

Godly Limits In Relationships



Amanda Buys' Spiritual Covering

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INTRODUCTION

What does 'boundary' mean?

DEFINE: HORIZO, Eng., horizon, primarily means to mark out the boundaries of a place (as in the Sept. Of **Num. 34:6; Jos. 13:27**); hence to determine, appoint.

In **Heb. 4:7**, where the reference is to the time of God's invitation to enter into His rest, in contrast to Israel's failure to do so, the word may mean either the appointing of the day (i.e. the period), or the defining of the day, i.e., marking it's limits.

So the R.V. (A.V., "limiteth").

KRINO, primarily, to separate, hence, to be of opinion, approve, esteem.

[VINE'S Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words]

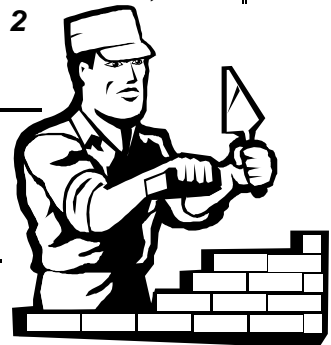
1447 גָּדַר [*gader /gaw-dare/*] *n m*. From 1443; TWOT 318a; GK 1555; 12 occurrences; AV translates as "wall" seven times, "hedge" four times, and "fence" once. **1** fence, wall.

[Enhanced Strong's Lexicon]

1448 גְּדֵרָה, גְּדֵרָת [*gâderah /ghed-ay-law/*] *n f*. From 1447; TWOT 318b; GK 1556 and 1560; 10 occurrences; AV translates as "hedge" four times, "fold" three times, "wall" once, "sheepfold" once, and "sheepcote" once. **1** wall, hedge. **2** sheepfold (construct with 'sheep').

[Enhanced Strong's Lexicon]

A limit or boundary is not inherited – it is built! And it doesn't stop there – it's an ongoing process!



Limit: 1.n. Bounding line, terminal point, bound that may not or cannot be passed, restrict; maximum, minimum, of what is possible, allowed, credible, infinite or unrestricted; is the last straw or furthest possible development.

2. v.t. Set to serve as ~ to restrict.

Fence: parry, evade; screen, shield repel (off, out); surround as with, enclose, fortify (cities in O.T.); close season

Hedge: fence of bushes or low trees, barrier of turf, stone; surround with, moat, shut off, make or trim; secure oneself against loss on by other; avoid committing oneself.

[Oxford Dictionary]

In the **physical sense**, a **boundary** depicts something that divides, protects, borders, shows a property's boundary line, etc.

n **n**: noun

m **m**: masculine

TWOT Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament

GK Goodrick-Kohlenberger

AV Authorized Version

f **f**: feminine

In the **non-physical sense**, it depicts a person's own awareness of 'where' and who he **is**, and where he 'ends' and 'is not'. Something like a 'personal space' so to speak. It is to take ownership of your own body, life, decisions, etc., and at the same time to have respect for another's personal space, personality, feelings, etc.

It defines what is *me* and what is not me. In our everyday lives we are all in some sort of relationship or community, and we need to clearly define what our own responsibilities are, and what they aren't.

If we can determine our own limits or boundaries, we have clarity in our own minds about what we are responsible for, and thus be good stewards of our own 'space'. This releases us from feeling responsible for other people's responsibilities.

Take for instance, the born-again person. He is a triune being: **body, soul and spirit**. These are the **separate areas** of a born-again Christian and one can see it as being 'fenced' or separated by boundaries, yet as ONE being, but having different functions.



1 Thess. 5:23 *"23 And may the God of peace Himself sanctify you through and through [separate you from profane things, make you pure and wholly consecrated to God]; and may your **spirit and soul and body** be preserved sound and complete [and found] blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah)."*

Ignorance of this fact can cause misconceptions and unnecessary mistakes which act as drawbacks in the life of the Christian and may lead to damage to the Body of Christ in general.

We have to control our own 'drawbridge!' You have to decide to whom and when you will grant access to your heart. A good example is that of a medieval castle with a drawbridge. The only way to gain access into the castle is over the draw bridge, and it is controlled by a guard. You are to be the guard of your own personal life. Others ought not to be allowed to walk in and out of your life according to their needs and desires!

Without proper, responsible control of your own boundary, you may end up feeling used and fall victim of the enemy, strangers or wanderers.

You will experience a lack of peace, feel tired and irritated, angry and become bitter – all because you did not set your personal boundaries. We ought never to allow ourselves to become public property. We tend to think that we as Christians need to be 'generous' in giving access to anyone. This can lead to the loss of your soul.

Claim your power and discover joy and peace. Only then you will be able to share yourself with others in a balanced, loving way.

If we are aware of the boundaries within own beings, things will clear up in a lot of ways – it is a matter of organizing oneself!

In this we also have a responsibility towards others....

Gal. 6:2,5 “**2 Bear (endure, carry) one another’s burdens** and troublesome moral faults, and in this way fulfill and observe perfectly the law of Christ (the Messiah) and complete what is lacking [in your obedience to it].
Galatians 6:5 (AMP)
5 For every person will have to bear (be equal to understanding and calmly receive) his own [little] load [of oppressive faults].”

“Burden” = What is, or has to be borne, load, task, obligation, weight; obligatory expense, **load**, encumber, lie heavy on.

“Load” = What is to be; or is carried or borne; put on a person, beast, ship, put aboard or on vehicle, burden, weight, strain, increase weight or strength, overwhelm with

WHY DO WE NEED BOUNDARIES?

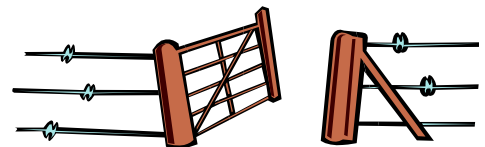
- ❑ To **establish** one’s legal grounds...
- ❑ To **take care** of those legal grounds...
- ❑ To **guard** those legal grounds...
- ❑ To **keep** our grounds **clean** and weed-free...
- ❑ To **keep** good things **in** and bad things **out**...
- ❑ To have them act as **alarms** for our own ‘safety’...
- ❑ To help us know when it’s **appropriate** to withdraw...
- ❑ To know where our responsibilities **start** ...
- ❑ To know where our responsibilities **end**.

What is more, our fences need proper gates. Why?

To let out the **wrong** and to let in the **right!**

The **wrong** may be things like anger, bitterness, unforgiveness, inner vows, pain, etc.

The **right** will be like allowing healing to come in, as well as truth, the Word, love, etc.



Luke 19:43 “**43 For a time is coming upon you when your enemies will throw up a bank [with pointed stakes] about you and surround you and shut you in on every side.”**

John 14:23 *“23 Jesus answered, If a person [really] loves Me, he will keep My word [obey My teaching]; and My Father will love him, and **We will come to him and make Our home (abode, special dwelling place) with him.**”*

Boundaries are not to be seen as the walls people build around themselves to shut out hurt or help.



When personal boundaries are not in place, a person will experience:

- ❑ Inability to identify manipulation and find the courage to say ‘no’ to it ...
- ❑ Inability to prioritize through which those nearest to him will suffer as a result ...
- ❑ Inability to say ‘no’ to requests for his time and availability, thereby failing to fulfill his own important personal agenda ...
- ❑ Inability to share workload at home ...
- ❑ Inability to communicate his true feelings to those nearest to him.



I. WHAT DOES THE WORD SAY ABOUT BOUNDARIES?

2 Cor. 11:9 “9 And when I was with you and ran short financially, I did not burden any [of you], for what I lacked was abundantly made up by the brethren who came from Macedonia. **So I kept myself from being burdensome to you in any way, and will continue to keep [myself from being so].**”

Phil. 4:7 “7 And God’s peace [shall be yours, that tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and being content with its earthly lot of whatever sort that is, that peace] which transcends all understanding **shall garrison and mount guard over your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.**”

2 Thess. 3:3 “3 Yet the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen [you] and set you on a **firm foundation and guard you from the evil [one].**”

Jas. 1:27 “27 External religious worship [religion as it is expressed in outward acts] that is pure and unblemished in the sight of God the Father is this: to visit and help and care for the orphans and widows in their affliction and need, and **to keep oneself unspotted and uncontaminated from the world.**”

God Himself functions through three Persons: **Father, Son and Holy Spirit**, yet He is One:

John 1:1-4 “1 **IN THE** beginning [before all time] was the Word (Christ), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God Himself.
2 He was present originally with God.
3 **All things were made and came into existence through Him; and without Him was not even one thing made that has come into being.**
4 In Him was Life, and the Life was the Light of men.”

In the Trinity there is order – each Person of the Trinity has His own **Function** and **Personality** and **Character traits**.

We need to learn these Character traits of each of the Godhead, to be able to relate properly to them, within our own selves, and to others.

John 14:26 “26 But the Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengthenener, Standby), the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name [in My place, to represent Me and act on My behalf], **He will teach you all things. And He will cause you to recall (will remind you of, bring to your remembrance) everything I have told you.**”

John 15:26 “26 But when the Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Advocate, Intercessor, Strengtheners, Standby) comes, Whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth Who comes (proceeds) from the Father, **He [Himself] will testify regarding Me.**”

2 Cor. 13:14 “14 The grace (favor and spiritual blessing) of the **Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the presence and fellowship (the communion and sharing together, and participation) in the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen (so be it).**”

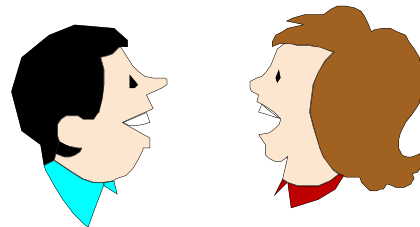
We need to have boundaries in place guarding our bodies and souls, for we are to be responsible stewards over these territories.

SKIN

- ❑ Designed to keep the good inside and the bad outside.
- ❑ Sexual abuse victims – they have a poor sense of personal boundaries – someone else forced themselves onto them and invaded their personal space, for example beating, pushing, bumping, pinching, sexual harassment, etc.
- ❑ Your skin is your very personal ‘covering’. It is your visual, outer boundary.
- ❑ If someone had suffered physical or sexual abuse, this most basic God-given personal boundary had been violated. It is necessary to regain ownership of the body and all that it entails.

WORDS

- ❑ Words create boundaries/ fences.
- ❑ Words expressing truth may even cause divisions.
- ❑ Words define your territory to others – you may express your feelings, dislikes, privileges, etc.
- ❑ Words tell others where you stand, and where they stand with you.
- ❑ You may say “no” – your body and soul is your territory and responsibility. Make yourself heard in saying “no” or “yes” whatever the case may be. A firm “no” draws a boundary on your personal space.



- When someone's personal boundaries are not in place, he will struggle with saying "no" to domination, intimidation, manipulation, pressure or demands from others.
- There is a function of self-control which comprise of saying "no" to external or internal pressure. Losing control of your personal territory means that you will not enjoy the fruit of positive self-control.

TRUTH

- By being honest, you draw the line between a lie and the truth. Honesty leads to integrity.

1 Tim. 2:2 "2 For kings and all who are in positions of authority or high responsibility, that [outwardly] we may pass a **quiet and undisturbed life [and inwardly] a peaceable one in all godliness and reverence and seriousness in every way.**"

- Satan is a deceiver, and will always attempt to draw us away from the truth, even by using the truth! He is a master in distortion of truth and reality.

2 Cor. 11:14 "14 And it is no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light;"

2 Thess. 2:9 "9 The coming [of the lawless one, the antichrist] is through the **activity** and working of Satan and will be attended by great power and with **all sorts of [pretended] miracles and signs and delusive marvels—[all of them] lying wonders—**"

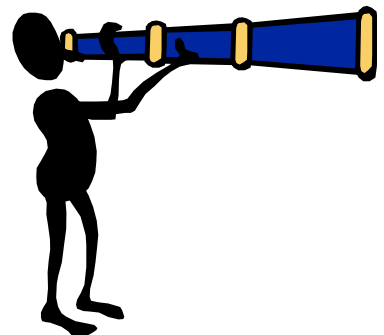
A SAFE DISTANCE

Ps. 101:2-6 "2 I will behave myself wisely and give heed to the blameless way— O when will You come to me? **I will walk within my house in integrity and with a blameless heart.**

3 I will set no base or wicked thing before my eyes. I hate the work of them who turn aside [from the right path]; it shall not grasp hold of me.

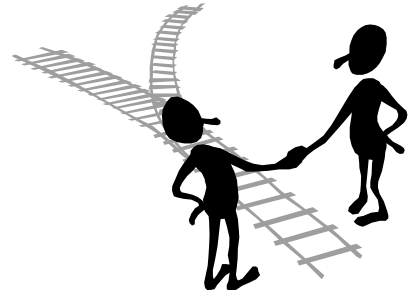
5 Whoso privily slanders his neighbor, him will I cut off [from me]; he who has a haughty look and a proud and arrogant heart I cannot and I will not tolerate.

6 My eyes shall [look with favor] upon **the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me; he who walks blamelessly, he shall minister to me.**"



THE TIME FACTOR

- ❑ It is always a good principle to take a few steps back from someone else / a relationship / an issue / a project, etc., to gain perspective and see it in a different light.
- ❑ There comes a time in everybody's life where he/she has to be separated emotionally and spiritually from parents / mentors / safe places in order to establish his/her own boundaries.
- ❑ Time and distance are excellent ways of giving oneself some breathing space from a situation or person, even when healing is needed in the instance of a painful experience.



