

The Heart, Mind & Future of a Liturgical Dancer

An E-book designed to impart truth, principles, and strategies to help you grow into a more healthy, effective, and efficient Minister in Dance.

Written by
Michael Johnson





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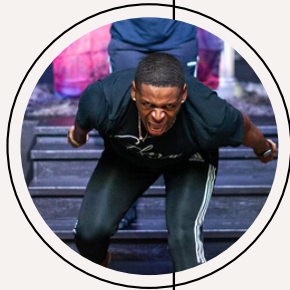
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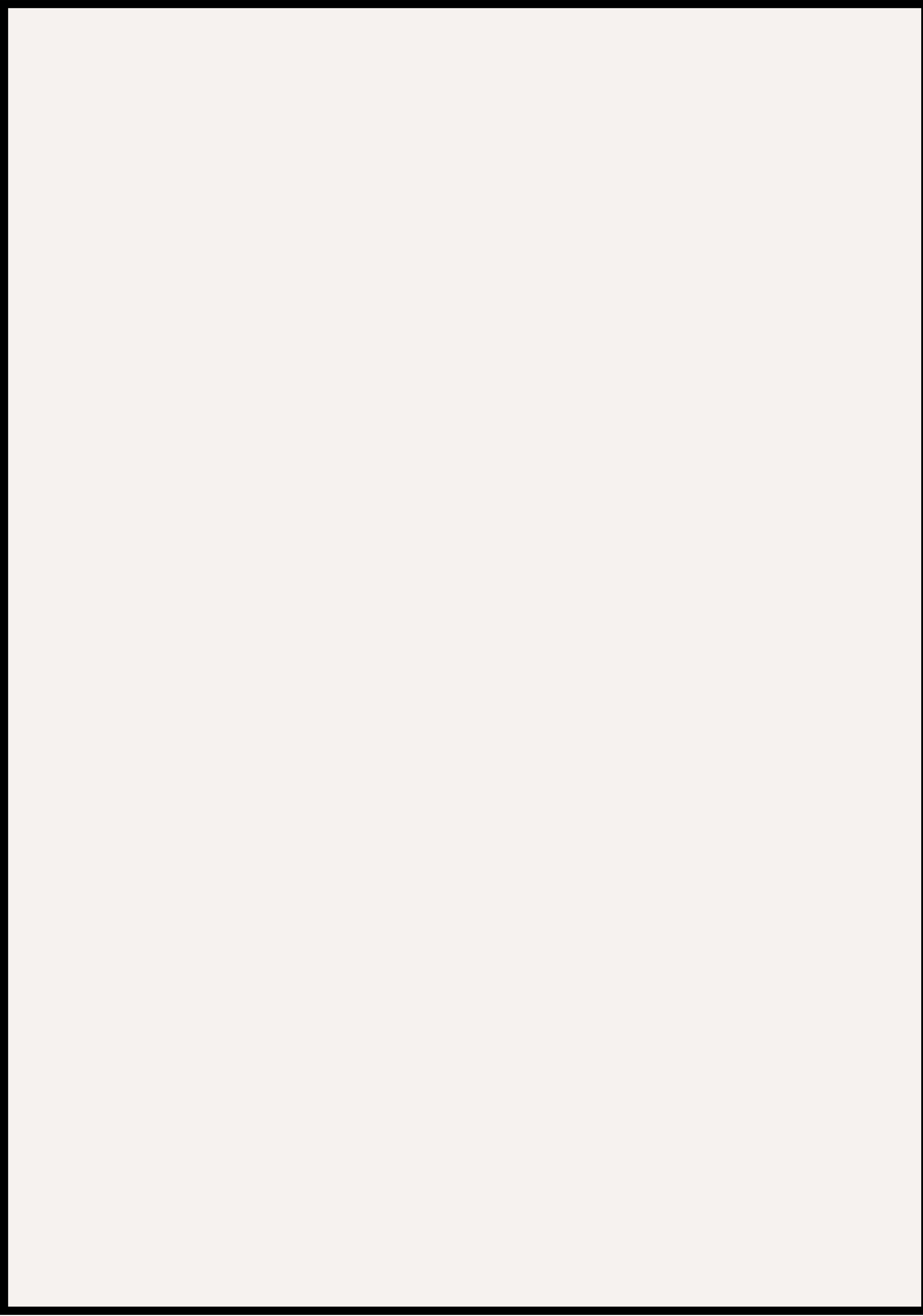
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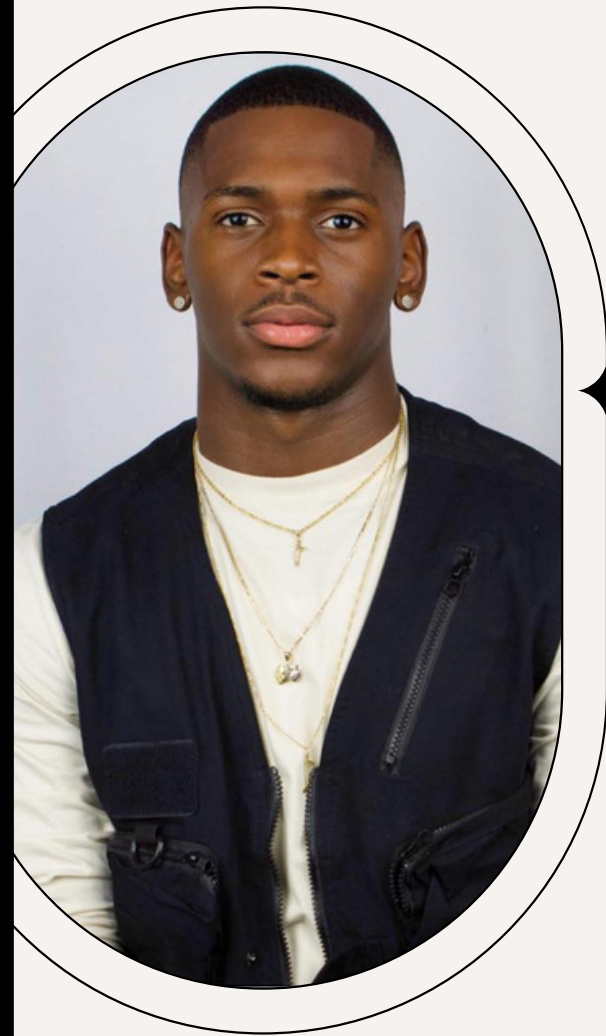
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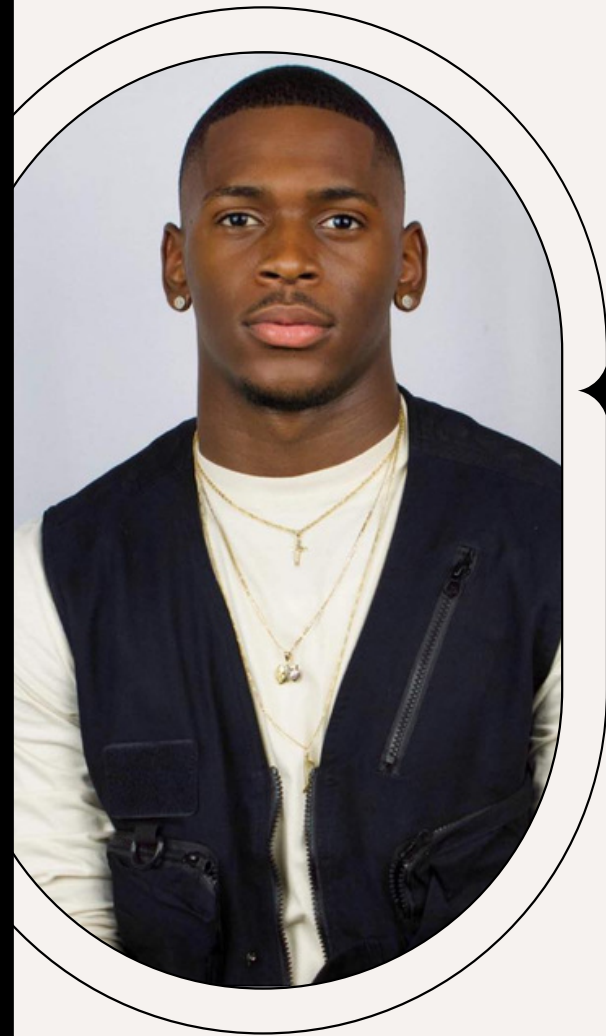


Problem/Challenge: Journeying through ministry in any form comes with various nuances and barriers that hinder the effectiveness of the gift. An ongoing universal challenge that movement ministers experience worldwide is the rejection from other ministering gifts and the body of Christ at large.

For years movement ministers have essentially fought to have a space where they were embraced in a worship setting and valued as important as the preached word or the psalmist and minstrel gifts.

The rejection experienced through the years has built a level of discontentment and discouragement, directly affecting the heart of the movement minister if not adequately managed. It is our earnest desire to feel that in any setting, on any platform, amongst any believer, our contribution to invoking the presence of God in a gathering is necessary and respected..





Response: This challenge can be dealt with on a larger scale by simply rectifying the lack of unity and discord within the body of Christ as a whole.

To be more specific to the dancer, unifying the movement and ministering gifts will also aid in the perspective of those who experience our ministries. It can become difficult to get anyone to invest or to embrace a thing that appears to be divided and inconsistent in presentation.

It is vital to know that given the circumstances and the general misunderstanding of what movement ministers do, **we are responsible for positively contributing to these negative frames of mind.**

When you go forth on an assignment, you are not solely **representing yourself**, you are first **God's instrument**, and you also bring **insight** and **awareness** that the Spirit of God lives and breathes on the dancing gifts.

Doing this gets the body's attention, and at that moment, you've been allowed to educate and break down negative connotations concerning the movement minister.





Resolution: This book in a nutshell, is a technology to be grounded in your gift through the word of God. After a time of pouring and plowing, this text is beneficial as it provides conviction, principles, and insight from God's word. The text brings you scripture and revelation relevant to your gift, which shifts you from simply dancing to becoming a **moving intercessor**. Pastor Michael Johnson, who is the author of this book, is one of the most integral individuals I've met within the body of Christ.

His heart to serve and disciple various gifts in the body has impacted and uplifted many who may have felt they've come to a halt. This text speaks volumes about his humble and authentic nature because he took the time to study and further understand a gift not reflective of how he typically operates or functions.

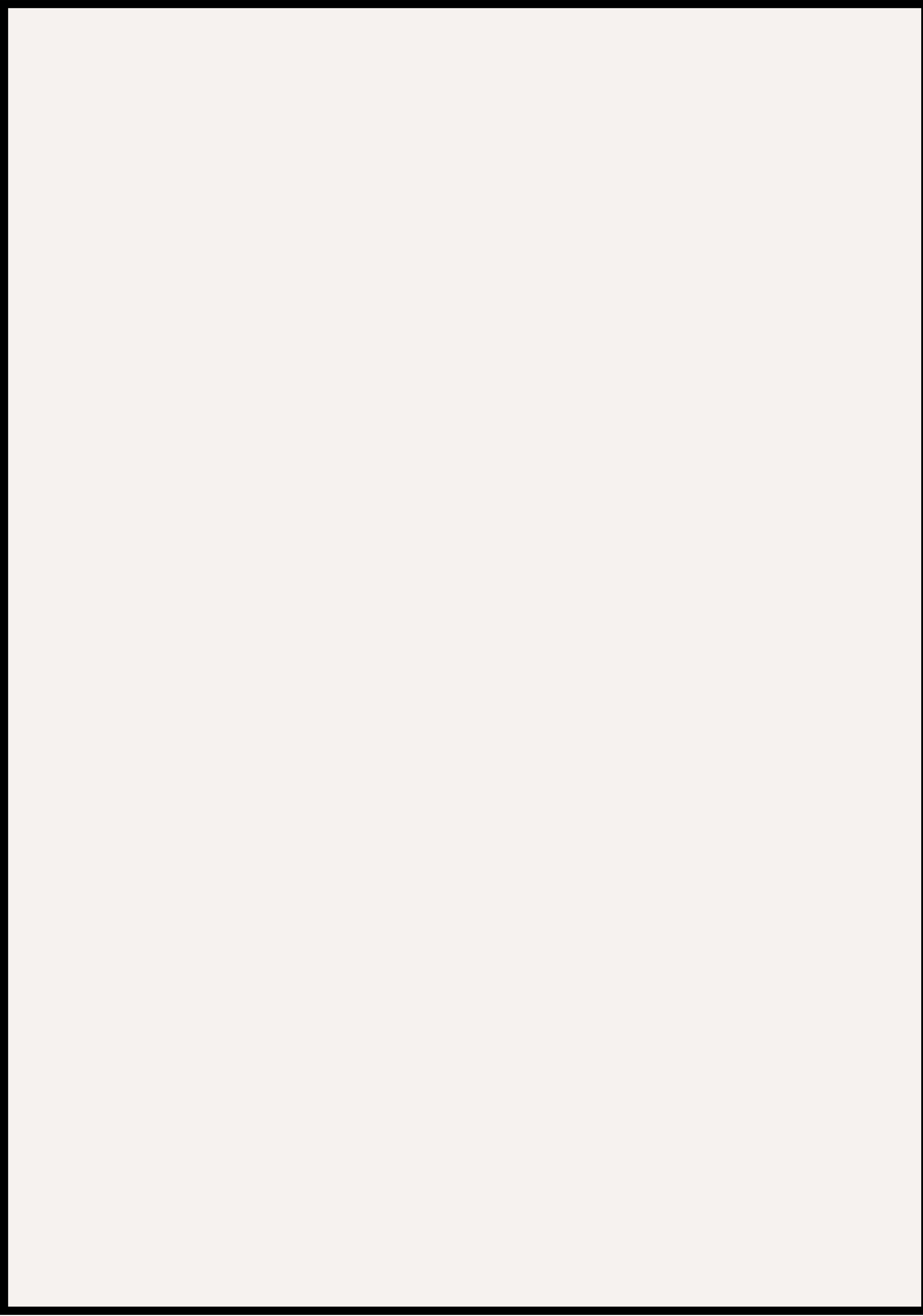
Michael Johnson has been a representation of the heart of God since we met, and his posture has not changed despite life's circumstances. He has remained steadfast in all things concerning God's people. It is a true honor to be connected to this boatload of revelation. His pour has and continues to shift, challenge, and launch my ministry, and I could not be more grateful to be connected to this pure-hearted vessel.

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PART I

THE HEART OF A DANCER

What are your motives for dancing for the Lord?



The Heart

2 Samuel 6:14 (ESV)

"And David danced before the Lord with all his might. And David was wearing a linen ephod."

1 Samuel 13:14

"...The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart..."

By now, it should be no secret that one of king David's most remarkable character traits was known to be his devotion to God. We find how God felt about David in 1 Samuel 16:7, where the Lord rebukes Samuel for assuming God chose someone who **looked** like the next king.





1 Samuel 16:7(ESV) God responded;

"Do not look on the countenance or the height of his stature, for man looks at the outward appearance, I look at the heart."

Because of David's devotion to the Lord:

- The Lord Accelerated his potential,
- The Lord Anointed him over the king in position,
- The Lord Acknowledged him before the nation's prophet and his family.

David wasn't anointed and appointed because he was talented, gifted, or skilled, although he was. But in 1 Samuel 16, God created an oil encounter with David because he was unquestionably devoted to God.

To this new generation of **creative worshippers**, **liturgical dancers**, and **praise expressers**, your unquestionable devotion to God makes you significant and valuable to Him.

- Not your affection.
- Not your attraction
- Not even your attention.

Your devotion sets you apart and determines what God decides to do to you, in you, with you, and through you..





I'm reminded of the greatest commandment Jesus notes in Matthew 22:37(ESV).

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."

This command is not about your affection for God, nor does it have to do with your attraction to God. This command is about your willingness to hand over your life as a tool **for worship** and **to worship God**.

Take into consideration what true love requires. Love requires:

- **Sacrifice:** Giving up what you hold dear.
- **Submission:** Losing sight of self and prioritizing His will over your own.
- **Sanctification:** Setting yourself apart so God can freely and willingly use your vessel however He sees fit.



My prayer is that God's love for you will draw you to remind you why you do what you do for Him.

- **If you dance** because you just like to dance, then you can do that at the club.
- **If you dance** because you like how people marvel at your expression, then go Snapchat yourself, Instagram yourself, or Facebook live yourself dancing and see how many views you can get.
- **If you dance** because you're bored and need something to do in church, then find something else more productive to do.

But this book is written to some dancers who made up in their minds; with every move produced within your ministry presentation, is to worship the Lord.



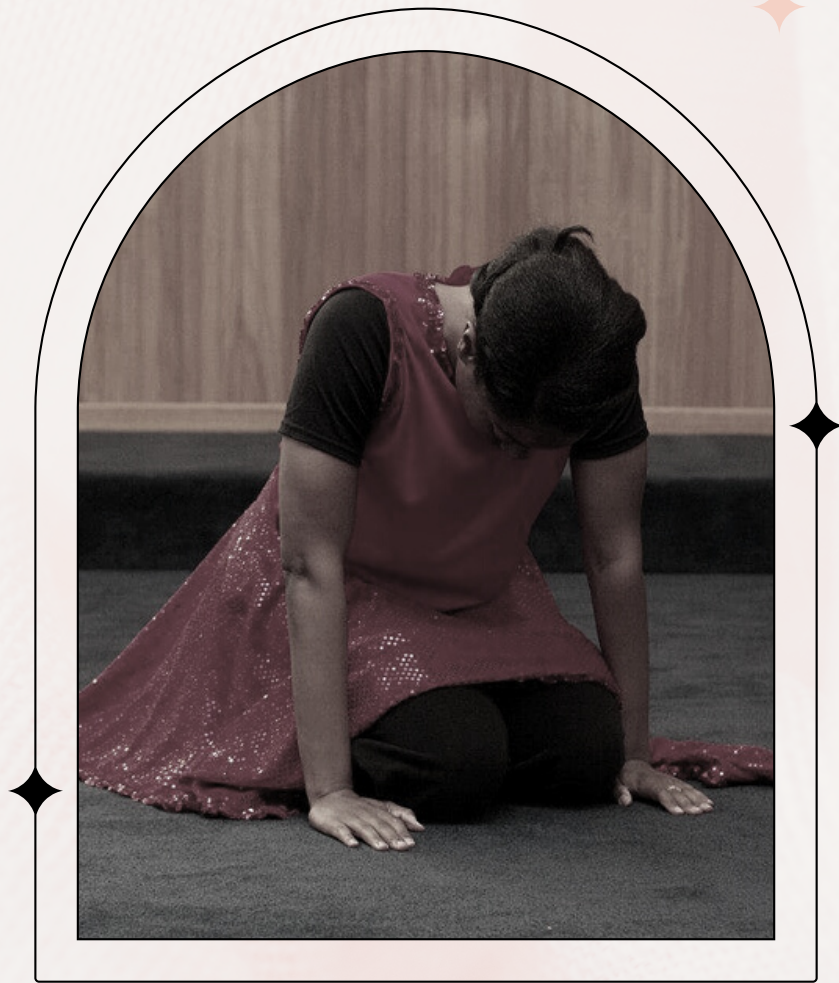
Do you Love the Lord?

Every facial expression is to worship the Lord.
Every choreographed movement is designed to worship the Lord.

John 4:23-24(ESV) “But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and truth.”

Where are the true worshippers who still believe in worshipping God in Spirit and in Truth?





