

INTERNATIONAL HOUSE OF PRAYER ATLANTA

Tools for Healthy Relationships: Boundaries

I. Every person has God-given power and authority in their life.

- A. What does being powerful mean? It means we can choose to be Christ-like in any situation. This happens through the power of the Holy Spirit and practice.
 - 1. In a similar fashion to teaching or learning a new skill, we can learn how to use our God-given authority and dominion
- B. Becoming a powerful person means managing yourself well.
 - 1. **Proverbs 16:32** (NASB) “He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city.”

II. Foundational truths: the Biblical basis for boundaries

- A. God’s original intent for humans is found in Genesis 1.26-28 (NASB), “ Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” **27** God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. **28** God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”
 - 1. God designed you to be just like Him.
 - a. *You are most like yourself when you are like God.*
 - 2. You were built to reign and rule by design.
 - a. In the context of Genesis 1.26-28, Adam and Eve were given dominion over their entire world.
 - 3. Your life is meant to be full of fruitfulness and abundance in every area you are ruling properly.
 - a. **3 John 2** (NASB) “Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers.”
- B. Power (authority) is from God, and He expects that we manage it well.
 - 1. **Romans 13:1** (NASB) “Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.”
 - 2. The parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30) clearly outlines the Lord’s expectation for us to exercise dominion and steward our authority
 - 3. **Luke 16:10-12** (NASB) He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much.
- C. We have everything we need in life through Christ, who is the greatest provision we have ever been given.
 - 1. **2 Peter 1:3** (NIV) “His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.”
 - 2. **Ephesians 1:3** (NASB) “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,”
 - 3. In Exodus 14:15-16, Moses applied the staff to the Red Sea. In the New Testament reality, we are invited to apply the power of the cross to every situation.
 - 4. **Romans 11:36** (NASB) “*For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.*”

III. 3 Foundational principles to managing boundaries in life

- A. What you think about God is the single most important thing in life
 - 1. Your beliefs endorse your expectations and experiences
 - 2. We need to anchor ourselves to the reality that God is kind, patient, loving, and good
 - 3. This reality remains knowledge until our experience validate our beliefs

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- B. What you think that God thinks about you is the second most important thing in life
 - 1. Do my circumstances affect what I believe God thinks about me?
 - 2. This reality remains knowledge until our experience validate our beliefs
- C. What you believe about who God is and what He thinks about you determines everything in life.
 - 1. **Psalm 19:7-11** (ASB) “The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. **8** The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. **9** The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether. **10** They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. **11** Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward.”
 - 2. **Psalm 136:1** (NASB) “Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! His Faithful love endures forever.”
 - 3. **Psalm 9:10** (NASB) “And those who know Your name will put their trust in You, For You, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek You.”
 - 4. **Romans 8:38-39** (NASB) “For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, **39** nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
 - 5. **1 John 4:16** (NASB) “We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.”

IV. We were created to live from fullness, not to fullness (John 7:37, Matthew 11:28)

- A. There are 5 sources that people generally run to in order to get their needs met. While these are great additions to our lives, we are called to find our security and identity in the Lord.
 - 1. People
 - 2. Pleasure
 - 3. Possessions
 - 4. Performance
 - 5. Power
- B. Placing our identity in another source than the Lord is a foundation for idolatry and addiction in our lives.
- C. Living from being full of the Father’s love and my true identity enables me to freely give and receive without the strings of control and manipulation attached.
 - 1. If you have to work to earn the free gift of love, then you have to work to keep it.
 - 2. The most devastating effect of the fall was the damage to relationships.

V. Throughout our lives, the Father gives us different levels of authority.

- A. You only have authority over that which you are responsible for.
 - 1. Responsibility: the ability to respond
 - 2. Although the degree of authority changes, we have one absolute place that we have responsibility and therefore authority over: ourselves.
 - a. When we steward our gifts properly, as God’s workmanship, we reflect the goodness of God.
- B. Your circle of influence is the viewpoint through which you view life.
 - 1. Direct Control: Area of Responsibility
 - a. Choices, Reactions, Attitudes, Emotions, Opinions, Hopes, Dreams, Eating Habits, Schedule, Energy, Resources

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2. Indirect Control: Area of Influence
 - a. Your schedule, Health, Family, Others' choices
3. No Control
 - a. Weather, Stock market, Traffic, Politics, Other's opinions
 - b. Although these points are important, they are most effectively managed through prayer.

