

Turning Boundaries into Barriers

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Consider two words and their corresponding definitions:
 - 1. boundaries : something that indicates or fixes a limit or extent
 - 2. barriers : 1 a : something material that blocks or is intended to block passage . . . b : a natural formation or structure that prevents or hinders movement or action . . . 3 : something immaterial that impedes or separates : obstacle (Merriam-Webster Online, www.merriam-webster.com)
- B. God has always established boundaries for His people.
 - 1. God established a boundary for Adam and Eve. (Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-6)
 - 2. God established boundaries for the Israelites. (Deuteronomy 6:1-3; 4:14-19)
 - 3. Moses crossed the boundary in response to the Lord's command to speak to the rock. (Numbers 20:7-12)
 - 4. When considering all the examples seen within the Old Testament, one should learn that people suffered punishment when they crossed God's boundaries. (Hebrews 2:2,3)
- C. With this lesson, we will address the question: How does a person turn God's boundaries into barriers that he cannot cross?

I. ONE MUST RESPECT GOD'S BOUNDARIES.

- A. In order to respect God's boundaries, a person must first respect God.
 - 1. A person should respect God because God created this world, He created life, and He created the whole of the universe. (Genesis 1:1-2, 31)
 - 2. A person should respect God because God sent Jesus to die on the cross so that sinful man might be made redeemed. (John 3:16; 1 John 4:9)
 - 3. A person should respect God because God has given a law by which He will judge all mankind. (2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Timothy 4:1)
 - 4. Consider King David as an example of one who had respect for God. (Psalms 119:33-40)
- B. In order to respect God's boundaries, a person must recognize the consequences of

crossing the boundaries.

1. Do not cross the boundaries of Him who can destroy both the body and the soul. (Matthew 10:28)
 2. When a person crosses God's boundaries, that person creates actions which God will judge at the day of judgment. (Revelation 20:12-15; 21:7-8)
 3. Those who have crossed the boundaries which God has set in place will be “punished with everlasting destruction.” (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10)
- C. In order to respect God's boundaries, a person must respect himself. (We must have respect for ourselves.)
1. Respecting God's boundaries will make one a better person. For instance:
 - a. A person will choose to neither tell lies nor practice deception.
 - b. A person will choose not to use filthy language.
 - c. A person will neither covet nor steal.
 - d. A person will not engage in immoral behavior.
 - e. And so on goes the list of improvements brought about by one who respects God's boundaries.
 2. Respecting God's boundaries will keep a person in fellowship with God. (1 John 1:5-7)

II. ONE MUST CHOOSE TO STAY IN GOD’S BOUNDARIES.

- A. Staying within God's boundaries must be a personal choice. Consider a few examples:
1. Joshua chose for him and his household to serve the Lord. (Joshua 24:15)
 2. Elijah called upon Israel to choose between serving God and serving Baal. (1 Kings 18:21)
 3. The Lord rebuked Judah for choosing not to hear the prophets of the Lord. (Micah 2:6-11)
 4. The apostles could not help but to speak those things that they had heard. (Acts 4:19-20)
- B. Just as Elijah told Israel to choose between God and Baal, so too must people choose to either believe in Jesus or not to believe in Him.
1. During Jesus' life on this earth, some chose not to believe in Him while others chose not to follow Him. (John 12:37, 42-43)

2. When the apostles were preaching the gospel to the world, not everyone chose to believe in Jesus. (Acts 17:4-5)
- C. Christians must choose either to obey the Lord or to disobey the Lord.
 1. Paul reminded the brethren in Philippi to “work out” their own salvation. (Philippians 2:12-13)
 2. The Hebrew writer issued a warning to those who would willfully sin against the Lord. (Hebrews 10:26-31)
- D. In order for a person to turn God's boundaries into barriers, he must make his own decision to honor God's boundaries.
 1. One must make his own decision to honor God's boundaries. This choice generates true commitment.
 2. Pressuring someone to honor God's boundaries does not create commitment.

III. ONE MUST KNOW THE BOUNDARIES.

- A. In order for a person to turn God's boundaries into barriers, he must have a knowledge of the boundary lines which God has drawn.
 1. A person must study and learn God's command's regarding the various responsibilities assigned by the word of God.
 - a. Instructions for worship. (ex. John 4:24)
 - b. Instructions for home life. (ex. Colossians 3:18-21)
 - c. Instructions regarding those who are not Christians. (ex. 1 Thessalonians 4:10-12)
 - d. Instructions regarding one's brethren. (ex. Romans 12:9-21)
 - e. Instructions regarding one's enemies. (ex. Matthew 5:43-45)
 2. A person must study and learn God's prohibitions, His teachings regarding those actions which are sinful. Consider a few passages as examples:
 - a. List of sins found in Romans 1:20-32.
 - b. List of sins found in Galatians 5:19-21.
 - c. List of sins found in Colossians 3:5-10.
 - d. List of sins found in Ephesians 4:25-31.
 - e. List of sins found in 1 Peter 4:2-5.
 3. Truly, ignorance is not bliss. Refusing to learn the boundaries of God does not

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change the fact that the boundaries do exist and must be honored. As we have already shown, all mankind will be judged by God.

- B. Many people will attempt to redraw the boundaries which God has established.
 - 1. Paul warned the churches throughout Galatia against those who would pervert the gospel of Christ. (Galatians 1:6-9)
 - 2. Paul told Timothy that some people would seek those who would redraw God's boundaries. (2 Timothy 4:2-4)
 - 3. The apostle Peter referenced those who would twist the scriptures, twisting the boundaries established by God. (2 Peter 3:15-16)
 - 4. The apostle Paul warned the brethren in Corinth not to “think” beyond what is written. (1 Corinthians 4:6)

CONCLUSION.

- A. Let us all remember strive to turn our boundaries into barriers by . . .
 - 1. First, respecting God’s boundaries.
 - 2. Second, choosing to stay within God’s boundaries.
 - 3. Third, know the boundaries.
- B. If we will follow these three steps, then we can choose to turn the boundaries into impassable barriers, enabling us to faithfully and continually, serve the heavenly Father.