

Chapter 2

GOD'S PLAN FOR YOUR BODY

"It is absolutely clear that God has called you to a free life. Just make sure that you don't use this freedom as an excuse to do whatever you want to do and destroy your freedom..." Galatians 5:13 (MSG)

There is freedom in living your life the way God planned it and bondage when you do not. People who follow God's plan have joy, peace, and satisfaction. Sin spoils those good things in your life.

God created all things and everything God created is good. So where does evil come from? God did not create evil. Evil is simply a perversion of something that God intended for good. Good things taken outside of God's plan become perverted.

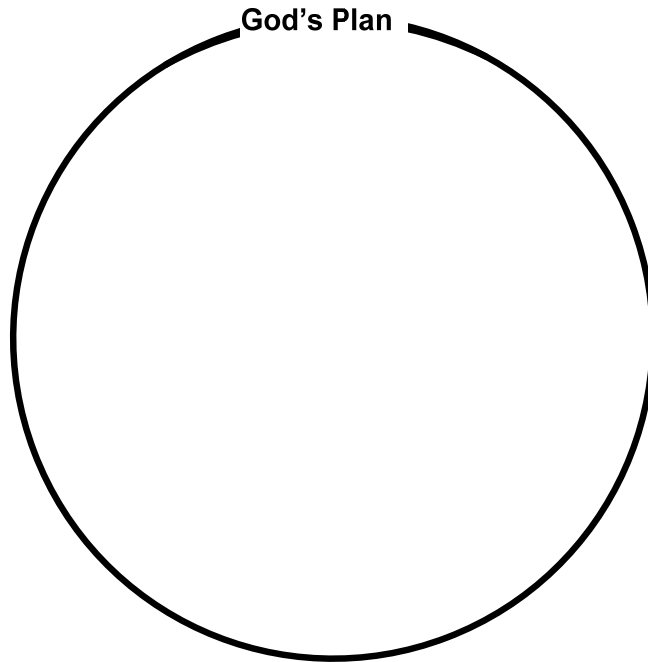
"Good" Taken Beyond the Bounds

God has established boundaries or rules for you to follow. When you remain inside of those bounds, life is good.

"God has called us to be holy, not to live impure lives. Anyone who refuses to live by these rules is not disobeying human rules but is rejecting God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you." 1 Thessalonians 4:7-8 (NLT)

- Q1.** What are some of the boundaries or rules God has established for your life?

Q2. How well do you stay inside of those boundaries?



This large circle represents the boundary of God's plan. Inside of His plan are many good things He has created for you to enjoy.

In the Garden of Eden, God provided everything Adam and Eve would ever need but He also gave them a boundary they were not to cross. God gave freedom with boundaries.

"And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'"

Genesis 3:2–3 (NKJ)

Unfortunately, just like Adam and Eve, we often go outside of God's plan to get what we want. God has given us everything we need for a good life, but we get deceived into believing He will withhold good from us.

"Then the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate."

Genesis 3:4–6 (NKJ)

Q3. What do you believe about God meeting your needs?

Enjoyment

God doesn't want you to live a boring life. He wants you to enjoy all He has given you.

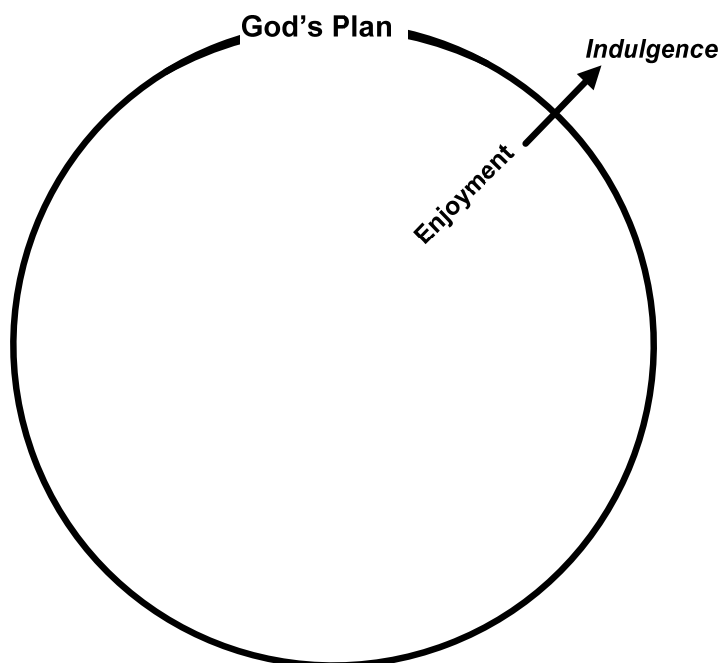
*"...Trust should be in the living God, who richly gives us all we need for our **enjoyment**."* **1 Timothy 6:17** (NLT)