TAKE A FEW STEPS BACK

- ❑ Sometimes, a **temporary** boundary has to be established for a person's own good, i.e. in the instance of abusive relationships, even dangerous situations within a relationship.
- ❑ In many instances a person needs to step out of a potentially dangerous situation for him/herself, especially where children or old people are involved.
- ❑ Establish your own 'safety boundary' until there is significant proof of a sustained positive change in the abuser's behavior.



HELP FROM OTHERS

Ps. 55:14 "14 We had sweet fellowship together and used to walk to the house of God in company."

Prov. 1:5 "5 The wise also will hear and increase in learning, and the person of understanding will acquire skill and attain to sound counsel [so that he may be **able to steer his course rightly**]"

Prov. 11:14 "14 Where no wise guidance is, the people fall, but in the **multitude of counselors there is safety.**"



Often we cannot discern clearly in a matter that is so close to our own hearts or emotions. This is where we can find a safe place in the company of other children of God. They can help us to see things from another perspective, often better than our own! They can support us during difficult times, or even help us to make sound decisions by giving their input and perspective on matters.

Man was made for relationship and relationship was made for man. This is every person's basic need in life. To stand alone in difficult situations, having to make decisions alone, commands much strain from a person. When we can call upon others with whom we are in relationship, it will lessen the risk of taking wrong steps.



Note that in the establishing of limits, it will always involve a support system of some sort.

A WORD TO THE SUPPORTER

LISTEN!!!

To listen well, is an active exercise. It requires your attention. It is hard work! It asks for total concentration upon another. It is a manifestation of love. You will have to set aside your own desires, frame of reference, ideas, agenda, and step into the other person's shoes. In becoming one – listener and speaker – you extend yourself.

Total acceptance of the speaker is necessary. Now the person will open up more and more. True communication will start to take place. The energy needed for focusing your total attention on another person's need, is so immense, only love can accomplish it!

Most of us lack this energy and have to draw it from the Holy Spirit within us. We tend to listen selectively. Often we have a preset agenda, perhaps to get this conversation over as quickly as possible, or even to redirect it to suit ourselves.



Remember, it is easier to do the talking than the listening. We tend to refuse to listen to that which we don't want to hear.

Just to have someone listening and hearing can start the healing process!!



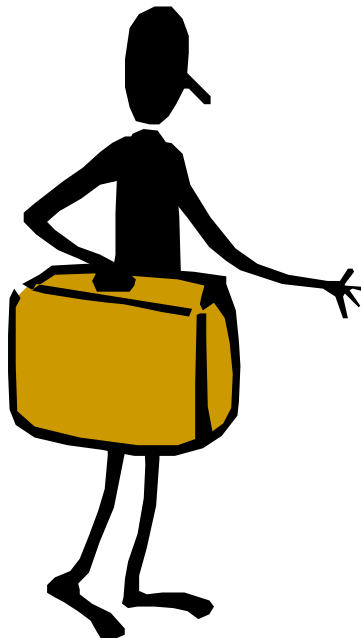
EFFECTS

When boundaries are ignored, it will affect the trespasser thereof, for example:

"If you

- ❖ don't stop lying to me;*
- ❖ don't stop abusing me;*
- ❖ don't stop abusing the children;*
- ❖ don't stop your substance abuse ...*

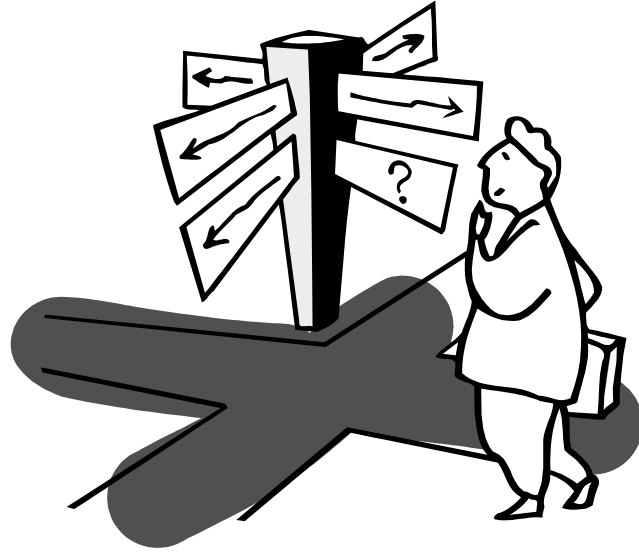
I will surely leave you and won't come back until you can prove to me that you can sustain a positive change in your behavior."



II. RESPONSIBILITIES

We are to take responsibility for our:

- ❑ Feelings
- ❑ Attitudes
- ❑ Beliefs
- ❑ Behaviors
- ❑ Choices
- ❑ Values
- ❑ Limits
- ❑ Talents
- ❑ Thoughts
- ❑ Desires
- ❑ Love

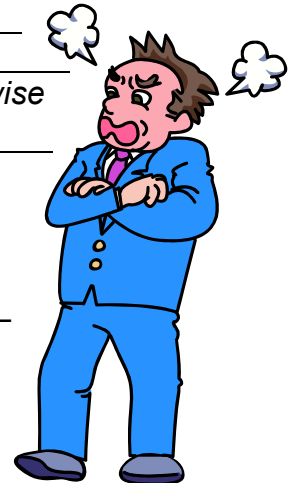


A. FEELINGS

Prov. 28:26 "26 He who *leans on, trusts in, and is confident of his own mind and heart is a [self-confident] fool*, but he who walks in skillful and godly Wisdom shall be delivered.

Ecc. 7:22 "22 For often your own heart knows that you have likewise cursed others.

- ❑ We have to be careful not to allow our feelings to take charge and thereby prescribe our actions to us.
- ❑ On the other hand, we are not to totally ignore our feelings – we have to discern and keep a healthy balance.
- ❑ Feelings / emotions are situated in the soul and should be trained to come under control of the Holy Spirit.



- ❑ They are the barometers of the soul that tell us 'how we are'.
- ❑ Feelings function as signals.
- ❑ We have to take responsibility for our feelings - for our own sakes and for the sake of others.
- ❑ We ought not to allow others to violate our boundaries and create havoc in our feelings, i.e. frustration, anger, fear, irritation, etc.

B. ATTITUDES

Prov. 23:7 *“7 For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. As one who reckons, he says to you, eat and drink, yet his heart is not with you [but is grudging the cost].”*

Ps. 19:14 *“14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my [firm, impenetrable] Rock and my Redeemer.”*

- ❑ Your disposition towards a cause, other people, general life, tasks, God, leaders, spouse, other relationships.
- ❑ We have to be careful of what we allow to be in our hearts.
- ❑ Allow the Holy Spirit to show you any attitude that is not in alliance with Him.
- ❑ We have to be able to stand with what we believe.



C. BELIEFS

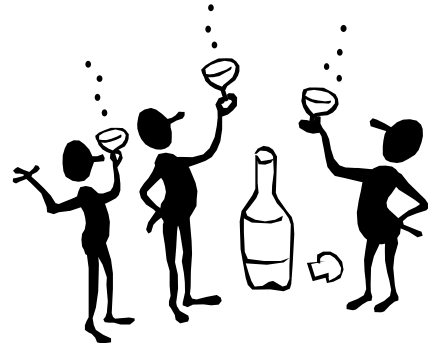
- ❑ We are born with the potential and tendency to ‘go with the flow’, leaving us sitting ducks for every wrong belief or doctrine of men, traditions, etc.
- ❑ We need to take responsibility for our own thinking and beliefs. The will has to be ready to say ‘yes’ or ‘no’ whenever appropriate.
- ❑ We have to realize how big a role our **beliefs** play in our behavioral patterns and relationships.
- ❑ We have to make our own decisions only after careful consideration and consultation of the Holy Spirit.
- ❑ People who do not have boundaries around their sense of reality, don’t feel ‘defined’.



D. BEHAVIORS

Gal. 6:7 “7 Do not be deceived and deluded and misled; God will not allow Himself to be sneered at (scorned, disdained, or mocked by mere pretensions or professions, or by His precepts being set aside.) [He inevitably deludes himself who attempts to delude God.] For **whatever a man sows, that and that only is what he will reap.**”

- ❑ Every behavior has a consequence, positive or negative. The law of sowing and reaping.
- ❑ A person’s misbehavior, abuse, drinking, etc. will have consequences for him.
- ❑ Relationships within the family need to be controlled by love, boundaries, and warmth. This produces children who will exercise control over their own lives.



E. CHOICES

Ps. 25:12,13 “12 Who is the man who reverently fears and worships the Lord? Him shall **He teach in the way that he should choose.**
13 He himself shall dwell at ease, and his offspring shall inherit the land.”

Prov. 3:31 “31 Do not resentfully envy and be jealous of an unscrupulous, grasping man, and **choose none of his ways.**”

Jos. 24:15 “15 And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, **choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve,** whether the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

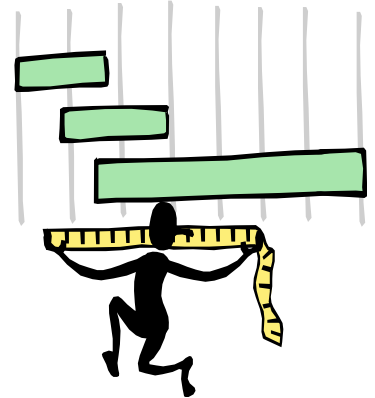
- ❑ To be able to make a choice and keep to it, asks for responsibility.
- ❑ To make a choice and keep to it, asks for self-control.
- ❑ In absence of boundaries, a person will tend to blame-shift his wrong choices. “It is because you would not listen to me... that is why I did it!”



- ❑ To make decisions and act out choices based on another person's approval or driven by guilt, leads to resentment, which is a fruit of the old sinful nature.
- ❑ We have to make choices with which we will be able to live – it is our own responsibility.

F. VALUES

- ❑ A value is something / someone we see as important.
- ❑ A value is something we love and take responsibility for.
- ❑ We have to discern our values – whether God comes first – or whether other people, things, positions, doctrines, etc. enjoy priority with us.
- ❑ When we are able to acknowledge boundaries to our values, the Holy Spirit will be able to work with us and rearrange our values according to His will.

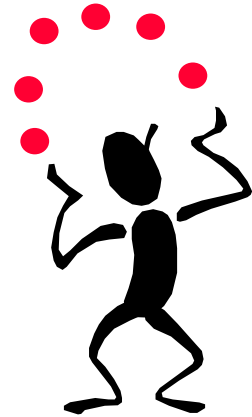


G. LIMITS

- ❑ God sets boundaries and allows people to make their own choices, taking with it the consequences, good or bad.
- ❑ We can put boundaries on the way others are treating us – for our own protection.
- ❑ In taking a stand against things that destroy love, we preserve that love.
- ❑ To set boundaries on yourself, you need self-control, but you are not to take it too far, which may lead to repression.
- ❑ We must remember that the un-renewed mind, will and emotions will always tend to have too much 'grace' to self, and will easily give in and allow destructive habits to form or continue – we need self-control.

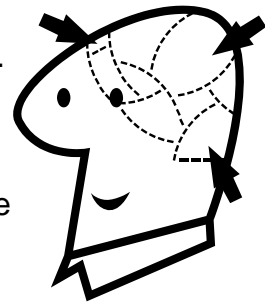
H. TALENTS

- ❑ God gave each of us talents, and expects from us to develop and take ownership of it. This can become a huge step to take from fear into trusting the Lord.
- ❑ We have to face our fear of failure, or fear of man in using our talents.
- ❑ We have to trust God and His wonderful gracious way of teaching and sustaining us as His children while we are developing.



I. THOUGHTS

- ❑ Our minds can be powerful weapons in the Hand of the Lord.
- ❑ Our minds need to be renewed, redeemed, and sanctified.
- ❑ We have to take ownership of our thoughts.
- ❑ We must be careful not to be un-teachable, but also not be gullible to everything others say or believe.
- ❑ We have a wonderful tool – the brain – use it, grow in knowledge and expand it.
- ❑ Ask the Lord to enlarge your capacity to contain everything He has intended for you to know on this earth, and in this life.
- ❑ Be alert to any distorted thinking, especially thoughts and ideas contrary to the Word of God.
- ❑ Remember in the counsel of many there is safety and wisdom. Share your thoughts with other brothers and sisters in the Lord, ‘using’ them as a sounding-board.



Ps. 94:19 “19 In the multitude of my [anxious] thoughts within me, Your comforts cheer and delight my soul!”

Ps. 139:23 “23 Search me [thoroughly], O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts!”

J. DESIRES

- ❑ The 'self' within has many dreams, wants, wishes, goals, plans, desires, etc.
- ❑ We have to take ownership of our desires, and test it against the Word and the Spirit of Truth.
- ❑ When we lack in structured boundaries within our own personality, we will not be able to define who the actual "me" is and what our real desires are.



Ps. 10:17 *"17 O Lord, You have heard the desire and the longing of the humble and oppressed; You will prepare and strengthen and direct their hearts, You will cause Your ear to hear,"*

Ps. 37:4 *"4 Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He will give you the desires and secret petitions of your heart."*

Prov. 13:19 *"19 Satisfied desire is sweet to a person; therefore it is hateful and exceedingly offensive to [self-confident] fools to give up evil [upon which they have set their hearts]."*

- ❑ We have to make sure that our motives are pure.

Ps. 19:14 *"14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my [firm, impenetrable] Rock and my Redeemer."*

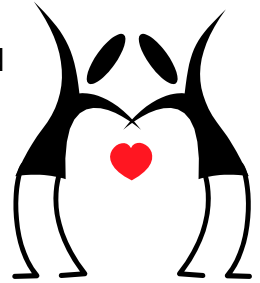
- ❑ We must make sure that our desires are not intermingled with things we do not really need.

