

OPEN YOUR BIBLE
STUDY COMPANION

Biblical Boundaries

Where Does My Responsibility End and Yours Begin?

A printable companion for tracing responsibility, sacrifice, access, prudence, consequences, authority, safety, restoration, and faithful love across Scripture.

Use this packet beside the full Bible Study. Read the assigned passage first. Record what the text says before deciding what the boundary should be.

STUDY RULE

A boundary is not automatically biblical because it protects you, and a sacrifice is not automatically biblical because it costs you. Ask what Yehovah actually made you responsible for.

Name: _____

Date started: _____

Study completed: _____

Don't take my word for it - Open your Bible.

Before You Study

Record your starting assumptions honestly. Do not correct them yet. You will return to these answers at the end.

When I hear the word boundaries, what do I think it means?

What do I believe I owe another person when they need help?

When does saying no feel selfish to me?

What have I been taught about family, marriage, church authority, forgiveness, and access?

What relationship or situation am I quietly thinking about as I begin this study?

KEEP THIS QUESTION BESIDE YOU

What has Jehovah actually made me responsible for - and what responsibility belongs to the other person?

Responsibility Map

Before studying individual situations, write a first working definition. Leave room for Scripture to correct you.

Burden I should help carry:

Responsibility another capable adult should carry:

Sacrifice:

Enabling:

Boundary:

Control:

Consequence:

Punishment:

PRECISION CHECK

These ideas can overlap in real life, but they are not interchangeable. Much of boundary wisdom is learning which category you are actually dealing with.

Study Progress

Check each section after reading the passage and working the questions.

- ☐ Galatians 6 - Burdens and Personal Responsibility
- ☐ The Adult Son and the Electric Bill
- ☐ Romans 12 / Matthew 5 - A Boundary Governs Me
- ☐ When No Does Not Mean No
- ☐ Yeshua - Need Is Not Always Assignment
- ☐ Sacrificial Love and Family Responsibility
- ☐ Access, Trust, and Guarding the Heart
- ☐ Prudence and Recognizing Danger
- ☐ When Helping Becomes Enabling
- ☐ Addiction, Secrecy, and Participation
- ☐ Consequences Versus Punishment
- ☐ Family Authority and Adult Children
- ☐ Marriage: Obligation Without Ownership
- ☐ Church Authority and Its Limits
- ☐ David and Saul - Mercy With Distance
- ☐ Relational Space and Over-Access
- ☐ When to Answer and When to Stop
- ☐ Repeated Boundary Violations
- ☐ Changed Fellowship Without Hatred
- ☐ Delegation and Carrying Too Much
- ☐ When a Boundary Becomes Control
- ☐ When Protecting Peace Becomes Avoidance
- ☐ Boundaries and Bitterness
- ☐ Fear of Setting a Boundary
- ☐ When Safety Changes the Conversation
- ☐ Boundaries Are Not Proof You Are Right
- ☐ Boundaries Cannot Produce Repentance
- ☐ Abram and Lot - Peace Through Separation
- ☐ Sometimes Yeshua Walked Away
- ☐ Sometimes Paul Used Legal Protection
- ☐ Not Every Boundary Needs an Announcement
- ☐ Practice Scenarios
- ☐ When the Boundary Changes
- ☐ Final Biblical Framework

Burden or Load?

READ: Galatians 6:1-5

Paul commands believers to bear one another's burdens and also says each person must carry his own load. Keep both truths together.

CORE QUESTION

Am I helping this person carry a burden, or am I carrying a responsibility Yehovah gave to them?

Open Your Bible

What responsibility does verse 1 give spiritually mature believers when someone is caught in wrongdoing, and what warning accompanies it?

What does verse 2 tell believers to carry for one another? What does verse 5 say each person must carry?

What kinds of circumstances create a burden that may genuinely be too heavy to carry alone?

What kinds of responsibilities normally belong to a capable adult?

How could refusing to help become hardness? How could helping too much protect irresponsibility?

The Adult Son and the Electric Bill

Use the scenario from the study: an adult son asks his mother to stop an electric shutoff. The same outward act - paying the bill - can be burden-bearing in one circumstance and harmful rescue in another.