True Worshipers

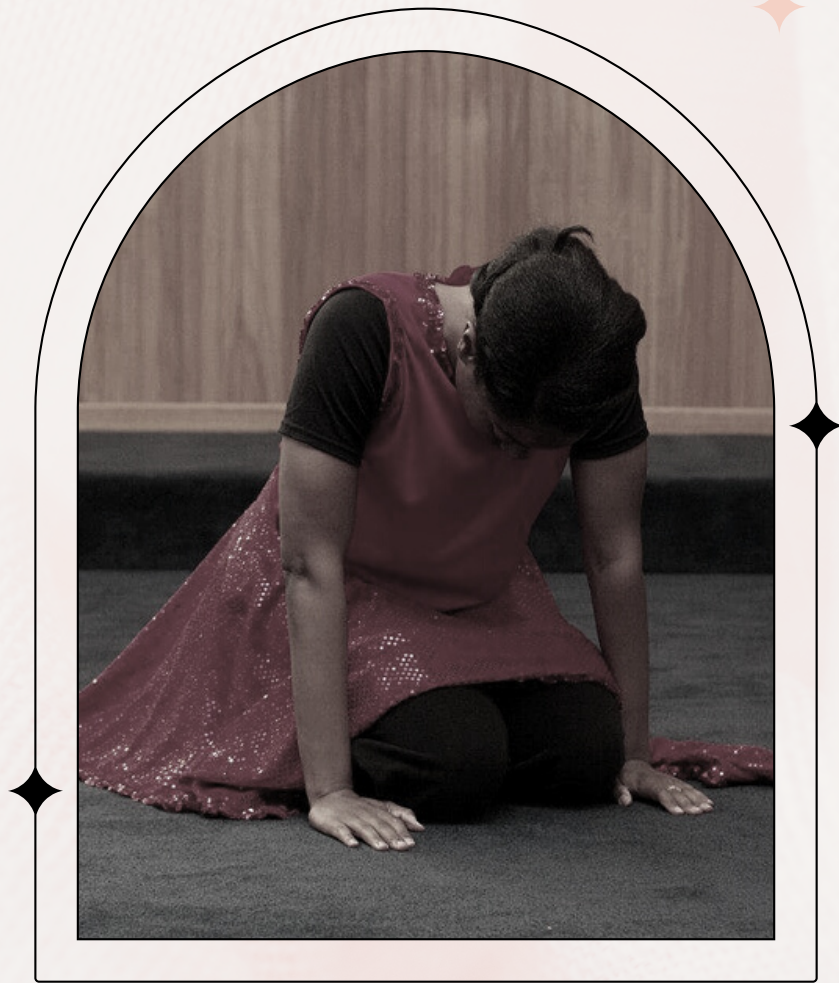
Where are the true worshippers who don't mind giving God glory whether people applaud you or not?

Where are the true worshippers who are conscious of what they say and how they act before and after ministering in dance?

True Worshipers don't hold grudges against congregations who don't respond to your worship.

True Worshipers leave their attitudes at the door before they worship.





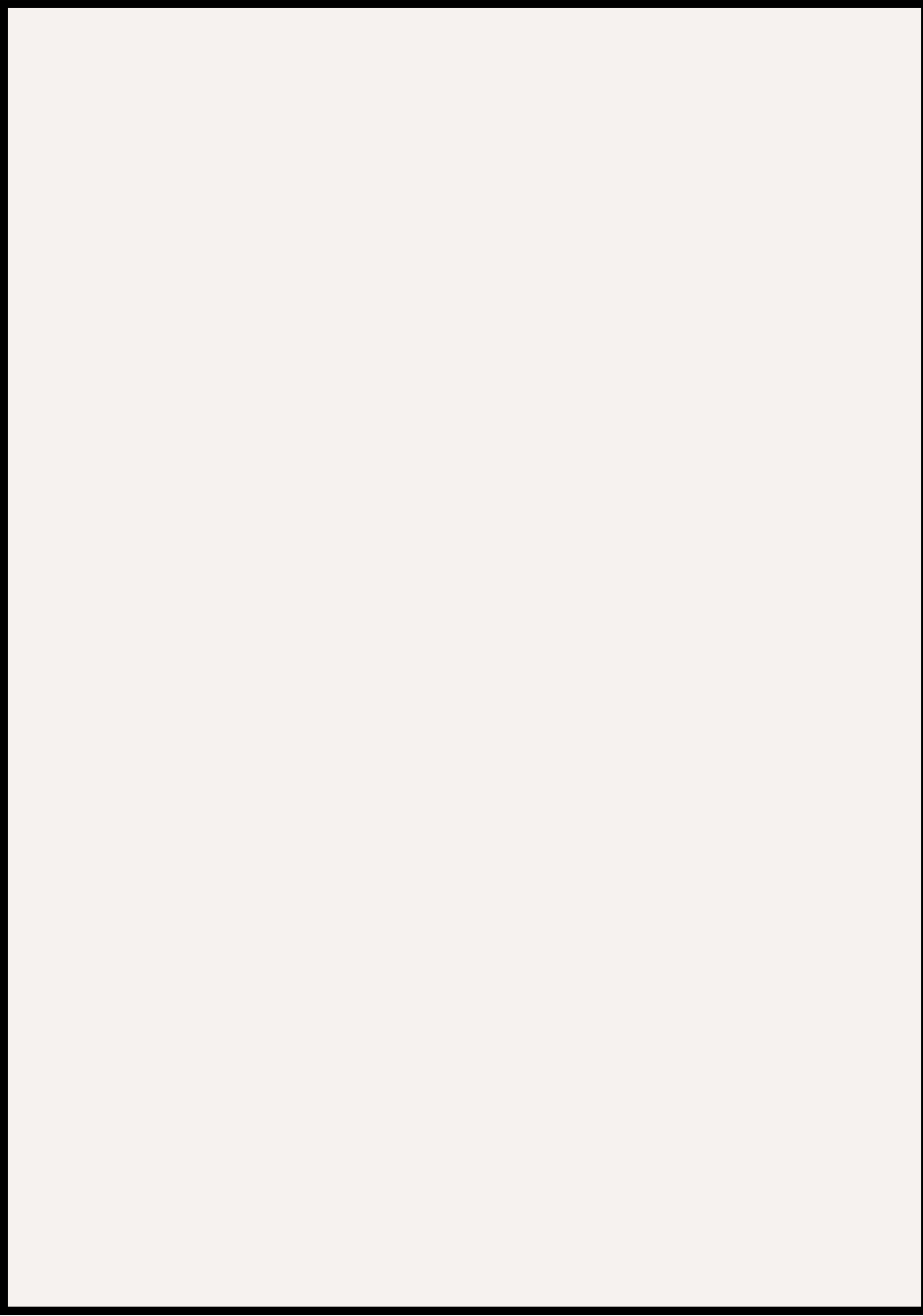
True Worshipers

True Worshipers are conscious of what they say and how they act before they worship.

If you want God to honor what you do then you have to remind yourself of the value of what you do and whom you do it for.

The question is, do you love the Lord enough to shape your heart in a way that is pleasing to God?





The Motives of a Dancer

David was an exceptional servant of the Lord. Not just because of his unquestionable devotion to God, but he also had a variety of ways he worshiped the Lord.

1. David knew how to worship the Lord audibly with his mouth.

Ps. 34:1 "*I will bless the Lord at all times, and His praise shall continually be in my mouth.*"

2. David knew how to worship God psychologically through poetry of words.

Ps. 23:2 "*He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.*"

3. David knew how to worship with his talents through music.

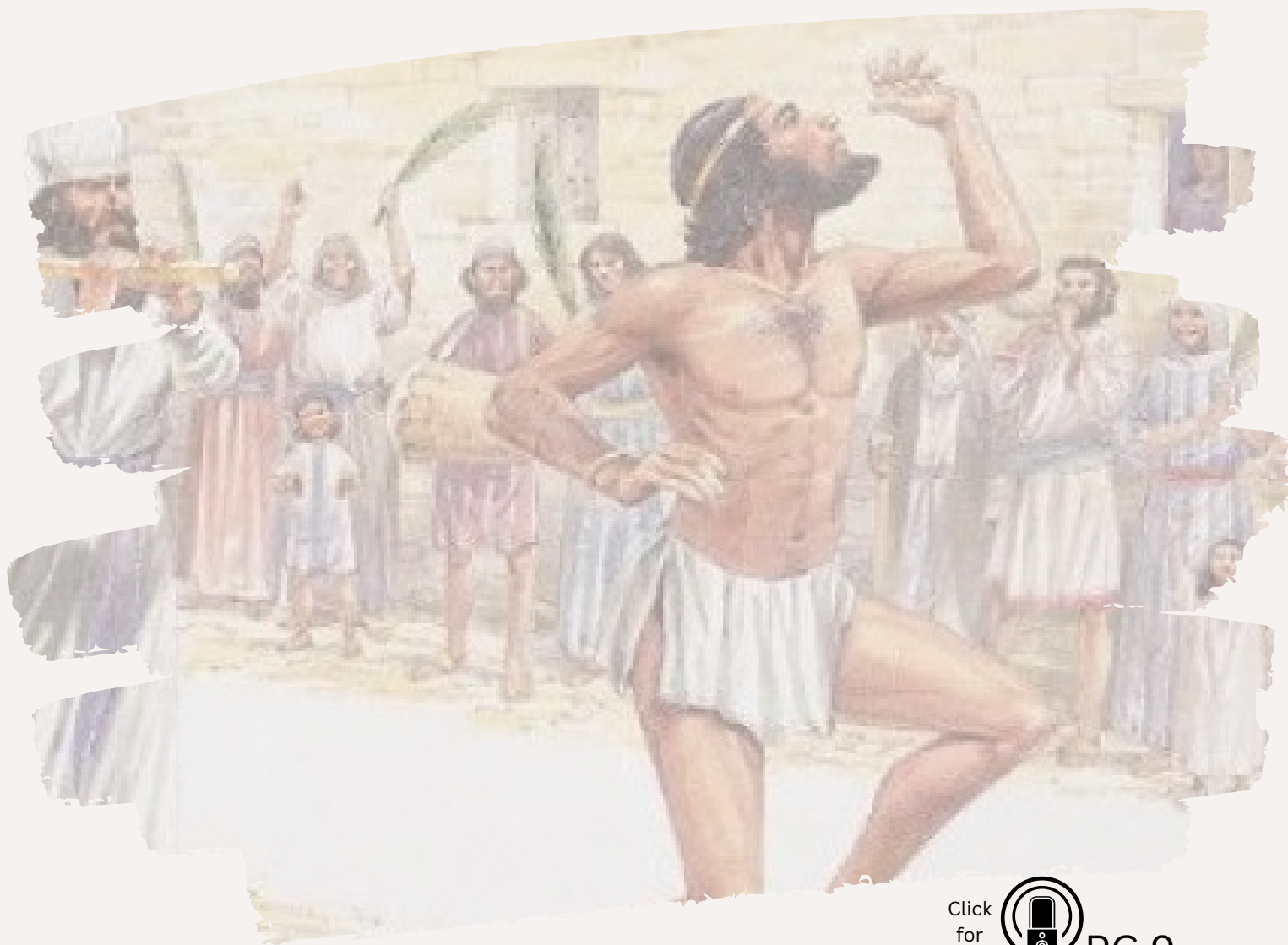
1 Samuel 16:13-23 He was skilled and anointed to minister through music to drive an evil spirit out of the King of Israel.

4. David also knew how to worship the Lord with his creativity through dance which we find him doing in 2 Samuel 6:14.

David wasn't fearful nor conditioned to worship God in only one way. Instead, he created opportunities to express his devotion to God in many ways.

However, we need to learn in 2 Samuel 6 that you can be ambitious with the right **motives**, but if you are not careful with the **methods** of choice, it can infect the intentions you have to please and worship the Lord.

We need to take time to consider not just our gifts, talents, and skills as dancers but we need to consider our motives as dancers as well. Behind every dancer, there is a heart. And if your heart's not in the right place, it doesn't matter what your feet, hands, or face is doing.



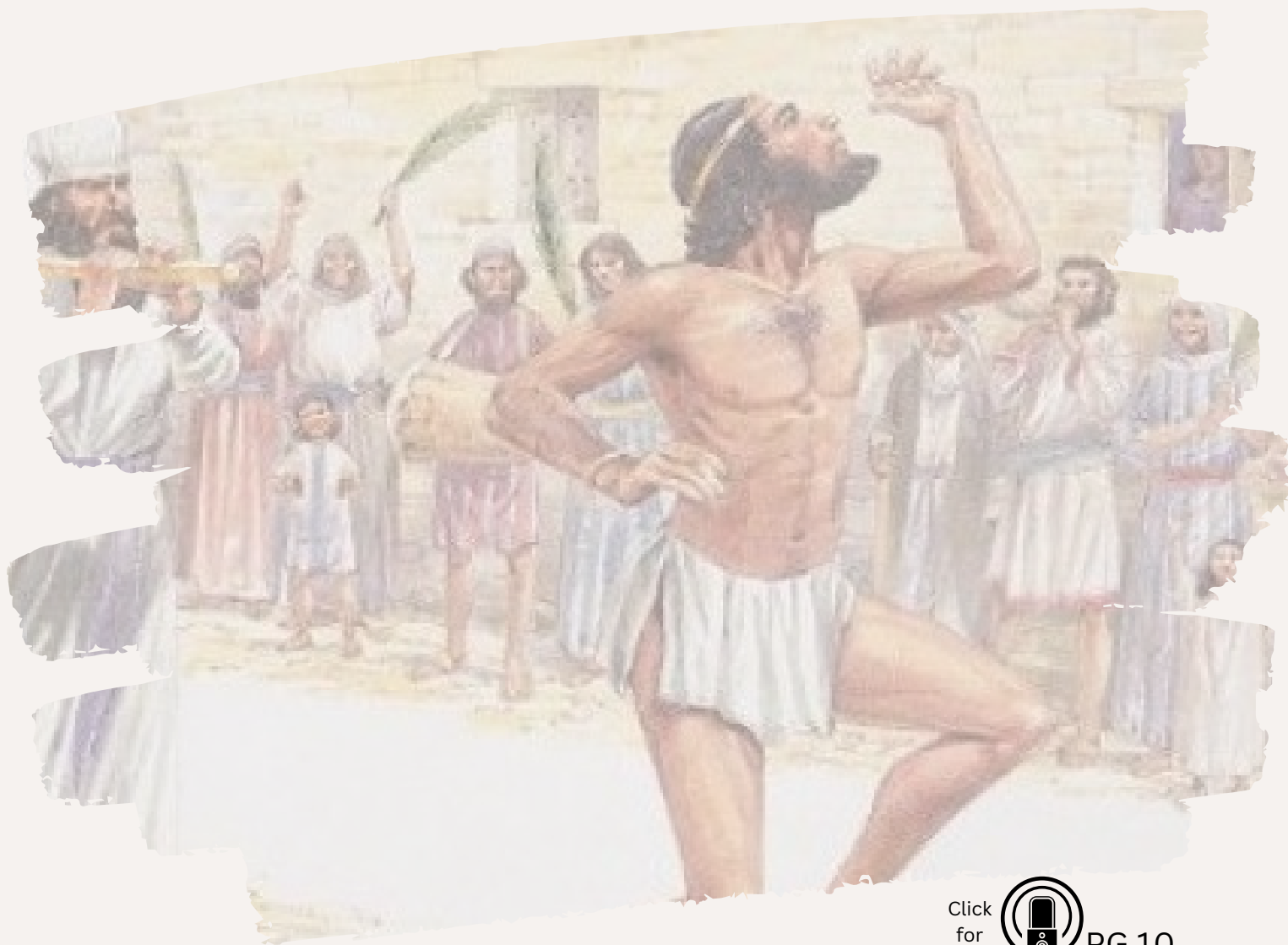
In 2 Samuel 6, we find David elevated as the king of Israel. The last king, Saul, was killed in battle, and the people voted David in officially.

Newly elected as king, David knew in his heart that the only way his reign as king would be successful was if the Lord went before him.

2 Samuel 6:2, "And David arose and went with all the people who were with him from Baale-Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the name of the Lord of hosts who sits enthroned."

Here we find a critical component that defines what motive liturgical dancers should have.

The Motive of a Dancer should be defined by how they want to bring in the presence of the Lord.



David was appointed the leader, and his first order of business was to bring back the presence of the Lord. So, he decides to bring back the Ark of the Covenant to his hometown, which brings us to a critical question.

WHAT ARE YOUR MOTIVES FOR DANCING FOR THE LORD?

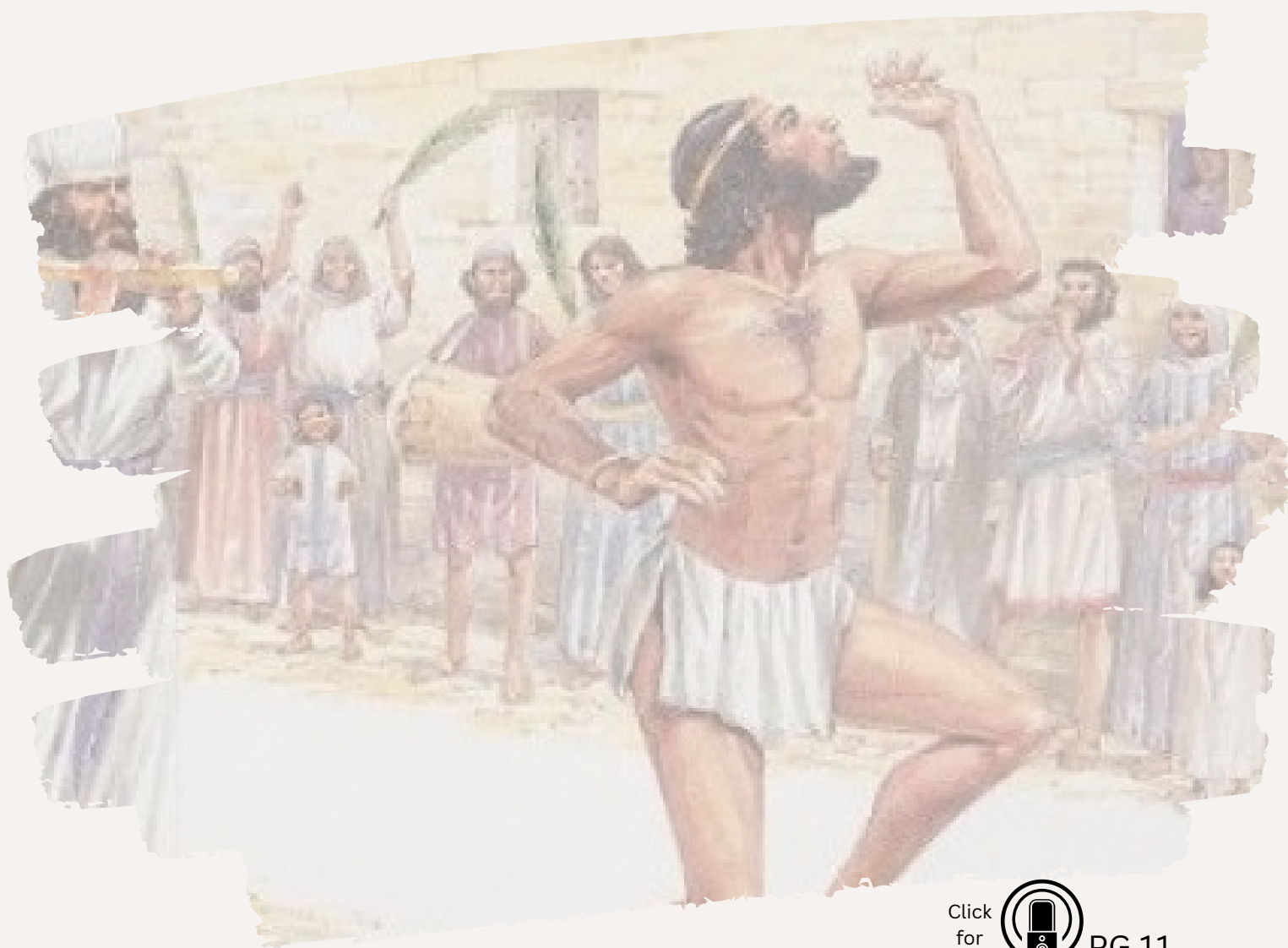
Is it to be seen?

Is it to be liked and loved?

Is it to be celebrated and acknowledged?

As the Lord's dancer, your motives should always be to bring in His Glory.

We're here for His Glory, dance for His Glory, move for His Glory, and cry for His Glory.

