

HOW TO MAKE GOOD DECISIONS

AN IGNATIAN PROCESS
FOR DISCERNMENT



WITH AUTHOR & SPEAKER
DAN WILT, D. MIN.



GOOD DECISIONS

An Ignatian Process for Discernment

A JOURNAL-BASED SEMINAR & WORKSHOP

- Three-Voice Learning
- Directed Teaching and Guidance
- You'll Receive All the Notes
- With Others, Yet Focused on You



GOOD DECISIONS

An Ignatian Process for Discernment

COME IN A POSTURE OF...

- Restfulness and reflection
- Teachability and a willingness to learn
- Openness to the Holy Spirit speaking to you
- Joy—it's a beautiful Saturday and we are cared for



GOOD DECISIONS

An Ignatian Process for Discernment

A Prayer for Our Time



GOOD DECISIONS

An Ignatian Process for Discernment

PART 1 | SEMINAR

1. WHAT IS DISCERNMENT?
2. WHAT DID IGNATIUS SAY ABOUT DISCERNMENT?
3. BIG IDEAS FOR MAKING GOOD DECISIONS

PART 2 | WORKSHOP

4. A 4-STEP PROCESS FOR MAKING GOOD DECISIONS
5. APPLYING THE PROCESS TO YOUR DECISION
6. A NEW FUTURE FOR YOU



GOOD DECISIONS

An Ignatian Process for Discernment

CAVEATS

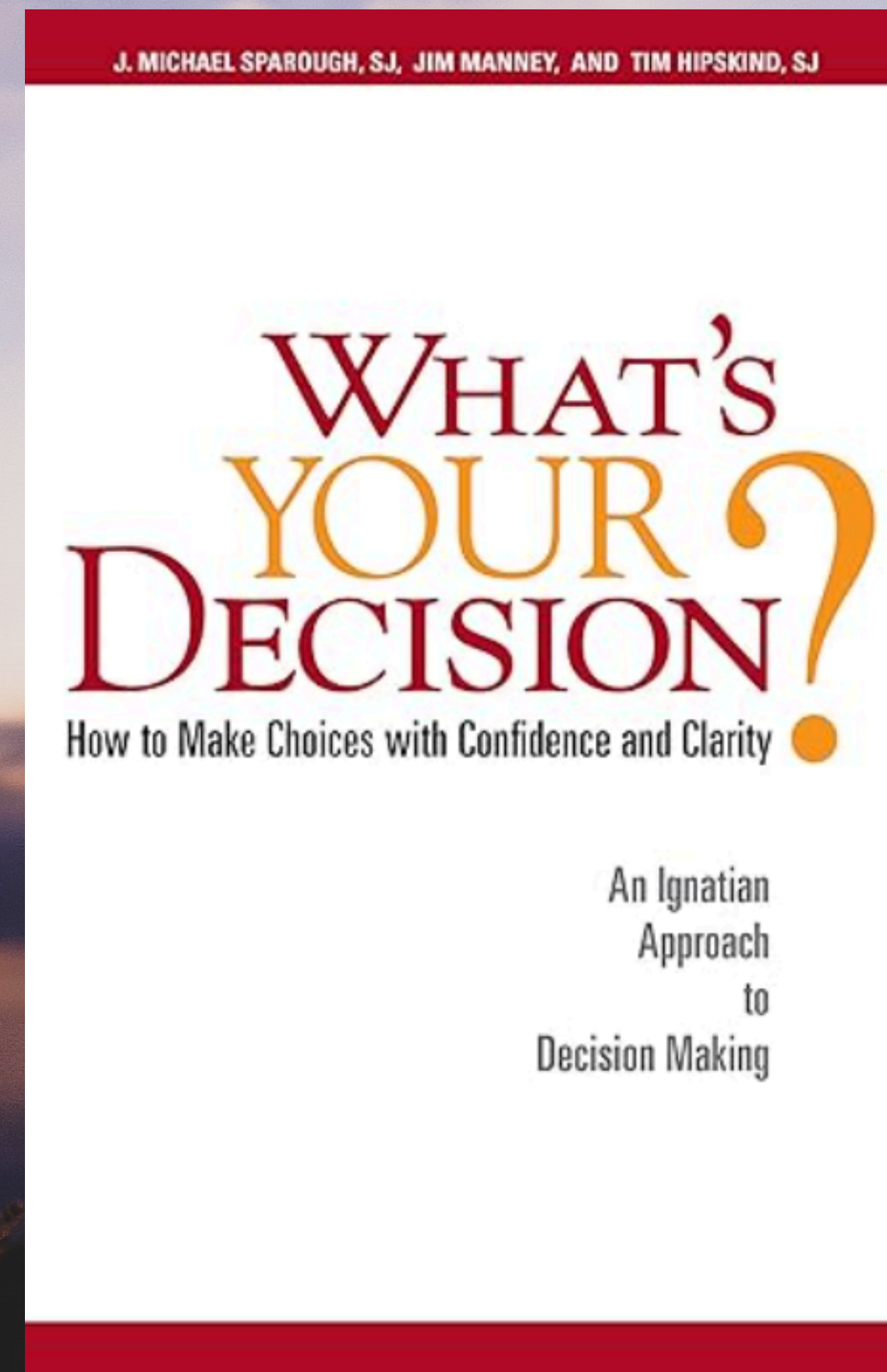
- There is only so much we can cover in the time we have; I'll be guiding us to overall principles we can apply in decision-making
- I can't promise that every decision you make after this will be a good decision; what I do believe is that you will make better decisions, more discerned decisions in alignment with God's heart and will, than if you didn't apply these principles
- This is an overview and a start; I would encourage you to read the book, *What's Your Decision?* after this session

RESOURCE

What's Your Decision?

How to Make Choices with Confidence and Clarity: An Ignatian Approach to Decision Making

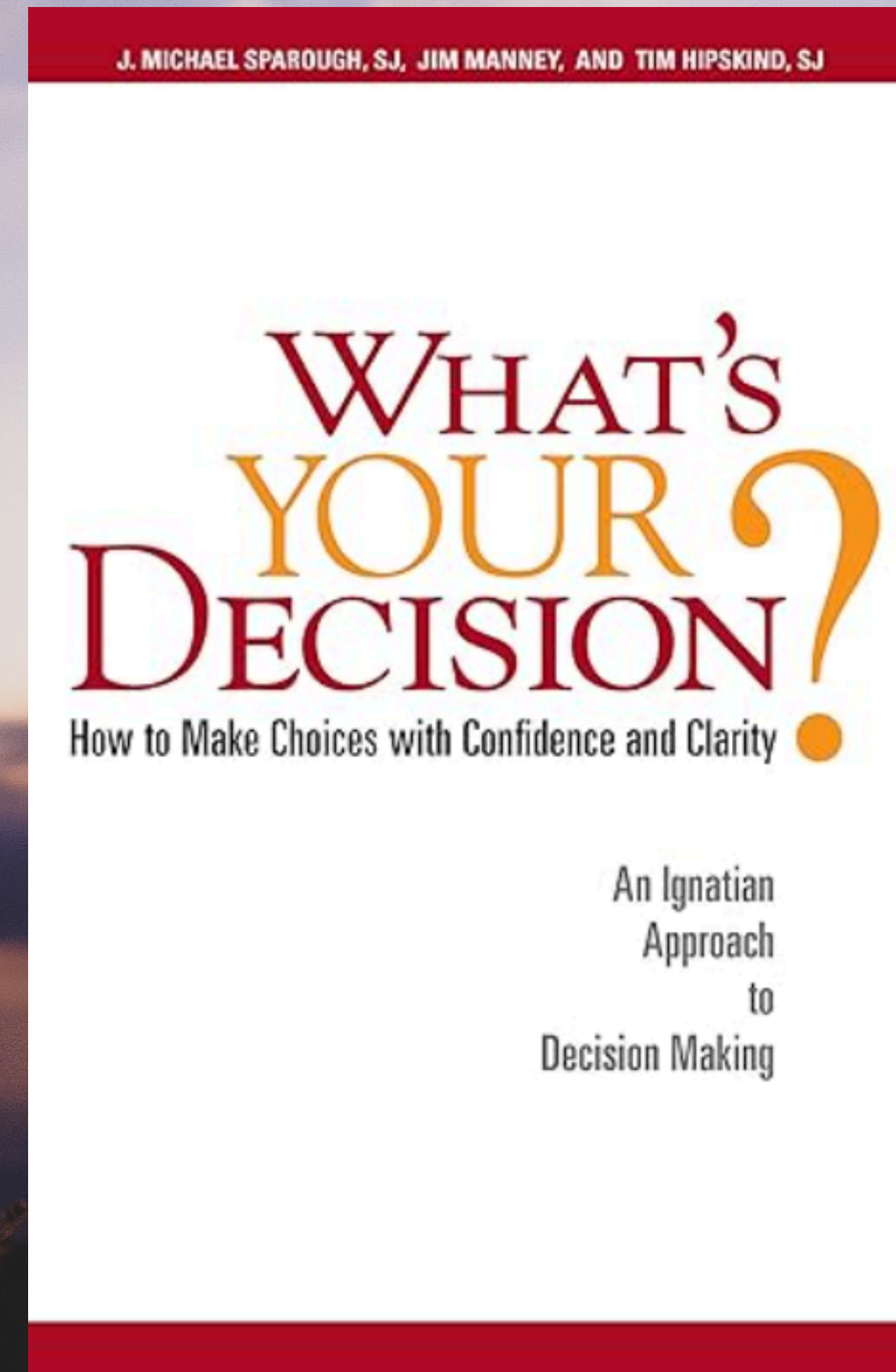
J. Michael Sparough, S.J, Jim Manny,
and Tim Hipskind, S.J.



QUOTE

What's Your Decision?

“Life is not a problem to be solved,
but a mystery to be lived.” (WYD, 51)



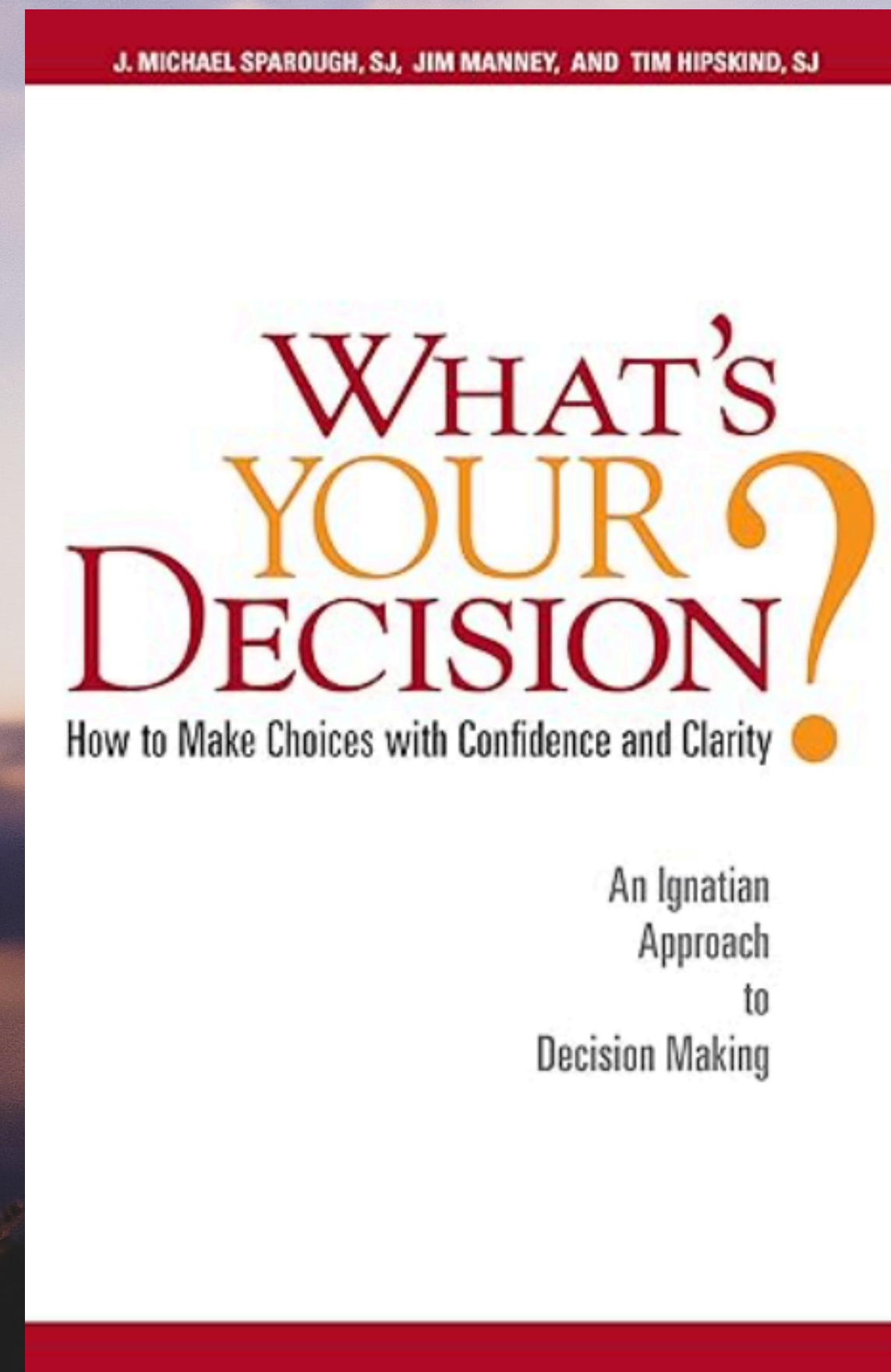
PART 1 | SEMINAR



RESOURCE

What's Your Decision?

“Discernment of God’s will is the act of distinguishing between options while consciously calling on God for assistance.” (WYD, 51)



1. WHAT IS DISCERNMENT?





THE COMPASS

A METAPHOR

The Compass represents...

- Orientation
- Guidance
- Approximation
- Invisible Forces in Play



THE STATS

DECISIONS, DECISIONS

Could it be that the way we make decisions, especially ones that take time and are life-changing, has everything to do with our thriving in faith and joy?

- According to research, each of us make roughly **35,000** decisions and choices each day
- That's **2000** decisions per waking hour, and **1-2** decisions each second
- Some decisions are macro-decisions that take **careful thought** and change the trajectories of our "one wild and precious life" (Mary Oliver)—in an instant



DISCERN

T O E X A M I N E & D E C I D E

They are a nation without sense, there is no discernment in them.

Deut. 32:28

So God said to him, "Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice...."

1 Kings 3:11



DISCERN

T O E X A M I N E & D E C I D E

I am your servant; give me discernment that I may understand your statutes.

Psalm 119:125



DISCERN

T O E X A M I N E & D E C I D E

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may **discern** what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 12:2 ESV



DISCERN

T O E X A M I N E & D E C I D E

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to **test and approve** what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 12:2 NIV



DISCERN

TO EXAMINE & DECIDE

...Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. **Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it.** Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.

Romans 12:1-12 The Message



DISCERN

T O E X A M I N E & D E C I D E

δοκιμάζω

dokimazo = prove, try, test, examine, scrutinize, approve, distinguish, discern, weigh, evaluate, decide on
(assaying metals to determine purity)



DISCERN

TO EXAMINE & DECIDE

δοκιμάζω

Discernment is granular; it gets into the details happily and leverages all inputs to help one make a decision that ultimately pleases God.



DISCERN

TO EXAMINE & DECIDE

δοκιμάζω

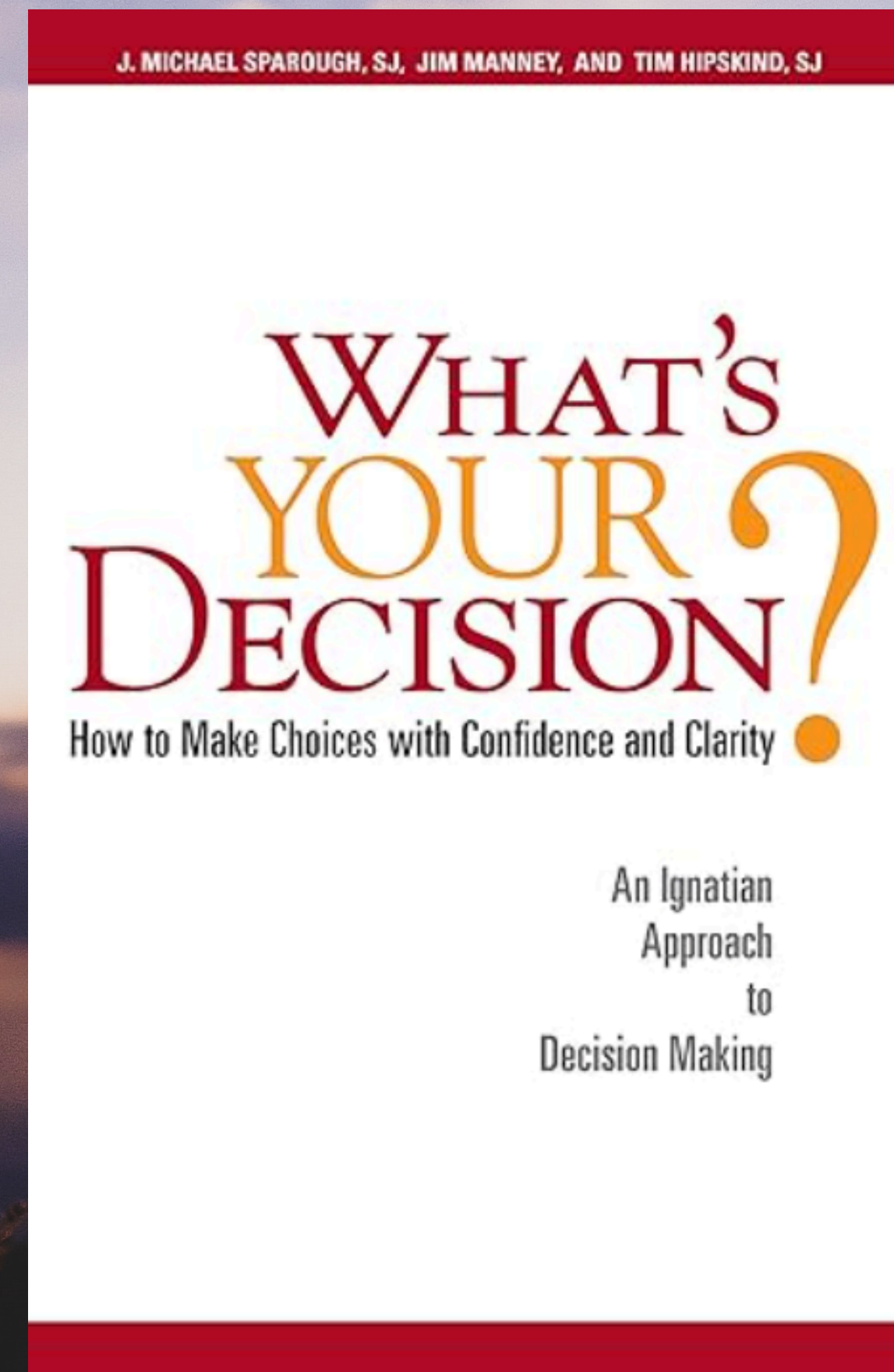
Discernment is a word used by Christians all the time, but in my experience, we're not all saying the same thing.

We want wisdom, we want understanding, we want to know what to do—but we often go about getting it not only differently from one another, but sometimes in ways that are ultimately unhelpful.

QUOTE

What's Your Decision?

“Life is not a problem to be solved,
but a mystery to be lived.” (WYD, 51)



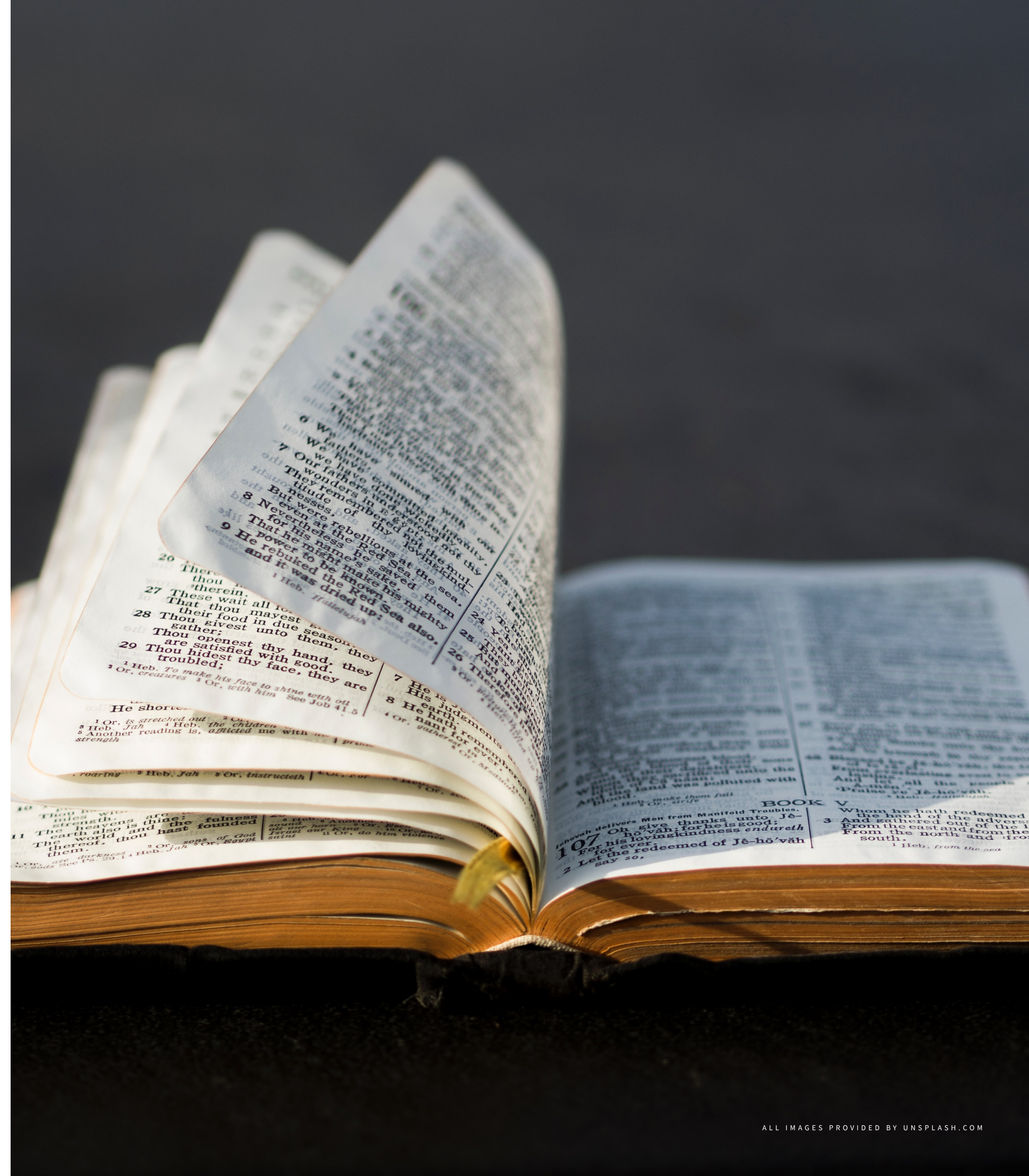
2. WHAT DID IGNATIUS SAY ABOUT DISCERNMENT?



