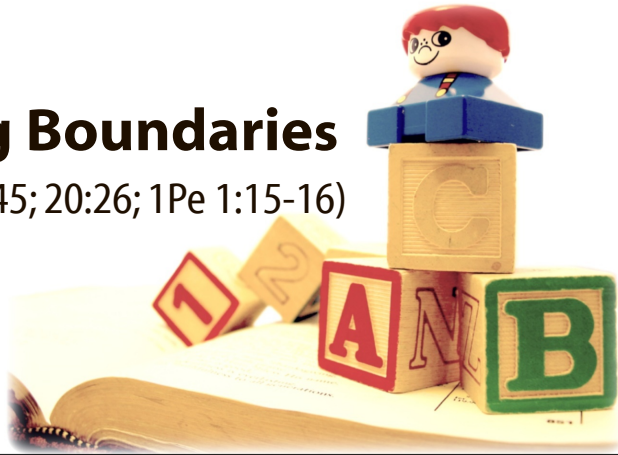


# Setting Boundaries

(Lev 11:44-45; 20:26; 1Pe 1:15-16)



What is the purpose of setting boundaries for our lives?

2

## 1. Boundary setting comes from God's idea of holiness (Lev 11:44-45; 20:26)

Boundary setting can be understood as originated from God's calling for His people to be holy as He is holy.

- a. "God's holiness" = the reality and value of his divine fullness, expressed in his self-sustainability, his absoluteness and sole-ness, his excellence and worth, and the beautiful harmony of all his acts with that fullness.  
~ Jason DeRouchie, *How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament*  
(This definition of God's holiness is very complicated. Only theologians would like it.)
- b. "God's holiness" = (1) His separateness, i.e., His uniqueness, His distinction as the Wholly Other. ... (2) His moral perfection, ...  
~ *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (This one is easier to understand.)
- c. "Being holy" = (1) Being set apart for God, devoted to God,  
(2) having moral excellence/perfection  
(In light of "b," above, this is a simple definition of "being holy." There are two aspects of it. This sermon will focus on the first one.)

3

Leviticus 11:44-45

<sup>44</sup> For I am the LORD your God, so you must consecrate yourselves and be holy because I am holy. Do not defile yourselves by any swarming creature that crawls on the ground. <sup>45</sup> For I am the LORD, who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God, so you must be holy because I am holy.

(The Israelites are called by God to be holy, to set themselves apart for God from other people groups around them, to dedicate themselves to God only. This whole passage of Scriptures talks about God's requirement for the Israelites to eat clean food as approved by God rather than unclean food. By doing so in faith, the Israelites would become different from all other people in the land – i.e. being set apart from the world around them for God, just like God Himself is set apart from His creation, this sinful world, and sin itself. Of course, God has His own criteria for distinguishing clean food and unclean food.)

4

Leviticus 20:24-26 (Here's the idea of "being holy" means to set apart. "To set apart" and "to distinguish" translate the same Hebrew word.)

<sup>22</sup> "You are to keep all my statutes and all my ordinances, and do them, so that the land where I am bringing you to live will not vomit you out.  
<sup>23</sup> You must not follow the statutes of the nations I am driving out before you, for they did all these things, and I abhorred them. <sup>24</sup> And I promised you: You will inherit their land, since I will give it to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey. I am the LORD your God who set you apart from the peoples. <sup>25</sup> Therefore you are to distinguish the clean animal from the unclean one, and the unclean bird from the clean one. Do not become contaminated by any land animal, bird, or whatever crawls on the ground; I have set these apart as unclean for you. <sup>26</sup> You are to be holy to me because I, the LORD, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be mine.

5

Exodus 3:5-6 (This is "holy ground" because it is set apart for God's use as His meeting place with Moses.)

<sup>5</sup> "Do not come closer," he said. "Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." <sup>6</sup> Then he continued, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look at God.

6

Exodus 3:5-6 (The Sabbath day was to be kept holy because, after six days of creating the physical world/universe, God set apart the seventh day especially for Himself, probably to enjoy His own creation, especially His fellowship with man and woman who were created in His image. Therefore, the Israelites, God's people, must keep the Sabbath day holy, distinct from the other six days, to set it apart for God in order to spend it with God – worship God, serve God, learn from God, pray, ...)

<sup>8</sup> Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. <sup>9</sup> You are to labor six days and do all your work, <sup>10</sup> but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. You must not do any work—you, your son or daughter, your male or female servant, your livestock, or the resident alien who is within your city gates. <sup>11</sup> For the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and everything in them in six days; then he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and declared it holy.

7

Exodus 19:17-23 (God set apart Mount Sinai for His use. He set a boundary around the mountain defining what belonged to Him, and how people must respect that boundary. From "being holy" comes "boundaries.")