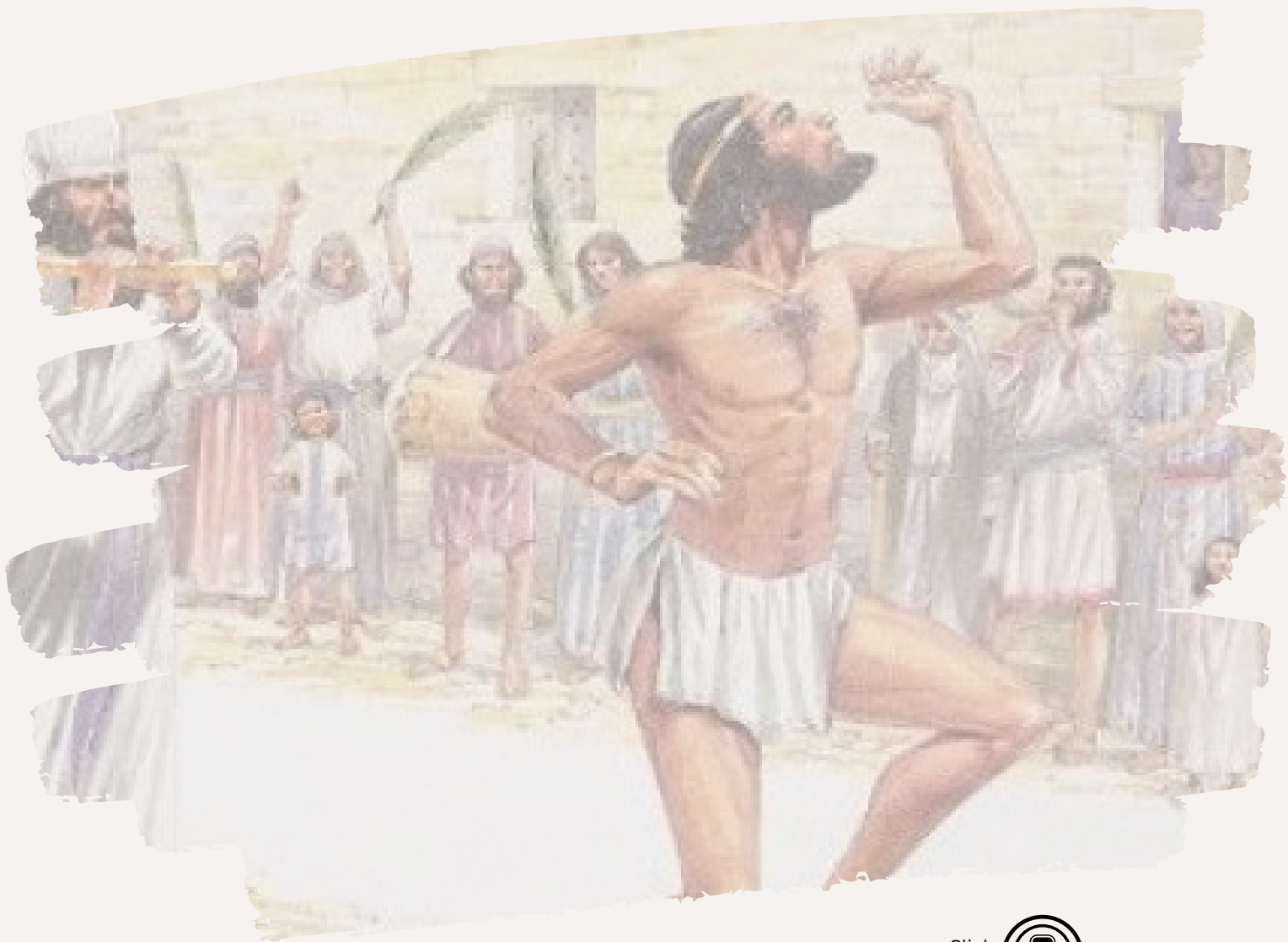


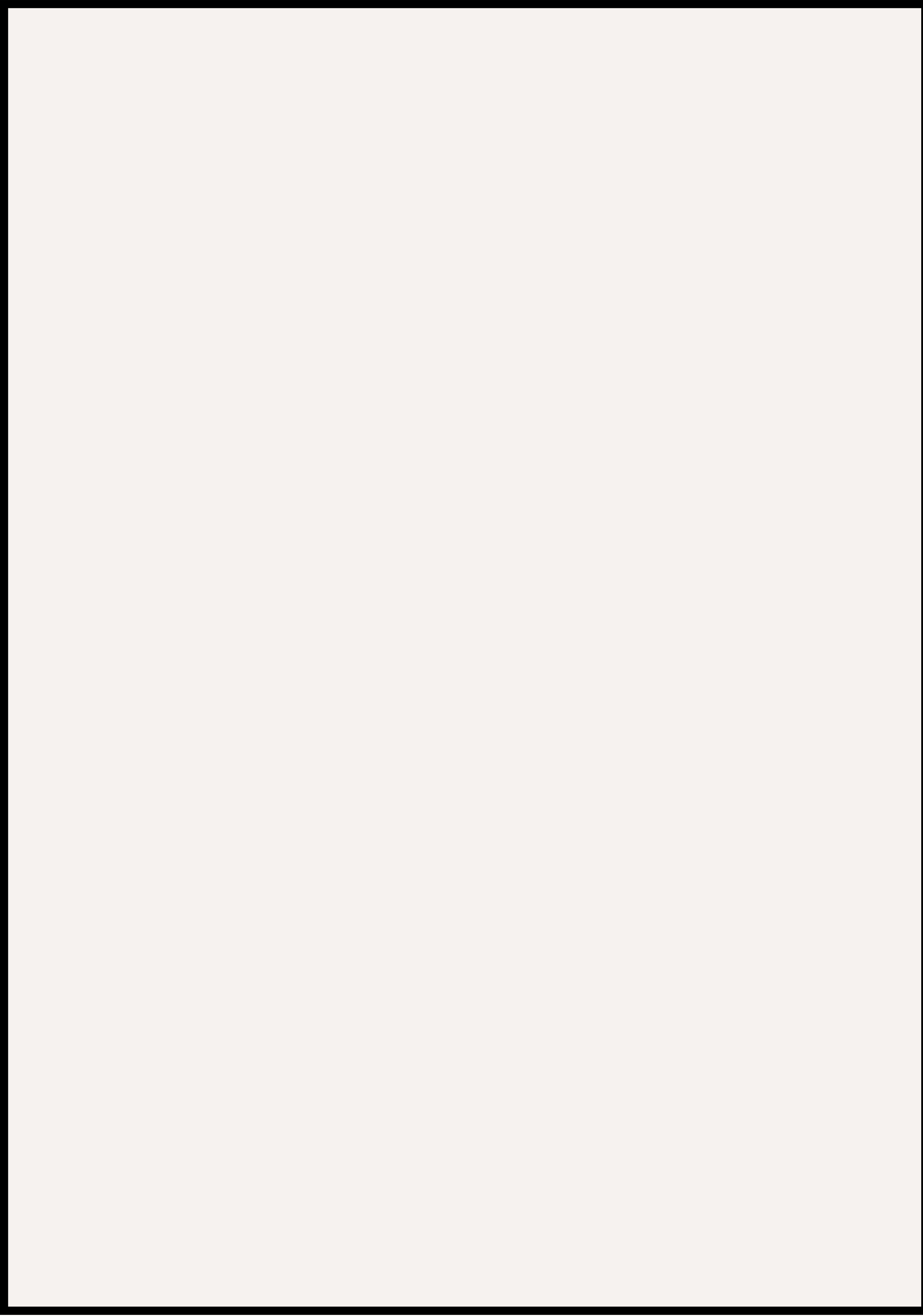
The dance ministry is **where your whole body should be a submitted vessel**. Your body must be felt by God, not just seen by men. If you're not dancing for His glory, I would suggest you're in the wrong place in ministry.

Your **purpose** should be as a movement minister to accompany the presence of the Lord.

Your **purpose** is to be a tool used to direct people to the Glory of God, where breakthrough, deliverance, and salvation can occur. But this all starts with the **motives** behind the dancer.

David aimed to restore the nation's devotion to God. He wanted the Ark of the covenant in a centralized location to solidify his goal. So he decides to bring the Ark home to Jerusalem.





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The Methods of a Dancer

2 Samuel 6:3 (ESV)

"And they carried the ark of God
on a new cart and brought it out
of the house of Abinadab..."

According to Exodus 25:13,14, God commanded Israel to make poles of wood, overlay them with gold, put the poles in rings on the sides of the Ark, and carry it from location to location.

However, we find that David and His camp use a different method to transport the Ark from where it was to their hometown. They decide to either speed up the transportation process or try a new approach to carry the representation of God's presence altogether.



David's ambition of bringing back the Ark was noble, but it seemed that his discipline slacked. David here neglects and disregards the importance of following the instructions of God in transportation and handling the Ark with care. In the transportation process, we later find David suffers a significant setback.

You see, my friends, sometimes **we can get so consumed with ambition that we adopt methods that were never qualified to carry the Glory of God.** If you are not careful, your lack of careful consideration can lead to devastating results. As the story continues, unforeseen circumstances cause the Ark during transportation to stumble and one man's sincere response to catch the ARK kindles God's anger, leading to his death.



So, you may be thinking, what does ambition have to do with Liturgical praise dance?

The heart can be tainted and infected when the dancer's heart is not in the right place.

Ex. An ambitious dancer may find themselves adopting methods of dance from carnal origins to implement in their liturgical dance expression. In 1 Samuel 5, one version suggests that when the Philistine army had the Ark in possession, they transported it from one location to another on a cart.

One commentary suggests that the Israelite people's response in transporting the Ark when it was in their possession reflects what the Philistines did. To indicate that the Israelites, like in many other instances in scripture, may have adopted their method of transportation.



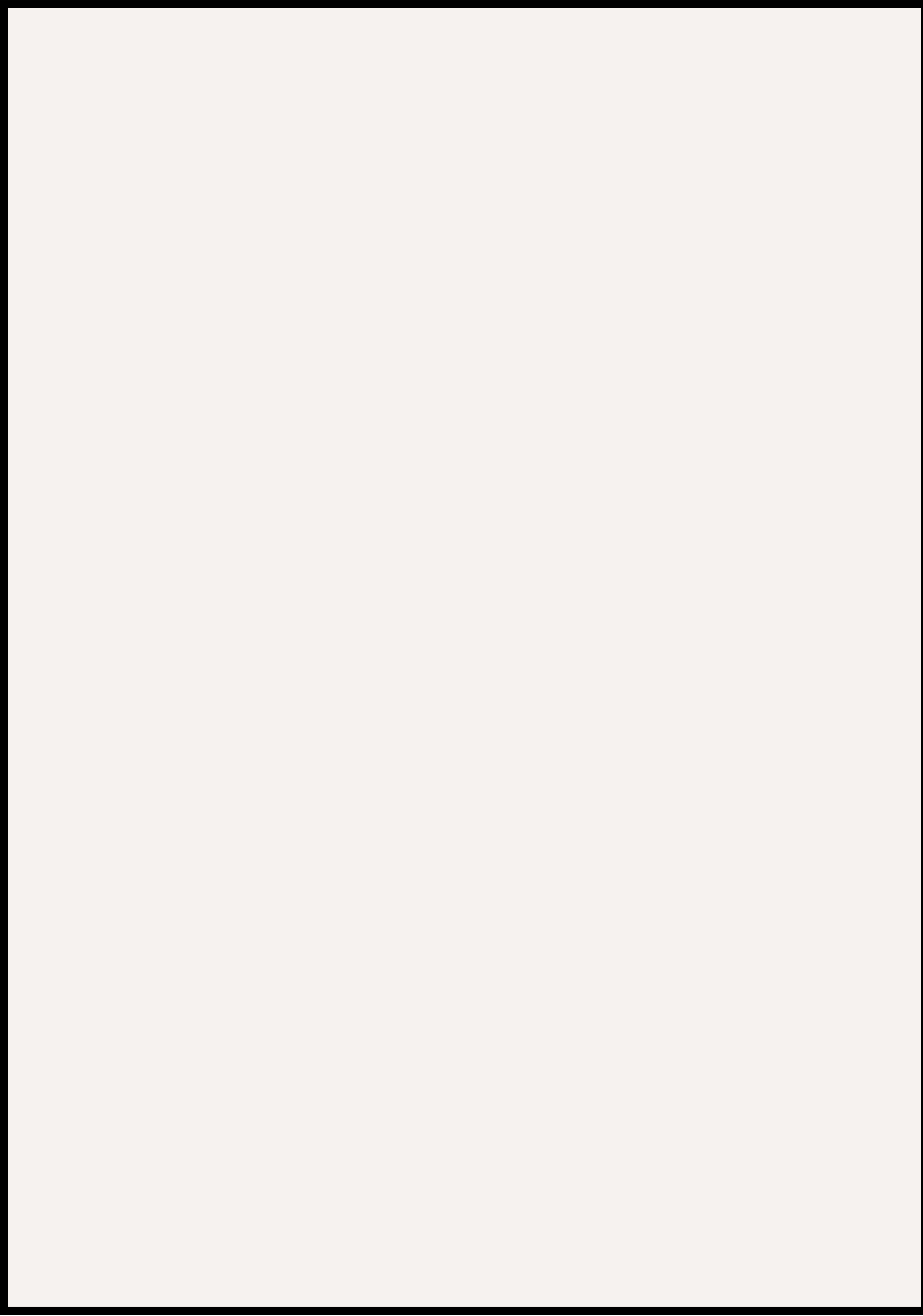
We have an issue when we emulate cultures with no connection with God merely because we don't know how to respond to spiritual matters.

Never allow pagan cultures to determine how you respond when it comes to carrying the Glory of God. There is a problem when liturgical dancers emulate and copy moves they saw in music videos and expect to create results that lead to God's glory.

I understand the need to learn new forms and fashions in dance but never allow the world to teach you more than the Holy Spirit.

I would suggest we must be careful in how we manage our methods when it comes to worshiping the Lord.







The Misery of a Dancer

1 Samuel 6:8-11 The Lord is unhappy with David and the Israelites on how they carried and managed the Ark of the Covenant. The Lord responds in anger by killing a man who unauthorized touched the Ark of the Covenant. In his response, David reacts in anger, for we can assume David felt as if his motives were pure. However, we learn that your motives are no good to God when **your methods disregard the majesty of God.**

I suggest that frequently while learning to keep our motives in check and considering acceptable practices to minister to the Lord, we can also find ourselves navigating through seasons where it may feel like **prolonged misery.**

I do believe many dancers have good motives. I even believe many dancers are disciplined with the methods they live out. But many of us, if we can be honest, have trouble navigating through moments or seasons of prolonged misery.

It is common for the dancer's heart to go through multiple experiences resulting in a roller coaster of emotions. It is crucial to learn how to manage your feelings **prior** to you ministering in dance before **God** and **man.**

We find David before dancing with all his strength is forced to navigate through a plethora of emotions.

1. His ambition led to excitement (2 Samuel 6:5)
2. God's response led to his anger. (2 Samuel 6:8,9)
3. David's failure led to fear and reluctance. (2 Samuel 6:9,10)

So all in one day, David finds himself angry with God's response in killing Uzzah. David navigates from anger to fear, and in the combination of anger and fear, David then struggles with being reluctant, even wanting to bring the Ark of God back to Jerusalem.

This reluctance to bring in the Ark is symbolic of David no longer wanting to bring the presence of the Lord to his hometown because he wasn't confident in how the Lord would respond to him or his people.



Let me ask you, have you ever had to navigate through wayward emotions due to some situations, circumstances, or unforeseen conditions in your life?

How did it make you feel?

Did it draw you to God, or did it push you away from God?

It's unfortunate how misery can have an uneasy effect on the heart of a dancer, causing you to create a distance between you and God. Any distance created with God infects the heart of a dancer. Purpose and reason are lost in the fog when forced to navigate through seasons of misery and dismay.

Consider how David's negligence kindles the anger of God, resulting in a man's death. David may have assumed the Lord didn't want him to move the Ark of God when the real problem **wasn't David's motives** but it was **with his methods**.

A lesson we must learn is how your **methods** can cause God to disregard your **motives**.



Here is a point I need you to take to heart, just because you're forced to navigate through misery shouldn't dictate how you mismanage your devotion to God.

We learn David's failed method of transporting the Ark wasn't meant to say David was a failure. It just meant his methods did not line up with God's majesty.

Some of you may have experienced quitting the dance ministry prematurely because you assumed your failure in a ministry moment meant God fired you.

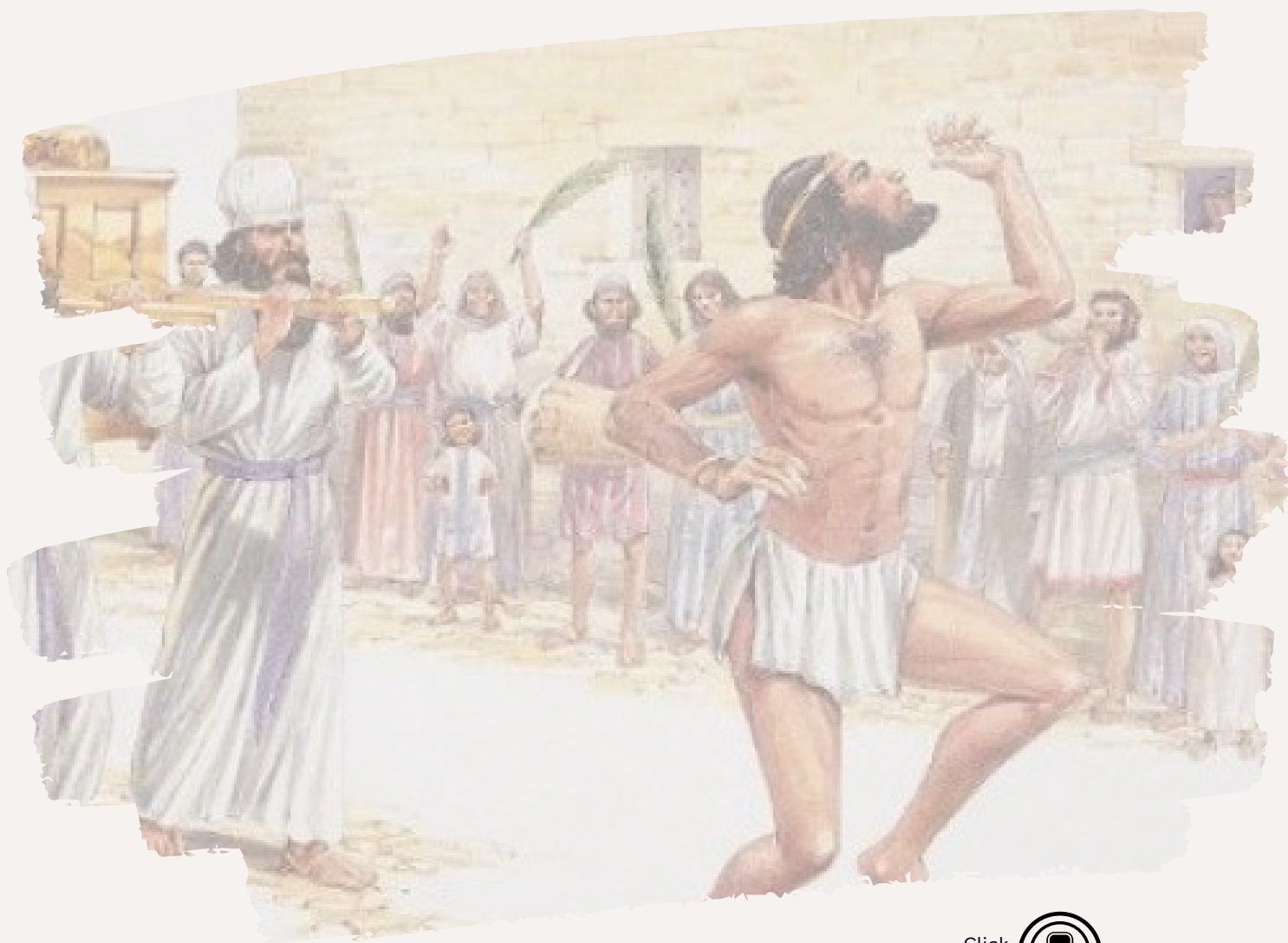
NO! What if God was trying to teach you that while your motives are honorable, check your methods? The Bible says (Heb. 12:6) God chastises those He loves. Don't allow your misery to make you think you are no longer valuable as a minister in dance.



Every idea you have shouldn't be used to carry God's presence. Ask the Lord for His approval if you need to know if it's ok to use specific methods. Also, you should have a **community of accountability** to ensure your plans are beneficial. Lastly, you should have a **mentor** who can provide an unbiased opinion on what should or shouldn't be used in your presentation.

The beautiful thing about misery is that it doesn't last forever. (Ps. 30:5) For weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning. While David navigates through a season of misery, he eventually finds himself embracing the **ministry of a dancer**.