Phil. 2:13 *"13 [Not in your own strength] for it is God Who is all the while effectually at work in you [energizing and creating in you the power and desire], both to will and to work for His good pleasure and satisfaction and delight."*

- ❑ If our hearts are sanctified and committed to our Father, He will put His desires in us.

K. LOVE

- ❑ The greatest gift of all in man-kind, is the ability to give love and respond to love.
- ❑ We need to be willing to trust when giving and receiving love.
- ❑ We have to take responsibility for this ability of ourselves to love, and use it. When we resist love, loneliness can step in. Loneliness may be a result of a lack of responsiveness.
- ❑ Work at any weaknesses in this area.



TAKING CARE OF THE TREASURES WITHIN OUR LIMITS

Abovementioned are the treasures we are to take care of; treasures which are situated in our own, personal selves.

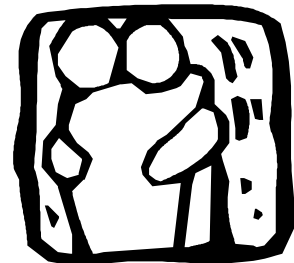
It is very important in life in terms of recovery and growing in the Image of God, to take ownership of our treasures. It will lead you to handle:

- ❑ Your time
- ❑ Your money
- ❑ Your body
- ❑ Your career
- ❑ Your relationships
- ❑ Your marriage

Our feelings, attitudes and behavior determine how we live our lives and our boundaries serve as assistants to protect our treasures!

Prov. 4:23 *“23 Keep and guard your heart with all vigilance and above all that you guard, for out of it flow the springs of life.”*

To be able to take care of what lies within our own boundaries is not easy! To allow other people to take care of what lies within their own boundaries is just as difficult! To set your boundaries and to keep at it is hard work!



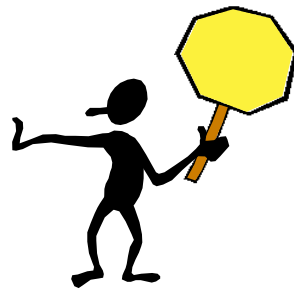
III. PROBLEMS WITH BOUNDARIES.

Parents have to realize their responsibility to teach their children the importance of setting Godly boundaries. When they teach their children that to set boundaries or to say 'no' is bad, they are teaching them that they have to accept everything coming their way from other people.

In fact, they are sending defenseless children into this world – a world infested with so much evil, controlling, manipulating and exploiting people and temptations.

Parents have to empower their children to be able to say:

- ❑ *I do not agree with this / you....*
- ❑ *No...!*
- ❑ *I will not...*
- ❑ *I choose not to...*
- ❑ *You are hurting me...!*
- ❑ *This is wrong...*
- ❑ *This is bad...*
- ❑ *Do not touch me there...!*



When saying “yes” to bad things, we can receive the first injury to our personal boundaries.

A. THE PERMISSIVE PERSON

The symptom of a permissive person, will be dissatisfaction – a sense that he had allowed something he shouldn't have.

What happens here, is that a person tends to give in easily and politely to the demands and needs of others.

They fear rejection or to be left alone.

Their backgrounds taught them to avoid saying “no” to keep the peace. They will not make a fuss about differences, because they do not want to:

- ❑ Hurt anybody's feelings
- ❑ Be abandoned or separated
- ❑ Stand alone, wants to be dependent upon someone else
- ❑ Make anybody angry
- ❑ Receive any punishment
- ❑ Be shamed
- ❑ Be seen as bad or selfish
- ❑ Be seen as unspiritual
- ❑ Carry the guilt conveyed by his over strict, critical conscience.



Rom. 13:5 *“5 Therefore one must be subject, not only to avoid God’s wrath and escape punishment, but also as a matter of principle and for the sake of conscience.”*

1 Cor. 8:7 *“7 Nevertheless, not all [believers] possess this knowledge. But some, through being all their lives until now accustomed to [thinking of] idols [as real and living], still consider the food [offered to an idol] as that sacrificed to an [actual] god; and their weak consciences become defiled and injured if they eat [it].”*

A person with weakly developed boundaries, will take on too many responsibilities and set too few boundaries. They are afraid and they HATE confrontation!



B. THE ‘STEERING CLEAR’ PERSON

This one tends to steer clear of the good, by refusing it. He is unable to ask for help or to recognize his own needs or to let others in on that need of his. They will withdraw from others when in need.

If his boundaries were in proper place, he would have been able to let the good in and the bad out. He ought to have the freedom to enjoy safe relationships and to shun away from destructive ones.

God gives us the choice to let Him in or to keep Him out. He respects our boundaries.

The ‘steering clear’ person will find it difficult to open up to both God and others. He will see his problems and rightful desires as something bad or to be ashamed of.

When both problems are present in one person, he may end up feeling totally drained, for he cannot say ‘no’ to the abusive person, and neither can he say ‘yes’ to the person who wants to help. He gets stuck in a tiring cycle with nothing to replace the lost energy with.



C. THE CONTROLLER

This one has no respect for another person's boundaries. Like human 'leeches' they do not want to take responsibility for their own lives, but want to control others. Others experience them as **manipulative, aggressive and abusive.**

They rely on others to carry their burdens as well as their yokes for them.



They are masters in self-justification!

Aggressive Controllers....

- ❑ Run over others like steamrollers.
- ❑ They tend to be verbally / physically abusive.
- ❑ They ignore the limits of other people.
- ❑ They have a lifestyle of 'yes'.
- ❑ Others have to change to suit them.

Manipulative Controllers

- ❑ Will attempt to lure people out of the limits they have set for themselves
- ❑ Will try to 'talk you into it'
- ❑ Will manipulate circumstances behind the scenes to have things their way
- ❑ Will delude others to carry their burdens for them
- ❑ Will make use of guilt messages
- ❑ Will never admit their desire to control others
- ❑ Will never do something for someone without expecting a favor in return.

Permissive / Aggressive Controllers

- ❑ The permissive person feels controlled and resentful and the aggressive controller feels good, but does not like to be nagged.
- ❑ The permissive person grew up avoiding conflict rather than embracing it and the aggressive controller never learned to take responsibility for self and wanted needs met immediately.
- ❑ The permissive person has an inability to set clear boundaries and the aggressive controller has an inability to respect a permissive one's boundaries.

A permissive person must see to it that he/she does not become the victim. He controls the aggressive controller by pleasing him/her, hoping it will appease him/her to cause him/her to change his/her behavior.

A controller must take ownership of the fact that he/she does not listen to “no” and does not accept the boundaries of others. They have to take responsibility for the need to control.

The permissive person must confront and set limits to let the controller know that his/her control hurts and wounds their relationship.

If the controller then becomes angry or intimidating, leave the premises/relationship until it is safe to come back.

The controller will be an undisciplined person with little ability to control his own impulses or desires.



- He will be a slave to himself.
- He will live an isolated life.

Those who stay with him will do it out of fear, guilt or dependency, not because they want to. The controller is used to calling the shots and rarely feels loved.

Permissive / Manipulative Controllers

The permissive person feels resentment and feels his/her friendship is taken for granted. Avoidance starts taking place because the permissive one does not like conflict and the manipulator is irresponsible and has a lack of discipline and planning.

D. THE NON-REACTING ONES

They are non-responsive and do not hear when others are in need.

This group consists of **two kinds** of people:

- i. Those with a **hardened heart** and **critical viewpoint** concerning others' needs. Because they have a shame or hate about being incomplete in themselves, they will ignore the needs of others.
- ii. Those who are totally **absorbed in their own needs** and desires, with no room for others.

Prov. 3:28 *“28 Do not say to your neighbor, Go, and come again; and tomorrow I will give it—when you have it with you.”*

To summarize:

A **Controlling / Non-reacting** person finds it difficult to see past his own needs and himself.

A **Permissive / 'Steering clear'** person is always on the lookout for someone to repair. They always say 'yes' and are not in touch with their own needs.

Who will be the 'butcher' and who will be the 'sheep' in this scenario?

Clearly the **Controlling Non-reacting** person will seek out the **Permissive, 'steering clear'** one as victim, so that he will be able to avoid his own responsibilities!



IV. THE SYMPTOMS OF LIMIT PROBLEMS

- Where there is a problem, there will be a **symptom**.
- A symptom is a **sign** that something is the matter.
- It serves as an indicator that some part of the **soul** is not functioning as it should be.

i. CLINICAL SYMPTOMS

These symptoms will indicate some of the ways in which pain will be experienced.

DEPRESSION

This is made up out of feelings of loss. A lack of good boundaries and not having good control over the heart, may result in constant feelings of loss. We do not want pain, we want love. We have numerous unmet needs, which results in depression.



RESENTMENT

We have received the power of choice. If we do not choose responsibly, we will resent our loss of freedom. Besides resentment being a sin, it will also have a negative effect on our physical bodies. Headaches, stress, ulcers, spastic colons, etc. will be the result of perpetual toxic feelings on the inside throughout the day.

When we encounter things we don't like, we resent it. When we cannot do something about a matter, we resent it. All of this is the result of not having Godly boundaries in place and we find ourselves making unwise choices and at the same time allowing others to have control over different areas of our lives. God has designed us to have power over our own lives!

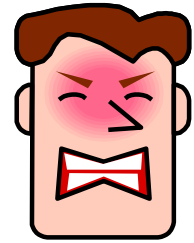


OUTBURSTS

Ecc. 7:9 "9 Do not be quick in spirit to be angry or vexed, for anger and vexation lodge in the bosom of fools."

Outbursts of rage and anger may often be triggered by the minutest of things. Inside such a person resides a pervading feeling of being 'out of control'. He feels 'powerless'.

Symptoms of anger and rage often are an indication that there are problems with personal boundaries that need to be sorted out.



OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE SYMPTOMS

When a person feels out of control of his life, he will try to control that which he is able to, e.g. excessive cleaning of the house, personal hygiene, perfectionism, etc. These obsessive compulsive problems fall into **two categories**:

- Thoughts are uncontrolled because of passivity of the will. It is to not being able to choose what he will think about or what he does not want to think about. This person tends to worry and experience undue anxiety over issues.
- Compulsive behaviors. This is a compulsive physiological need for something. Something a person feels he needs to be able to survive. Some people are addicted to a substance of some sort, e.g. alcohol, drugs, food, etc. Others are addicted to specific activities, e.g. pornography, sex, gambling, speed, work, destructive relationships, religion, sport, money, etc.

THE OBVIOUS PROBLEM IS NEVER THE REAL PROBLEM. THE FRUIT IS THE INDICATOR THAT SOMETHING IS WRONG WITH THE TREE!!

ii. RELATIONAL SYMPTOMS

- Who is important to you?
- Whom do you spend your time with, needing something from?
- Whom do you feel frustrated with?
- To whom do you want to be closer with?
- With whom do you have to resolve conflict?

Boundary conflicts in **friendships** are difficult to deal with, because the only cord tying the relationship together is the attachment itself. There is no 'covenant' or token – only friendship. Things can easily go wrong some time or other.

The answer to this is to be in Christ, to stay connected to God. Through Christ we are filled with enough grace to stick it out and dissolve the problems that may arise.

A friendship is basically built upon some sort of attachment.



There has to be mutual respect, love, unselfishness, etc. to make it work. As we enter more and more into an attachment-based life, we learn to trust love and learn that the bonds of true friendship are not easily broken. If a friendship has to be held together by performance, lovability, guilt, obligation, etc., it is not love-driven! When a friendship is based on love, we can set boundaries that will strengthen and not injure the connection.

a) **LOSS OF FREEDOM**

Genuine closeness are meant to be a position from where you are free to either move closer or further away, whatever the need may be. When we find ourselves in a relationship where the freedom to be close or separate, to agree or disagree doesn't exist, we will feel trapped. There are two types of these **freedom restricting relationships**:

i) **DIRECT CONTROLLER**

A **boundary violator** and a **boundary victim** will attract each other. It is generally someone who cannot say 'no' living with a person who cannot hear 'no'. In this relationship the victim will do his best, try to be loved, try to be easy to get along with, but the violator is never satisfied, always wanting more, wanting all the freedom, leaving nothing for the victim.

ii) **MANIPULATIVE CONTROLLER**

The manipulative controller is much more subtle than the previous one. Condemnation is loaded upon the victim through 'dark' condoned speeches like, "*you don't have time for me, I'll just have to do it alone....*" etc. The victim will internalize this and will have a growing feeling of responsibility towards the violator, which, in turn is an expert in planting these guilt messages.

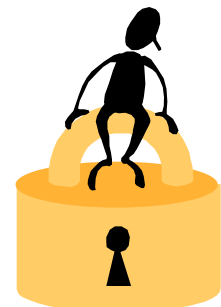
THE PERSONAL BOUNDARY VICTIM PUTS POWER IN THE HANDS OF THE BOUNDARY VIOLATOR WHEREBY THEY RECEIVE UNDESERVED POWER.

b) **LOSS OF LOVE**

When a relationship makes one feel as if he is walking on eggs, and that he may never disagree or tell the truth in fear of abandonment, he is living in fear. When we are not free to express a 'no' in a relationship, we find that our hearts will grow cold towards the other person. To live in fear in a relationship, the love that exists, begins to diminish.

When living with a direct or indirect controller, you will experience a loss of freedom.

