



**BOUNDARIES THAT BLESS:
Living Free from Toxicity**
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In this message, we're discussing setting healthy boundaries with toxic individuals. Drawing wisdom from Scripture, we explore how to recognize toxic behavior, understand the importance of boundaries, and learn practical steps to protect our spiritual, emotional, and mental well-being. Discover how Biblical figures modeled boundary-setting in their interactions and how we, too, can follow their examples to maintain peace and integrity in our lives. Join us as we seek God's guidance in creating boundaries that honor Him and foster healthy relationships.

1. The Need for Boundaries

- **Recognition of Toxic Relationships:** Identifying toxic behaviors in coworkers, friends, family members, and others
- **Consequences of Toxic Relationships:** Emotional, mental, physical, and relational harm, including anxiety, stress, burnout, and loss of identity

2. Biblical Perspective on Boundaries

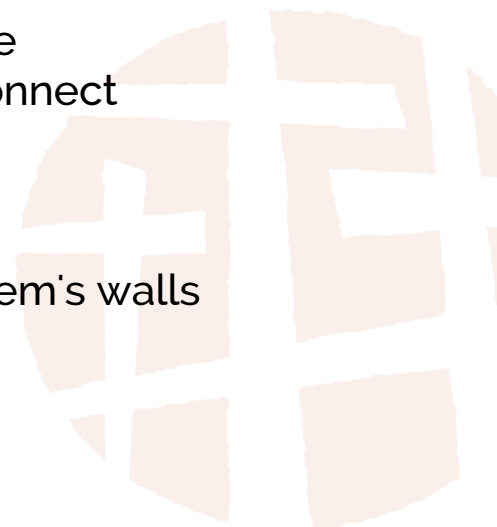
- **Tension**
 - Balancing love and self-preservation
 - Biblical commands to love others and honor parents
 - Questions of guilt, selfishness, and relationship changes
- **Scriptural References**
 - John 13:34b (NIV): "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."
 - Matthew 22:39b (NIV): "Love your neighbor as yourself."
 - Romans 12:10 (NIV): "Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves."
 - Ephesians 6:2a (NIV): "Honor your father and mother."

3. Consequences of Not Setting Boundaries

- Mental and Physical Exhaustion
- Stress and Anxiety
- Resentment and Low Self-Esteem
- Depression and Unhealthy Relationships
- Loss of Identity and Work-Life Imbalance
- Compromised Values and Spiritual Disconnect

4. Biblical Example: Nehemiah's Boundaries

- **Nehemiah's Mission:** Rebuilding Jerusalem's walls despite opposition



- **Opposition:** Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem's attempts to distract and intimidate Nehemiah
- **Nehemiah's Response**
 - **Prayer and Defense:** Turning to God and organizing defenses
 - **Steadfast Focus:** Remaining committed to the mission despite threats

5. Four Strategies for Setting Boundaries

❑ Guard Your Heart

- Proverbs 4:23 (NIV): "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."
- Matthew 12:33-35: Outward behavior reflects the heart's state

❑ Discernment

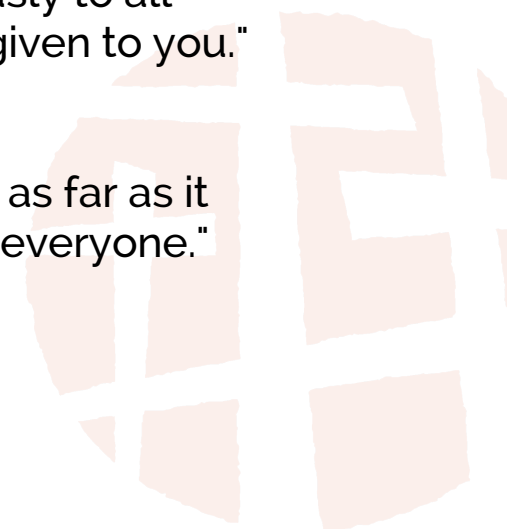
- John 16:13 (NIV): "But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth."
- Signs of Toxicity: Manipulation, lack of accountability, emotional instability, controlling behavior, disrespect for boundaries

❑ Continual Prayer

- James 1:5 (NIV): "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you."

❑ Maintaining Peace

- Romans 12:18 (NIV): "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."



6. Practical Steps for Setting Boundaries (Henry Cloud)

- **Identify Limits:** Recognize and define unacceptable behaviors
- **Communicate Clearly:** Use direct, calm language
- **Use "I" Statements:** Express feelings and needs to reduce defensiveness
- **Stay Firm and Consistent:** Maintain boundaries despite pressure
- **Limit Exposure:** Reduce time with toxic individuals
- **Seek Support:** Surround yourself with supportive people
- **Practice Self-Care:** Engage in activities that nurture well-being
- **Be Prepared for Pushback:** Stay firm against resistance
- **Know When to Walk Away:** Limit or end relationships if boundaries are continually violated
- **Rely on Spiritual Guidance:** Seek wisdom and strength through prayer

7. Walls vs. Fences

- **Walls:** Complete barriers that isolate and disconnect
- **Fences:** Boundaries that allow interaction while protecting well-being
- **Goal:** Build fences, not walls, to maintain healthy relationships



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. We discussed the harmful effects of toxic relationships on our well-being. How have you experienced or witnessed toxicity in relationships, and what impact did it have on your mental and emotional health?
2. Balancing biblical commands to love and honor others with the need for self-preservation can be challenging. How do you reconcile the command to honor others with setting boundaries when their behavior is harmful?
3. Nehemiah faced significant opposition but remained focused on his mission. What can we learn from Nehemiah's response to toxic opposition that can help us handle difficult people in our own lives?
4. We discussed various strategies for setting and maintaining boundaries. Which strategy for setting boundaries do you find most challenging, and how can you apply it in your current relationships?
5. The importance of building fences (healthy boundaries) instead of walls (complete barriers) was emphasized. How can you ensure that your boundaries are like fences, allowing healthy interactions, rather than walls that isolate you from meaningful relationships?

