

Week Three: Purity and Boundaries

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<https://www.soulshpherd.org/iesus-set-boundaries/>

<https://positivepsychology.com/great-self-care-setting-healthy-boundaries/>

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Bible-purity.html>

There are two things that we must talk about and those two things are purity and boundaries. Which is a big “WHY” behind this peer team in the first place.

Boundaries

“Boundaries can be physical or emotional, and they can range from being loose to rigid, with healthy boundaries often falling somewhere in between.”

“A boundary is a limit or space between you and the other person; a clear place where you begin and the other person ends . . . The purpose of setting a healthy boundary is, of course, to protect and take good care of you” (n.d.).

Another way to think about it is that “Our boundaries might be rigid, loose, somewhere in between, or even nonexistent. A complete lack of boundaries may indicate that we don’t have a strong identity or are enmeshed with someone else”

Healthy boundaries can serve to establish one’s identity. Specifically, healthy boundaries can help people define their individuality and can help people indicate what they will and will not hold themselves responsible for. While boundaries are often psychological or emotional, boundaries can also be physical. For example, declining physical contact from a coworker is setting an important boundary, one that’s just as crucial as setting an emotional boundary, i.e., asking that same coworker not to make unreasonable demands on your time or emotions.”

Healthy boundaries are a crucial component of self-care. That’s because “in work or in our personal relationships, poor boundaries lead to resentment, anger, and burnout” (Nelson, 2016).

More generally, the consequences of not setting healthy boundaries often include “stress, financial burdens, wasted time, and relationship issues, which can cause mental distress” (Prism Health North Texas, n.d.). In other words, a lack of healthy boundaries can negatively affect all aspects of someone’s life.

Setting healthy boundaries can have many benefits, including helping people make decisions based on what is best for them, not just the people around them.

The first part of setting boundaries is examining the boundaries that already exist (or are lacking) in one's life. For example, a woman might decide that she has healthy boundaries with her romantic partner, but not with her friends and coworkers. From there, she can decide what types of boundaries she wants to set with her friends and coworkers.

As for how to exactly set these boundaries, "Say 'no' simply but firmly to something you do not want to do. Do not feel that you need to explain" (Kairns, 1992). Not overexplaining is a crucial aspect of setting boundaries, as everyone has the right to determine what they do and do not want to do.

This brings up another important point: Keep the focus on Jesus and yourself. Instead of setting a boundary by saying something like, "You have to stop bothering me after work", a person can say, "I need some time to myself when I get back from work."

Another important thing to remember is: "It is impossible to set boundaries without setting consequences" (IPFW/Parkview Student Assistance Program, n.d.). This means that when setting boundaries, it is important to explicitly state why they are important.

For example, a person in an unhealthy relationship might declare that his partner needs to start respecting his career goals if his partner wants to continue being in a relationship with him. It is also crucial to only declare consequences that one is willing to follow through on, or else the boundaries will not be effective.

In general, the key to setting boundaries is first figuring out what you want from your various relationships, setting boundaries based on those desires, and then being clear with yourself and with other people about your boundaries.

And of course, in all things, we have Jesus to look at as an example. Though "self-care" is not something explicitly talked about in Scripture, it is something we can see demonstrated in the life of Jesus.

In outline form, I'd like to share with you some of the key points of my Bible study on Jesus Setting Boundaries. This is the same outline I've used in many classes I've taught to pastors, church counselors, and other ministry leaders on setting limits and learning to be joyful givers. I encourage you to look up the Scriptures and study their contexts and other related passages from the Bible. Meditate and pray. Ask Jesus to teach you to live your life in the way that he would if he were you.

Jesus Accepted His Personal Limits (Part of His Incarnation)

- **Meeting His Personal 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 26:18, 20; Mark 1:16, 3:23, 4:38; Luke 7:36; John 10:40, 12:2).
- **Receiving Support from Friends.** He sought the company of friends (Matt 26:36-38).
- **Enjoying Solitude.** He withdrew from the crowds to go away on retreat, alone or with friends.
- **Enjoying the Moment (These people, this place, this time).** He left one city to go to another because he couldn't be in two places at the same time (Mark 1:38).
- **Unhurried Pace of Life.** He was never in a hurry, except to go to Jerusalem and embrace his cross (John 11:6; Mark 10:32).
- **Abandoning Outcomes to God.** Jesus was tempted to become paralyzed with fear about the cross. Satan and his demons, along with many people who hated him, were trying to kill him. Would he make it to the cross to die for us, to be "lifted up" publicly so as it draws people to God? He let go. He chose not to force things, but to trust the Father's will. To the Father, he abandoned the outcomes of his sufferings and trials to come, as he always did. (Mark 14:32-42)