THE LOSS OF FREEDOM AND LOVE ARE THE TWO BIGGEST DANGER INDICATORS THAT A BOUNDARY PROBLEM DOES EXIST IN A RELATIONSHIP!



iii. FUNCTIONAL SYMPTOMS

c) UNABLE TO COMPLETE A TASK OR REACH A GOAL

A boundary will give a person some sense of purpose or direction. Lack of boundaries causes loss of control of our purposes, and other people, things or circumstances will direct us off our course. We must have the ability to say 'no' to an opposing influence or desire which attempts to redirect us into never finishing a task or goal.

We have to stay focused on our goal that lies ahead of us and not be changed by every contrasting wind that comes along. This is also true in our spiritual walk with God.

A TRUE TARGET, GIVEN BY GOD, WILL BE OUR OWN PASSION. WE WILL FIND OURSELVES BEING DRIVEN FROM WITHIN. IT IS OUR GOD GIVEN CALLING IN CHRIST JESUS.



d) UNORGANISED

Even within ourselves we need to have internal boundary and structure. If internal boundaries are not in place, we will get nothing done and experience a feeling of scattered ness.

e) LACK OF ENERGY

If limits are not in place, we will end up doing something we don't really want to. In other words, not because we feel CALLED to do it, but because we HAVE to do it. This is an energy drainer!



f) LACK OF CONCENTRATION

When our minds are cluttered with many depressing and unresolved things and we haven't put boundaries on our emotions to control that, we do not have enough space in that mind to work with. We have to train and discipline ourselves to concentrate. If this is not in place, it is a symptom of a boundary problem.



2 Tim. 1:7 *"7 For God did not give us a spirit of timidity (of cowardice, of craven and cringing and fawning fear), but [He has given us a spirit] of power and of love and of calm and well-balanced mind and discipline and self-control."*

g) SELF LOVE

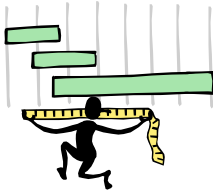
High quality life starts with a high quality **you** – but when self love is taken to the extreme, a person will learn to become selfish. However, if we can learn to attend to our own basic needs, and in so doing, equip ourselves to be available to others, we are fulfilling a need in others. Take for instance a situation where people are in an emergency situation during an airplane flight. Adults should first put on their own oxygen masks, to be able to help their children and others without restraint.

Initially it might make you feel guilty, uncomfortable, uncaring and unspiritual. But organized thinking in such instances can save others too!

TO HONOR YOURSELF IS THE GREATEST GIFT YOU CAN GIVE TO SOMEONE ELSE.



V. BOUNDARIES AND SCALES



In walking the path of life, we need to measure and weigh ourselves and put up boundaries for our own, as well as others' protection.

We will now have a look at some of the things we can expect to encounter:

RESENTMENT.....

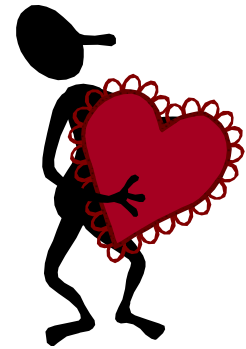
Detecting resentment in ourselves, is a sure sign of us having a boundary problem. When being in a relationship, doing things for that person, and at the same time resenting him/her, talking behind his back, being sarcastic with him, even in his face, putting him down, diminishing his remarks, etc., there is a boundary problem.

BOND, THEN BOUNDARIES.....

There are no boundaries to recovering outside of a relationship. We are not living in a vacuum. We were created by God to bond and love first, and then to determine the boundaries within ourselves regarding that relationship.

People who have been abandoned, find it hard to be separated from others, and will always try to find someone to bond with. This makes them fall more easily into destructive relationships.

Healing comes through connection with others in the Body of Christ where His love, healing and fruits are in operation.



PICK AND CHOOSE.....

Be on the lookout for people with well defined boundaries in place and whose lives clearly show that they have integrity. If you find yourself being attracted to those who have 'shady' lives and lifestyles, you must note the warning signs clearly! You have to step away from a potential vortex trying to draw you into a problem, and take a leap and a bound towards boundaries!

GUARD YOUR TREASURES

Have a good look inside of yourself. Measure the amount of time and energy you are putting into developing the treasure inside.

When you find that you are taking proper stewardship of your life, trying to put wrong things right and taking responsibility for your mistakes, you will know that you are well on your way to recovery.

FIRST CRAWL, THEN WALK

We need to be gracious to ourselves when putting to practice our boundaries. We can start practicing our abilities to put out boundaries and saying 'no' in relationships where we feel relatively safe to do so.

Like a baby, we need to first learn to crawl, and then to walk in the safe environment of the home and the loving relationship with father and mother.

Start using that 'no' muscle and exercise yourself in it, so that when the time comes, you will be skilled in it.



STICKING OUT THE NECK

If we are used to setting our personal boundaries, and acquainted with saying 'no', we will be ready when bigger challenges come our way. Sometimes we need to say 'no' to people we really cherish and need in our lives.



FREEDOM FROM GUILT

Replace legalistic guilt with love and grace.

MY FELLOW-MAN HAS A BOUNDARY.....

We need to give others the same grace that we expect them to give to us. In relationships we need grace to be separated, to allow the other one to make his/her own choices, have their freedom.

If I had been the controller in that relationship, I need to repent of it.



FREEDOM IN 'NO' MAKES WAY FOR FREEDOM IN 'YES'.....

We often find ourselves in situations where we had said 'yes', BUT we:

- did it compulsively
- is fearful about it
- angry about it
- resent it

We feel as if we're the prisoner of someone else. Therefore we need to reach the place in ourselves where we can be free to say 'no' – to make the choice – otherwise your 'yes' will never be wholeheartedly. Learn to set boundaries and say 'no' in honesty. Be in close contact with God, yourself and others – discern the situation, and feel free to say 'yes' or 'no'.

RESPONSIBLE BOUNDARIES.....

Responsible and mature boundaries are not reactive, but are value-driven and properly thought through. They are boundaries which are set deliberately because it is the right and best thing to do for yourself and the other person in the situation. These boundaries protect those valuables inside of you.

Responsible boundaries are all about keeping your own heart protected and not controlling the other person.

HOW CAN I BE OF SERVICE.....

Mat. 23:11,12 *“11 He who is greatest among you shall be your servant.
12 Whoever exalts himself [with haughtiness and empty pride] shall be humbled (brought low), and whoever humbles himself [whoever has a modest opinion of himself and behaves accordingly] shall be raised to honor.”*

Those who were helped can help others with that same help.
Those who were comforted can comfort others with that same comfort.
When we have developed secure boundaries in our own lives, we will be comfortable to step out and help and support others.

We will want to give to others that which we have received freely. With a heart filled with gratitude and joy about the grace of God and through what He did for you, you will want to extend a hand to others, share the benefits of your experience with them.

Over time your boundaries will lead to an appropriate concern about the self, responsibility and love. You will help others to find God the way that you have found Him.

IN GOD AND THROUGH HIS WORD, HIS SPIRIT AND HIS BODY, WE ARE BROUGHT INTO THE HABIT OF DEVELOPING HEALTHY BOUNDARIES FOR OURSELVES.



VI. THE DEVELOPMENT OF BOUNDARIES

Babies are born without boundaries in place. Boundaries are formed, not inherited. These boundaries are developed from childhood, and it never stops. The most crucial development of the elementary boundaries however, needs to be developed during our early years when our characters are formed.



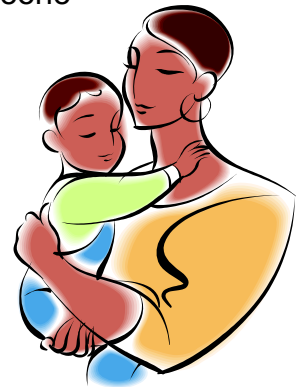
If the parents' boundaries are in place, they will teach their children those values. They ought to help their children to discover God's plan for their lives and help them to reach that.

The deepest need of a human being is to belong somewhere – to be in a relationship and to have a spiritual and emotional home. If these things are not in place, boundaries cannot develop. Remember, we are unable to live in a vacuum. We need relationship. If we lack that, we have no place to go when in conflict. Only two options then remain:

- to set boundaries and risk losing that relationship
- to not set boundaries and stay under control of someone else

BONDING.....

Natural bonding takes place at the earliest stages of life when a mother responds to the needs of the baby. A baby's basic needs are for closeness, safety, food and comfort. Internally, the baby forms an emotional picture of a warm, loving mother. He develops an inner sense of security of oneness through the constant attendance of his mother.

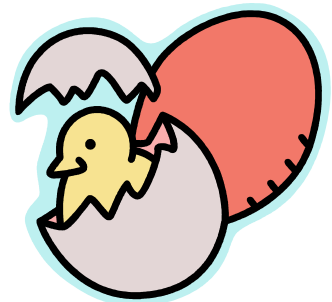


SEPARATION.....

There are three stages of separation in the early years of life:

1. BREAKING THE SHELL

During this first stage (\pm 5 – 10 months), baby starts to take interest in things outside of his mother. He explores, touches, tastes, and feels new things. He starts learning and even feels safe enough to take small risks.



2. DOING THE 'WORK-OUT'

This is the stage (\pm 10 – 18 months) when baby learns to walk and talk. He takes initiative and may even become aggressive at times!

3. HOME BASE

Now the little one (\pm 18 months to 3 yrs) experiences a reality check and finds out that he cannot do everything he thought he could!

During this stage he once again connects with his mother, however, he keeps an amount of separateness which are portrayed in thoughts and feelings that are different from hers and his own.

THE BLOCKS A TODDLER USES TO BUILD HIS BOUNDARIES.

- **ANGER**

A red light. A sign which shows that there is a problem. It draws a line between the self and others – a boundary is set.

- **ME, MINE AND MYSELF**

The child takes ownership. This is a necessary phase in the development, nurturing and protection of our personal space, time, energy, talents, values, feelings, possessions, etc. We need to comprehend 'self' to be able to give ourselves – to God and to others.

- **NO.....!!**

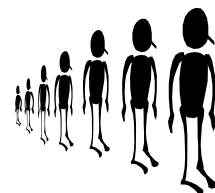
Such a small word, such power! This word sets a boundary. It gives the power to make a choice. It gives protection. We must teach our children that they may say 'no', but that they must also be able to take a 'no.'

In this he learns to set his boundaries and at the same time to respect the boundaries of others. This is discipline, and at the age of three, they should be able to say 'no' to others when it is appropriate without fearing loss of love, and to accept an appropriate 'no' from others without withdrawing emotionally.

LATER STAGES

During **adolescence boundaries** need to be set on sexuality, gender, identity, competition and adult identity.

Young adulthood phase when children leave home, start a career or get married, asks for further boundaries.



VII. BOUNDARY WOUNDS

a) MANIPULATION

Spiritual and emotional manipulation occurs when parents detach themselves from a young child when he misbehaves. The solution is to rather stay connected and deal with the problem. Keep in touch with the child, don't pull away in 'fits of silence', rage, pouting, etc.

This conveys a message to the child that he is only acceptable and lovable when he behaves like his parents or others want him to. The child learns to compromise his boundaries, to be dishonest to himself and others, to wear a mask.

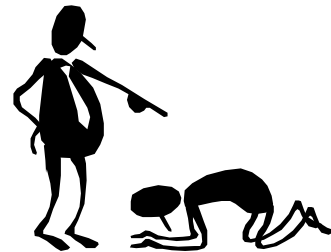
They learn to hide their truth-telling and separate parts. They start to form a mindset of guilt and feel responsible for the reactions of others. They grow up into adults who shy away from setting boundaries in relationships for fear of causing isolation and rejection.

b) HOSTILITY

True Godly discipline is carried out appropriately. Not with anger, harsh words, cruelty and exaggerated consequences for a small transgression.

True Godly discipline is an art to teach children and even adults self-control by using consequences. Intimidation, manipulation or domination is not Godly principles to use.

These create a 'slave' mentality in a child, and he will pretend to be coherent and obedient as long as the parent or authority figure is within watching or hearing distance. Again it cultures dishonesty and sets a bad example in putting boundaries in relationships.



If the child receives the "you have a choice" option, he learns to take responsibility for his own actions. Godly discipline always teaches, and not punishes us.

Heb. 12:9-11 "9 Moreover, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we yielded [to them] and respected [them for training us]. Shall we not much more cheerfully submit to the Father of spirits and so [truly] live?
10 For [our earthly fathers] disciplined us for only a short period of time and chastised us as seemed proper and good to them; but He disciplines us for our certain good, that we may become sharers in His own holiness.

11 For the time being no discipline brings joy, but seems grievous and painful; but afterwards it yields a peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it [a harvest of fruit which consists in righteousness—in conformity to God’s will in purpose, thought, and action, resulting in right living and right standing with God].”

When a child disagrees or is disobedient, etc., and the parent handles the situation with hostility and inaccessibility, the child is denied the privilege of being properly trained by an adult who is supposed to know better. The only lesson the child learns from this is how to avoid someone else’s wrath. This causes depression, anxiety, relationship problems and substance abuse and addiction problems later on.

Hostility can have one of two results, i.e. to go with the flow, or to reflect back and become controlling.

c) EXCESSIVE CONTROL

When rules and boundaries are too strict, a child does not have any room to make mistakes.

Children who grow up in such circumstances are inclined to be over dependent, have conflicts and difficulty in the setting and upholding of boundaries, fear to take any risks, get enmeshed. They even have problems in being creative!

d) ABSENCE OF LIMITS

Sometimes a lack of boundaries in the upbringing of the child, together with a lack of connection between parents and child, can produce an aggressive and controlling adult.

e) SHIFTING THE LIMITS

When boundaries are forever being inconsistent, it causes confusion in the child. In a family where alcohol plays a large role, this is often the case. Alcoholism causes enlarged boundary confusion due to the inconsistent behavior and reactions of such an abuser. A child never feels safe in relationships, for they always expect to be let down or to be attacked without reason. They learn to keep their guards up and their masks on.

f) TRAUMA

Emotional, physical and sexual abuse, accidents, illnesses, death, divorce, financial hardship, shock, etc.

