

MORAL EXCELLENCE





5 THOUGHTS ON MORAL EXCELLENCE

- It begins with accepting divine direction
- It is fostered by setting the right expectations
- It will always feel out of place in a lost world
- It is easily neutralized by a sense of superiority
- It is never found hiding in the shadows

Hosea 4

MORAL EXCELLENCE
BEGINS WITH ACCEPTING
DIVINE DIRECTION



SETTING EXPECTATIONS

- We tend to live up or down to the expectations we set for ourselves. Those who take a casual approach to morality don't feel challenged or pushed.



SETTING EXPECTATIONS

- We tend to live up or down to the expectations we set for ourselves. Those who take a casual approach to morality don't feel challenged or pushed.
- To be sure, the bar is set high for Christians! Remember Colossians 3:5-7, Ephesians 5:5, and Romans 12:1-2.



SETTING EXPECTATIONS

- We tend to live up or down to the expectations we set for ourselves. Those who take a casual approach to morality don't feel challenged or pushed.
- To be sure, the bar is set high for Christians! Remember Colossians 3:5-7, Ephesians 5:5, and Romans 12:1-2.
- Sadly, low expectations tend to get transferred to those around us, especially for those in positions of leadership (2 Chronicles 28:19, Hosea 4:6-10). We see this in parenting, in managing a business, in our language, in marriage, and in shepherding a church.



MORAL EXCELLENCE IS *OUT OF PLACE*

- Excellence in any pursuit is exceptional. It is our natural tendency to fake our way through life, resting on our laurels, or grading on a curve. So when we lament that Christian values seem out of place in this world, I say, "What were you expecting?!"

MORAL EXCELLENCE IS *OUT OF PLACE*

- Excellence in any pursuit is exceptional. It is our natural tendency to fake our way through life, resting on our laurels, or grading on a curve. So when we lament that Christian values seem out of place in this world, I say, "What were you expecting?!"
- Jesus wasn't being careless when He used terms like "salt of the earth" and "light of the world" (Matthew 5:13-16). Salt is only useful if it is distinctively salty (Luke 14:34-35).

