



## Kid Boundaries

Adapted from “Boundaries” series by Wayne Murray

I can remember being in a grocery store and watching a child flop on the floor and start to scream. As I watched the parent try to negotiate with the child, I was amazed at the ten-year old’s mastery of negotiating skills. I wanted to step in and say to the parent, “You should not negotiate with a terrorist.” Boundaries are put in place for protection and provision. Time after time, scripture after scripture, parents are commanded to set up boundaries in their children’s lives. Marianne Neifert’s posture on boundaries provides a good rationale for the need. She states:

Whether it's a toddler who's deliberately dumped his plate of spaghetti onto the floor or an older child who can't stop whining for one more story before bedtime, it seems our children repeatedly challenge the boundaries we set. No wonder so many parents get discouraged about establishing -- and enforcing -- limits, and even question if it's really worth the effort.

But structure and rules not only make child rearing easier, they're also essential. Trying to raise a responsible, cooperative child without age-appropriate boundaries is like trying to raise a goldfish outside its fishbowl. Far from squelching the spirit, rules are needed for kids to flourish.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Marianne Neifert, “Why Kids Need Rules,” Parenting, <http://www.parenting.com/article/why-kids-need-rules> (accessed July 6, 2017).

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## COURAGE

**C1:** Describe the boundaries your parents had for you when you were growing up. Describe the most bizarre boundary you thought your parents enforced when you were a child.

**C2:** What are the boundaries you believe are necessary for children? How did you arrive at these boundaries?

**C3:** Time after time, scripture after scripture, parents are commanded to set up boundaries in their kid's lives and to enforce consequences when they violate those boundaries. Read and answer the following.

**Proverbs 23:13–14 (ESV)** Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you strike him with a rod, he will not die. If you strike him with the rod, you will save his soul from Sheol.

- What do you gather from these scriptures about setting boundaries in the lives of children?

## STRENGTH

**S1:** In his book, *Boundaries with Kids*, Henry Cloud writes, “If you are a parent, congratulations! You are engaged in one of the most meaningful jobs in the world. Although cleaning up spilled milk and arguing about dirty rooms may seem trivial, you are doing an eternally significant work: developing a little person into an adult.”<sup>2</sup>

- How do boundaries in the lives of children help develop them into a mature adult?

**S2:** You read in the introduction, “Structure and rules not only make child rearing easier, they’re also essential. Trying to raise a responsible, cooperative child without age-appropriate boundaries is like trying to raise a goldfish outside a fishbowl. Far from squelching the spirit, rules are needed for kids to flourish.”<sup>3</sup>

- If you are a parent, what boundaries do you have in place to help your children flourish and mature? If you are not a parent, what do you believe good boundaries might be?
- On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being very well and 4 being not very well, rate your children in the following areas.
  - Self-Control
  - Security (safety)
  - Self-Esteem
  - Social Interaction
  - Spiritual Life

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<sup>2</sup> Henry Cloud, *Boundaries with Kids* (Grand Rapids, MI: 1992) as cited by Wayne Murray in the sermon “Kid Boundaries”.

<sup>3</sup> Marianne Neifert, “Why Kids Need Rules,” Parenting, <http://www.parenting.com/article/why-kids-need-rules> (accessed July 6, 2017).

- In the next seven days, sit down with your children and ask them to rate themselves in these five areas. How close were your ratings of them compared to their ratings of themselves? What can you deduce from this discussion?

**S3:** Families are God's idea. Since families are God's idea, the Bible becomes the instruction manual for raising our children. Read and answer the following.

**Proverbs 12:1 (ESV)**

**Proverbs 13:24 (ESV)**

**Proverbs 29:15 (ESV)**

**Proverbs 29:17 (ESV)**

- What do you glean from these scriptures about boundaries?
  
- What happens to children who do not have boundaries?

## ENDURANCE

**E1:** Boundaries look different at every stage of life, but in every stage of life there should be some boundaries. The ultimate goal is to create adults who are responsible and resourceful followers of Jesus. Read and answer the following.

### Proverbs 13:10 (ESV)

- From this verse, what boundary should be in place in the lives of children?
- What boundaries have you established for your children's actual friends and their social media friends?

**E2:** Remember not all boundaries are in the Bible. Some boundaries are meant to help you keep the commandments God has established. Children need boundaries when it comes to the time they spend in front of the screen. This would include: TV, video games, smart phones, tablets, apps, social media, websites, and texting. Read and answer the following.

- The American Academy of Pediatrics suggests the following limits to parents. They recommend: zero screen time for those under 18 months; No more than 1 hour of screen time for those age 18 months-5 years; set consistent limits for screen time for those over the age of 6.<sup>4</sup>
  - Why is it necessary for the American Academy of Pediatrics to recommend limits on screen time for children?

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<sup>4</sup> "American Academy of Pediatrics Announces New Recommendations for Children's Media Use," American Academy of Pediatrics, October 21, 2016, <https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/pages/american-academy-of-pediatrics-announces-new-recommendations-for-childrens-media-use.aspx> (accessed August 2, 2017).

- What are your thoughts in regard to what medical science is discovering about children and screen time?
  
- What are the boundaries for screen time in your home?

**E3:** Spiritual boundaries are the most important boundaries. Read and answer the following.

**Deuteronomy 6:2, 7-9 (ESV)**

- Who is responsible to teach children to love God with all their heart, soul, and mind?
  
- What is your plan to instill spiritual boundaries in your children?
  
- On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being very well and 4 being not very well, rate how well you are teaching children to love God with all their heart, soul, and mind. Write out a plan to improve.

**E4:** In the next thirty days, meet with three dads and discuss this lesson. What did you glean from these conversations?