

BOUNDARIES FOR KIDS

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PRESENTED BY: PARKVIEW KIDS

BOUNDARIES FOR KIDS — APRIL 15 2015

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AN OUTLINE

A boundary is a “property line” that defines a person – it defines where one person ends and someone else begins. If we know where a person’s boundaries are, we know what we can expect this person to take control of: him or herself.

Setting limits helps us better our own lives, and ultimately helps us love God and other better.

At Parkview Kids, we want to equip you as a parent to help your child grow to be all he or she can be for God. Boundaries are a huge part of his or her development. Dr. Henry Cloud & Dr. John Townsend, author’s of the book *Boundaries with Kids* unveil the necessity for healthy boundaries, and the amazing results these choices can produce.

In this package, you will find further information on:

- Why Kids Need Boundaries
- Your Role as a Parent
- Kids Need Parents with Boundaries
- 10 Boundary Principles Kids Need to Know
- Your 10 Day Challenge

WHY DO KIDS NEED BOUNDARIES?

1. Because you are preparing them for their future.
 - What if every decision you made as a parent you filtered through the idea it was influencing your child's future?
2. Because you are helping them to take control of their lives
3. Because a child needs to know where she begins, what she needs to take responsibility for, and what she does not need to take responsibility for, so that she can learn to live up to those requirements and get along well in life
4. Because they need consistency – without boundaries kids can try to control others and be out of control of themselves
5. Because children aren't born with boundaries and these concepts need to be learned
6. Because wisdom comes only from experience – the big thing a child is short on
7. Because boundaries facilitate the process of having the child internalize things that were external to them
 - *In order for children to learn who they are and what they are responsible for, their parents have to have clear boundaries with them and relate to them in ways that help them learn their own boundaries.*
8. Because boundaries allow parents to relate to kids at different stages of development
 - You can give more responsibility for a 10 year old than a 2 year old; learned, grown and developing
9. Because boundaries produce character, and most of our problems result from our own character weakness. As a parent, boundaries and character are vital because character is always formed in relationship
 - *Character refers to a person's ability and inability, his moral makeup, his functioning in relationships, and how he does tasks. What does he do in certain situations, and how does he do it? When he need to perform, how will he meet those demands? Can he love? Can he be responsible? Can he have empathy for others? Can he develop his talents? Can he solve problems? Can he deal with failure? How does he reflect the image of God? These are a few issues that define character. If a person's character makeup determines his future, then child rearing is primarily about helping children to develop character that will take them through life safely, securely, productively and joyfully. Parents – and those who work with children – would do well to keep this in mind. A major goal of raising children is o help them develop the character that will make their future go well. (*
10. Because boundaries are Biblical, and as a Christian parent your job is to raise your kids to honour God in all they do

YOUR ROLE AS A PARENT

1. Guardian – protects from harm, provides safe environment for learning and gaining wisdom
 - Set limits to keep kids safe and enforce them for the child's protection.
 - i. Too little freedom to gain experience and the child forever remains a child
 - ii. Too much freedom the child is in danger of hurting himself
2. Manager – a manager makes sure things get done; follow through
 - Provide discipline by controlling recourses, teaching, enforcing consequences, correcting and building skills; requiring the child to take ownership
3. Source – parents are the source of resources that sustain life
 - Children need to learn how to receive and use responsibility when it is given to them and gradually take over the role of meeting their own needs

KIDS NEED PARENTS WITH BOUNDARIES

As a rule, children don't know what they are doing. They have little idea how to handle life so that it works right. That's why God have them parents – to love them, give them structure, and guide them into maturity. Children will mature to the level the parent structures them, and no higher.

The parent's limitations in being able to be responsible and teach responsibility influence how well children learn responsibility. Children don't have it in them to grow themselves up. They respond and adapt to how they are parented.

One of the most helpful questions a parent can ask is “what was my part in creating this problem?”

If we want kids to own their actions, we have to demonstrate the same. Children tend to be mirrors in which you can see yourself. They reflect your behaviour, habits, attitudes and ways of seeing and negotiating life.

Part of the heat of parenting is tolerating and enduring your child's hatred of your boundaries. **You and your child each have a different job here: the kid's job is to test your resolve, so she can learn about reality. Your job is to withstand the test, including anger, pouting, tantrums and much more.**

Ask yourself: Am I afraid that if I say no to my kids, I will lose the love I need from them? If that is the case, begin taking your needs for relationship to other places.

