

How to thrive as a biblical scholar

by
J. David Stark
for the
European Association of Biblical Studies

A forward-looking statement

This masterclass contains the best advice I could provide you if you were my own students. But your mileage may vary because

- in-process-ness is characteristic;
- experience, experiences, and situations are different; and
- *laborare est orare.*

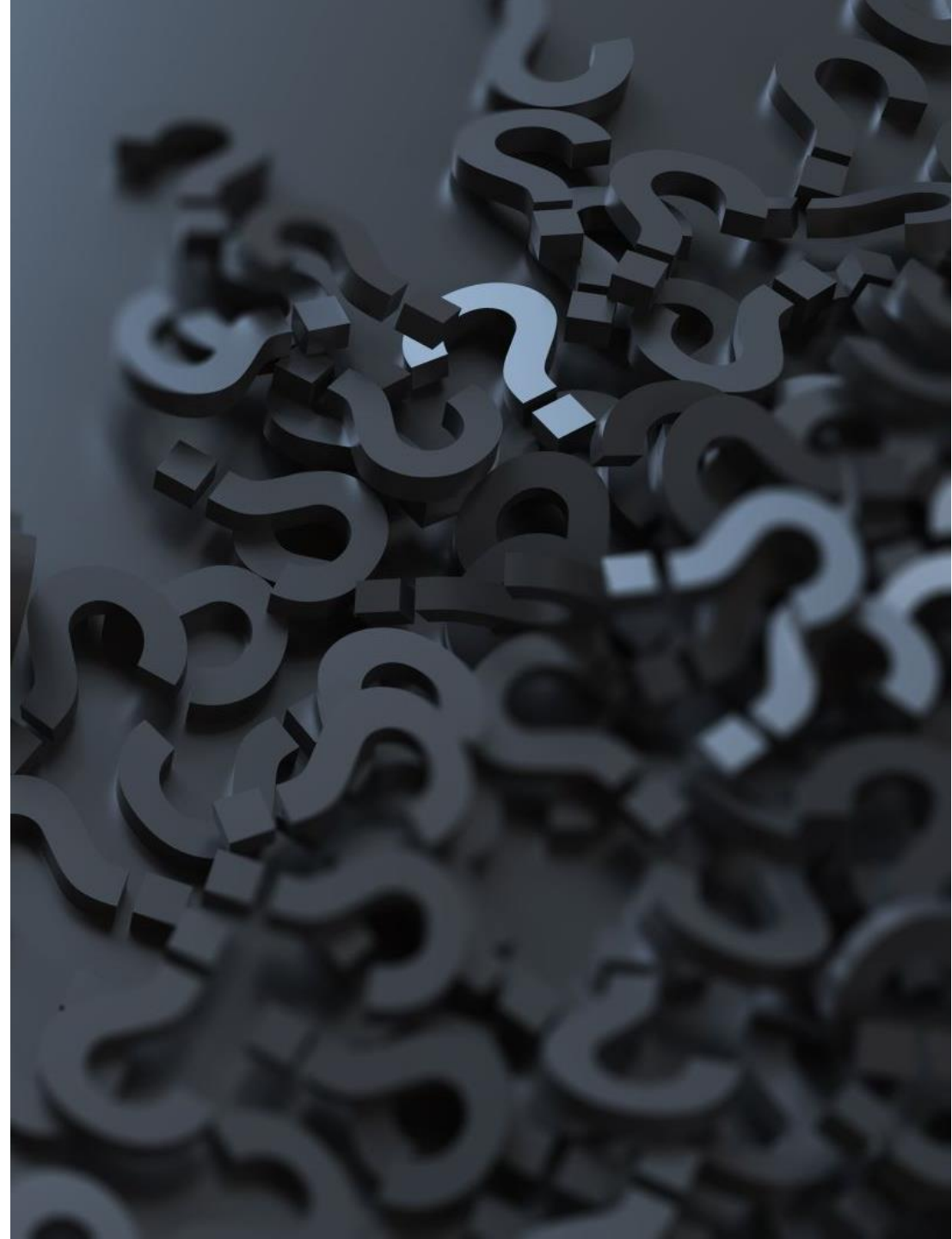
Outline

1. Lessons for navigating an uncertain future in the field
2. How to craft publishable research
3. How to craft work-life balance
4. A craft-centric approach to biblical studies

Some background context for the lessons I've learned (that you don't have to learn the hard way)