WHO IS IGNATIUS?

IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA
1491 - 1556

1. Spanish Catholic priest and theologian
2. Founder of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits)
3. Writer of the “Spiritual Exercises”
4. Wealthy young man converted to Christ after reading the lives of the saints while lying in a hospital bed
5. Leading voice behind a 450-year old “company” that continues to this day

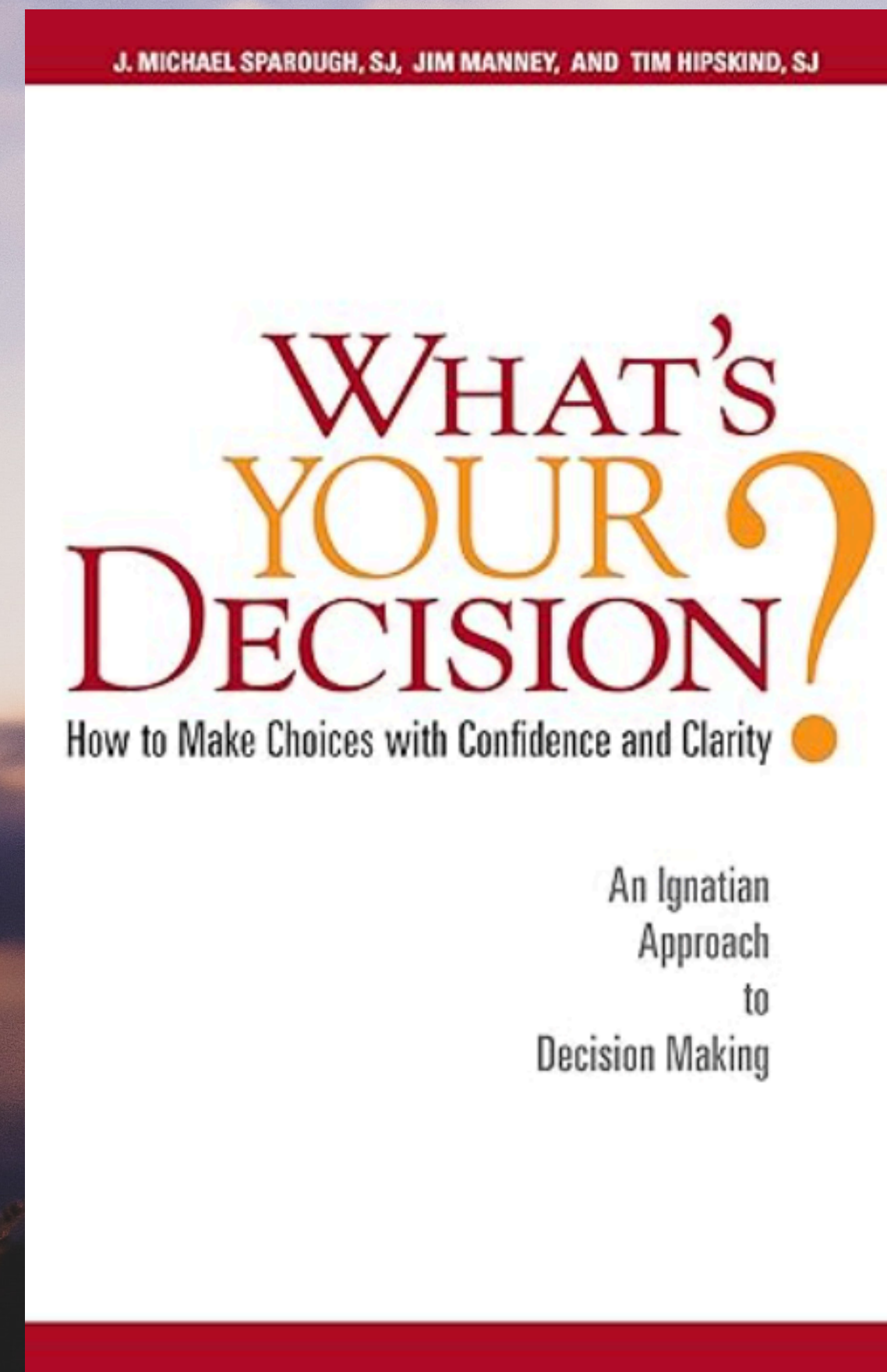


THOUGHT

What's Your Decision?

We are made to know that we are loved by God, and to live from that love.

All of life is an opportunity to “return love” to God, to respond. Decisions are part of that love relationship.

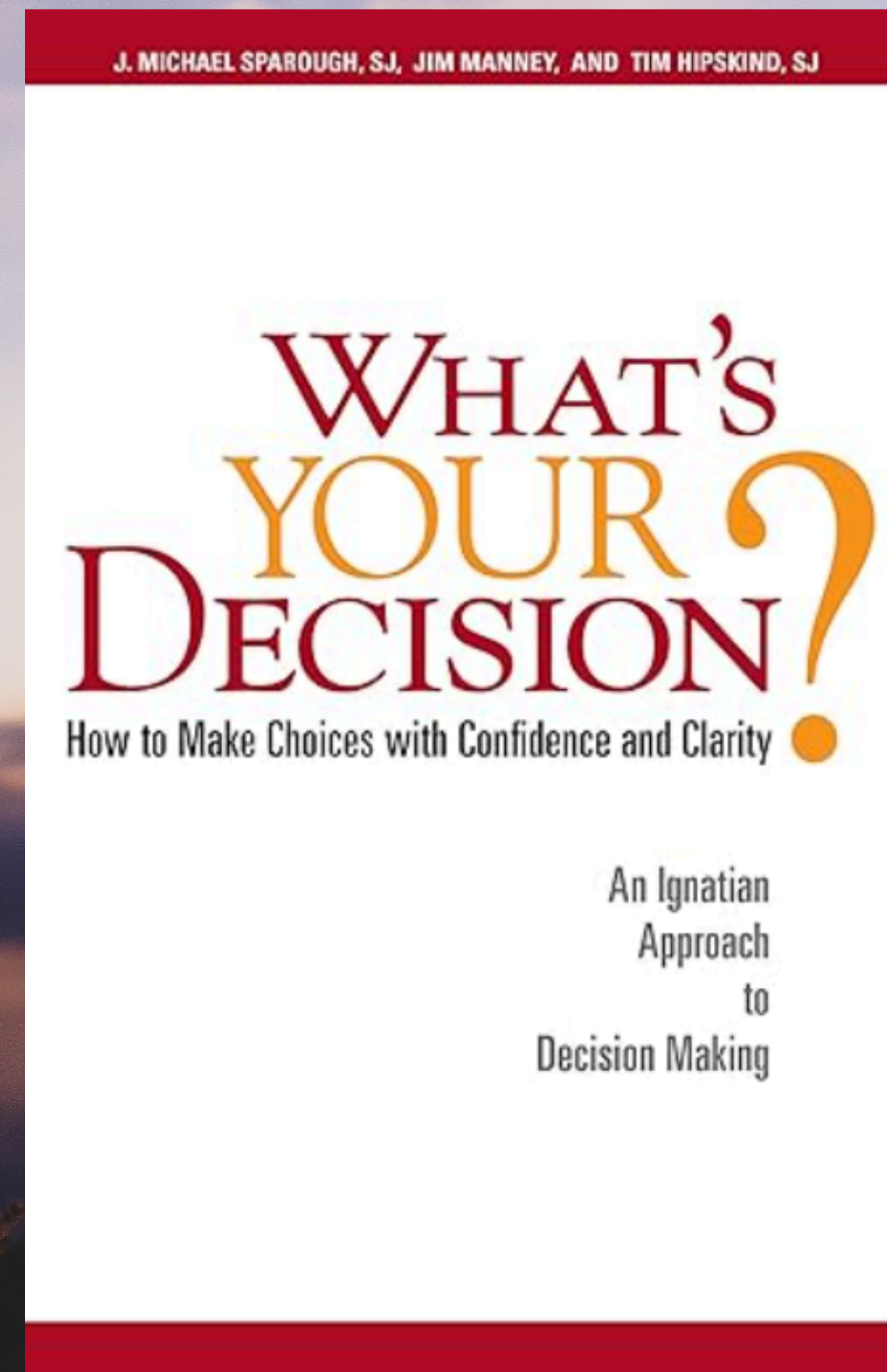


THOUGHT

What's Your Decision?

We are our desires are not at the center of the decision making process; the will of God is at the center, and a process can help us discover God's will with greater confidence and growing clarity.

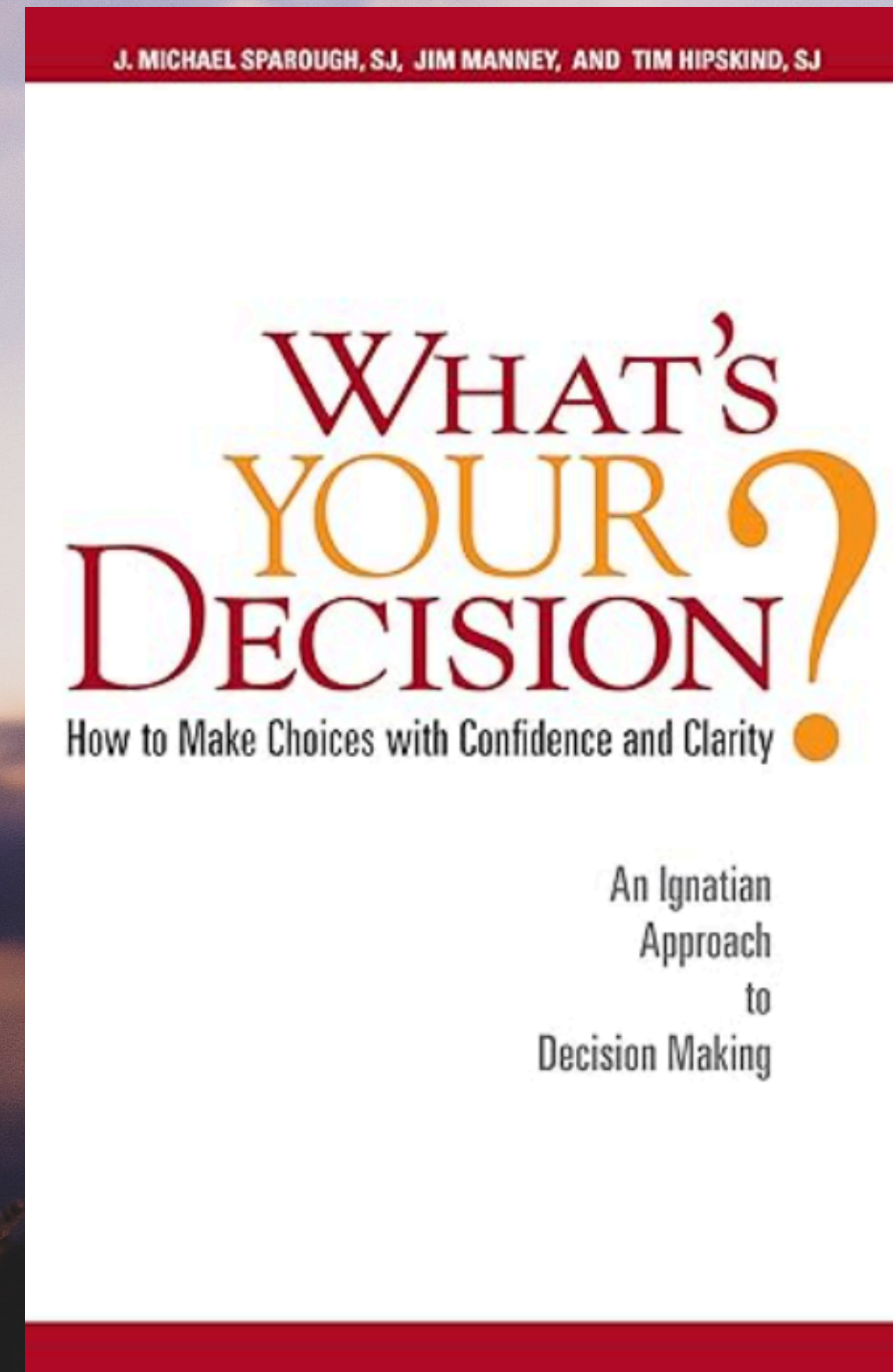
All streams lead to the Love of God.



QUOTE

What's Your Decision?

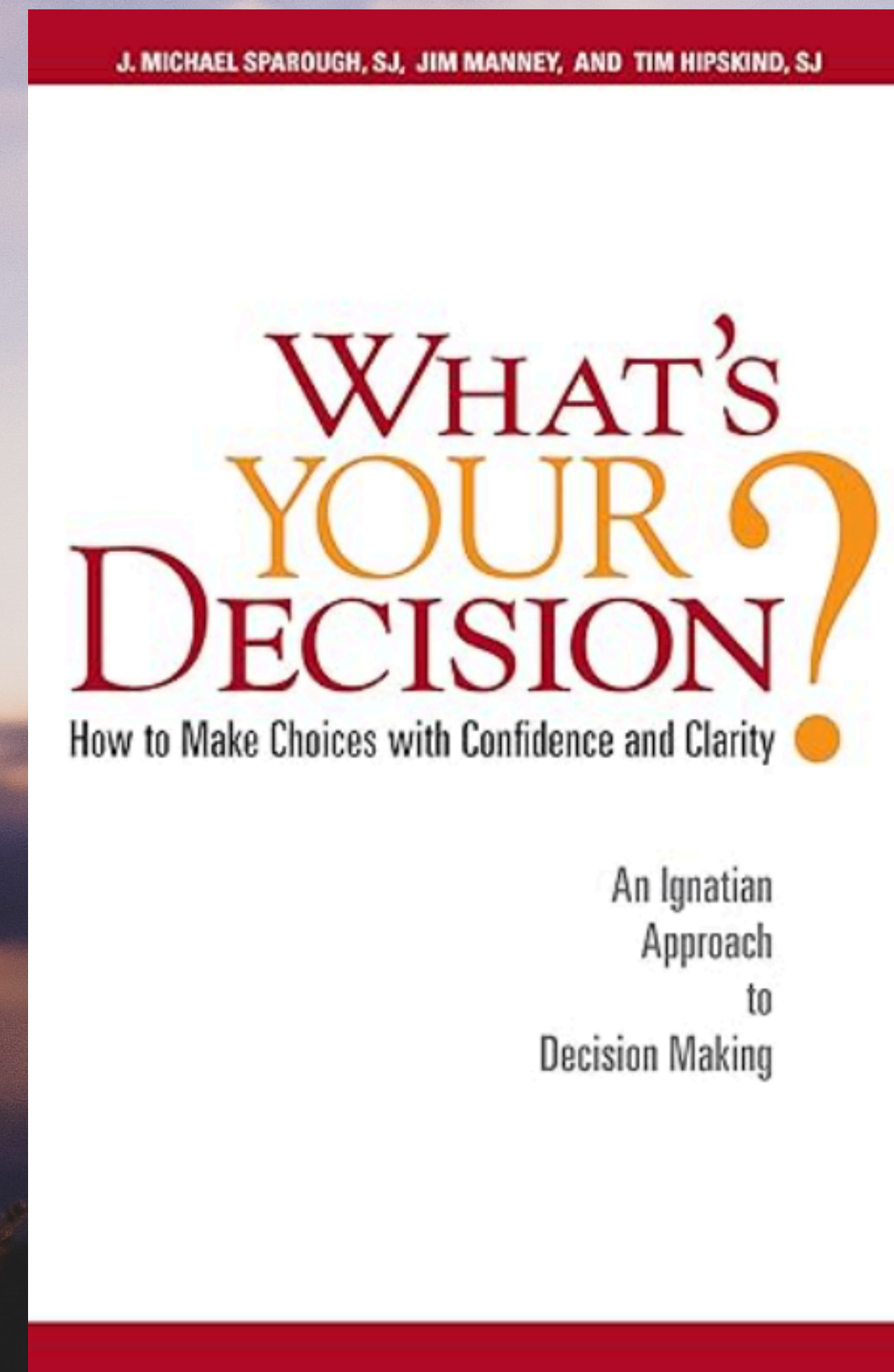
“At the center of reality is a God who loves us.... ‘All the things in this world’ exist so that we can love better. Our decisions are choices about how we use the things of this world. Our decisions *matter* to God. God cares.” (WYD, 4)



QUOTE

What's Your Decision?

Ignatius provided “advice about interpreting the inner movements of the heart.” (WYD)

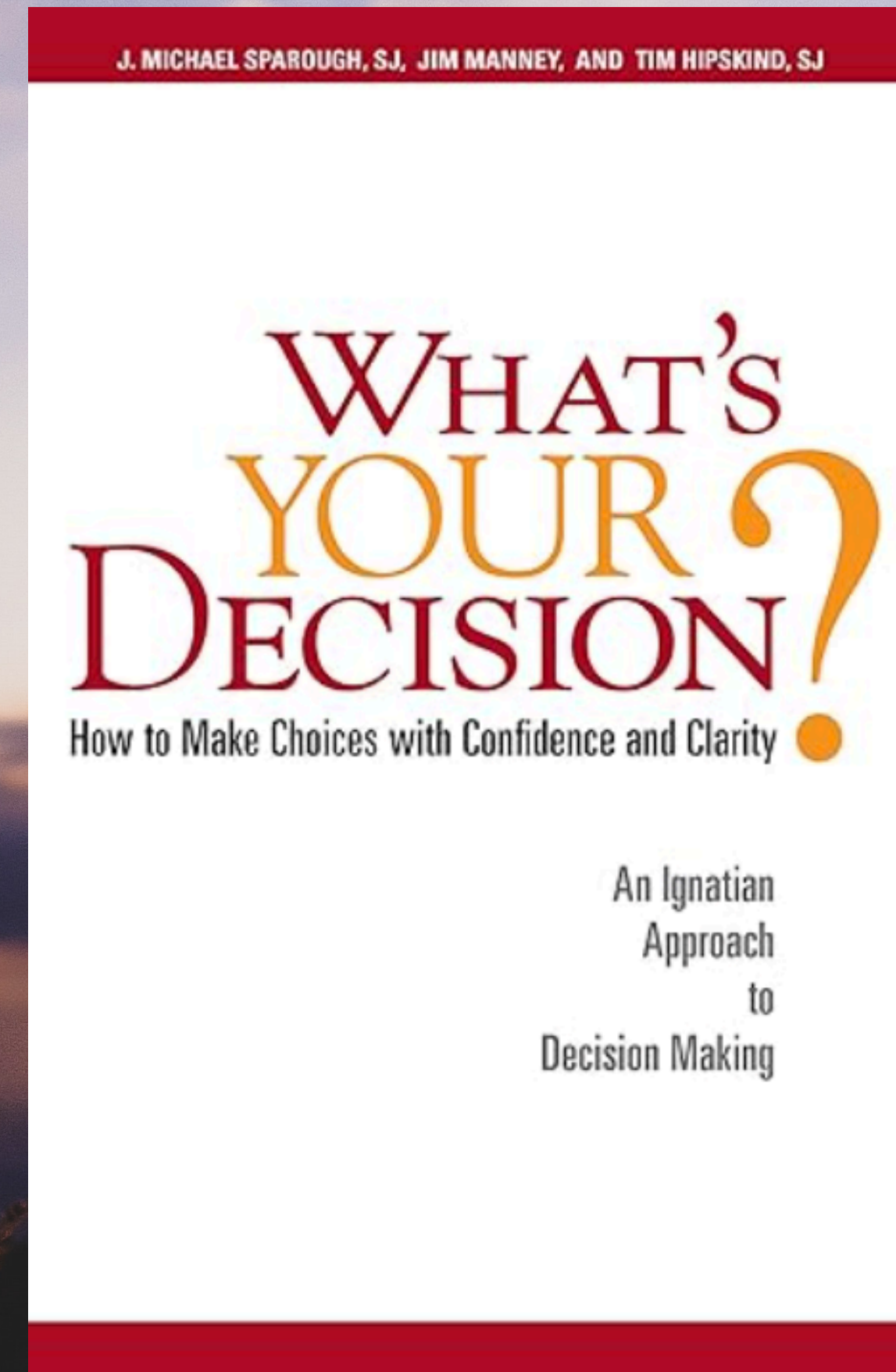


QUOTE

W h a t ' s Y o u r D e c i s i o n ?