VI. Self-evaluation for boundary issues:

- A. You feel responsible for everyone and everything you care about (and may feel guilty much of the time)
- B. You feel that you can't measure up to other people's expectations no matter what
- C. You feel responsible for making other people feel happy or successful
- D. You have difficulty saying no to people without feeling guilty or giving an explanation
- E. You feel that you must be in complete control of your life (including spouse, family, and home)
- F. You try harder and harder but your increased efforts result in self-criticism and not growth, compulsion instead of joy and peace, and more distance instead of intimacy
- G. You control and manipulate or feel controlled or manipulated

VII. The Power of Boundaries

- A. The Power of Yes and No:
 1. If you aren't free to say no to someone, you aren't free to say yes and mean it
 2. If you don't have *the* choice between yes and no, you don't have a choice.
- B. The ability to say yes from desire and not compulsion
 1. Matthew 5:37 (NASB) "But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one"
 2. An internal "no" nullifies/ overrides an external "yes"
- C. The Ability to ask "Inconvenient Questions"
 1. Confidence in boundaries allows you to ask questions without feeling awkward, compulsion, etc.
 2. When you have confidence in boundaries, it allows peace that the response is sincere.

VIII. How to establish boundaries

- A. Since you cannot change others, change yourself so that the behavior of others no longer affects you.
 1. Establish boundaries and the ability to set limits—which do not change whether you are in the presence of those with or without boundaries
- B. Take responsibility for your own thoughts and emotions
 1. 2 Corinthians 10:5 (NIV) "We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."
- C. Build a support system—find life-giving people and learn appropriate ways to get your needs met.
- D. Find loving people that will speak the truth to you
- E. Use powerful statements by clarifying ownership through saying "I" versus "You."
- F. Get an outside or skilled perspective

IX. 4 Keys to walking out Boundaries

- A. Know that the ability to say no means that you are now able to say yes

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- B. Say “no” with tact and grace because you’re dealing with people’s hearts.
 - 1. This does not mean giving a reason why you are saying no.
 - 2. Some options to say no: “That won’t work for me.” or “I’m not available.”
 - 3. “When you say ____, I feel ____.”
 - 4. “Can I share how I’m experiencing this?”
- C. Understand the roles you operate in because they will help you define your boundaries
 - 1. Submission= to serve another person’s mission
 - 2. Example of boundaries at work: “When I’m here, I am fully present, but in the grand scheme of my life, this job is a _ on the scale of 1 to 10”
- D. Maturity enables you to give outside of your boundaries.
 - 1. If you cannot flex outside of your boundaries, your boundaries have stopped becoming positions of will and moved into idols.

X. Jesus and Boundaries

- A. Basic Needs: He ate healthy foods, got the sleep he needed and even took naps, took time to relax, and did a lot of walking (Matt 4:6-7; 26:18, 20; John 12:2).
- B. Support from Friends: He sought the company of friends (Matt 26:36-38).
- C. Pace of Life: He was never in a hurry, except to go to Jerusalem and embrace his cross (John 11:6; Mark 10:32).
- D. Ministry Success: He withdrew from the crowds who wanted him, for one-on-one time with the Father (Luke 5:15-16).
- E. Monetary: He told the Rich Young Ruler that he couldn’t help him until he gave away the money that was controlling him (Matthew 19:16-21).
- F. Priorities: “No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other” (Luke 16:13).

XI. Handling Repeat Boundary Violations

- A. Communicate your love
- B. Define the boundary: clearly
- C. Define the consequences

XII. Benefits of healthy boundaries

- A. You have learned healthy ways to get your needs met
- B. You can say “no” and hear “no” without fear
- C. You take responsibility for the consequences of your choices
- D. You have realistic expectations in relationships
- E. You allow others to experience the consequences of their choices
- F. You don’t manipulate or attempt to control people and recognize and resist attempts of others to control you
- G. You can make and keep promises to yourself