Children will enter the role of parent with mom or dad. Not because they want the position, but because they go where the relationship is – if taking care of mom or dad's emotional needs gets them feeling connected, they will take on that role. This can affect the child's adult life, and it can create a parent dependency on a child which can compromise the parents ability to structure appropriate limits with the child. When you need someone's love it is extremely difficult to confront or deprive him, as you risk losing this love. These needs are good and God-given, but not for a child to bear growing up.

When you keep set boundaries for your child, she actually feels more secure and loved, not less. She knows that you value her freedom to choose her path within certain parameters and that you will guard and develop this freedom with her.

Children try to push the boundaries – they learn what they can get away with. If past experience shows they can get away with almost anything nine times out of ten, and just have to endure the out-of-control parent that one time out of ten, it seems worth it cause they get what they think they want.

- To avoid teaching this lesson, become an early confronter.
- The TRICK of parenting is to hold onto your limit one more time than your children hold onto the demand.

You can't train what you don't have. Don't just sat boundaries to your child – be boundaries.

10 BOUNDARY PRINCIPLES KIDS NEED TO KNOW

THE LAW OF SOWING & REAPING

The goal is not to control the children to make them do what you want – the goal is to give them the choice to do what they want, and make it so painful to do the wrong thing that they will not want to do it.

- You can do your homework before dinner, or you can miss out on going out with your friends because you did not complete your homework.
- Giving them the choice, while still controlling what is being reaped. Parents are in control of the reaping.

Both the Bible and life experience show that effort, diligence and responsibility pay off

- If a child sows irresponsibility, they will reap pain. If the child sows responsible behaviour, they will reap the benefits and want to choose that path.

Key to success in this principle is the vital role of empathy for the child who makes a bad choice – it builds a bridge to you instead of a barrier.

- Communicating “you do not have to do your part, for everyone will do it for you. Bad things will not happen when you don’t preform. You can blow off your responsibility and still go to Disneyland. You don’t lose anything. Sure, people yell at you, but if you tune them out, yelling will not be a problem.”

To effectively implement this law, parents need to be comfortable with letting the child suffer. To get the fruit of discipline, there has to be pain. Parents often resist allowing the consequences of the Law of Sowing and Reaping because they over identify with the child’s pain. Let the child suffer the sorrow now instead of later. Suffering is inevitable.

Grace + truth /time = a growing person

Caution: Rewards System

- *Be careful of giving children the attitude that they only have to preform when someone pays them for it. They need to learn that they will have to pay if they don’t preform. This avoids the attitude of ‘entitlement’, the feeling that many people have today that they are entitled to something for nothing. It is better for them to learn that everyone in the family is required to do one’s part. If you do more than your part, we can talk about some extra reward, but what we expect is the minimum from everyone. As Jesus said, “Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do?” (Like 17:9) In the real world, no award dinners are held for minimum performance. But many penalties are dealt out for failure to meet minimum civilized expectations.*

Teach your child to make friends with reality early on in life – we learn that we are ultimately in control of much of how our life goes. If we sow to meeting reality’s demands, we reap the benefits.

10 BOUNDARY PRINCIPLES KIDS NEED TO KNOW

THE LAW OF RESPONSIBILITY

A large part of boundary training with your kids will have to do with helping them understand that they must gradually take responsibility for their own problems. Your job is to become a person who structures his life around responsibility and reality. This is what develops your children's sense of responsibility.

- What begins as the parent's burden must end up as the child's.
- Even though we all have been sinned against and mistreated in some ways, our own responses to our environments are the major determining forces in our present character and personality. The child bears most of the weight of his own development.

You will do your kids immeasurable favours by helping them experience the reality of Jesus' Log and Speck principles. Before you look at your friend's speck, take the log out of your own eye (Matthew 7:1- 5). Teach your kids that whenever they have a problem, to first examine what they may have done to contribute to the problem.

Build intervening agents into your child by: validation, instruction and experience.

- Teach children that being unable differs from being uncomfortable. Kids see the two as one – if they don't enjoy it, they think they can't do it. Children will take opportunities to shrink their responsibilities until we make taking ownership an expectation.
- While children are to ask for help in matters that are beyond them, they are expected to handle many things on their own (grades, behaviour, tasks).
- Even when we are unable to help ourselves, we still have a job to do. If your best friend moves away, it's not your fault, but it is your job to find other people of character in whom to entrust your heart. There are very few "boulders" in life in which the child has no responsibility at all.

Caution: Rescuing your child every time they have a conflict will not produce responsible adults.

Help your child learn the difference between help and rescue. A person is responsible for himself. He or she is responsible to others. But responsibility suggests the child does not protect them from the consequences of their own actions. Helping kids differentiate between help and rescue, also helps them learn how to pick friends who don't need someone to take on their problems kids of good character, kids to whom your child can say no without fear of losing the connection.