LOVE SEEKS GOOD, NOT ONLY COMFORT

Protecting a capable adult from every predictable consequence can preserve the very pattern that is harming them.

Open Your Bible

Was the crisis caused by an unusual hardship or a repeated pattern of choices?

Does he have enough income to pay basic bills but repeatedly spend the money elsewhere?

What has happened after previous rescues? Has responsibility increased, stayed the same, or decreased?

How can repeatedly removing the consequence actually hurt him by making change less necessary?

What forms of help could support responsibility without simply paying the bill again?

Are children, an elderly person, or someone medically vulnerable in the home whose needs must be considered separately?

A Boundary Governs Me - Not You

READ: Romans 12:18 and Matthew 5:33-37

A workable boundary describes your participation, access, responsibility, or response. It cannot guarantee another adult's obedience.

GRAMMAR CHECK

Who is the subject of the sentence? 'You must...' often describes control. 'If this happens, I will...' describes your response.

Open Your Bible

What part of relational peace does Romans 12:18 say depends on you?

What parts of another person's conduct do not depend on you?

Rewrite this control statement as a boundary: 'You are not allowed to yell at me.'

Rewrite this control statement as a boundary: 'You have to stop borrowing money.'

Why does a boundary still work even when the other person dislikes it?

When No Does Not Mean No

READ: Matthew 5:33-37

Yeshua's immediate subject is truthful speech and oaths, but reliable words matter when we establish limits.

CHECK THE REASON

A changed answer is not automatically weakness. Ask what changed it: wisdom and new facts, or guilt and pressure?

Open Your Bible

What usually happens after you say no and another person becomes disappointed?

Do you tend to explain until the other person agrees that your no is reasonable?

What is the difference between reconsidering because new information matters and surrendering because pressure became exhausting?

What behaviors can turn disappointment into leverage - guilt, withdrawal, accusation, repetition, anger?

Where might your own words be teaching someone that enough pressure changes your answer?

Need Is Not Always Assignment

READ: Mark 1:32-39 and Luke 4:40-43

People had real needs, yet Yeshua did not let the loudest demand determine His next assignment.

REMEMBER

The fact that you can help does not always mean you must be the person who helps.

Open Your Bible

Were the people seeking Yeshua asking for something evil or trivial?

What determined where He went next?

How can compassion become confused with universal responsibility?

Which responsibilities Yehovah has clearly given you are being crowded out by other people's urgency?

Where could responsibility be redistributed instead of simply abandoned?

Sometimes Love Says Yes

READ: Philippians 2:3-8; 1 Timothy 5:3-8; Galatians 6:1-5

A boundary study becomes selfish if every example ends with no. Scripture preserves real obligations and costly love.

BALANCE

Self-sacrifice is not automatically unhealthy. Carrying every responsibility alone is not automatically faithful.

Open Your Bible

What does Philippians 2 teach about the interests of others?

What family responsibilities appear in 1 Timothy 5?

How is 'this costs me something' different from 'this is not mine to carry'?

In the sick-parent scenario, what responsibility belongs to the family collectively?

How could distributing caregiving responsibilities protect both the parent and the caregiver?

Access and Trust

READ: John 2:23-25

Yeshua did not entrust Himself equally to everyone. Love does not require identical levels of vulnerability or access.

DISTINCTION

Forgiveness is not the same thing as trust. Love is not the same thing as unlimited access.

Open Your Bible

What does John actually say Yeshua did and did not do?

Why should this passage not become a simplistic proof text for distrusting everyone?

What kinds of access can vary: private information, money, home, children, decision-making influence, emotional closeness?

If someone repeatedly violates confidence, what access is directly connected to the problem?

How could greater access return if trustworthy fruit becomes consistent?

Guard Your Heart - Without Building a Wall

READ: Proverbs 4:20-27

Proverbs 4 is about guarding the inner life so wisdom directs the path. It is not permission to become permanently unreachable.

TEST THE SAYING

'Guard your heart' does not mean 'never let anyone close enough to hurt you.'

Open Your Bible

What surrounds the instruction to guard the heart in Proverbs 4?

What influences are shaping your heart, habits, speech, and direction?

How could 'guarding my heart' become an excuse never to risk vulnerability or receive correction?

How could unrestricted access to a destructive influence reshape you?