Q4. Do you have trouble enjoying life? If so, what keeps you from that enjoyment?

Enjoyment of life is inside of God's plan. However, when you take enjoyment to the extreme, it becomes indulgence. It is a good thing that has become twisted or perverted. *Indulgence* is outside of God's plan and bounds.

*“But let the Lord Jesus Christ take control of you, and don't think of ways to **indulge** your evil desires.”*

Romans 13:14 (NLT)



The diagram above shows how taking enjoyment of life beyond the boundary of God's plan becomes indulgence.

- Q5.** Do you take good things like parties, hobbies, or entertainment too far? Explain.

Diligence

When God created Adam, He gave him work to do. Adam was to care for the garden and name the animals. God has work for you to do too.

*“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” **Ephesians 2:10** (NLT)*

- Q6.** Do you believe you were designed to do good things? Explain.

The Bible says to be *diligent* as you work. Work hard cheerfully not grudgingly. You will experience joy as you work for the Lord.

"Work hard and cheerfully at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people."
Colossians 3:23 (NLT)

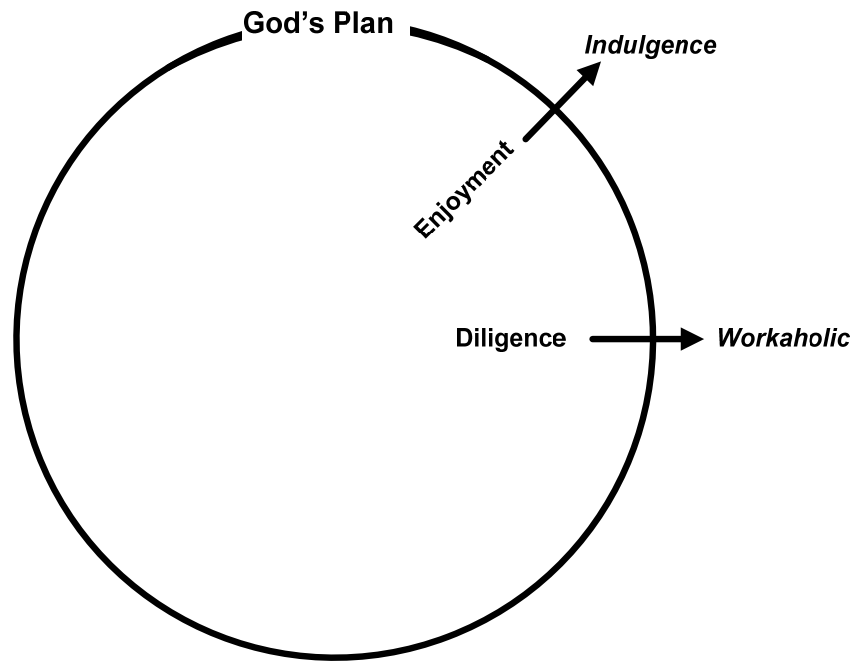
Working diligently can be taken outside of the bounds of God's plan. That person is a workaholic. A *workaholic* works obsessively. Jesus had much to accomplish while He was on earth but He remained inside of God's plan.

- Q7.** Do you work compulsively, even at the expense of your relationship with God, family, and friends? If so, what is your reason for working so hard?