<sup>17</sup> Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. <sup>18</sup> Mount Sinai was completely enveloped in smoke because the LORD came down on it in fire. . . .

<sup>20</sup> The LORD came down on Mount Sinai at the top of the mountain. Then the LORD summoned Moses to the top of the mountain, and he went up. <sup>21</sup> The LORD directed Moses, "Go down and warn the people not to break through to see the LORD; otherwise many of them will die." <sup>22</sup> Even the priests who come near the LORD must consecrate themselves, or the LORD will break out in anger against them."

<sup>23</sup> Moses responded to the LORD, "The people cannot come up Mount Sinai, since you warned us: Put a boundary around the mountain and consecrate it."

8

1Corinthians 1:2 (All Christians are “saints.” “Saints” in CSB is translated as “[those who are called] to be holy” in NIV. “Saints” are those who are called by Christ to be holy. That means to all Christians. All Christians are set apart for Christ – to belong to Christ, to live for Christ, to worship Him, ...)

<sup>2</sup> To the church of God at Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called as saints, with all those in every place who call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord—both their Lord and ours. [CSB]

<sup>2</sup> To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours: . . . [NIV]

9

1Peter 2:9-10 (Same idea, Christians are a “holy nation” = a new nation of people set apart for God through the salvation of Jesus Christ. Christians are people who belong to God’s Kingdom.)

<sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. <sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

10

1. Boundary setting comes from God’s idea of holiness  
(Lev 11:44-45)

**2. Set boundaries in order to image God to the world (1Pe 1:14-15; Lev 20:26)**

11

1Peter 1:14-15. As Christians, we are to set ourselves apart for God in all our conduct (v. 15). So that, we can help the world to see an image of God’s holiness through us (v. 16). To do so, we need to set/define our boundaries and be responsible for what belong inside of our boundaries.

Your boundaries are your personal “property lines” that define who you are, and whom you are not. What fall within your boundaries are your physical body, feelings, personality, thinking/knowledge, decision-making power, core values, belief, experiences, language, background, skills, . . . etc. You are responsible only for all these that belong inside of your boundaries, not someone else’s. You are to conduct yourself responsibly for everything that are within your boundaries in order to help the world see an image of God/Christ through you. E.g. Keep your words from hurting others even when you’re angry.

That means, you are to be holy – set apart for God – in all your conduct because God is holy – set apart from sin & worldliness (v. 15-16). To do so, we need to set boundaries for ourselves.

<sup>13</sup> Therefore, with your minds ready for action, be sober-minded and set your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. <sup>14</sup> As obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires of your former ignorance. <sup>15</sup> But as the one who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct; <sup>16</sup> for it is written, Be holy, because I am holy.

12

Leviticus 20:26

<sup>22</sup> "You are to keep all my statutes and all my ordinances, and do them, so that the land where I am bringing you to live will not vomit you out. <sup>23</sup> You must not follow the statutes of the nations I am driving out before you, for they did all these things, and I abhorred them. <sup>24</sup> And I promised you: You will inherit their land, since I will give it to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey. I am the LORD your God who set you apart from the peoples. <sup>25</sup> Therefore you are to distinguish the clean animal from the unclean one, and the unclean bird from the clean one. Do not become contaminated by any land animal, bird, or whatever crawls on the ground; I have set these apart as unclean for you. <sup>26</sup> **You are to be holy to me because I, the LORD, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be mine.**

13

1. Boundary setting comes from God's idea of holiness (Lev 11:44-45)

## 2. Set boundaries in order to image God to the world

(1Pe 1:14-15; Lev 20:26)

- a. **Christians will be different.** (Setting apart for God will make us different from others.)
- b. **Set boundaries positively & set boundaries negatively**  
("Positive boundaries" means "I will do this and do that." e.g. worship God, speak the truth, love others, ...)  
("Negative boundaries" means "I will NOT do this or that." e.g. "I will not exasperate my children to anger," or "I will never say the word 'divorce' to my spouse regardless of how angry I may be.")
- c. **Know yourself & know God's will** (Take these next 3 steps to set your boundaries. First, know how God has shaped you in your life, and what He wants you to be & to do as a Christian.)
- d. **Be responsible for yourself & to God** (Note: Be responsible FOR yourself but TO God & others)
- e. **Say "NO" to distraction, opposition, temptation, deception & unbiblical ideas**  
(These may come from other people, your own self, the devil, or events in your life that you can't control. E.g. A deceptive thought may say, "I will not make myself to read the Bible until I find my heart's intention to be pure." Say NO to this deception and just start reading the Bible & let God's Word purify our hearts.)

14



## Sharing & Praying Together

1. What boundaries can you set for yourself as a Christian in your important roles? – positive & negative boundaries
2. What differences can you non-Christian friends tell about you in comparison to themselves? (What can they learn about God from you?)

15