Jesus Said No to Inappropriate Behavior

- **Demands.** He withdrew from the crowds who wanted him, for one-on-one time with the Father (Luke 5:15-16).
- **Entitlement.** He didn't give in to his mother and brothers who tried to use their relationship with him to pull him away from the crowd he was ministering to (Matthew 12:46-50).
- **Baiting Questions.** When the religious leaders asked him baiting questions to make him look foolish he answered with incisive questions of his own (Matthew 21:23-27, 22:15-22).
- **Cynicism.** He said no to Herod's mocking demand, "Show us a sign that you are the Son of God." (Luke 23:8-9).
- **Manipulation.** He said no to Peter and the disciples who had an inappropriate agenda for Jesus to a political king or military warrior rather than a sacrificial lamb. (Matthew 16:23).
- **Pride.** He didn't heal those who were too proud to trust Him (Matthew 13:58).

Jesus Spoke the Truth in Love to those Stuck or Wrong

- **Exploitation.** He used a whip to clear out the temple of the vendors and money changers who were taking advantage of the poor and turning God's house into a marketplace (Matthew 21:12-17, John 2:12-16).

- **Addiction.** 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).
- **Misguided.** He rebuked the disciples who tried to keep the little children away from him and told them that they needed to emulate the children's faith (Matthew 19:13-15).

Jesus Had Expectations for People in Need

- **What do you want?** Two blind men called out to him for help from the Jericho road. He asked them, "What do you want me to do for you?" They needed to ask for what they needed and they needed to trust Him (Matthew 20:29-34).
- **Do you want to get well?** For 38 years the invalid at the Sheep gate pool hadn't been able to get into the miracle waters. He felt helpless and sorry for himself. He expected someone to fix his problem. Jesus challenged him, "Do you want to get well?... Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." It was up to him to be motivated and to take responsibility for himself (John 5:1-14).
- **Do you believe?** A father sought deliverance for his son who was mute and had seizures and said to Jesus, "If you can do anything, take pity on us and help us." Jesus put it back on the father, "If you can"? Everything is possible for him who believes." The father needed to believe that Jesus could cure his son (Mark 9:17-27).

Jesus Taught us Examples of how to be Setting Boundaries

- **Personal Prayer Time:** "But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen" (Matthew 6:6).
- **Be Honest and Direct (Don't Pressure People or Try to Get Them to Do Things):** "Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one" (Matthew 5:37).
- **Set 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).
- **Please God, Not People:** "How can you believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God?" (John 5:44).
- **Obey God:** "What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.' 'I will not,' he answered, but later he changed his mind and went. Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go. Which of the two did what his father wanted?" "The first,' they answered" (Matthew 21:28-31).

Barriers to Boundary Setting

It seems obvious that no one would want his/her boundaries violated. So why do we allow it? Why do we NOT enforce or uphold our boundaries?

- FEAR of rejection and, ultimately, abandonment.
- FEAR of confrontation.
- GUILT.
- We were not taught healthy boundaries.
- Safety Concerns

Assess the current state of your boundaries

HEALTHY BOUNDARIES allow you to:

- Have high self-esteem and self-respect.
- Share personal information gradually, in a mutually sharing and trusting relationship.
- Protect physical and emotional space from intrusion.
- Have an equal partnership where responsibility and power are shared.
- Be assertive. Confidently and truthfully say "yes" or "no" and be okay when others say "no" to you.
- Separate your needs, thoughts, feelings, and desires from others. Recognize that your boundaries and needs are different from others.
- Empower yourself to make healthy choices and take responsibility for yourself.

UNHEALTHY BOUNDARIES are characterized by:

- Sharing too much too soon or, at the other end of the spectrum, closing yourself off and not expressing your need and wants.
- Feeling responsible for others' happiness.
- Inability to say "no" for fear of rejection or abandonment.
- Weak sense of your own identity. You base how you feel about yourself on how others treat you.
- Disempowerment. You allow others to make decisions for you; consequently, you feel powerless and do not take responsibility for your own life.

Tips for Setting Healthy Boundaries (Modified from the book, *Boundaries: Where You End and I Begin* by Anne Katherine)

When you identify the need to set a boundary, do it clearly, calmly, firmly, respectfully, and in as few words as possible. Do not justify, get angry, or apologize for the boundary you are setting.

You are not responsible for the other person's reaction to the boundary you are setting. You are only responsible for communicating your boundary in a respectful manner. If it upsets them, know it is their problem. Some people, especially those accustomed to controlling, abusing, or manipulating you, might test you. Plan on it, expect it, but remain firm. Remember, your behavior must match the boundaries you are setting. You cannot successfully establish a clear boundary if you send mixed messages by apologizing.