"And this, too, is a very serious problem. As people come into this world, so they depart. All their hard work is for nothing. They have been working for the wind, and everything will be swept away." **Ecclesiastes 5:16** (NLT)

You also use your body to read the Bible, worship, and serve God, these are all good things.

- Q8.** Do you think it is possible to take even these things outside of the bounds?

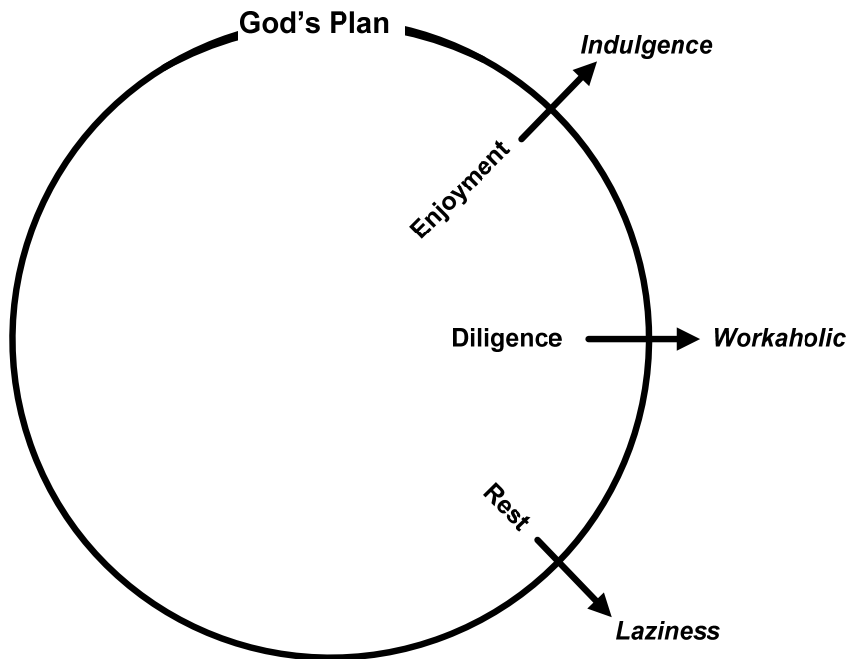


Rest

Physical *rest* is part of God's plan. God rested after creating the world. He tells us to rest too.

*"For all who enter into God's rest will find **rest** from their labors, just as God rested after creating the world."*

Hebrews 4:10 (NLT)



However, if you spend too much time sleeping or resting, you go outside of God's bounds and become *lazy*.

*"A **lazy** person has trouble all through life; the path of the upright is easy!"* **Proverbs 15:19** (NLT)

Lazy people usually don't get a good night's sleep because their bodies aren't tired and they have neglected so many things that their minds are full of worry.

Q9. Do you try to escape frustration and worry through excessive sleeping? Explain.

Q10. What excuses do you give for not being responsible?

Eating

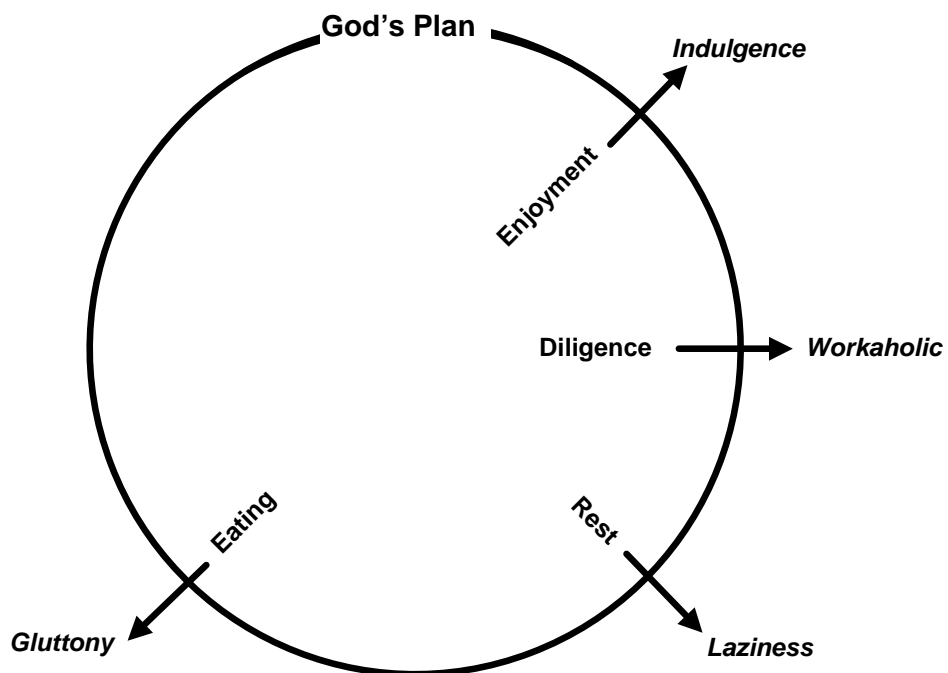
God created you with a need to eat. He created many things for you to enjoy eating.

