

## SIGNS of UNHEALTHY BOUNDARIES

1. Telling all
2. Talking at an intimate level at the first meeting
3. Falling in love with a new acquaintance
4. Falling in love with anyone who reaches out to you
5. Being overwhelmed by a person - preoccupied
6. Acting on the first sexual impulse
7. Being sexual for your partner, not for yourself.
8. Going against personal values or rights just to please others
9. Not noticing when someone else displays inappropriate boundaries
10. Not noticing when someone invades your boundaries
11. Accepting food, gifts, touch, or sex that you don't really want
12. Touching a person without asking
13. Taking as much as you can get for the sake of "getting"
14. Giving as much as you can give for the sake of giving
15. Allowing someone to take as much as they can from you
16. Letting others direct your life
17. Letting others describe your reality
18. Letting others define you
19. Believing others can anticipate your needs
20. Expecting others to fill your needs automatically
21. Falling apart so someone will take care of you
22. Self-abuse
23. Sexual and physical abuse
24. Food and chemical abuse



# I. **BOUNDARIES**

## A. **Boundaries define us.**

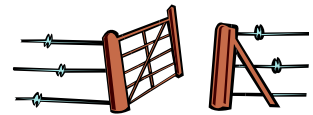
1. They define **what IS me** and **what IS NOT me**.
2. A boundary **shows me where I END and someone ELSE BEGINS**, leading me to a **SENSE of OWNERSHIP**.
3. **KNOWING** what I am to **own** and take responsibility for gives me **FREEDOM**. If I know where my yard begins and ends, I am free to do with it what I like. However, **if I do not “own” my life**, my choices and options become very **limited**.
4. Boundaries also help us to define what is NOT on our property and what we are NOT RESPONSIBLE for. Such as, we are **NOT responsible FOR OTHER PEOPLE**.

## B. **To and For**

1. **We are responsible TO others, and FOR ourselves.**

## C. **Good In, Bad Out**

1. Boundaries help us keep the **good IN** and the **bad OUT**.
2. **Boundaries are NOT walls. Boundaries have gates.**
3. We are to be in community with others, but in every community, all members have their own space and property.
4. **When people are abused while growing up**, they often **reverse** the function of boundaries and keep the “BAD in” and the “**GOOD out.**”



## D. **God and Boundaries**

1. God also limits what he will allow in his yard. He confronts sin and allows consequences for behavior.
  - a. *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that **whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**”* - John 3:16
  - b. **God loves free will – freedom to CHOOSE**
2. The “gates” of His boundaries open and close appropriately.

## E. **Example of Boundaries** (made with)

Boundaries are anything that helps to DIFFERENTIATE **you** from **someone else**.

1. **Skin – most basic boundary** that defines you. Victims of abuse often have a poor sense of boundaries. Early in life they were taught that their property did not really begin at their skin. Others could invade their property and do whatever they wanted, so they have problems establishing boundaries later in life.
2. **Words** – you can create good protective fences with your words. The **most basic boundary-setting word** is “**NO.**” It lets others know that you exist apart from them and that you are in control of you.

3. **Truth** – knowing the truth about God and His property puts limits on you and shows you His boundaries.
4. **Geographical Distance** – physically removing yourself from a situation will help maintain boundaries
5. **Time** – Taking time off from a person or project can be a way of regaining ownership over some out-of-control aspect of your life where boundaries need to be set.
6. **Emotional Distance** – Emotional distance is a temporary boundary to give your heart the space it needs to be safe – never a permanent way of living.
7. **Other People** – you need to depend on others to help you set and keep boundaries.

**Creating Boundaries Always Involves a Support Network.**

8. **Consequences** – **MUST back up our boundaries with CONSEQUENCES.**
9. **The 3 S's** - **SPEAK** Up, **STAND** Up, **STEP** Back
  - a. **SPEAK Up** – words; “NO” “YES” “DON'T” “I WILL...” “I WON'T...”
  - b. **STAND Up** – truth, what’s right – calmly repeat desire & then state consequence
  - c. **STEP Back** – distance, space; carry out previously stated “consequence”.
    - Puts the responsibility for the bad behavior back onto the person initiating it
    - Creates a sense of self-respect for the new “boundary-setter”.
    - **Respect begets Respect** – when we respect ourselves, others begin to respect us in return.
    - Respect is **EARNED** by making wise choices.

**F. What’s in My Boundaries? – (What I AM responsible for)**

1. Feelings
2. Attitudes and Beliefs
3. Behaviors
4. Choices
5. Values
6. Limits
7. Talents
8. Thoughts
9. Desires
10. Love
11. My Body



**G. OTHER**

1. When parents teach children that setting boundaries or saying “no” is bad, they are teaching them that others can do with them as they wish.
2. Blocking a child’s ability to say “no” handicaps that child for life
  - a. As adults they have the boundary injury of “saying “YES” to bad things”
3. Inability to say “no” to the bad keeps us from refusing evil