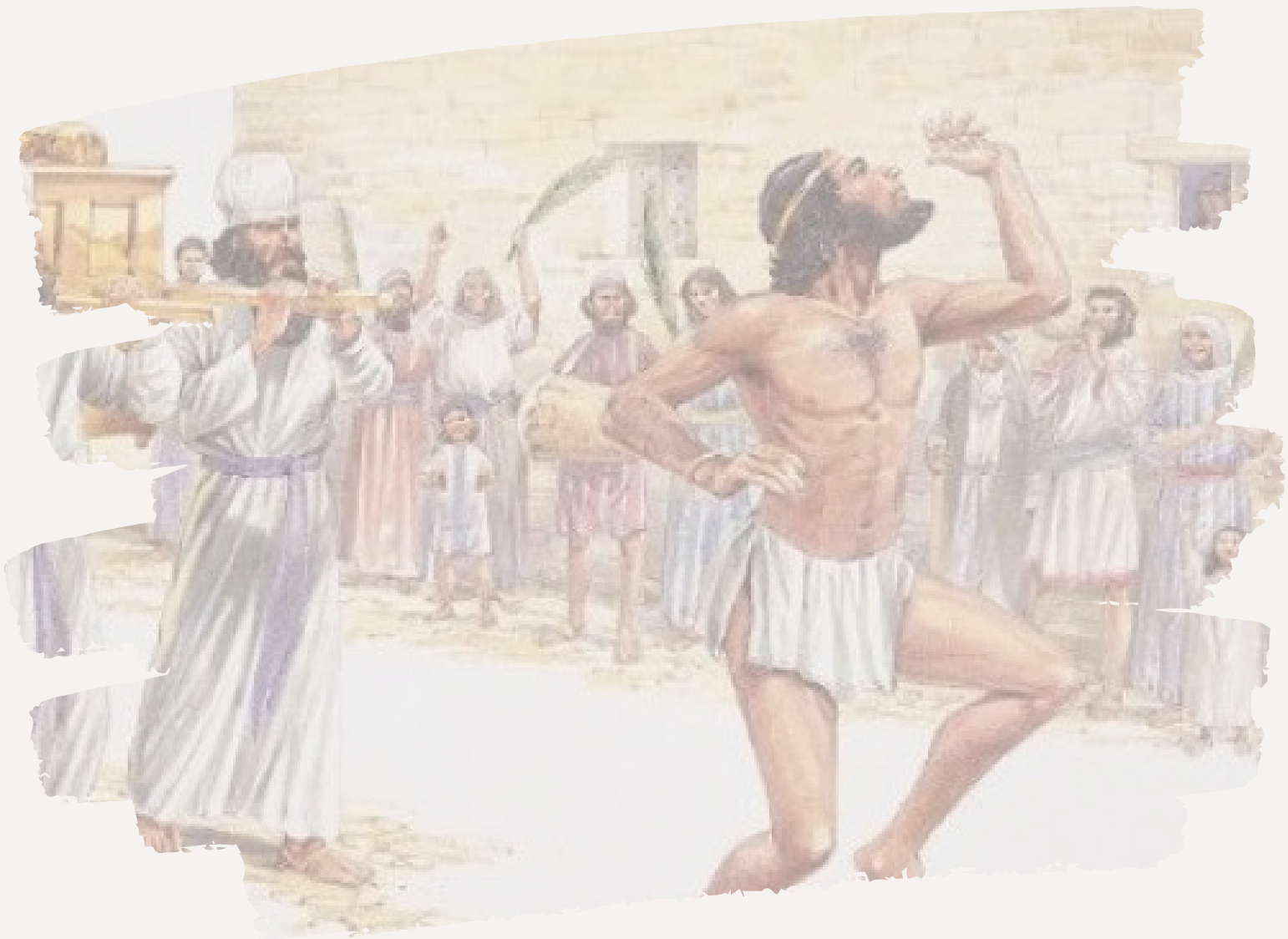
2 Sam. 6:13 After returning to where they had left the ARK, they correctly picked up the ARK and proceeded to take it to Jerusalem, where we see David in Vs. 14 dancing with all his might.

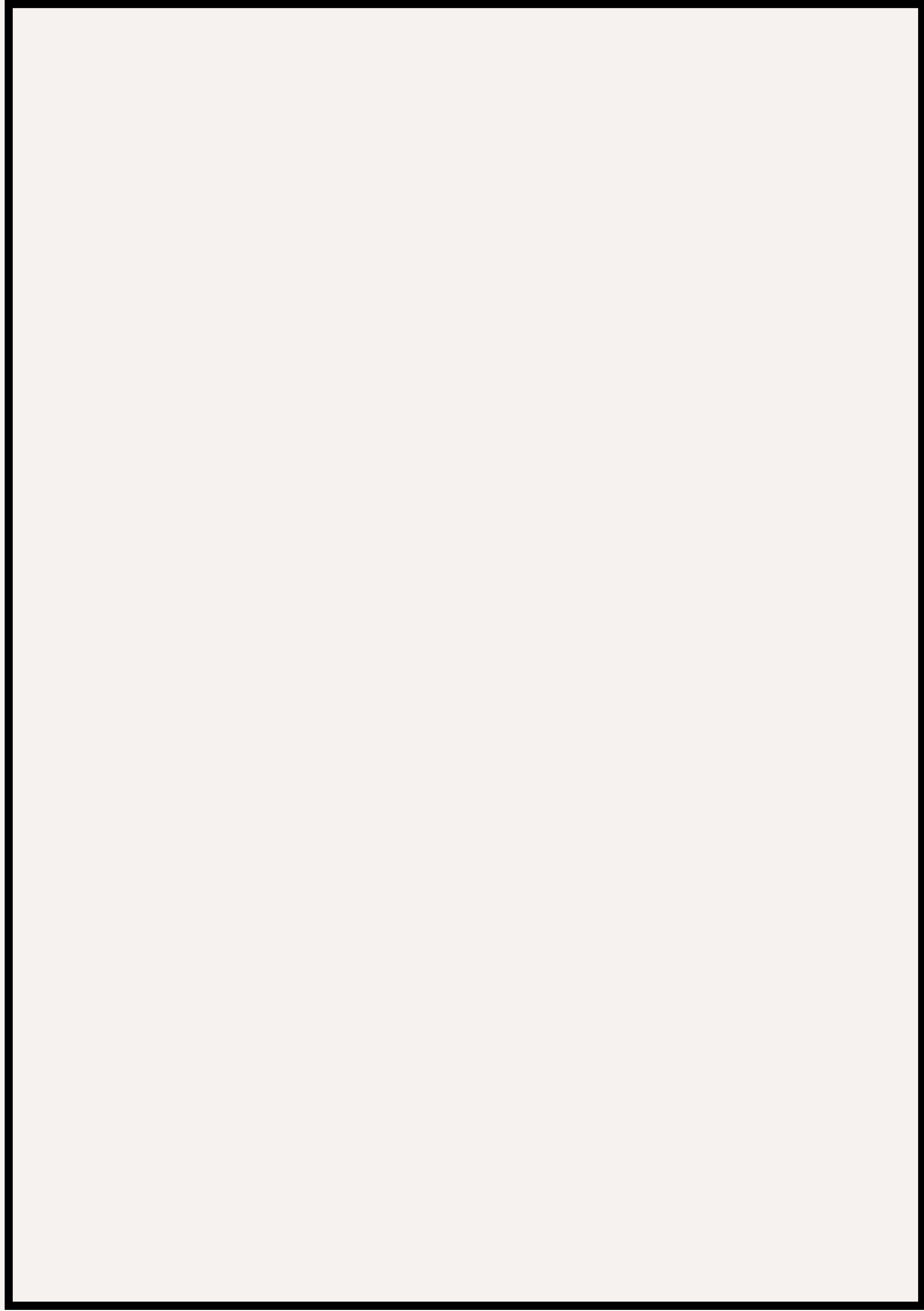


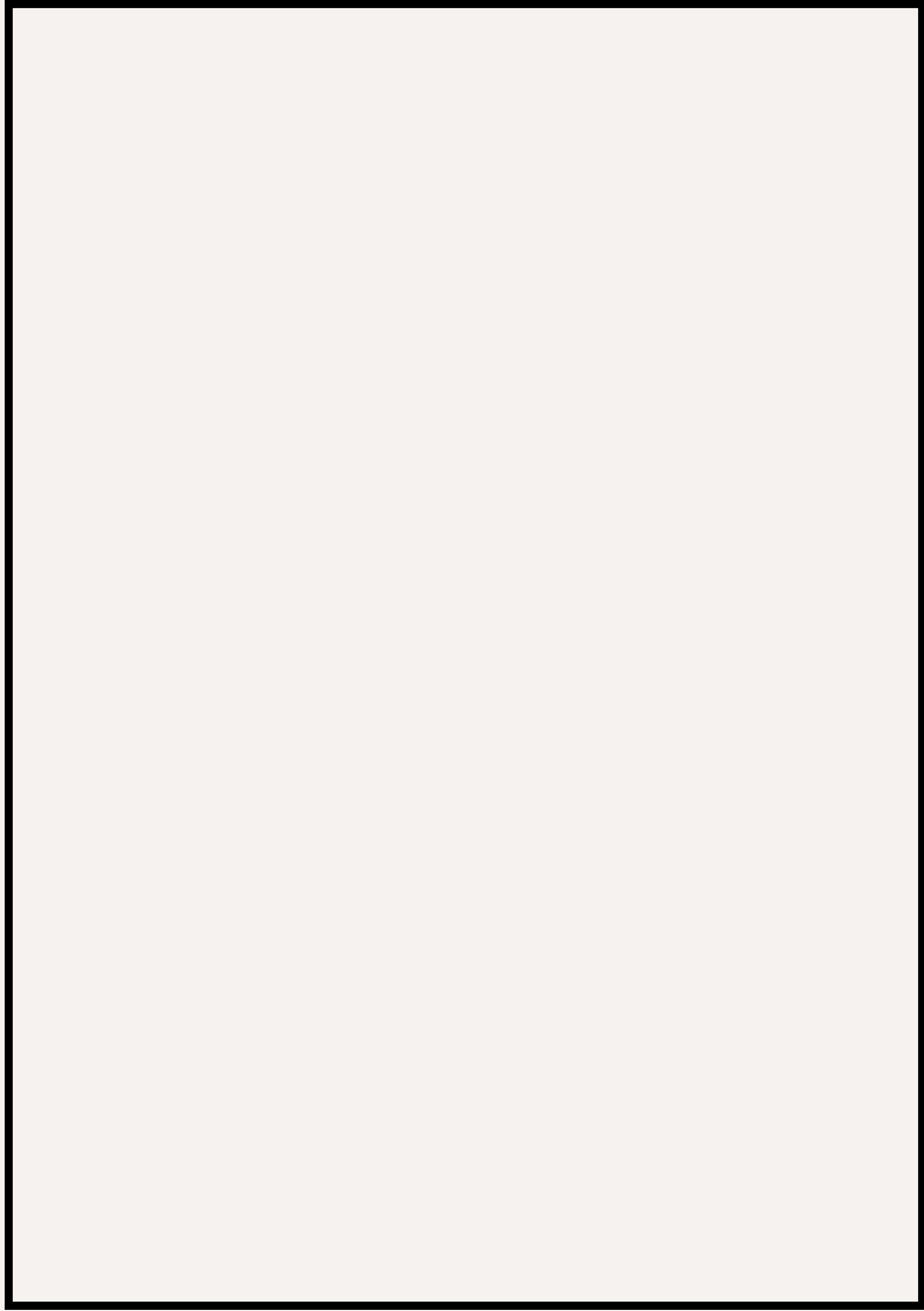
Regarding the heart, make sure you consider your **motives** and be careful to check your **methods**.

Be aware that all ministers navigate through **misery**, but endurance will bring you around to embrace new **ministry opportunities**. Your heart is the catalyst to all these moments in your call as a minister in dance.

While the heart is the seat of your will and emotions, let us navigate how your mind is the vehicle that manages your thoughts and intentions as a minister in dance.



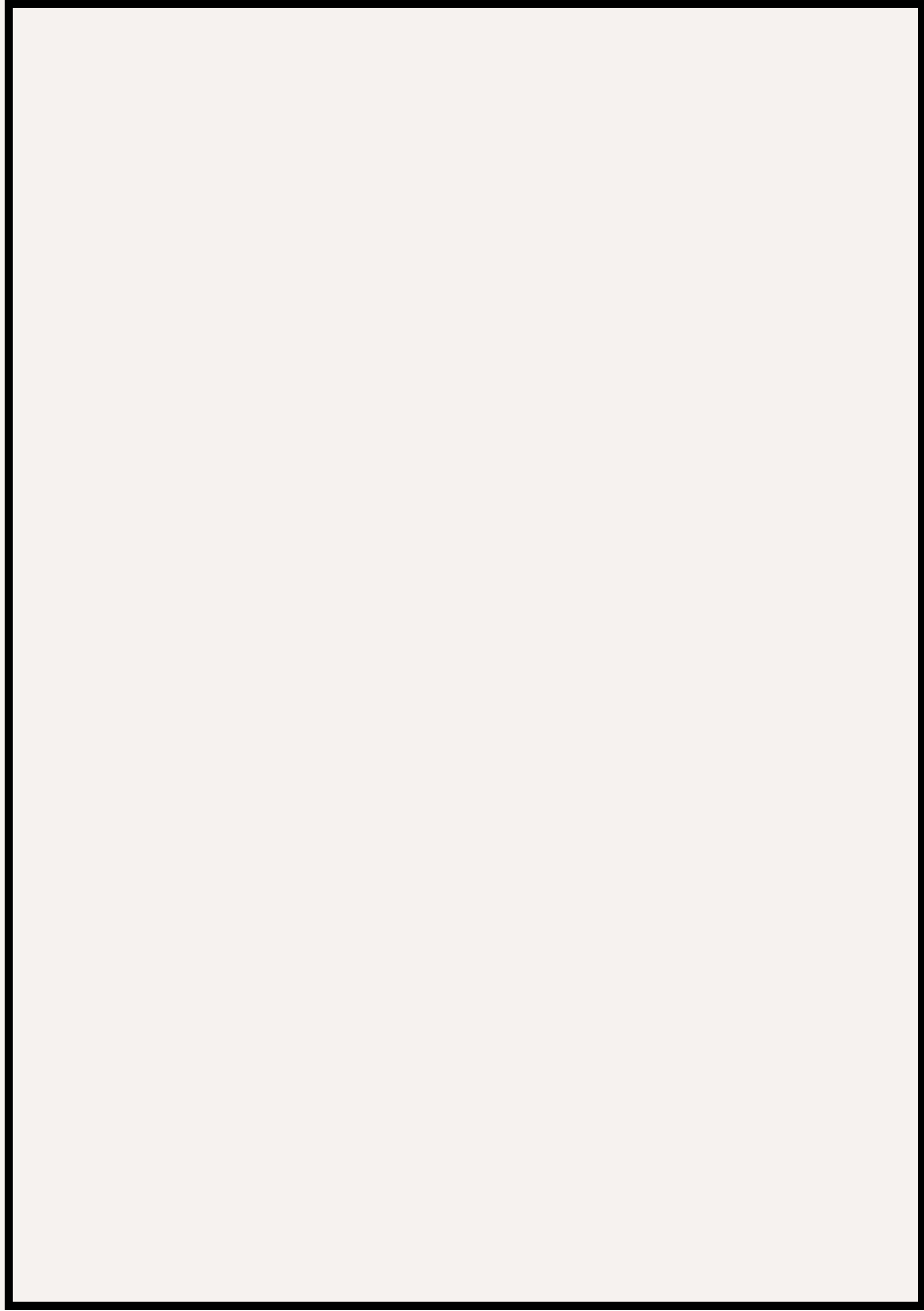






PART II
THE MIND OF A
DANCER

You need the right mindset to do this ministry
effectively.



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The Block of Concern

With every heart comes a mind. You are responsible not just for managing your heart posture but also for how you manage your mindset.

The thoughts you think determine the acts you live out, which is why we need the right mindset to do this ministry effectively.

I would encourage you to include this perspective in your prayer: **Lord, give me the right attitude to minister effectively in dance.** This perspective in prayer can help us direct our thoughts in pleasing God as we steward our ministry calling.

Let us consider Nehemiah as we highlight the mind of a dancer.





There is still space for God to help you to build again!

I would suggest to you that there are four building blocks we need as effective servant leaders with the right mindset.

- **The Block of Concern**
- **The Block of Compassion**
- **The Block of Conviction**
- **The Block of Conception**

Nehemiah 1:1-3 Israel is in a state of discouragement and disarray because their hometown, which represented their safe haven and security, was burned by fire.

It was destroyed by enemy nations.

The Israelites were scattered and exiled without a home to go back to. However, the grace of God is found in the fact that while the city was gone, the city's foundation remained intact.

This means that even though what used to be was no longer there, they could still use the foundation that remained to build again. I believe there are times in life when **deconstruction proceeds reconstruction.**

Sometimes, the Lord deconstructs you only to create an opportunity to put you back together again.

My brother and my sister, I want you to be encouraged; while navigating through deconstruction can be disheartening, find strength in the truth that **THERE IS STILL SPACE FOR GOD TO HELP YOU TO BUILD AGAIN!**



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The Bible says Nehemiah accepts the call to rebuild and teaches us four building blocks we should consider to be influential builders.

Applying these four building blocks can help you significantly impact the lives of those you are assigned to.

1. THE BUILDING BLOCK OF **CONCERN**.

Reconstruction often hinges on the weight of your **concern** to see actual change occur in the lives of others..

Nehemiah 1:1,2 The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace, that Hanani, one of my bretheren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.



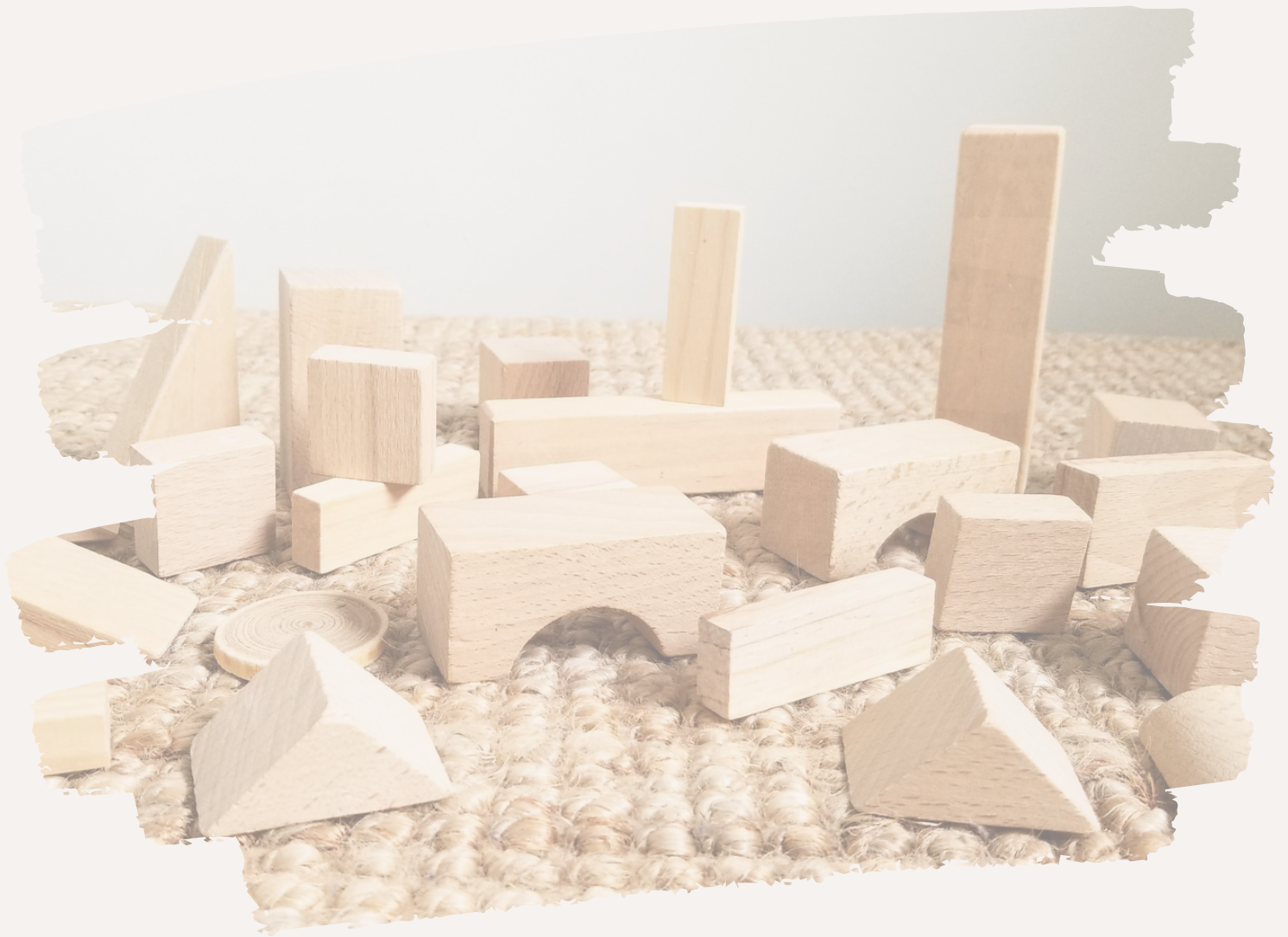
How concerned are you with those you minister to?

Let me ask you, as a ministry dancer is your prayer only that you hope that the audience enjoys your presentation? Or is there a genuine concern for those you minister to?

Consider Nehemiah, a native of Jerusalem known to have found a life of favor and grace in his job after being exiled. However, in light of His new life serving as a valued cupbearer to a king, Nehemiah found it necessary to exercise concern for the state and well-being of his hometown and the people who represented his history.

We should consider the mind and heart of Nehemiah. Don't just pray to the Lord to use you. Pray the Lord gives you **genuine concern** so that you can empathize and sympathize with those you are assigned to throughout your ministry.