Where do you need discernment rather than either total openness or total shutdown?

Prudence Is Not Fear

READ: Proverbs 22:3 and Proverbs 27:12

Biblical prudence notices danger and responds. Wisdom is not paranoia, but neither is preventable exposure to danger proof of faith.

PRUDENCE

Trusting Yehovah does not require denying what is actually happening.

Open Your Bible

What does the prudent person do after recognizing danger?

What does the simple person do?

When might caution be proportionate to an established pattern?

When might fear exaggerate risk and make every relationship feel dangerous?

How can you tell whether you are responding to reality or to a fear that has become detached from the facts?

When Helping Becomes Enabling

READ: Proverbs 19:19 and Galatians 6:2-5

Repeated rescue can solve today's crisis while preserving tomorrow's pattern.

TIME HORIZON

Ask not only, 'Does this help today?' but also, 'What is this teaching for tomorrow?'

Open Your Bible

What warning does Proverbs 19:19 give about repeated rescue?

What would show that help is strengthening responsibility rather than replacing it?

How could rescuing an employee from chronic lateness keep that person from developing needed habits?

How could rescuing a teenager from every forgotten assignment prevent maturity?

What smaller consequence now might prevent a larger consequence later?

Addiction, Secrecy, and Participation

READ: Ephesians 4:25 and Proverbs 28:13

Love does not require financing, concealing, or lying about destructive behavior. Help can remain available without participating in the pattern.

PRECISION CHECK

We do not need to expose everything in order to stop hiding everything.

Open Your Bible

If you reasonably believe cash may support an addiction, what forms of direct help might still be available?

What is the difference between protecting legitimate privacy and maintaining a false story?

How can a family refuse to lie without publicly humiliating the person?

How might repeated financial rescue make the destructive pattern easier to continue?

What kind of help would support truth, treatment, responsibility, or safety?

Consequences Are Not Punishment

READ: Romans 12:17-21

Allowing a natural or proportionate consequence is different from manufacturing pain so someone will 'learn a lesson.'

MOTIVE CHECK

A consequence answers, 'What follows from this behavior?' Punishment often asks, 'How can I make you hurt?'

Open Your Bible

What does Romans 12 forbid concerning repayment of evil?

Is the consequence directly connected to the behavior, or are you adding unrelated pain?

What makes stopping a loan after repeated nonpayment proportionate?

What would turn a reasonable consequence into vengeance?

Is your goal truth and stewardship - or making the person feel what you felt?

Family Does Not Mean Unlimited Authority

READ: Genesis 2:24; Exodus 20:12; Ephesians 6:1-4; 1 Timothy 5:4

Scripture preserves real family obligations while also recognizing adulthood, new households, and personal responsibility before Yehovah.

FAMILY

Real obligation does not equal unlimited authority.

Open Your Bible

What responsibilities toward parents remain meaningful in adulthood?

What changes when an adult child forms a household of his or her own?

Does honoring a parent mean obeying every adult preference?

How could an adult child say no while still communicating honor?

How could a parent use 'honor' language to claim authority Scripture does not give?

Marriage: Obligation Without Ownership

READ: Ephesians 5:21-33 and 1 Corinthians 7:3-5

Marriage creates substantial mutual obligations, but covenant does not turn one spouse into the moral owner of the other.

BALANCE

Marriage creates real claims on our love and faithfulness. It does not erase personhood, conscience, or safety.

Open Your Bible

What mutual or reciprocal responsibilities appear in these passages?

How does sacrificial love differ from entitlement?

How could 'I need a boundary' become an excuse to avoid covenant responsibility?

How could 'you are my spouse' become an excuse for control or surveillance?

How would you distinguish transparency from surveillance, and privacy from secrecy?

Church Authority Has Boundaries Too

READ: 1 Peter 5:1-5 and Hebrews 13:7,17

Scripture recognizes genuine leadership and accountability while warning leaders not to domineer.

AUTHORITY

Counsel, oversight, permission, and ownership of another believer's conscience are not the same thing.

Open Your Bible

What responsibility do elders or leaders carry?

What does Peter explicitly warn leaders not to become?

What kinds of decisions legitimately belong to church or ministry leadership?

What ordinary adult decisions may deserve counsel without requiring pastoral permission?

