

Boundaries

- I. boundary: That which serves to indicate the bounds or limits of anything whether material or immaterial; also the limit itself.

- II. Legitimate boundaries are everywhere and to be respected.
 - A. God Himself is bound by His being.
 1. He is God in Three Persons, no more nor less. **1JO 5:7.**
 2. He cannot die, lie or deny Himself. **1TI 1:17; TIT 1:2; 2TI 2:13.**
 - B. It was the overstepping of a boundary that brought sin into the world. **GEN 2:16-17.**
 1. This boundary-breach was facilitated by the principle of an artificial boundary which was more restrictive. **GEN 3:1-3.**
 2. This principle of imposing greater boundaries than God Himself imposes remains a threat to well-being. **1TI 4:1-3.**
 - C. The forces and substance of nature operate within God-appointed bounds. **JOB 38:8-11.**
 1. Without this limiting principle in nature, nuclear chaos would be inevitable.
 2. This principle has an analogy in the way God governs men. **PRO 21:1.**
 3. God allows evil to flourish to execute His will but limits it. **ISA 10:5-7; PSA 76:10.**
 - D. God ordained boundaries of nations for man's benefit. **ACT 17:26-27.**
 1. Antichrist autocrats remove such boundaries. **ISA 10:13.**
 2. The dividing of men at Babel was to restrain one thing which knows no boundaries: the capacity of sinners' imaginations to do evil. **GEN 11:6.**
 - E. There are appointed boundaries of authority.
 1. In Israel, no one man could hold all three offices of prophet, priest and king. A king could also be a prophet but not a priest. **2CH 26:18.**
 2. Women have authority over their children but not over their husband. **EPH 5:23.**
 3. In all human relationships (social, civil, marital, familial, etc.) no authority is ultimate.
 - a. All authorities are derived from God Who is the only Potentate (one endowed with independent power). **1TI 6:15.**
 - b. God is uniquely the model of ultimate authority in relationships (Trinity).
 - c. All subordinates of earthly powers have the right (and sometimes the duty) to appeal to power above them, all the way up to God. **ACT 5:28-29.**

- III. A sometimes overlooked area of authority and submission is employer/employee relationships.
 - A. Christians have a duty to respect the power who employs them in its lawful exercise. **MAT 20:15.**
 1. We should not be slothful in business but fervent. **ROM 12:11.**
 2. We should conduct ourselves with integrity. **1TH 4:11-12.**
 - B. There is a limited analogy of the master/servant relationship to instruct us. **COL 3:22-24; TIT 2:9-10.**
 1. There is a distinction between master/servant and employer/employee relationships.
 2. The master/servant relationship implies bondage: an obligatory submission to the will of a master. This relationship is not forbidden in Christ but ordered and regulated. **1CO 7:21-23; EPH 6:5-8; 1TI 6:1-2.**
 3. The employer/employee relationship is a matter of consensual contract: hired labourers who agree to work for a sum. **MAT 20:13.**
 - a. Employee infidelity in such arrangements may constitute *covenantbreaking*

- (**ROM 1:31**) where an employee defrauds his employer by refusing to perform contractual duty yet receiving compensation.
- b. It is not covenantbreaking to quit employment or to challenge the unreasonable expectations of an employer: these are areas of negotiation, not defiance or negligence.
 - c. Even the greatest Master / Employer invites reasoned challenge.
GEN 18:25; ISA 41:21.
- C. In all such authority/subordinate relationships, God sets bounds for the man on top, not just the man on the bottom.
1. Masters do not have absolute power over servants but are expected to treat them humanely and fairly, respecting family. **COL 4:1; LEV 25:39-41; JOB 31:13-15.**
 2. Employers are enjoined likewise, and to not defraud their hires of their due.
JER 22:13; JAM 5:4.
 3. But for exceptional situations, the labourer should be secure in his wage and his time at the end of the work day. **LEV 19:13; PSA 104:23; JOH 9:4.**
 - a. A salaried employee by contractual agreement may be required to work extra hours.
 - b. But a wage-earner should not be expected to work “off the clock” for free. When he punches out of his work-day, he is done for the day. He does not need to subsidize his employer with free labor and time that belongs to him.
 4. Neither a master or an employer owns a subordinate and God demands the subordinate heed other priorities like religion and family.
 - a. Tyranny presumes to interfere with religion and family order but the godly resist. **EXO 1:16-17; DAN 6:7-10.**
 - b. Servants belong to God first, being purchased by Christ. **1CO 7:23.**
 - c. Christ did not let the expectations of men keep Him from higher priorities.
LUK 4:42-43.
 5. Watch out for self-imposed excesses as if the fate of the world or the company depends on you. It doesn't. **ROM 12:3.**
 6. The man who trusts his cares to God can rest. **PSA 3:1-5; 4:8.**