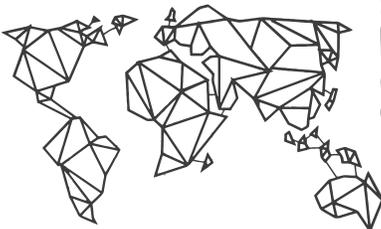


¹ Henry Cloud and John
Townsend, *Boundaries
Workbook: When to Say Yes
When to Say No To Take Control
of Your Life* (Grand Rapids, MI:
Zondervan, 1995), 73.

Notes:

GREAT COMMISSION LEADERSHIP

HOMEWORK PACKET NINE



BOUNDARIES IN LIFE & LEADERSHIP

To understand the importance of setting limits, remember that your life is a gift from God ... We are to develop our lives, abilities, feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. Our spiritual and emotional growth is God's "interest" on His investment in us. When we say no to people and activities that are harmful to us, we are protecting God's investment.¹

Cloud and Townsend

BEFORE GOING ANY FURTHER, IS CHRIST ON THE THRONE?

If not, make sure He is!

MEMORY VERSE

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.

Mark 12:30 [NIV]

GOOD LEADERS MUST HAVE GOOD BOUNDARIES

Jesus demonstrated good boundaries in Matt. 12:46-50. He loved and respected His family but didn't allow them or their requests to prevent Him from obeying the Father's will. He understood His identity and purpose. Respecting our families, fellow believers, and loved ones is essential. But we also need to learn not to let them pull us from our commitment to Christ. Biblical boundaries can help.

Nehemiah is an inspiring Old Testament example of good boundaries. Nehemiah was cup-bearer to king Artaxerxes yet grieved by the demise of Jerusalem and the Jews. He had a great sense of personal boundaries and was willing to take a tremendous risk by asking the king for permission to intervene. Even after that permission was granted, he had to have good boundaries with governors of surrounding provinces and some of his own people who opposed him! Nehemiah was convinced of his call and resolute regardless of others' opposition or disapproval (Nehemiah 1-13). Godly leaders must follow Jesus' and Nehemiah's examples.

Notes:

BOUNDARIES ARE IMPORTANT

You can't fully love God and others until you are whole in Christ alone. Jesus tells us, in Mk. 12:29-31 (NIV), that the most important commands are to "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength," and to "love your neighbor as yourself." You can't love God with ALL your heart, soul, mind and strength if you're allowing other people, pressures, or perspectives to control parts of your life. It is hard to love others like yourself if you don't understand or accept who you are in Christ. A leader who is following the two greatest commandments and all else God calls them to must have a good sense of personal boundaries. You can't maximize your impact pulled in many different areas. You can't fully serve God until you have fully surrendered to Him alone—and that requires good boundaries.

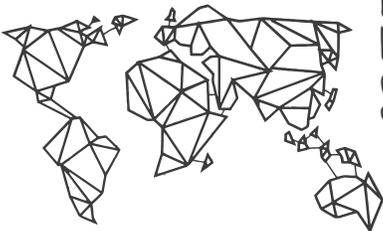
- **Read Rom. 12:1. God wants you to live your entire life as a sacrificial act of worship for Him. How can you ensure other people, pressures, and perspectives don't keep you from this?**

- **Read Mt. 25:14-30. God has called us to steward what He entrusts us with well. How can you do that with your identity, body, attitudes, feelings, opinions, behaviors, thoughts, desires, choices, decisions, relationships, responsibilities actions, and possessions?**

NO MORE EXCUSES

When we make excuses, we fail to accept responsibility. Sometimes we do this because we fear a mistake might erode our value. Instead, we should find our value in Christ alone and be willing to accept responsibility for our mistakes. We can't grow if we're always avoiding responsibility and blaming others. At other times, we can make excuses for our opinions, decisions, and actions, fearing others might not approve. That is a dangerous snare.

It can be easy to fall into a trap of people pleasing. If worrying about what other people think about you determines what you say and do, you need to grow in the area of biblical boundaries. Paul tells us, in Gal. 1:10, "am I



² Henry Cloud, *Changes that Heal: How to Understand Your Past to Ensure a Healthier Future* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 205-209.

Notes:

now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ." Paul reiterates this in 1 Thes. 2:4 and Jn. 12:43 warns us about doing what we do for man's praise rather than God's.

- **Do you make excuses for your mistakes or for your opinions, decisions, and actions?**

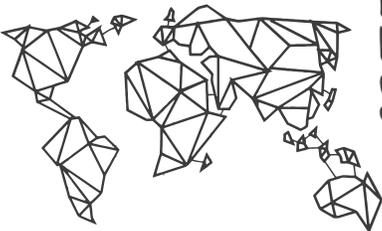
- **How can you accept who you are in Christ, imperfections included, and allow Him to transform you into the person He has made you to be?**

- **Read Col. 3:23. Are there areas you are working for the approval of other people rather than the Lord?**

SETTING BOUNDARIES

We can't escape the idea of responsibility when thinking of boundaries. Biblical boundaries help us understand who we are and what we are responsible for. When we have biblical boundaries, we are content in Christ and can submit to one another in love (Eph.5:21) and to your spiritual authorities (Heb. 13:17). You must allow Scripture to define who you are and how that relates to your body, attitudes, feelings, opinions, behaviors, thoughts, abilities, desires, choices, limits, possessions, actions. You also need to let God's Word define who you aren't. You must know who you are and who you are not and then accept and take responsibility for each area!!! Here are 10 ways² to take responsibility by setting boundaries in your life:

Define who you are. Remember your identity in Christ. Then, based in that conviction, offer an opinion, express a need, describe yourself and who you are not. Decide to say what you like and don't like. Don't be taken



Notes:

advantage of. Don't encroach on others or allow others to encroach on you. Refrain from saying, "I don't care" at least once this week. Be confident in your identity in Christ.