VIII. BOUNDARY PRINCIPLES

There are basically **ten principles** in the area of boundaries.

1. SOWING AND REAPING.

Eccles. 11:6 *“6 In the morning sow your seed, and in the evening withhold not your hands, for you know not which shall prosper, whether this or that, or whether both alike will be good.”*

Ps. 125:5 *“5 As for such as turn aside to their crooked ways [of indifference to God], the Lord will lead them forth with the workers of iniquity. Peace be upon Israel!”*

This principle is as sure as the law of gravity – if you jump from a building, you will certainly go down!

It also has its effects on people and relationships. However, it often is not the sower who reaps the results of weak boundaries, but someone else!

Co-dependent people with no boundaries step in and reap the consequences ... and pay the bills.... physically, emotionally and spiritually. In other words, someone sows and the wrong person reaps. It is therefore very important that we bring order into our relationships, so that the person sowing the sin is the one who will reap the consequences.

This is more obvious in the area of negative behaviors, but more difficult to observe in the area of attitudes and emotions. Take for instance a person with a possessive controlling attitude. He will maintain this ‘lifestyle’ for years and years, and is never stopped. The other person in the relationship is not taking responsibility for his own boundaries, and allows this attitude to be sown in his life ... with disastrous fruits! The natural consequences of the loss of control of behavior should fall on the shoulders of the responsible party.

Proper boundaries force a sower to also be a reaper. To confront someone who is irresponsible will not harm him, it is only the consequences that are painful. However, painful consequences will change behavior.

2. PRINCIPLE OF RESPONSIBILITY

1 Cor. 12:25 *“25 So that there should be no division or discord or lack of adaptation [of the parts of the body to each other], but **the members all alike should have a mutual interest in and care for one another.**”*

When a person sets boundaries, he exhibits self control and take responsibility for himself. To set boundaries is an act of love, especially in marriage. When the bad is bound and limited, the good gets protected.

We ought to be responsible “to” people and not “for” them. If we do not act that out correctly, we take them out of God’s training program. Love is also to be able to stand back and let God do the discipline; otherwise we may stand in the way of their growth. To take responsibility for someone else’s anger, tantrums, etc. by giving in to that person’s demands or controlling behavior, destroys love in relationships or marriage.

Parents often make the mistake of “feeling” for their children, thinking **for** them, behaving **for** them, even sometimes **answering** for them. This is wrong. To be responsible “to” someone, means not only the giving of, but also the setting of boundaries on another’s destructive and irresponsible behavior. We have to confront the evil we see.

We need boundaries with others, otherwise it will lead them to destruction. At the same time, we are responsible for our own feelings, attitudes and behavior. When taking responsibility for other people and leaving our own responsibilities behind, we compromise our personal growth.

THE FRUIT OF MY LOVE: IS IT RESCUE OR MATURITY? WHEN WE TAKE THE LOADS OF OTHERS ONTO OURSELVES, LEAVING THEM WITH NOTHING, WE ARE IN FACT STEALING THEIR OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH!!

3. THE PRINCIPLE OF POWER

God has given us the power to develop a sense of control in ourselves, i.e. **self control**. We have received the power to work on ourselves through the power of the Holy Spirit, but we do not have the right to use the principle of power to change someone else. We have to accept people as they are, respect their choices and then give appropriate consequences. This is the way to execute the power we do have and at the same time we are not trying to change our partner.



However, we can co-labor with God to build in our own lives. There are certain steps we can take to help us in the process of change:

- Agree with the truth about my condition, in other words, confession.
- I need to admit my condition, the starting point of healing.
- Submit my powerlessness to change to God and accept the help of others.

Ps. 34:18 *“18 The Lord is close to those who are of a broken heart and saves such as are crushed with sorrow for sin and are humbly and thoroughly penitent.”*

- Ask God to show me how bad my condition really is. We need to walk in closeness to God and to be watchful for what is going on in our hearts and boundaries. We need to acquaint ourselves about the infinite love He has for us. The more grace we receive, the greater our ability to confront new areas of sin and work them through.

THE MORE GRACE WE RECEIVE, THE MORE TRUTH WE ARE WILLING TO FACE AND THIS IS A NEVER-ENDING PROCESS.

- Turn away from evil. Make a positive decision to change, to walk under control of the Spirit of God and not under flesh.
- Humble yourself and ask for help from God and others. Most of us have wounds and scars from our childhood years. God gave us a spiritual family to help us grow up emotionally.
- Seek out those whom you have injured, make amends, reconcile and forgive.

4. RESPECT

We have to learn to hear the other person’s “no”. Just like us, others have boundaries too. When we learn to respect the freedom of others, we can be free also.

We may not control other people, but respect their boundaries. Thus I will become more dependent upon God and others.

A boundary always deals with yourself, not the other person. You cannot demand that other person to respect your boundary, if you don’t do the same to them.

5. EVALUATING THE PAIN CAUSED BY YOUR BOUNDARIES.

Remember that a boundary always deals with yourself and not the other party. A boundary spells out what you will or will not do. We do have control over ourselves and we need to allow the other person to take responsibility for his/her own behavior.

- We need to make a distinction between **hurting** and **harming** someone else.
- When allowing someone to experience pain, we help them see that the hurt is due their character structure, and not due to us.
- Expect anger and guilt messages from others.
- By embracing the boundaries of others, we are able to be more loving.

6. PRINCIPLE OF MOTIVATION

False motives may keep us from setting proper boundaries. It may be:

- ❑ Fear of loss or abandonment
- ❑ Fear of another person's anger
- ❑ Fear of loneliness
- ❑ Guilt
- ❑ Seeking of approval
- ❑ To return favors
- ❑ Fear of losing the "good" person inside
- ❑ Taking another person's loss on ourselves

7. PRINCIPLE OF EVALUATION

We need to be honest with others about how we feel when we are hurt. We also need confrontation and truth from others to grow.



8. PRINCIPLE OF ENVY

If we want something we can't have, it causes envy. This was the original sin of satan. Envy can be one of the greatest boundary destructors possible. Envy is part of our sinful nature and we all suffer from it in one way or another, whether we are aware of it, or not. Envy devalues what we have.

Gratitude, on the other hand, is being content with what we already have.

Envy appears when other people have what we don't have, resulting us resenting their limits. Envy focuses outside our boundaries onto others. We will then neglect our responsibilities and end up with an envious heart.



How can we move from envy to gratitude?

- ❑ Be practical and make a list of those things you envy and confess it.
 - ❑ Grieve what you cannot have.
 - ❑ Look inwardly and take responsibility for your misery.
 - ❑ Seek actively what you CAN have and appreciate that.
- (Recommended reading: ENVY by Bob Sorge)

9. PRINCIPLE OF MOTIVATION

Boundaries define who I am apart from anyone else. It brings freedom. If I can manage this freedom properly, it is called responsibility.

We need to have a good look at our own lives and ask ourselves whether we are living in freedom or in slavery.

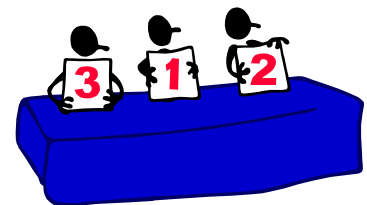
2 Cor. 9:7 *“7 Let each one [give] as he has made up his own mind and purposed in his heart, not reluctantly or sorrowfully or under compulsion, for God loves (He takes pleasure in, prizes above other things, and is unwilling to abandon or to do without) a cheerful (joyous, “prompt to do it”) giver [whose heart is in his giving].”*

Love increases when someone is able to acknowledge ***‘it hurts me when you say “no”, but I understand’***. Love begins to multiply as we respect and allow one another that freedom of choice.

BOUNDARIES ARE ABOUT GAINING CONTROL OVER MY OWN LIFE SO THAT I CAN DO THE MOST FULFILLING THING I AM CREATED TO DO – LOVE.

10. PRINCIPLE OF REACTIONS

In an atmosphere of fear, love cannot grow. When in a relationship where it feels as if you are living with a judge with yourself always on trial, you are living in an atmosphere of fear.



The reactions will be:

- ❑ Withdrawal from other person's anger
- ❑ Resentment for his irresponsibility
- ❑ Letting go of own responsibilities due to the other person's lack of attention
- ❑ Self-centered because of the other person's self-centeredness.

Living in such an atmosphere will cause a continuing reaction to the other person's sin and you will not be able to grow spiritually or emotionally.

We have to be careful to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and not satisfaction from another person. We are responsible for our own actions.

11. PRINCIPLE OF PRO-ACTIVE vs. REACTIVE BOUNDARIES.

This is to take action to solve problems based on your values and wants, before you blow up!

When personally defined by something someone else did to you, then that person "owns" you in some inappropriate way. There is a difference between being victimized and becoming a victim as an identity.

The definition of a victim is someone who, in their response to circumstances and choices they make, makes their decisions according to something dictated from the outside.

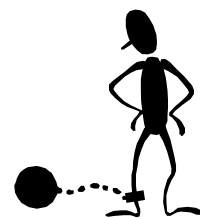
Victimization as you were growing up, is a significant part of your life which left damage in the soul, but when you begin to be ordered and defined by what someone else is doing to you now, you are a **reactive** person and not in control of yourself.

To set boundaries has nothing to do with the assertion of rights, but it is a quiet, authoritative statement of what you believe to be appropriate and right for yourself.

The ultimate goal of boundaries, is to be a responder to the bad, not a reactor.

12. PRINCIPLE OF ACTIVITY

To be active, is to take initiative. It is to take responsibility for the fact that you do have a problem and start to plan what you are going to do about it.

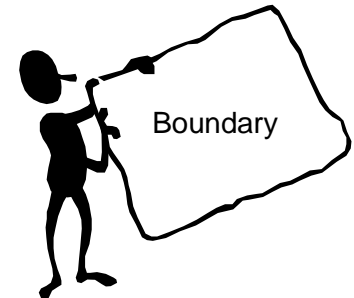


I take ownership for my problem, determine where and what it may be, and exert the power to submit my soul to a process of healing. I am doing something; I am active and part of my own solution.

This process is hard work and it involves a passionate hunger and thirst for righteousness.

13. PRINCIPLE OF EXPOSURE

Although our boundaries are manifested on the inside, we need to take them to the outside and communicate them to others, thus making it visible.



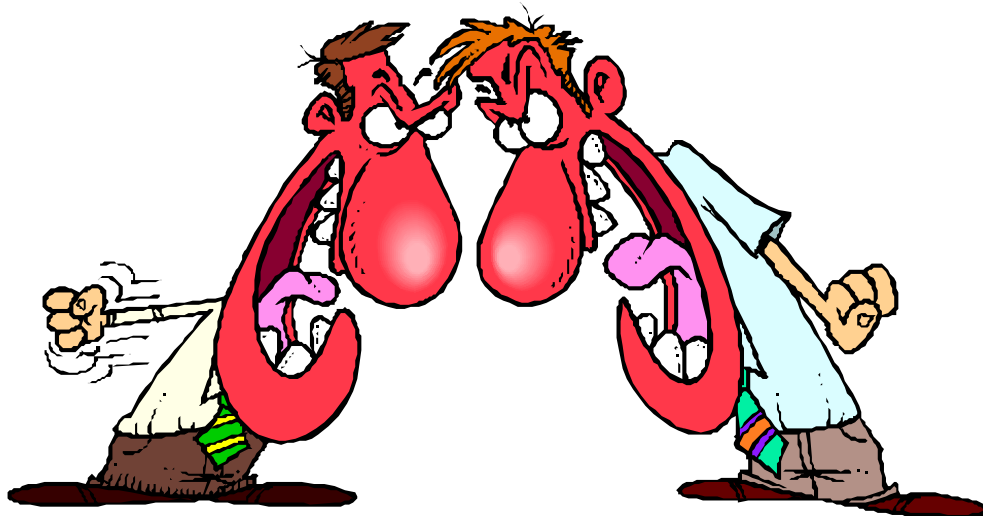
A boundary not communicated, is a boundary that is not working, it's latent.

Boundaries must promote love and truth. Make it clear what it is you want or do not want.

Symptoms of latency in the principle of exposure:

- ❑ We grumble a lot.
- ❑ Frequent explosions.
- ❑ Victimization. (Remain a victim)

Others cannot respond to our boundaries if we keep it a secret. Within relationships, boundaries can get more defined and stronger and healthy. People who are in a healthy relationship are able to talk about their boundaries and negotiate about it. But people who keep their boundaries inside will either remain a victim or will continue grumbling with an explosion following.



IX. MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT BOUNDARIES

1. BOUNDARIES ARE SELFISH

This is not true. The Bible encourages us to guard and love ourselves, to develop and grow and to get in touch with ourselves. To be able to do this, we need to be in a loving relationship with God and other people in order to even be able to have a self.

The Word teaches that we ought to love our neighbor as we love ourselves.



Mark. 12:33 *“33 And to love Him out of and with all the heart and with all the understanding [with the faculty of quick apprehension and intelligence and keenness of discernment] and with all the strength, and to love one’s neighbor as oneself, is much more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.”*

To set your boundaries are to develop self control – a fruit of the Spirit.

2. BOUNDARIES CAUSE DISOBEDIENCE

People confuse obedience to them with obedience to God. When we have to make a decision regarding a boundary and it does not match up to their expectation from us, they will accuse us of disobedience...to God!

