

# DID GOD REALLY SAY?

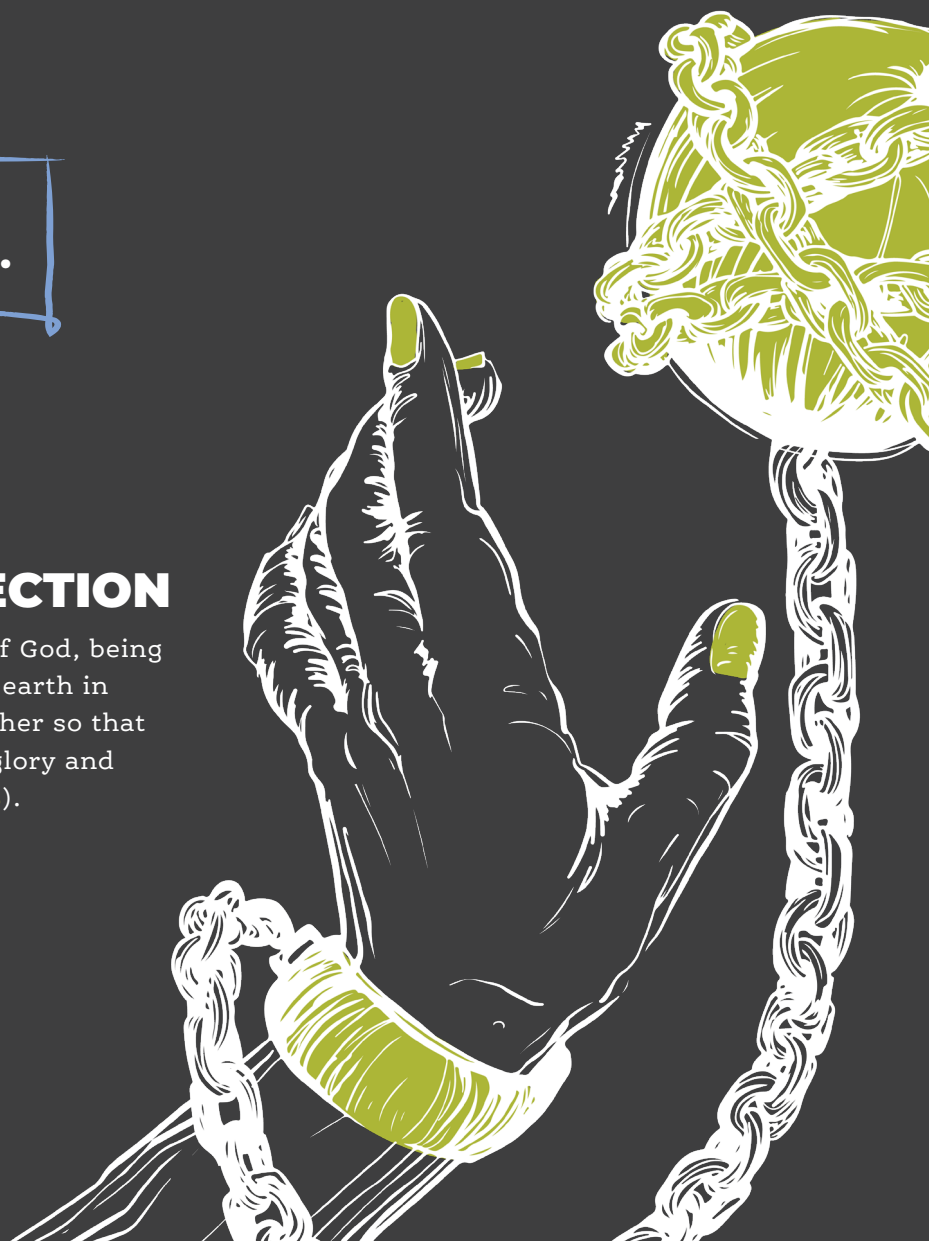
## MAIN POINT.

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 read all of the content on the timeline as you prepare to teach.

**Genesis 2:8**

**Genesis 3:7**

## **GOD'S BOUNDARIES ARE GOOD**

### **GENESIS 2:8-9,15-17**

8 And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. 9 And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. . . . 15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

## **BELIEVING GOD'S WORD HELPS US AVOID SIN**

### **GENESIS 3:1-7**

1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" 2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, 3 but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" 4 But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

# BEFORE YOU TEACH

## MAIN POINT.

**Leaders:** Thank you for preparing to teach God's Word. As you do, may He teach you new and wonderful truths (Ps. 119:18).