10 BOUNDARY PRINCIPLES KIDS NEED TO KNOW

THE LAW OF POWER

Kids want power over things that are not theirs; but boundaries cannot be set around that which isn't his or her property.

- Often in trying to control the uncontrollable, a child negates their ability to exercise power over what they do have control of.

Learning to accept powerlessness had profound spiritual implications for your child. When we accept the reality of our human condition – that we are ultimately powerless to change our fallen state, yet totally responsible for being in it – we are driven to receive God's solution based on his Son's payment of a debt we can't pay. Children who grow up hanging on to their omnipotence and never coming to terms with their absolute failure may have difficulty seeing the need for a Saviour. They are prone to think, I just need to try a little harder. Yet the Bible teaches that being powerless is a blessed state: 'When we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly' (Romans 5:6).

Promote and encourage relational dependency, teaching that healthy people need other people; they don't isolate themselves.

- Children think they have the power to do everything they set their mind to, without considering time constraints or what it may cost them. Your child needs you to be their parent and establish boundaries in their schedule. Kids can easily expect too much of themselves, thinking they have power over their energy, time and activity planning, which turns into over commitment.
- Set strong limits on dishonesty, so that honesty becomes the norm.
- Wait until the child realizes your boundary is a reality to discuss the issue at hand more calmly.

Caution: The proper or improper use of power can either heal or harm your child.

- A reality-based understanding of the true power will provide a child with a foundation for respecting, setting, and keeping boundaries.

10 BOUNDARY PRINCIPLES KIDS NEED TO KNOW

THE LAW OF RESPECT

The Law of Respect teaches children that the world does not belong only to them, but they have to share it with others. They don't always get things their way, and they are okay when they don't.

Your task is to cure your child of his natural disrespect for the boundaries of other people.

- Your boundaries as a parent are the ones that your child will internalize – what do you allow others to do to you?
- Normal children hate limits when they are first set. As a parent, your test is what you are going to do when the child expresses disrespect and hatred. It is normal for disrespect to occur, but it is not normal for it to continue. The cure is empathy and correction, then consequences.
- As much as possible, connect the consequence to the trespass. This will preserve the child's freedom and choices, and is being loving in the process.

Letting the reality of the child's world teach him and having the empathy and limits of the parent to support the learning process make up the best recipe for learning to respect boundaries... A wise parent lets the child's world teach him the lessons of life and then empathizes with his pain.

- If you handle all the disputes for your child, they will not learn the problem solving skills they will need to succeed when you are gone.

Caution: getting caught up in your child's protest against a boundary is difficult.

- Reality is still reality, and children need to have two essential components present: the limit and love. By having both the child can internalize the reality of limits in a non-adversarial way. By arguing with a child, or condemning them, the reality is no longer the problem – you are.
- Removing your emotion from the scenario can assist in enforcing a boundary and maintaining respect – by keeping calm and being consistent, the child gets bored with not getting anywhere and accepts reality.

Empathy and keeping the limit is essential balance.

- Give age appropriate freedom and do not require children to be at your side at all times. In an effort to develop strong independent adults, children need to experience separateness in age appropriate amounts. Try not to overstep their privacy and space when it is not needed.
- If you nag and try to control their separateness by not letting them manage their freedom, they will never learn that limits are real.

10 BOUNDARY PRINCIPLES KIDS NEED TO KNOW

THE LAW OF MOTIVATION

Motives drive behaviour; the Bible teaches out of our hearts proceed all kinds of wicked deeds (Mark 7:20). If the behaviour is the problem, it gets the attention.

If you have a fire in your living room, you are more concerned about putting it out than where it came from.

The goal: a desire to do the right things and to avoid the wrong ones because of empathetic concern for others and because of a healthy respect for the demands of God's reality.

Immature motives such as fear of pain and consequence help young children. But parenting is more than just helping a child own their behaviour. Parenting is also about teaching your child to do the right thing for the right reasons.

Caution: appeals to improper motives out of desperation or exhaustion can hurt your child in the long run.

- The child may experience fear of consequence, but it should never be a fear of losing love. Your child needs to know you are constantly and consistently connected and emotionally there with them, no matter what they did.
- Your child needs to be concerned with what pain his actions may cause for his friends and God. Be a parent who creates many experiences for your child to internalize and own positive motivations for his or herself.

10 BOUNDARY PRINCIPLES KIDS NEED TO KNOW

THE LAW OF EVALUATION

Evaluating your child's pain is critical for boundary success.

