

# Cultivating Connections

MARRIAGE CONFERENCE 2019

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## Boundaries To Save Our Marriage

## Building and Balancing Healthy Boundaries in the Marriage Relationship

First word(s) that pop into your head as you read this session title....

## Our Goal

The "I Do" phrase also opens many other issues/opportunities for husbands and wives to navigate. Our spiritual walk, job demands, kids, in-laws, family and friends, homes, etc. can all bring stress to our marriage. This session will examine the principle of boundaries for keeping that which is good in and the harmful out.

Today: more than a time mgt. talk



***Power of Holy Spirit + Prayer+ Word of God***

## Boundaries Abound?

What are some possible boundary issues that can surface in a marriage?

*(Not about ourselves or our spouse of course, but more like that one neighbor down the street!)*



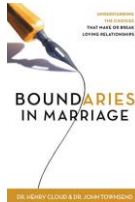
## STRENGTHS and LIMITS?



## What is a Boundary...

In the simplest sense, a boundary is a property line. It denotes the beginning and end of something.

**Boundaries are not something you "set on another person"...**  
**Boundaries are about yourself.**



*Boundaries in Marriage* By Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend

## Boundary Do's and Don'ts

<b>Boundaries DO:</b>	<b>Boundaries do NOT:</b>
-take ownership.	-play Adam and Eve and pass blame.
-self reflect on one's own character.	-guilt or shame your spouse.
-help each other grow in their boundaries work.	-take on your spouse's struggle as your own; they are held accountable for theirs, you are accountable for yours.
-do have conversations that are spoken in kindness and love.	-contain or allow sarcasm or extremisms.

## Quiz Time

Your mother invites you to come over for dinner, but you have other plans. Would you:

- Tell her that you are busy and suggest a more convenient time?
- Change your plans to avoid upsetting her?
- Feel obligated to try and do both dinner with your mom and your other plans too?



## Quiz Time

Your spouse wants you to apologize for something you did. But, you don't think you've done anything wrong. Would you:

- Avoid the discussion and cry on the shoulder of a friend or parent?
- Apologize to maintain peace in the relationship?
- Decline to apologize and ask for clarification instead?



## Quiz Time

Your spouse has a habit of spending too much money and going into credit card debt. Would you:

- Suggest developing a spending plan together?
- Hide the credit cards from the other person?
- Try to drop hints that you're upset with the current level of spending?



## Quiz Time

Your spouse hates to clean the home, so you have been doing more than your fair share of the housework. Would you:

- Let the dirty dishes and laundry pile up as a signal of your dissatisfaction?
- Talk about the housekeeping issue and ask to make a fair plan?
- Keep cleaning for both of you because it's easier than creating an awkward situation or hurt feelings?



## Quiz Time

Your spouse has the habit of saying sarcastic things or joking about your faults in public. Would you:

- Ignore the situation and try to let the comment roll off your back?
- Feel hurt but believe the best in your spouse?
- Pull your spouse aside and explain that you didn't appreciate what was said?



## Why Healthy Property Lines?

Marriage is first and foremost about "\_\_\_\_\_".

- A healthy marriage is bound together by the care, need, companionship, and values of 2 people.
- This union can overcome hurt, immaturity, and selfishness to form something better, than what each person alone can produce.

**Love** is at the heart of God Himself. (1 John 4:16)

## Is Love Enough?

The marriage relationship needs other ingredients to grow and thrive. They are:

**FREEDOM and RESPONSIBILITY**

True or False:

*"when two people are free to disagree,  
they are free to love?"*

## Is Love Enough?

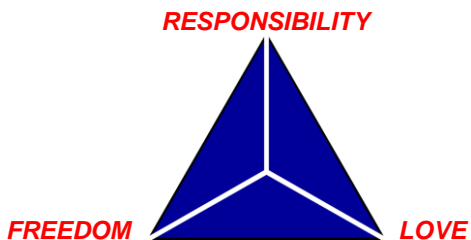
**TRUE:** If not true, then two people can live in fear and love can even die (wax cold).

1 John 4:18: "Perfect love cast out all ....."?"

When two people **TOGETHER** take responsibility to do what is best for the marriage, LOVE can grow.



## The Triangle of Boundaries (1)



## The Triangle of Boundaries (2)

God created us Free (free will and choices).

He gave us responsibility for our freedom,

AND

as responsible free agents, we are told to love HIM and each other.



## The Triangle of Boundaries (3)

Wow...something incredible happens as these three ingredients of relationship work together.

As **love** grows, spouses become more **free** from things that enslave: self-centeredness, sinful patterns, past hurts, and other self-imposed limitations.

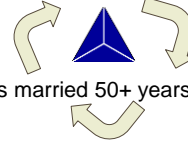
Then they gain a greater and greater sense of self-control and **responsibility**.



## The Triangle of Boundaries (4)

As they act more responsibly, they become more loving!  
And then the cycle begins all over again.

As **love** grows so does **freedom**, leading to more **responsibility**, and to more love.



Why can couples married 50+ years say their marriage gets better?  
Or NOT?

## The Triangle of Boundaries (5)

They become more free to be themselves as a result of being loved, and the love relationship deepens.

*(Intimacy: closeness with confidence)*

Agape love can only exist where freedom and responsibility are operating.

**Love** creates more **freedom**, which leads to more **responsibility**, which leads to more and more ability to love.

## The Triangle Summary

- 1 **Love** within a vow of Marriage - profoundly unique!
- 2 We are created with free will to **choose** responsibility.
- 3 See the process work, increase **vulnerability**.
- 4 Cycle of **trust** flows and grows.
- 5 Deepens **intimacy**!

1+2+3+4+5 =  *the mind of Christ!*

## The LAWS of Boundaries

**The Law of Sowing and Reaping:** Our actions have consequences.

**The Law of Responsibility:** We are responsible to each other, but not for each other.

**The Law of Power:** We have power over some things; we don't have power over others (including changing people).

**The Law of Respect:** If we wish for others to respect our boundaries, we need to respect theirs.

**The Law of Motivation:** We must be free to say no before we can wholeheartedly say yes.

## The LAWS of Boundaries

**The Law of Evaluation:** We need to evaluate the pain our boundaries cause others.

**The Law of Proactivity:** We take action to solve problems based on our values, wants, and needs.

**The Law of Envy:** We will never get what we want if we focus outside our boundaries onto what others have.

**The Law of Activity:** We need to take the initiative in setting limits rather than be passive.

**The Law of Exposure:** We need to communicate our boundaries to each other.

## Questions for Reflection

1. When two people together take responsibility to do what is best for the marriage, love can grow. When they do not, one spouse takes on too much responsibility and resents it while the other spouse does not take on enough and becomes self-centered or controlling.

What, if anything, do you see about yourself and/or your marriage when you look through the lens of the preceding statement?

## Questions for Reflection

2. Think about a current problem in your marriage. What can you do to take ownership rather than blaming your spouse? If you haven't already, state the problem in such a way as to reflect your ownership of it.

3. What issues in your marriage do you need to be dealing with? Put differently, what issues are you choosing to ignore or what are you afraid to address?

## Prayer

*Lord God, I'm a bit nervous as I set out on this journey toward a healthier marriage, and I'm feeling more than a little vulnerable. I know that you will be with me each step of the way, and may your presence give me hope and the willingness to proceed. And, as I submit myself to your transforming touch, I ask you to be at work in my mate even as you work to make me more like Christ—in whose name I pray.*

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