

DID GOD REALLY SAY...

MAIN POINT.

We can **trust** God's boundaries are **good**.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus is the perfect image of God, being God Himself. Jesus came to earth in perfect obedience to the Father so that He might bring God all the glory and honor He deserves (**Heb. 1:3**).

FREEDOM IN THE BOUNDARIES.

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. We encourage you to dig in and read all of the content on this timeline.

Genesis 2:8

Genesis 3:7

GOD'S BOUNDARIES ARE GOOD

GENESIS 2:8-9, 15-17

8 The Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he placed the man he had formed. 9 The Lord God caused to grow out of the ground every tree pleasing in appearance and good for food, including the tree of life in the middle of the garden, as well as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

15 The Lord God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it. 16 And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree of the garden, 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die."

BELIEVING GOD'S WORD HELPS US AVOID SIN

GENESIS 3:1-7

1 Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You can't eat from any tree in the garden'?" 2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit from the trees in the garden. 3 But about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, God said, 'You must not eat it or touch it, or you will die.'"

4 "No! You will certainly not die," the serpent said to the woman. 5 "In fact, God knows that when you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 The woman saw that the tree was good for food and delightful to look at, and that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

MAIN POINT.

We can **trust** God's boundaries are **good**.



THEOLOGY CONNECTION

THE GOODNESS OF CREATION

In Genesis 1, God repeatedly affirmed that all of His creation was good, even “very good” (1:31). It is good, in God’s judgment, because He created it for a purpose it fulfilled—to reflect and display the **good character of the Creator**. Therefore, sin and evil should not be seen as a foundational part of the creation but as a corruption of it. While the creation has been marred and distorted because of sin, it is still good in the hands of God and serves His purpose of proclaiming His glory in the world. God’s people should affirm and seek to preserve the goodness of God’s creation (Gen. 2:15).

DISCUSSION

GOD’S BOUNDARIES ARE GOOD

GENESIS 2:8-9, 15-17

- What’s the point of boundaries? What does it reveal about God that He gives us boundaries?
- Why do we sometimes struggle to submit to God’s authority?
- How can boundaries actually lead to freedom ?

BELIEVING GOD’S WORD HELPS US AVOID SIN

GENESIS 3:1-7

- How did Satan distort God’s words in verse 1?
- How do you see God’s Word being distorted in society? Why does society reject its authority?
- When has Satan placed doubt in your mind about one of God’s commands?



DOES YOUR LIFE REFLECT THAT YOU BELIEVE GOD’S WORD? EXPLAIN.

CULTURAL CONNECTION

Sometimes the church doesn’t talk enough about doubt and treat it like it doesn’t exist. Maybe if we ignore it long enough it’ll go away, right? No. Here’s something that needs to be said: believers can struggle with doubt. Why? Because we’re imperfect and vulnerable. Struggling with doubt doesn’t mean we don’t love God. So, what do we do when we feel the crack of doubt beginning to form concerning who God is or what He has said in His Word? We take it to Him. Adam and Eve didn’t do this. They gave in to the doubt and allowed Satan to twist God’s truth. But you can take your doubts to God because He can handle them. It’s ok to ask questions. Ask God to show you what’s true. Instead of ignoring your doubt, wrestle with it to work through it.



DAY ONE

MATTHEW 4:1-11

We’ve all struggled with temptation. It’s a fact in every believer’s life: We will be tempted to chase after things that don’t honor God. And Satan often uses bits and pieces of God’s Word against us, twisting it so that we begin to question what’s right and wrong. For example, God’s Word cautions us to keep ourselves sexually pure. But we push boundaries in this area, justifying that we haven’t “gone all the way.” We convince ourselves that we can get as close to the line as possible if we don’t cross it. But God’s Word tells us to flee from anything that could pull us away from Him and to run toward the things that draw us closer to Him: righteousness, faith, love, and peace (2 Tim. 2:22). It’s dangerous to view any sin as something to get close to rather than something to flee from.