MORAL EXCELLENCE IS *OUT OF PLACE*

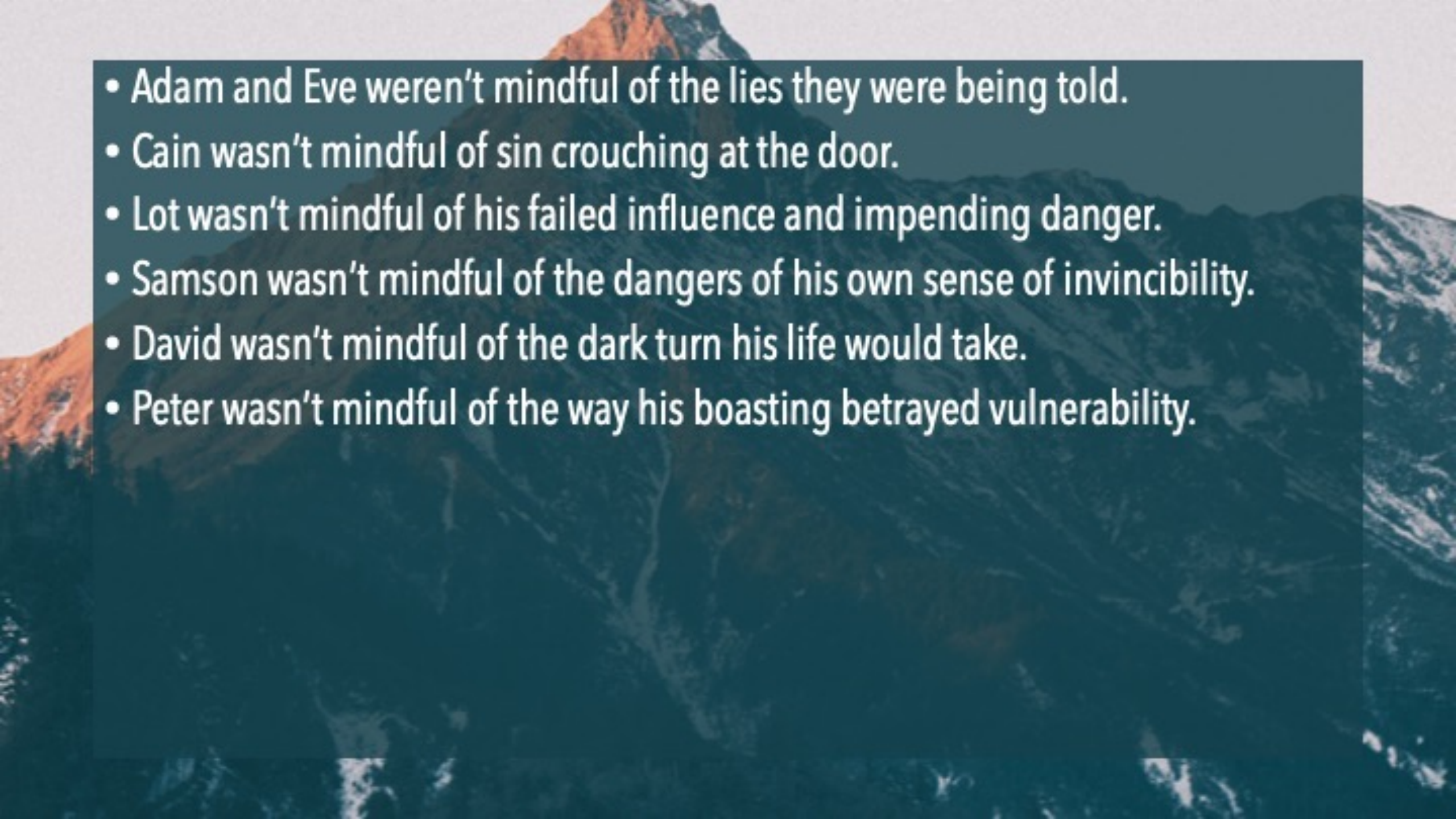
- Excellence in any pursuit is exceptional. It is our natural tendency to fake our way through life, resting on our laurels, or grading on a curve. So when we lament that Christian values seem out of place in this world, I say, "What were you expecting?!"
- Jesus wasn't being careless when He used terms like "salt of the earth" and "light of the world" (Matthew 5:13-16). Salt is only useful if it is distinctively salty (Luke 14:34-35).
- This is why we "keep our behavior excellent" (1 Peter 2:11-12) and produce "good fruit from a good tree" (Luke 6:43-45).