Be careful; that you don't find yourself getting lost in the narratives of, *"Oh, my daughter really enjoyed you."* *"Oh, my son was inspired by your dance."* *"Oh, that was so nice; how long have you been dancing?"*

As a ministry dancer, it's ok to be encouraged by praise, but their enjoyment should not determine your **motives** or **reason** for dancing. Your dance should lead people to experience God in a significant way. Your dance should draw people to believe that the Lord can heal, set free and deliver them from any state or condition they suffer from.

People will enjoy your gift, but the strength of your gift **should not conclude with enjoyment**. It should draw others to some **impartation** and **empowerment**. But it all stems from your concern for their well-being.



2. THE BUILDING BLOCK OF **COMPASSION**.

Reconstruction also hinges on the weight of your **compassion** to hope and trust God to bring a change to others.

Nehemiah 1:4 says, "When I heard this, I sat down and **cried, mourning** for many days while I fasted and prayed in the presence of the God of Heaven."

Is it possible you've been dancing so long that you no longer have compassion for those you minister to?

This may or may not apply to you but has your tenure in dance ministry made you feel numb toward the people you are called to minister to?

If so, how did you get so cold?

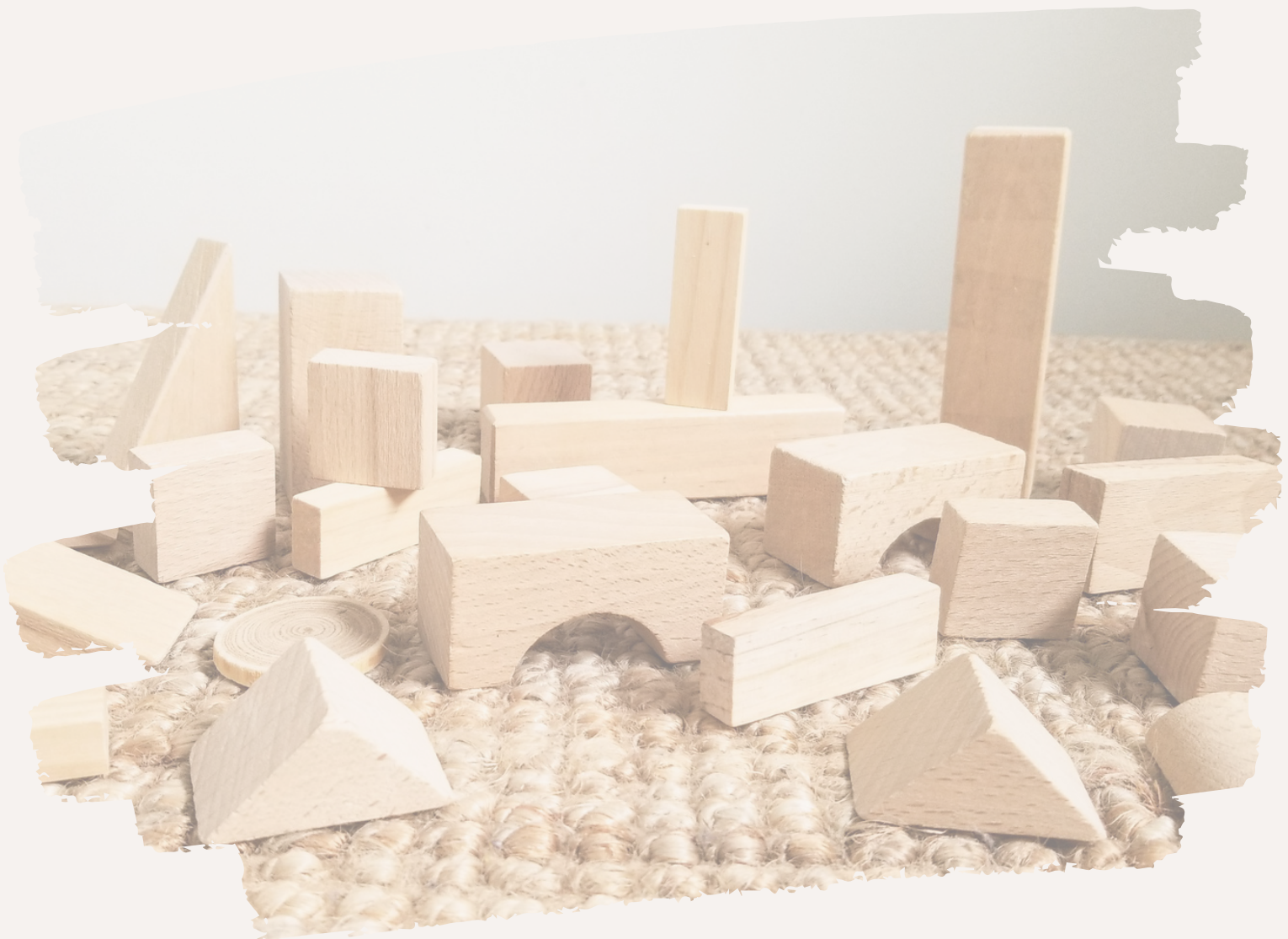
When did ministry become just a performance?

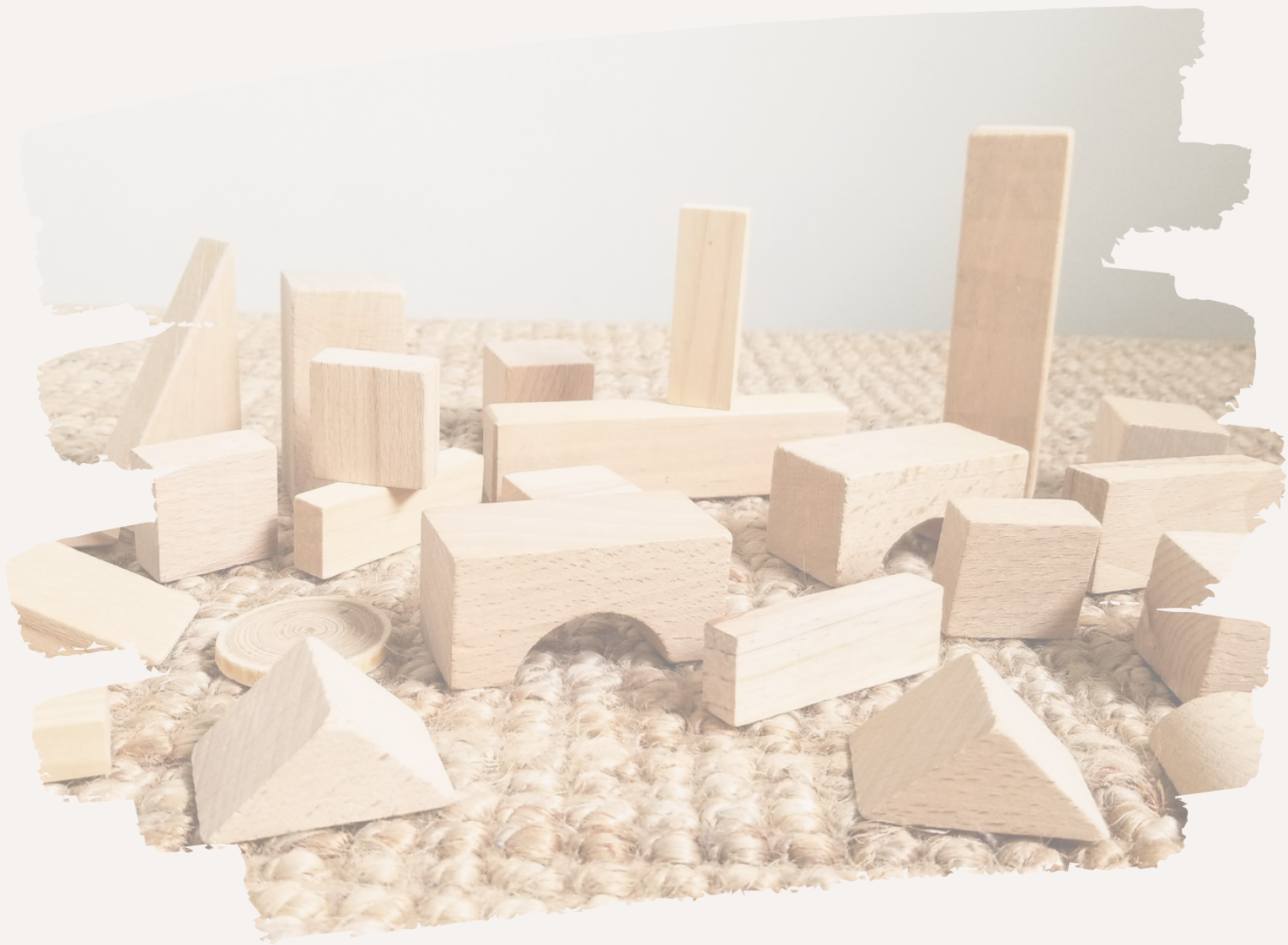
Has your heart grown so cold that when you hear about the misery of others, it doesn't elicit a response?



Your compassion for others **should fuel your ministry in dance.** We should dance with all our might, believing that our energy will soften the hardened hearts and minds of those who need a touch from God.

When Jesus was moved with compassion, He cried, healed, and fed. **How does your sympathy draw you to respond to others?** I pray that this moment of conviction draws you to include in your prayer not for people to enjoy your presentation but ask God to give you the concern and compassion to minister effectively to those who will be watching, seeing, and observing you minister in and through dance.





3. THE BUILDING BLOCK OF **CONVICTION**.

Nehemiah 2:7 "...**we have acted very corruptly against you** and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, and the rules that you commanded your servant Moses."

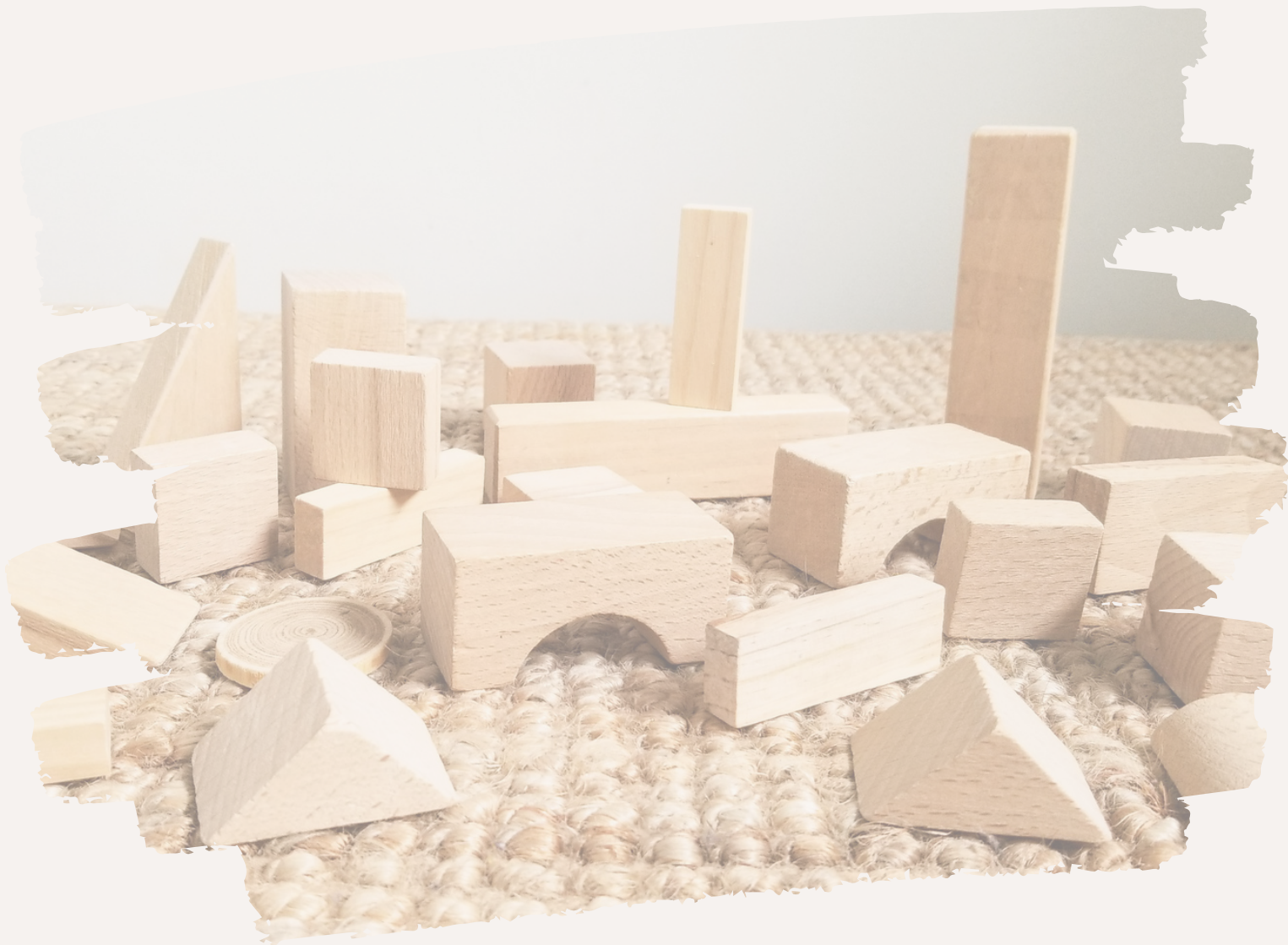
Reconstruction often hinges on the weight of your **conviction** not to blame others for misfortune but to include yourself in the condition.

Let's be honest; we are a scapegoat generation often looking for someone to blame why things are the way they are:

- Haters
- Family
- Entitled Christians
- Leaders



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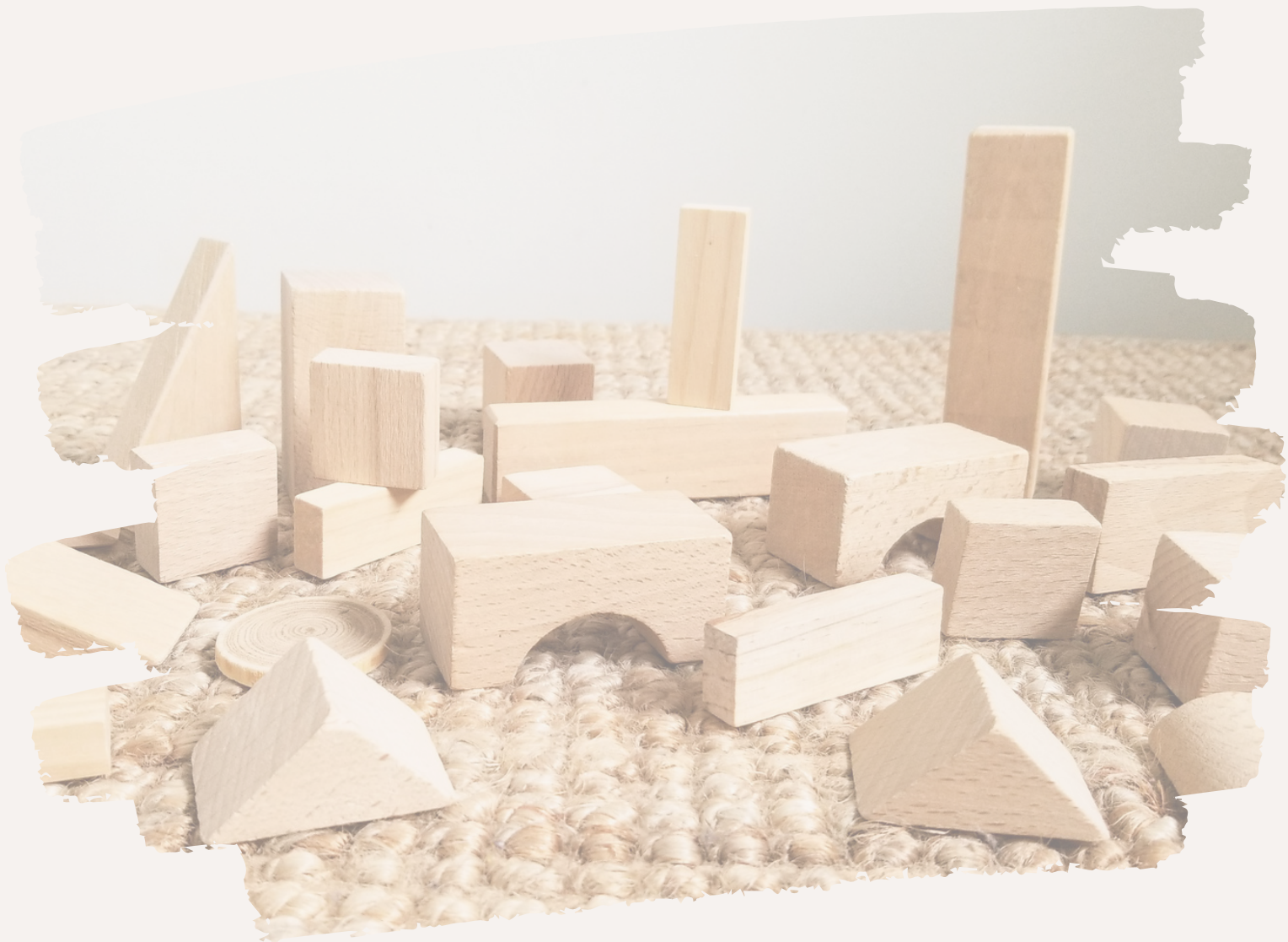


But Nehemiah's compassion drew him to seek God's face, and his prayer was one of **accountability** and **responsibility**.

Nehemiah 1:6(ISV) "please turn your attention to observe and listen to the prayer of your servant today that I am presenting to you day and night on behalf of your servants, the Israelis. I confess the sins that we Israelis have committed against you. Both I and my father's house have sinned."

Concern and **Compassion** should draw you to **Conviction**. What this generation needs is an updated dose of conviction. May the Lord strengthen our convictions to respond with humility and meekness.





Condemnation is not the same as conviction. Romans 8:1 says "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus."

The Lord does not find pleasure in your condemnation. He doesn't want you to drown feeling condemned for what you've done or how you have conducted yourself. But your love for God and your ability to see His grace and mercy in your life should draw a conviction to make the necessary choices to present to God what He deserves and desires from you.

What sacrifices are you willing to make to ensure your convictions are strong enough to save your life?

If you're not careful, you can lose the battle against the flesh before and after ministering in dance because your convictions have lost the power to keep you focused.



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4. THE BUILDING BLOCK OF **CONCEPTION**.

Nehemiah 1:11(ISV) "And now, Lord, I ask you to listen to the prayer of your servant and to the prayers of your servants who delight in revering your Name. I ask you; please prosper your servant today by granting him to receive favor from this man. Now I was the king's senior security advisor."

Nehemiah prayed for favor with the king he worked for because, in his prayer, he had already **conceived** a strategy and planned to address the conditions of his hometown.

This cannot be the day where you depend on others to come up with fresh ideas to minister to this generation using the unique vehicle of dance.

What if the Lord wants to use you to **create new strategies** to serve and minister to the people you are assigned to?





What ideas can you come up with?

- Dance routines
- Outreach ideas
- Prayers
- Innovative Dance gatherings
- Dance Think Tanks
- Dance Accountability Systems
- Dance Soul Care
- Where to research new music or new dance ministry opportunities.

All these conceived ideas should stem from your Concerns, Compassions, and Convictions.

May this generation of ministry dancers become the most COMPASSIONATE, CONCERNED, and INNOVATIVE servant leaders who spend their time praying through their convictions and **strategies** on how to minister to those fighting abuse and oppression.

Strategies on how to minister to those fighting suicide and low self-esteem.