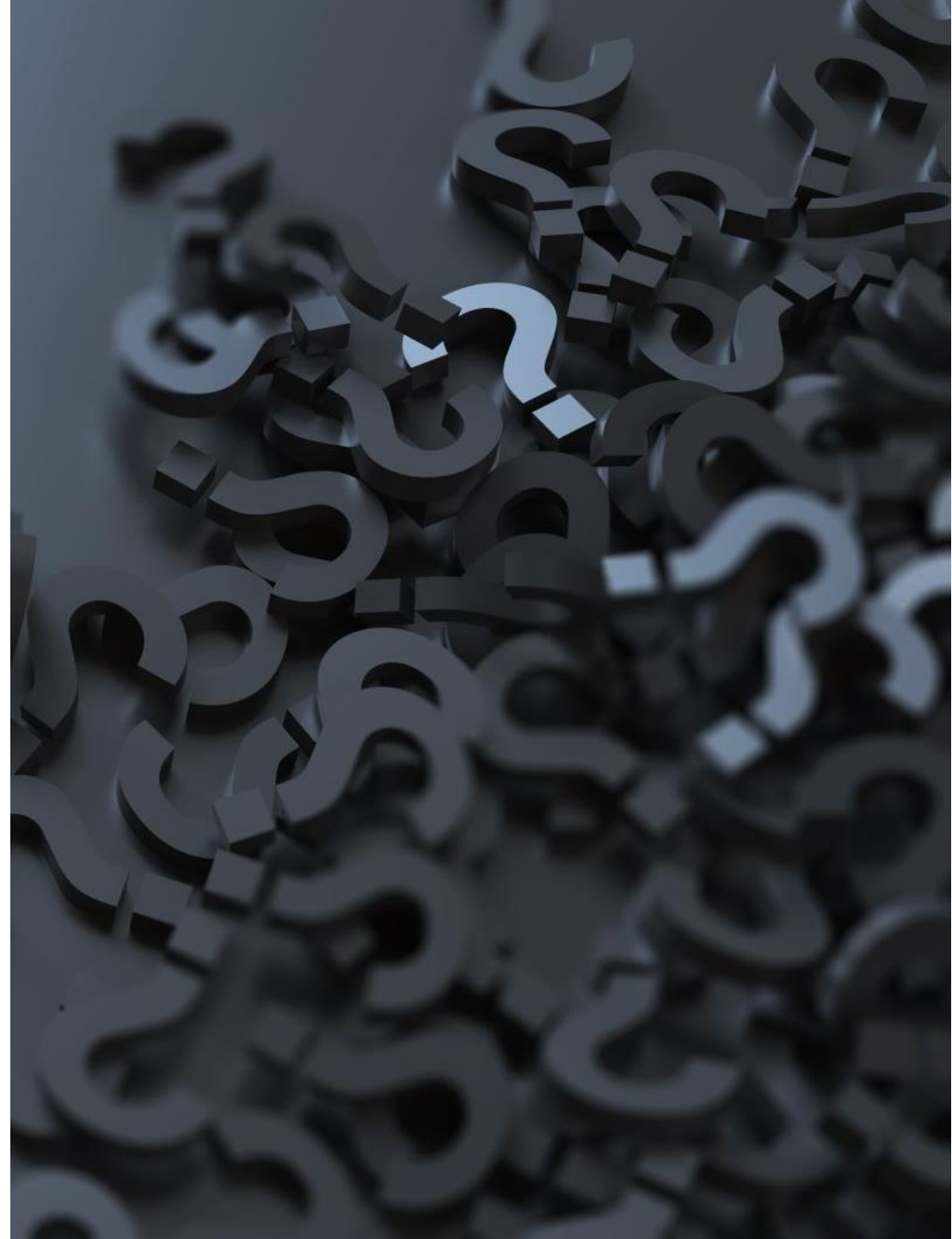
10 Lessons for an Uncertain Future

1. Confront the brutal facts, yet never lose faith.
2. The market doesn't care about your ideas, work, job, or needs.
3. Security doesn't come from an institution but from identifying your role in the market and playing it well.