The difference between hurt and harm: hurt means, perhaps because of discipline, the child feels sad or wounded because of the loss of something they value. Harm means actual injury by wounding the child, judging, attacking, abandoning or neglecting something they need.

Growth involves pain, but not all pain produces growth.

- If you are independent, you are used to doing things that "hurt" so you can receive something that you desire.
- Parents go through so much mental evaluation to help their kids become self-sufficient.
- Evaluate your child's pain, and encourage them to keep going. Example: a child not wanting to go to school. When he or she lashes out, stating "this behaviour is not appropriate. I'm sorry you don't want to go to school today. Some days I don't want to go to work either, but I have to go."

The parent who hears every cry or complaint as the ultimate concern will never develop boundaries and character in the child. When your children cry about homework, chores or a missed opportunity because they did not do their part, what are you going to do? How you answer this question will have a tremendous effect on the course of your child's life.

Purposeful parents stay in control of themselves.

- Frustrating and painful moments of discipline can help children learn to delay gratification, which is one of the most important character traits a person can have.

Caution: keep your own sadness about your children's pain separate from theirs.

- The child who is taught to avoid pain altogether will encounter much more pain in life than necessary. Parents who rescue their children from suffering will be replaced late in life with other co-dependent people, drugs, alcohol, eating disorders, shopping or other addictions. They have taught their child that adversity is not something to face, but something that can be made to go away in the immediate moment by using them as immediate gratification.

When children learn to value the pain of life instead of avoid it, they are ready to solve their problems.

10 BOUNDARY PRINCIPLES KIDS NEED TO KNOW

THE LAW OF PROACTIVITY

The Law of Proactivity addresses why kids react and proactive boundaries that help kids react well.

- A problem in boundaries that exist is the struggle between reactivity and proactivity – between lashing out in protest or responding maturely to problems. This is a learned behaviour and children can develop the ability to set appropriate boundaries without exploding or being impulsive.

A child's response is a reaction, rather than an action, since their behaviour is determined by some external influence, not by their own values or thoughts.

- Children in reaction are in a constant state of protest against something else.
- A protest identifies the problem, but it doesn't solve the problem. That is the difference between reactive and proactive boundaries.
- *While reactive boundaries signal something that needs to be dealt with, proactive boundaries fix something that is broken. Reactive boundaries are often emotionally driven and impulsive and don't involve a great deal of reflection; proactive boundaries are value based, reflective and solution focused.*

Caution: operating with reactive boundaries can result in insufficiency. Children who never move beyond reactive to proactive develop a victim identity.

- *Most of our pain comes from either our own mixed-up attitudes or our responses to mixed-up others. When we understand this, we become free to choose.*
- Teach your kids that tantrums identify the problem, but do not solve them. Redirect by using these feelings to motivate your child to action, to address the issue at hand.
- Proactive boundaries mean that other people cannot control the child, which enables them to grow. Children who have reactive boundaries and who live in protest are still dependent on other people. Remember, the goal is to develop children who can establish healthy boundaries and be independent as an adult.

Caution #2: Life isn't always fair. Demands for fairness are a very real reality when parenting.

- Discuss how you navigated fairness in your home.
- Here is an example of how to be proactive in the fight for fairness. Respond to your child by stating, "You're right – lots of things aren't fair. And its not fair that I let you off the hook sometimes when you deserve punishment. Your needs are very important to me, but perfect fairness isn't. Tin this family, as long as you are okay, that's fair enough for you."
- Help the child focus on their needs being met, rather than judging the world for being unfair.

10 BOUNDARY PRINCIPLES KIDS NEED TO KNOW

THE LAW OF ENVY

Envy is a reality for all people – the hardest part about envy is the emptiness envious people continue to feel. We want kids to feel fulfillment and purpose, rather than feeling like nothing is ever good enough. You have the ability to transform your child's envy into acceptance, gratitude and contentment.

Humble people are those whose entitlement has been broken. The envious want more and get less. The grateful are thankful for what they already have, and receive more.

Children envy what another child has, and what they have becomes no good at all. Then they protest if they cannot have the other object, demonstrating entitlement to what is not theirs.

- Children who are never gratified are in a constant state of need, and they will never feel grateful because they literally have not received enough. Children must have their needs met to develop trust and gratitude.
- As children learn responsibility and positive choices over time, they will learn that they will be rewarded as the Bible teaches – “He who is faithful in the little things will be given more” Matthew 25:21

Developing children with hearts of gratitude rather than envy means limiting and managing their choices and consequences. How you live out the word “no” makes their ability to understand envy and gratitude a reality.