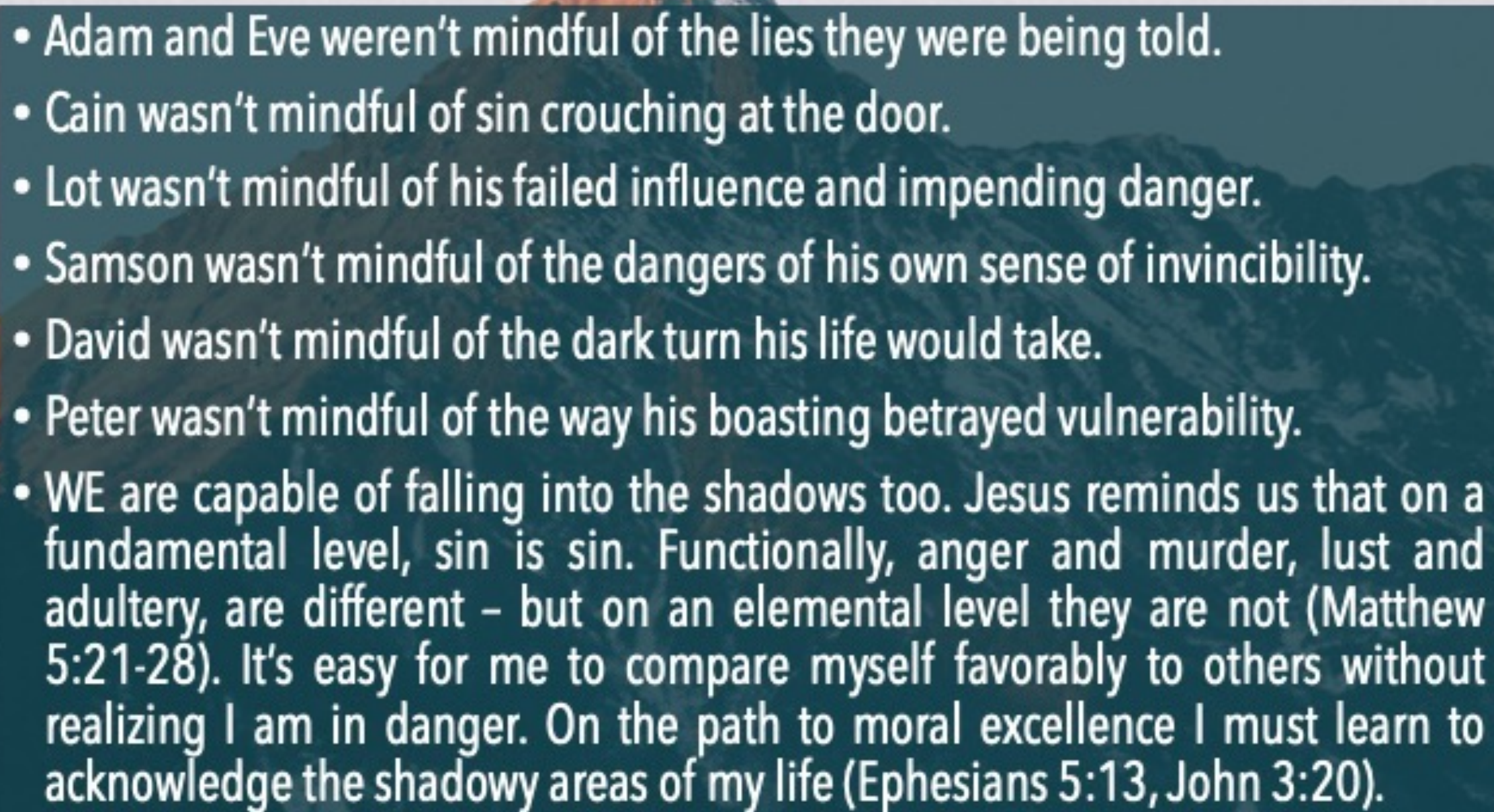
Luke 18:9ff & Romans 12:3

MORAL EXCELLENCE IS
NEUTRALIZED BY MORAL
SUPERIORITY



BE MINDFUL OF THE SHADOWS

- 
- Adam and Eve weren't mindful of the lies they were being told.
 - Cain wasn't mindful of sin crouching at the door.
 - Lot wasn't mindful of his failed influence and impending danger.
 - Samson wasn't mindful of the dangers of his own sense of invincibility.
 - David wasn't mindful of the dark turn his life would take.
 - Peter wasn't mindful of the way his boasting betrayed vulnerability.

- 
- Adam and Eve weren't mindful of the lies they were being told.
 - Cain wasn't mindful of sin crouching at the door.
 - Lot wasn't mindful of his failed influence and impending danger.
 - Samson wasn't mindful of the dangers of his own sense of invincibility.
 - David wasn't mindful of the dark turn his life would take.
 - Peter wasn't mindful of the way his boasting betrayed vulnerability.
 - WE are capable of falling into the shadows too. Jesus reminds us that on a fundamental level, sin is sin. Functionally, anger and murder, lust and adultery, are different – but on an elemental level they are not (Matthew 5:21-28). It's easy for me to compare myself favorably to others without realizing I am in danger. On the path to moral excellence I must learn to acknowledge the shadowy areas of my life (Ephesians 5:13, John 3:20).