If and when we have to make such a decision, even if others do not agree with it, we still have to follow the leading of the Lord in this.

3. BOUNDARIES WILL TAKE AWAY LOVE

Our first love is Jesus Christ. Our security in Him draws us into relationship with Him. However, we were created to be in fellowship and relationship with our fellow men. A baby is born with **two ‘fears’**: to fall, and to be abandoned.

In drawing up boundaries, it may well happen that we will offend others and there is a definite chance that we will win some, lose some. We must be prepared to take that step in absolute trust in God and the choices we make for ourselves, so that even when we lose some, we may know that He will take care of us and that the right people will eventually come back.

4. BOUNDARIES WILL HURT OTHERS

Of course we do not want to hurt others! We don't want to be abandoned, and neither do we want to be the one who abandons! The truth is, however, that the boundaries set up is not offensive, but defensive. We ought not to give someone else who does not want you to exercise boundaries, the grace to manipulate you out of that decision. Sometimes love needs to be tough in putting out boundaries – yet, over time it will yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness. Remember, there is a difference between **hurting** in order to heal, or **harming** in order to wound.



5. BOUNDARIES DOES NOT MEAN THAT I AM ANGRY

Perhaps it did happen to you frequently that only when pushed into a corner, you could bring yourself to saying “no!” Therefore, you have been associating boundaries with anger.

Boundaries, however, are proactive and not reactive, therefore, people with well developed boundaries, don't experience a lot of anger, because they do not allow others or circumstances to push them into corners.

We are programmed to understand that love and boundaries do not go together and that they cannot exist or operate together. True love, however, is continuous, no matter what happens. True love does not need a “yes” all the time, yet the love is still constant. My “no” may sometimes be the actual demonstration of genuine love in a relationship.

THE BOUNDARYLESS ONE IS THE UNLOVING ONE. BOUNDARIES ARE NOT UNLOVING, BUT KIND. PASSIVITY WITHOUT BOUNDARIES CREATE ANGRY PEOPLE.

6. BOUNDARIES WILL INJURE ME

The way a relationship should function, is that it will involve choices that take us away from each other. In relationships there is a time to be together and a time to be separate. We cannot be together all the time. This creates a longing for each other and it brings us back together again.

However, if we experience a “no” that takes the other person away from us, as rejection and abandonment, we have the problem of not having received enough love in our emotional brain before we developed boundaries.

The other person is drawing a boundary for his own sake. Why do I experience this in a negative way? Why do I experience emptiness and brokenness?

I have to get in touch with the injuries inside myself and work with it. I need to take responsibility for it.

7. I OWE THEM

The guilt trap is basically a confusion between love and seduction, because what it says is that what you are receiving, is not freely given. Some time or other you will have to pay it back.

Someone reached out and helped us when we needed it – they sacrificed their time, money, themselves, etc. for us. In our minds we create a debit/credit balance that we are not even aware of. We need to understand and accept love as a free gift and the only ‘paying back’ that is needed from us, is gratitude.

Guilt will keep us from doing what is right and will keep us stuck. Guilt is a personal problem. No one has the power to **make** us feel guilty.

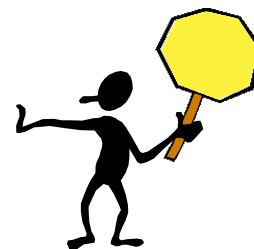
Love goes together with emotion. When we respond to something in guilt, we are not being loving, not emotionally present, and resentment follows.

Mat. 6:21 *“21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”*

8. I AM SCARED OF BOUNDARIES – WHAT IF I CAN’T TURN BACK?

Boundaries can be changed according to the measure in which we grow, our needs or circumstances change, etc. We are in charge of our boundaries. Our boundaries are always negotiable – if not, you are in a child/parent relationship and that never works.

RESISTANCE IS A GOOD SIGN!!



X. BOUNDARIES AND YOUR FAMILY

Mark 10:7 *“7 For this reason a man shall leave [behind] his father and his mother and be joined to his wife and cleave closely to her permanently,”*

Your father / mother / parents can own your life, this is wrong, a clear sign of a boundary problem. They can affect your new family negatively. When your relationship with one person affects your relationships with others negatively, it is a clear indication that you are giving someone too much power in your life.



When the spouse feels like he/she always receives the left-overs from the other partner and that the other person’s loyalty lies with the family of origin, there is a boundary problem.

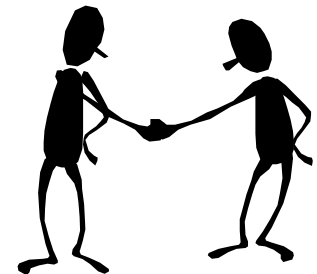
When adult children get into financial problems again and again because of their own irresponsibility, negligence, substance abuse, spending, etc., and parents tend to always step in to help out, they are preventing their children from achieving independence.

Adults need to separate emotionally from their parents and plan for their own future.

Another problem is called triangulation. This is when old patterns of conflict between parent and child, parent and parent, etc., result in talking behind the back of the third family member.

Matt. 18:15 *“15 If your brother wrongs you, go and show him his fault, between you and him privately. If he listens to you, you have won back your brother.”*

It is a Biblical principle to always talk to the person with whom you have a conflict first. Bring it to the light between you two and do not discuss issues with a third party which you will not say in front of the other person, doesn’t matter how good your intentions are.



Some people had to learn very early in their lives that they had to feel responsible for their parents’ irresponsibility and immaturity. They could never break free to live separate lives, due to feelings of guilt.

They do not know how to put limitation upon their giving, their parents lack adjustment to their old age, and thereby dominating and influencing the privacy of the young family.

This kind of pressure and infiltration can even come from a sibling who avoids growing up and leaving the family.

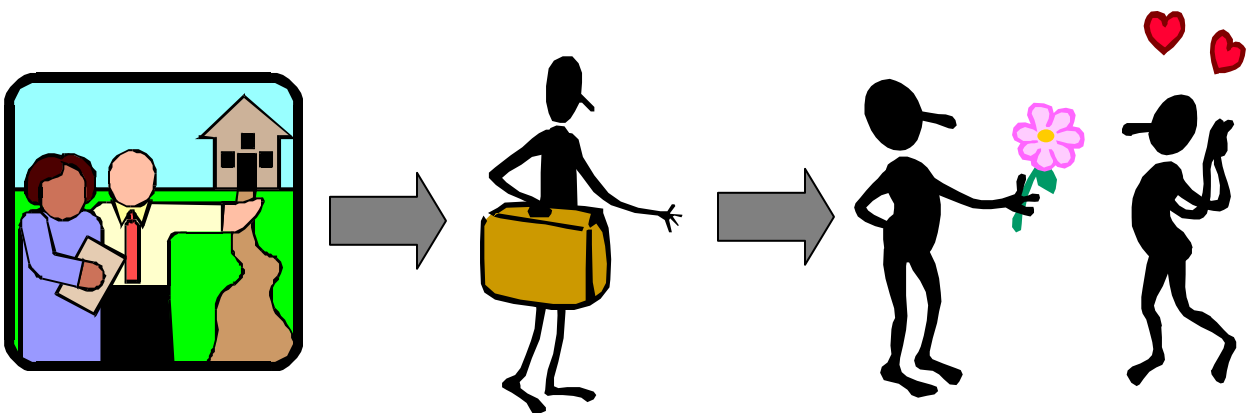
If boundaries are securely in place, resentment is prevented. Wisdom and maturity is needed to be able to give within the boundaries of your own situation and resources.

2 Cor. 12:14 *“14 Now for the third time I am ready to come to [visit] you. And I will not burden you [financially], for it is not your [money] that I want but you; for children are not duty bound to lay up store for their parents, but parents for their children.”*

We must be aware that the examples we had while growing up, will continue into adulthood, unless we identify them and turn away from it.

NOBODY CAN BECOME A TRULY BIBLICAL ADULT WITHOUT SETTING SOME BOUNDARIES, LEAVING HOME AND CLEAVING SOMEWHERE ELSE.

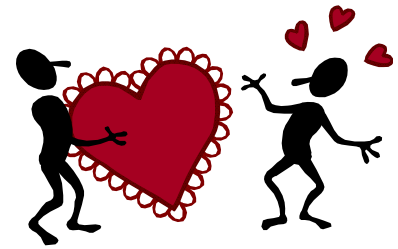
You have to form your own identity – your own values, beliefs and convictions – you are your own person. Your family can be your friends, yes, but you have to grow into an adult-to-adult relation and not be afraid of separating and becoming an individual.



XI. BOUNDARIES IN A ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP

To set secure boundaries in romantic relationships, is of utmost importance. A romantic relationship is by nature risky.

The point of departure in any romantic relationship, is dating with the purpose to practice and experiment. The end goal is then to decide, sooner or later, whether or not to marry this person. While still dating and we find that it is not working, we have the freedom to say so and end the relationship.



To bring immature, undeveloped aspects of our characters into an adult romantic relationship, is dangerous. We cannot seek safety, bonding and consistence for our wounds in this area of low commitment. Dating is not a place for your injured soul to find healing. It can best be found in support groups or same-sex friendships where it is safer to learn the skills of setting boundaries.

Honesty with each other in a romantic relationship is necessary. It helps to define the relationship and each party knows where he/she starts and the other person stops. If there is ignorance of one's boundaries, it is a sure indication of the poor health of that relationship.

Even if a couple say that they “do not have many differences”, they must find out what they are hiding from each other!



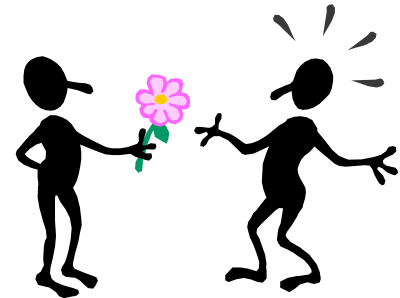
XII. BOUNDARIES AND YOUR MARRIAGE PARTNER

Eph. 5:31 *“31 For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”*

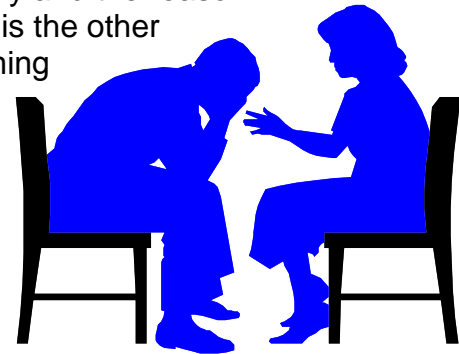
The marriage relationship is a reflection of Christ’s relationship with His Church. As Christ was the only One who could die for the world, and the Church has to represent Him on earth, likewise, in marriage, partners do not lose their individual identities.

The area where boundaries can get confusing is in the elements of the soul when one trespasses onto the other one’s personhood and tries to control the feelings, attitudes, behaviors, choices, values, etc. of the other partner. This is a violation of someone’s personal boundaries. Our relationships need to be based upon freedom.

Feelings are an important element to promote intimacy between two people. Feelings are also a warning signal to tell us that something needs to be done. We need to take responsibility for our feelings and learn to communicate it from an attitude of vulnerability and not accusation.



In any relationship, but especially in marriage, when you are angry, it is your responsibility to tell the other party that you are angry and the reason why. If you have the misconception that your anger is the other person’s problem and waits for him/her to do something about it, it may never happen. The fruit of bitterness will soon start growing within you!



The same principle goes for our **desires**. We have to take responsibility for it and not expect someone else to be responsible for our needs and wants, blaming them for our disappointments.

Any relationship has the principle element of give and take in it. We must give as we decide in our hearts to give, and be alert that we do not give past the point of love and start resenting it.

2 Cor. 9:7 *“7 Let each one [give] as he has made up his own mind and purposed in his heart, not reluctantly or sorrowfully or under compulsion, for God loves (He takes pleasure in, prizes above other things, and is unwilling to abandon or to do without) a cheerful (joyous, “prompt to do it”) giver [whose heart is in his giving].”*

When we start blaming someone else for our own lack of boundaries, problems arise. This may easily occur within a marriage, and resentment and bitterness will step in. In marriage, the principle of submission of one to another out of reverence for Christ is essential. Mutual respect plays a huge role in marriage, and thus mutual respect for each other's boundaries. Submission must of course be a free choice of one party to another.



Eph. 5:24-27 *“24 As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands.
25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her,
26 So that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word,
27 That He might present the church to Himself in glorious splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such things [that she might be holy and faultless].”*

The law makes us conscious of the fact that we can never make it on our own. The law will quicken wrath, guilt, insecurity, alienation, etc. in a person.

Gal. 3:24 *“24 So that the Law served [to us Jews] as our trainer [our guardian, our guide to Christ, to lead us] until Christ [came], that we might be justified (declared righteous, put in right standing with God) by and through faith.”*

If the **husband forces his wife to submit**, he is trying to get her to do something that is either hurtful, or it takes away her will and her personal boundaries. This is sin against himself and against the Word of God. Christ never overrules our free will or asks us to do something hurtful. He never pushes us past our boundaries and uses us as objects.

The aim of boundaries is to be able to love in freedom and responsibility. When we are in control of ourselves, we can give and sacrifice for others in a helpful way in stead of allowing their destructive behavior, self centeredness and self justification to hurt or destroy us. Then we can exercise the freedom to give in a way that produces fruit. Then we can live up to the principle of Christ, which is to love one another.



If well defined boundaries are in place within the marriage, it can lead to much greater intimacy.

