

Boundary Myths:

1. Boundaries are selfish.

- I am self-centered instead of other centered.

IN TRUTH...

- Boundaries help others know how to relate to us.
 - They provide people with a clearer understanding of who we are, what matters, and how we operate.
- Boundaries keep us healthy.
 - We help more people when we are healthy, at our best and not depleted, resentful, over-committed.
 - Taking care of our own needs is being responsible.
 - Boundaries are our way of stewarding our God-given life, skills, talents, gifts, feelings, and thoughts. Our spiritual and emotional growth, our transforming selves, need protected by boundaries.
- Boundaries give us margin.
 - Saying 'yes' feels good in the moment, but if it stretches us too far, disappointing others does not feel good.
 - We only have one life to live and we cannot serve and honor God properly if we cannot manage our time and energy effectively. The "You're being selfish" accusation typically comes from those people in our lives who are using ungodly means to try to control us.

2. Boundaries are a sign of disobedience.

- Setting and keeping limits is a sign of rebellion or disobedience.
- Unwillingness to go along with a program is the sign of an 'unresponsive' heart.

IN TRUTH...

- A lack of boundaries is often a sign of disobedience.
 - No boundaries leads to a half-hearted 'yes' then destructive, unhealthy behavior.
 - No restrictions on acting out.
- Boundaries are disobedience only when they limit what God is doing.

3. If I begin setting boundaries, I will hurt others or be hurt by others.
- Setting boundaries will only expose my thoughts or feelings.
 - No strait talk. I need to sugarcoat my boundaries so they will be accepted.
 - I will avoid setting boundaries for the sake of the relationship.

IN TRUTH...

- Boundaries have consequences.
 - People will either react or respond.
 - We have to work through negative (non-welcoming) reactions or responses.
 - Often, offending parties often need to “feel the pain” before they will begin to effect changes in their behavior towards you.
 - Anger and frustration from others may be a short-term reaction to newly set boundaries but it is often a vital emotion to be experienced by them so they can assess the consequences of continually violating your boundaries. Boundaries only take on significant meaning when they are properly enforced in the face of opposition.
- Boundaries are a litmus test for the quality of our relationships.
 - We cannot manipulate people into accepting our boundaries by sugarcoating them.
- Boundary setting is truth-telling.
 - Caution: How I set them matters. Grace! Love! Bonding!

4. Boundaries mean that I am angry.

- I get mad when I think about boundaries I may need to set with people.
- I’m trying to do the right thing, but I keep feeling angry, thinking about injustice, past wrongs.

IN TRUTH...

- Boundary setting for the first time is an emotional experience.
- Boundaries will actually decrease anger.
 - Feel less violated, taken advantage of, etc.
- Boundaries don’t always require intense reactions.
 - Eventually we learn to set boundaries naturally, gently.

5. When others set boundaries it injured me, so they must be wrong.
- When I needed support, I was told “no.”
 - Other’s boundaries prevented me from doing something good, so I won’t do to others what people did to me.

IN TRUTH...

- Inappropriate boundaries set on us can injure us, especially in childhood.
 - Boundaries that should have been set.
 - Boundaries that should not have been set.
 - We need to acknowledge the pain of our past.
- Boundaries should not be used to project our own pain onto others.
 - We need to find healing.
- Boundary injury may reveal an unhealthy relationship.
 - Like a spouse co-dependent or over-dependent.
 - Like a parent over-functioning.

6. Love has no boundaries.

- “I love you” ≠ I’ll do anything you ask at any time.
- If you love me, you’ll do what I want...what makes me happy.

IN TRUTH...

- Boundaries are an expression of love by defining who is being loved.
 - We get a chance to give and not just take.
 - Limits prevent us being selfish.
- Boundaries communicate love to others.
 - Sometimes the most loving gesture is to say ‘no,’ to keep the boundary and allow the other to grow, learn, be creative, innovate, be disciplined.

7. Boundaries push people away.

- It feels like I’m rejecting the person.

IN TRUTH...

- Boundaries are actually the key for a close relationship.
 - They help you distinguish yourself from others which allows you to choose to be closer to others.
 - Healthy differentiation = closer relationship

8. Boundaries require too much time.

- It requires conversations, meetings, discussions, learning...whew!
- It requires follow-up if violated.

IN TRUTH...

