

# Better Way Apostolic Church- Bible Class

## Subject: BOUNDARIES for Success in God: Genesis 2:16-17 Emptied of Self

While it is the Divine Spirit that makes the ground of the human heart good, the truth that is set forth in the parable of the sower bears on human responsibility. We must try to have our hearts like good ground for "the seed," to hear and understand the word. Let us hear it regularly, not "now and then"; let us pray beforehand for the grace of the Holy Spirit; let us guard against preoccupying the heart with the things of the world—as in a Sunday newspaper; and let us be ready to do as the word directs, like the jailer when he asked, "What must I do to be saved" (Acts 16:30), or like Saul when he said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6).

### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF GOD'S BOUNDARIES?

Genesis 2:16-17 . . . The Lord God gave him this warning: "You may freely eat any fruit in the garden except fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat of its fruit, you will surely die."

Deuteronomy 10:13 . . . Obey the Lord's commands and laws that I am giving you today for your own good.

God's boundaries are set for our own good. They help us stay within his will.

Psalms 36:1 . . . Sin whispers to the wicked, deep within their hearts. They have no fear of God to restrain them.

Romans 3:17-18 . . . They do not know what true peace is. They have no fear of God to restrain them.

God's boundaries are set for our protection from evil. They help us stay away from sin.

Psalms 23:4 . . . Even when I walk through the dark valley of death, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me. Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me.

God's boundaries are set for our safety and comfort. They keep us from harm.

### WHAT ARE GOD'S BOUNDARIES FOR US?

Micah 6:8 . . . No, O people, the Lord has already told you what is good, and this is what he requires: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.

God's boundaries are his loving restraints to keep us from falling away from him. God's boundaries call us to right living for ourselves, to show mercy to others, and to have a relationship with him. Right living with God and showing mercy to others—not a bad fence to live within, is it?

Deuteronomy 10:12-13 . . . Now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you?

He requires you to fear him, to live according to his will, to love and worship him with all your heart and soul, and to obey the Lord's commands and laws that I am giving you today for your own good.

God's commands and laws act as boundaries for us. We are to obey him out of our love and worship of him. Our motive is not the fence around us but the love for God within us.

Job 26:10 . . . He created the horizon when he separated the waters; he set the boundaries for day and night.

Ecclesiastes 3:1 . . . There is a time for everything, a season for every activity under heaven.

God provides boundaries of time and seasons for us. These provide certain parameters of predictability for our lives, giving us confidence that we can trust in his reliability.

Job 38:8-11 . . . “Who defined the boundaries of the sea as it burst from the womb, and as I clothed it with clouds and thick darkness? For I locked it behind barred gates, limiting its shores. I said, ‘Thus far and no farther will you come. Here your proud waves must stop!’”

Psalms 104:9 . . . Then you set a firm boundary for the seas, so they would never again cover the earth.

Proverbs 8:29 . . . I was there when he set the limits of the seas, so they would not spread beyond their boundaries. And when he marked off the earth’s foundations.

Jeremiah 5:22 . . . Do you have no respect for me? Why do you not tremble in my presence? I, the Lord, am the one who defines the ocean’s sandy shoreline, an everlasting boundary that the waters cannot cross. The waves may toss and roar, but they can never pass the bounds I set.

God provides physical boundaries for our protection and our enjoyment. Fish do not swim in a desert, nor do eagles swim beneath the seas. Know your limitations and you will enjoy your lifestyle better.

### **WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF FAILING TO OBSERVE GOD’S BOUNDARIES?**

Jude 1:6-7 . . . I remind you of the angels who did not stay within the limits of authority God gave them but left the place where they belonged. God has kept them chained in prisons of darkness, waiting for the day of judgment. And don’t forget the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighboring towns, which were filled with sexual immorality and every kind of sexual perversion. Those cities were destroyed by fire and are a warning of the eternal fire that will punish all who are evil.

God judges those who refuse to observe his boundaries of righteous living. If God puts a fence of some kind around you, he wants to keep something harmful from you or keep you from something harmful.

Genesis 3:15-24 . . . “From now on, you and the woman will be enemies, and your offspring and her offspring will be enemies. He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” Then he said to the woman, “You will bear children with intense pain and suffering. And though your desire will be for your husband, he will be your master.” And to Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate the fruit I told you not to eat, I have placed a curse on the ground. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it. It will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat of its grains. All your life you will sweat to produce food, until your dying day. Then you will return to the ground from which you came. For you were made from dust, and to the dust you will return.” . . . So the Lord God banished Adam and his wife from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made.

After banishing them from the garden, the Lord God stationed mighty angelic beings to the east of Eden. And a flaming sword flashed back and forth, guarding the way to the tree of life.

Psalms 94:12 . . . Happy are those whom you discipline, Lord, and those whom you teach from your law.

Isaiah 38:16 . . . Lord, your discipline is good, for it leads to life and health.