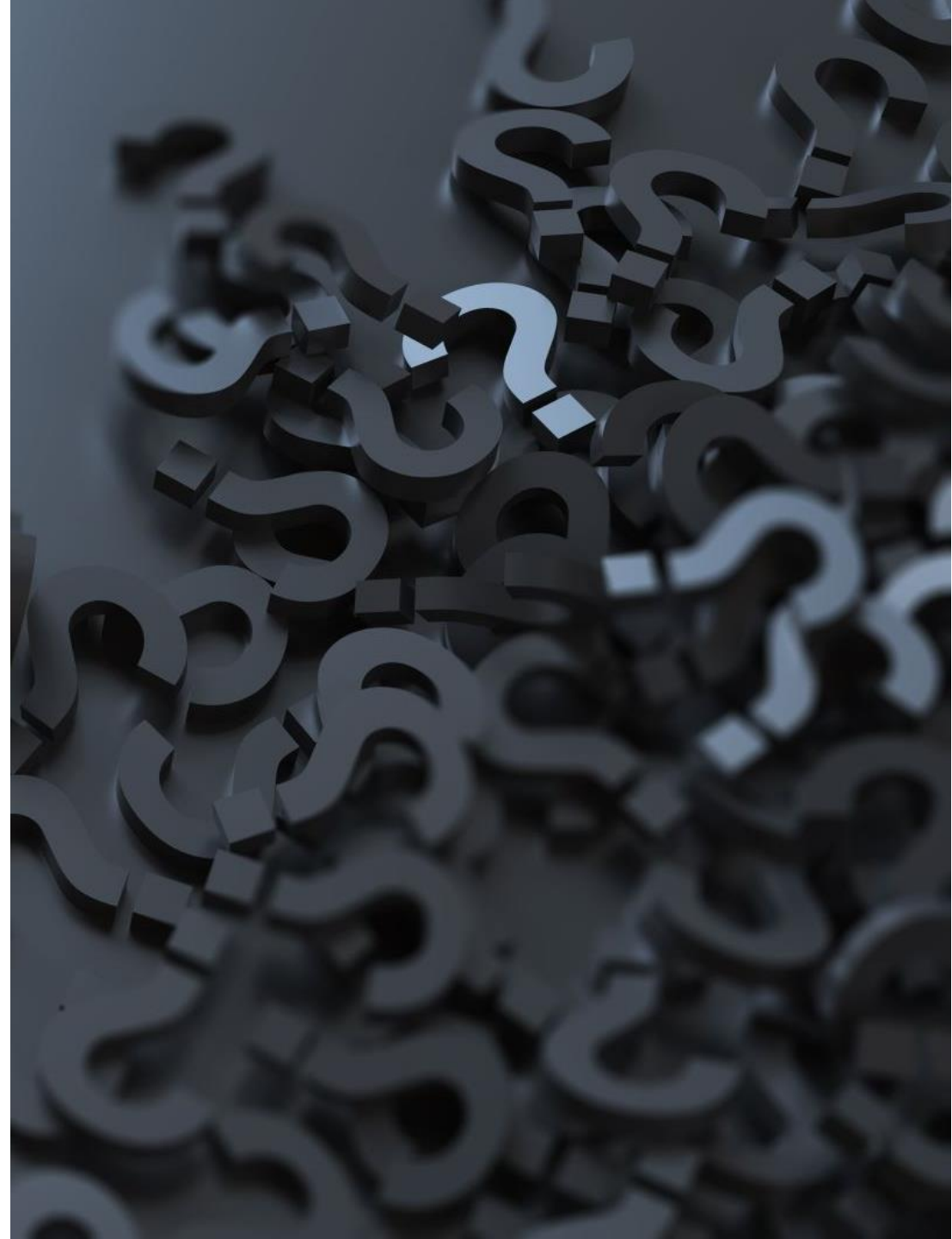
10 Lessons for an Uncertain Future

4. Feed your family by selling your expertise or results, not your time.
5. Don't plan on immediately securing a full-time, tenure track position.
6. Do plan on additional craftwork time.



