

Boundaries- Session 4

1. Setting up Biblical Boundaries- Continuation

“God’s world is set up with laws and principles. Spiritual realities are as real as gravity, and if we do not know them, you will discover their effects. Just because we have not been taught these principles of life and relationships does not mean they will not rule. We need to know the principles God has woven into life and operate to them.”- Boundaries, 86

f) The Law of Evaluation

Evaluation is needed because if we do not the boundaries we create or the lack of boundaries that we have will bring harm to someone.

However, we need to remember that when standing by our boundaries, there is a difference between harming someone and hurting someone.

What is the difference?

When has someone protected his or her boundaries and done something that hurt you? Did that action harm you?

When have you hesitated to do something out of fear of hurting someone’s feelings? Would your action have harmed that person?

Remember: Jesus emphasizes what it looks like to follow him in the tough situations; refers to the “narrow gate” (Matthew 7:13-14). It is always easier to go through the “broad gate of destruction.”; not setting boundaries where we need to.

As a result, we need to evaluate the effects of setting boundaries and be responsible to not set our boundaries to please other people, but to honour God. This can be difficult, as deciding to set boundaries does require decision making and possible confrontation when someone opposes them.

- What boundaries are you needing to set based upon current circumstances?
- If you set boundaries, what pain or disappointment might you cause someone you love?
- Will the pain harm the person?

Pain takes place when others do not like the choices that we make. Pain occurs when we confront someone when they are wrong.

Remember what Ephesians 4:25 teaches us: “Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.” If we do not share our anger with one another, bitterness and hatred can set in. Just as iron sharpens iron (Proverbs 27:17), we need confrontation and truth from others to mature us.

"The Bible says that, if we are wise, we will learn from the admonition of a friend (Proverbs 27:6). While that admonition can hurt, it can also help. And it is from this perspective that we need to evaluate the pain our confrontation causes other people. We need to see how this hurt is helpful and sometimes even the best thing we can do for that person and the relationship." (pg. 96-97)

g) **The Law of Proactivity**

- Romans 4:15; 5:20; 7:5; Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21

Just like in the physical world, for every action in the spiritual realm of human relationships, there is an equal opposite reaction.

"Proactive people show you what they love, what they want, what they purpose, and what they stand for—as opposed to those who are reactive people who are known by what they hate, what they don't like, what they stand against, and what they will not do." (pg. 98)

Our reactions communicate how we connect to the human race; whether or not we love our neighbour as ourself.

- Where are you? Are your boundaries still more reactive or more proactive?
- Where are you channeling your power right now—in angry outbursts of pain and rage, or in acts of responsibility and love?

Remember: "The ultimate expression of power is love: it is the ability not to express power, but to restrain it. Proactive people are able to "love others as themselves," "die to self", and not "return evil for evil". (pg. 98)

Challenge: Take some time in prayer; looking to God to help each one of us move past the reactive to the proactive... begin living out the power of love.

h) **The Law of Envy**

²You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. - James 4:2

God's Word is clear that an envious heart is not acceptable, but what does envy have to do with boundaries?

Envy, the direct result of sin entering the world; it was Satan's sin (Isaiah 14:13-15). **Envy defines good as "what I do not possess" and hates the good that it has.** What is so destructive about this sin is that it guarantees that we will not get what we want and keeps us continually greedy and dissatisfied. (pg. 99)

- What things do you tend to envy most?

Clarification: “As bad as envy is, we are not say that it is wrong to want things we do not have. God has said that he will give us the desires of our heart (Psalm 37:4). The problem with envy is that it focuses outside our boundaries onto others.” (pg. 99)

⁴But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. ⁵For each will have to bear his own load.

Galatians 6:4-5

Reality: “Boundaryless people feel empty and unfulfilled. They look at another’s sense of fullness and feel envious. This time and energy needs to be spent on taking responsibility for their lack and doing something about it.” (pg. 99-100).

- If you find yourself lacking, what is God calling you to do about what you lack? What questions would you do well to ask yourself instead of envying others?
- James 4:2 says, “You do not have because you do not ask God”. What is this verse calling you to do when you take the time to pray?

“Your envy should always be a sign to you that something is lacking in your life. When you feel envy, ask God to help you understand what you resent, why you do not have whatever you are envying, and whether you truly need it. Ask God to show you how to get there or grieve what you cannot have and be content with what you have.” (1 Timothy 6:6–10)

(pg. 101)

i) **Law of Activity**

“Human beings are responders and initiators. We respond to invitations and push ourselves into life. Many times we have boundary problems because we lack initiatives—the God—given ability to propel ourselves into life.” (pg. 101)

- How easy or difficult is it for you to respond to invitations?
- How easy or difficult is it for you to take initiative in life?

Read: Matthew 25:14-30

- What kind of people succeed in the story and what kind of people lose out?

“In the parable, the one who lost out was passive and inactive. Passivity never pays off, God will match our effort, but He will never do our work for us. That would be an invasion of our boundaries. God wants us to be assertive and active, seeking and knocking on the door of life. God’s grace covers failure, but it cannot make up for passivity.” (pg. 102)

Reflection: “The sin that God rebukes is not trying and failing, but failing to try. Passive, shrinking back” is intolerable to God (Hebrews 10:38-39). Instead, we are to actively work to preserve our souls. That is the role of boundaries: they define and preserve our property; our soul. And our boundaries can only be created by our being active and aggressive, by our knocking, seeking, and asking (Matthew 7:7-8) (pg. 101-102)

- In what aspect of your life are you failing to try right now?
- Passivity can become an ally of evil by not pushing against it. When have you seen this truth in someone’s life or perhaps experienced in yourself?
- Where is God calling you to be more active? Where will you begin to knock, seek and ask? Be specific.

j) **The Law of Exposure**

Definition: Your boundaries need to be made visible to others and communicated to them in relationships. We have many boundary problems because of relational fears. (pg. 103-104)

²⁵ Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. ²⁶ Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,

Ephesians 4:25-26

¹³ But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, ¹⁴ for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

“Awake, O sleeper,
and arise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”

Ephesians 5:13-14

- What do these passages have to say about the importance of communicating boundaries?
- With whom do you struggle to communicate your boundaries? Why?

"The Biblical mandate is to be honest and be in the light. The light is the only place where we have access to God and other people, and our relational problems can only be solved in relationships. Because of our fears, we may hide aspects of ourselves in the darkness, where the devil has an opportunity." (pg. 103-104)

- What aspects of yourself do you hide?
- Can you bring them into the light by making them the focus of a prayer? Let God know which parts of yourself you are afraid to share and ask Him to bring into your life someone safe with whom you can gradually begin to share those parts.
- Read Psalm 51:6. What does God want for us?

"God wants a real relationship with us and wants us to have real relationships with each other. A real relationship means that I am the light with my boundaries and other aspects of myself that are difficult to communicate. Our boundaries are affected by sin, and need to be brought into the light for God to heal them and for others to benefit from them. The path to real love is communicating boundaries openly." (pg. 104)

Session 3 & 4 Reflection

- How has the understanding of boundaries changed because of these two sessions?
- What challenges or concerns are you facing that makes it difficult to set boundaries?
- What wisdom or experience that you would like to share with someone in how you created boundaries and implement them?
- What is God saying to you through these sessions on the laws of boundaries?
- What have you determined to do as a result of what you have learned about God's Laws, boundaries, and yourself?

* **Resource:** [Henry Cloud & John Townsend](#), *"Boundaries: When to Say Yes, How to Say No, to Take Control of Your Life"*