How can 'I have boundaries' become an excuse to reject correction, and how can 'I am your authority' become domination?

David and Saul: Mercy With Distance

READ: 1 Samuel 24 and 1 Samuel 26

David refuses vengeance and still refuses to place himself back within Saul's reach.

MERCY WITH WISDOM

An apology deserves to be heard. An emotional moment does not require us to pretend an established pattern has already changed.

Open Your Bible

What opportunities does David have to harm Saul, and what does he choose instead?

What acknowledgments does Saul make after David spares him?

Does David immediately restore the former level of proximity?

What happens after Saul's emotional words?

How does this story challenge both vengeance and naive restoration of access?

Relational Space Is Not Rejection

READ: Proverbs 25:17

Scripture recognizes that healthy relationships can include space. Closeness does not require constant access.

RELATIONAL SPACE

Space can preserve relationship; neglect can damage it. Wisdom distinguishes the two.

Open Your Bible

What practical wisdom does Proverbs 25:17 give?

Do you tend to interpret another person's need for space as rejection?

Do you assume family or friendship gives you access that was never actually offered?

How could reasonable space reduce irritation and preserve affection?

What would neglect look like on the opposite side?

When to Answer - and When to Stop

READ: Proverbs 26:4-5 and Matthew 7:6

Two adjacent proverbs show that wisdom sometimes answers foolishness and sometimes refuses to join it.

DISCERNMENT

The skill is not only knowing how to answer. It is knowing whether another answer will serve anything useful.

Open Your Bible

Why do Proverbs 26:4 and 26:5 give opposite-sounding instructions?

When might an answer protect truth or other listeners?

When might answering pull you into the same foolishness?

How does Matthew 7:6 add discernment about what we continue offering?

Are you continuing any argument only because ending it feels like losing?

When Someone Keeps Crossing the Boundary

READ: Matthew 18:15-17 and Titus 3:9-11

Repeated refusal matters. Scripture does not freeze every relationship at the first level of correction forever.

CONSISTENCY

A boundary repeatedly stated but never acted upon may function only as a request.

Open Your Bible

What happens in Matthew 18 when the first conversation is ignored?

What does Titus describe after repeated warning?

Has the person misunderstood your boundary, or understood it and rejected it?

What response would be directly connected to the repeated violation?

What would make escalation corrective and proportionate rather than retaliatory?

Changed Fellowship Without Hatred

READ: 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15

Paul can instruct changed fellowship while also saying not to regard the person as an enemy.

KEEP BOTH

Corrective distance and continued brotherly concern can coexist.

Open Your Bible

What relational change does Paul describe?

What purpose does that change appear to serve?

How does verse 15 qualify the way the person is treated?

How can distance exist without contempt?

Where have you assumed either 'love means no change in fellowship' or 'distance means rejection'?

Delegation and Carrying Too Much

READ: Exodus 18:13-24

Moses was doing important work, but the structure was unsustainable. The answer was not caring less; it was distributing responsibility.

STRUCTURE

Sometimes a boundary is not withdrawal. It is redistribution.

Open Your Bible

What problem does Jethro identify?

Is Moses doing something evil, or too much of something good?

What responsibilities remain uniquely Moses' responsibility?

What responsibilities can other trustworthy people carry?

Where might your refusal to delegate keep others dependent or keep you exhausted?

When the Boundary Becomes Control

READ: 2 Corinthians 1:24 and 1 Peter 5:2-3

Even legitimate spiritual authority has limits. A statement can use the word boundary and still function as coercion.

CONTROL TEST

A boundary can describe your action and still be coercive if the action is used to force surrender of ordinary freedom.

Open Your Bible

What does Paul refuse to do regarding the Corinthians' faith?

What does Peter warn elders not to do?

What legitimate good is the proposed boundary protecting?

Is the response proportionate to that good?

Could the same concern be addressed without governing another adult's harmless choices?

When Protecting My Peace Becomes Avoidance

READ: Proverbs 27:5-6 and Matthew 18:15

Emotional discomfort is not the same thing as danger. Faithful relationships sometimes require correction and hard conversations.

TEST THE SAYING

'Protecting my peace' is not a biblical exemption from correction, accountability, or ordinary relational discomfort.