- Each stage of a child's development will result in different types of limits. An infant will receive very little limitation because they are in full dependence of their parents. As children grow, good limits on how you allow them to treat you will show them that they are not entitled to treat people any way that they want to.
- Limiting a child can seem mean, or even cold. None of us can enforce them well without love. It's important to keep them limit you have set while giving the child empathy. Making empathic statements such as, “I know it's hard” or “I agree, it's not fair”, without expanding more than that, show the child that someone is on their side even while the limit seems so against them.

Caution: we can only take kids as far as we are willing to go. Are you envious? Of what? Why? Make a list of what you're thankful for to remind you that gratitude supersedes envy, and teaching children the Law of Envy will help them grow to be more like Christ.

The key shift that has taken place in the child is that his wants and desires are his problem. He can ask for help, pray, learn, work, or whatever he needs to do. But his lack and the solution are his problem before God. No one should solve things for him. If this is happening, you are rearing a child who will find his true desires, seek God for the resources, abilities, and talents to get there, and reach out to his community for the learning and support that will be needed along the way.

10 BOUNDARY PRINCIPLES KIDS NEED TO KNOW

THE LAW OF ACTIVITY

The goal is to develop children who have the ability to be active, taking initiative in life.

Activity means doing all you can do, and then aggressively seek that which isn't in you, to complete you.

- Biblically, we are carry our cross everyday, be diligent, and seek His kingdom and righteousness.

The advantages of active children are sometimes hard for parents to understand. Often when we speak on the topic of kids and boundaries, a mom will ask for help with a problem: "I set the boundaries of behaviour for my child. But she keeps crossing them. What do I do?" The answer is, "That's what is supposed to happen. You are the parent. You have a job. Your job is to set the limits and enforce the consequences in love. She is the child. She also has a job. Her job is to test the limits many times with her active aggression and thereby learn about reality, relationships, and responsibility. It's the divinely ordered training system."

Caution: do not confuse passivity with patience, which is a positive trait, namely restraining our impulse to do God's job for him. (James 5:8)

Your child needs you to be the loving, limiting, provoking agent who teases out his active parts. He will resist you and be angry with you. But just as the mother bird knows when to push the baby bird out of the nest, use your experience, judgment and the help of God and others to help him take initiative to own his life.

10 BOUNDARY PRINCIPLES KIDS NEED TO KNOW

THE LAW OF EXPOSURE

The Law of Exposure says that life is better off living in the light.

Remember: the way parents communicate with each other and their children is the starting point for kids to learn the Law of Exposure. Live out what you want your kids to learn – if you are upset, tell them lovingly, honestly and directly.

Honesty is the best policy. Clearly define and communicate the expectations and rules for your children so they know them.

- Two fears prevent people from being honest: fear of loss of love and fear of reprisal. As a parent you have the opportunity to either cure or reinforce these fears.

Caution: children think that their anger is much more powerful than it really is, that it has the power to destroy you. Children need to understand you are bigger than their feelings so they can learn to be bigger than their feelings as well. Remember, you are modeling character to your child.

- Communication is so important in mature development. Don't reinforce non-expressive behaviour by dismissing the conflict when the child will not communicate. Wait.

Caution #2: don't let your children put you in the middle of a conflict, unless the scenario is unsafe. Do whatever you can to keep the conflict between them so they learn the necessary conflict resolution skills. If mom and dad are always there to "step in", the child will be lost when her first employer is upset with her performance.

The ultimate boundary is love – our connection with God and each other is ultimately about relationship. Jesus said, all the boundaries in the world could be summed up in the two laws: love God with everything in you, and love your neighbour as you love yourself. As a result, kids need to learn to take their feelings, fears, thoughts, desires and experiences into relationship, and to work them out in those relationships.

YOUR 10 DAY CHALLENGE

Step ONE

Pick 1 of the 10 Laws that you would like to try to implement in your home

STEP TWO

For 10 days, make every effort to build that law into the core values of your home

Below are 5 basic steps for implementing a boundary in your home:

1. Establish the boundary, and make sure everyone knows it.
2. Children protest the limit (a good sign).
3. They try to change the limit and punish the one setting in.
4. You hold on to the limit, applying empathy and reality.
5. Children accept the limit and develop a more loveable attitude toward it.

STEP THREE

Write a one-two sentence statement each day on how the implementation of your new boundary is going and email it to: ataylor@parkviewchurch.ca

STEP FOUR

When the 10 days are complete, Parkview Kids will provide you with a FREE copy of the book *Boundaries for Kids* + a DQ gift card for your family, so you can reward yourself, and continue on your journey in establishing healthy boundaries and helping your kids grow to be successful, balanced, and God honouring adults.

TEN
DAYS + ONE
BOUNDARY =