“When you open your hand, you satisfy the hunger and thirst of every living thing.” Psalm 145:16 (NLT)

Staying inside of God’s plan with your appetite would be eating when you are hungry and stopping when you are full.

Jesus didn’t allow himself to be ruled by His appetite. During His forty day fast, He told the devil that man doesn’t live by bread alone.

“...Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.” Luke 4:4 (NKJ)



When eating crosses God’s bounds, it is called *gluttony*. Just like alcoholism or laziness will destroy your life, so will gluttony.

*“For the drunkard and the **glutton** will come to poverty, and drowsiness will clothe a man with rags.”*
Proverbs 23:21 (NKJ)

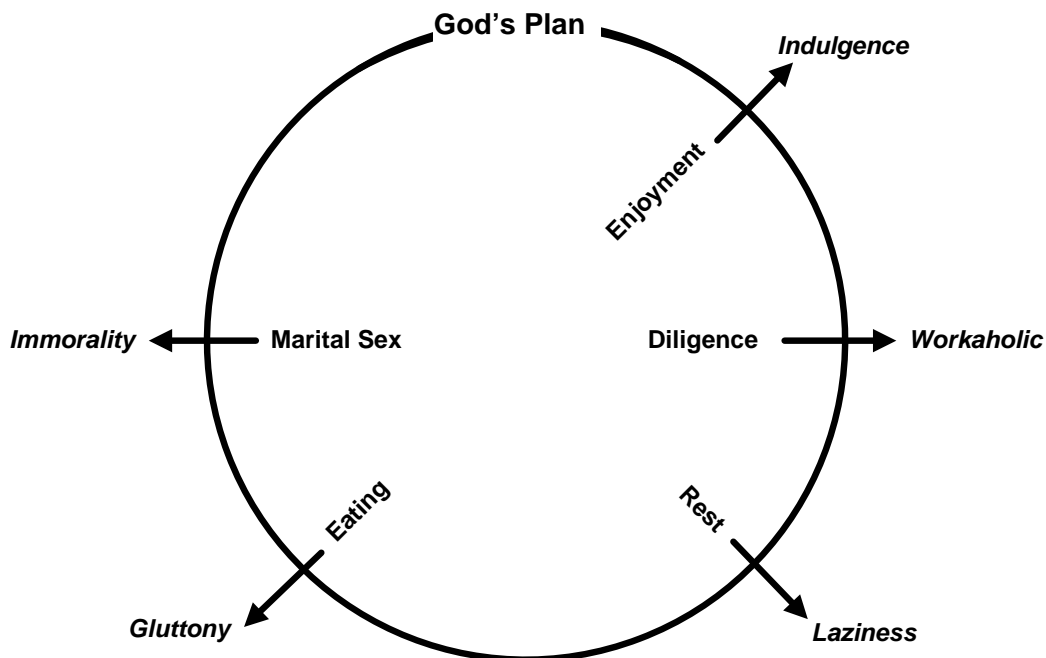
Another way you may cross God's bounds in the area of eating, is by bingeing on food and then purging it from your body or starving your body when it needs food.

Marital Sex

Another blessing inside of God's plan is sex. God created sex for your enjoyment but only within the context of His plan; between a man and woman who are joined together in marriage. Following God's plan is sexual purity.

