

Boundaries Are Good for Us!

Message 2 of 4 in the series: "Boundaries"

Boundaries = dividing lines that clearly define our identities, responsibilities, and privileges. Boundaries help us manage our lives and maintain healthy relationships.

A. Boundaries protect us from evil.

"And **do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.** For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen." Matthew 6:13 (NKJV)

Note: A great example of a boundary that protects us from evil is, "**Run from anything that stimulates youthful lusts.** Instead, pursue righteous living, faithfulness, love, and peace. Enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts." 2 Timothy 2:22 (NLT)

"Get wisdom; develop good judgment. Don't forget my words or turn away from them. **Don't turn your back on wisdom, for she will protect you. Love her, and she will guard you.** Getting wisdom is the wisest thing you can do! And whatever else you do, develop good judgment." Proverbs 4:5-7 (NLT)

B. Boundaries help us develop self-control.

Self-control = temperance = the mastery of our appetites, desires, reactions, and thoughts.

"A person without self-control is like a city with broken-down walls." Proverbs 25:28 (NLT)

"For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. **It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,** while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and **to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.**" Titus 2:11-14 (NIV)

IMPORTANT: The spiritual fruit of self-control does not come about through trying harder, but by surrendering control of our thoughts, appetites, desires, and reactions to the Lord.

"So I say, **let the Holy Spirit guide your lives.** Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions... But the **Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives:** love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and **self-control.**" Galatians 5:16-17 & 22-23a (NLT)

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; **apart from me you can do nothing.**" John 15:5 (NIV)

C. Boundaries allow us to build margin into our lives.

Margin = the space between my load and my limit. Margin in our lives gives us more peace, better health, stronger relationships, and the availability to do important things, not just urgent things!

1. God doesn't want us to live overloaded, stressed-out lives.

"So what do people get in this life for all their hard work and anxiety? Their days of labor are filled with pain and grief; **even at night their minds cannot rest.** It is all meaningless."

Ecclesiastes 2:22-23 (NLT)

"It is useless for you to work so hard from early morning until late at night, anxiously working for food to eat; for **God gives rest to his loved ones.**" Psalm 127:2 (NLT)

2. We build margin into our lives by pruning our schedules.

"**Teach us to number our days,** that we may gain a heart of wisdom." Psalm 90:12 (NIV)

"**Our time is limited.** You have given us only so many months to live and have set limits we cannot go beyond." Job 14:5 (NCV)

3. We build margin into our lives by living on a budget.
“Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity, but hasty shortcuts lead to poverty.”
Proverbs 21:5 (NLT)
4. We build margin into our lives by delegating instead of trying to do everything ourselves.
“You’re going to wear yourself out—and the people, too. This job is too heavy a burden for you to handle all by yourself... select from all the people some capable, honest men who fear God and hate bribes. Appoint them as leaders over groups of one thousand, one hundred, fifty, and ten... Let the leaders decide the smaller matters themselves. **They will help you carry the load**, making the task easier for you. If you follow this advice, and if God commands you to do so, **then you will be able to endure the pressures, and all these people will go home in peace.**” Exodus 18:18-23 (NLT)
5. We build margin into our lives by minding our own business.
“Make it your goal to live a quiet life, minding your own business...” 1 Thessalonians 4:11a (NLT)
6. We build margin into our lives by saying “No”.
“All you need to say is simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.”
Matthew 5:37 (NIV)

D. Boundaries help us say “No” to good things so we can say “Yes” to the best things.

“Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?” Jesus replied, **“You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.”** This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: **“Love your neighbor as yourself.”** The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.” Matthew 22:36-40 (NLT)

1. Good boundaries will ensure we have time to spend with the Lord.
“My heart has heard you say, ‘Come and talk with me.’ And my heart responds, ‘Lord, I am coming.’”
Psalm 27:8 (NLT)
2. Good boundaries will ensure we have enough resources to give joyfully to the Lord’s work.
“For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.’ And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others.”
2 Corinthians 9:7b-8 (NLT)
3. Good boundaries will ensure we have time and resources available to genuinely love our neighbors.
“Don’t just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. When God’s people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.” Romans 12:9-13 (NLT)

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Connect Group Questions:

1. How do boundaries protect us from evil? (Matthew 6:13, Proverbs 4:5-7) Share a time in your life where a Biblical boundary kept you from making a terrible decision/facing a terrible consequence.
2. Why do we gain self-control by surrendering control of our thoughts, appetites, desires, and reactions to the Lord? (John 15:4-5, Galatians 5:16-23, Philippians 2:13)
3. If margin gives us more peace, better health, stronger relationships, and the availability to do important things, why do many people view multi-tasking as a virtue? (Psalm 127:2, Ecclesiastes 2:22-23)
4. Discuss the following ways to build margin into our lives:
 - We build margin into our lives by pruning our schedules. (Job 14:5, Psalm 90:12)
 - We build margin into our lives by living on a budget. (Proverbs 21:5)
 - We build margin into our lives by delegating instead of trying to do everything ourselves. (Ex. 18:13-26)

- We build margin into our lives by minding our own business. (1 Thessalonians 4:11)
- We build margin into our lives by saying “No”. (John 5:37, Ephesians 4:15)

Which of these ways is hardest/easiest for you? Why?

5. What did Jesus say were the most important things for us to do? (Matthew 22:36-40) How do boundaries help us say “No” to good things so we can say “Yes” to the things Jesus said were most important?

- Spending time with the Lord (Psalm 27:8)
- Giving joyfully to the Lord’s work (2 Corinthians 9:7b-8)
- Genuinely loving our neighbors (Romans 12:9-13)

6. Quotations worth considering:

“No’ is a complete sentence.” Celebrate Recovery

“I don’t want to get to the end of my life and find that I have just lived the length of it. I want to have lived the width of it as well.” Diane Ackerman

“We change our behavior when the pain of staying the same becomes greater than the pain of changing. Consequences give us the pain that motivates us to change.” Dr. Henry Cloud & Dr. John Townsend