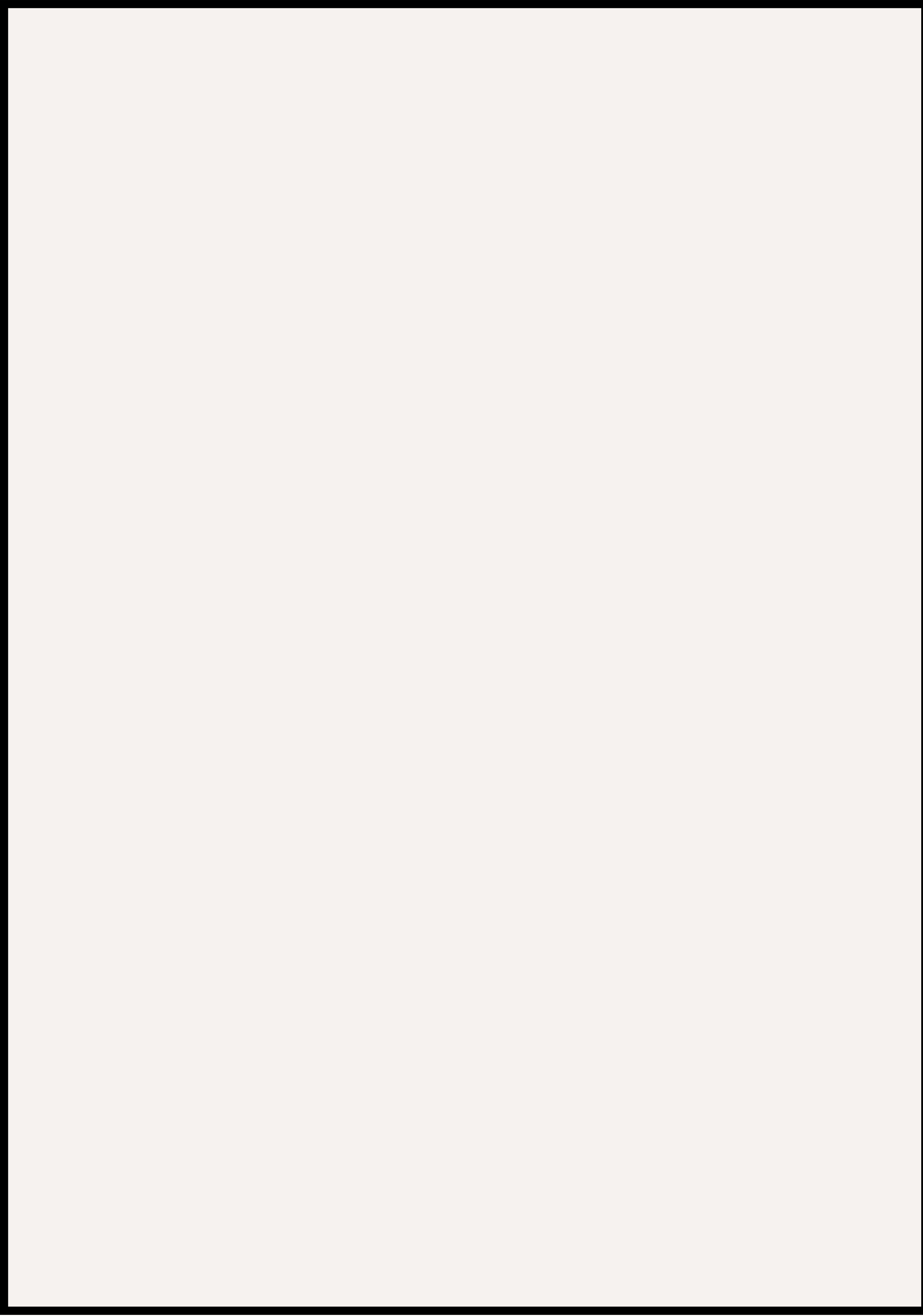
Strategies on how to minister to those dealing with unhealthy weight gain and mental health issues and matters.

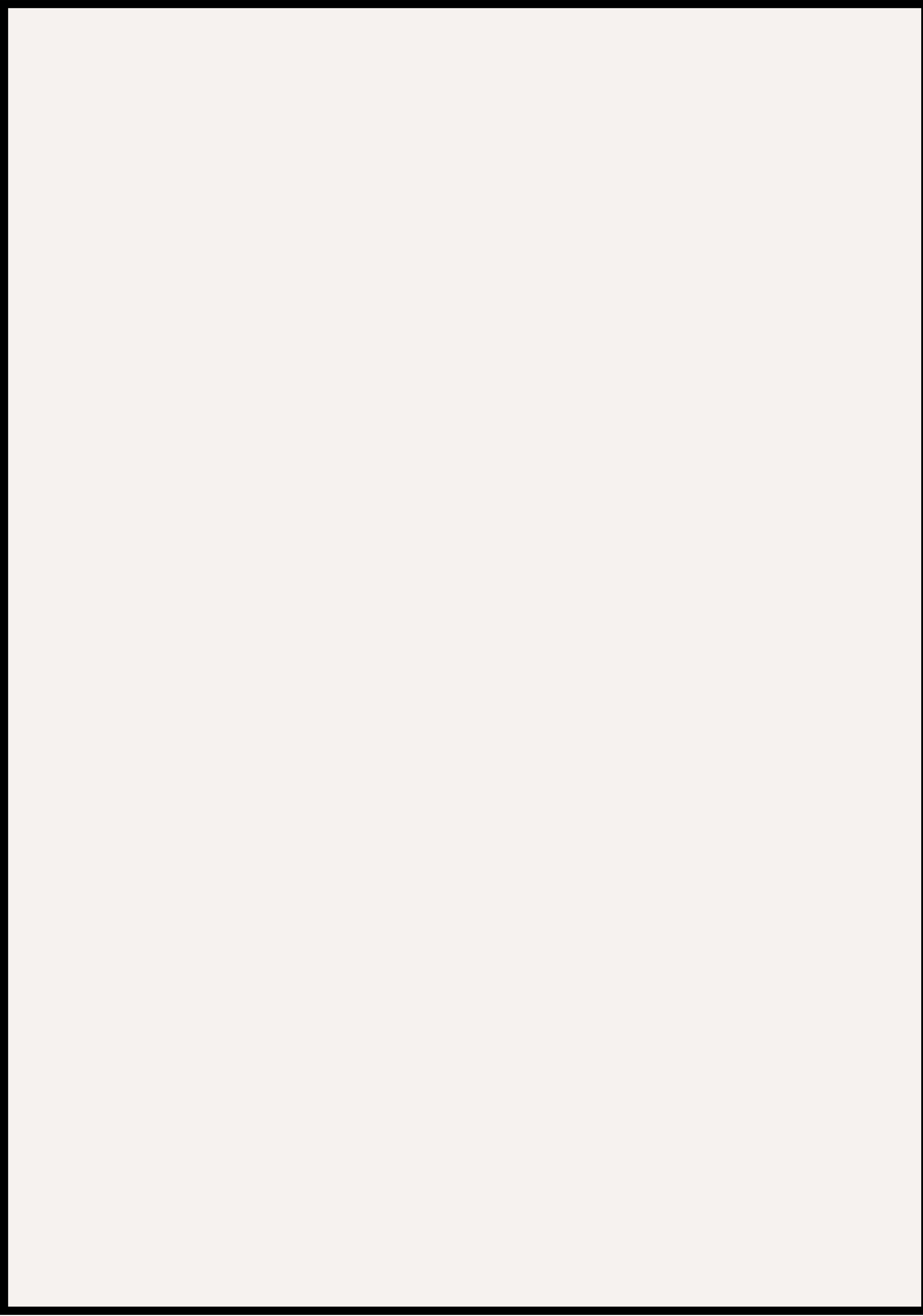
The Mind of a Dancer must evolve.

And that evolution should include these four building blocks.

This ensures your impact goes beyond a five to eight-minute presentation.

It is time to create defining moments that lead to change and transformation.



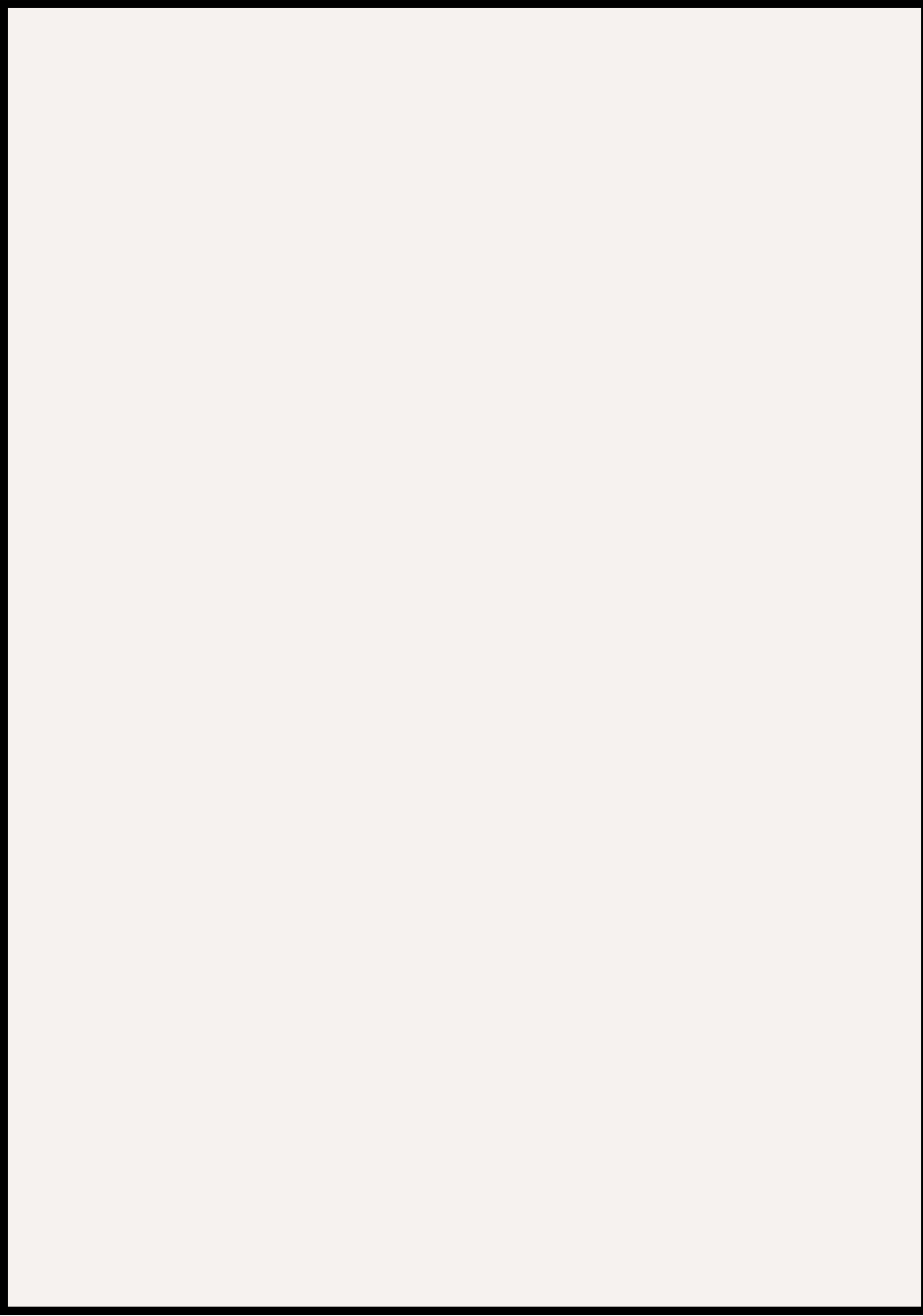




PART III

THE FUTURE OF A DANCER

You have yet to hit the ceiling.





The Future

To every dance leader who has made it this far in our journey together, **YOU HAVE YET TO HIT THE CEILING!**

You have yet to hit the ceiling with your purpose and potential. As the world is constantly evolving, it requires evolving leaders. You were made in the image of God, a creative being who always has innovative ways to make the world better.

Your challenge is not in your lack of resources or inventory. The question is, **what can you create with the resources God has given you?**

You have a creative imagination, and you have the desire to please God with it. So now, what can you do with what God gave you?

I believe that your future is tethered to how you are hard-wired and who you are assigned to.

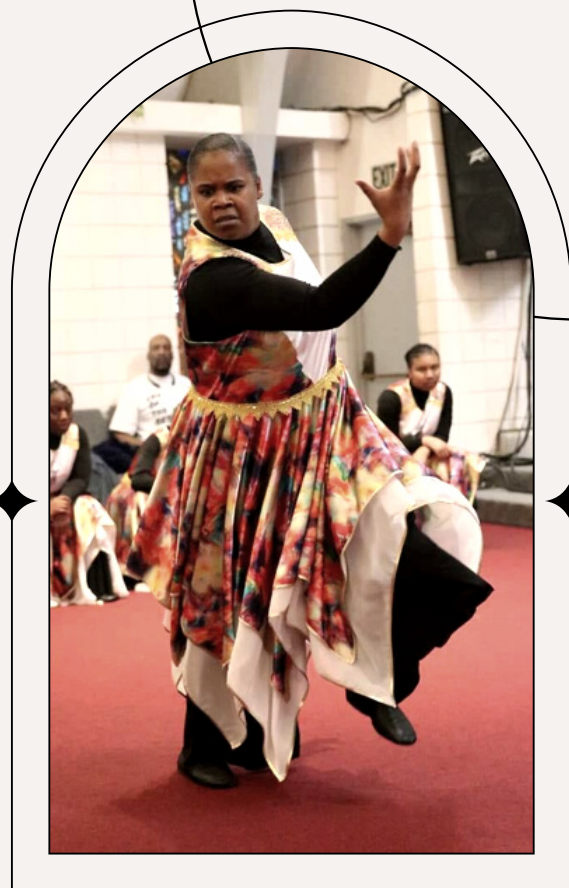
The more acquainted you are with how God hardwired you, the more effective you will be in ministering to the future.

The more knowledgeable you are with who you are assigned to minister to determines how efficient you will be in serving the future.

I feel the need to revisit what I initially shared with you. The future of your dance ministry begins with this truth; **YOU HAVE YET TO HIT THE CEILING.**

The progression of your ministry will lead to great opportunities. But the opportunities afforded to you are not an indication of you maxing out your purpose or potential.

The progression of your ministry will lead to great rewards and benefits. But the rewards of your labor are not the indication of you finishing the call on your life.





Any measure of success you experience should draw you to consider that there is more to do, more to accomplish, and more to produce for God.

If you are graced with the opportunity to minister abroad, if you are graced with the reward of provision and supply for your labor, understand there is more work to be done.

In Proverbs 18:16, the writer declares, "A man's gift makes room for him and brings him before great men." But it is your responsibility to steward the assignment your gift brought you.

How are you stewarding your now assignments that lay the foundation for the future?



Are you taking time to learn what the future will require of you as a ministry dancer?

Are you considering what the future needs from men or women like you as a ministry dancer?

Are you using discernment to consider that when your time is up, how will future dancers follow the model you leave them? You're not just responsible for yourself but for those who will follow in your footsteps. So, what legacy will you leave for them?

The future is bright for the dance ministry. God is elevating and evolving gifts in new ways. However, the future of your ministry in dance starts with considering how you are disciplining yourself now for the future.

The future requires a greater version of you. Whatever your standard is today, the question to consider is how can you exceed that?





2 Cor. 3:18 "But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord, the Spirit."

The verse means from one degree of glory to another. Progression is not a copy-paste. It suggests that what measure you experience at one level should exceed the next level.

Speaking of levels, have you considered the implications tethered to progression, advancement, and development as a ministry dancer? In the church context, we often believe promotion, elevation, and advancement mean God is taking us higher, giving us more, and blessing us with greater, which is one form of improvement. But that only partially defines advancement for ministry leaders.

For some, the future is not God taking you to a new level; for some, your future is God helping you to be faithful at the same level. With a fresh set of eyes, God can help you see how much more you can accomplish at this level.

Don't allow your future to be defined by how much in demand you are; let it be determined by the depth of your obedience, sacrifice, and devotion to serving God however He desires to use you on whatever level He needs you to serve in.

When you learn to trust God in how He elevates you, you will experience a depth of fulfillment no man can ever offer you.



Does the value your ministry offers today benefit the calling of dance ministry for the future?

The greatest investment you can make to the dance ministry of the future is creating standards today that tomorrow can benefit from.

Yes you are anointed, yes, you are gifted, yes you are talented, yes you are skilled. But what do you have to offer the future?

As a minister in dance, you do the future of dance ministry a disservice by not considering laying the foundation on how to grow, mature, and develop.

Don't wait for others to imagine how to build for the future; start building now one block at a time.

What does your future look like?

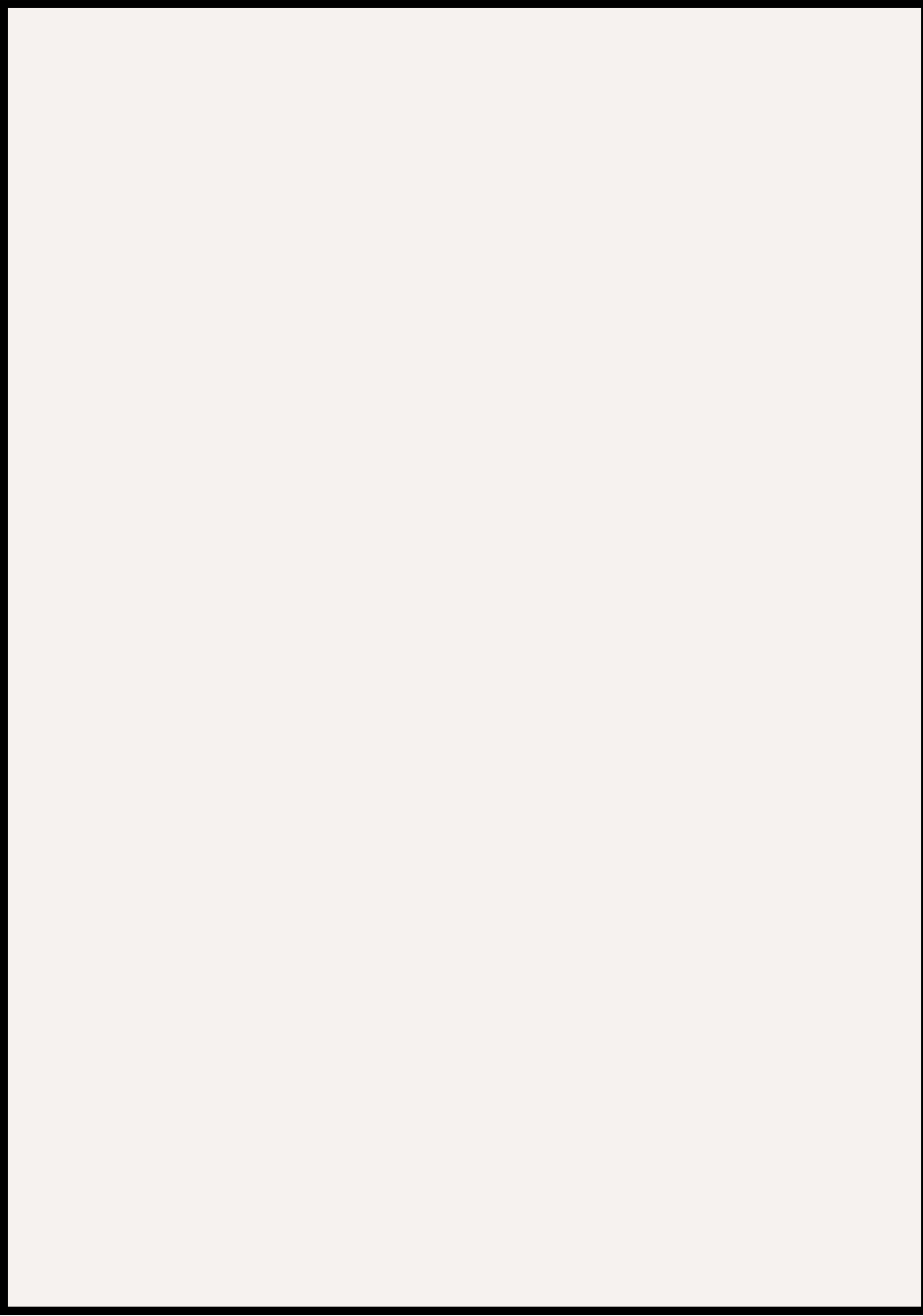
I pose you to consider, if you want your dance ministry to add value towards the future, you must consider imagining how your ministry can go wider, deeper and further.

Wider on how to minister to those beyond your barrier.

Deeper on how to minister to those beyond your industry, sphere of influence, and place of engagement.

Further on how to minister to those beyond your region.

Let us imagine the possibilities of the **unknown**.



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Wider

Wider:

- Having considerable or great extent from side to side; broad.
- Of great horizontal extent.
- Of great range or scope; embracing a great number or variety of subjects.

Consider that movements are meant to be precisely that, move-ments, mobile vehicles of transportation.

Can you imagine how your ministry could impact those beyond your current space of influence? Beyond your current reformation? Beyond your current denomination?

Those in your church context have been blessed to see and experience your dance ministry in extraordinary ways. Can you imagine taking that experience beyond your current context?

