

BOUNDARIES

Overview:

Learn what boundaries are and how they can help you to manage every relationship in your life.

Lessons:

1. What Are Boundaries In Relationships?
2. The 10 Laws of Boundaries
3. Boundaries with Friends
4. Boundaries in Marriage
5. Boundaries in Parenting
6. Boundaries with the In-Laws



WHAT ARE BOUNDARIES?

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TALKING POINTS

Learn what boundaries are and why you need them in your life.

- _____ define what is you and what is not you. They help you to define what's your _____ and what isn't.
- Three questions to ask yourself:
 - Do you ever feel _____ or imposed upon by someone else?
 - Can you _____ your own beliefs freely or are you a "yes" man?
 - Are you putting too much energy into trying to _____ someone else?

DISCUSSION

- 1. Describe your understanding of boundaries up to this point. Would you say that you have a lot of boundaries or that you have few or none? Explain.*
- 2. In your own words, why are boundaries important for healthy relationships?*
- 3. Who in your life makes you uncomfortable at times or stresses you out? How have you responded to this person in the past?*
- 4. Who have you tried to control in your life and how has that worked out for you?*
- 5. Read Genesis 1:1-19. Identify the boundaries God put in place in creation.*

THE 10 LAWS OF BOUNDARIES

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TALKING POINTS

Like anything in the natural world, healthy relationships are governed by basic principles. Here are 10 of them.

- _____: You get what's coming to you unless someone swoops in and protects you from negative consequences. **Galatians 6:7-8**
- _____: You aren't responsible for someone else's choices. **Galatians 6:1-5**
- _____: You alone have the power to see your problems and to address them.
- _____: As we want others to respect our boundaries, we need to respect theirs. **Matthew 7:12**
- _____: Choose to serve others out of freedom and love and not from a place of fear or control.
- _____: Speak the truth in love for the good of another person, even if it causes temporary pain. **Ephesians 4:15**
- _____: Be proactive about what you stand for instead of being emotionally reactive toward what you stand against.
- _____: Instead of resenting what others have, go after the things you want in life.
- _____: Don't shrink back from a challenge, but embrace the struggle needed for growth. **2 Timothy 1:7**
- _____: Your boundaries need to be visible to others and communicated clearly.

LESSON #2 OF 6

DISCUSSION

1. *Describe someone in your life who struggles to maintain healthy boundaries with someone in their life (spouse, child, friend). What are the indications that it may be an unhealthy situation?*
2. *Which of the 10 Laws jumps out to you the most and why? Which law do you need to be more mindful of in your life?*
3. *Read Ephesians 4:14-16. Review the law of Evaluation (truth in love). Have you ever confronted someone before who has hurt you? How did you feel about that experience? In your own words, why is it important to speak the truth in love?*
4. *Read 2 Timothy 1:7. Why is it better to be proactive with your emotions and boundaries rather than always being reactive? Share a time you reacted to something and regretted your actions. How could the law of Proactivity and this verse have helped you in that situation?*
5. *Review the law of Exposure. Up to now, how have you made your boundaries known to the people in your life? What more do you need to say or do to make sure your boundaries are clear to others?*

BOUNDARIES WITH FRIENDS

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TALKING POINTS

If you're a compliant person, you need to watch out for these 4 types of conflicts that can complicate a friendship.

- _____: You are both _____ to express true desires or to be honest about your preferences-so neither of you get what you want. Learn to _____.
- _____: You are always saying _____ to keep the peace while the other person steam rolls- so you get bitter and angry. Learn to say _____ and stand your ground.
- _____: You are always saying yes while the other person takes advantage of you-so you grow _____ and tired. Learn to confront _____ behavior.
- _____: You're looking for _____ but you're ignored or rebuffed- so you feel rejected. Learn to take a hint and _____.

DISCUSSION

1. Describe a friendship that has been challenging for you. Which of the 4 conflicts best describes that friendship?
2. What are the potential problems in a friendship with two compliant friends? Why is it important to be able to express your real desires?
3. Describe a controlling friend in your life. How does that friendship affect you?
4. Read Ephesians 4:25. Have you ever felt taken advantage of by a friend? Explain. Why is it better to be honest about your frustrations compared to just taking it or completely walking away?
5. Have you ever been non-responsive to someone in your life? Why? Has someone been unresponsive towards you? What insights can you glean from that?
6. Read Proverbs 18:24 and 1 Corinthians 15:33. Would you categorize a friend as bad company for you? Explain. What adjustments might you need to make with this person?