XIII. BOUNDARIES AND OUR CHILDREN

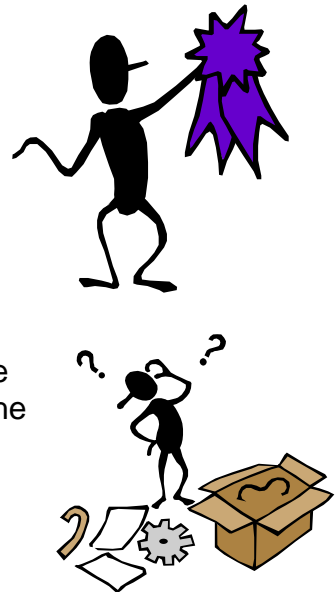
Responsibility is one of those most indispensable gifts that a parent can ever give to a child. Children have to learn from a very early stage what is, and what is not their responsibility, even to be able to know when they may say “no” and how to accept “no” when it’s coming from someone else.

The one component of external limitation which is designed to develop internal boundaries in a child, is **discipline**. Discipline is not necessarily punishment. While punishment looks back at what had happened, discipline looks ahead and helps a child to grow and develop into a mature, responsible adult. This boundary created by discipline, helps a child to take ownership and responsibility for his own needs.

Parents need to allow their children to talk about their anger and to express grief, loss or sadness without trying to cheer them up or talk them out of their true feelings. They need to encourage their children to ask some questions and to not make them believe that parents have all the answers or that their answers are about equal with that of the Bible. They need to help their children to put their negative feelings into words.

Through this, children growing up into adults, learn to take responsibility for their own lives. They should by then, have an internal conviction of certain aspects, for instance:

- ❑ I am responsible for my own success or failure;
- ❑ I am responsible for the final choices I make, even after having discussed it with God and other people;
- ❑ I am aware of the fact that relationships throughout my life will affect me to one degree or another, I have to take responsibility for my own problems and not blame someone else for it;
- ❑ Although I am aware of the fact that I cannot always succeed and I will need support from others, I cannot be irresponsible and leave it to another person to pick up the pieces for me every time I have spiritual, emotional, financial or relational crises.



Although we will always be tempted to put the blame for our injured, immature souls upon someone else like a parent, etc., we are ultimately responsible for what we choose in life. Even so, parents have a huge responsibility to teach their children to create an internal sense of limitations and at the same time to respect the limits of others.

XIV. BOUNDARIES AND THE FLESHLY SELF

Rom. 8:4-9 “4 So that the righteous and just requirement of the Law might be fully met in us who live and move not in the ways of the flesh but in the ways of the Spirit [our lives governed not by the standards and according to the dictates of the flesh, but controlled by the Holy Spirit].

5 For those who are according to the flesh and are controlled by its unholy desires set their minds on and pursue those things which gratify the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit and are controlled by the desires of the Spirit set their minds on and seek those things which gratify the [Holy] Spirit.

6 Now the mind of the flesh [which is sense and reason without the Holy Spirit] is death [death that comprises all the miseries arising from sin, both here and hereafter]. But the mind of the [Holy] Spirit is life and [soul] peace [both now and forever].

7 [That is] because the mind of the flesh [with its carnal thoughts and purposes] is hostile to God, for it does not submit itself to God’s Law; indeed it cannot.

8 So then those who are living the life of the flesh [catering to the appetites and impulses of their carnal nature] cannot please or satisfy God, or be acceptable to Him.

9 But you are not living the life of the flesh, you are living the life of the Spirit, if the [Holy] Spirit of God [really] dwells within you [directs and controls you]. But if anyone does not possess the [Holy] Spirit of Christ, he is none of His [he does not belong to Christ, is not truly a child of God].”

Rom. 6:12 “12 Let not sin therefore rule as king in your mortal (short-lived, perishable) bodies, to make you yield to its cravings and be subject to its lusts and evil passions.”

1 Thess. 4:4,5 “4 That each one of you should know how to possess (control, manage) his own body in consecration (purity, separated from things profane) and honor,

5 Not [to be used] in the passion of lust like the heathen, who are ignorant of the true God and have no knowledge of His will,”

We are body, soul and spirit. The Word says we have to walk after the Spirit, not the flesh. We need to take responsibility and control over our flesh through the Spirit of God living in us.

We will now look at some of the tendencies of the fleshly self that portrays areas of our soul that are out of control.

1. GLUTTONY

Gluttony or overeating leads to the bodily condition of overweight, which is visible to the outer world. This condition may cause self hatred and shame in a person and will drive him/her away from relationships and back to his/her comfort, which is food. Overweight is sometimes used by overeaters to serve as a type of boundary to avoid intimacy.



2. MONEY

When we had fallen into the trap of spending more than our income and it has become a lifestyle, it is a sign of a boundary problem in ourselves. Signs of this may be:

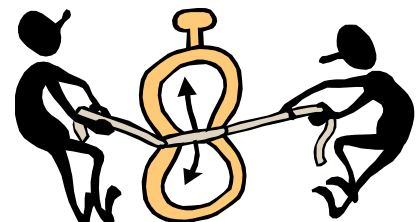
- ❑ Spending impulsively
- ❑ Do not take budgeting seriously
- ❑ 'Flying too high'
- ❑ Problems with credit
- ❑ Borrowing becomes a habit
- ❑ Savings not in place
- ❑ Has to work more and more to pay expenses



3. TIME

Once again this is an area where self limitation is the problem.

A person is forever on the run, and it seems as if they have constant 'dead-lines' to meet. On top of that, they are never on time for an appointment, and it is frustrating to others as well as themselves.



They end up with unfinished projects, unfulfilled desires, disappointments, etc. However, they seem to be caught up in this cycle and just can't manage to take control over this habit and take responsibility for their time, as well as others' time.

4. TONGUE

James 3:5,6 *“5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and it can boast of great things. See how much wood or how great a forest a tiny spark can set ablaze! 6 And the tongue is a fire. [The tongue is a] world of wickedness set among our members, contaminating and depraving the whole body and setting on fire the wheel of birth (the cycle of man’s nature), being itself ignited by hell (Gehenna).”*

With our tongues we can both **bless or curse**. Bless by being compassionate, edify, encourage, exhort, confront, pray, etc. Curse by gossiping, being sarcastic, threatening, false flattering, seducing, talking nonsense, dominating, etc.

We need to **exercise** ourselves to bridle the tongue by setting up boundaries. We need to be in charge of our words, and not the other way around.



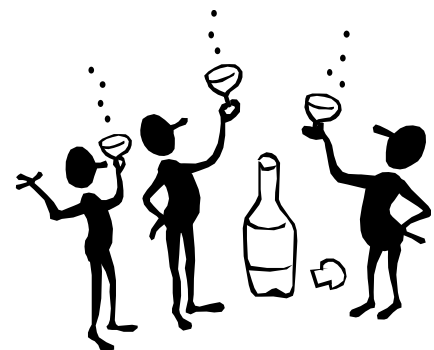
5. SEX

The lust of the flesh covers a wide spectrum of behavior in people, of which one is sexuality. The fruits thereof may be like: pornography, masturbation, molestation, incest, rape, prostitution, etc.

A person trapped in an uncontrolled sexual behavioral cycle, becomes isolated and the lack of boundaries in this area causes shame and loneliness. This destructive habit becomes a vortex which the victim is unable to resist.

6. SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND ADDICTION

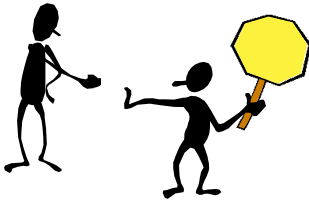
This is one of the most evident examples if an internal boundary is absent. The dependency upon some or other substance and the abuse thereof, creates chaos in peoples’ lives, with the fruits of destruction being broken relationships, parent/child dysfunction, divorce, job failures, financial breakdowns, health problems, accidents, and even untimely death.



XV. BOUNDARIES AND GOD

How will we be able to manage to love God and our neighbor as we love ourselves?

If we have not taken ownership of our personal internal boundaries, it will be very difficult.



God respects our will. He leaves some things to us to do, and in so doing, we have to take ownership and responsibility for it, and suffer the consequences if we don't.

People tend to be dishonest with God. With our mouths we confess, but in our hearts we are deceitful. We have to take ownership of our boundaries with God, acknowledge them, bring them to the light and into the right position.

God wants us to be completely honest with Him. Not so much for His sake, but for our own sakes. Those deeply buried angers, shame, pride, etc., need to be exposed to His light so that He can transform it with His love.

On the other hand, we have to honor God's boundaries too. We must be expecting and be prepared to receive "no's" from God from time to time.

It is important that we know what the boundaries are between God and ourselves. It clarifies our vision of who we are, and who God is. We cannot do His part, and He wants us to do our part. All in all, He wants to be in a healthy relationship with us.

THREE REASONS WHY MY "NO" IS NOT WORKING?

- ❑ I am my own worst enemy.
- ❑ I withdraw from relationship when I need it most. We need relationships to be able to receive healing and balance. We will not be able to make progress alone – we need God and other people.
- ❑ I try to do it from my soul area with my will.

A victim is someone who, while in a helpless state, was injured by exploitation of another person, whether it was verbal, physical or ritual. These things can cause tremendous damage to the internal structure of a child and these factors remain constant, i.e. helplessness, injury and exploitation.

The fruits later on may be:

- ❑ Depression
- ❑ Compulsive disorders
- ❑ Impulsive disorders
- ❑ Isolation
- ❑ Inability to trust
- ❑ Inability to form close attachments
- ❑ Inability to set limits
- ❑ Poor judgment in relationships
- ❑ Further exploitation in relationships
- ❑ Deep sense of pervasive badness
- ❑ Shame
- ❑ Guilt
- ❑ Chaotic lifestyle
- ❑ Sense of meaninglessness and purposelessness
- ❑ Unexplainable terror and panic attacks
- ❑ Phobias
- ❑ Rage attacks
- ❑ Suicidal feelings and thoughts



The healing of these people is not an easy process, because they were injured through abuse in their developmental stages. Such a person has lost trust in others and life. Often the perpetrator was someone they knew, someone who played an important role in their lives, like a parent, grand-parent, brother, sister, etc.

How do we develop the sense of trusting ourselves? By learning to trust others. If that trust was abused in the early years, even later on, a person finds it extremely difficult to let go and trust again. He needs to learn to trust his own perceptions of reality and to depend upon himself and others during times of need.

Because of the perpetrating of personal boundaries in a victim through abuse or molestation, his sense of ownership over his soul was destroyed. They feel that they do not belong to themselves, even their body and time do not feel like their own. They have a deeply seated sense of feeling dirty or ashamed, wrong or bad. They take ownership of being bad.

The role of a counselor is to help such people to set boundaries for themselves. Boundaries act as protection for them.

XVI. THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

1. IDENTIFICATION

You have to acknowledge that you are being controlled, manipulated, abused, etc. This involves identifying your symptoms, acknowledging that YOU have the problem, not somebody else. You may even confess that you are scared ... but to ignore the symptom, will not make it go away!



2. CONNECTION

What is causing the symptoms? Why are we sick? Because we are separated from God and from life.

The one sin of mankind, is that he is separated from God and from life by choice. And it is from out of that position of separateness from God that other sins start to flow in our lives. The religious system trained us to go for the symptoms of the sins, and we do that through soul power. We have to go right down to the root of the sin, and dismantle it right there.

The opposite of separateness? Connection Reconciliation Firstly with God, and then with man. If we live in the illusion that we will get better in a bubble of our own, in other words in isolation, we're living a lie and the solution will not come that way.



3. OUR NEEDS

The four most basic needs of a human being are

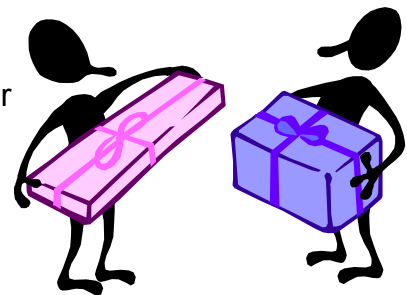
- Connection
- Limits and personal space
- I am good and bad, but not perfect
- To become mature

Our lack of limitations has underlying needs, and we need to discover them. Due to our different circumstances and personalities, we all have to one degree or another, limitation problems.

When we come to the realization of our needs, it is better to be enveloped within a healing Body of believers.

4. RECEIVE FROM OTHERS

A genuine relationship will serve as an 'incubator' for someone who had been hurt in the growing up years. We need someone who will love us unconditionally, who will "love us back to life!"



We need grace to accept this from someone else, and not resist it, for this much good will often scare us. This is because of a fear of love or closeness. We need to take ownership of these fears and proceed to healing.

5. LETTING GO

To forgive and to **let go** is not an easy process, but possible. It is our passage to freedom, although it is a sad process.

It is said that we cannot receive something new if we are still holding the old in our hands. When we let go of the bad, we can embrace the good.

Let go of what you could never have

Let go of the thought of “but this was different ...” or “if only”.

6. FORGIVENESS

True forgiveness works like a two-edged sword. To be able to forgive, we must first be forgiven. We cannot be forgiven until we realize our own badness. We need to take ownership of the fact that there is a wrong in ME.

Because we tend to repeat the bad that was done to us by acting it out on those near to us, we need to realize that not only were we perpetrated, but we are perpetrating too.



Ps. 34:18 *“18 The Lord is close to those who are of a broken heart and saves such as are crushed with sorrow for sin and are humbly and thoroughly penitent.”*

When I acknowledge my own condition of brokenness and badness, I can receive grace from God. And once I have received grace from God, I can extend grace to others.

7. OWN IT

This means that where I am at now, is my problem and that I am going to value what goes on inside of me, enough to develop and nurture those parts.