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

## BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

### GOD'S BOUNDARIES ARE GOOD

#### GENESIS 2:15-17

"The instruction of the Lord is given as a positive expression of God's goodness rather than a harsh restriction (v. 16b). . . . This generosity is heightened by the following Hebrew construction translated 'you are free to eat,' which could also be translated 'you may eat freely' (NRSV). This strong affirmation indicates that the provision of God for the first couple is plentiful and to be enjoyed liberally by them. But freedom has no meaning without prohibition; the boundary for Adam is but one tree. This prohibition, however, is stated in the strongest terms, as was the provision. . . . The preemptive warning is necessary because, unlike the other members of the created order, mankind alone has the potential for crossing moral boundaries. Out of God's goodness and mercy he informs the man that the consequence of disobedience is death; what is at stake is whether he will choose to trust God's words."<sup>5</sup>

### BELIEVING GOD'S WORD HELPS US AVOID SIN

#### GENESIS 3:5

"In this verse the Evil One questioned the goodness of God when he declared, God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. Satan had already hinted that God must not be good if he had restricted mankind in any way. His next attack was consistent with what he had already implied. God reveals his character through his Word. When the serpent questioned God's word, he questioned God's goodness. When he questioned God's goodness, he questioned God's word."<sup>6</sup>

#### GENESIS 3:6

"Failure to appreciate God's goodness leads to distrust of his goodness. Distrust leads to dissatisfaction and finally to disobedience. God's prohibitions as well as his provisions are for our good. But mankind wants to be independent, to go his own way, to be subject to no one. God has always asked people to believe and trust his word. God has always asked people to believe that he is sovereign and good. His desire is that we trust him so we will live abundantly (John 10:10; 17:3). God has always asked people to believe that true satisfaction comes by obeying him and respecting his prohibitions—to live by faith, not by sight."<sup>7</sup>



## CONTEXT

At this point in the biblical narrative, we've already seen that God is good and everything He does is for our good. He established Eden and placed man there to live and work, giving him authority over the plants and animals. God's words, "**you may surely**" (Gen. 2:16), tell us something critical: **the boundaries God puts in place are for our freedom**. We see humankind's first boundary: not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. We don't know how much time had passed since God created humans in His image, but things took a tragic turn when the serpent asked Eve a simple question: "**Did God actually say?**" Satan still uses this tactic today.

## 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).

## PRAY

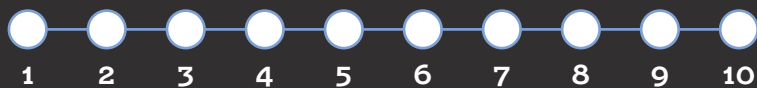
LORD, HELP US DISPLAY WHAT IT LOOKS  
LIKE TO LIVE IN FREEDOM AS WE POINT OUR  
STUDENTS TO FREEDOM IN YOUR SON.



## KICK STARTER

### RATE IT!

On a scale of 1-10, how difficult is it to submit to authority?





These optional activities are designed to help your students interact. You'll find a Discussion Activity and a Cultural Connection, which touches on a relevant topic in today's teen culture. Each group is different, so adapt these activities to fit your group's needs. The goal is for students to connect more to the lesson as they connect to the topic and to one another.

# 1

## RULES AND AUTHORITY

### **SUPPLIES LIST: NONE**

Ask the following questions, allowing time for students to share responses:

- **WHAT IS ONE RULE AT HOME OR AT SCHOOL THAT YOU WISH YOU COULD CHANGE?**
- **WOULD SOCIETY BE BETTER OFF WITHOUT RULES AND LAWS? EXPLAIN.**
- **IS IT IMPORTANT FOR SOMEONE TO BE IN CHARGE? WHY OR WHY NOT?**

Our definition of freedom matters greatly. Freedom isn't the absence of rules or authority; in fact, that would lead to anarchy. But freedom is truly found when we operate within the good boundaries that are in place to protect us. These boundaries help us live fuller lives.

# 2

## CULTURAL CONNECTION

Sometimes the church doesn't talk enough about doubt or treats it like it doesn't exist. Maybe if we ignore our doubt 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 okay to ask questions. So, ask God to show you what's true. Instead of ignoring your doubt, wrestle with it to work through it.