Hebrews 12:7-11 . . . As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating

you as his own children. Whoever heard of a child who was never disciplined? . . . Since we respect our earthly fathers who disciplined us, should we not all the more cheerfully submit to the discipline of our heavenly Father and live forever? . . . But God's discipline is always right and good for us because it means we will share in his holiness. No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening-it is painful! But afterward there will be a quiet harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way. God disciplines his children in love when they move beyond his boundaries. He does this to lovingly bring us back to him.

Ecclesiastes 7:13 . . . Notice the way God does things; then fall into line. Don't fight the ways of God, for who can straighten out what he has made crooked?

God's boundaries will prevail. God's ways are not our ways, nor can we change them to make them our ways. Accepting God's imposed limitations will bring a happier life because we can be assured that his limitations protect us and guide us toward what is best for us.

### **HOW DO I SET BOUNDARIES FOR MYSELF?**

Romans 12:2 . . . Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is.

2 Corinthians 10:13 . . . We will not boast of authority we do not have. Our goal is to stay within the boundaries of God's plan for us, and this plan includes our working there with you.

Start by striving to be set apart for God. Study his Word to find out how to live as a believer, and how to be transformed by his power and presence. His Word provides the proper boundaries for living. To avoid his Word is to ignore his boundaries for you.

1 Corinthians 7:35 . . . I am saying this for your benefit, not to place restrictions on you. I want you to do whatever will help you serve the Lord best, with as few distractions as possible.

Serving the Lord is a lifetime priority. Thus, setting boundaries is a lifetime commitment which will provide you with a lifelong goal of pursuing his will. Rather than restricting you, this gets rid of distractions that can keep you from accomplishing magnificent things for him.

1 Corinthians 10:29, 32-33 . . . It might not be a matter of conscience for you, but it is for the other person. . . . I try to please everyone in everything I do. I don't just do what I like or what is best for me, but what is best for them so they may be saved.

God's Word clearly states certain rules that we must live by. But God's Word also talks much about following the spirit of his law, doing things that will not cause another to stumble, even though those things might be technically appropriate.

We should unselfishly consider others when setting our personal boundaries. Part of the reason we set up personal boundaries is to keep us from hurting others, particularly if that means causing them to stumble when considering belief in God.

Proverbs 21:16 . . . The person who strays from common sense will end up in the company of the dead.

Common sense is necessary in establishing personal boundaries. How often do we make life decisions based on impulse or emotion when common sense screams for us to say "no."

## HOW DO WE OBLITERATE THE NEGATIVE BOUNDARIES IN OUR LIVES?

Numbers 11:23 . . . Then the Lord said to Moses, "Is there any limit to my power? Now you will see whether or not my word comes true!"

Matthew 17:20 . . . "You didn't have enough faith," Jesus told them. "I assure you, even if you had faith as small as a mustard seed you could say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it would move. Nothing would be impossible."

Matthew 19:26 . . . Jesus looked at them intently and said, "Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But with God everything is possible."

Ephesians 3:20 . . . Now glory be to God! By his mighty power at work within us, he is able to accomplish infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or hope.

**We should not place limitations on God. Nothing is impossible for him. He is ready to help you get rid of bad habits, sinful practices and desires, or anything else that is fencing you out from his love and freedom.**

Ecclesiastes 11:4 . . . If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done.

Psalms 119:96 . . . Even perfection has its limits, but your commands have no limit.

**PERFECTIONISM CAN ACT AS A BARRIER TO ACTION FOR US. IT IS NOT NECESSARY TO ALWAYS WAIT FOR THE "PERFECT" OPPORTUNITY; WE ARE TO OBEDIENTLY FOLLOW HIM AND HIS COMMANDS AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY.**

Matthew 7:1-2 . . . "Stop judging others, and you will not be judged. For others will treat you as you treat them. Whatever measure you use in judging others, it will be used to measure how you are judged."

John 8:15 . . . You judge me with all your human limitations, but I am not judging anyone.

Judging others can be a barrier to our loving others as we should. We are commanded to stop judging each other. Judging others is trying to put them within our imposed box or boundaries. We don't like it when others try to do this to us.

James 2:1-4 . . . My dear brothers and sisters, how can you claim that you have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you favor some people more than others? For instance, suppose someone comes into your meeting dressed in fancy clothes and expensive jewelry, and another comes in who is poor and dressed in shabby clothes. If you give special attention and a good seat to the rich person, but you say to the poor one, "You can stand over there, or else sit on the floor"-well, doesn't this discrimination show that you are guided by wrong motives?

Proverbs 31:20 . . . She extends a helping hand to the poor and opens her arms to the needy.

**Discrimination can be a boundary that closes us off from a person in need. We are to help all who are in need. If everyone discriminated against those unlike themselves, the world would be an incredibly lonely place.**

### PROMISE FROM GOD:

Deuteronomy 10:12-13 . . . "Now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you? He requires you to fear him, to live according to his will, to love and worship him with all your heart and soul, and to obey the Lord's commands and laws that I am giving you today for your own good."