“Only one thing is necessary—to love God first.” (WYD, 43)

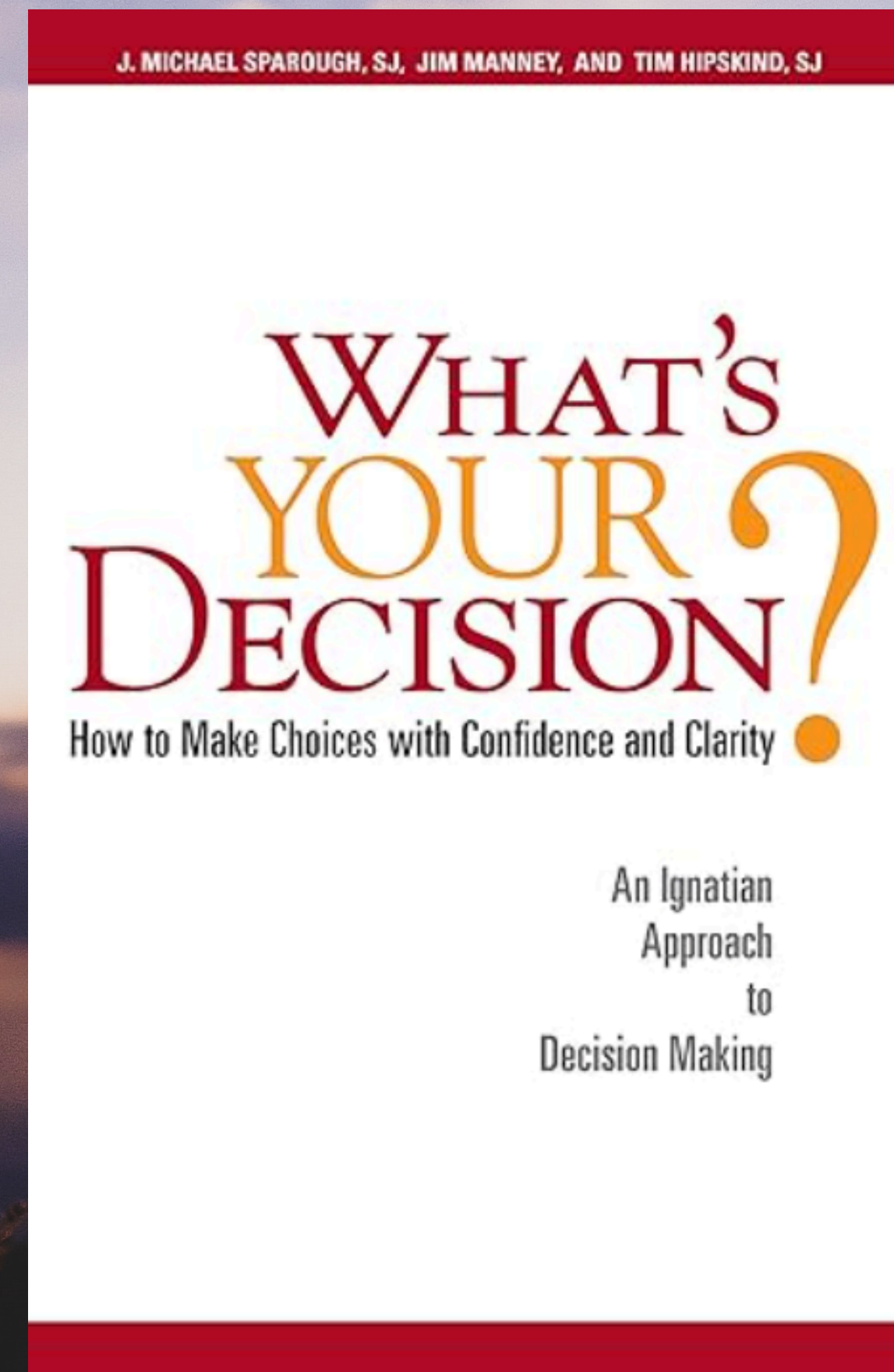
“The only prerequisite for good decision making is a desire to make this one choice to grow in life with God.” (WYD, 14)



THOUGHT

To Carry into Decisions

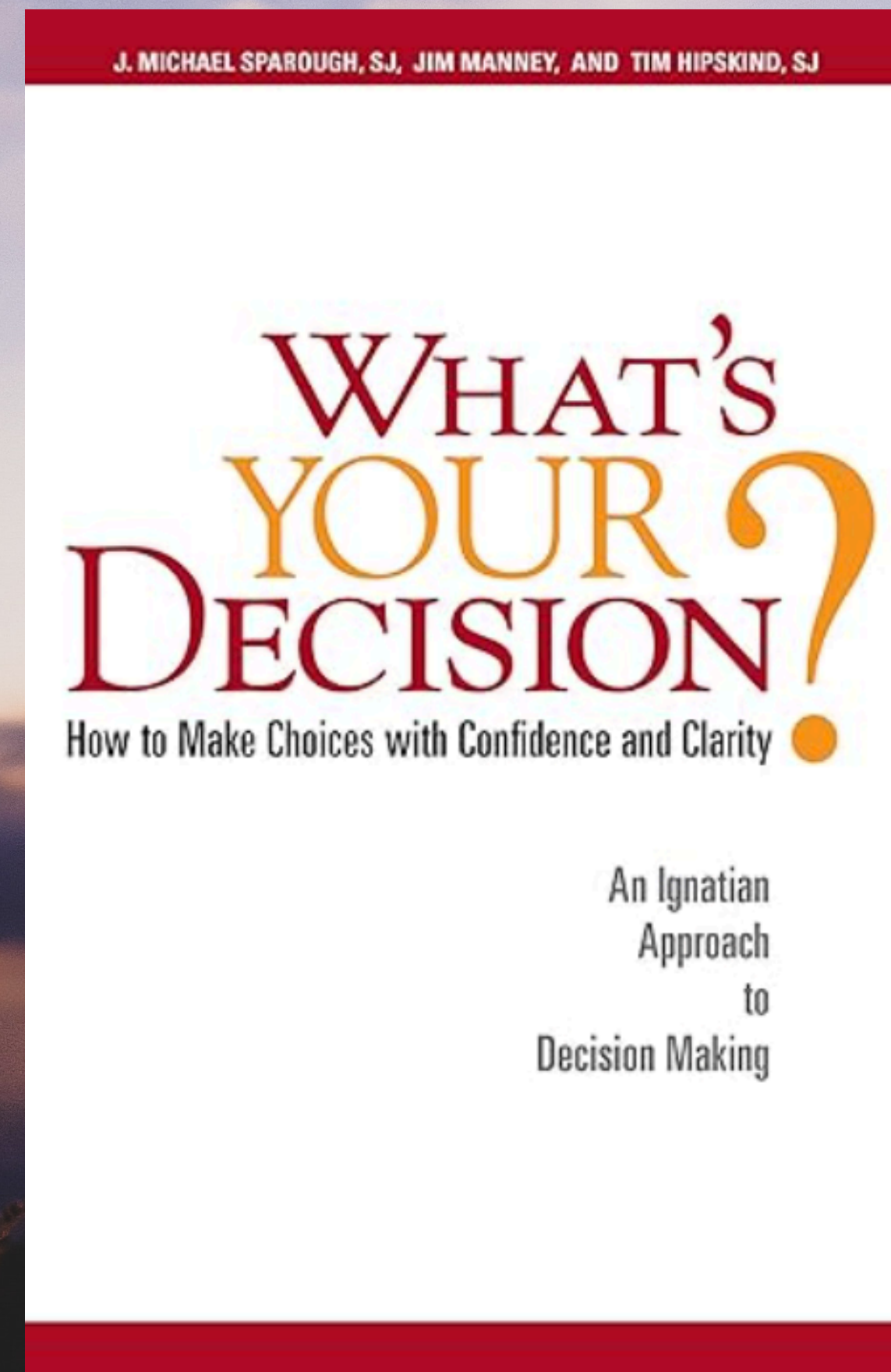
Decisions give us the opportunity to
“return love” to God.



THOUGHT

To Carry into Decisions

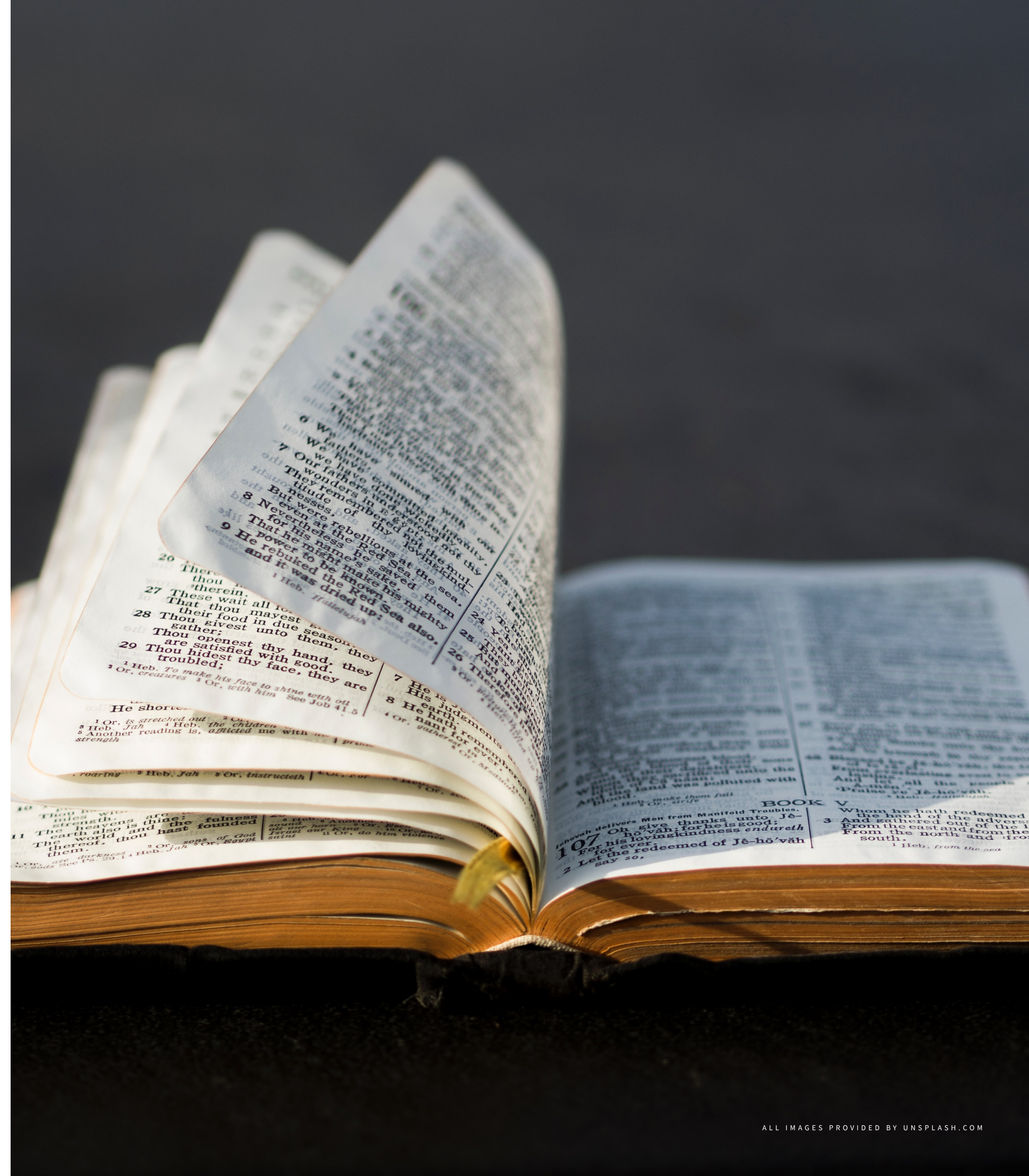
Feelings are important—God gives us feelings.



METHODOLOGY

“YOU CAN TRUST YOUR JUDGEMENT AND YOUR FEELINGS.” (WYD, 9)

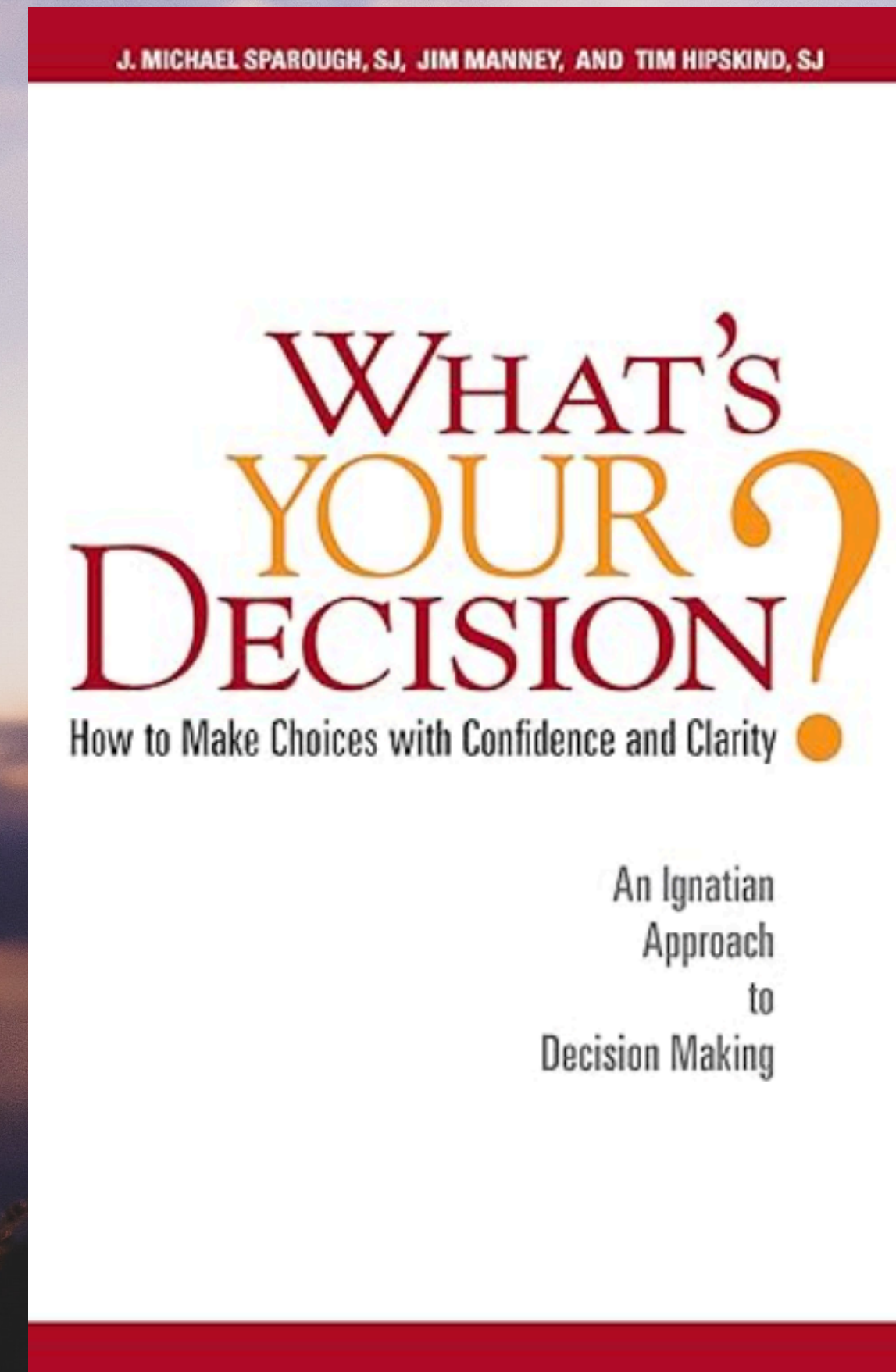
1. Feelings
2. Analysis
3. Life Circumstances
4. Advice of Others
5. Prior Commitments and Decisions



QUOTE

W h a t ' s Y o u r D e c i s i o n ?

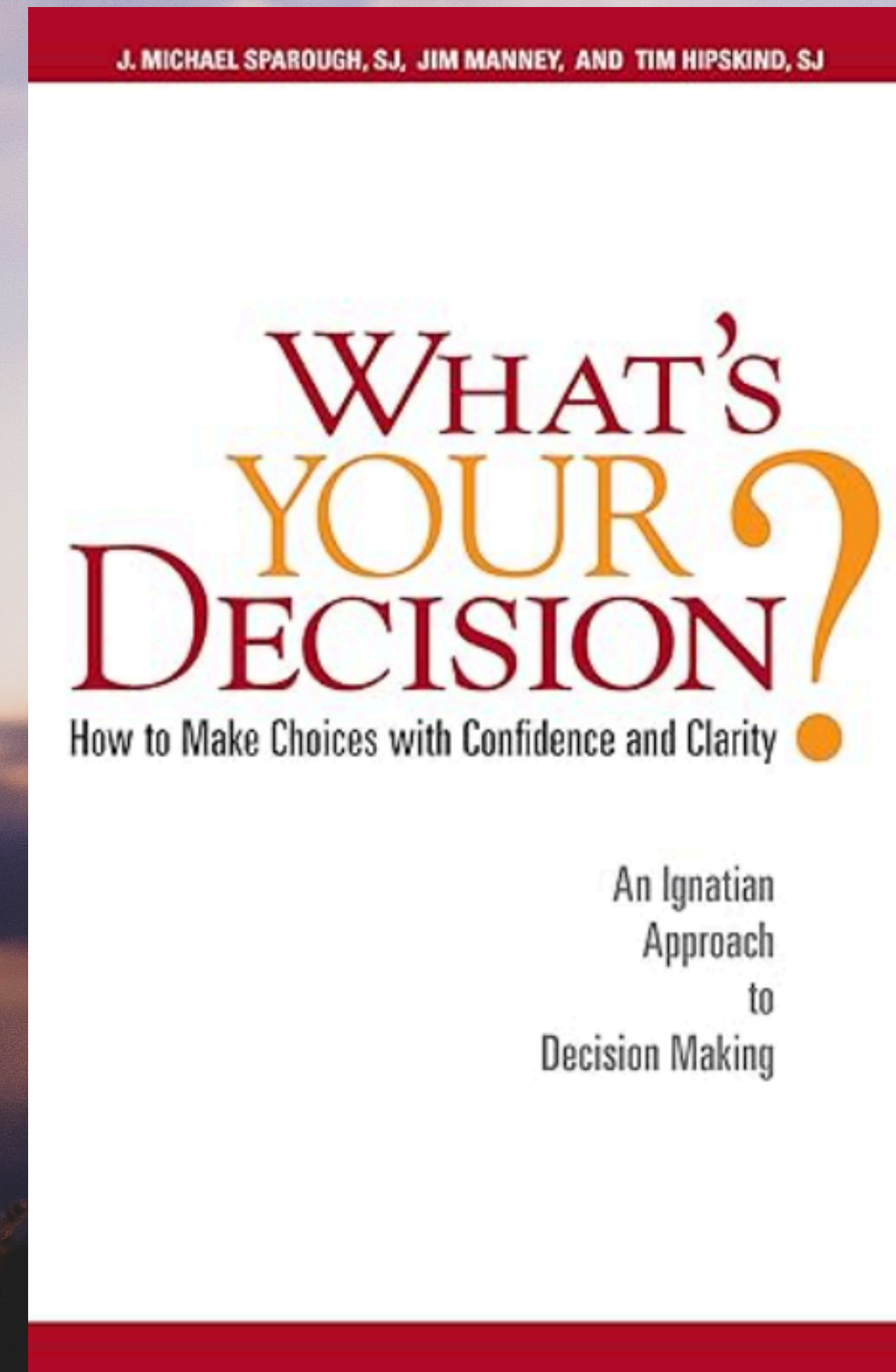
“The mechanics of Ignatian discernment consist largely of techniques to free ourselves of attachments to desires and ideas that lead us astray.” (WYD, 6)



QUOTE

What's Your Decision?

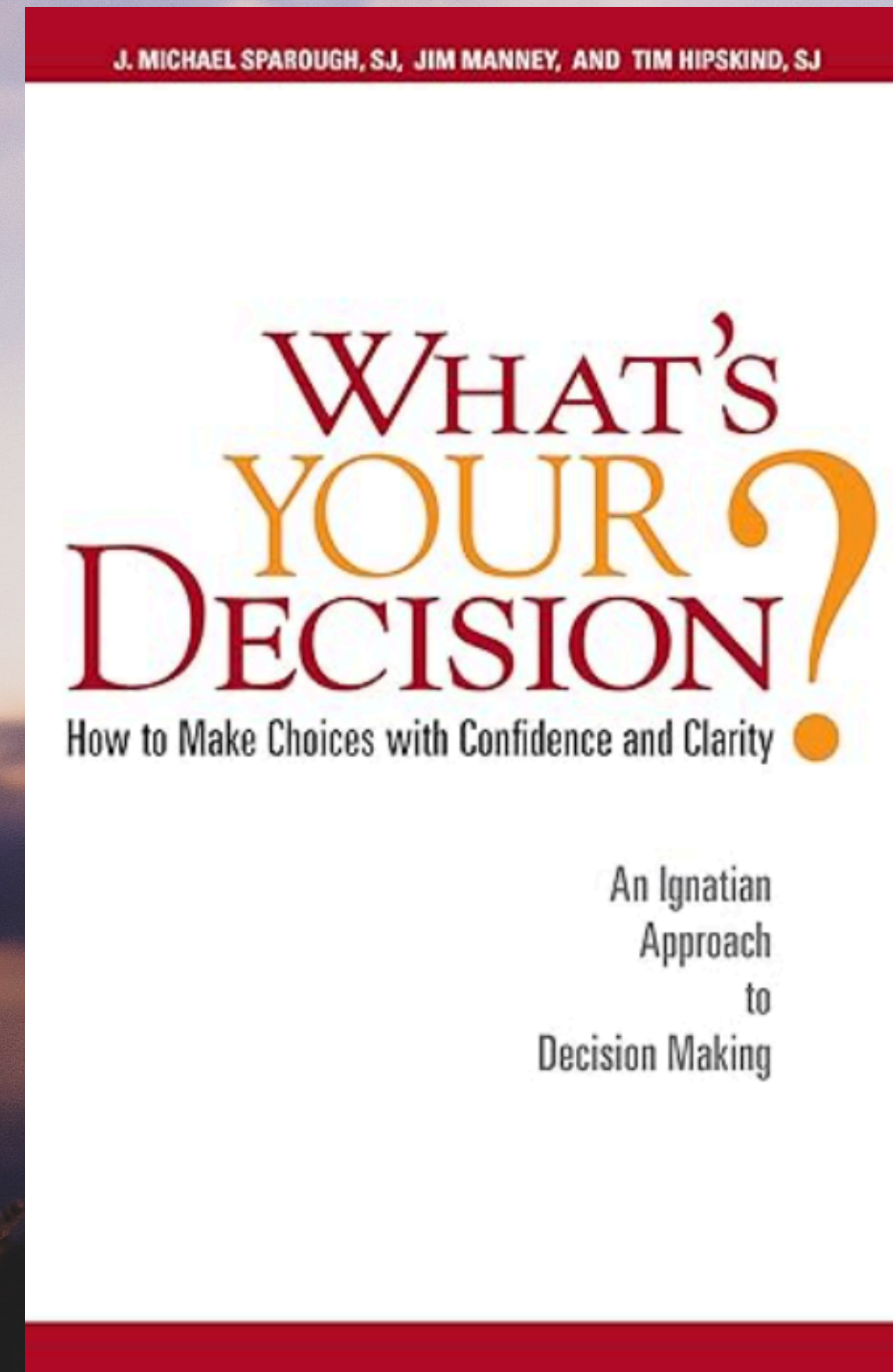
“We must coolly appraise what our culture says is important. ...We must hold ourselves in balance before all created things.” (WYD, 19)



QUOTE

What's Your Decision?