Choose for yourself (and respect your choices and decisions).

Let Scripture guide your choices. Make biblical decisions and don't make excuses for them.

Become active (not reactive). Do what you do based on convictions and then go for it.

Stop making choices by passively reacting to others. Don't react in defensive ways.

Take a stand on Scripture, don't just merely stay quiet and fit into the crowd.

Stop blaming others. Decide to stop blaming others even if they seem like the source of your trouble. Be willing to accept responsibility for dealing with the effects of injury that was not your fault. Stop playing the victim. As an adult, you make choices and you are responsible for what you choose to do.

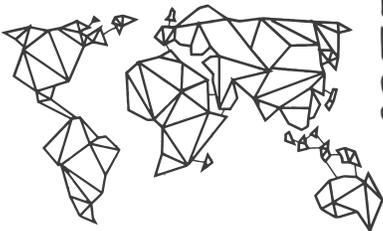
Set limits. Put biblical limits on what you will allow others to do to you and follow through on your limits. Recognize your limits of time, money, and energy. Some people have a very hard time setting limits; that can lead to exhaustion and burnout. Learn to set healthy limits that will help you continue going strong in life and ministry.

State values. Define your biblical values. Be specific. Be willing to take a stand for something even if it is unpopular.

Practice self-control. Prov. 25:28 tells us, "Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self control" (NIV). Learn to say no to things you know won't help you.

Accept others. We don't have to approve of others' bad choices or behavior but we can choose to accept them as people made in the image of God. We can love them without condoning or enabling their bad choices. Respect others' boundaries is one way to show them love. Christian leaders should point people to God but they should never manipulate people.

Be Honest. Prov. 12:22 tells us, "Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, But those who deal faithfully are His delight" and Ps 51:6 says, "You desire truth in the innermost being." Truth and honesty bring people closer together in their relationships. Don't hesitate to tell loved ones



Notes:

what you really think. Be honest with yourself.

Develop your “no” muscle. Jesus says, in Mt. 5:37, “Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No’” (NIV). Learn to commit. Be OK with saying no. Don’t take responsibility for another person’s disappointment or feelings with your decision.

LEADING OTHERS WITH A GOOD SENSE OF BOUNDARIES

Accept and acknowledge others’ boundaries! It is difficult to help others grow without manipulation until you have a good sense of your boundaries and an ability to respect theirs. Ministry and leadership require that you give those you’re leading freedom, protecting the freedom they have in Christ (remember Gal. 5:1). If you don’t respect the boundaries of those you lead you’ll encounter one or both of the following:

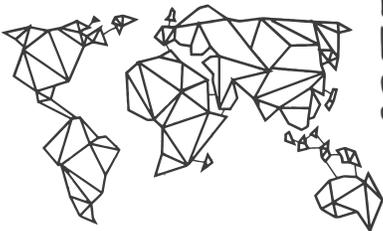
People won’t follow you. They will sense God’s will and follow Him in stead of you. They will feel manipulated and want nothing to do with you.

People will follow you but out of the wrong motives. Usually they will feel manipulated and follow begrudgingly. They may follow out of a desire to please you more than God.

Godly leaders help those following them follow God (remember Paul’s example in 1 Cor. 11:1). Never try to manipulate someone into what you think is best for them. Help them understand Scripture. Share the vision. Respect their boundaries. Delegate as much as you can to those with good boundaries who need to grow. Good leaders always protect their own freedom and the freedom of those they lead.

This even applies to issues of confronting sin. Sometimes people in the church will choose to sin. We can’t manipulate people into godliness. Respect their freedom to make their own decisions but also remember your biblical boundaries. Exercise church discipline in a loving way if they refuse to repent (Matt. 18:15-20, 1 Corinthians 5). Do not enable spiritual, emotional, physical or relational immaturity.

- **Read Mt. 20:25-28. Godly leaders lead by serving, not manipulating! What is the difference between serving and manipulating in leadership?**



³ Henry Cloud and John
Townsend, *Boundaries
Workbook: When to Say Yes
When to Say No To Take Control
of Your Life* (Grand Rapids, MI:
Zondervan, 1995), 41.

