

Boundaries Help Us Live Godly Lives

Message 3 of 4 in the series: "Boundaries"

A. Boundaries help us live godly lives.

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

"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..." Titus 2:11-14 (NIV)

1. Boundaries help us take responsibility for our behaviors/decisions and allow others to take responsibility for theirs.

"Pay careful attention to your own work, for then you will get the satisfaction of a job well done, and you won't need to compare yourself to anyone else. **For we are each responsible for our own conduct.**" Galatians 6:4-5 (NLT)

"Someone came to Jesus with this question: 'Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?' 'Why ask me about what is good?' Jesus replied. 'There is only One who is good. But to answer your question—if you want to receive eternal life, keep the commandments.' 'Which ones?' the man asked. And Jesus replied: "'You must not murder. You must not commit adultery. You must not steal. You must not testify falsely. Honor your father and mother. Love your neighbor as yourself.'" 'I've obeyed all these commandments,' the young man replied. 'What else must I do?' Jesus told him, 'If you want to be perfect, go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.' **But when the young man heard this, he went away sad, for he had many possessions.** Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'I tell you the truth, it is very hard for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. I'll say it again—it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God!" Matthew 19:16-24 (NLT)

"Then Jesus said to his disciples, '**If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me.** If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it.'" Matthew 16:24-25 (NLT)

2. Boundaries help us and others face the consequences of our behaviors/decisions.

"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. **A man reaps what he sows.** Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life." Galatians 6:7-8 (NIV)

Important: It is NOT loving or kind to rescue others from the consequences of their behaviors/decisions. "Hot-tempered people must pay the penalty. **If you rescue them once, you will have to do it again.**" Proverbs 19:19 (NLT)

Important: Talking to others about their irresponsible behavior/decisions is NOT the same as allowing them to face consequences. "Now Eli was very old, but he was aware of what his sons were doing to the people of Israel. He knew, for instance, that his sons were seducing the young women who assisted at the entrance of the Tabernacle. Eli said to them, 'I have been hearing reports from all the people about the wicked things you are doing. Why do you keep sinning?' ...Then the Lord said to Samuel, 'I am about to do a shocking thing in Israel. I am going to carry out all my threats against Eli and his family, from beginning to end. **I have warned him that judgment is coming upon his family forever, because his sons are blaspheming God and he hasn't disciplined them.**"

1 Samuel 2:22-23 & 3:11-13 (NLT)

B. Boundaries help us live godly lives at home.

1. Godly marriages have healthy boundaries for resolving conflict. "And 'don't sin by letting anger control you.' **Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil... Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander**, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you." Ephesians 4:26-27 & 31-32 (NLT) (*Psalm 4:4*)

2. The kindest thing we can do for our children is help them develop godly boundaries. **“Those who spare the rod of discipline hate their children.** Those who love their children care enough to discipline them.” Proverbs 13:24 (NLT) “Discipline your children while there is hope. **Otherwise you will ruin their lives.**” Proverbs 19:18 (NLT) “Discipline your children, and **they will give you peace of mind.**” Proverbs 29:17a (NLT)
3. Godly boundaries are essential for Christian dating. “Don’t judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The Lord doesn’t see things the way you see them. **People judge by outward appearance,** but the Lord looks at the heart.” 1 Samuel 16:7 (NLT) “A beautiful woman who lacks discretion is like a gold ring in a pig’s snout.” Proverbs 11:22 (NLT)

Important: We should strive to become the type of godly people we hope to date. “Charm is deceptive, and beauty does not last; but **a woman who fears the Lord** will be greatly praised.” Proverbs 31:30 (NLT) “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.” Matthew 5:6-8 (NIV)

C. Boundaries help us live godly lives at work, school, and everywhere we go.

1. Boundaries keep us focused on pleasing God, not others. “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as **working for the Lord, not for human masters,** since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.” Colossians 3:23-24 (NIV)
2. Boundaries help us deal with difficult situations appropriately. “Instead, **we will speak the truth in love,** growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church.” Ephesians 4:15 (NLT) “Let the godly strike me! It will be a kindness! If they correct me, it is soothing medicine. Don’t let me refuse it.” Psalm 141:5a (NLT)
3. Boundaries help us control ourselves so we can be a godly influence on others. **“Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors.** Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will give honor to God when he judges the world.”
1 Peter 2:12 (NLT)

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Connect Group Questions:

1. Read the story of the rich, young ruler. (Matthew 19:16-30) Why did this man turn down an opportunity to become a disciple who personally traveled with Jesus? Why didn’t Jesus beg him to stay? What kind of boundaries does Jesus have regarding His disciples? (Matthew 16:24-25, Matthew 7:13-14)
2. Read Galatians 6:7-8. How do boundaries help us and others face the consequences of our behaviors and decisions? (Proverbs 19:19 & 26:11)
3. In what ways are boundaries different than just talking to someone about their irresponsible behaviors/decisions? (1 Samuel 2:22-36 & 3:11-13)
4. Discuss the following ways boundaries help us live godly lives at home:
 - Godly marriages have healthy boundaries for resolving conflict. (Ephesians 4:26-27 & 31-32, Psalm 4:4)
 - The kindest thing we can do for our children is help them develop godly boundaries. (Proverbs 13:24, 19:18, & 29:17)
 - Godly boundaries are essential for Christian dating. (Proverbs 31:30, Matthew 5:6-8)
5. How well did your parents handle boundaries?
6. Discuss the following ways boundaries help us live godly lives at work, school, and everywhere we go:
 - Boundaries keep us focused on pleasing God, not others. (Colossians 3:23-24)
 - Boundaries help us deal with difficult situations appropriately. (Ephesians 4:15, Psalm 141:5)
 - Boundaries help us control ourselves so we can be a godly influence on others. (1 Peter 2:12)
7. Who might you be influencing at work, school, and in your neighborhood? Which boundaries do you need to firm up?

Great Resource: "Boundaries: When to Say Yes, How to Say No to Take Control of Your Life." By Dr. Henry Cloud & Dr. John Townsend, Zondervan, 2017.