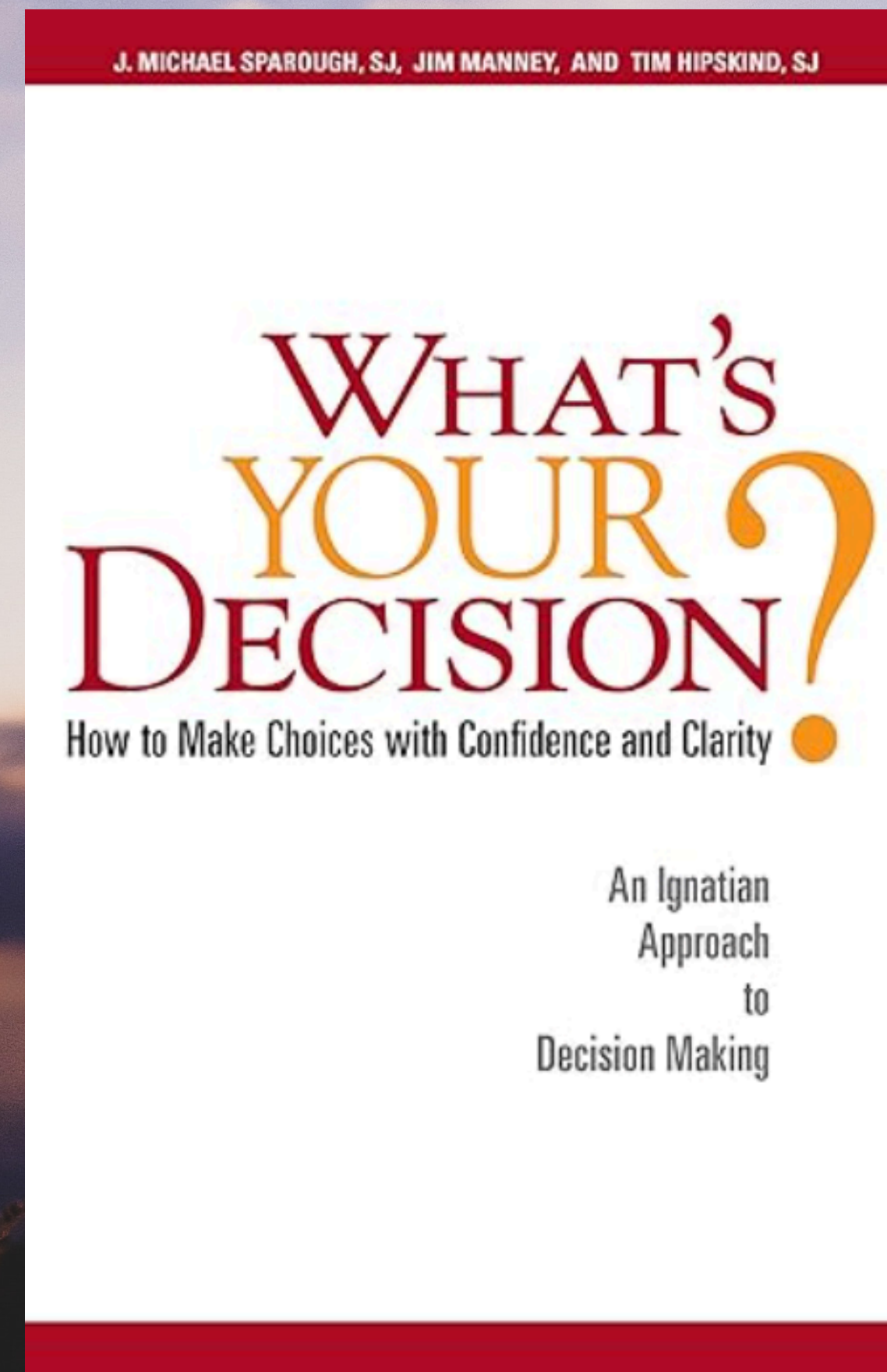
“The shift is subtle. Individual well-being is not unimportant; we do need to consider it in decision making. But when our personal fulfillment becomes the paramount consideration, we are adrift in a sea of relativism.” (WYD, 21)



THOUGHT

What's Your Decision?

We can become good at discerning God's will, and making better decisions that align with the Father's heart for us, for others, and for the world.



3. BIG IDEAS FOR MAKING GOOD DECISIONS



ASSUMPTIONS

“YOU CAN TRUST YOUR JUDGEMENT
AND YOUR FEELINGS.” (WYD, 9)

- You live a prayerful life aware of God
- You are willing to choose God’s will over your own
- You have a life with the Scriptures
- You are teachable and are seeing the good
- You are open to the input of others
- You are living to “return love” to God



BIG IDEAS

“YOU CAN TRUST YOUR JUDGEMENT
AND YOUR FEELINGS.” (WYD, 9)

1. The One Thing Necessary: The Good Life
2. Attachments
3. Consolation & Desolation
4. Gather Information & Ask Questions
5. Indifference



BIG IDEAS

“YOU CAN TRUST YOUR JUDGEMENT
AND YOUR FEELINGS.” (WYD, 9)

The One Thing Necessary: The Good Life

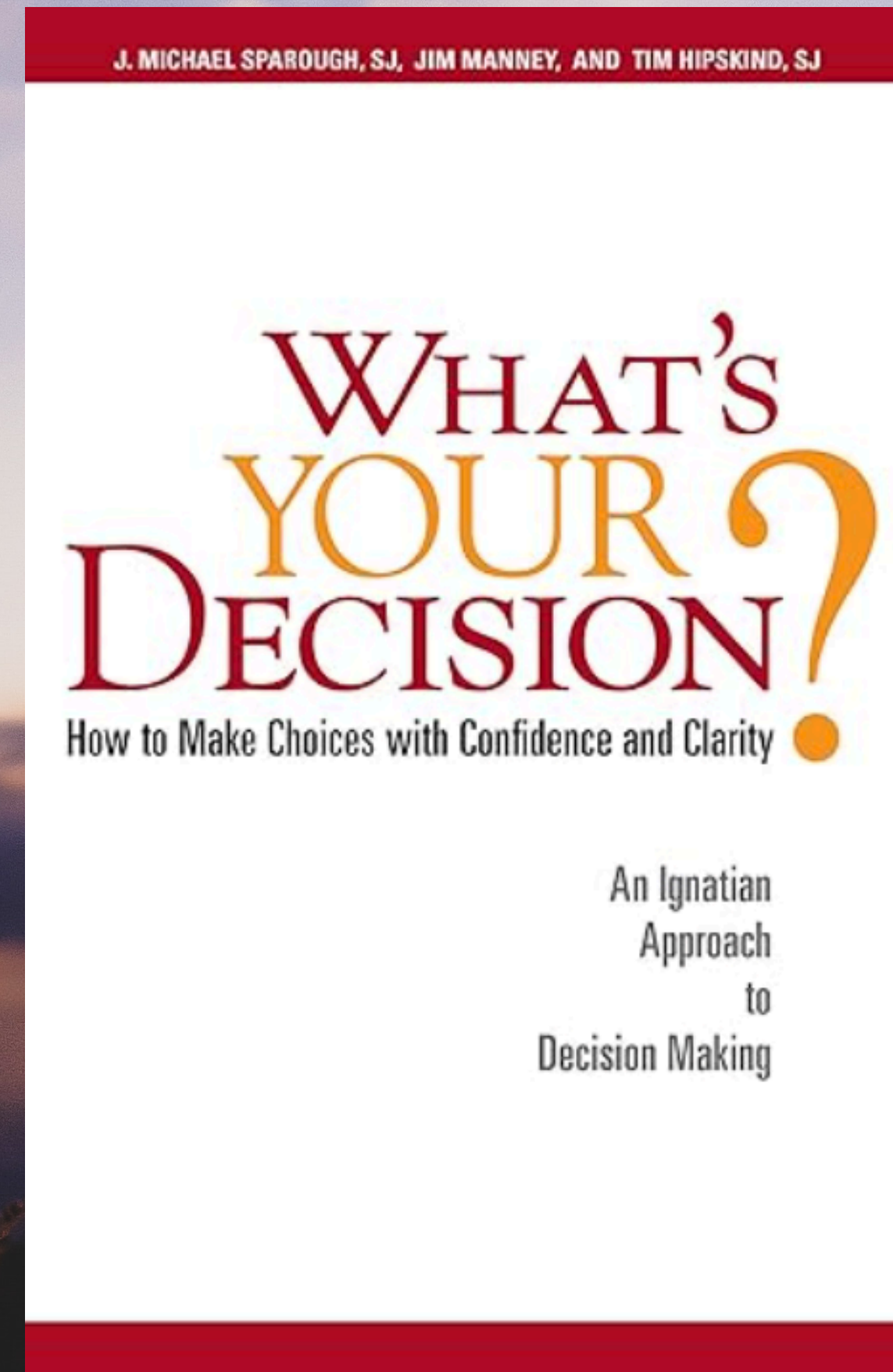


THOUGHT

To Carry into Decisions

Beginning with the end in mind means that we must keep before us why we were created—for union with God in Christ.

All streams run to and from this river.



BIG IDEAS

“YOU CAN TRUST YOUR JUDGEMENT
AND YOUR FEELINGS.” (WYD, 9)

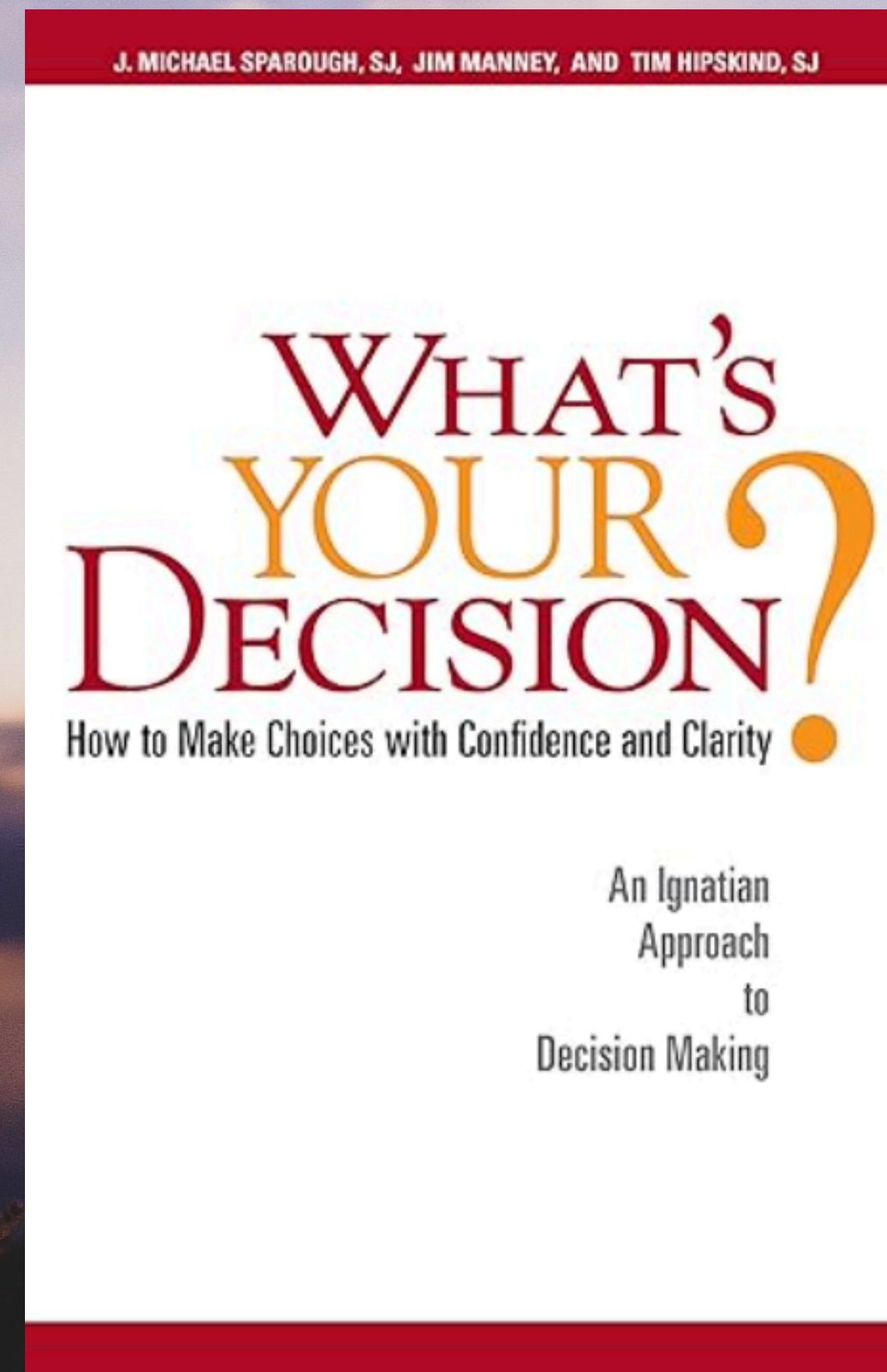
Attachments



THOUGHT

To Carry into Decisions

We must be *free* to make a good decision by making sure we have named both obvious and less than obvious attachments to disordered desires, preferred outcomes, and more. We are “indifferent” to anything other than the will of God.

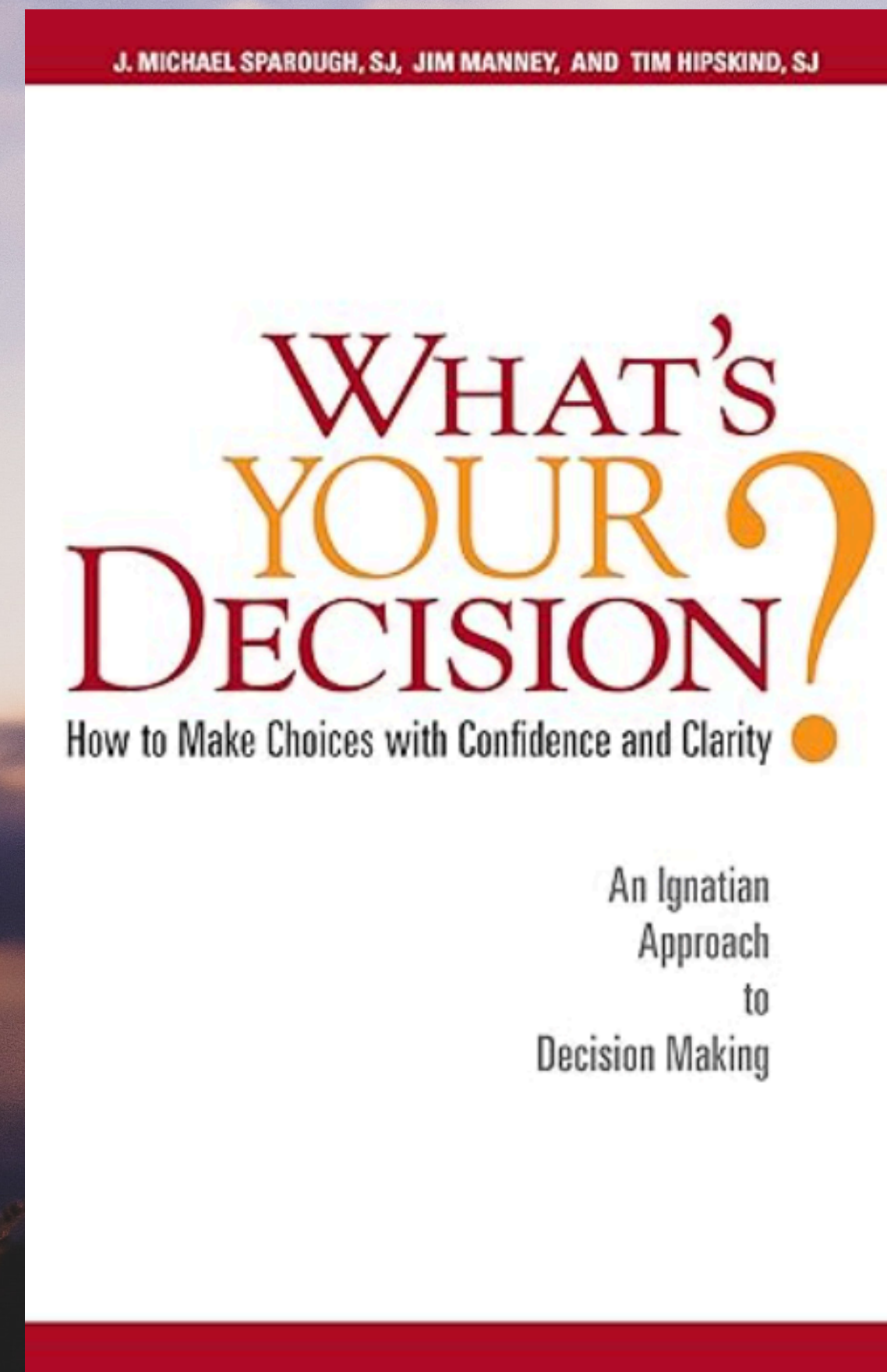


THOUGHT

To Carry into Decisions

“What do I really want” is a key question—our view of the good life is key to making decisions in alignment with God’s will and unseen purposes.

Do we ultimately want God’s will to be done? Or something else?

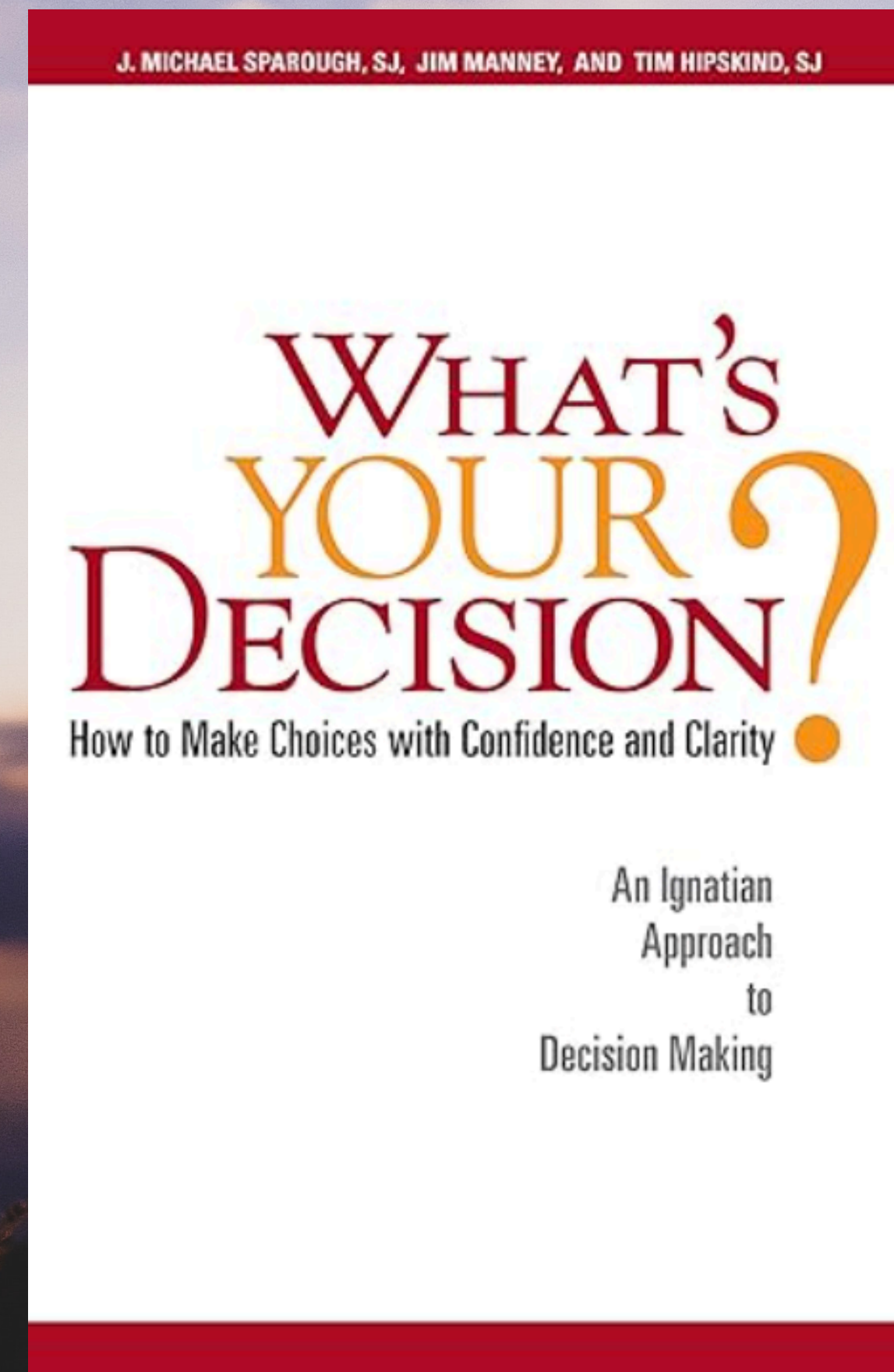


THOUGHT

To Carry into Decisions

Attachments...

