

# Boundaries In Marriage

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## The Laws of Boundaries

Not about what I think, but what God says it is.

### Why Laws and Not Just Feelings?

“One of the major causes of marital breakups in the Christian community is the lack of protective hedges that spouses should plant around their marriages, their heads, their hearts, their eyes, and their hands”. Jerry Jenkins

### James 1:22 What Is Your Conviction Of The Law?

<sup>22</sup> Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. *Do what it says.* <sup>23</sup> Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror <sup>24</sup> and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. <sup>25</sup> But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.

- > The laws that are built from biblical principles are founded in the Word, not in the emotions of the moment.
- > The “faith” part of all of this is that we know in our heart of hearts that the law is there for freedom and not for constraint, to give life and not take it away.
- > The law is disconnects from time/space/seasons/ our ups and downs. We can build on a sure foundation that releases us from “Boundary Bondage” and gives us the freedom to enjoy “Boundary Building” instead.
  - > We are focused on the builder and not on our “stuff”
  - > We are prepared for freedom and not failure.
  - > We are released to be blessed.

***A lack of boundaries causes us to be blind to the blessings***

### Boundary This!

*Feelings nothing more than feelings again in my life.....*

<http://www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/10851/From-The-Heart>

1. Why can't we just play with feelings instead of rules?
2. Give an example of when feelings trumped “law” and failed.
3. Was the “chess guy” being too demanding regarding the rules? Couldn't he have just leave well enough alone?
4. What keeps us “in our feelings” and away from the law of the Lord pertaining to our marriages and relationships?

## Law 1      The Law of Sowing and Reaping Galatians 6:7-9

<sup>7</sup> Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. <sup>8</sup> The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. <sup>9</sup> Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

- > Your actions have consequences
- > When we do loving responsible things, people draw close to us.
- > When we are unloving or irresponsible people withdraw from us by emotionally shutting down or avoiding us, or leaving the relationship.
- > Dealing with our part causes us to grow up in the relationship.
- > Healthy Marriage Boundaries help a spouse grow by establishing clear consequences for bad behavior.

I.E. Refusing to rescue your spouse

Refusing to cheer them up when they choose to pout.

Refusing to pay-off their credit card debt...again.

Refusing to call in sick for your spouse who is not sick or is tired from being “out with the guys/girls” the night before until the dawn.

- > Your Marriage Covenant is not to be mocked.

## Law 2      The Law of Responsibility Galatians 6:2-5

<sup>2</sup> Carry each other's **burdens**, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. <sup>3</sup> If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. <sup>4</sup> Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, <sup>5</sup> for each one should carry his own load.

- > **BURDEN:** Backbreaking Boulder
- > Key is “the Law of Christ” ...Love the Lord your God/Your neighbor as yourself.
- > **LOAD:** Daily responsibilities of life > Our biblical roles in Christ (see handout)
- > We are responsible to each other but not for each other.
  - > No matter what, all I can do is what I am called to do fulfilling my role. > My spouse has to fulfill their role as well.

## Law 3      The Law of Power Galatians 5:22,23/26

<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness and *self-control*. Against such things there is no law / <sup>26</sup> Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

- > We can not fix each other, nor are we called to...especially against their will.
- > We have no power over the attitudes and actions of our spouse but we can influence them.
- > The power to be changed to influence our spouse God's way for His purposes...not ours.

## Law 4      The Law of Respect 1 Corinthians 12:18

<sup>18</sup> But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. <sup>19</sup> If they were all one part, where would the body be? <sup>20</sup> As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

- > Respecting and *valuing your mate's boundaries* is the key to being close and loving.
- > Healthy boundaries actually help to see the values/hopes/ and dream of your spouse.
- > Sometimes we need to “influence our spouse to establish boundaries that help them reach their dreams etc.

## Law 5      The Law of Motivation 1 John 4:18

<sup>18</sup> There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

- > Fear always works against love (agape love)
- > This is about “have to” vs. “choose to”. Love grows when “no” my no is heard.
- > Sometimes we must die to self. The motive is love not a fear of relational abandonment.
- > We are able to stay connected as we love God, love our spouse, and what to do what is pleasing to God in our covenant relationship.
- > Pleasing God and not acting out of fear, we are released from our and our spouse's agenda.