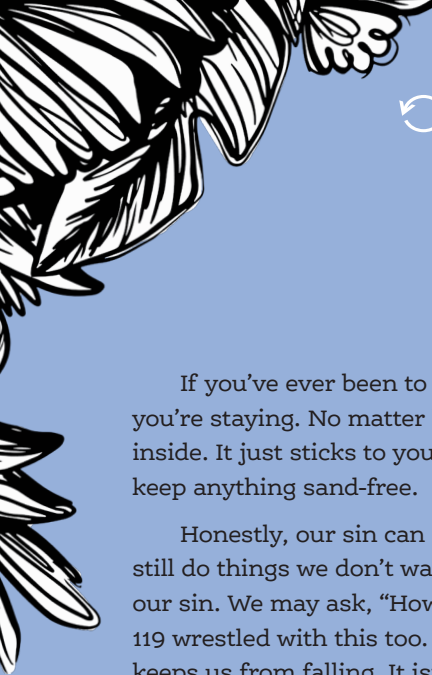
Here’s an amazing truth: Jesus was tempted in every way we are (Heb. 4:15). Jesus had just finished fasting for forty days when Satan met Him in the wilderness. Satan used pieces of God’s Word to try to entice Jesus into sin. But Jesus knew the Word—He was the Word! And in every single case, Jesus refuted Satan by correctly using God’s Word. This has to be our strategy too. We have to know God’s Word, which is also our sword for battle, if we want to fight temptation and detect the distortion of Scripture in our culture (Eph. 6:17).

○ WHAT TEMPTATIONS ARE YOU FACING RIGHT NOW?

○ WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE IN THE WAY YOU HANDLE TEMPTATION? HOW CAN YOU MODEL JESUS?

PRAY

LORD, HELP ME TO KNOW YOUR WORD SO THAT I CAN WITHSTAND TEMPTATION. HELP ME TO DETECT WHEN YOUR WORD IS BEING DISTORTED.



DAY TWO

PSALM 119:9-11

If you've ever been to the beach, you know how hard it is to keep sand out of the place where you're staying. No matter how many times you rinse off your feet, you somehow still carry sand inside. It just sticks to you. It winds up all over the floor and even in the bed! It's almost impossible to keep anything sand-free.

Honestly, our sin can feel this way too. As hard as we try, we all still give in to temptation. We still do things we don't want to do (Rom. 7:18-19). This can make us feel defeated in the battle against our sin. We may ask, "How am I really supposed to keep myself from sinning?" The writer of Psalm 119 wrestled with this too. But he also stated a simple answer: Knowing and treasuring God's Word keeps us from falling. It isn't enough to simply have a head-knowledge and be able to quote Scripture. Verse 11 tells us to treasure God's Word. And when we treasure something, we value it; we protect it, treating it with respect; and we admire and love it. Treasuring God's Word is the key to not only standing strong against temptation but also knowing when someone has distorted Scripture. While living in this world, you may feel it's impossible to stay pure, like sin just sticks to you. But God's Word helps you discern what's godly from what's not. It guides you, along with the Holy Spirit, to live a life that pleases God.

○ **DO YOU TREASURE GOD'S WORD? WHY OR WHY NOT?**

○ **WHEN HAVE YOU FELT DISCOURAGED IN THE BATTLE WITH SIN? HOW DOES THIS PASSAGE ENCOURAGE YOU?**

PRAY

GOD, HELP ME TREASURE YOUR WORD.
HELP ME FOLLOW YOUR WORD, NOT OUT
OF OBLIGATION, BUT BECAUSE IT LEADS TO
REAL FREEDOM.



DAY THREE

HEBREWS 12:8-10

Most of us don't love discipline or correction. In fact, we often try to avoid it. Even as kids, many of us try to hide the wrong things we do because we're afraid of getting in trouble. We want to avoid getting grounded or giving up recess or writing lines. Sadly, some of us have even experienced unnecessarily harsh punishment or abuse, and this distorts our view of discipline, right? We attach it to pain or fear. But in a loving family, parents discipline their children in a healthy manner. Parents do this to help them learn what is harmful from what's helpful—what's going to lead them to peace rather than chaos. Discipline is form of love. When someone disciplines us, that person shows he or she cares about our well-being and our character.

