

BOUNDRIES

God has designed life with boundaries and limits to everything. All of our physical, soulish and spiritual life has limits. God uses physical boundaries to teach us about the limits he has placed in our souls and in our relationships. He has made us to exercise abilities, authority and responsibilities – within boundaries.

1. Physical boundaries

- Ex 23:31; Deut 19:14; Act 17:26 – property boundaries
- Ps 74:12 – boundaries of the seas, waters, day, night, seasons
- Eccl 3 – boundaries of times/seasons – born, die, plant, harvest

God has designed human existence to work better within set boundaries.

2. Conceptual boundaries

Rom 13:1-7 – Governmental authority
Mt 7:29; 9:6; 10:1 – Spiritual authority
Mt 8:9 – military authority
1Cor 7:4 – sexual authority in marriage

Authority – power to set policy and command specific others – limits

- Government – federal and state boundaries and limits
- Marriage/Family – husband/wife; Parents/children
- Employment – levels of supervision appointed by owner

Responsibility – duty to care for specific others and organizations

- Government – care for those within the boundaries of nation/state
- Marriage/Family – provide, train, manage your own family
- Employment – oversee your own employees

3. Boundaries of the soul

Volition – capacity and freedom to choose/decide – Jn 3:16 – whosoever

- Every person has been endowed with capacity to make their own decisions
- Every person is required to make their own decisions – only you can decide

Privacy – Freedom from intrusion into your thoughts – Mt 7:1 – judge not

- Your beliefs, thoughts, feelings are yours to reveal or conceal
- No one can read your mind or motives and only God is the Judge

Influence - the power or capacity of causing an effect on others

- We are powerless to persuade or change a person's mind – choose for them
- Any influence exerted must be received/accepted by the person
- It is impossible to cause another to accept or reject God – personal choice

4. Even God respects the freedom of creatures to choose for themselves.

Mt 23:37 – Jesus/Jerusalem – how I would have – you would not

Rom 9:17-18 – Pharaoh – hardened by God

- God designed volition to be free and responsible – respects our choices
- World is coercive – drives us to conform or be rejected

5. Boundaries define the limits of our relationships.

Rom 14:12 – each of us will give an account concerning ourselves – peri

- Everyone must take responsibility for their own beliefs and behaviors
- No one or no circumstance has been the cause of your chosen beliefs.
- No one is able to make another person believe something – even children
- You are not responsible for the beliefs and behaviors of others
- You cannot change the beliefs and behaviors of others through persuasion.
- God has empowered all of us to change ourselves through His Grace
- The only person you have the power to save is yourself – only you
- All of us exist today in the state **we have chosen** as our way of life
- Boundaries fix responsibility and eliminate blame – you are your own fault

6. Misunderstanding boundaries causes us to adopt unhealthy behaviors.

- Fixers – co-dependent – correct beliefs/behaviors in others
- Guilt – feel responsible for the choices of others who react to your failures
- Domination – believe you can force others to adopt your views
- Persuaders – believe you can convince others to adopt your views
- Manipulation – believe you can give to others to cause them to like you
- Fear – believe we can avoid rejection by avoiding confrontation

7. Genuine influence occurs when others see something in you they want.

1Pt 3:15 – answer those who ask you about your hope – confidence

Eph 2:7 – God has designed us to be examples of His grace for ever

- We influence others as we demonstrate the reality of Christ through growth
- Our example of love and grace gives others an option to choose for themselves
- Unconditional love creates a nurturing environment that helps others grow