

BOUNDARIES: GUARD MY HEART PROVERBS 4:23

Gleanings and Extracts from
Cloud and Townsend's "Boundaries"

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(Pro. 4:23) Keep your heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

Issues to be truth-telling, responsible, free and loving God and people.

(Pro. 4:23) Keep your heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

It is when to say Yes
and how to say No,
to take control of my life.

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(1) The concept of boundaries comes from the very nature of God.

- A. God is distinct, separate from us and creation.
- B. The Trinity are distinct persons with their own boundaries.
- C. He sets limits what He allows into His presence. He confronts sin and allows consequences. He guards His House and He does not allow evil to go in.

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(1) The concept of boundaries comes from the very nature of God.

- D. We are commanded to separate from evil to protect holiness and love.

(Matt. 18:15) Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

(Matt. 18:16) But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

(Matt. 18:17) And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

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(2) Spiritual boundaries like those that are physical, define that I am the owner of my life and my responsibilities.

A. They define what is me and what is not me.

(Pro. 14:10) *The heart knows his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.*

B. I am responsible to others and for myself.

(Gal. 6:2) *Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*

(Gal. 6:5) *For every man shall bear his own burden (daily toil).*

(2) Spiritual boundaries like those that are physical, define that I am the owner of my life and my responsibilities.

D. When the good is outside, I need to open my life and let it in.

(Rev. 3:20) *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*

E. Others can be a blessing.

(2 Cor. 6:11) *O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged.*

(2 Cor. 6:12) *Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. (afflict or distress)*

(2 Cor. 6:13) *Now for a recompense in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged.*

(2) Spiritual boundaries like those that are physical, define that I am the owner of my life and my responsibilities.

C. Boundaries help to keep the good in and the bad out.

(Matt. 5:19) *Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*

(Matt. 5:20) *For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

(2) Spiritual boundaries like those that are physical, define that I am the owner of my life and my responsibilities.

F. Self-control

1. My body (1 Cor. 6:19-20)

(1 Cor. 6:19-20) *What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*

2. Feelings (Matt. 9:36; Luke 15:20, compassion)

(Matt. 9:36) *But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.*

(2) Spiritual boundaries like those that are physical, define that I am the owner of my life and my responsibilities.

F. Self-control (*continued*)

3. Mark 12:30, love God with my mind.
(2 Cor. 10:5) *Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;*
4. Beliefs (Mark 7:8; Matt. 15:3)
(Mk. 7:8) *For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.*

(1) LAW OF SOWING AND REAPING

(Gal. 6:7) *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap.*

- A. God tells me how things really are: the law of cause and effect, a basic law.
- B. It can be interrupted when someone else steps in and reaps the consequences.
- C. The Law is not repealed, the doer is not suffering, someone else is.
- D. Co-dependent people bring insults and pain on themselves when they confront irresponsible people.
- E. Consequences need to be suffered before changes occur.
(Ps. 119:67) *Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept Thy word.*

(2) Spiritual boundaries like those that are physical, define that I am the owner of my life and my responsibilities.

F. Self-control (*continued*)

5. Behaviour (Gal. 6:7; Pro. 15:10)
(Pro. 15:10) *Correction is grievous unto him that forsakes the way: and he that hates reproof shall die.*
6. Resources (Matt. 25:23, 26-28).
(Matt. 25:23) *His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*

(1) LAW OF SOWING AND REAPING

F. (Heb 12:11) *Now no chastening for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.*

The process of experiencing consequences is key:

- *A child in a 5-minute time out begs to get out in 3 minutes*
- *A teen asks not to be grounded for bad grades*
- *A spouse with a drinking problem asks to be given one more chance before requiring counselling*

EXAMPLES

- (1) Boundary: I want you to stop demeaning me in public.
Consequence: I will be emotionally distant. I will leave the event.
- (2) Boundary: I want you to stop being critical.
Consequence: I will leave the room and let you be angry about it.

(2) LAW OF RESPONSIBILITY

- B. I am to love one another but not be one another (Jn. 15:12). I cannot feel, think or grow for others. Others are responsible for themselves.
- C. To be responsible is to help others in need but also to set limits on sins (Pro. 19:19; 23:13).
(Pro. 19:19) A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment: for if thou deliver him, yet thou must do it again.
(Pro. 23:13) Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beat him with the rod, he shall not die.