- Freedom (from interference)
- Money
- Being seen
- Relationships
- Addictions
- Obstacles



BIG IDEAS

“YOU CAN TRUST YOUR JUDGEMENT
AND YOUR FEELINGS.” (WYD, 9)

Consolation & Desolation

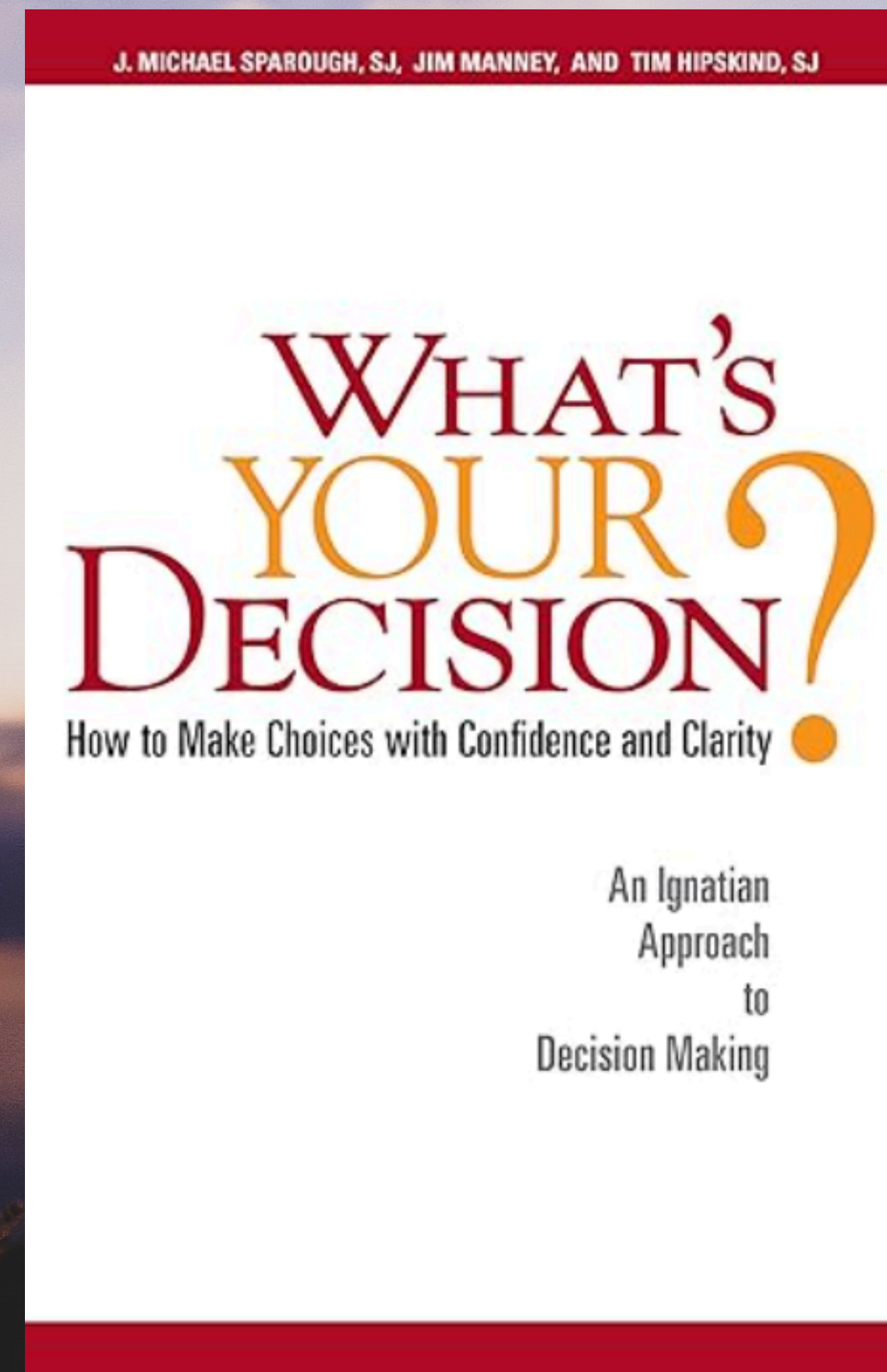


THOUGHT

To Carry into Decisions

The process of waiting is crucial to good decision making. Patience, a fruit of the Holy Spirit, must lead over impulsivity and impatience.

As we wait, we track with our emotions through observing our feelings of **consolation** and **desolation**.

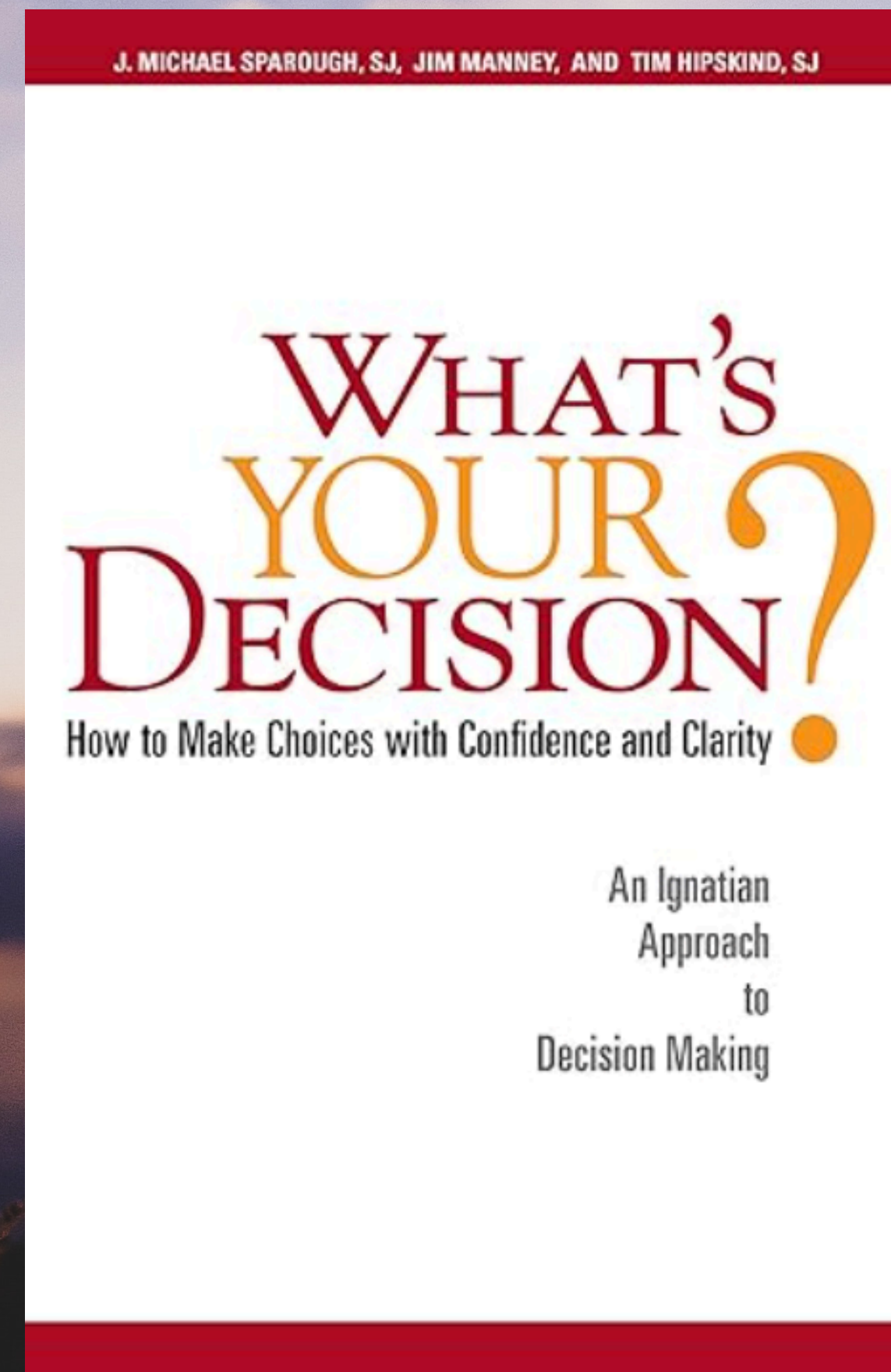


THOUGHT

To Carry into Decisions

Consolation

- Opening to God
- Sense of God's nearness
- Sunlight and warmth
- Sail filling with wind toward God



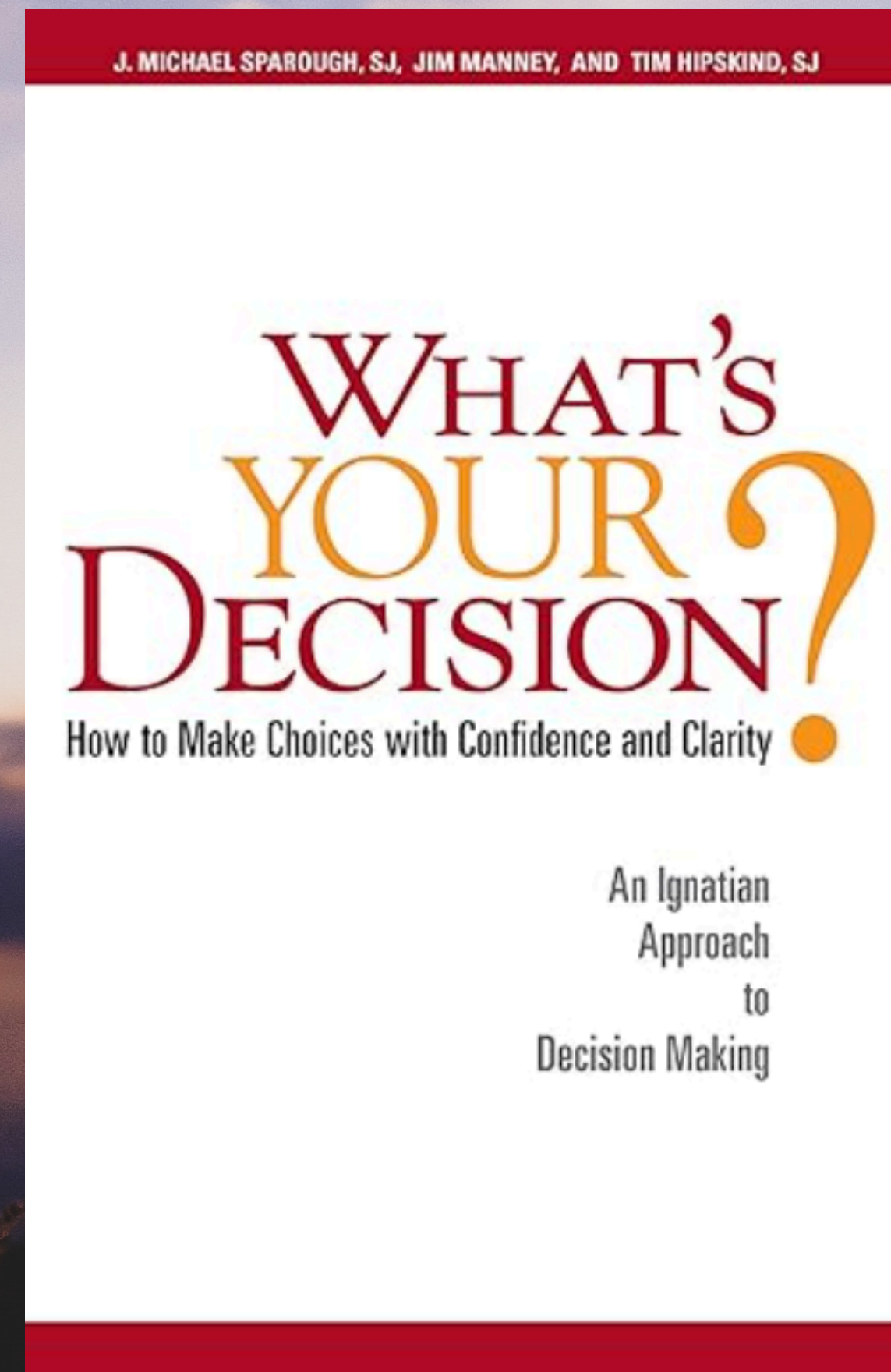
THOUGHT

To Carry into Decisions

Consolation

“Feelings that move us toward God and others. ...Increase in faith, hope, and love that leads to a holy peace.

...Serenity, joy. ...Sadness about circumstances and personal shortcomings.” (WYD, 61)



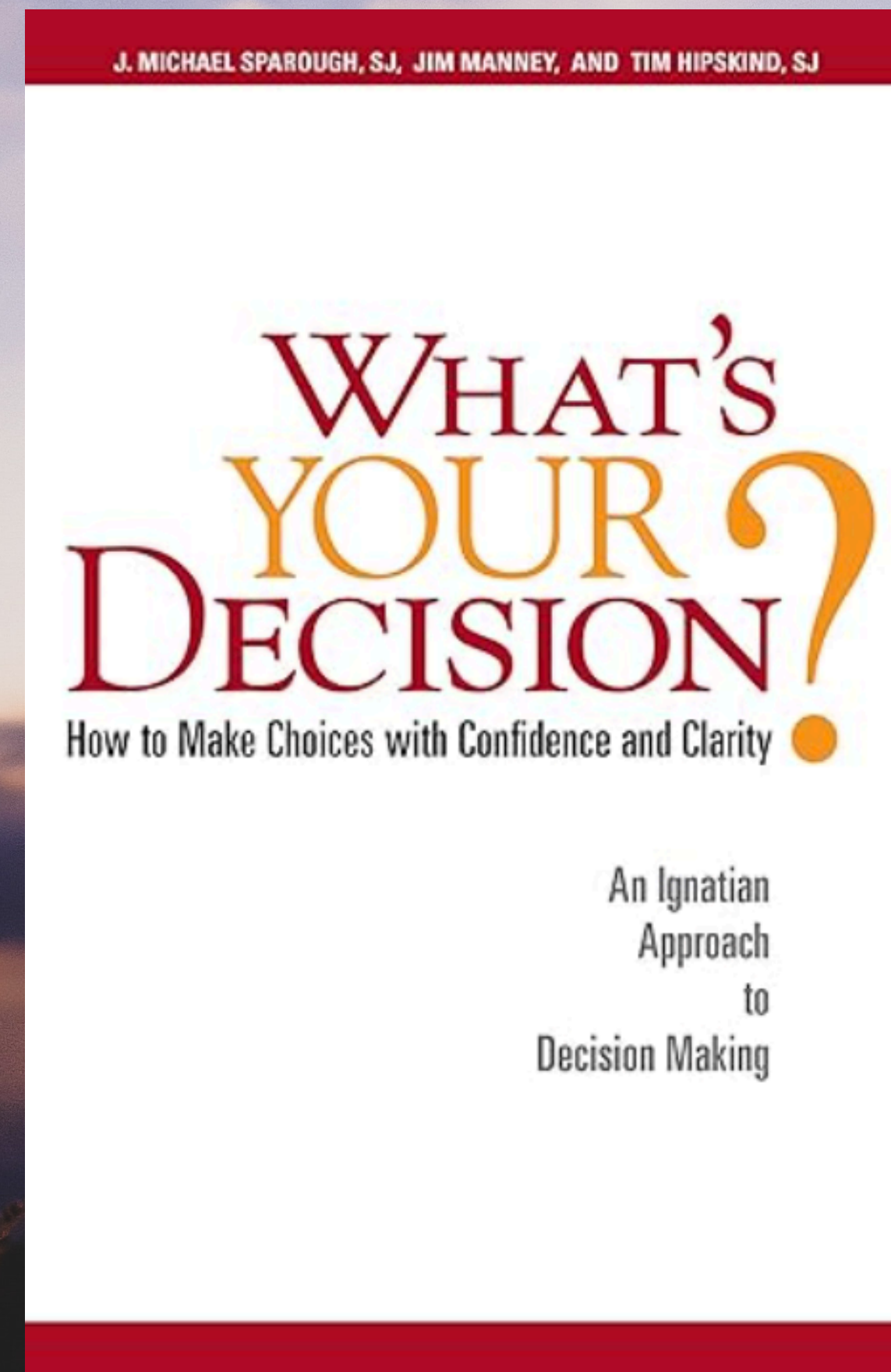
THOUGHT

To Carry into Decisions

Consolation

Points toward...

- God and people
- Being joined with others
- Work bearing fruit
- Family being strengthened (62)

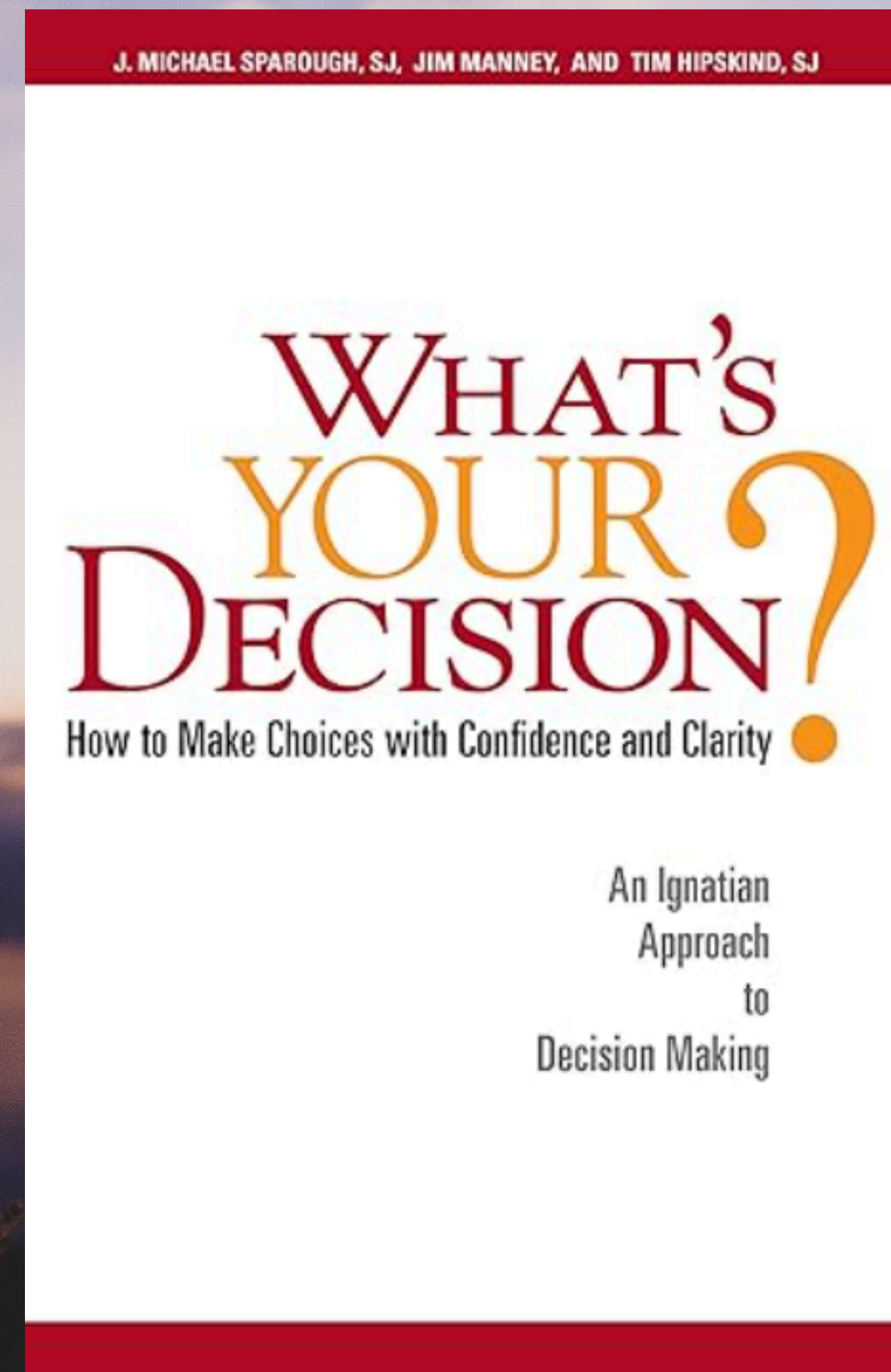


THOUGHT

To Carry into Decisions

Desolation

- Closing to God
- Sense of God's distance
- Darkness and cold
- Sail devoid of wind or misdirection

