

GUARD RAILS

GUARDRAILS, PART 1: DIRECT AND PROTECT

They're everywhere, but they don't really get much attention—until somebody hits one. And then, more often than not, it is a lifesaver. The damage done by hitting a guardrail is minor when compared to what you would have hit had it not been there. Guardrails are designed to keep vehicles from straying into dangerous or off-limit areas. They minimize damage by keeping us in the safety zone. But the highway isn't the only place we need guardrails.

BIG IDEA: Guardrails direct and protect us.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Guardrails. They're everywhere, whether we need them to be or not. The thing about guardrails is that we don't need them . . . until we do. And when we need one, it can be the difference between life and death.

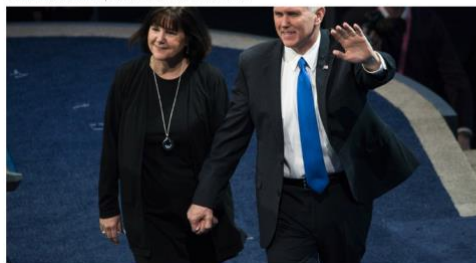
1. Have you ever been in a car accident involving guardrails or medians?
2. What guardrails have you set up in your life?
3. During the message, Chris said, "The highway isn't the only place we need guardrails. Perhaps your greatest regrets would have been avoided if you had established personal guardrails." Is that second statement true for you? If so, would you be willing to share that part of your story?
4. Chris listed four areas where guardrails may be helpful:
 - Sex—wait till you're ready.
 - Consolidate your debts.
 - Drink responsibly.
 - Listen to your heart.

Have you ever considered these examples to be mixed messages?

5. "Our culture does not promote guardrails. Culture is content with a painted line." Why do you think culture resists rules?
6. Do you agree that culture doesn't value the concept of guardrails and criticizes those who attempt to live within the safety zone? Why or why not? Have you ever been criticized for setting standards or establishing boundaries?
7. A good example of painted lines verses guardrails is the guardrail known as the "Billy Graham Rule," which Vice President Mike Pence has made popular and caught a lot of flak over. It's the guardrail that a man avoids spending car rides, work trips, and meals alone with women other than their spouse. Billy Graham and Mike Pence adopted the rule to safeguard their marriages and reputations. What is your initial reaction to this rule? Good idea? Too extreme? In this age of Weinstein and the allegations against Kavanaugh, what is the wisest thing to do?

Vice President Pence's "never dine alone with a woman" rule isn't honorable. It's probably illegal.

An employment lawyer weighs in.
By Joanna L. Grossman | Updated Dec 4, 2017, 10:02am EST



How Mike Pence's Dumb Dinner Rule Puts Women at a Disadvantage



If You Follow The 'Mike Pence Rule' You're Literally An Idiot

The 'Mike Pence Rule' has quickly become a topic of conversation in the wake of the #MeToo movement—which seeks to bring to light the trials and tribulations of women in regards to sexual abuse in workplaces and social circles.

8. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Ephesians 5:15-18.*

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.

Ephesians 5:15-18 (NIV)

9. In Ephesians 5:17, the Greek translation of the verb “to understand” means to face up to, to acknowledge, to be honest with yourself, to stop deceiving yourself. Why is it so difficult to be honest about (to understand) where we need wisdom and guardrails in our lives?
10. To which are you most prone, careless or careful living? In what area of your life could you benefit from establishing a guardrail?
11. In verse 18, the apostle Paul uses alcohol to illustrate his point about debauchery. What areas of your life do you struggle with “losing control”?
12. In which areas of your life have you been dancing on the yellow line? Listen to your conscience. Pay attention to the Holy Spirit. Where do you need to set up some guardrails?

THINK ABOUT IT

We're all aware of the destructive consequences associated with poor decisions or lapses in judgment. We don't plan to mess up. But it can easily happen if we try to navigate life without guardrails. It's not enough to hope God will protect us. He doesn't usually keep us from the consequences of decisions we make freely. His protection comes when we seek and apply the wisdom he's provided in the Bible—wisdom that is the basis for all personal guardrails.

Stepping away from what has the potential to harm you is stepping in the direction of the One who loves you. God isn't trying to keep you *away* from something; he is drawing you *toward* someone—himself. In preparation for next week, spend some time thinking about where you need to establish or re-establish guardrails.

MOVING FORWARD

Ever wonder what it would be like to have guardrails in other areas of your life—areas where culture baits you to the edge of disaster and then chastises you when you step across the line? Your friendships. Your finances. Your marriage. Maybe your greatest regret could have been avoided if you had established guardrails. What steps do you take to make sure painful regrets don't happen? Set up guardrails. You can tell yourself that you'll “be careful.” Well, setting up guardrails is how you “be careful.”

CHANGING YOUR MIND

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.

Ephesians 5:15-18