(2) LAW OF RESPONSIBILITY

- A. The command is for personal growth (Phil. 2:12-13). I am responsible for myself.
(Phil. 2:12) Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.
(Phil. 2:13) For it is God which works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

EXAMPLES

- (1) Boundary: Quit over-spending.
Responsibility: I will remove your credit cards and stop paying for the expenses.
- (2) Boundary: Quit controlling by guilt messages.
Responsibility: I will confront the covert control and let you call me an unloving person.

(3) LAW OF POWER

- A. No power in and of myself (1 Jn. 1:8).

(Rom. 7:19) *For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.*

(Rom. 7:24) *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*

(Rom. 7:25) *I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.*

(3) LAW OF POWER

- D. I have the power to submit my inability to God – confess, believe and ask for help.

(Jas. 4:6) *But He giveth more grace. Wherefore He saith, God resists the proud, but gives grace unto the humble.*

(Jas. 4:7) *Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

(Jas. 4:8) *Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded.*

(3) LAW OF POWER

- B. Power belongs to God.

(Ps. 62:11) *God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God.*

- C. I may not be able to change, but I can confess about the truth of the situation (1 Jn. 1:9).

(1 Jn. 1:9) *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

(3) LAW OF POWER

- E. I have the power to search and ask God and others to reveal my evil within with repentance and support from them.

(Jas. 5:16) *Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.*

- F. I have the power to make amends (Matt. 5:23,24)

Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remember that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

(3) LAW OF POWER

G. I have no power to everything and every person outside me (2 Sam. 16:10).

And the king said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruah? so let him curse, because the LORD hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so?

H. I do have influence in changing myself when dealing with others (Gen. 50:20).

But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

(4) QUESTIONS TO ASK

(Matt. 7:12) *Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.*

(2 Cor. 3:17) *Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*

(Jas. 1:25) *But whoso looks into the perfect law of liberty, and continues therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*

EXAMPLES

(1) Before Boundary: Stop yelling at me. You must be nicer.

After Boundary: You can continue to yell if you choose, but I choose not to be in your presence when you are that way.

(2) Before Boundary: Please stop drinking. You are ruining the family.

After Boundary: You may choose to drink but I will not expose the family to the chaos. We will go to my parents for the night and tell them why too.

(4) QUESTIONS TO ASK

(1) I need to treat others' boundaries the way I want them to treat mine.

(2) It encourages me to freely, rather than judgementally (Matt. 7:1,2), love and accept their freedom to set boundaries

(3) When I accept their freedom, I will not get angry, feel guilty or withdraw.

(4) I will then feel better about my own freedom.

(4) QUESTIONS TO ASK

- (1) How might I be crossing your boundaries?
- (2) Do you feel I respect your right to say no to me?
- (3) Do I give you guilt messages, withdraw or attack you?
- (4) Will you let me know the next time I do not respect your freedom?

(5) LAW OF MOTIVATION

A. I am called to freedom in God first

(Jn. 8:36) If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

(Rom. 6:22) But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

(5) LAW OF MOTIVATION

(2 Tim. 1:7) For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

(1 Jn. 4:18) There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear: because fear hath torment. He that fears is not made perfect in love.

(5) LAW OF MOTIVATION

B. False motives keep me from setting boundaries.

1. Fear of loss of love or abandonment – give to get love.
2. Fear of other's anger, because of old hurts.
3. Fear of loneliness.
4. Fear of losing the 'good me' inside.
5. Guilt, trying to gain a sense of goodness.
6. Payback, burden to pay back for all I have been given.

(5) LAW OF MOTIVATION

- C. We are called into freedom with resulting gratitude and service. It is more blessed to give than to receive.
1. Let God work on the fears and resolve them.
 2. Create healthy boundaries to guard the freedom

COMMON PROFILES

- (1) COMPLIANTS: cannot say no
- Say yes to bad things because they have not learnt how to say no
- Or even that it is okay to say no to the bad.
- Their weak boundaries let everything in.
- It often keeps us from recognizing evil.

SAYING NO TO SAYING YES

- (1) To the extent that we are free to say no, we are free to say yes to something that is needed.
- (2) "I can't whole-heartedly say yes to this so I have to say no at this time." This gives time and space to work out what the best option may be. No one wants someone to comply out of fear.