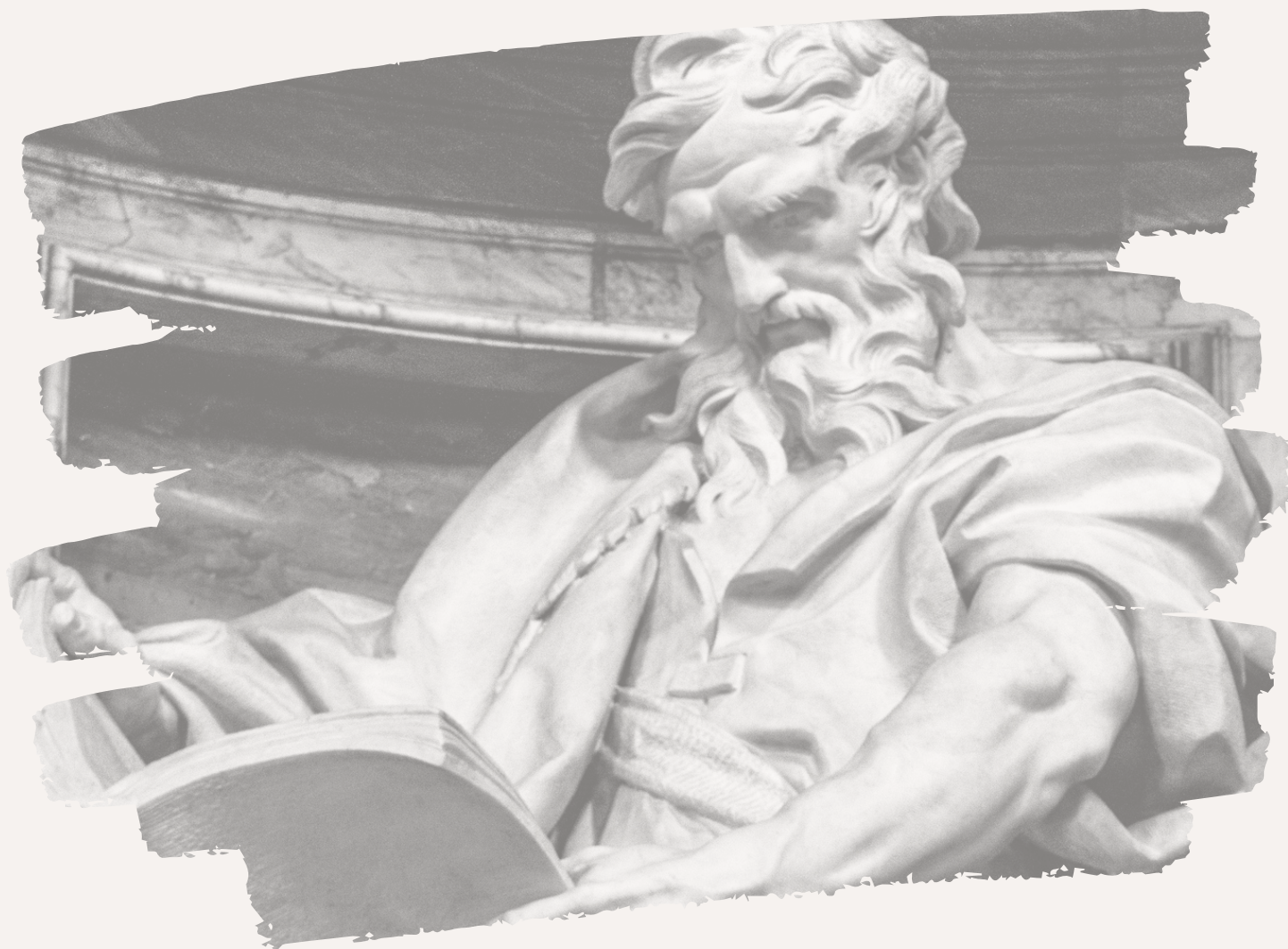


Acts 13, we find the Apostle Paul, formerly Saul, officially starting his ministry with his co-laborer Barnabas. What made their ministry so impactful was not just what they said but where they were not afraid to share their ministry.

They took their ministry beyond the confines of Jerusalem. They ministered in places we never thought the Gospel of Jesus Christ would reach.

They invaded industries and other spheres of influence with their ministry. As a result of their commitment to a broader reach, the Gospel spread, and lives were forever changed.

How can you take your dance ministry beyond this current sphere of influence?



You have accepted the mandate to usher God's people into His presence. You have used your dance to inspire, to intercede, to invoke people to change.

You have been gifted and graced to shift atmospheres and environments through your dance. Congregations are inspired by the dynamic impact of your dance ministry.

The following question is, how can you take that experience beyond your current barrier?

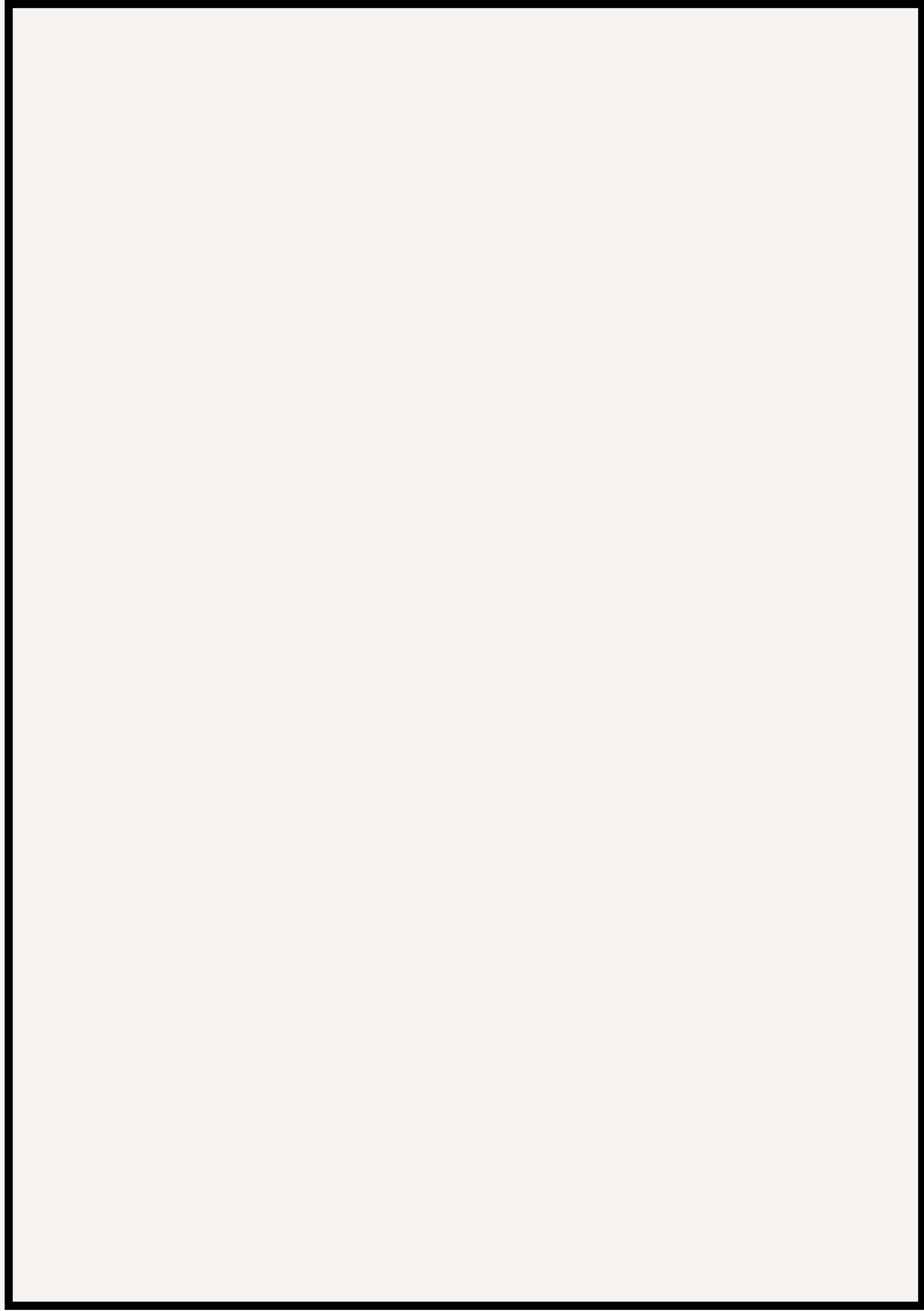
Develop relationships with dance ministries outside your present context.

Develop relationships with ministries outside of your denominations.

I pose you to consider you should to be willing to participate and fellowship with those who don't think like you or dance like you.

You make your reach more diverse when you're willing to learn from others. Ask God to help you to see wider.







Deeper

Deeper:

- Extending far down from the top or surface.
- Having a specified dimension of depth.
- Reaching or advancing far down.

I had the honor and privilege of having a conversation with one who serves as an apostolic covering for dance ministers.

She has been ministering and serving the movement ministry community for over 20+ years. She is apart of a worldwide network of liturgical dancers, prophetic dancers, movement ministers, and creative artists who serve in dance. She is affectionately embraced as Mama Que Payne.

We had a conversation and dialogue on what the future of dance ministry looks like.

Here are some observations shared from that conversation:

She said, "First thing to consider is that God does not have walls. The church is the place designed for us to study, learn and grow, but then you go."

One of the strategies that can help your dance ministry reach deeper is considering how your ministry can go beyond the four walls.

Now, this can be a sensitive area without systems of accountability. Going beyond the four walls can create dynamics of expressions lacking standards, disciplines and restraints.

But with the proper accountability and standards to ensure you keep Jesus as your aim and priority, it can be advantageous for the future of dance. Going beyond the four walls and engaging spaces to present your dance ministry there can create opportunities to **advance the kingdom, evangelize to uncommon groups, edify the craft of dance**, and even **expand the artistry of creative movement**.

What are you assigned to do through your dance ministry?



Is it to lead others into the presence of the Lord?

Is it to shift climates and cultures prepping environments for deliverance and healing?

Is it to expand the artistry of dance?

Is it to reach people with God through the vehicle of dance?

Maybe all the above?

Mama Que Payne suggested,

"If we don't consider building out of the box, we only will be defined by our **presentation** instead of the opportunities for **demonstration**."¹¹



As a movement minister, you are assigned to demonstrate God's creative expression to others. The question to consider is how can that expression transcend the level of depth you are accustomed to?

Transcend means to rise above, surpass, exceed or go beyond the point you have reached.

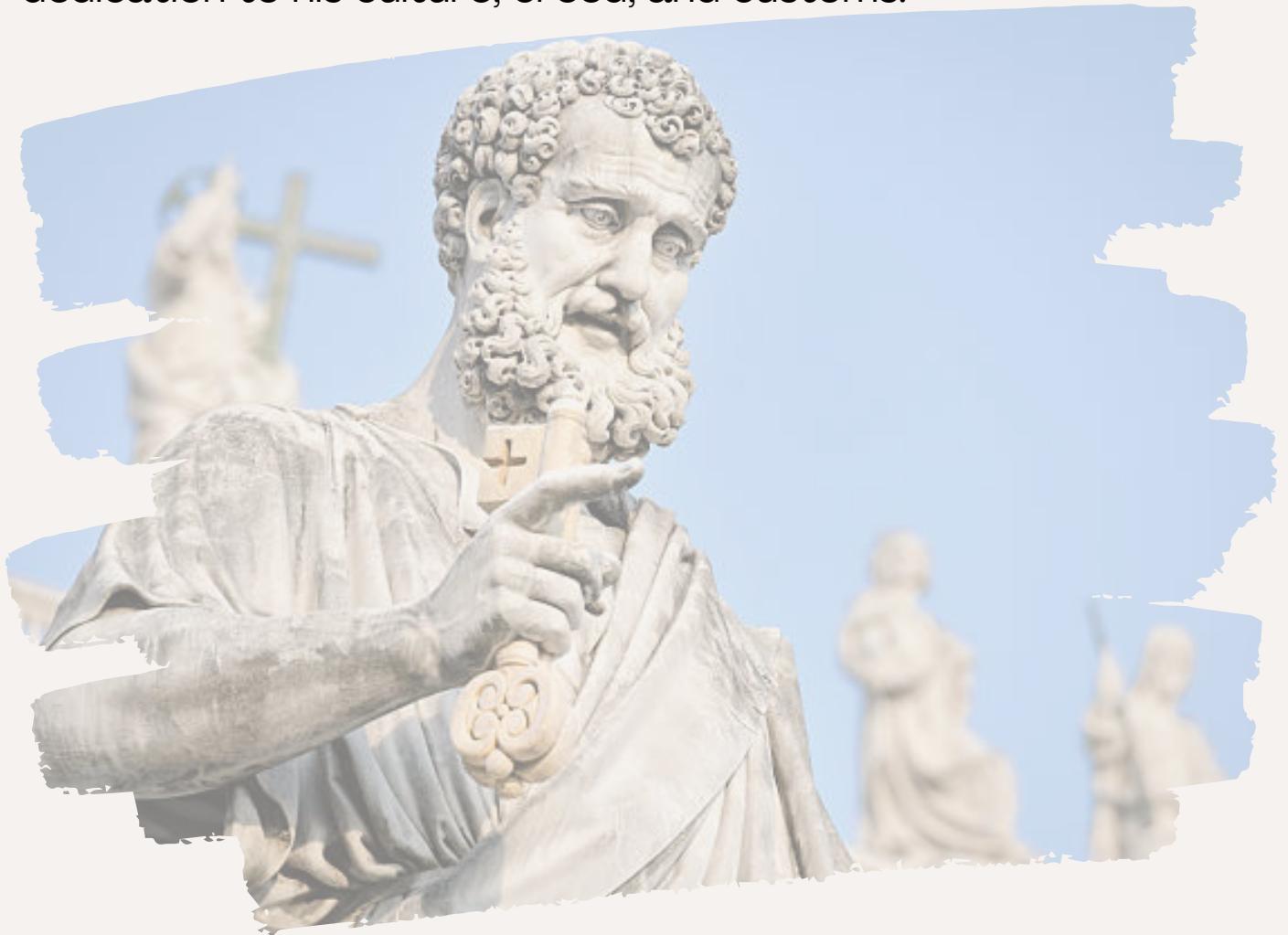
I know you are comfortable and feel cozy in your present position. I'm sure you feel snug in your current occupation as a dance minister but understand that God has called you to go **"into the unknown,"** in the words of Elsa from Frozen.

Captain Kirk from Star Trek said **to boldly go where no one has gone before.** What if this is God's call for you as a movement minister?



Acts 10 The Apostle Peter had a vision from God that he did not fully understand. He pondered on it, and following that moment, three men came looking for him. Peter was convicted by the Holy Spirit to go with these men.

As He came to the house of a centurion, Peter communicated his hesitation to engage with them due to his devotion and dedication to his culture, creed, and customs.



But after hearing that the master of the house had a dream given by God, Peter's eyes were opened, and he knew vs. 34, "God shows no partiality." There is an opportunity for God to grace anyone who fears Him and does what is right by Him.

Had Peter remained locked to his culture, creed, and customs, the opportunity of expanded ministry may have never been extended to this household.



But the miracle in Cornelius' home was the byproduct of Peter heeding to the prompt of the Holy Spirit to cross the barrier that separated His people and these people.

What if you're on assignment to create a bridge with another culture of people, granting them access to the world you're accustomed to building and creating?

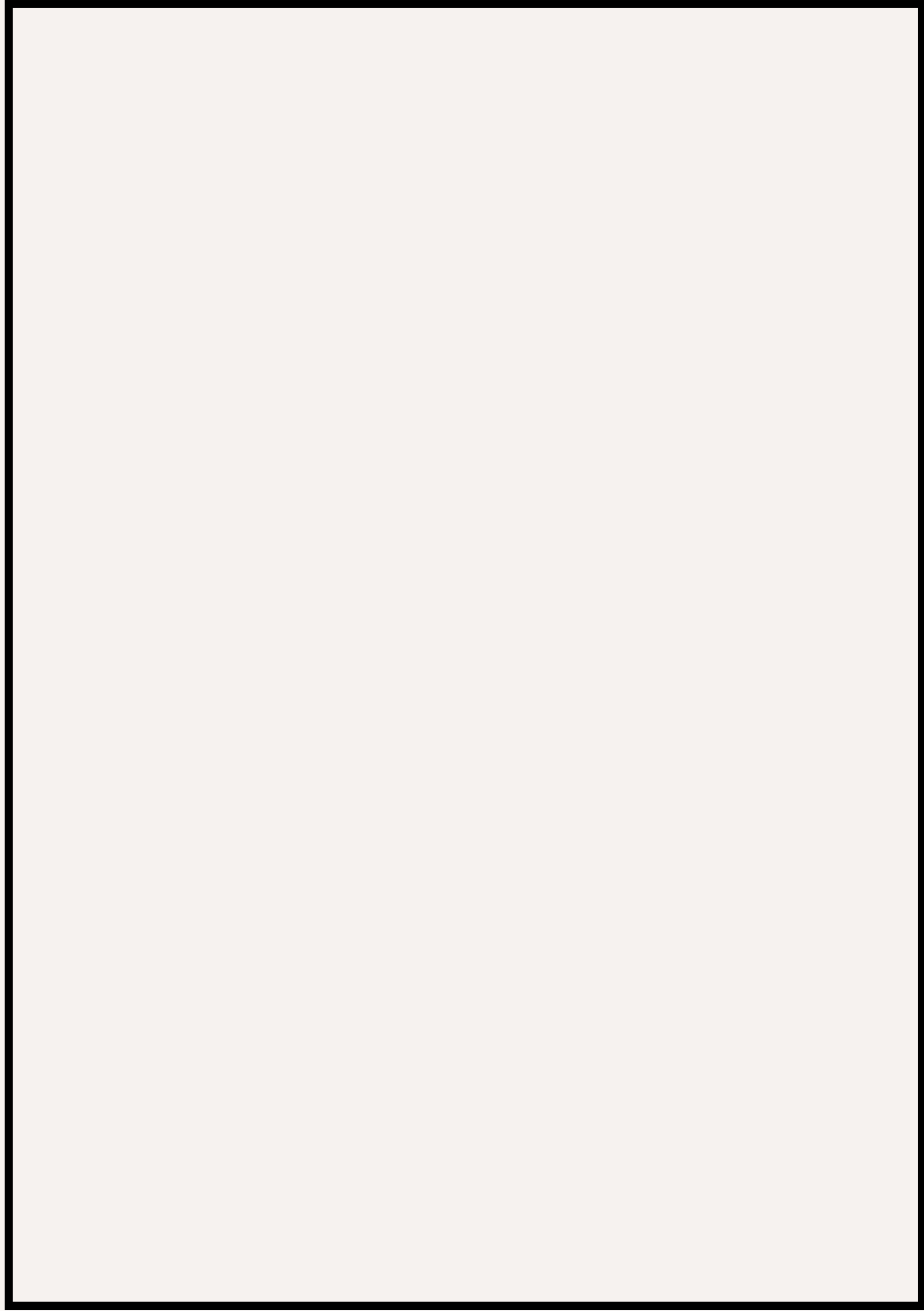
If you refuse to consider the world outside the four walls, you may be shutting off people God wants to reach out to.



Know your assignment, heed to the voice of the Lord and be willing to be afraid but go in faith.

The depth of the future of dance ministry may depend on you creating bridges connecting to other races, creeds, cultures, and civilizations beyond the four walls.





