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BOUNDARIES

WHERE I STOP, AND YOU BEGIN

Because God gave dominion over the earth to man, the only way God can intervene in the life of any one on earth is if they give Him dominion over their life.

God gave Adam and Eve boundaries in the Garden of Eden. He told them to eat of every tree except the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Boundaries are essential to a healthy, balanced life. Boundaries are simply defined as who you are and who you are not. They state your goals and the purposes for your life. Boundaries then safeguard your goals and purposes. They say where you end, and another person starts.

They are like property lines. Others can do what they want on their property, but not on yours. Once you set your boundaries, no one gets to redefine these parameters except you and the Lord.

There are many types of boundaries: personal boundaries, physical boundaries, emotional boundaries, spiritual boundaries, and sexual boundaries.

We must spend time with our Lord. Listen to Him and ask Him to help you define who you are. First, you must know that you are loved which

is essential to all relationships and activities. You must realize that you are a child of God, and that He loves you. Are you secure in knowing who you are? He knows every hair on your head.

Your priorities in life must be putting God first, yourself second, thirdly your family, and then what God has called you to do. When you put yourself as a priority after God, you have started developing correct boundaries.

According to Bill Guiltiere, Jesus had limitations. He knew he needed nourishment, rest, and could only be in one place at a time.

He had personal needs that took priority in his life. Sometimes those needs took priority over others. He did not feel guilty because he knew He had to spend time with God, which gave him focus and energy. So, he was never in danger of burn-out, being angry, or depressed.

Jesus said “no” to inappropriate behaviors of others. He said “no” to control, manipulation, abuse, pride of others, and cynicism. He spoke truth in love to those who were misguided.

Often, he didn’t do what people wanted him to do. There were many people he did not help. And whenever he did help other people, he expected them to do their part.

Guidelines for setting boundaries:

1. Have personal prayer time.
2. Be honest and direct. **Matthew 5:37 “Simply, let your yes be yes, and your no be no; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.”**
3. Set priorities.
4. Please God and not people.

5. Obey God.

Boundaries impact all our lives. We have the responsibility of creating and enforcing our own boundaries. You must be aware of your limitations.

Our physical boundaries must be created so that we know our limitations so we will be safe and appropriate. Physical Boundaries refer to our bodies; our ability to control when and how others approach us, see us, or touch us. This boundary separates us from others. It stops with our skin. Examples: refusing a hug, locking a door on your bedroom, closing a curtain, building a fence between your home and your neighbor's property.

According to Anne Katherine, author of *Boundaries, Where You End and I Begin*, empowerment is the answer. If your physical and sexual boundaries have been violated in the past, you were a victim then, but you do not have to be a victim any longer.

As of this moment, know that you have the right to determine how your body is treated. Even a light touch can be removed if you do not want it. Simply take his hand off your shoulder and say, "No thank you." Move away and say, "I do not like that." Or say, "Please ask permission before you touch me again." We do not have to be courteous when someone is rude or aggressive. Say, "Touch me again and I will scream. I will embarrass you in front of everyone." When you protect yourself, you empower yourself.

Our emotional boundaries are our feelings and reactions. We each have our own set of emotional boundaries, and they are individually distinctive. They will help us disengage with manipulative and controlling emotions of others. We respond to the world based on our

values, beliefs, goals, and concerns. When your emotional boundaries are well-developed, you are in charge of your own feelings, moods, and problems. You can be compassionate toward others without taking on their feelings or problems and making them your own. Our emotional health is related to the health of our boundaries.

Another sign of emotional boundaries is learning to take responsibility for ourselves. This may mean at times we must confront inappropriate behavior. We may have to back off helping someone and direct them to someone else.

Boundaries can be spoken or unspoken. Walking away from a person who is insulting you speak as loudly as your words. I set limits on what people say about me. When you let someone verbally abuse you or hurt you, you have not protected your personal boundaries. Do not let them cross the line.

Setting a boundary means you respect yourself. When you respect yourself, you protect yourself from inappropriate behavior.

Spiritual boundaries help us to distinguish God's will from our own. **Matthew 6:33** **“But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you.”** Through God, we will find peace, contentment, and right thinking. We instinctively will know who we can talk to about our spiritual beliefs and who we cannot.

Mental/Intellectual boundaries give us the freedom to have our own thoughts and opinions.

Sexual boundaries are the choices we make as to who we interact with sexually and to what extent. You know what is safe and appropriate.

Remember the purpose of setting boundaries is to take care of yourself, not to create walls. Say no to obligations that make you miserable. Protect your health. By saying, “No” to more things, and you will then have the time, energy and resources to get really good at the things you want to say “Yes” to.

Boundaries should be clear, specific, reasonable, and enforceable. An example is telling your son that you will buy him a car, but he must pay for his own car insurance, maintenance, and fuel.

I want to tell you a personal example. I was with a group of ministry people and we were to visit a very large ministry in downtown Washington, DC. They were in the middle of a large project that was extremely time-consuming. The individual who was showing us around the organization started demanding that we all help them with this and that. She confronted each one of us individually. The other people in my group caved and all said that they would do something. I said “no”, and that was it. When we all got back to our van, some of the people said, “Judy, you had the courage to say “no”, and they had wished they had done so.

Another example, my son and I were going to visit my family that we had not seen for several years. I want to let you know that my mother had a serious control problem. We arrived at our destination by plane and were taken to my sister’s home to refresh ourselves. We had decided that we would then go to see our mother. Upon arriving at her home, I went up to the door and she started to yell at me for not getting there sooner. She had not seen her grandson in four years and all she did was get us upset. So, I said to everyone, “Get back in the car, we are leaving here.” I believe that was my first experience in really setting

my boundaries. I was proud of myself, and I knew from then on, I was going to have healthy boundaries.

With good boundaries, we can have the wonderful assurance that comes from knowing we can and will protect ourselves from the ignorance, meanness, or thoughtlessness of others.

According to Anne Katherine, “We learn about our boundaries by the way we are treated as children. Then we teach others where our boundaries are by the way we let them treat us. Most people will respect our boundaries, if we indicate where they are. With some people, however, we must actively defend them.”

In healthy relationships, people respect each other’s boundaries. Each person respects the needs, values, thoughts, and feeling of the other, regardless how they differ from their own. When respect is reciprocal, the self-worth of both people will probably increase. Without boundaries, you will limit God’s plan for you. You must set limits in order to live the life God has planned for you.

Resources:

Boundaries, *Where You End and I Begin*, Anne Katherine, MA, Copyright 1991 Parkside Publishing Corporation, Park Ridge, Illinois 60068

www.make-my-life-work.com

Jesus Set Boundaries, www.soulshepherding.org

I Am Global Church

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