BOUNDARIES IN MARRIAGE

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TALKING POINTS

Healthy boundaries lead to a healthy marriage and gives you the ability to love selflessly and sacrificially.

- There are four main areas in your marriage where boundaries are needed:
 - #1 How you _____ - You are responsible for your _____ and you have to be brave enough to _____ them to your spouse.
 - #2 What you _____ – Your spouse can't read your mind so you have to share your _____ and be ready to _____.
 - #3 The _____ you do- You can't do everything for everyone so be honest with your spouse about your _____.
 - #4 Your _____ together- You don't have to spend all your time together. It's okay to ask for some _____.

DISCUSSION

1. Share about a couple whose marriage you admire and respect. What do you notice that's different about their relationship from most marriages? How do you feel your marriage compares?
2. Read *Philippians 2:3*. Why is sacrifice an important element to a healthy marriage? Share a time selfishness caused problems in your marriage.
3. Read *Ephesians 5:25-26*. Jesus demonstrated selfless love for us. How does this challenge you to love your spouse sacrificially? What does that look like for you? How are boundaries a useful tool in loving your spouse well?
4. How aware are you of your own emotions? Why is it important for you to be able to express yourself to your spouse?
5. Share a time your spouse missed meeting one of your expectations. How did that make you feel? Did you articulate what you wanted or were you hoping they would figure it out?
6. Read *Ephesians 4:29*. Do you feel like your spouse has some unrealistic expectations of you? Explain. What might you need to be honest about and how can you present those frustrations in an honorable way?
7. Do you and your spouse have individual interests? Explain. How can you free your spouse to pursue those interests more? How can your spouse give you the gift of free time?

BOUNDARIES IN PARENTING

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TALKING POINTS

Boundaries in parenting are all about transferring ownership where your kids grow and learn how to function as an independent person.

- Parents help kids to develop internal _____, called boundaries, that teach kids to take _____ of their lives. **Proverbs 22:6**
- Parenting is about transferring _____ to your kids teaching them about _____, _____ and setting _____ and sticking to them.
- _____ reinforces the boundaries you're trying to teach. Discipline should be _____, _____ - _____ and _____ to the offense. **Hebrews 12:11**

DISCUSSION

1. *Describe your parenting style. How have you viewed your job as a parent up to now?*
2. *Read Proverbs 22:6. What are your ultimate goals for your kids? What are you currently doing to encourage or to train your kids in those things?*
3. *Why is it important for your kids to take more ownership of their lives as they grow? What happens when kids don't learn this?*
4. *How have you trained your kids on issues of safety? What are some areas you need to start emphasizing more with your kids?*
5. *How do you teach your kids to respect others?*
6. *Share some goals you've set for yourself and have worked hard to accomplish? How can you use that example to teach your kids about setting goals for themselves? How does an instant gratification attitude derail this process?*
7. *Read Hebrews 12:11. Evaluate your current disciplinary strategies. How do you need to adjust or improve to make sure your discipline is teaching the right things?*

BOUNDARIES WITH THE IN-LAWS

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TALKING POINTS

If you experience ongoing conflict with the in-laws, it's time to draw some boundaries using three steps.

- Take an _____ look at yourself. Evaluate the source of your _____ and your typical _____ to it.
- Be _____ with your spouse and discuss the _____ that are being crossed.
- Use good communication skills. Use “_____” statements and _____ so you can really hear your spouse’s point of view. **Ephesians 4:29**
- Establish boundaries to _____ your marriage, and be okay if your family doesn’t like it. **Ephesians 5:31**

DISCUSSION

1. Describe your typical experience with your family. How about with the in-laws. (holidays, family dinner, reunion). What are some pros and cons to each family?
2. Do you notice your stress level rising when you’re about to spend time with either family? Explain. Do you notice your spouse’s stress level rising around family? Explain.
3. What are the triggers that tend to upset you when you’re around family? Why do those things have such a negative impact on you?
4. Of the 3 boundaries mentioned, (one or both act differently around family, ignore your spouse or triangulation) which one best describes your family dynamic? How is each one damaging to you?
5. Read Ephesians 4:29. When is the last time you asked your spouse about what it’s like being around your family or theirs? How could being honest about the challenges help your marriage?
6. Read Ephesians 5:31. What are some boundaries you need to put in place with your family? With your spouse’s family? How will you go about communicating those boundaries?

