



Foundation Stone #4: Boundaries August 2006

Benefits Gained from Godly Boundaries

Godly Boundaries Facilitate Your Ability to Live Proactively from Christian Principles and Deeply-Held Convictions:

Christians should live by deeply held convictions based upon biblical principles. Otherwise, you will tend to make decisions based on your feelings in the moment. The world will try to “squeeze you into its mold” (Rom. 12:2, Phillips paraphrase). Only boundary living will keep you from taking the path of least resistance when others tell you that your unique calling in ministry “can’t be done”, when Satan attempts to knock you off course through sexual temptation, or the wooing of a larger benefits package might tempt you to pursue a “career move” in a city your spouse is in complete opposition to. Clear boundaries *purposefully established well ahead of time* – not in the heat of the moment – may be the only thing that keeps you grounded during such times.

Godly Boundaries Help You and Others See that Consequences (both positive and negative) Follow Choices: God requires us to accept responsibility for the choices we make (Heb. 4:13). When we live by intentionally set boundaries from Scriptural principles, we (and others) will clearly see the positive and negative consequences of our choices. We will also hold others more responsible for their actions in how they respond to our well-established boundaries. For example, when someone attempts to coerce you into helping do something you know he or she was simply too irresponsible to care for in a timely manner, you might feel manipulated into taking a half-day on Saturday to help and thereby neglect your planned family outing to the park. Your promise to your children – coupled with your refusal to be manipulated by another’s guilt and pleading – will be deeply-held values to govern your healthy boundary of saying “no” to the manipulator and “yes” to your family. Godly boundaries will result in everyone (you, your family and the manipulator) seeing the consequences on all sides more clearly. It will model to others healthy boundaries, as well.

Godly Boundaries Assist You in Distinguishing between the “Influence” and “Control” of Others: In the previous example, your setting a healthy boundary based upon biblical values will allow you to better assess whether another is attempting to influence or control you based upon his or her reaction to your boundary. Those merely wanting to *influence* will accept your negative response, though they may be disappointed. And even if they express disappointment with you, they will not only accept your “no” but will internally respect you for it. Conversely, those attempting to *control* may become angry, perhaps even spreading rumors about you in an attempt to stir up trouble as a form of passive-aggressive “punishment”. Such trouble is sometimes the price we pay for living a well-boundaried life.

“Godly Boundaries Make Godly Neighbors”: You’ve heard the saying, “good fences make good neighbors”? For the Christian, godly boundaries make for good fences! As you establish strong boundaries based upon what matters most (intimate relationships with God, family, close friends, and your calling), others will greatly respect you. You’ll have less difficulty getting along with most people because they will learn to predict your steady way of responding from your deeply held principles. You may even find they only ask you to do things consistent with the way you live life and will stop asking you to take responsibility for things they should do themselves. No longer will you resent them for trying to manipulate you and your family. Others will know they can rely on your “yes” being “yes” and your “no” being “no”.

Thoughts to Ponder:

- What *godly boundaries* are you in need of establishing to protect what matters most in your life and ministry?
- What are *one or two practical action points* you can apply this week toward establishing such boundaries?

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