Open Your Bible

What does Proverbs say about faithful wounds and open rebuke?

What does Matthew 18 assume a brother may need to do?

Are you ending the conversation because it is destructive, or because you do not want to hear the concern?

What would a planned pause look like if the conversation is too heated to continue well?

What issue needs to be revisited rather than permanently avoided?

Boundaries and Bitterness

READ: Ephesians 4:26-32 and Romans 12:14-21

A boundary can remain necessary while the heart holding it becomes bitter. The heart and the access decision are related but not identical.

HEART CHECK

Strong boundaries do not require hard hearts.

Open Your Bible

What attitudes does Paul tell believers to put away?

Can distance remain while bitterness is surrendered?

Do you take satisfaction when the person behind the boundary struggles?

Do you repeatedly retell the offense to keep the other person condemned?

What would it mean to maintain wise access while asking Yehovah to remove vengeance and contempt?

When You Are Afraid to Set the Boundary

READ: Proverbs 29:25 and Romans 12:18

Fear of another person's displeasure can make appeasement feel like peace.

CALM IS NOT ALWAYS PEACE

A relationship can look peaceful because one person has learned never to disagree.

Open Your Bible

What does Proverbs say fear of man can become?

What part of peace does Romans 12 place within your responsibility?

What response are you afraid another person will have if you say no?

Has avoiding their anger trained you to surrender responsibilities or convictions?

What would faithful peace look like if the other person remains unhappy?

When Safety Changes the Conversation

READ: Proverbs 22:3 and Proverbs 27:12

When violence, stalking, threats, coercive control, serious intimidation, or credible physical danger are present, ordinary boundary advice may become unsafe.

SAFETY RESOURCE

In the U.S., the National Domestic Violence Hotline offers confidential support and safety planning: 800-799-SAFE (7233), text START to 88788, or TheHotline.org. If there is immediate danger or a life-threatening emergency, contact 911.

Open Your Bible

What does the prudent person do when danger is recognized?

Why might announcing a new boundary increase danger in some situations?

Why should Matthew 18 never be used to require a private meeting with a dangerous person before seeking help?

What kinds of private safety planning might be appropriate before making visible changes?

How can seeking protection coexist with refusing vengeance?

Boundaries Are Not Proof You Are Right

READ: Psalm 139:23-24

Boundary language does not make us immune from misunderstanding, selfishness, disproportion, fear, pride, or the need for correction.

PRAYER

Search me, know my heart, test me, and lead me in Your way. A healthy boundary should survive honest examination before Yehovah.

Open Your Bible

What are you afraid might happen without the boundary?

What legitimate good are you trying to protect?

Is the response proportionate to what has actually happened?

Have you sought counsel from someone who is not emotionally invested in taking your side?

What might Yehovah need to change in you even if the other person never changes?

Boundaries Cannot Produce Repentance

READ: 2 Timothy 2:24-26 and 2 Corinthians 7:8-11

A boundary can expose reality or remove participation in a pattern, but it cannot force another person's heart to turn.

REMEMBER

Their reaction is information. It is not necessarily the verdict on whether your boundary is faithful.

Open Your Bible

Who corrects in 2 Timothy 2, and who ultimately grants repentance?

What fruit does 2 Corinthians 7 associate with godly grief?

Why are tears, anger, or an apology not enough by themselves to prove repentance?

Are you holding a boundary mainly because you believe it will make the person change?

If they never change, what obedience still belongs to you?

Abram and Lot: Separation Without a Villain

READ: Genesis 13:5-12

Abram and Lot change the arrangement because continued proximity is producing strife. The story does not require either man to become the villain.

GENESIS 13

Not every separation is rejection. Sometimes space protects relationship.

Open Your Bible

What practical problem exists before Abram proposes separation?

How does Abram describe his goal concerning strife?

What choice does he offer Lot?

What relationships in your life may need structural change more than moral condemnation?

Could different roles, living arrangements, schedules, or responsibilities preserve peace?

Sometimes Yeshua Walked Away

READ: Matthew 10:14-16; Matthew 12:14-15; Luke 4:28-30; John 8:58-59

Yeshua endured opposition, but He did not remain in every hostile situation indefinitely.

NO UNIVERSAL FORMULA

Sometimes obedience means staying. Sometimes it means leaving. Context matters.