Notes:

→ **Have you ever tried to manipulate others, even to do the right thing?
How did that work out?**

→ **How can you grow in serving, encouraging and leading others by
example rather than manipulating them?**

DON'T EXPECT PERFECTION

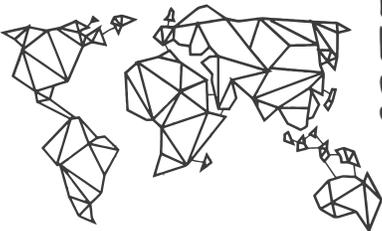
Realize no one is perfect except God alone. When we remember this and nothing is all good (except God) or all bad. Recognize the difference between perfection and reality. Aim for perfection but accept reality in your life and in others' lives as well. You aren't perfect, and you won't be until you see Jesus face to face, but you are valuable and dearly loved. The same is true for your family, co-workers, leaders, and even your ministry!

→ **Do your failures lead to self-hate? If so, how do you need to remind yourself of your identity in Christ and infinite value to Him?**

→ **Do others' failures cause you to be bitter? How can you forgive them and choose to love them in spite of their problems?**

RESULTS OF BIBLICAL BOUNDARIES

Cloud and Townsend tell us that growth is a product of grace and truth over time.³ When you understand and accept who you are in Christ, and establish good, biblical boundaries, you'll be able to love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength! You'll be able to love others as yourself.



Notes:

You'll be able to surrender your whole self to God. You'll be able to steward and be responsible for all God entrusts to you. You'll be able to give generously. You'll be able to serve fully. You will be able to grow tremendously. You will experience freedom, joy, peace and the fruit of the Spirit in greater measures. Knowing what lies outside your control and accepting what you can't change will result in a tremendous sense of freedom, joy & peace. It will also help you make the biggest change where you can! In summary, biblical boundaries will help you grow in your potential and accomplish your purpose.

- **List an area you've had a good sense of biblical boundaries and describe how that produced freedom for you in life and ministry.**

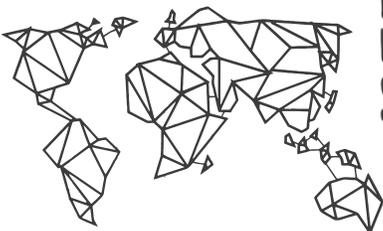
PATIENCE IS KEY

Chip Ingram describes frustration as the distance between expectations and reality. Be careful to maintain a realistic, Scriptural and godly sense of expectations. And when your expectations aren't met, be patient! Remember God is patient with people (2 Peter 3:9). Learn to follow His example with yourself and with others. This is a life long learning process.

Remember to have good boundaries with the ministry God gives you. Find your sense of identity and worth in Him, not in the results of your ministry. The Holy Spirit will work Christ's character (including good boundaries) into your life and ministry as you allow Him to (2 Cor. 3:18). It is imperative that you persevere (remember Heb. 12:1-3).

Christian leaders must find their identity and purpose in Christ alone and they must set biblical boundaries that guard those things. Always respect your family, fellow believers, and loved ones but don't allow that to pull you from your commitment to Christ. Biblical boundaries will help you accept your identity in Christ and follow Him wholeheartedly! Setting and maintaining biblical boundaries is difficult but necessary and will produce great fruit in your life, relationships, and ministry.

Remember, your weaknesses, inabilities, failures and past present no challenge to God's will for your life. Your willingness does. Be willing to be and do what God made you for. You don't have what it takes but God's Spirit in you does so be the leader He made you to be and turn this world upside down for Him!

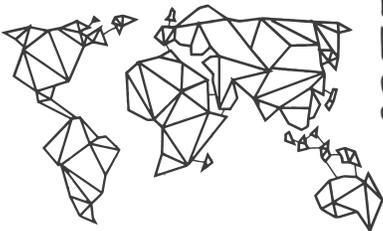


Notes:

ACT NOW

HEALTHY BIBLICAL BOUNDARIES

- Earlier you listed 4 areas you wanted better biblical boundaries in. For each one come up with a plan to accept responsibility and grow in that area.
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
- List something about yourself you've feared sharing.
- List a choice you've been afraid to make.
- List an action you have been afraid to take.
- List an area you've blamed others for that you'll own.
- List a limit in an area you have felt manipulated in before.
- List a value that you have that you've been afraid to admit.
- List an area you'll begin practicing self control in.
- List something you've been afraid to be honest about.
- List something you'll say no to that you haven't felt free to say no to before.



⁴ G. T. Doran, *There's a S.M.A.R.T. Way to Write Management's Goals and Objectives* (Management Review, Volume 70, Issue 11, 1981), 35-36.

Notes:

PERSONAL GROWTH

→ Write out this lesson's memory verse (also, write it out several more times this week):

→ List a SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant & within a Time-frame) goal¹⁶ for this lesson and action plans for achieving it.

SMART Goal:

Action plan:

Action plan:

Action plan:

→ How are you staying close to Jesus, walking by faith and in integrity, trusting Him and the power of His Spirit in life and ministry rather than yourself, and how can you more?

→ Jesus insisted that serving Him and serving others was the highest attribute of leadership (Mt. 20:25-28). How are you growing as a servant leader?

→ How will this lesson help you better accomplish the Great Commission and multiply Christ-like multipliers?

→ List any last thoughts and then put everything you learned in this lesson in God's hands, trusting Him to build these things into your life.

