1 Corinthians 14:26

²⁶ What is *the outcome* then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.

• Use your gifts to edify each other

A sepia-toned photograph of a landscape. The foreground is a dense field of tall grasses, some of which are in focus. The middle ground shows a line of bare trees, possibly deciduous, with their branches silhouetted against a hazy, overcast sky. The overall atmosphere is misty and somewhat somber due to the monochromatic color palette.

1 Corinthians 16:15-18

¹⁵ Now I urge you, brethren (you know the household of Stephanas, that they were the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves for ministry to the saints), ¹⁶ that you also be in subjection to such men and to everyone who helps in the work and labors. ¹⁷ I rejoice over the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have supplied what was lacking on your part. ¹⁸ For they have refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore acknowledge such men.

- Submit to leaders and submit to others
- Impossible on your own
- Leaders lead flocks
- Church is where we begin to demolish the kingdom of self for His Kingdom

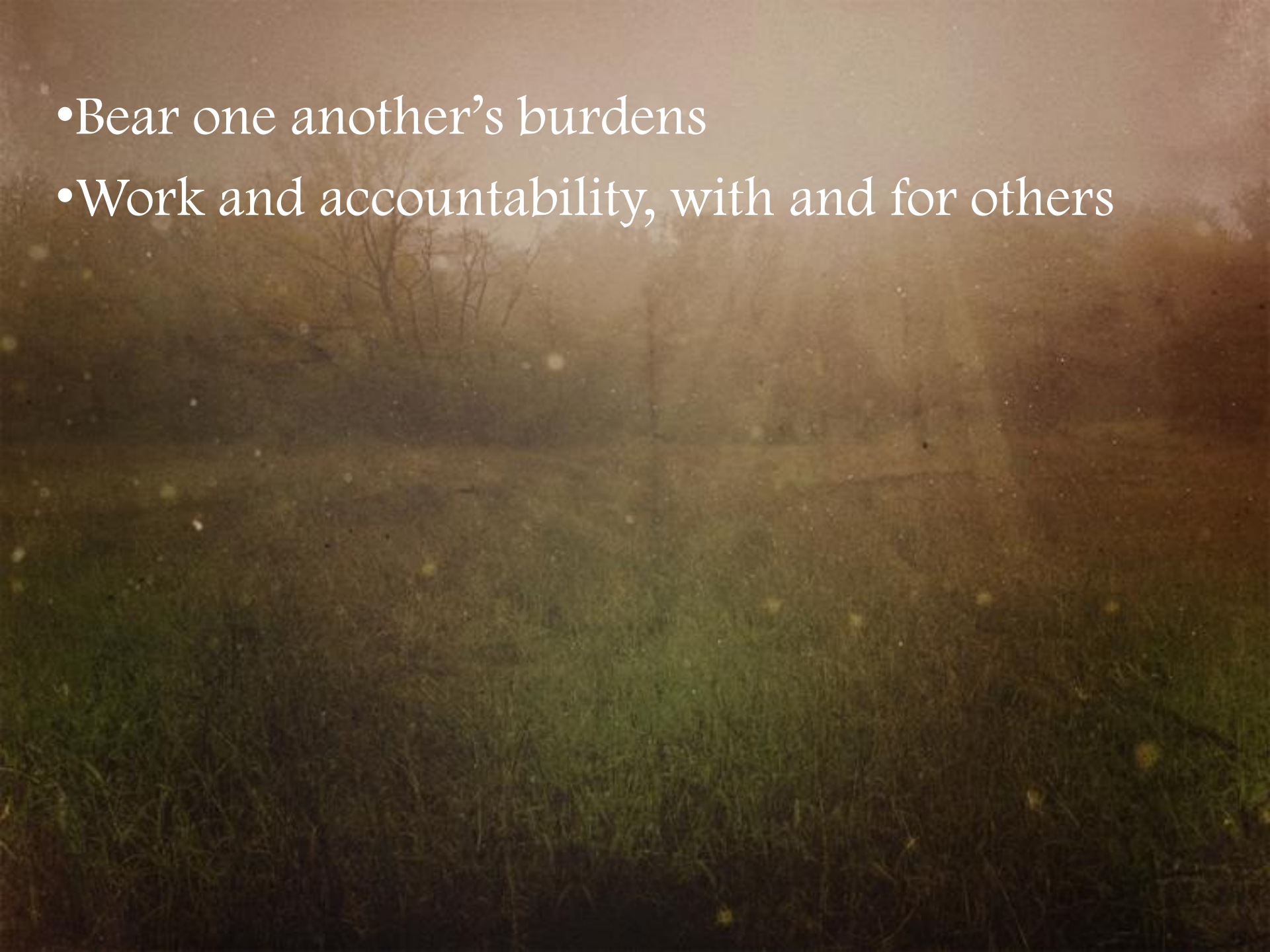
1 Corinthians 16:19-20

¹⁹ The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Prisca greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. ²⁰ All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

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- A sepia-toned, misty landscape. The foreground is a dense field of tall grasses. In the middle ground, there are several bare, leafless trees. The background is a soft, hazy expanse of more trees and sky, creating a sense of depth and atmosphere. The overall color palette is warm and muted, dominated by browns, greens, and greys.
- Accept and love others
 - Not of your clan/family