Open Your Bible

What circumstances lead to leaving or withdrawal in these passages?

How do these texts challenge the idea that love always requires continued engagement?

What other examples keep us from walking away at the first disagreement?

Where in your life has a conversation stopped producing anything except anger or repetition?

How would you distinguish wise withdrawal from avoidance?

Sometimes Paul Used Legal Protection

READ: Acts 16:35-39 and Acts 22:22-29

Paul sometimes surrendered rights voluntarily, but he did not believe Christians were forbidden to use legitimate legal protection.

PROTECTION

Humility is not the refusal of every legitimate protection available to you.

Open Your Bible

What legal status or protection does Paul invoke in Acts 16?

What does he invoke before the flogging in Acts 22?

How is voluntary surrender of a right different from being told you are never allowed to use it?

When might employment, legal, medical, civil, or law-enforcement help be appropriate?

Have you assumed that seeking outside help would be spiritually wrong when Scripture never required you to remain unprotected?

Not Every Boundary Needs an Announcement

Clear communication is often loving, but some relational adjustments are quiet acts of stewardship rather than formal declarations.

DISCERNMENT

Not every relational adjustment needs a speech. Not every needed conversation should be avoided either.

Open Your Bible

When would stating the boundary clearly help the relationship adjust?

When might simply sharing less information with a gossip be enough?

When could a formal announcement create unnecessary conflict?

When could silence become avoidance of a conversation that actually needs to happen?

Does this situation require clarity, quiet adjustment, or confidential safety planning?

What Does a Biblical Boundary Sound Like?

Rewrite each statement so it governs your own participation rather than trying to control, punish, or humiliate another person.

Control: You are not allowed to yell at me.

Boundary:

Control: You need to stop borrowing money.

Boundary:

Punishment: You hurt me, so I am ignoring you until you learn.

Boundary:

Control: You have to answer me immediately.

Boundary:

Avoidance: I protect my peace, so I never discuss difficult topics.

Boundary:

A USEFUL PATTERN

I want / I care / I am willing... AND I will not / I cannot / If this happens, I will... Healthy boundaries can remain warm and clear.

Practice Scenarios: 1-4

For each scenario answer: What belongs to me? What belongs to the other person? What good needs protecting? What response would be proportionate?

1. The Chronic Crisis Friend

A friend calls several nights a week for two-hour crisis conversations, rejects nearly every suggestion, refuses broader help, and becomes offended when you cannot answer.

What would compassion require? What would becoming the entire support system wrongly transfer to you?

2. The Grandparent Who Ignores a Parenting Rule

A grandparent repeatedly ignores a medical instruction for the child and says the parents are overreacting.

What access is directly connected to the health concern? What response would protect the child without using the child as punishment?

3. The Relative Who Borrows the Car

A relative repeatedly returns your car late, nearly empty, and full of trash despite multiple conversations.

What responsibility belongs to you as steward of the vehicle? What consequence is directly connected to the problem?

4. The Spouse Who Forgets Everything

One spouse has become responsible for remembering every appointment, bill, school event, and errand.

What mutual help belongs in marriage? What responsibilities could be redistributed so one person is not the household memory system?

Practice Scenarios: 5-8

Keep testing responsibility, motive, proportion, and Scripture.

5. The Church Volunteer Who Cannot Say No

A woman signs up for nearly every need announced at church and is now exhausted and resentful.

Is every legitimate ministry need automatically her assignment? What would faithful service with limits look like?

6. Scripture Used to Override Your No

After you decline a request, someone says, 'Christians are supposed to serve' or quotes going the extra mile.

How can a true verse be used manipulatively? What other biblical responsibilities must also be considered?

7. The Adult Child Wants to Move Back Home

An adult daughter loses her apartment and asks to live with her parents temporarily.

What generosity might be appropriate? What expectations could prevent hidden assumptions and future resentment?

8. The Same Offense in Every Argument

You repented of a real wrong, made restitution, and changed the behavior, but the offense is introduced into unrelated disputes months later.

How can you remain open to unresolved hurt without accepting perpetual weaponization of a repented-of offense?

When the Boundary Changes

READ: 2 Corinthians 2:5-11

A boundary that was once wise may change when circumstances and fruit genuinely change. Restoration remains a legitimate goal.