God cares deeply about our physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. He allows us to experience the consequences of our sin so He can correct us. God is holy, and He calls us to be holy as well (1 Pet. 1:16). We were made in God's image, but when we allow sin to rule us, we begin to look more like the world than our Maker. While discipline never feels good, we can thank God for loving us enough to allow us to experience it. It shows us where we went wrong—where we veered off the path. And it teaches us how we can make godly decisions next time we face that situation.

○ **WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DISCIPLINE AND PUNISHMENT?**

○ **WHEN HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED CONSEQUENCES FOR YOUR SIN?**

PRAY

GOD, HELP ME NOT TO RUN FROM YOUR
DISCIPLINE. HELP ME TO EMBRACE IT AS A
WAY TO LEARN FROM MY MISTAKES AND TO
BECOME MORE LIKE YOU.



DAY FOUR

ROMANS 8:1-17

Imagine being locked in a dark prison cell for several years. You have no access to social media, no contact with friends or family, and no entertainment. You're shackled to the wall, and you sleep on a thin mat on the floor. Food is basic: water, soup, and bread. How would you feel to suddenly be released from this prison? How would you spend your new freedom?

Jesus freed us from a prison far worse than the one described above. With His death and resurrection, Jesus set us free from the prison of sin and shame. He accomplished what we could never accomplish on our own by following the law: our salvation (v. 3). He perfectly fulfilled the law and made a way for us to walk in freedom instead of living enslaved to sin! But we sometimes forget what we've been freed from. If you were released from a real prison cell, you'd probably soak up all life has to offer. You'd likely be full of gratitude as you remembered the conditions of your cell. As believers, we can walk in complete freedom because of Jesus. And we should live completely different lives because we're no longer enslaved to our sin. The chains don't bind us anymore. We can look back at our old lives and our past mistakes and know we don't ever have to return to the way we previously lived because the Spirit now directs us.

○ **HOW ARE YOU SPENDING YOUR FREEDOM?**

○ **HOW HAS JESUS SET YOU FREE? WHAT STEPS CAN YOU TAKE TO REMEMBER ALL THE WAYS JESUS HAS FREED YOU?**

PRAY

THANK YOU FOR FREEING ME FROM THE
BONDAGE OF SIN. FILL ME WITH GRATITUDE
FOR THE FREEDOM I HAVE IN YOU.



DAY FIVE

GALATIANS 4:8-10; 5:1

That prison cell we discussed yesterday—would you willingly return to it after being set free? Probably not! It would be like your parents punishing you by taking away your phone or the keys to your car and then you turning them back in even after the punishment was over. Or it's like finishing detention for a week and then begging for another week of it. We don't usually ask for more punishment, right? In fact, we do anything we can to escape it!

Here's the deal: Sin is bondage. Sin is like a jail cell. It's a temporary high that only leads to disappointment, shame, and disconnection from our loving God. But we so often return to it, don't we? Jesus set us free from sin. We now have the Holy Spirit—God living inside of us. We don't have to make the same decisions we did before knowing Him. The things we used to do in ignorance—lying, gossiping, taking part in ungodly behavior—shouldn't be enticing to us anymore because we know God. We know freedom! But we feel drawn back to what used to enslave us. Until we join God in heaven, we will struggle with sin. We still live in a fallen world. But we don't have to let it rule over us. Paul calls these things “weak and worthless” (v. 9). When we feel tempted by sin, we can look back and remember our slavery. We can train our minds to embrace freedom instead of returning to the things that used to hold us captive.

○ **WHAT SINS DO YOU STRUGGLE TO WALK AWAY FROM? WHY?**

○ **WHAT STEPS CAN YOU TAKE TO CONTINUALLY WALK IN FREEDOM?**

PRAY

GOD, I CONFESS THE SIN I KEEP RETURNING
TO AND ASK THAT YOU HELP ME WALK
AWAY FROM IT. HELP ME BE AN EXAMPLE OF
FREEDOM FOR OTHERS TO MODEL.