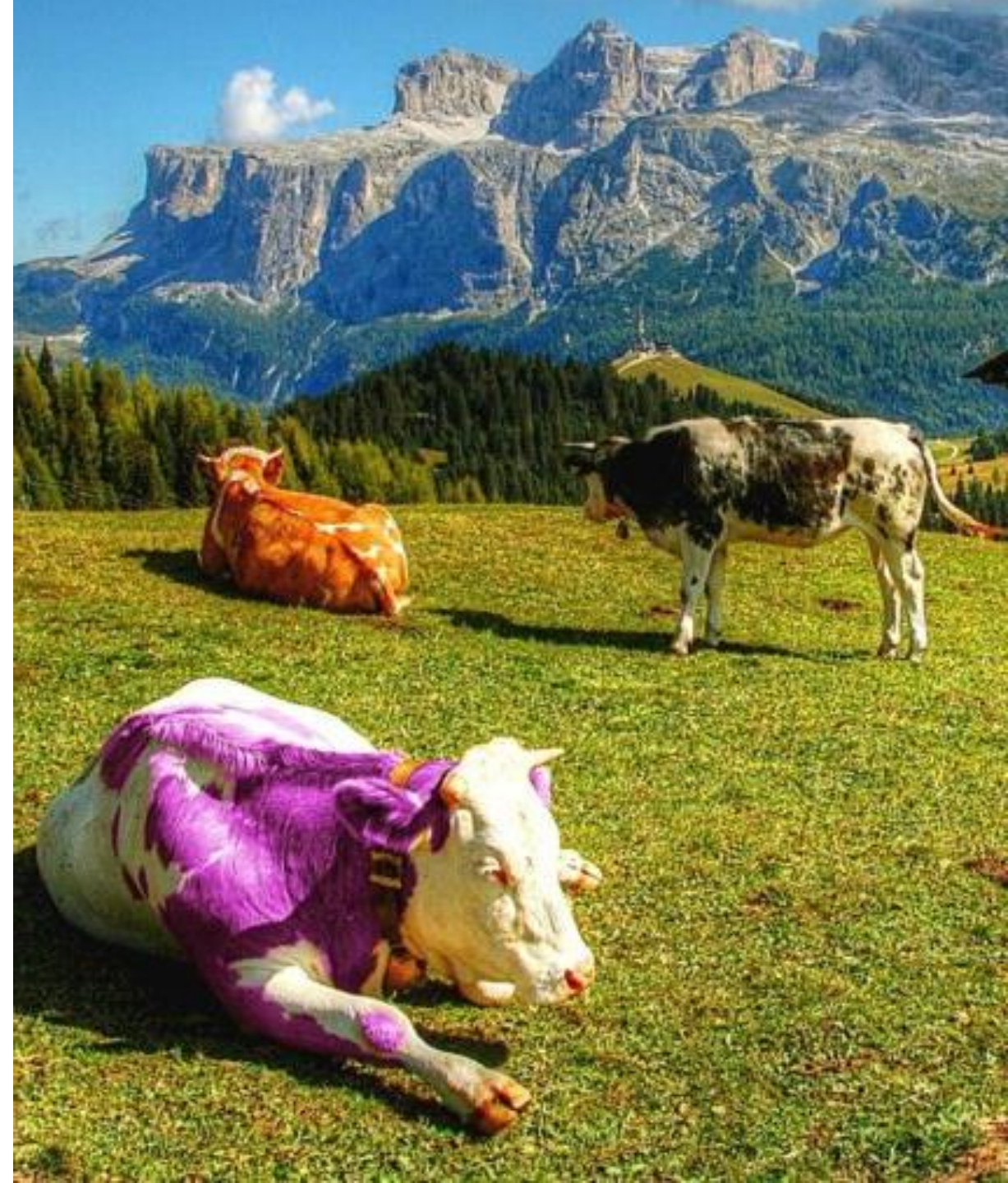
10 Lessons for an Uncertain Future

7. Don't try to secure any position you could theoretically do.
8. Do use your network and pursue positions that look like logical next steps.
9. Don't let disappointment demotivate you.
10. Do keep showing up.