At first, you will probably feel selfish, guilty, or embarrassed when you set a boundary. Do it anyway and remind yourself you have a right to self-care. Setting boundaries takes practice and determination. Don't let anxiety, fear or guilt prevent you from taking care of yourself.

When you feel anger or resentment or find yourself whining or complaining, you probably need to set a boundary. Listen to yourself, determine what you need to do or say, then communicate assertively.

Learning to set healthy boundaries takes time. It is a process. Set them in your own time frame, not when someone else tells you.

Develop a support system of people who respect your right to set boundaries. Eliminate toxic persons from your life— those who want to manipulate, abuse, and control you.

In what relationships in your life do you see good boundaries?

In what areas of your life do you see the need to set stricter boundaries?

Purity

Question: "What does the Bible say about purity?"

Answer: Purity is freedom from anything that contaminates. Purity is the quality of being faultless, uncompromised, or unadulterated. Pure water is free from any other substances. Pure gold has been refined to such a degree that all [dross](#) has been removed. And a pure life is one in which sin no longer determines the choices one makes.

Purity is important to God, who alone is truly pure. Purity is often used in Scripture as a means to communicate holiness or perfection. When Moses was building the tabernacle, God specified that the lampstand and other items inside the Holy Place be made “of pure gold” ([Exodus 25:31](#); cf. [37:2, 16](#)). The oil used in the tabernacle was to be pure, as was the frankincense ([Leviticus 24:2, 7](#)). The Lord has “pure” eyes ([Habakkuk 1:13](#)) and speaks “pure” words ([Psalm 12:6](#)). The [New Jerusalem](#) is described as a “city of pure gold, as pure as glass” ([Revelation 21:18](#)).

When God created the heavens and the earth ([Genesis 1 – 2](#)), everything was pure. There was no death, decay, pollution, or sin. God creates pure things because He is pure. In Him, there is no confusion, contradiction, or compromise. Everything He does is good ([Psalm 18:30](#); [145:17](#)). He created human beings to reflect His image and to live in pure, unbroken communion with Him ([Genesis 1:27](#)). However, sin is the corruptor of purity ([Psalm 14:3](#)). Impurity is often listed as one factor that will keep us away from the presence of God ([Colossians 3:5-6](#); [Galatians 5:19-21](#); [1 Corinthians 6:9-10](#)). Impurity renders a person or a nation unfit for entrance into God’s presence ([Joshua 3:5](#); [Revelation 21:27](#); [Ephesians 5:5](#); [James 4:8](#)). In order to have fellowship with a holy God, we must reclaim the purity that He originally intended for us: “Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart” ([Psalm 24:3-4](#)).

In the Old Testament, people reclaimed purity by sacrificing animals in the way God specified. God had declared that He would purify them ([Leviticus 22:32](#)) if they kept all His commands ([Leviticus 22:31](#)), His Sabbaths ([Leviticus 26:2](#)), and His sacrifices ([Exodus 8:27](#)). Repentance and faith in a coming Savior, as shown in their obedience to the Law, were sufficient for God to pronounce people righteous. In the New Testament, purity is reclaimed by placing our faith in the perfect sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ ([Romans 6:3-7](#)). We cannot be pure enough on our own to see God ([Romans 3:23](#)). We must have Christ’s righteousness credited to our accounts ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)). That’s what it means to be a [Christian](#).

The term *purity* is often used today in relation to sexuality. [Sexual purity](#) is freedom from immorality or perversion. Girls sometimes wear [purity rings](#) to indicate their commitment to saving sex for marriage. Purity is closely related to holiness, and those who walk in holiness will keep themselves sexually pure: abstinent before marriage and monogamous within marriage.

When we have been [born again](#) through faith in Jesus ([John 3:3](#)), we desire to live in purity ([1 Peter 1:15-16](#)). That purity is not limited to our sexuality, although that is important ([Ephesians 5:2](#); [1 Corinthians 6:18](#)). God desires that we live purely in all

our dealings with others ([Ezekiel 45:10](#); [Luke 6:31](#)). Purity should define our thought life ([2 Corinthians 10:5](#)), our words ([Ephesians 4:29](#)), and our actions ([1 Corinthians 10:31](#)). Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" ([Matthew 5:8](#)). When our hearts are clouded with impurities, we cannot experience God's presence or hear His voice. But when our claim to righteousness is based on what Jesus has done ([Titus 3:5](#)), we will strive to forsake sin ([1 John 3:9](#)) and live in purity of heart, enjoying fellowship with the God of purity.