BALANCE

Wisdom notices patterns of harm. Grace also notices patterns of change.

Open Your Bible

What concern does Paul express once correction has served its purpose?

What does he tell the congregation to reaffirm?

How can wisdom remember history while grace notices transformation?

Is there anyone you still relate to entirely through the lens of what they used to be?

What evidence would justify reconsidering trust, access, responsibility, or fellowship?

A Biblical Framework for Boundaries

Use the full study to explain the biblical reasoning behind each step. Do not use this page as a shortcut around the passages.

- ☐ Identify what Yehovah actually made me responsible for.
- ☐ Identify what responsibility belongs to the other person.
- ☐ Ask what legitimate good needs protecting.
- ☐ Choose a response that governs my participation rather than controlling another adult.
- ☐ Keep the response proportionate to the actual problem.
- ☐ Distinguish natural consequences from manufactured punishment.
- ☐ Preserve real family, marriage, church, work, or parental obligations.
- ☐ Refuse to use boundaries as an excuse for selfishness or avoidance.
- ☐ Refuse to use love as an excuse for enabling or self-erasure.
- ☐ Invite Yehovah to search my motives.
- ☐ Use prudence when danger is real.
- ☐ Leave room for genuine repentance and changed circumstances.
- ☐ Remember that I cannot produce another person's repentance.

Which step is hardest for me in the situation I am currently thinking about?

Which step have I most often skipped?

Final Open Your Bible Review

Answer from Scripture as clearly as you can without looking back at your first answers.

How can Galatians 6 require both burden-bearing and personal responsibility?

What makes a boundary different from control?

Why is another person's legitimate need not automatically your assignment?

How does Scripture keep boundaries from becoming selfishness?

Why are forgiveness, trust, and access not identical?

When can rescuing a capable adult actually be unloving?

What distinguishes a consequence from punishment?

What family or marriage obligations remain real even when boundaries are needed?

What limits does Scripture place on human authority?

What do David and Saul teach about mercy and distance?

When is continued engagement wise, and when may withdrawal be wise?

How can a boundary become avoidance, control, bitterness, or fear?

What changes when credible danger is present?

Why can a faithful boundary not make another person repent?

What would make it appropriate to loosen a boundary later?

After the Study

Return to the first pages and compare your answers. Record what changed.

How would I define a biblical boundary now?

How would I explain the difference between burden-bearing and enabling?

Where do I need to say yes more faithfully?

Where do I need to say no more faithfully?

What responsibility have I been trying to carry for another capable adult?

What responsibility of my own have I been trying to call a boundary?

What do I need to place back into Yehovah's hands?

FINAL QUESTION

What kind of disciple is this boundary helping me become?

Don't take my word for it - Open your Bible.

Passages Used in This Study

Genesis 2:24; Genesis 13:5-12; Exodus 18:13-24; Exodus 20:12; 1 Samuel 24; 1 Samuel 26; Proverbs 4:20-27; Proverbs 19:19; Proverbs 22:3; Proverbs 25:17; Proverbs 26:4-5; Proverbs 27:5-6, 12; Proverbs 28:13; Proverbs 29:25; Psalm 139:23-24; Matthew 5:33-37; Matthew 7:6; Matthew 10:14-16; Matthew 12:14-15; Matthew 18:15-17; Mark 1:32-39; Luke 4:28-30, 40-43; John 2:23-25; John 8:58-59; Acts 16:35-39; Acts 22:22-29; Romans 12:9-21; 1 Corinthians 7:3-5; 1 Corinthians 9; 2 Corinthians 1:24; 2 Corinthians 2:5-11; 2 Corinthians 7:8-11; Galatians 6:1-5; Ephesians 4:25-32; Ephesians 5:21-33; Philippians 2:3-8; 1 Timothy 5:3-8; 2 Timothy 2:24-26; Titus 3:9-11; Hebrews 13:7, 17; 1 Peter 5:1-5.

Use this Study Companion beside the full Biblical Boundaries Bible Study at OpenYourBible.org. The full study contains the teaching, interpretive qualifications, application scenarios, and context behind these workbook prompts.

SAFETY RESOURCE

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OpenYourBible.org