



Why Boundaries

Adapted from “Boundaries” series by Wayne Murray

There are physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual boundaries. The boundaries that provide for us and protect us are defined by both God’s commandments and our convictions. Boundaries help us to not live our lives aimlessly, lost, wandering, purposelessly, and without identity. Christoph Kreitz gives an astute insight to us about boundaries.

But freedom and responsibility requires us to respect boundaries, that is the invisible property lines which describe where a person begins and where it ends. Within these boundaries, a person must be able to act freely without being controlled by anybody else, and to take on responsibility for everything that happens. The mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual boundaries for our lives are the essence of our personality. If we can't set and respect appropriate boundaries at appropriate times, we will easily run into serious problems without ever finding out how we got into all this mess.¹

¹ Christoph, Kreitz, “Boundaries in Marriage,” July 8, 2002, <http://www.cs.cornell.edu/home/kreitz/christian/boundaries/all.html> (accessed July 6, 2017).

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COURAGE

C1: Describe a time in your life when a boundary served a good purpose in your life.

C2: What are four areas where you think a boundary is needed in your life?

C3: What do boundaries do for you in your life? Why do you think you need boundaries?

STRENGTH

S1: Imagine a baseball game without rules. A game where there are no foul lines, no umpires, and no outs. Read and answer the following.

1 Corinthians 9:24 (ESV)

- What would happen in a baseball game without rules?
- From this scripture, what would happen in the race if there were no boundaries?

S2: James Dobson once said:

Your child, and most other kids, has a great need to know where behavioral boundaries are and who has the courage to enforce them. Let me illustrate how that works. Years ago, during the early days of the progressive education movement, an enthusiastic theorist decided to take down the chain-link fence that surrounded the nursery school yard. He thought the children would feel more freedom of movement without that visible barrier surrounding them. When the fence was removed, however, the boys and girls huddled near the center of the play yard. Not only did they not wander away; they didn't even venture to the edge of the grounds. Clearly, there is a security for all of us in defined boundaries. That's why a child will push a parent to the point of exasperation at times. She's testing the resolve of the mother or father and exploring the limits of her world.²

- Describe how boundaries can actually bring freedom.
- List the boundaries you have for your life? Your family? How does this bring freedom to your life?

² James Dobson, "Boundaries give kids sense of security," Log Cabin Democrat, June 27, 1999, http://thecabin.net/stories/062799/col_0627990078.html#.WYIP_MaZNPU (accessed August 2, 2017).

S3: There is no freedom without the law. Jesus said the truth will set you free. Yet, society tells us we are free so we do not need God's laws. What culture calls freedom is actually slavery. Read and answer the following.

Exodus 20:1–17 (ESV)

- Why did God create the Ten Commandments? How do the Ten Commandments act as boundaries?

- Do you think boundaries given to us by God are meant to weigh us down? Why or why not?

S4: Find three men and discuss this lesson in the next thirty days with them. What did you glean from these conversations?

ENDURANCE

E1: Our culture says it is wrong to have a standard. Or at the very least if you have a standard it is wrong to impose those standards on others. Our culture says to be politically correct it is wrong to have gender boundaries, sexual boundaries, and it is wrong to have marriage boundaries. Read and answer the following.

John 10:10 (ESV)

- From this verse, whose idea is it for you to not have boundaries in your life?

- Why does Satan want you to move or remove the boundaries in your life?

E2: Today's society believes that Christianity endangers freedom and divides rather than unites people. From society's perspective, faith in Christ is narrow minded and crippling to our full and free personhood. It's the same argument the serpent made to Adam and Eve in the Garden. In his book, *The Reason for God*, Tim Keller addresses this type of thinking when he says:

Modern people like to see freedom as the complete absence of any restraints. But think of a fish. Because a fish absorbs oxygen from water, not air, it is free only if it is restricted to water (its boundaries). The fish is not more free but less free, if it cannot honor the boundaries of nature. The same is true with airplanes and birds. If they violate the laws of aerodynamics, they will crash into the ground. But if they follow these rules – these natural boundaries, they will ascend and soar.³

- Do you agree with Tim Keller's statement, "modern people like to see freedom as the complete absence of any restraints"? Why or why not?

³ Tim Keller, *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism*, (New York: Penguin Group, 2008) as cited in the sermon "Why Boundaries" by Wayne Murray.

- Describe a story from the Bible where the boundaries were disregarded. What was the outcome?

- Have you ever disregarded boundaries in your life? What was the outcome?

E3: Read and answer the following.

Isaiah 48:17–18 (ESV)

- From these verses, what can you conclude about boundaries?

- How do convictions and commands aid in setting boundaries?

- Write out four convictions (matters of conscience) the Holy Spirit has given you.

E4. In the next thirty days, find three men and discuss this lesson with them. What did you glean from the conversation?