Galatians 6:1-5

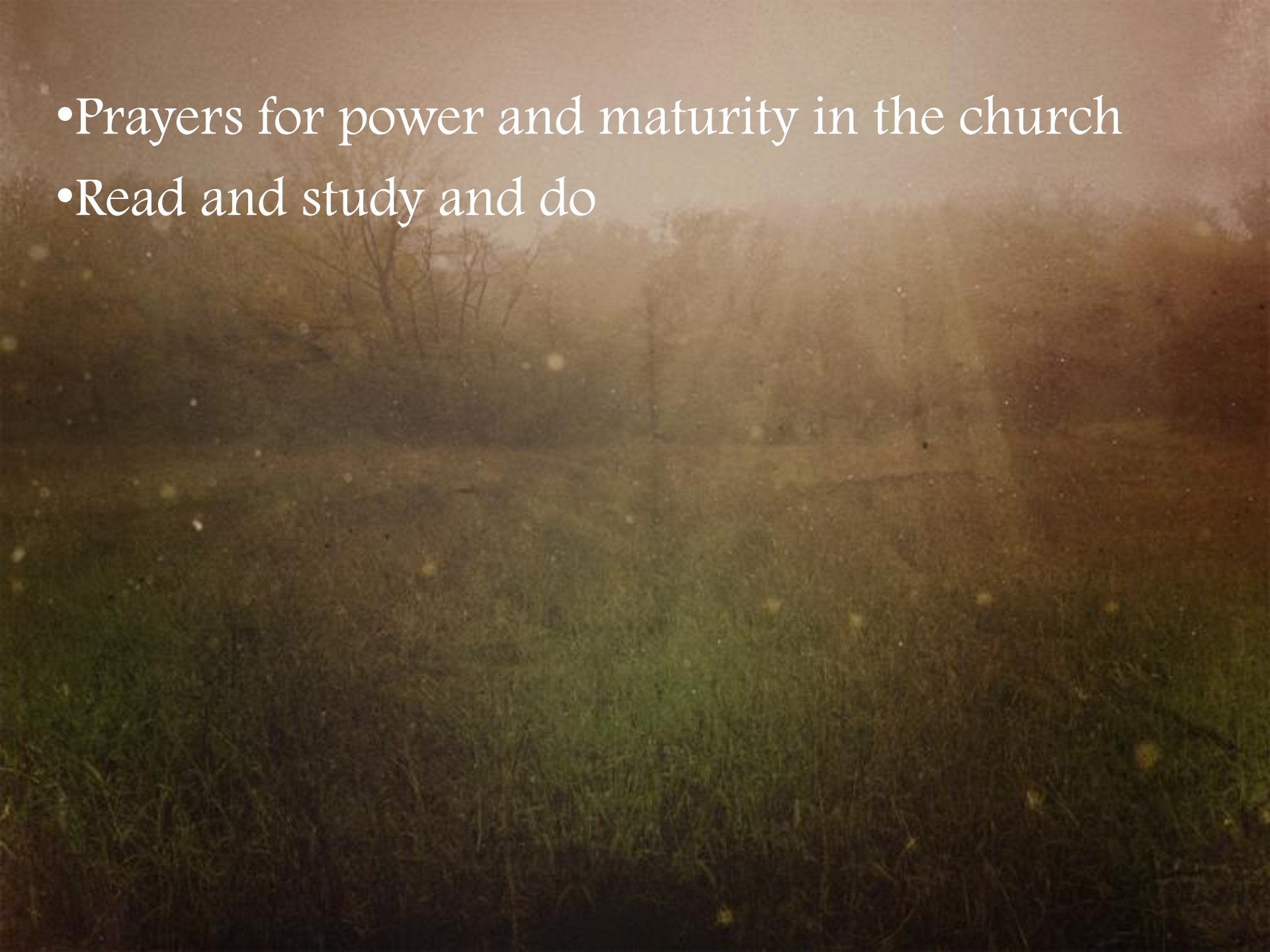
Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; *each one* looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. ² Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. ³ For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. ⁴ But each one must examine his own work, and then he will have *reason for* boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another. ⁵ For each one will bear his own load.

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- A sepia-toned photograph of a landscape. The foreground is filled with dense, tall grasses. In the middle ground, there are several bare, leafless trees. The background is very hazy and misty, with a warm, brownish-gold color palette. The overall mood is quiet and somewhat somber.
- Bear one another's burdens
 - Work and accountability, with and for others

Colossians 4:12, 16

¹² Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bondslave of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.

¹⁶ When this letter is read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and you, for your part read my letter *that is coming* from Laodicea.

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- Prayers for power and maturity in the church
 - Read and study and do

Ephesians 1:22-23

²² And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

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- The church is God's vehicle to place societies under His will
 - In the past....
 - And it's needed now and in the future!

1 Corinthians 14:23-25

²³ Therefore if the whole church assembles together and all speak in tongues, and ungifted men or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad? ²⁴ But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all; ²⁵ the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you.

- “Collective effervescence”; worship that changes us, observers and the world we impact
- All of these texts are given to the early church, full of spots and blemishes
- Just like them, today’s local church is an earthen vessel with lots of cracks, on the wheel of the potter
- We will be unfulfilled in church and begin to despise it as long as we see it only as
- A commodity to be consumed
- Sole source of spirituality

- 
- Stop Going to Church!
 - Be the church
 - Build up the church
 - Get God

 - Good news!
 - God doesn't want your religion
 - God wants to fill you up!

 - Are you wasting your church?