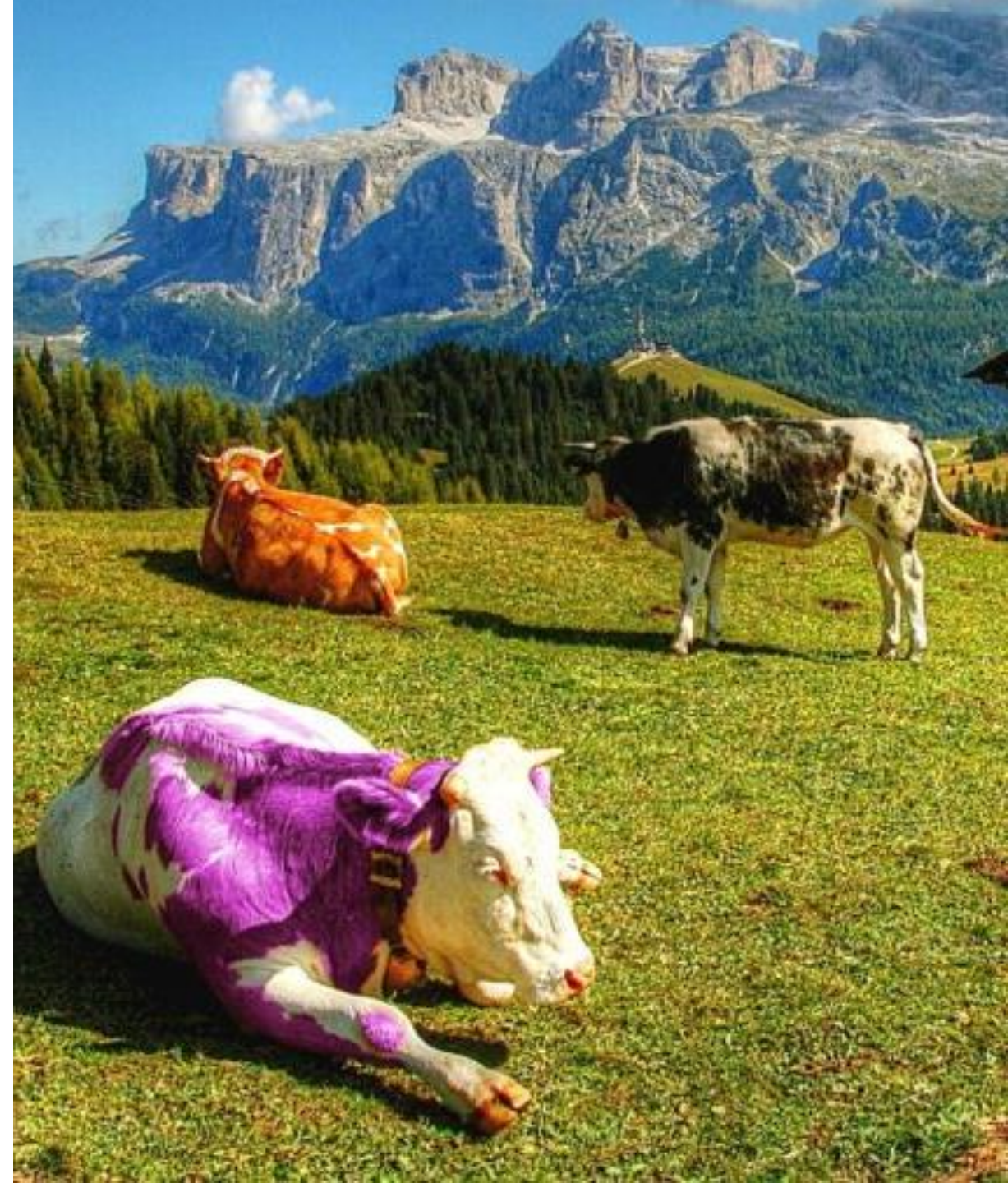
Frequent Tropes for Publishable Research

1. Patterns in the data or that unite groups of data
2. Anomalies in the data
3. Solutions to persistent problems or problems with persistent solutions
4. How and why things work
5. Fine distinctions