# DISCUSSION

## MAIN POINT.

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

## GOD'S BOUNDARIES ARE GOOD

READ GENESIS 2:8-9,15-17



### WHAT'S THE POINT OF BOUNDARIES? WHAT DOES IT REVEAL ABOUT GOD THAT HE GIVES US BOUNDARIES?

Boundaries usually keep us safe—physically and emotionally. God is our heavenly Father. Earthly fathers give boundaries to their children, disciplining them when those boundaries are crossed. God loves us infinitely more than our parents do. God wants His children to live abundantly (John 10:10). In His perfect wisdom, God knows what will rob us of this abundant life—what will draw us away from Him. **Because He loves us and He is good, God gives us boundaries to protect us from spiritual harm and to help us live in a way that glorifies Him.**

### WHY DO WE SOMETIMES STRUGGLE TO SUBMIT TO GOD'S AUTHORITY?

Submitting to authority isn't always fun, right? Things unraveled in Eden because of humankind's disobedience to God. And honestly, we've struggled with authority ever since. In our sin nature, we resist the idea of someone telling us what we can or can't do. Some of us resist it because we've been hurt by bad examples of authority. It may feel like a suppression of our freedom; we want to choose our own way. This could look like choosing to give in to sexual temptation, lying, or gossiping. We fall into a trap of believing we're entitled to live the way we want to live. **While we do have free will, we'll never have authority.** Even when we choose to disobey God, we're not in control.

### HOW CAN BOUNDARIES ACTUALLY LEAD TO *FREEDOM*?

Godly boundaries do not equal bondage. The boundaries God gives us in His Word are designed to help us enjoy the freedom found by living according to the Spirit. Instead, **real bondage is found in living outside of God's Word.** Biblically, bondage means living according to our sinful nature (Rom. 8:2). Sin is like a cage that holds us captive to our own desires. When we commit to living according to God's Word and following Him in obedience, we find true freedom from our sin nature.

## BELIEVING GOD'S WORDS HELPS US AVOID SIN

READ GENESIS 3:1-7

### HOW DID SATAN DISTORT GOD'S WORDS IN VERSE 1?

The serpent used doubt as a weapon against Eve. He asked, "Did God actually say?" (Gen. 3:1). With these words, **the serpent planted a seed that led Eve to question God's words and His character.** God was clear in His command: Don't eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But the serpent twisted God's words, prompting Eve to doubt what she'd heard. She even exaggerated God's command, making it seem much harsher than it was.

### HOW DO YOU SEE GOD'S WORD BEING DISTORTED IN SOCIETY? WHY DOES CULTURE REJECT ITS AUTHORITY?

Culture often twists God's Word. People—even believers—will take Scripture out of context to justify certain behaviors. For example, there is currently an attack on the Biblical views of gender, sex, and identity. Unbelievers don't want to submit to God's authority because the Spirit isn't living within them (1 Cor. 2:14). As believers, we must always defend God's Word as truth and allow it to have authority in our lives. **We must also know God's Word in order to detect when it's being distorted.**

### WHEN HAS SATAN CAUSED YOU TO DOUBT ONE OF GOD'S COMMANDS?

Maybe you think some of God's commands are outdated. Culture dictates what is "normal." For example, profanity seems widely acceptable. We hear it everywhere, but God is clear about using language to glorify Him and build others up (Eph. 4:29). We allow what's "normal" for society to make us doubt the relevance of God's Word. **But God's character and His Word are steady. We can depend on Him to lead us to truth and freedom.** Instead of relying on society, we must look to God's Word for guidance.

## WRAP-UP

✝ **DOES YOUR LIFE REFLECT THAT YOU BELIEVE GOD'S WORD? EXPLAIN.**

**If we look to God's Word as authority—if we really believe it—then the way we live will look different from the way the world lives.** This might mean we make different choices, like glorifying God with our words, having godly standards in relationships, or sharing the gospel. This will mean we love people—even those rejected by society. God's Spirit living within us will draw us to the Lord. Here's the deal: living under God's authority is a good thing! God's commands and boundaries come from His goodness and His love, from His holiness and His desire for us to be holy and experience freedom. **God is worthy of our obedience.** His authority is pure and trustworthy. When we surrender our will, we show the world how to follow Christ. Sometimes this obedience will go against the flow of society, but the Holy Spirit gives us the power to live out God's Word.