THE
Moment
Definers
Podcast

W/SPECIAL
GUEST
Prophetess Que Payne

Thursday @7pm PST
Hosted by
Michael Johnson

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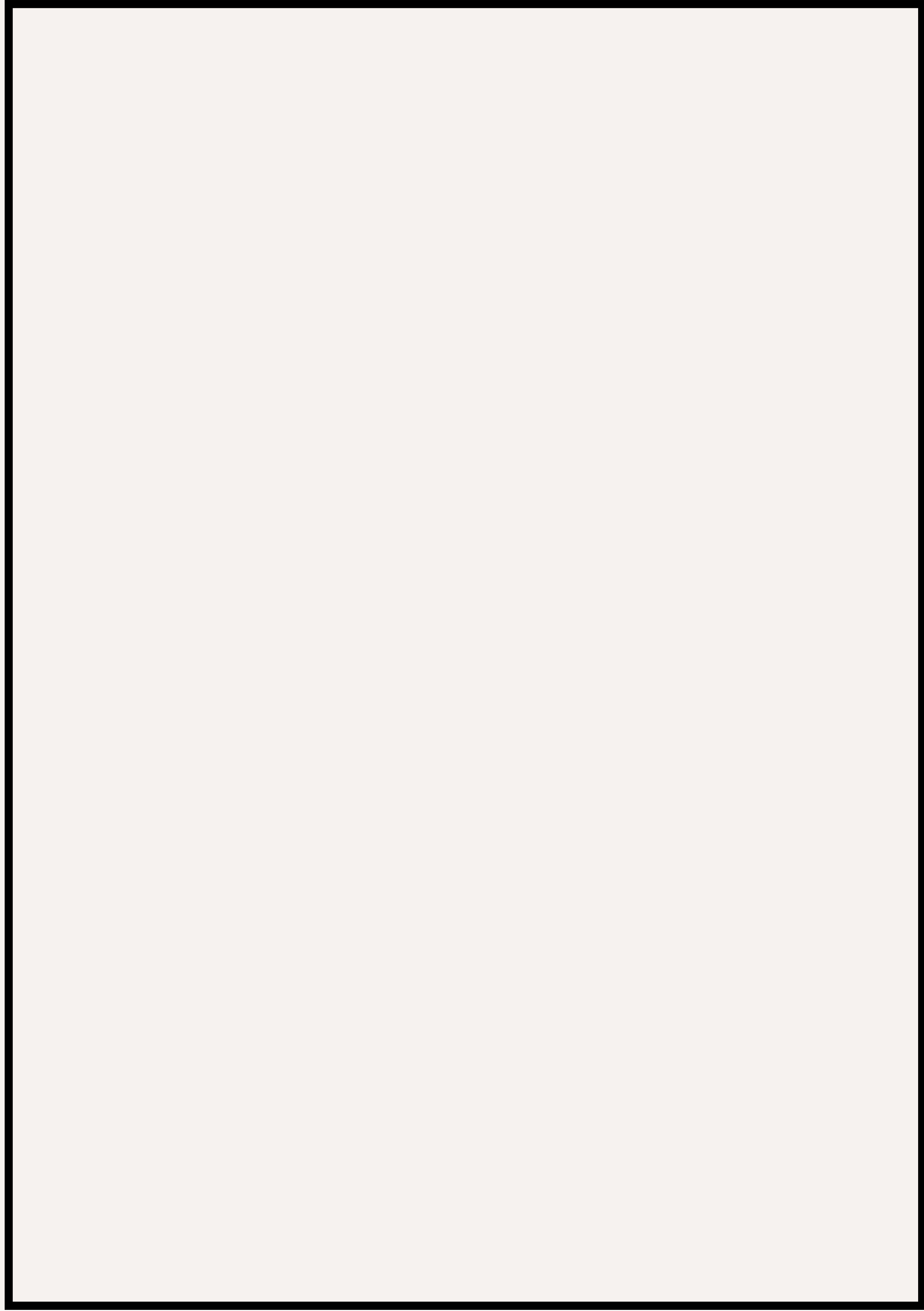


For Part 1 of the Conversation with
Mama Que Payne
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For Part 2 of the Conversation with
Mama Que Payne
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Further

Further:

- At or to a great distance
- At or to a more advanced point; to a greater extent.
- Extended beyond the current point.

Continuing the conversation with Mama Que Payne led to a subject I feel is disregarded within the dance community. The value of building relational equity.

Not limited to but inclusive of the dance ministry. In my experience, some of the most gifted and anointed ministers are the most paranoid, defensive, and stand-offish people you will ever meet.





Whether they suffer from a peacock spirit parading around like they are the center of attention untouched by man in the words of the Fiji water commercials, or they are militant in character always ready to fight with their looks if someone gets too close to them.

You will never be able to take your dance ministry **wider, deeper,** or **further** if you keep yourself from being connectable and relational to those you minister to or serve alongside.

I believe the value of ministry including all industries, spheres of influence, and areas of service, no longer flourishes on the backs and shoulders of individual **characters**. Instead, they are carried and cultivated on the backs and shoulders of **communities**. The more diverse your community, the more expansive your reach.



However, your reach requires you to cross the barrier of relational engagement. Do not be the dance minister known only to be seen, heard, or connected to others when you are called to minister in front of God's people.

Let people see your heart, hear your mind, and connect with you spirit to spirit. This should include when you're assigned to minister and outside when you are not called to minister.

The more trustworthy you are, the more valuable you will become to the community.

As I continued to dialogue with Mama Que Payne, I was curious what made her so treasured and esteemed within this community. It was apparent she was anointed, educated, wise and experienced, but I wanted to understand why God entrusted her with such an expansive reach.



She told me the last time she fellowshipped with the worldwide network she was a part of was in Greece; over 80 different countries were in attendance.

I asked myself why she was granted such a great opportunity to engage with 80 other countries while I know some dancers who have yet to connect with other dancers beyond their streets, let alone another country.

She then shared with me multiple stories of how she reached out to other dancers and dance ministers throughout her tenure who didn't look like her, dance like her, or even believe like her, and she made a connection with them with a simple gesture. **She said hi.....**



No heavy prophetic word, no word of knowledge or wisdom, prophecy or speaking in other tongues. She said without judgment that she reached out and built relational equity with other dancers, which led to expanded friendships, connections, partnerships, and co-laboring.

How friendly are you as a dance minister? Are you approachable? Connectable? Reachable?

What made Jesus cherished by every community he invaded was that he was never outside arm's length. Even though 4000 and 5000 gathered, they all still partook in the miracle of Jesus' ministry.

I am suggesting that you be as intentional as possible with reaching further in your ministry by creating systems where not only can people reach out to you, but you can reach out to others.



Here is where we can also find value in the **digital space**. The dance ministry's digital footprint should be about something other than numbering followers. Instead, it should be about creating spaces to bridge the gap between others who desire to be ministered by the dance ministry and those interested in serving as dance ministers.

Be careful in allowing your digital platform to deform the quality of your ministry. If your character isn't aligned with the standard of God's expectations of you as a movement minister, then your service quality may be affected.

It is your responsibility to ensure you keep your hands clean and your heart pure. That includes the natural world and the digital world.





A well-respected and growing servant in dance I've come to appreciate is a young man by the name of Micqwuan Wright. His ministry name is Prodigy, and he serves alongside a group of talented dancers who go by the name of Eden.

I asked His opinion on the state of dance ministry and the future of dance ministry.

Here was his response:

"Future of the movement minister :

"In the days to come, I believe a **standard** will be set for the contribution that movement ministers play in all corporate worship gatherings.





Ecclesiastes 9:10

"Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the realm of the dead, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom."

Though this is not referring to dance, this scripture is relevant to movement because we use our hands to **demonstrate**. So as we understand who we are and what we have been allowed to do, every aspect of our pour must be done with full-fledged intent.

Emptying ourselves out entirely that heaven is pleased with what we offer unrestrictedly. This scripture eludes that while you are here, don't do anything halfway. Do not pray halfway; fast halfway, repent halfway.

We've been given a small window and so while we have the chance, do it with every fiber of your being.





Lastly, I believe the Lord will separate the wheat from the tares.

Consecrated movement ministers will become instantly identified from those who don't.

Movement ministers at large will no longer be held accountable for being misrepresented on certain platforms or instances.

God will make clear those who have wholeheartedly yielded themselves to the commission and have become the word made flesh.”

I believe that Micwquan highlighted the quality and virtue of the movement minister.

- Standards must be and will be set to ensure quality and virtue.
- Understanding of mission and purpose must be and will be set to ensure quality and virtue.
- A greater demand of emptying oneself must be and will be required to ensure quality and virtue.
- And a separation of authentic and sincere servants must be separated from entertainers and artists to ensure quality and virtue for the movement ministry.



Genesis 4 gives the story of 2 brothers. Both were known for their **labor** and **occupation**. Abel was a shepherd; Cain was a farmer.

There was no indication of preference from God regarding if He liked one over the other. As a result of their devotion to God, they determined to present to God an offering from the fruits of their labor.

Cain gave a portion of His labor, and Abel offered a portion of His labor.



Vs. 4,5, you could assume God plays favoritism, considering He looks favorably at Abel's offering and yet doesn't look favorably at Cain's offering. Why?

Was Cain not good enough? Did Cain not measure up to God's expectations? This is where we can start to struggle with comparison.

Did God like Abel more than Cain?

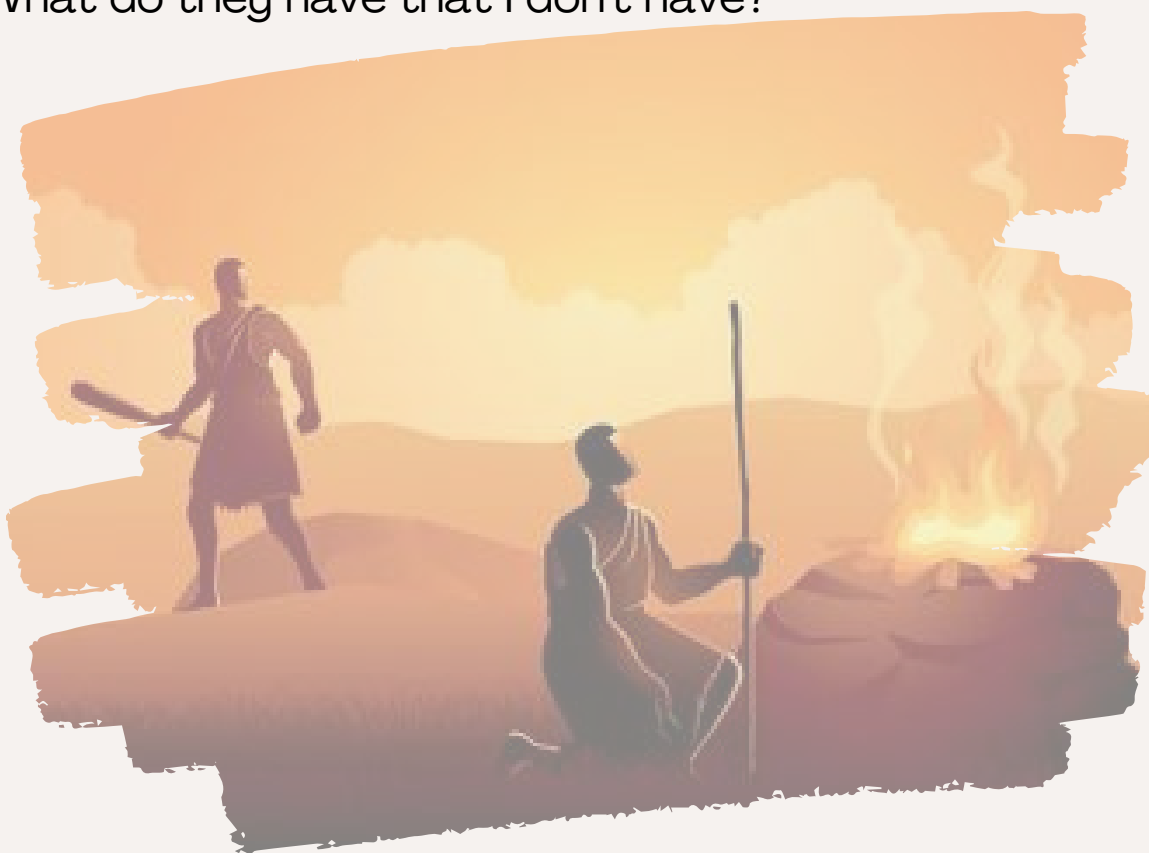
You can even use it in the context of Dance.

Lord, why were they favored the opportunity to travel and minister in dance?

Why were they given the platform to impact 1000s?

Why are they offered lucrative contracts and deals for their dance gifts?

What do they have that I don't have?



Who said they have what you don't? **What if the reason is found their willingness to sacrifice what you weren't willing to give?**

Vs 4,5 teaches us that Abel gave God what was first and what was best from the fruit of his labor, while Cain gave God a portion out of his labor.

How fair is it to expect God to favor us at the same level as someone else when our levels of sacrifice aren't even the same?

some ministers are known to consistently give God what's first and what is best, and then we have the nerve to challenge God's judgment while we only give God a portion of what we have.

No sir, no ma'am. **God honors sacrifice, and he disdains partial supplements.** God isn't a crummy God, so assuming He would be happy with crumbs from our labor isn't fair. No, He deserves **what's first**, and He deserves **what is best**. That must always be a standard and priority, no matter what timeline you minister in.



Heed to this charge, whatever you are assigned to produce through dance, whatever you are favored to experience in ministry, whatever you are graced to demonstrate as a result of your service and labor, make sure you give God what is first and what is best.

Your future in dance ministry depends on it.



Conclusion

May this generation of Ministry Dancers become the most **compassionate, concerned, innovative servant leaders** who spend their time in prayer through their convictions, trusting God for strategies on how to minister to those fighting through emotional challenges.

Strategies on how to minister to those fighting who need to know how God can shift their situations.

Strategies on how to minister to those struggling with significance and value in their lives.



Conclusion

The Heart of a Dancer must reflect the heart of God.

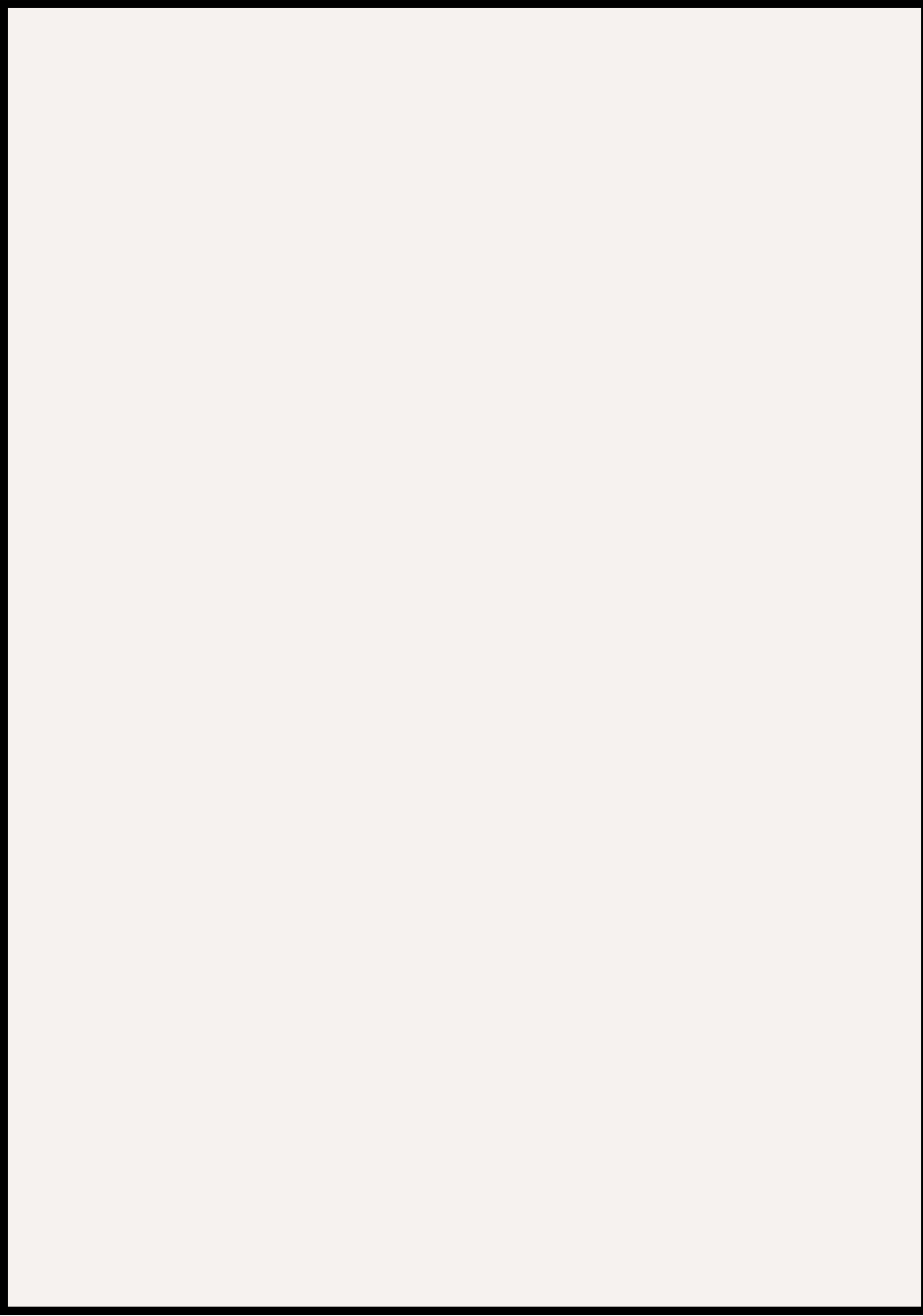
The Mind of a Dancer must evolve to consider how else you can inspire a world loved by God.

The Future of a Dancer lies in the hands of those willing and daring to think beyond customs, habits, and places of historical adaptation.

You are not just a **presenter**; you are a **demonstrator**. And as you allow the Holy Spirit to reveal to you what else can be done through your ministry, make sure you give God what is first and what is best from your labor.

It's time to create defining moments that lead to greater change and transformation.

Go Forth and Serve God's People!



About Me

- Served in ministry for over 20+ years spanning from youth, young adults, men's ministry, praise and worship and pastoral leadership.
- Books, Devotionals, E Courses and Videos available on website.
- Serves as an associate pastor at Heavenly Vision Church in Los Angeles, CA. (www.HVCLA.com)
- Serves as Lead Strategist of the Defining Moments Legacy Group. A Leadership Development organization designed to deploy disciples, leaders, entrepreneurs and community activists to create change and cause change in our communities, cities and culture. (<https://www.mjohnson7.com/definingmomentslegacygroup.html>)
- Loves Basketball (Lakers Fan!)
- Veteran Served in the U.S Navy for 4 years
- Married to the beautiful Jamaica Nicole Johnson

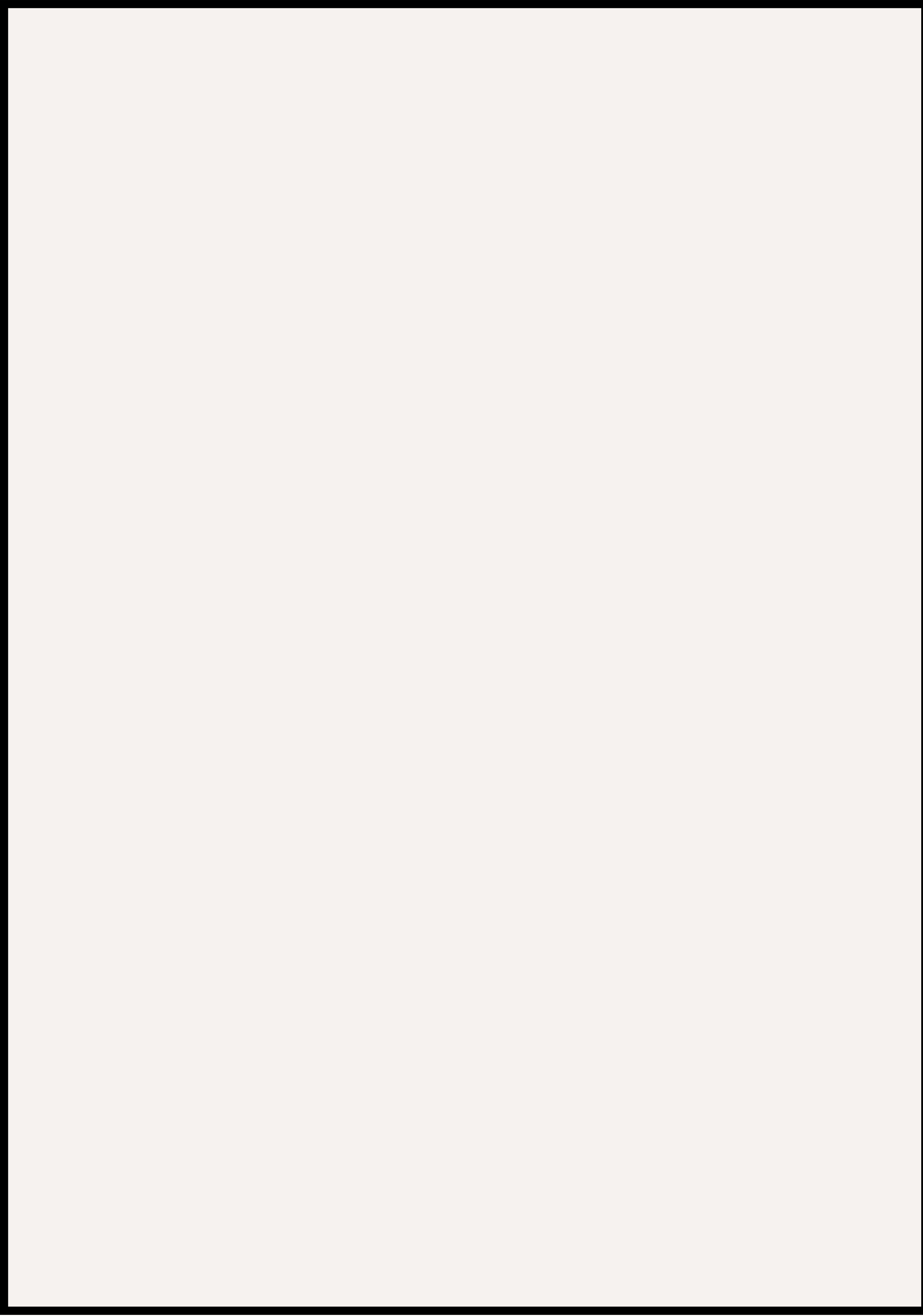


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