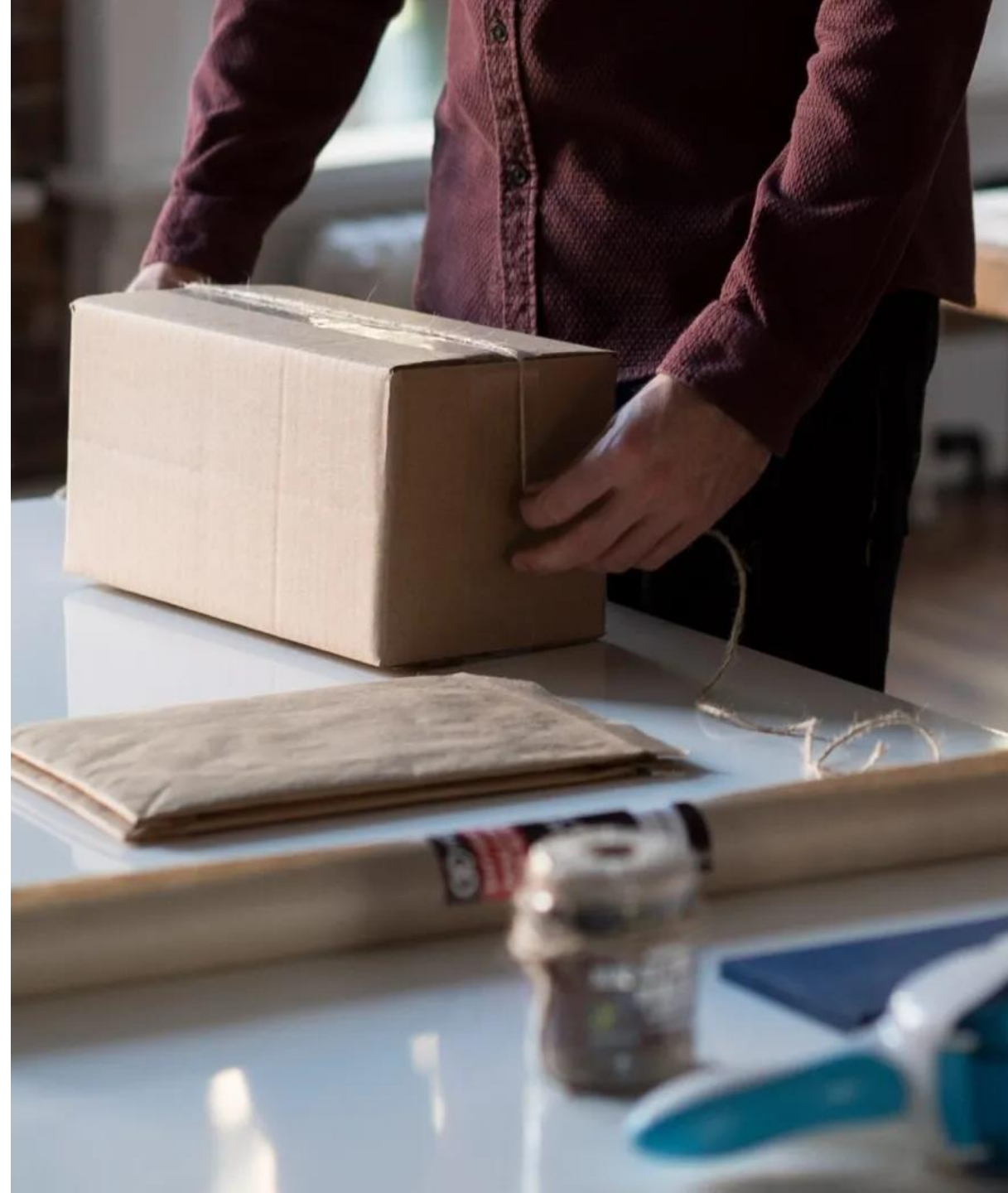
Frequent Tropes for Publishable Research

6. Comprehensiveness
7. Currency



How to Craft Publishable Research

1. Work like a professional. Focus on shipping.
2. Ship to yourself.
3. Ship for feedback at conferences or to individuals who are knowledgeable, reliable, honest, and good-willed.
4. Ship for distribution (and for feedback).



How to Craft Publishable Research

5. Work on shipping the next thing.



How to Craft Work-Life Balance

1. Create a fixed work schedule.
2. Create and work toward personal goals.
3. Plan, prepare for, and actually take time away.
4. Focus your time for academic work on what counts most.
5. Recognize there's a "no" inside every "yes."



Craftsmanship in Biblical Studies

As a craft, biblical scholarship is about

1. both the content of the discipline and how you perform the discipline and
2. undertaking an iterative cycle of improvement.



Craftsmanship Resources

1. Step-by-step guides to help you (1) craft your own SCHOLARLY goals and (2) make more time for achieving those goals
2. Guides to (1) multiple strategies for planning your days, (2) using the Internet as your personal research library, (3) making the most out of academic conferences



Craftsmanship Resources

3. A toolbox with more than a dozen tools to eliminate work you don't need to do, streamline what remains, and focus on what really counts
4. An annotated bibliography for considering how best to contextualize your spiritual formation for your particular vocation



Craftsmanship Resources

5. A checklist and full guide to clarify some of the unclear parts of SBL style
6. A planner to help you make the most of your next opportunity to get away so you can enjoy that time and come back recharged



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