



# HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

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## God Created Boundaries

- In the first two chapters of Genesis He separated night from day, water from land, plants from animals, and kinds of animals from other kinds.
- *Genesis 2:16-17* records the first boundary presented to human beings:  
 16 "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, *Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:*  
 17 *But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*"

## Introduction To Boundaries

- Boundaries are also known as limits.
- Emotionally, boundaries separate what is your *responsibility* from what is not.
- Boundaries are *built* - they are not inborn.
- Boundaries are designed to let the *good in* and keep the *bad out*.
- If you *do not maintain* your boundaries, they will *erode*.

## Boundaries Have Two Parts

1. The Limit: The "line in the sand".
2. The Consequence: What will occur if the boundary is respected or violated.

## In the Bible God lays out a plan in which He gives us....

- Responsibility for our actions and consequences (positive and negative) for our choices.
  - *Galatians 6:7-8* "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."
- Responsibility for our own repentance and the choice to turn away from sin and toward God.
  - *Deuteronomy 30:19* "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live"

## Types of Boundaries

- Loose Boundaries: Chalk lines.
- Rigid Boundaries: Concrete block walls.
- Healthy Boundaries: Fence with a gate door.

## Loose Boundaries

- Have difficulty saying “No” when they need to.
- Often let others take advantage of them.
- Can become “menpleasers”. (*Colossians 3:22*)
- Often fight burnout and resentment.
- Need to apply **Romans 15:2** “*Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.*”
- **Galatians 1:10** “*For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.*”

## Rigid Boundaries

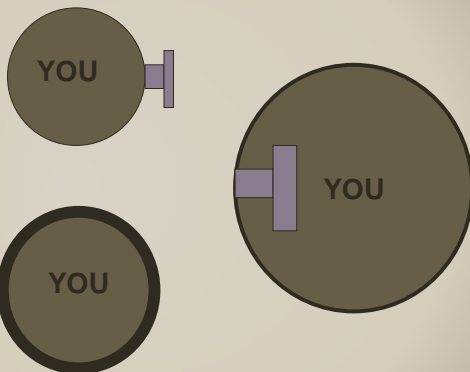
- Block out others.
- Use (incorrectly) boundaries as walls.
- Shut both the bad and the good out.

## Healthy Boundaries

- Are Christ-like.
- Say “No” to sin and taking on the responsibilities of others.
- Say “Yes” to serving others, developing relationships, and helping people with needs.

## BOUNDARIES IN ACTION

Dealing with People



## Three Problematic Boundary Styles

- **Compliants:** Tend to say ‘yes’ even when they really mean ‘no’.
- **Aggressive Controllers:** Use anger to get their way: “If you don’t do what I want you to do, I’ll get mad.”
- **Manipulative Controllers:** Use guilt to get their way: “If you really cared, you’d do it my way.”

## RESPONSIBILITY “TO” AND “FOR”

- Taking on too much responsibility for others leads to anxiety, enabling, and burnout.
- You are responsible **TO** others and **FOR** yourself.

## Bearing Burdens: When to Help

- *Galatians 6:2* “**Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.**”
- This is referring to heavy weights that someone cannot carry alone – like a boulder.
- *Galatians 6:5* “**For every man shall bear his own burden.**”
- This is referring to cargo or a person's daily load – like a napsack – personal responsibility.

### FOR OTHERS:

1. I fix, protect, rescue, control, and carry their feelings.
2. I feel tired, anxious, and fearful.
3. I am concerned with finding the solution, answers, being right, and details.

### TO OTHERS:

1. I encourage, show empathy, share, confront, and am sensitive.
2. I feel free and am aware I have choices.
3. I am concerned with relating person-to-person and the person I care for.

### FOR OTHERS:

4. I may control and/or manipulate.
5. I feel responsible for the other person's behavior and choices.
6. I can't stand to see the other person make a mistake. I can't let go.

### TO OTHERS:

4. I am a helper and/or guide.
5. I expect the person to be responsible for himself/herself and his/her own actions.
6. I encourage and support, but recognize that experiences (even mistakes) are sometimes the best teachers.

## Types of High-Maintenance Relationships

- **The Critic** – Constantly complains and gives unwanted advice.
- **The Martyr** – Forever the victim and wracked with self-pity.
- **The Wet Blanket** – Pessimistic and automatically negative.
- **The Steamroller** – Blindly insensitive to others.
- **The Gossip** – Spreads rumors and leaks secrets.
- **The Control Freak** – Unable to let go and let be.
- **The Backstabber** – Irrepressibly two faced.

## High-Maintenance Relationships Cont'd

- **The Cold Shoulder** – Disengages and avoids contact.
- **The Green-Eyed Monster** – Seethes with envy.
- **The Volcano** – Builds steam and is ready to erupt.
- **The Sponge** – Constantly in need but gives nothing back.
- **The Competitor** – Keeps track of 'tit for tat'.
- **The Workhorse** – Always pushes and is never satisfied.
- **The Flirt** – Imparts innuendoes, which may border on harassment.
- **The Chameleon** – Eager to please and avoids conflict.