"Honor marriage, and guard the sacredness of sexual intimacy between wife and husband..."

Hebrews 13:4 (MSG)



Not being sexually pure, for example, sex before marriage, sex with a partner of your same sex, pornography, extramarital affairs, is going outside of God's will and called sexual *immorality*.

*"...Our bodies were not made for sexual **immorality**. They were made for the Lord, and the Lord cares about our bodies."* **1 Corinthians 6:13** (NLT)

Q11. Have you taken the good thing, marital sex, and gone outside of God's bounds? Explain.

Q12. Have you experienced peace and joy or shame and regret?

Crossing God's bounds may seem fun or exciting but over time it will destroy your life. God makes rules to keep you safe and blessed.

God wants to meet your needs but when you cross His bounds you are trying to be your own god.

Beauty

In the Bible, there are accounts of both women and men who were described as attractive like Sarah, Esther, David, and Moses. Though the Hebrews did not exalt the human form as the world does, looking your best or dressing nicely isn't condemned by God.

Yet physical *beauty* was secondary to loving Him.

*"Charm is deceptive, and **beauty** does not last; but a woman who fears the LORD will be greatly praised."*

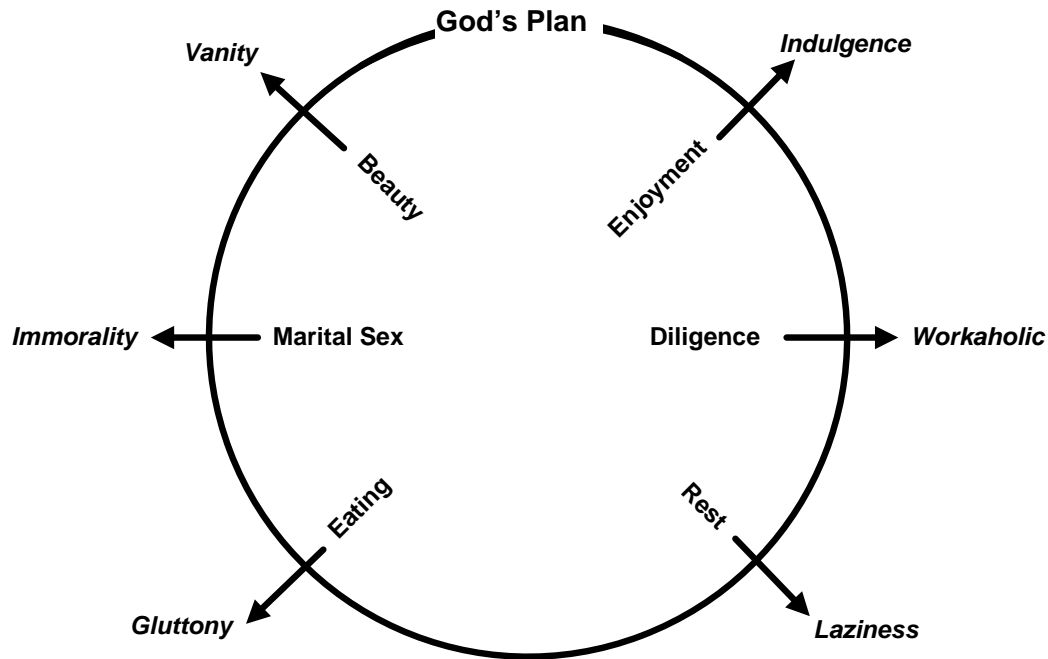
Proverbs 31:30 (NLT)

Q13. In what ways would you be different if you focused more time on your relationship with God than your appearance?

*"And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands for us; Yes, establish the work of our hands." **Psalms 90:17** (NKJ)*

Personal care of your body becomes *vanity* when taken outside of God's bounds. Vanity shows itself when you spend more time and money on improving your outward appearance than your inward condition.

Q14. Do you try to gain attention by how you look?



"Don't be concerned about the outward beauty that depends on fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. You should be known for the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God."