4. People **raised in dysfunctional families**, or families where God's ways of boundaries are not practiced, find themselves transported into adult life where spiritual principles that have never been explained to them govern their relationships and well-being.
5. The law of **Cause and Effect** is a basic law of life, and the Bible calls it the **Law of Sowing and Reaping**.
  - a. Certain behaviors (CHOICES) result in certain CONSEQUENCES
  - b. Sometimes someone else steps in and **reaps** the **consequences for people**, **INTERRUPTING** the Law of CAUSE and EFFECT by **rescuing irresponsible people**
  - c. It is often people who have no boundaries who do the interrupting
  - d. **Rescuing** a person from the natural consequences of his behavior **ENABLES** him to **continue** in IRRESPONSIBLE behavior
  - e. A person who **continually rescues** another person is CODEPENDENT
  - f. Codependent, boundary-less people "**co-sign the note**" of life for the irresponsible person
  - g. They end up paying the bills – physically, emotionally, and spiritually – and the spendthrift continues out of control with NO consequences
  - h. Establishing boundaries helps codependent people STOP interrupting the Law of Sowing and Reaping
  - i. Boundaries FORCE the person who is doing the SOWING to also do the REAPING
  - j. Irresponsible persons NEED to suffer consequences BEFORE they will change their behavior.
  - k. Often may have to HURT others when setting boundaries, but not HARM them. **Major difference between HURT and HARM.**
    - (1) Dentist – bad tooth – may "**hurt**," but won't "**harm**" us
    - (2) Often have to "**hurt**" to get better
6. God wants us to take care of ourselves so we can help others without moving into a crisis ourselves

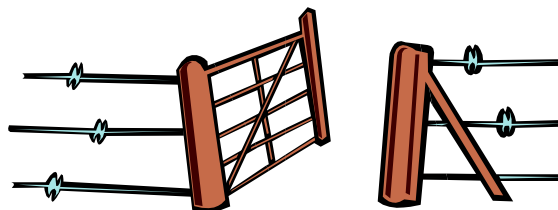
## **H. HUMAN NEED**

1. God has designed us with **very specific needs** from the family we grew up in.
  - a. When we have **unmet needs**, we need to take inventory of these broken places inside and begin to have those needs met in the body of Christ so we will be strong enough to fight the boundary fights of adult life.
2. These **UNMET DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS** are responsible for much of our resistance to setting boundaries.
3. God has designed us to grow up in Godly families where parents **DO the things He has commanded.**
  - a. They NURTURE us
  - b. They have good BOUNDARIES
  - c. They FORGIVE and help us resolve the split between good and bad
  - d. They EMPOWER us to become responsible adults
4. Many people have not had this experience
  - a. They are **psychological orphans** who need to be adopted and cared for by the body of Christ

5. **UNRESOLVED GRIEF and LOSS**

- a. "Unmet needs" - resistance has to do with getting the "good"
- b. **GRIEF** has to do with letting go of the "**bad**"
- c. **Many times when someone is unable to set boundaries, it is because they cannot let go of the person with whom they are fused.**
  - The Bible has numerous examples of God asking people to "**leave behind**" the people and lives that are not good for them
  - **The basic rule in biblical recovery is that the life before God is not worth holding on to; we must LOSE it, GRIEVE it, and LET GO so He can give us good things.**
  - We tend to hold on to the hope that "**someday they will love me**" and continue to try to get **someone who is UNABLE TO LOVE us to change.**
  - This **wish must be MOURNED and LET GO** so our hearts can be opened to the NEW things that God wants for us.

**We cannot have SELF-CONTROL until we let go of OTHER-CONTROL.**



## PERSONAL BOUNDARIES

### Codependent

I can fall in love with a new acquaintance.

I talk at an intimate level at the first meeting.

I am overwhelmed by & preoccupied with a person.

I let others define me.

I let others describe my reality.

I let others determine what I feel.

I let others direct my life.

I violate personal values to please others.

I don't notice when someone else displays inappropriate boundaries

I don't notice when someone invades my personal boundaries.

### Interdependence

I know that love is based on respect & trust; these take time to develop.

I don't overwhelm a person with personal information. I allow trust to develop slowly.

I am able to keep my relationships in perspective & function in other areas of my life.

I know who I am in Christ, and I am wary of people who want to remake me.

I believe my perception of reality is just as accurate as anyone's.

I refuse to allow someone else to tell me, "*You don't feel that way.*"

I listen to opinions, but I make decisions for myself based on God's leading of my choices.

I am not willing to "do anything" to maintain a relationship. I have values that are not negotiable.

I am wary of someone who wants to get too close to me too soon. I notice if someone has values & opinions.

I notice when others try to make decisions for me, are overly helpful, and/or do not consult me about time commitments.

Establish your personal boundaries by making a list. Here are some examples of boundaries common to recovering codependents.

- I will not allow anyone to physically or verbally abuse me.
- I will not knowingly believe or support lies.
- I will not allow chemical abuse OR criminal behavior in my home.
- I will not rescue people from the consequences of their irresponsible behavior.
- I will not finance a person's destructive or addictive habits or other irresponsible behavior.
- I will not lie to protect you or me from your poor choices and/or bad behavior.
- I will not use my home as a detox center for recovering alcoholics or drug abusers.
- "If you want to act crazy that's your business, but you can't do it in front of me. Either you leave or I'll walk away."
- "You can spoil your fun, your day, your life - that's your business - but I won't let you spoil my fun, my day, or my life."