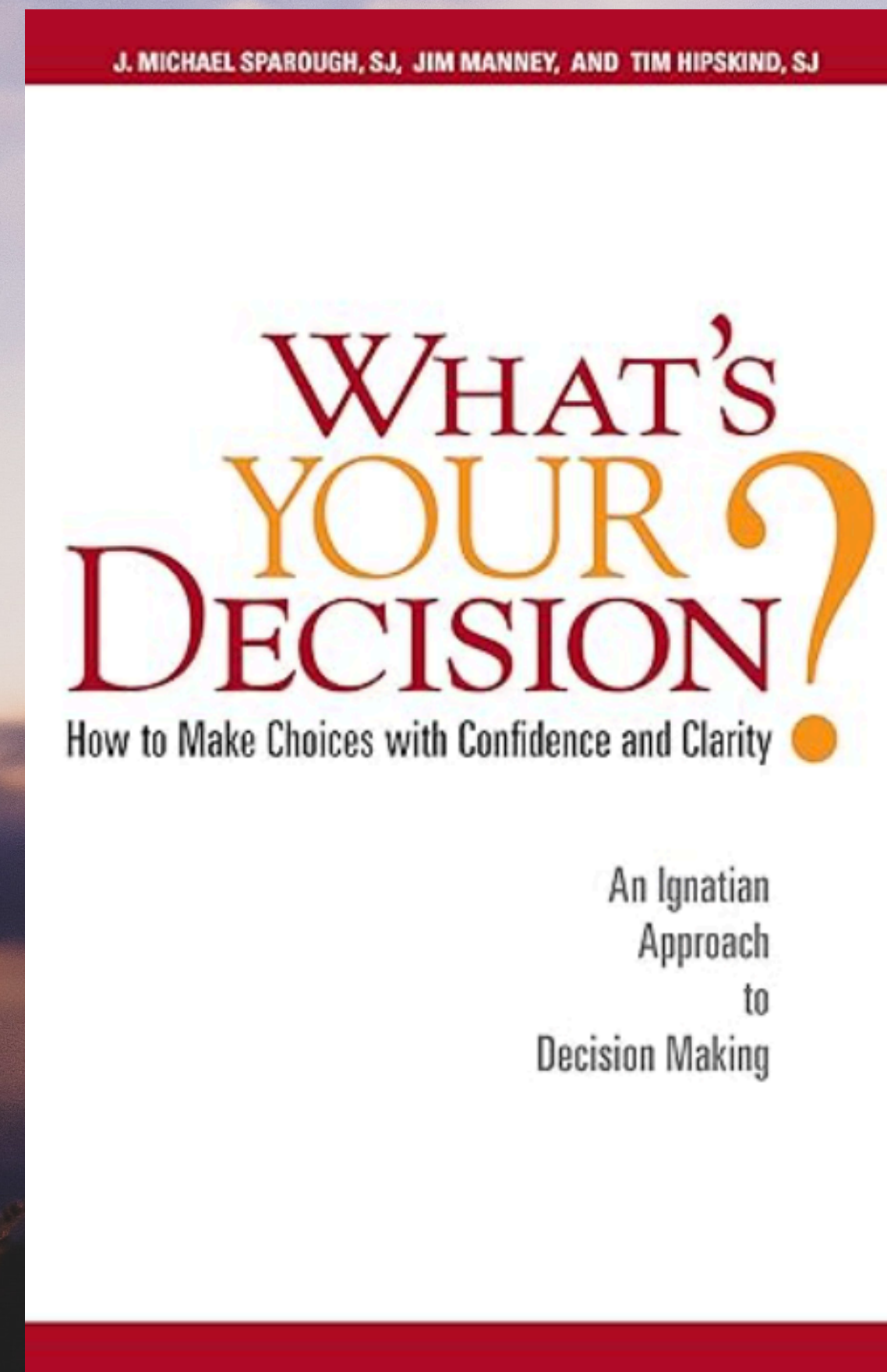


THOUGHT

To Carry into Decisions

Desolation

“Anxiety, restlessness, doubt, upset. ... Anything that takes us away from the Love of God and others. ...Pride and smugness about a life centered on pleasure. ...Spiritual lethargy. ...Not inclined to pray. ...God is nowhere to be found... not worth the trouble to contact” (WYD, 62)



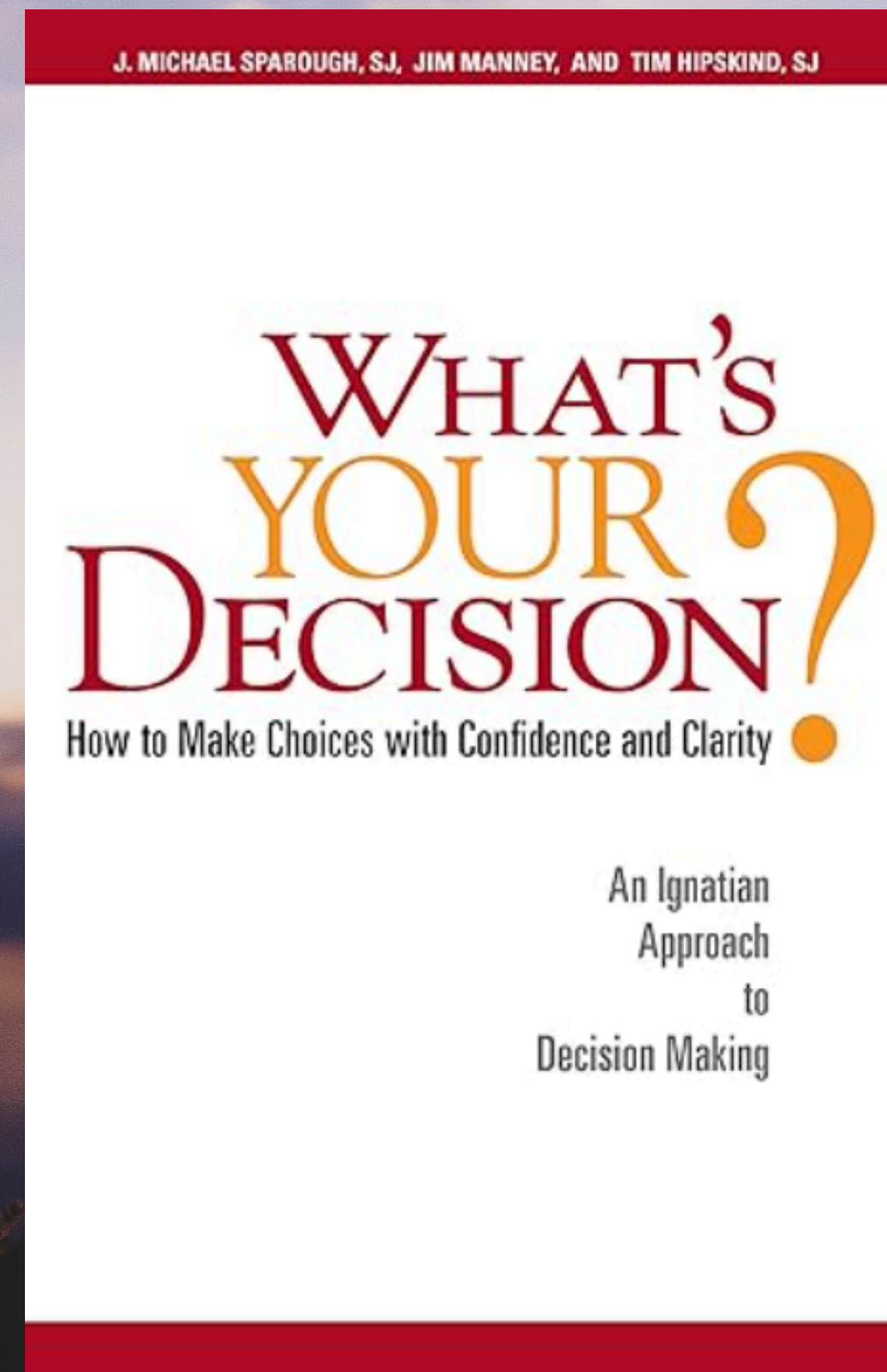
THOUGHT

To Carry into Decisions

Desolation

Points toward...

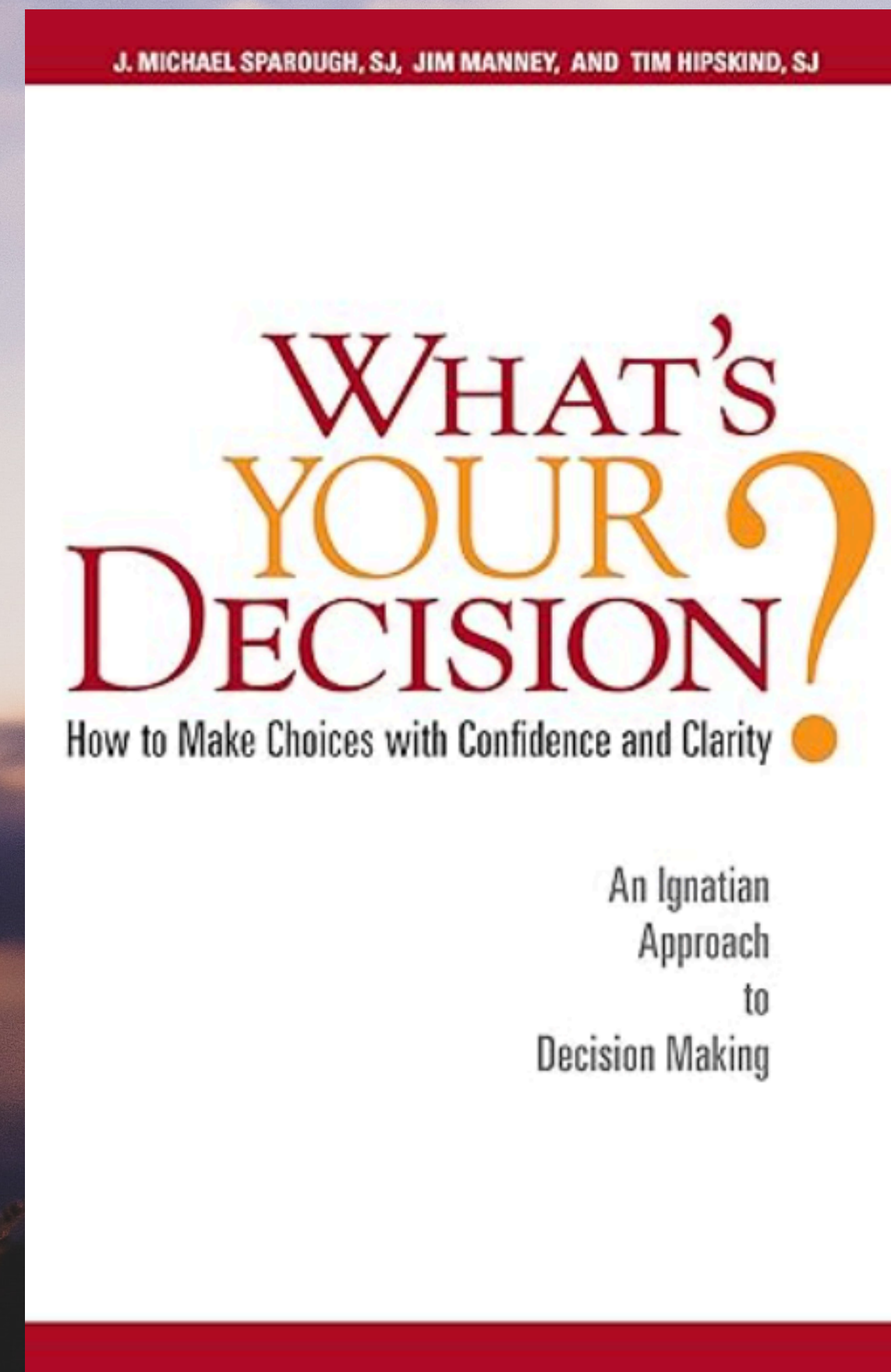
- Distance from God and people
- Unhappiness because desires are thwarted
- Feelings that people don't respect us
- Feelings that we are alone in a cruel world (62)



THOUGHT

To Carry into Decisions

Decision making is more like a dance than it is a straight road; we must learn to live in belovedness, and then notice the directions in which the Spirit is leading us.



BIG IDEAS

“YOU CAN TRUST YOUR JUDGEMENT
AND YOUR FEELINGS.” (WYD, 9)

Gather Information & Ask Questions

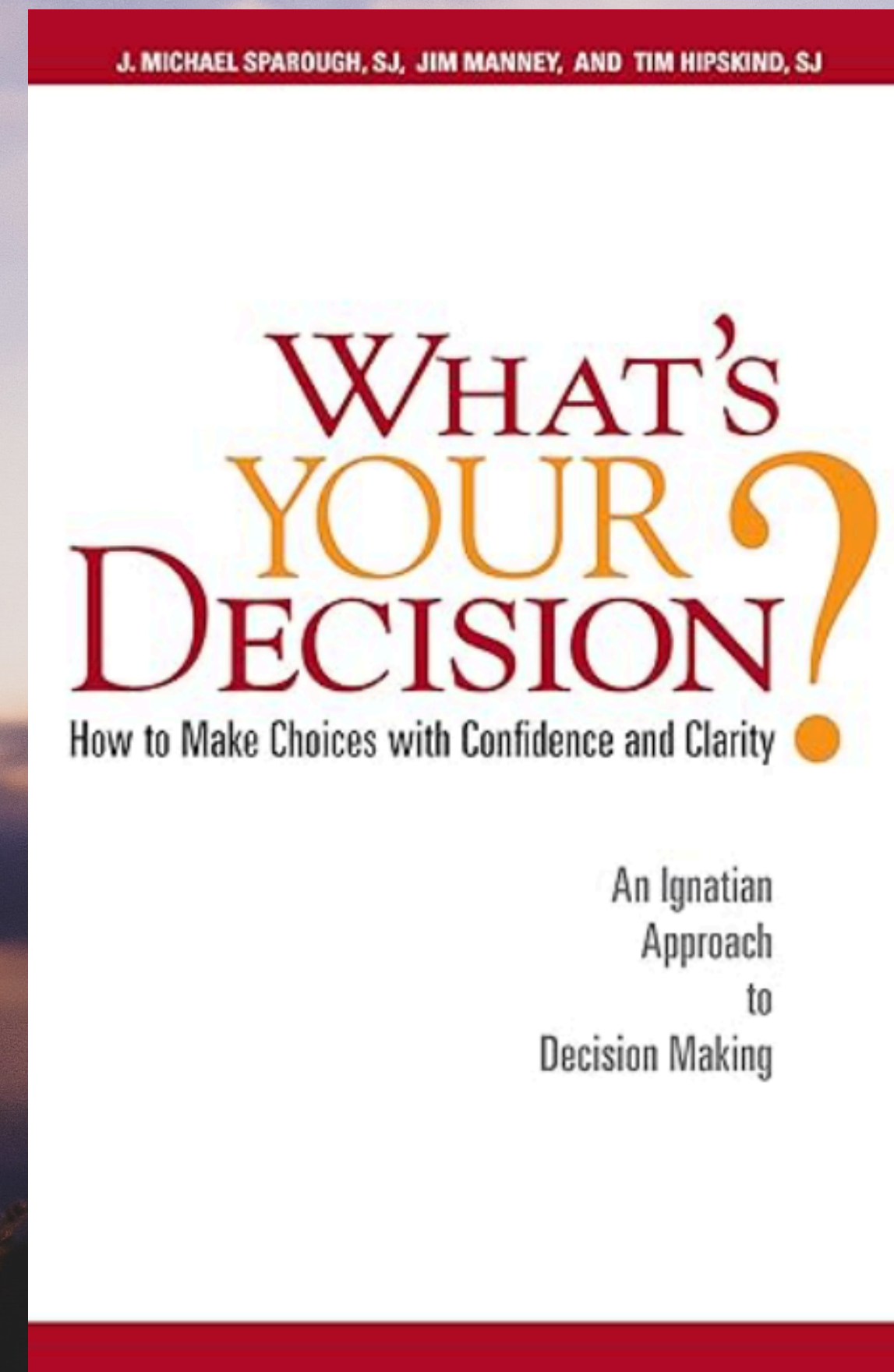


THOUGHT

To Carry into Decisions

Research and analysis matters for good decisions to be made “with all the information.”

Take the time to be thorough, and give more energy and evaluative time to more important decisions.

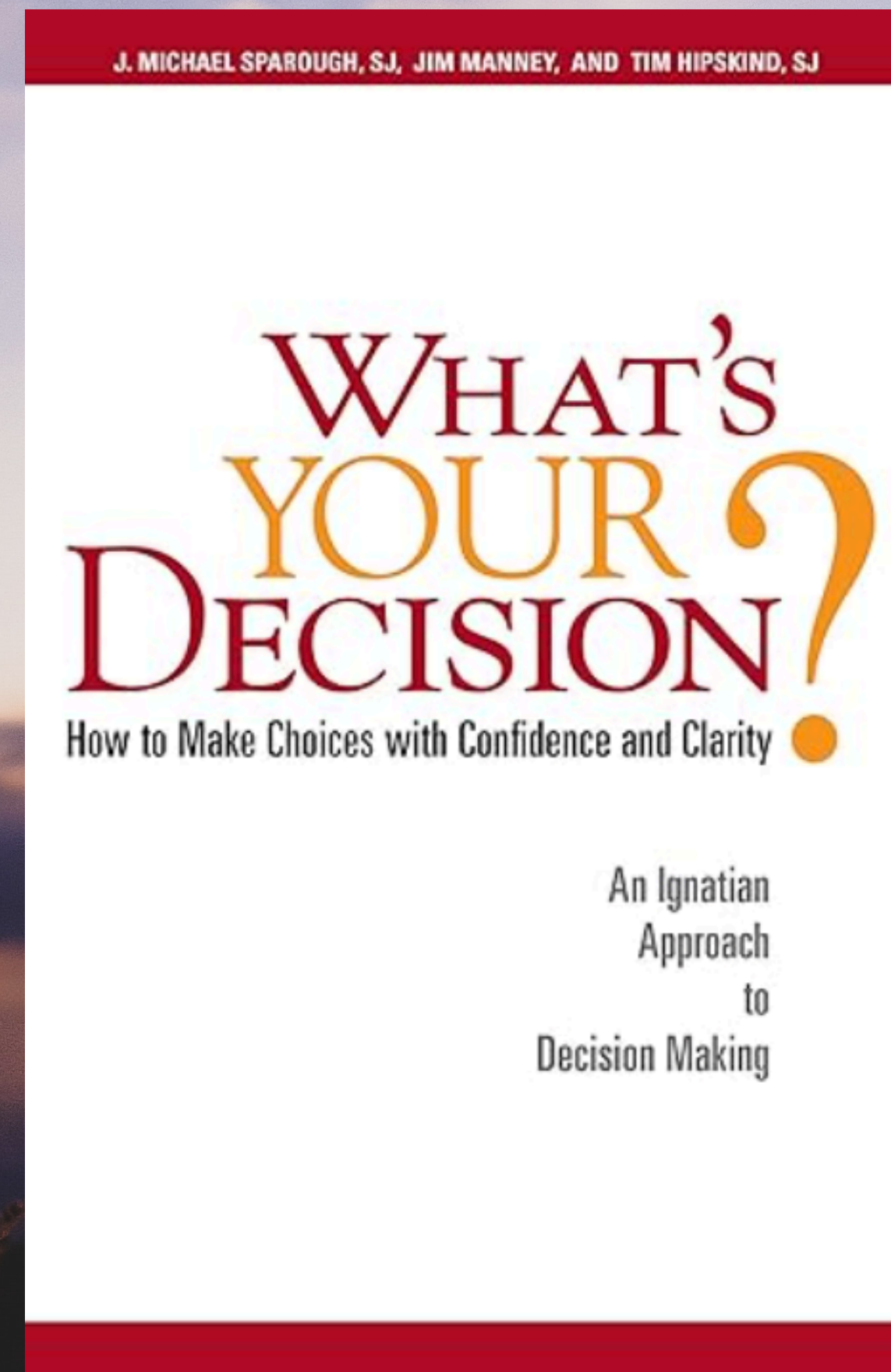


THOUGHT

To Carry into Decisions

Our hearts are unruly and divided—this is why teasing apart our emotions (and often either casting them aside or allowing them to railroad the decision) is so difficult.

We are learning to lean into the heart of God as we examine our own heart.



BIG IDEAS

“YOU CAN TRUST YOUR JUDGEMENT
AND YOUR FEELINGS.” (WYD, 9)

Indifference

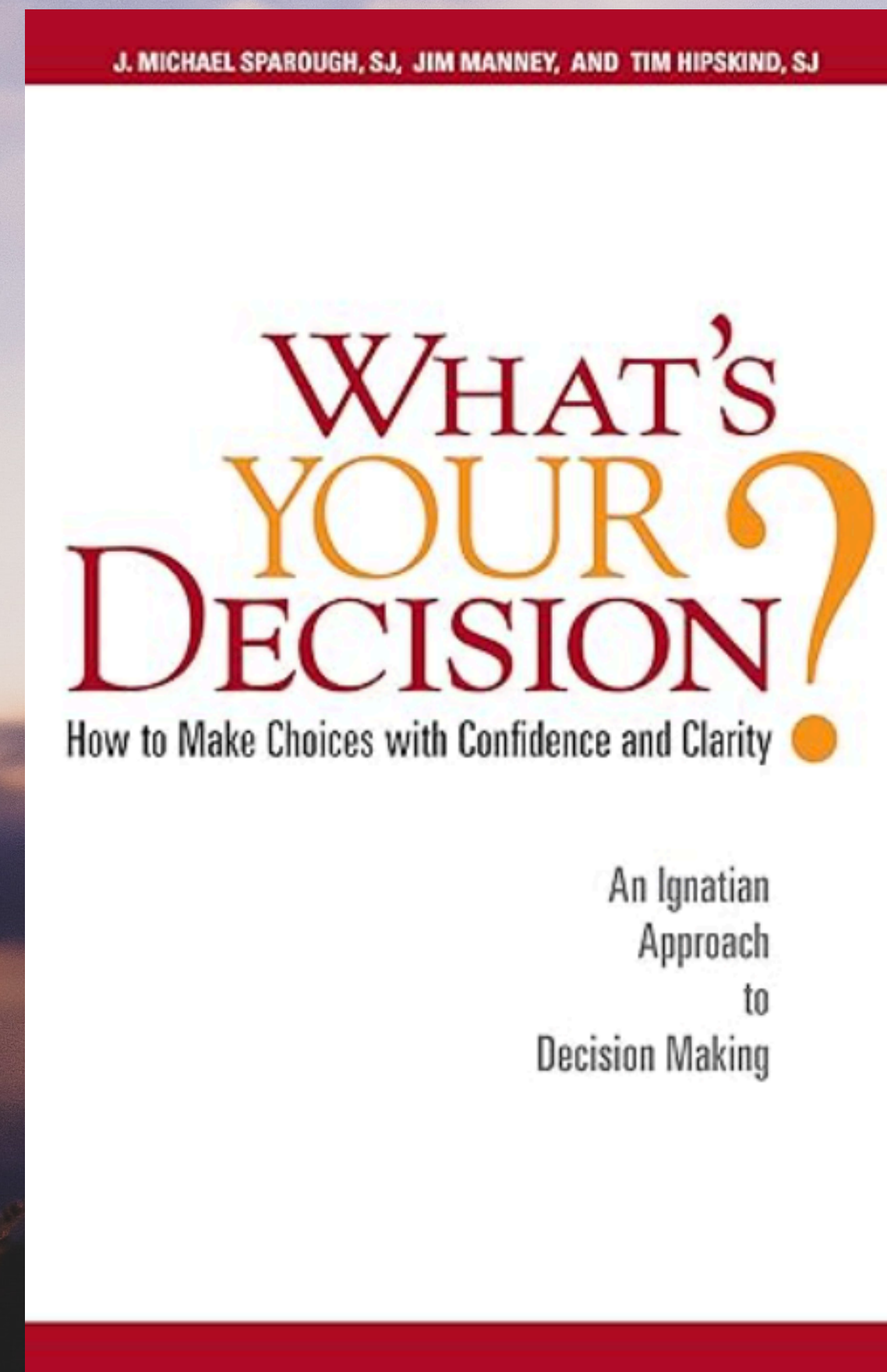


THOUGHT

To Carry into Decisions

Indifference means that we are “indifferent” to anything other than God’s will being done.

