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"Boundaries"

Between You and Me: Today's goal is to learn a Biblical skill - how to set up healthy boundaries - in order to have healthy relationships.



1. Are Boundaries Biblical?

- a. In Creation, we see God setting up **physical boundaries** - dividing lines:

Proverbs 8:27,29 (NIV) "I [wisdom] was there when he set the heavens in place, when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep [...] 29 when he gave the sea its boundary so the waters would not overstep his command, and when he marked out the foundations of the earth."

- b. In the beginning, God creates **relational boundaries**:

Genesis 2:16-17 (ESV) "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."

- c. "Good boundaries are not just a good idea, they are a God idea." - Terkeurst
 d. "No" is not a bad word; it's a boundary word.
 e. Right away we learn that **crossing a boundary has consequences**:

Genesis 3: 24 (ESV) "He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life."

- f. God doesn't swoop in to act on Adam and Eve's behalf to do their part.
 g. **Boundaries in and of themselves are not God's goal.**
 i. God wants a personal, loving relationship with you.

2. Where are Christians told to have boundaries?

- a. There is no command that says: "Set boundaries!" But the Bible does say: "Guard your heart", "Flee sexual immorality", "Do not associate..."
 b. **What is a boundary?**
 i. Good boundaries are limits motivated by love that protect and promote what God values.
 ii. Good boundaries are not meant to be walls that keep people out, but more like filters that allow what is healthy to be let in.

Titus 3:9-11 (ESV) "But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. 10 As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, 11 knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned."

- iii. This boundary exists to promote unity and protect against division.

1 Timothy 1:20 (NIV) "Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme."

- c. Good boundaries are loving because good boundaries prevent dysfunction in a relationship to become normalized.

3. When do I need boundaries?

- a. **#1 We need boundaries to help us keep God's priorities.**
 i. Do we see Jesus ever doing this?

Mark 1:32-39 (NIV) “That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. 33 The whole town gathered at the door, 34 and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was. 35 Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. 36 Simon and his companions went to look for him, 37 and when they found him, they exclaimed: “Everyone is looking for you!” 38 Jesus replied, “Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.” 39 So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.”

- ii. Boundary lesson: There is a time to be unavailable - even for good things.
- b. **#2 We need boundaries with the opposite sex.**

1 Timothy 5:1-2 (ESV) “Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, 2 older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity.”

- c. **#3 We need boundaries to discipline ourselves for Kingdom work.**
 - i. Boundaries don't just keep out what is harmful, but also when there is too much of something good.

Proverbs 25:16 (ESV) “If you have found honey, eat only enough for you, lest you have your fill of it and vomit it.”

- ii. God doesn't want you to be mastered by anything:
 - 1. Sports, video games, social media, food, working out, job, etc.
- d. **#4 We need boundaries because of broken trust.**
 - i. Forgiveness does not mean the same thing as trust.
 - ii. Trust is rebuilt slowly over time through repeated observable trustworthy action and boundaries play a part so that we can safely rebuild that trust.

Matthew 7:6 (NIV) “Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.”

4. How do we set helpful boundaries to have healthy relationships?

- a. Identify what is harming your relationship with God or others.
 - i. **Use God's word and godly counsel to help you in this process.**
- b. Decide your boundary internally first.
 - i. **Boundaries aren't meant to be a weapon.**
- c. When appropriate, communicate your boundaries to the other person.
- d. Expect this to be difficult and don't let that dissuade you.
- e. Enforce the boundary consistently.
- f. Let boundaries lead to healing or honest endings.

Small Group Questions:

Ice Breaker: What social boundaries do you highly value? (Ex: Calling before coming over)

Practice storying: Use Mark 1:32-39. Have someone learn it and story it to the group.

1. In this passage, what do we learn from Jesus?
2. What do you think the other people (not Jesus) thought about Jesus's response?
3. Where do you (use “I” statements) need to apply this passage to your life?
4. We need boundaries as we interact with the opposite sex. What boundaries do you practice to help you stay pure? Are there any boundaries you want to adopt?
5. Read Proverbs 25:16. Boundaries don't just keep out what is harmful, but also limit when there is too much of something good. Is there anything good in your life that you need to set boundaries to?
6. Is there a relationship in your life that you need to set helpful boundaries in?
7. How can your life group help you?