## Reactions to Boundaries

Unfortunately, but not unexpectedly, people don't like boundaries to be set with them.

They might:

1. They may push harder (guilt, etc.).
2. They may push more frequently.
3. They may get angry.

## Action Steps

1. Where do you see "high-maintenance" characteristics in your own life?  
*"And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? ...Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." Matthew 7:3-5*
2. Set clear expectations and healthy boundaries in your relationships.
3. Remember you are fully responsible for your own behavior. Let others be responsible for theirs.

## BOUNDARIES AND YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

Life inside the "Glass House"



*"Come ye yourselves apart..."*

**Mark 6:30-32**

*"And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. And they departed into a desert place by ship privately."*

## Saying "No" to Good things is Hard

- One of the biggest problems for Christians.
- Burnout, lack of desire, resentment, etc. result if we don't limit activities – even good ones!

## You Need To Be Realistic

- Use this stem:
  - The reality is....

Two kinds of Acceptance:

1. To bless.
2. To acknowledge reality.

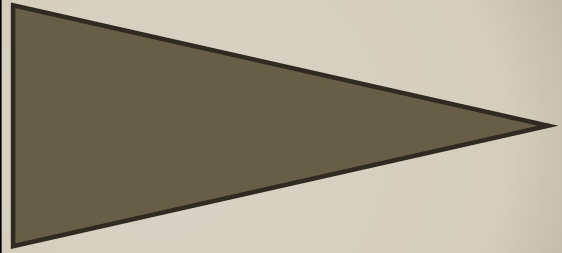
## Mark 6:44-46

- Verse 44 "And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men."
- Verse 45 "And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people."
- Verse 46 "And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray."

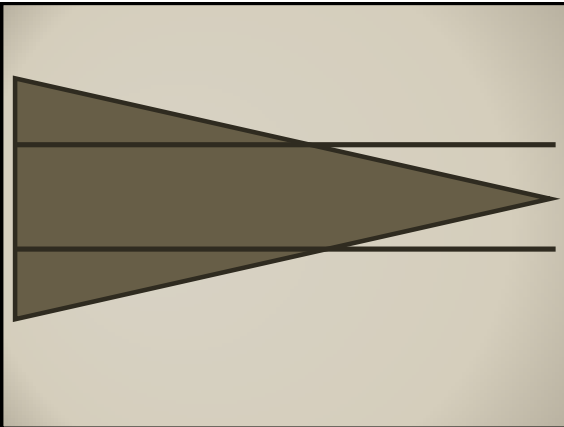
Masses

Family

Alone



----Where Time is Spent----



## The Circle of Concern

Represents 100% of the things that concern you in life

## The Circle of Influence

10% of the Circle of Concern. It represents the portion of your concerns that you can actually do something about right now.

## Circle of Concern vs. Circle of Influence

- Many people spend 90% of their time in the 90% they cannot control.
- This leads to stress, anxiety, feeling out of control, difficulty letting go.
- The goal is to spend 90% of your time in the 10%.

## Sharpen the Saw

- Time away to become refreshed helps increase our effectiveness.
- It rarely feels like we **have time** to get away.
- If you don't **make time**, you won't **have time**.

## Being a Vessel: One Part of the Solution... Not the Solution

### • 1 Corinthians 3:6-9

*"I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building."*

## Delegation: Hard and Necessary

### Exodus 18:13-25

*"And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people: and the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening. And when Moses' father in law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even? And Moses said unto his father in law, Because the people come unto me to inquire of God: When they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between one and another, and I do make them know the statutes of God, and his laws. And Moses' father in law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good."*

**18 Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone.**

19 Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to Godward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God:

20 And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do.

21 Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens:

22 And let them judge the people at all seasons; and it shall be, **that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge; so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee.**

23 **If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace.**

24 So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father in law, and did all that he had said.

25 **And Moses chose able men out of all Israel,** and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens."

## "Moses Syndrome"

### Numbers 11:10-17

10 "Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent: and the anger of the LORD was kindled greatly; Moses also was displeased. 11 And Moses said unto the LORD, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? and wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? 12 Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them, that thou shouldst say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which thou swarest unto their fathers?"

13 "Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people? for they weep unto me, saying, Give us flesh, that we may eat. 14 I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. 15 And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favour in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness. 16 And the LORD said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee. 17 And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone."

## Bibliography

- 1 Much of the material from this presentation is adapted from the book Boundaries by Henry Cloud and John Townsend. Zondervan.
- 2 From High-Maintenance Relationships: How to handle impossible people by Les Parrott. Tyndale House Publishers.
- 3 From 7 Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen Covey. Free Press.