- Boundaries save time in the long run.
 - A life without boundaries drains your time, energy and emotions.
 - It takes more time to clean the mess than to set a boundary.
- Boundaries are healthy limits we need to become all God desires us to become.
 - The limits we place around our bodies, relationships, belongings, feelings, beliefs, and plans give us the time, safety, resources, and focus to build the beautiful and caring lives and world we are here to create.

9. Boundaries are permanent, and I'm afraid to burn bridges.

- I'll lose friends.
- I'll ostracize family members.
- I'll take a hit at work and never get a promotion.
- How will it look if I change my mind?

IN TRUTH...

- We own our boundaries, they don't own us.
- Boundaries are always negotiable.
 - Especially as a relationship improves.

10. Boundaries won't work because the other person won't respect them.

- We get flustered by the reality that we are unable to set someone else's boundaries.
- We can't control others.

IN TRUTH...

- The only boundaries we can set (and enforce) are our own.
 - As each individual sets their boundaries, each offended party then has the opportunity to respond in a proper way. Consistency and persistence are the keys to seeing this happen!

11. Boundaries cause feelings of guilt.

- I just keep feeling like I'm letting the other person down.
- I'm not sure I'm living up to what it means to be a husband, son, employee.
- I can't set a boundary... I owe this person something.

IN TRUTH...

- Boundaries can reveal unhealthy issues of the 'self.'
 - Living up to unrealistic expectations or obligations.
 - Approval seeking.
 - Legalism.
- Boundaries allow us to give of ourselves freely.
 - What we say 'yes' to is a true gift from us.
 - No strings or obligations or manipulation attached.

12. Boundaries are weaknesses.

- Limits reveal a lack in our life.
- Limits scream "I'm not good enough."

IN TRUTH...

- Boundaries allow us to focus on our strengths.
 - No, we can't do it all.
 - Yes, none of us are perfect.
- Boundaries reveal our need for God.
 - We maximize our strengths and gifts, God can handle our weakness.
- Boundaries keep us humble.
 - Humility is not a weakness.
- Boundaries should be celebrated.
 - We should celebrate our limits and learn to embrace them.

Wall Myths:

1. A wall of family secrets protects people.

- If they don't know...they won't have to feel the pain.

IN TRUTH...

- Family secrets divide people over who does and doesn't know.
- Secrets destroy people once they know.
- Secrets prevent healing and reconciliation.
- Secrets are about hiding...not timing.

2. Walls protect me from feeling overwhelming toxic shame.

- I don't have to reveal my needs.
- Having needs means I am bad. I must not let people see how bad I really am.

IN TRUTH...

- Walls serve to entrap us in our shame.
 - Healing demands the wall come down.
 - Walls prevent us from seeing who we are in Christ.
- Walls prevent us from receiving God's grace.

3. Walls protect me from pain.

- Predicated on the misconception that all people will hurt me if I let them.
- Predicated on the misconception that pain is bad.

IN TRUTH...

- Pain is often the catalyst for growth.
- Pain is often the catalyst for healing.
- Walls must come down so we can feel.

4. Walls protect me from failure.

- Many people are risk-averse or afraid to fail.

IN TRUTH...

- Failure is good, not bad.
 - Feedback is important for growth.
 - Risk is how we learn and grow and eventually succeed.
- Walls must come down so we can risk.

Material for this teaching/coaching week was taken from:

Cloud, Henry, and John Sims Townsend. *Boundaries: When to Say Yes, When to Say No to Take Control of Your Life*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Pub. House, 1992.

Ibbitson, Don. *Five Myths About Personal Boundaries*. Above & Beyond Christian Counseling. Accessed Sept. 12, 2018. <https://aandbcounseling.com/five-myths-about-personal-boundaries/>.

Tartakovsky, Margarita. *5 Biggest Myths About Boundaries*. PsychCentral. Last modified Feb. 1, 2014. Accessed Sept. 12, 2018. <https://psychcentral.com/blog/5-biggest-myths-about-boundaries/>.

Establishing Boundaries

Removing Walls



Boundaries and Walls: Week 2

Myths and Truths

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- Boundaries keep us _____.
- Boundaries give us _____.

2. Boundaries are a sign of _____.

IN TRUTH...

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- Boundaries are disobedience only when they limit what _____ is doing.

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IN TRUTH...

- Boundaries have _____.
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