Limitary problems usually develop because someone did not value our treasures within, and wanted something from us that we were not supposed to give away.

To own this personally, I must come to a decision that I am going to be the transitional generation. That I am going to take responsibility in integrity, truthfulness, being firm, and not giving in to pressure like it was being done to me.

Apart from taking ownership over our treasures, we also have to acknowledge the fruit thereof. This may not come easy, as some of these fruit may be something like a divorce, childlessness, depression, etc. We have to reach a point where we must realize that this problem has to be tackled by me, and me alone. No one else is going to do it for me.

8. SAY YES TO LOVE

The biggest part of liminary work has to do with being loved. In a loving relationship we are able to develop limits. If we cannot say “yes” to love, we will not be able to say “no” to the bad. Remember to learn to say “no” to those people you feel safe with at first, before you extend it to those you don’t feel safe with!



9. FAILURE

Growth takes time. Maturity takes time. Failure is part of it. There are lots of reasons for failure. Perhaps we are not ready yet, perhaps there are still some more things to learn, etc. Failure is a message to you that your recovery is not over and that you can do it. It is a message that you are finally in it. It is alright to be scared because this is new to you.

We also have to face our natural resistance to change and make a positive decision to change and to move forward.

10. BACK TO SQUARE ONE

When you fail, not if, don’t give up! Remember the way you came? Remember what to do with pain? You identify it, right? You examine the symptom and the root thereof.

This is a cycle that needs to be worked through again and again. Often it’s not as simple as one little root, it’s a junction of different things that cause our symptoms. There is always light at the end of the tunnel and it’s not a train! If we push in and keep working this cycle of transformation in ourselves, we will eventually break through!

XVII. GROWING HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

The implementing, establishing and maintaining of boundaries in our lives, are no easy matter. It takes hard work, honesty, humility, discipline and motivation. We need to acknowledge the fact that we need healthy boundaries throughout our lives all the time, and not seek for it only once we're in pain.

Job 1:10 *"10 Have You not put a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have conferred prosperity and happiness upon him in the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land."*

The more we grow and become like Jesus, the more we will be aware of His outworking within us, redeeming our boundaries.

In the establishing of healthy boundaries, we will have to face two forms of resistance, i.e. **external resistance** from others and **internal resistance** from ourselves.

I. EXTERNAL RESISTANCE

Expect anger

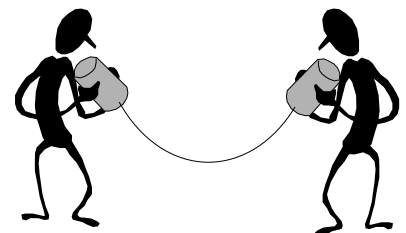
You will have to make a stand and be firm in that, when declaring new boundaries to those around you. They may not take this 'in the stride' and may even become angry with you for 'excluding' them. This is a new thing for them, and they will have to get used to it. Do not react to this anger, do not allow it to influence you in getting angry yourself, and you may even have to physically remove yourself from the presence of the other party, thereby enforcing consequential boundaries. But for you, this is the right decision, for you have to take care of those treasures inside of you.



Get connected

While in this process, especially when the implementing of boundaries is still new to you, you need to be connected to God and other people who will help you to absorb the shock and even rejection you may experience from those near you.

Get connected to people who are familiar with a lifestyle of boundaries, who will understand you situation.



Guilt

Remember that people who try to control, have poorly developed boundaries themselves.

One method such people will use to gain back their control over you, is by internalizing guilt messages, thereby trying to manipulate you. Guilt is none other than rage that someone is lying about, seeking for a victim to unload upon. Examples of guilt messages may be:

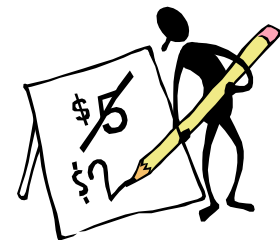
- *I cannot believe this! After all I had done for you?*
- *I thought you loved me! Seemingly I was wrong.*
- *I never could imagine that you are such a selfish person. How can you leave us like this?*
- *If only you could know how much I had sacrificed for you!*
- *Don't you know what this is going to cost me?*
- *Someday, some or other day, you will remember and be sorry!*
- *And you call yourself a Christian?*
- *You need to once again go and read the Ten Commandments ... one of them says you ought to honor your parents ... !*
- *The Word says you have to submit Is this your idea of submission?*
- *You ought to be ashamed of yourself! You made a promise in front of witnesses!*

If accusations or guilt messages come your way, you need someone you can trust to work these through with. Do not under-estimate the damage that these guilt messages can cause to your internal self.

You will also have to work through your need to repair the other person in the relationship. Let go of that need to repair, accept that you are living with someone without a sense of limitations, and speak to God about them, and not to them about God!

Remember that the first step in establishing a boundary, will be the hardest. Remember that establishing a boundary is the start of the battle, not the end. Remember that you face a risk in setting up boundaries and gaining control over your life.

Take into account that you will have to stand firm to enforce also the consequences before you set the boundaries. Remember that God will be with you all the way to help you, encourage you, give you the wisdom to enforce your boundaries, guide you to exhibit His fruits!



Physical resistance

Prov. 11:29 *"29 He who troubles his own house shall inherit the wind, and the foolish shall be servant to the wise of heart."*

When trying to implement boundaries, it may ignite physical violation from the other person in the relationship. This conduct ought not to be endured or condoned by the person setting the boundary.

Especially women, when they are a victim of this kind of behavior, will try to protect their husband's reputation with friends, family, community, children or church, and would not admit that they are allowing this kind of treatment to happen to them.

In truth, this is a very serious condition and needs help from outside, either from the law, social services, the church, relatives or friends. This problem will not only influence the woman, but also the children, and later on the descendants, due to the emotional wounding that takes place and leaves imprints of the conscious and unconscious minds of those involved.

Victims need empowerment so that they can get their needs met in other ways than just trying to make the other person happy. Do not fall into the trap of believing that it's 'Biblical' to submit to the authority in your life. If that authority is not administered through love and the Holy Spirit, you have Biblical authority to refuse hurt and not allow it in your life. **No other person has the right to hurt you physically, nor abuse you emotionally or verbally.**

True Biblical submission is an act of bond-servant hood. True submission is voluntarily and loving and a reaction upon love received.

Pain

When setting our boundaries, we have to evaluate why we have set this boundary. Are we setting it to become ourselves, or to get revenge? We need to be honest to ourselves about this, for revenge and justice do not belong to us, it belongs to God. Do not ever allow yourself to enforce boundaries upon someone else which are unjust and with a hidden agenda.

If appropriate, we may even need to explain to the other person that they are not always entitled to ALL that you have, ALL that you are, ALL that you can give. The other person needs to learn that he needs boundaries too, that he is living in a real world, and that he needs to grow up and learn.

WE ALWAYS NEED TO FORGIVE, BUT WE DO NOT ALWAYS ACHIEVE RECONCILIATION THROUGH IT.

We can forgive in our hearts and release someone else through it. Forgiveness is something we can do on our own without the other party present. Forgiveness is a work of grace that God does in my heart.

However, to reconcile, we need the other party or parties. Reconciliation can only take place when both parties take ownership of their transgressions and repent thereof.

II. INTERNAL RESISTANCE.....

Everything involving resistance inside a person, e.g. “*are boundaries Biblical?*” or “*what effect is it going to have on me?*” are internal resistances.

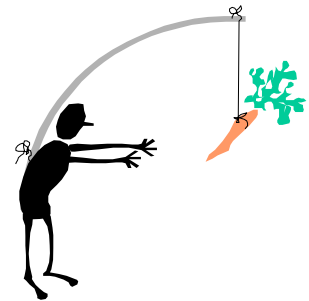
We may be suffering from unmet needs from the family we grew up in, and so we will have to work extra hard at these weak areas, so that we will be strong enough to stand against the intruding of our personal boundaries when adults.

OFTEN TIMES WE ARE OUR OWN WORST ENEMY!

Unmet needs

Due to all sorts of drives inside of us stemming from real needs that have not been met, we are often unable to say “no”, and that drives us to the wrong solutions.

If you really have an unmet need for love inside, you may tend to turn to the wrong answers such as over-eating, destructive relationships, substance abuse, etc.



Once you have decided upon, verbalized and implemented a boundary to someone who has played a controlling role in your life, and separation follows, you may experience an incredible emptiness inside. This need has to be met now. Unless we take ownership of this unmet need, we will try to go into the right direction, but will forever find that we are being pulled back into something destructive because of this unmet need.

The one true need of man, is connection with God and man – nothing else will satisfy.

Grief

Humans tend to avoid sadness and turn it into madness. Until we walk through that grief, we will be kept in bondage to the past through repeated separation, leading to depression. In other words, internally we associate the word “no” with separation and grief.

If only we can learn to let go of the bad things of the past, we would be able to receive the good things of the present.



Sometimes this means that we will have to grieve the childhood that we never had, the daddy we never had, the love we so badly needed.

Forgiveness is an act that deals with the past. Boundaries and reconciliation have to do with the future.

John 14:18 *“18 I will not leave you as orphans [comfortless, desolate, bereaved, forlorn, helpless]; I will come [back] to you.”*

We can think of numerous instances in the Bible where God told people to leave their old lives, even people behind. If only we could see that the life before God is not worth holding on to.

We must let go so that He can give us better things. We need to take ownership of our grieves, mourn it and let it go, so that we will have room for new things. Take a survey of all the “if only’s” or “maybe’s” in your life, look them in the eye, say goodbye to them, let them go and carry on with your life.

This may involve that you will have to own your boundary-less-ness. Acknowledge that you are being controlled, manipulated, dominated or abused. Do not internalize that you are the bad person in this situation – realize that your boundaries are not in place and be careful not to blame others for it. You may confess that you are afraid to take this new step. Reach out and seek a support group to help you to see clearly and to retain your stand.

Determine who your “Isaac” is who needs to be laid on the altar. Let go of everything, and be prepared to willingly step into the stages of grief, i.e. denial, bargaining, anger, sadness, acceptance. Now you have to take the next step and decide to move on, gain new ground, establish true boundaries in any new relationships.

Remember, God will fill all emptiness inside of you.

Internal fears & anger

If you find that angry people make you give up your boundaries, you probably still have an angry parent / adult in your head that you still fear. Internally there is a hurt, frightened part of you that needs to be brought to the light and healing of Jesus and His Body.

Only love will allow you to let go of the angry person inside and to stand up to the adults that you now have contact with in your life.

The Unknown

When a prisoner is set free after a long imprisonment, he experience fears for the unknown and changed world outside. It takes courage to walk out into freedom, the sunlight and changed circumstances.

That prison was his home. He knew the inside, he knew the inmates, he became settled there.

To take a step into setting boundaries needs courage and faith. It needs the comfort of love from others and God. It needs prayer and regular meals from the Word. It needs a good look at yourself and your own gifts and abilities. It needs developing yourself.

Unforgiveness

We tend to “wish it never happened”. The wrongs that were done to us, can never be undone, however, it can be forgiven.

- ❑ Forgiveness means that we may never get from the other person that which he owes us.
- ❑ Forgiveness is not denial.
- ❑ Forgiveness renders that wrongs powerless. It unlocks healing!
- ❑ Forgiveness provides limits, for it protects me from the hurtful person and I have room to act responsibly and in wisdom.

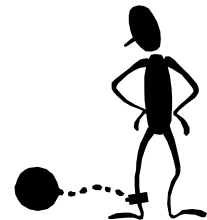


Guilt.....

Guilt, other than emotions like sadness, anger or fear, is a difficult emotion in that it is like a state of internal condemnation.

Our old sinful nature tells us that we are bad.

Our new Christ like nature tells us that we are to be motivated by love.



2 Tim. 1:7 *“7 For God did not give us a spirit of timidity (of cowardice, of craven and cringing and fawning fear), but [He has given us a spirit] of power and of love and of calm and well-balanced mind and discipline and self-control.”*

Guilt feelings are not accurate indicators or motivators. They distort reality, draws us away from the truth and from unselfishness towards others. Many of the guilt feelings we experience, stem from internal standards that we had learned from childhood, and which are not necessarily Biblical standards.

When we do fail, we should feel **Godly sorrow**:

2 Cor. 7:10-11 *“10 For godly grief and the pain God is permitted to direct, produce a repentance that leads and contributes to salvation and deliverance from evil, and it never brings regret; but worldly grief (the hopeless sorrow that is characteristic of the pagan world) is deadly [breeding and ending in death].
11 For [you can look back now and] observe what this same **godly sorrow** has done for you and has produced in you: what eagerness and earnest care to explain and clear yourselves [of all complicity in the condoning of incest], what indignation [at the sin], what alarm, what yearning, what zeal [to do justice to all concerned], what readiness to mete out punishment [to the offender]! At every point you have proved yourselves cleared and guiltless in the matter.”*

Often when we have to set our boundaries, the people affected by it may say some things that will confirm these unjustified guilt feelings we have.

Remember, ungodly guilt will keep you from doing what is right and it will keep you stagnant in your unlikely circumstances.

Guilt is your own problem, and you will have to deal with it. If guilt was your master up to now, make a positive decision and take control over it.

Eph. 3:17 *“17 May Christ through your faith [actually] dwell (settle down, abide, make His permanent home) in your hearts! May you be rooted deep in love and founded securely on love,”*

You cannot develop healthy boundaries in isolation. You need a strong support system consisting of the Body of Christ to under gird you so that when resistance comes, you will be able to stand firmly on the promises of our Father in Christ Jesus.



Rom. 12:2 *“2 Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind [by its new ideals and its new attitude], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you].”*

