

1 INTRODUCTION

- Why did we wait so long to talk about boundaries? Boundaries are not even possible if we don't understand our worth and identity – nor understand our own faulty filters.
- Learning to have healthy boundaries is based on the ability to establish who we are, stand firm in our beliefs and morals and establish that we have basic God-given rights

2 INTRO

- The basic mechanism of a boundary is that it draws a line of protection AND distinction between you and me. "You are you" and "I am me".
- It establishes that if someone wants to enter into our area, it's done with our consent. Anything else is considered a violation.
- Boundaries draws a line between acceptable and not acceptable, good and evil. This means things are either right or wrong. They are either okay, or not okay.
- If we have poor boundaries, everything gets muddled and tangled.
- We don't really understand where we begin and someone ends - we become enmeshed

3 DEFINITION OF BOUNDARY

- "Boundaries are visible or invisible fences that define ownership, protect our rights, and set rules to determine what's acceptable and what's not acceptable in a given situation. Boundaries say "I belong to me," and "you belong to you." Rather than merely separate, boundaries protect what we possess and value, including our own life and body. They enable us to defend physically, emotionally, and spiritually against intrusive or unwanted dangers. But their entire design and purpose is to set the course for mutual respect, consideration, protection, and safety in all forms of relationships.
- Boundaries protect our body, our emotions, our decisions, our time, our relationships, our possessions, our family, our values our finances.
- Boundaries are everywhere and affect all aspect of our life.

4 TYPES OF BOUNDARY SYSTEMS

- Open Boundary System
- Closed Boundary System
- Spirit-led Flexible Boundary System

5 GOD'S BOUNDARY SYSTEM

- All of God's principles, laws, and promises rest on a perfect set of boundaries established through His Word.
- God's boundaries aren't merely "to do" lists.
- Rather, God understands that we need to be dealt at a heart level - not just try to comply to him externally.
- We don't need to "do" boundaries, we need to "become" boundaries. Therefore a true place of surrender and brokenness are the key to unlocking our ability to have healthy boundaries.

6 THE FUNCTION OF BOUNDARIES

What boundaries Do:

- Boundaries protect
- Boundaries identify ownership and property
- Boundaries affirm personal rights and responsibilities
- Boundaries legitimize what's "okay" and what's not "okay"
- Boundaries can offer consequences

7 **THE FUNCTION OF BOUNDARIES**

What Boundaries Don't Do:

- Boundaries don't change the heart
- Boundaries aren't designed to control another person's behavior. If I am trying to force my own outcome in the situation, I am engaged in controlling behavior, and now have breached a boundary myself.
- Boundaries aren't walls - we don't completely block people out, we learn to let God provide us with the wisdom of how to protect ourselves, while still injecting His love whenever possible.

8 **FIVE IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES ABOUT BOUNDARIES**

9 **#1 - BOUNDARIES ARE BASED ON FREE WILL**

- God respects us – He gives us free will and designed us to function with that same freedom in our relationship with others.
- Freedom is the gift of choice – if we are operating by control, we are enslaved or attempting to enslave others.
- Our choices can lead to life, our choices can lead to death, but God wanted our relationship based on the freedom to choose, including our “choice” to Him.
- Our ability to choose goes in direct correlation with maturity and growth. We mature through choices.

10 **#2 - BOUNDARIES ARE BASED ON LOVE.**

- All God's boundaries are for our well being. They are somehow set in place to benefit us or protect us or others from harm.
- God's boundaries don't simply try to dictate our behavior or force us to change or comply to an expectation, they care deeply about us as beloved children – and are written from the heart of a Loving Father.
- Boundaries offer us direction that will lead us into abundance, not hurt us.
- Boundaries always have purpose, and that purpose is rooted in love.

11 **#3. BOUNDARIES ARE BUILT ON THE BASIS OF INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS**

We have the rights!

- To exercise free will and choice
- To be who God made us to be - my identity and value is in Him
- To not have to live under the influence of another person's bad behavior or be forced to participate
- To say no to things that compromise our beliefs
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12 **#3. BOUNDARIES ARE BUILT ON THE BASIS OF INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS, CONTINUED**

We have the right to:

- To feel and act based on our own intellect and spiritual convictions, even it opposes another person.
- To be safe from physical harm
- To pursue dreams, to find joy, to live in peace, and to have balance in our relationships, despite what those close to us chose to do.

- WHAT WE CLAIM AS A RIGHT, WE MUST GIVE OTHERS THE SAME RIGHTS

13 #4. BOUNDARIES UPHOLD INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Three different people in a relationship - God, ourselves and the other person.
- We need to learn to own our own responsibility, let God own His and let the other person own theirs.
- We can't take over and own other people's sin issues - that's not our responsibility to do so
- We have no permission or authority to do things that are God's responsibility – which often occurs in subtle ways
- When we do allow people to take responsibility for their own behaviors, we allow them to grow and mature.
- When we don't allow them take responsibility, we prevent and limit their growth

14 #5 BOUNDARIES IMPOSE CONSEQUENCES WHEN THEY ARE BREACHED

- This means the very mechanism of boundary is to separate "what's okay" from "what's not okay"
- Consequences are necessary in order to enforce important boundaries that have serious consequences - the consequence itself affirms that a breach is not okay (i.e. if someone is driving drunk and kills someone, there is a consequence)
- Consequences ask for respect of the person or institution who set the boundary
- Consequences are intended to be a teaching tool - not merely punishment - they are a set up for grace, forgiveness and restoration
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15 BECOMING AN ENABLER

- When we are vulnerable to wanting people to love and accept us, we can actually enable bad behavior
- We enable when we defend the bad behavior by removing any consequence, thus prevent that person from having to face their wrongful choices
- The drug addict or behaviorally unhealthy person especially has to feel the consequence, and the person that inhibits that process inhibits their growth, and inhibits their ability to come to God.
- Because consequences are good and necessary to grow and mature, our enabling is a major boundary violation.

16 WHAT TO DO NEXT

- Help! I have boundary issues! Where do I begin?
- We need to start in the heart – what did we learn and what happened that taught us that it was okay for compromise to appease someone else's needs, desires or demands.
- We have to see and be willing to face how we attempt to control someone to get them to appease our needs, desires or demands
- If we still struggle, ask:
 - Why don't I have solid identity
 - Why don't I believe that people should respect me
 - Why do I struggle with saying "no"

17 WRITING A BOUNDARY

- It's important that our motives are right
- It's important that our heart and spirit are moved, that we are not just being legalistic or

behaviorally focused.

- It's important that we set them up ahead of time and then stick to them in the heat of the moment
- We need to use them to protect "our side" of the fence, not continue to "hop over" in their yard and dictate their behavior.
- Boundaries will automatically begin to change when our soul and spirit become healthy. It's not just a maybe, we WILL change in this area as we continue to pursue recovery.