When we have dealt with our attachments to inner desires and preferred outcomes, we become free to make the decision.

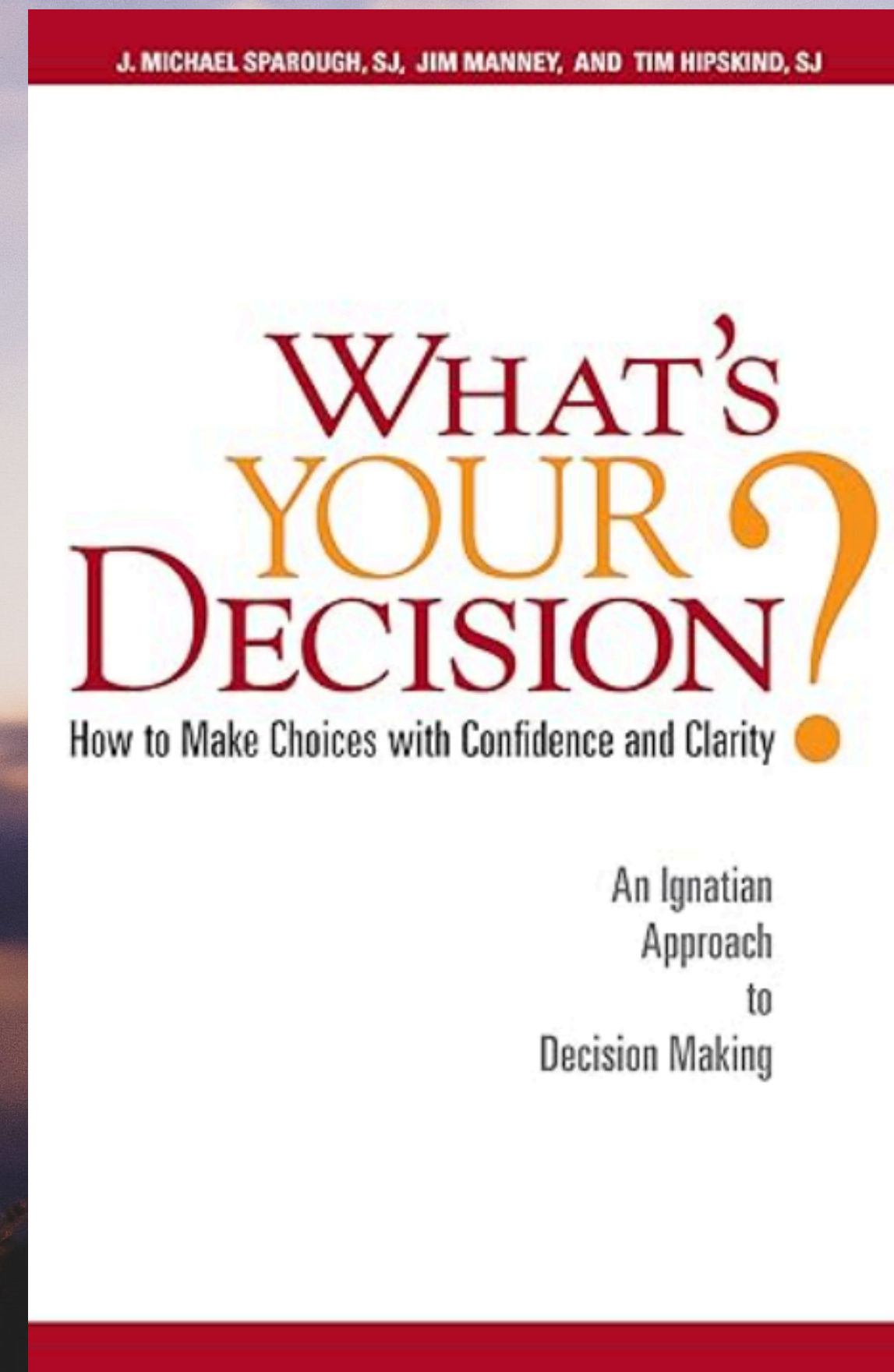


THOUGHT

To Carry into Decisions

“Ignatian indifference is the capacity to let go of what doesn’t help me to love God or love others—while staying engaged with what does.”

Marina Berzins McCoy

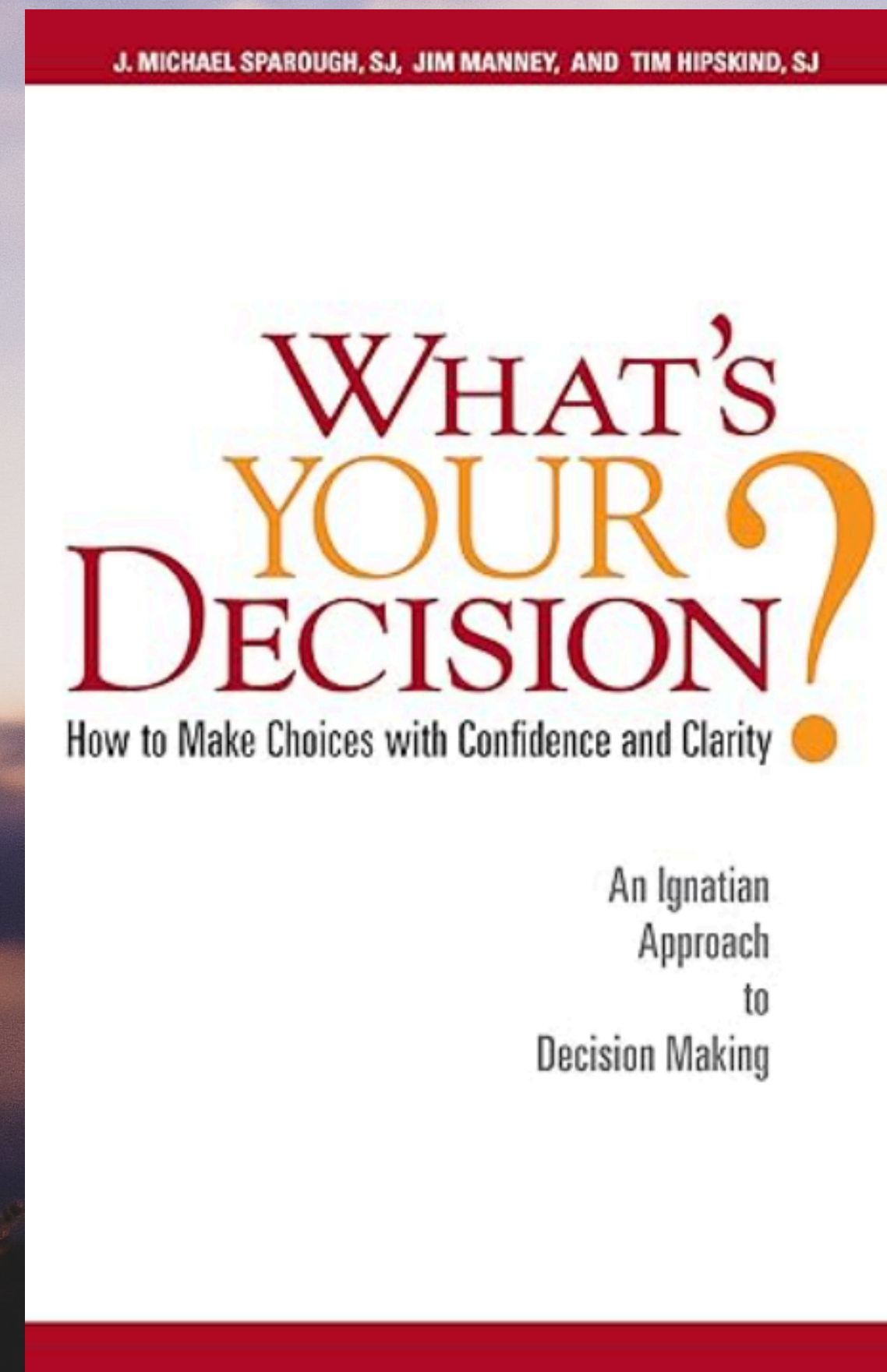


THOUGHT

To Carry into Decisions

Every decision we make comes with a yes to one thing, and a no to something else. We may “want it all” (WYD), but we can’t have it all.

This was the challenge in the Garden. Embrace your limits in order to thrive.



BREAK (5)



PART 2 | WORKSHOP



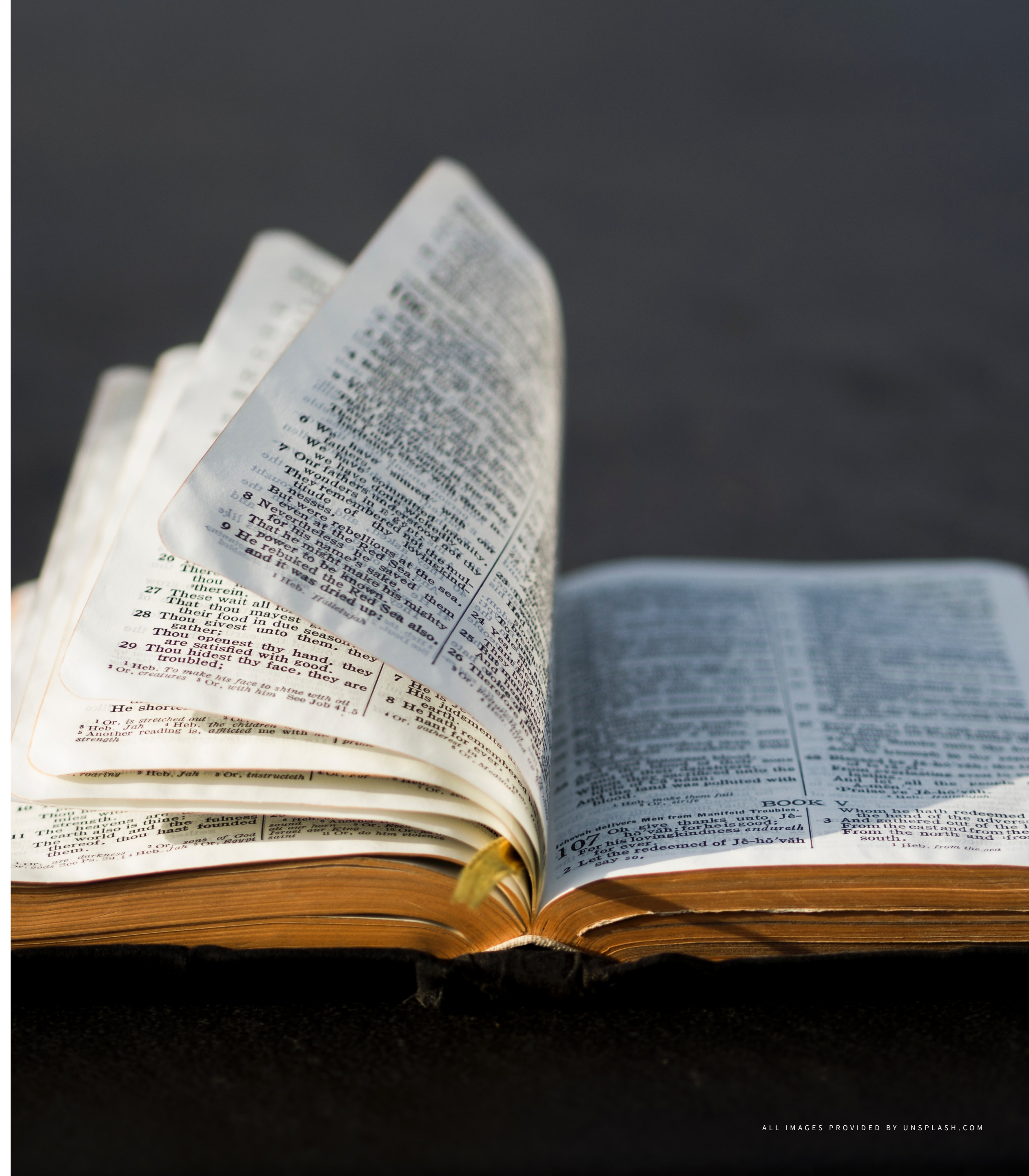
4. A 4-STEP PROCESS FOR MAKING GOOD DECISIONS



4 STEPS

“YOU CAN TRUST YOUR JUDGEMENT AND YOUR FEELINGS.” (WYD, 9)

1. What is the Decision I Need to Make?
2. What are My Attachments?
3. What are the Pros and Cons?
4. Make (or Begin Making) Your Decision



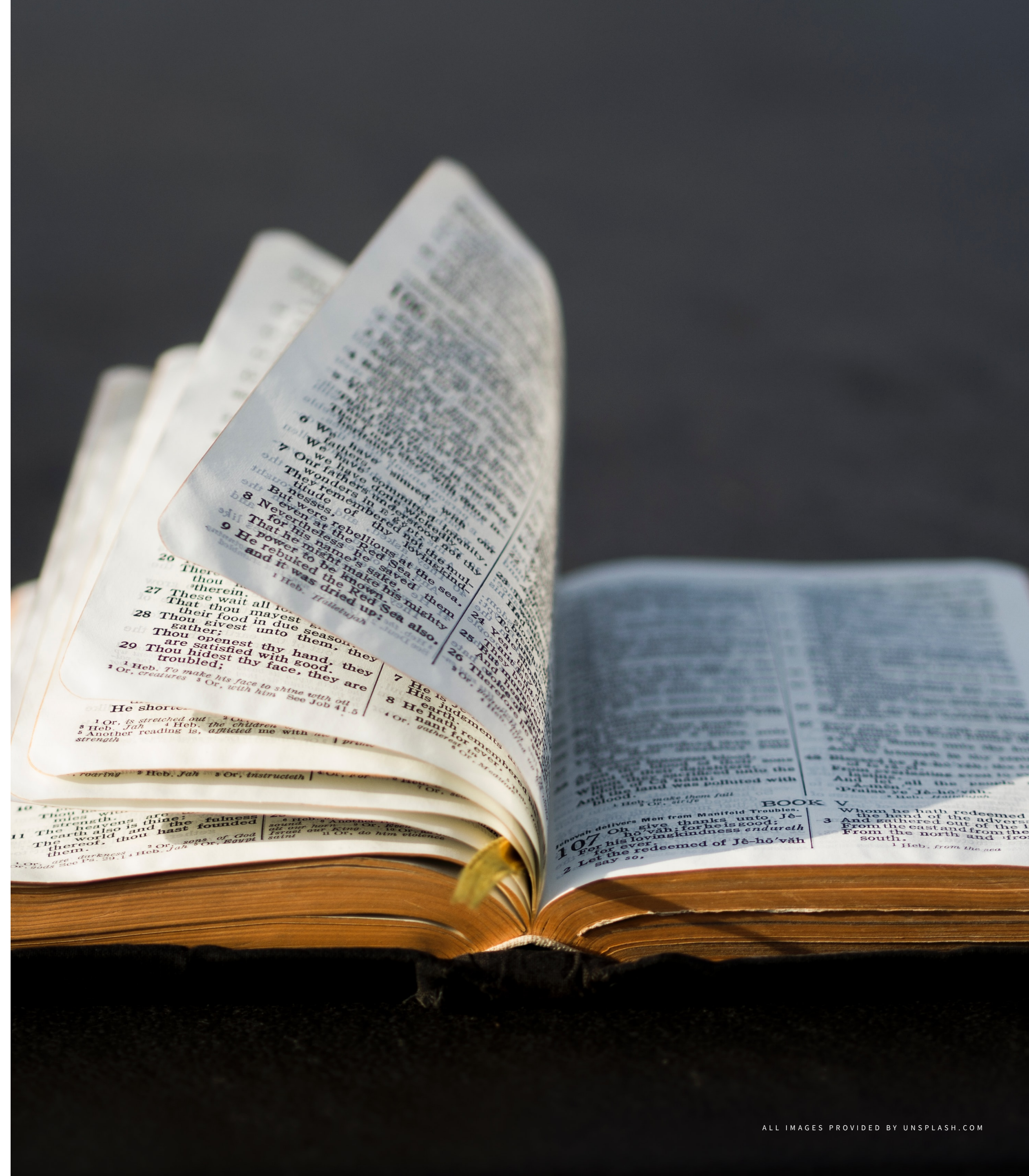
5. APPLYING THE PROCESS TO YOUR DECISION



4 STEPS

“YOU CAN TRUST YOUR JUDGEMENT AND YOUR FEELINGS.” (WYD, 9)

1. What is the Decision I Need to Make?
2. What are My Attachments?
3. What are the Pros and Cons?
4. Make (or Begin Making) Your Decision



4 STEPS

“YOU CAN TRUST YOUR JUDGEMENT
AND YOUR FEELINGS.” (WYD, 9)

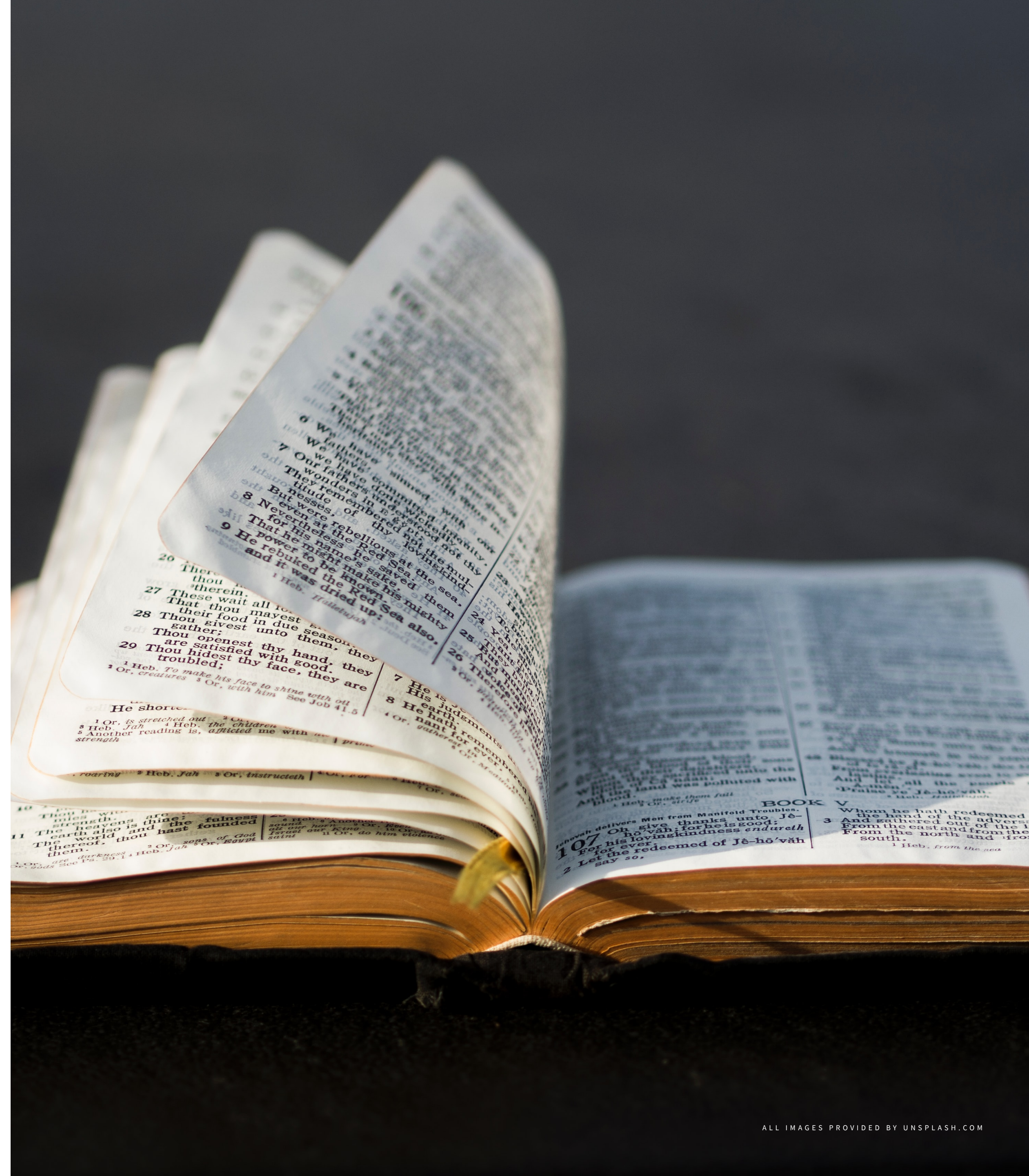
We begin with a Daily Examen.



