

SETTING LIMITS FOR

BOUNDARIES

A HEALTHY LIFE

WEEK 4

“

Jesus **CANNOT** and **WILL NOT** accept second place in our lives—not because He's demanding, but because He knows that anything we place above Him will eventually **DESTROY US.**

BOUNDARIES: WEEK 4

THE COST OF TRUE CONNECTION

MARK 10:21-22, NLT | PROVERBS 27:6, NLT

We live in a world that tells us love means never saying no. That true friendship requires unlimited access, endless availability, and zero conditions. We've bought into the lie that boundaries damage relationships, that drawing lines means we don't really care.

But what if the opposite is true?

When Jesus looked at the rich young ruler, Scripture tells us He felt genuine love for him. This wasn't casual interest or polite engagement—Jesus saw potential for deep friendship. Yet in the very next breath, Jesus set a firm boundary: "Sell everything. Give to the poor. Then follow me."

The man walked away sad.

Jesus didn't chase after him. He didn't negotiate. He didn't lower His standards to keep this potential friendship alive. The Son of God, who IS love, let someone He genuinely cared about walk away rather than compromise the boundary that would protect both the relationship and the man's spiritual journey.

This challenges everything about what our culture teaches us about relationships. We've been programmed to believe that keeping peace means staying silent, that expressing needs is selfish, that boundaries are walls built from fear rather than bridges built from wisdom.

But look at how Jesus' disciples turned out. These men who accepted His boundaries—who left their nets, their tax booth, their political agendas—built

friendships that were so deep, they changed the world together. The boundaries didn't diminish their friendship; they defined it. They had the strength to hold what God had entrusted them with.

The rich young ruler wanted friendship on his terms. He wanted to follow Jesus while keeping his treasure in first place. But Jesus cannot and will not accept second place in our lives—not because He's demanding, but because He knows that anything we place above Him will eventually destroy us and poison our relationship with Him.

The point is that every friendship in your life has its own "possessions" that threaten to come between you; unspoken resentments, unhealthy patterns, enabling behaviors, or simple incompatibilities in values and vision. These things aren't necessarily bad, just as wealth itself isn't inherently evil. But when they prevent authentic connection, when they keep relationships surface-level, when they slowly poison what could be life-giving—that's when love requires boundaries.

The hardest part to accept is that many will walk away, they'll choose comfort over connection or enablement over growth. And like Jesus, we must let them go, not from lack of love but from the abundance of it.

Because real love—the kind that sharpens iron against iron, that speaks truth when lies would be easier, that chooses long-term health over short-term harmony, always comes with boundaries.

Mark 10:21-22, NLT

Looking at the man, Jesus felt genuine love for him. “There is still one thing you haven’t done,” he told him. “Go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

Historical Context

In Jesus' day, just like today, wealth represented security, status, and control over one's future. The young ruler had done everything "right" by all standards. He followed all the commandments since childhood. He was even a good, moral person; yet he hadn't dealt with what's really controlling his heart—his wealth. And it wasn't just about money; it was his identity, his safety net, and his source of significance. By choosing his possessions over Jesus, he remained enslaved to the very thing he thought gave him freedom, which caused him to walk away from the one relationship that could have transformed everything.

- We need to be careful that our possessions don't own us more than we own them
- Boundaries reveal what actually controls our hearts
- God won't negotiate for second place in our relationships
- Healthy friendships require non-negotiable standards

Reflection

What are some things people today tend to find security or identity in—and how can those things quietly start to take God's place in our hearts?

Why do you think it's so easy to let “good” things—like success, comfort, or relationships become more important than our relationship with God?

Proverbs 27:6, NLT
***"Wounds from a sincere friend are better than many kisses
from an enemy."***

Historical Context

Experience tells us that kisses always feel better than wounds, but this verse is telling us that while it is important to be tactful and loving rather than simply critical, true friendship sometimes means having the courage to speak hard truths that aren't easy to hear. When advice or correction is given out of genuine love—even if it stings a little—that's the mark of real friendship. A true friend is willing to take that risk because they care more about your growth than your comfort.

- A true friend is willing to wound us with a loving correction
- Friends who challenge you help you grow; friends who flatter you hold you back.
- True friendship isn't about keeping peace—it's about keeping each other on the right path.
- Sometimes honesty hurts before it helps

Reflection

Has there ever been a time when a friend confronted you with an honest truth that hurt to hear it, but you were glad they did? Are you willing to share?

Can you think of a truth, a correction, or even a piece of advice, that would it have been shared sooner, would have saved you some pain, grief, or even embarrassment? Are you willing to share?



GUIDED PRAYER

Heavenly Father,
Thank you for the gift of friendship. Thank you for those friends who You have blessed us with who are there to not only celebrate with us in the good times but also willing to walk alongside us when things are difficult. Give us the grace to be true and faithful to those whom you have placed in our lives, and to be open and ready to receive those who you have placed in our future.

Give us the wisdom to speak with truth with kindness and to have conversations that will create deeper friendships.

For those of us who struggle with placing boundaries within friendships, remind us that healthy boundaries add to our relationships and not take from them.

Help us to honor You above all else, to put You first, reminding us to never allow anything to come between us and our Creator.

Help us to communicate clearly, to forgive freely, and trust You to work in the hearts of those we love. Remind us that when we put our faith in You, all things will naturally fall into place.

We give you all the praise, we give you all the glory.

In Jesus name we pray,