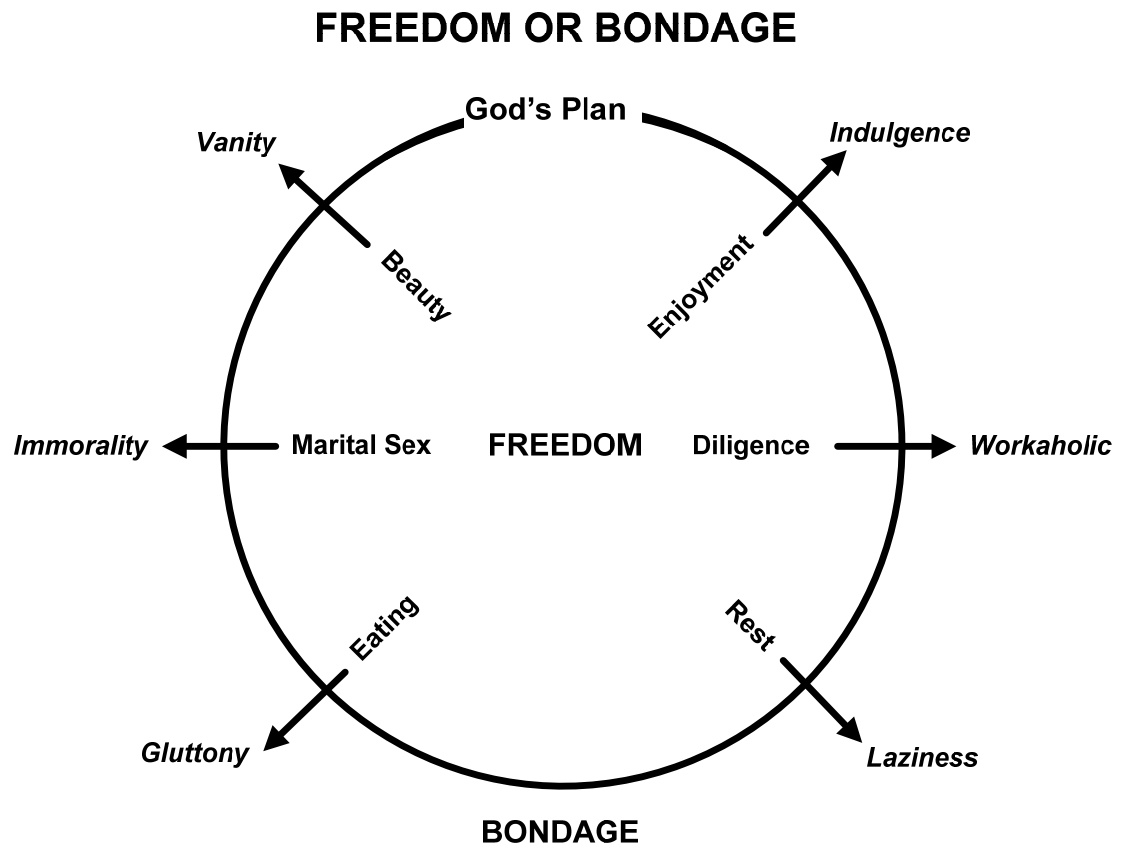
1 Peter 3:3–4 (NLT)

Freedom

Here's the paradox, staying inside of God's plan sets you free. Going beyond His boundaries produces bondage.

Q15. Circle the words on the following diagram that best describe your present behavior.

Q16. Which ones are outside the bounds?



If you are outside of God's plan in one or more areas, consider the words of King Solomon. When he was outside of God's boundaries, this is what he discovered.

"But as I looked at everything I had worked so hard to accomplish, it was all so meaningless. It was like chasing the wind. There was nothing really worthwhile anywhere."

Ecclesiastes 2:11 (NLT)

Personal Application

Take time to **acknowledge to God** the areas where you are outside of His plan.

Repent of what you have been doing.

Confess to God that you have been trying to meet your needs apart from Him.

Ask God to remind you to stay inside of His plan.

"You made me; you created me. Now give me the sense to follow your commands." Psalm 119:73 (NLT)

Freedom or Bondage

Diagram

Notes