4 STEPS

“YOU CAN TRUST YOUR JUDGEMENT
AND YOUR FEELINGS.” (WYD, 9)

1. What is the Decision I Need to Make?

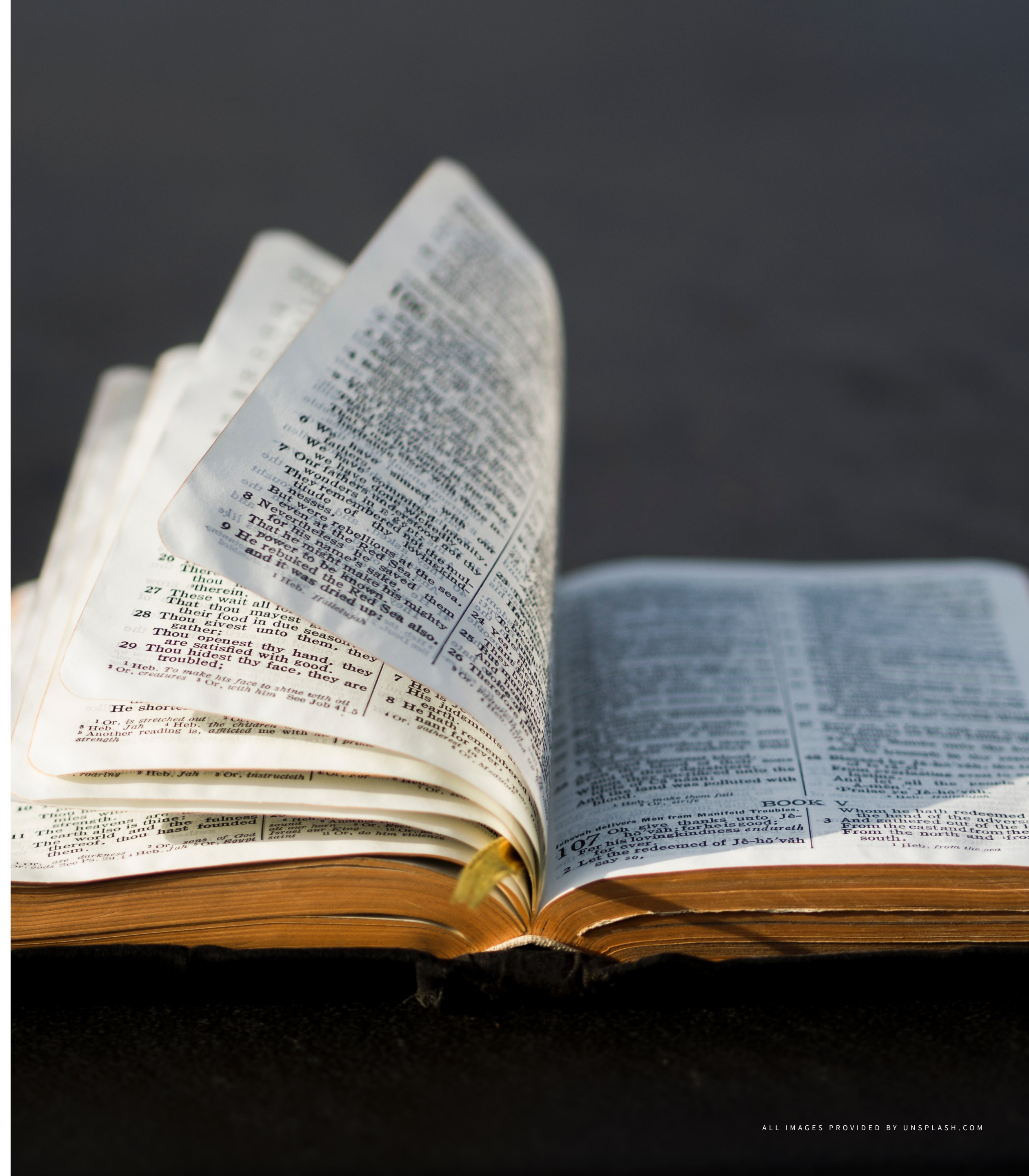


4 STEPS

“YOU CAN TRUST YOUR JUDGEMENT AND YOUR FEELINGS.” (WYD, 9)

Jim Manney:

- State it as a positive, concrete choice
- Make it as specific as possible (What you will do, where, and when)
- State it in the way that God initially seems to be drawing you
- State it in the form of X vs. non-X or X vs. Y



4 STEPS

“YOU CAN TRUST YOUR JUDGEMENT AND YOUR FEELINGS.” (WYD, 9)

Jim Manney:

Example of an X vs. non-X proposal: “I will take enough courses next term so that I can graduate this coming May.”

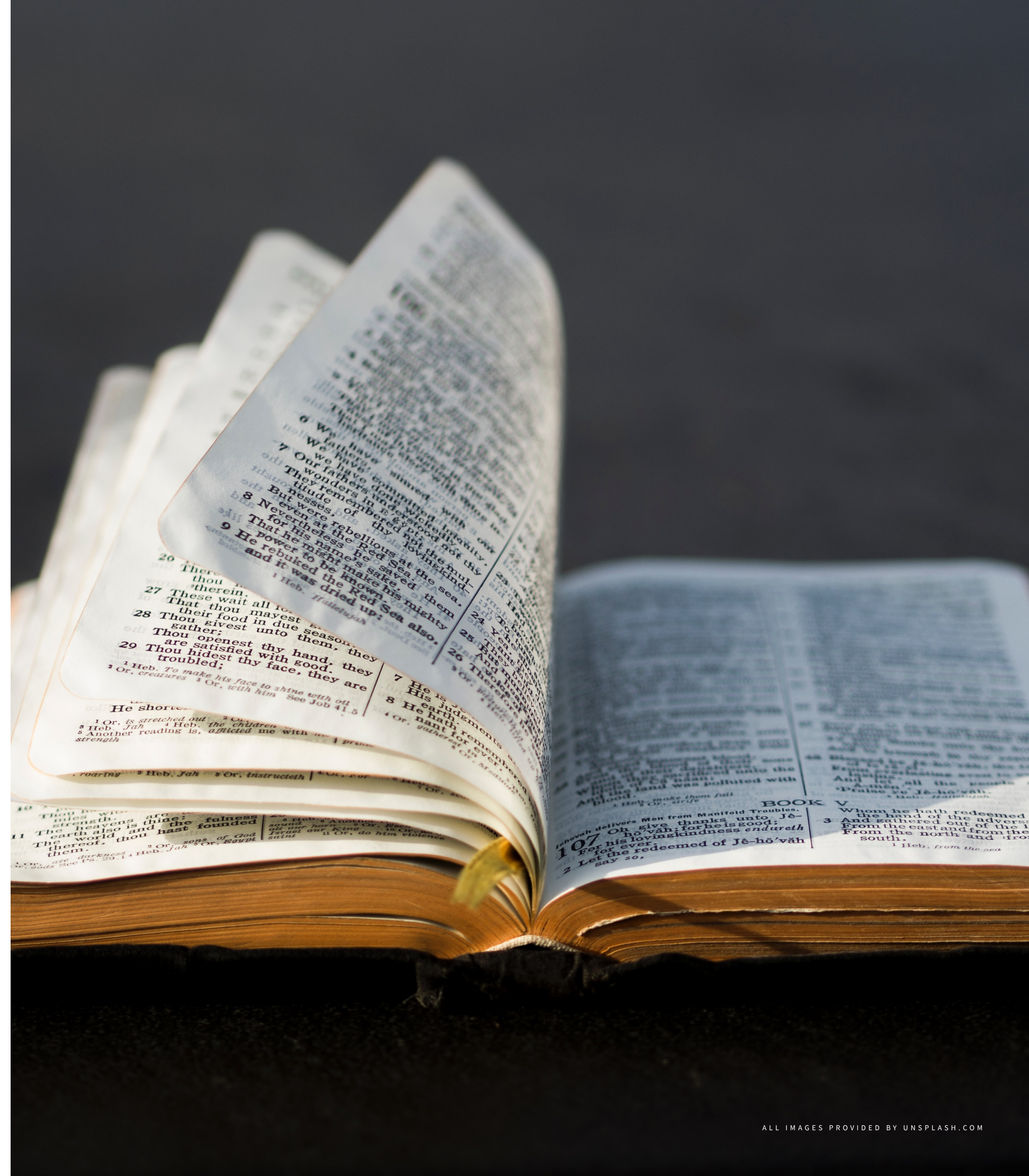
Example of an X vs. Y proposal: “I will stay in my current job with company A or I will accept a job offer from company B.”



4 STEPS

“YOU CAN TRUST YOUR JUDGEMENT
AND YOUR FEELINGS.” (WYD, 9)

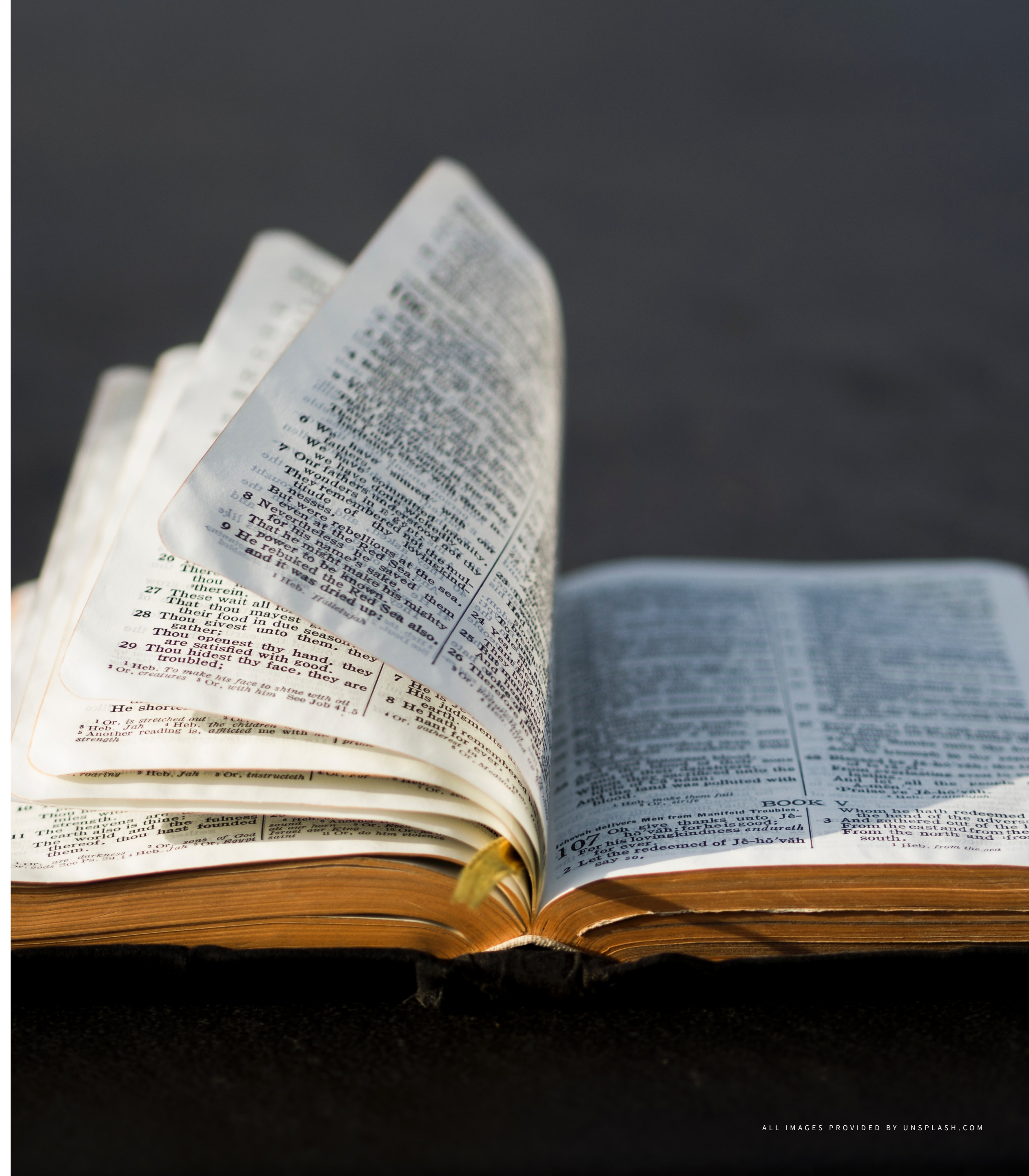
2. What are My Attachments?



4 STEPS

“YOU CAN TRUST YOUR JUDGEMENT AND YOUR FEELINGS.” (WYD, 9)

3. What are the Pros and Cons?



4 STEPS

“YOU CAN TRUST YOUR JUDGEMENT AND YOUR FEELINGS.” (WYD, 9)

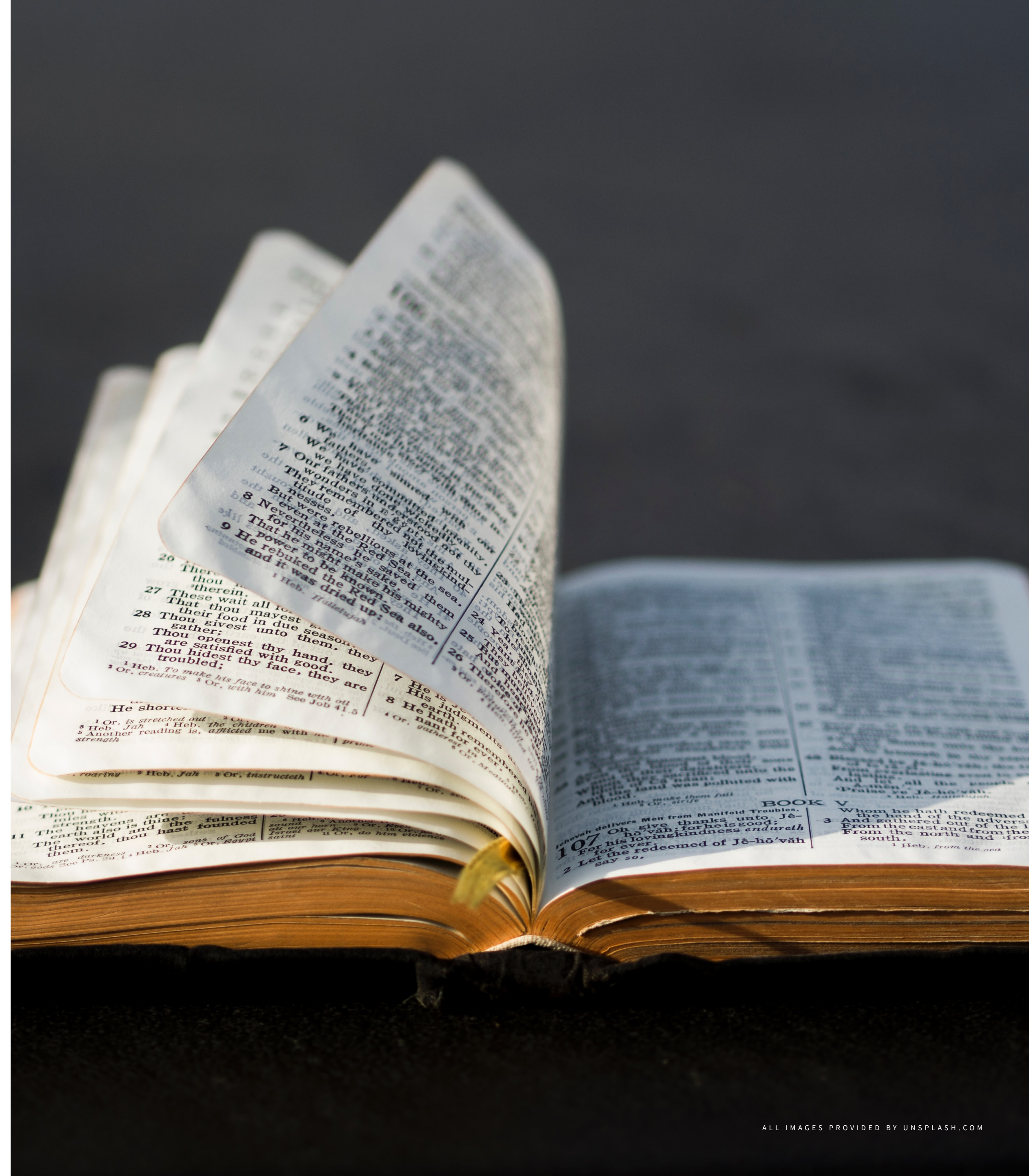
Ask God to help you make your lists.

List 1

Advantages and disadvantages for you of making the decision one way.

List 2

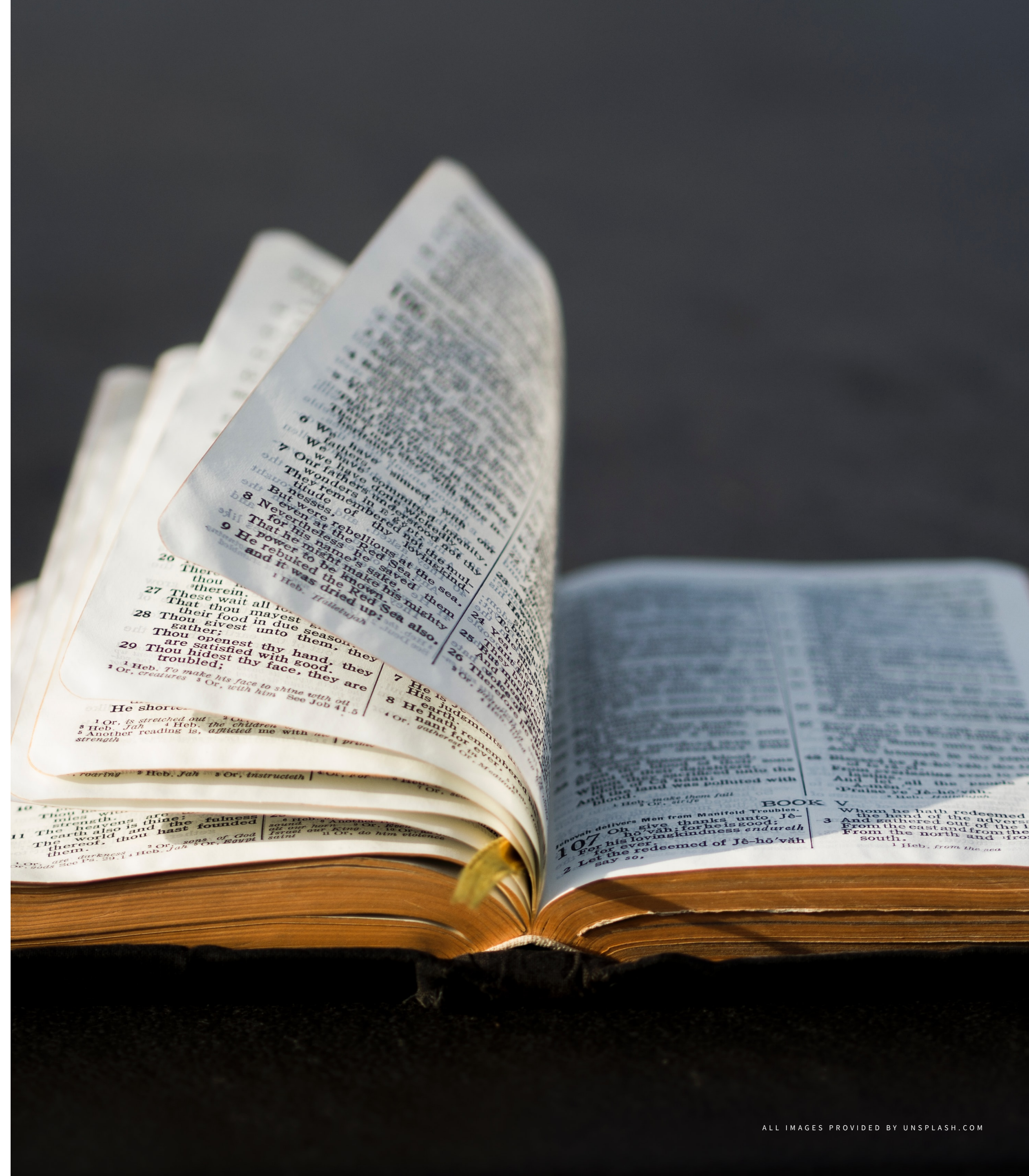
Advantages and disadvantages for you of making the decision the other way.



4 STEPS

“YOU CAN TRUST YOUR JUDGEMENT
AND YOUR FEELINGS.” (WYD, 9)

4. Make (or Begin Making) Your Decision
*(and continue to pray, research, sit with
it, and listen to consolation and
desolation)*



4 STEPS

“YOU CAN TRUST YOUR JUDGEMENT
AND YOUR FEELINGS.” (WYD, 9)

Use Imaginative Exercises
(“Try it On,” “At Your Funeral”)



6. A NEW FUTURE FOR YOU





WALK WITH GOD

AS A DISCERNING SOUL

1. You do not need to be anxious about decision making; you can learn to make better and better decisions.
2. Your walk with Jesus means you have the mind of Christ—you can discern God's desires for you.
3. You can become a student of decision-making; make these principles second-nature, and normalize their vocabulary in your everyday life.
4. Keep the vision of the Good Life before you—coming into union with God in Christ.



TOOLS

FOR THE JOURNEY

1. 4-Steps to Making a Good Decision eBook
2. *What's Your Decision?* (on Amazon)
3. This Video and Audio
4. Helpful Article Links
5. The Daily Examen & 40-Day Option



COURSE

A WELL-WORN PATH

a well-worn path

a 5-week video study in the spiritual habits of Sabbath, the Daily Examen, Lectio Divina, Silence/Stillness/Solitude, and a Rule of Life

WITH HOST & AUTHOR
DAN WILT

**A BLESSING TO MAKE
GOOD DECISIONS &
TO GROW IN
DISCERNMENT**