COMMON PROFILES

- (2) AVOIDANTS: cannot hear yes
- Say no to the good. They are not able to recognise their needs and ask for help.
- Their boundaries keep people, even God out.
- Needs, problems and wants seem bad and destructive.
- "Reversed boundaries" – they have no boundaries when they need them. And they have boundaries when they should not have them.

COMMON PROFILES

- (3) **CONTROLLERS:** cannot hear no
Hear no as simply a challenge to change the other person to fit their idea. They live in a world of yes.
They cannot respect other people's limits.
They tend to project responsibility for their lives onto others.
Undisciplined with impulses.
- A. Aggressive Controllers – abusively forcing
 - B. Manipulative – talk guilt and manipulate situations.

COMMON PROFILES

- (5) Distinction between Functional and Relational boundaries:
- A. Functional refers to a person's ability to complete a task. It has to do with performance, discipline, initiative and planning.
 - B. Relational refers to the ability to speak truth to others in relationships

COMMON PROFILES

- (4) **NON-RESPONSIVES:** cannot say yes
- A. They neglect the responsibilities of love by not responding to needs.
(Pro. 3:27) Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.
 - B. They are critical, projecting their own hatred of own needs onto others (Matt. 7:1-5).
 - C. They are self-absorbed and thus excluded others (Phil. 2:4).

COMMON MYTHS

- (1) I am being selfish because we are to love others (John 13:35).
- A. Selfishness has to do with a fixation of own wishes.
 - B. Stewardship means that our lives belong to God and we are to develop and grow God's investment (cf. 2 Cor. 5:10).
- (2 Co 5:10) For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*

COMMON MYTHS

(2) It is a sign of disobedience.

- A. A lack is often a sign of disobedience because we can be trapped in endless activities because of fear (cf. 1 John 4:18).
- B. Having a “no” helps us to clarify our motives to respond in love (2 Cor. 9:7).

(2 Co 9:7) Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

COMMON MYTHS

(4) When others do that, I feel injured.

- A. Having inappropriate ones can injure, especially in childhood.
- B. We project our own injuries onto others.
- C. There could be an over-dependent relationship and emotional blackmail.
- D. It may indicate a problem in taking responsibility.

(2Co 7:8,9) For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.

COMMON MYTHS

(3) If I set boundaries, I will be hurt by others.

- A. Boundaries are a “litmus test” for the quality of our relationship.
- B. Some will resent but some will accept with growth in intimacy.
- C. Need to connect and bond first before boundaries (Eph. 3:17).

(Mat 19:22) But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

(Luk 6:26) Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

(Eph 3:17) That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

COMMON MYTHS

(5) It may cause feelings of guilt, because of kindness or gifts.

- A. Should it be accepted thankfully as gifts or debt to be paid?
- B. God’s gift is free and we receive with thanks to overflow to others (Col. 2:7).
- C. We need to separate the issue of gratitude and boundaries (Rev. 2:4;14;20).

(Col 2:7) Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

(Rev 2:4) Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

REFLECTIONS

- (1) Issues to be faced include truth-telling, responsible, free and loving God and people. Which of the four are you finding hard to solve? How are you planning to solve it?
- (2) There are at least six areas for self-control boundaries. Please identify one that you need to work on. What steps do you need to take?
- (3) There are four profiles of problems. Which two do you identify with? Which is the closest about you? Discuss some steps to help you grow healthy boundaries.
- (4) Do you find such a study helpful? What is the biggest problem you face? How do you intend to solve it?

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ASSIGNMENTS

- (1) Please go through the audio twice and share three blessings that you have received. Be specific and in detail. What are the blessings? Why are you blessed? How do you apply them to stretch and grow?
- (2) Please share three ways how you can use the teaching in your ministry. Please give examples of the issues and your plans to resolve them and to grow. Use the what, why, when, who, where and how you will be sharing with others. Think through and be specific.

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Lord, open our eyes to see You and Your example. Open our ears to hear from the Creator of the universe about how to live life in the most loving, healthy, and God-honouring ways.

Open our hearts to love the way that You do.

We can't be perfect, but we're thankful in advance for what we're going to learn and the tools we'll gather in this study.

In Jesus' precious Name, Amen.

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