

20 Days of Trouble

Topic #15 – Lack of Healthy Boundaries

Textbook Def:

Lack of something that indicates a border or farthest limit.*

Real-Life Look:

He hadn't asked for money in six months. This was his biggest stretch yet. "Okay, so he hadn't secured a steady job or repaid any of the money yet either, but how could he get his life together if he wasn't even able to take care of the most basic necessities?" Joan pondered. She struggled with this question every time her son, Joshua, asked for help. She wanted to help him, and she usually did, but was she doing more harm than good?

Joy finally met the man of her dreams; at least she thought she had. It had been three months and things were going really well. It's not easy to meet a man in his thirties without kids or baggage, but Joy seemed to have hit the jackpot with Dylan. He was handsome, had a great job, and shared many similar interests. But he was also moving too fast for Joy. She didn't want to put the brakes on and risk turning him away but she needed to be true to herself. Why couldn't he just be more patient and understanding?

His parents' health was declining. It pained Jacob to see them deteriorate. His weekly trips to help around their house had now turned into two to three times each week. It was his job, wasn't it, to take care of his ailing parents? Jacob's wife offered to take them in, suggesting they buy a home big enough for their family of five and his parents. Sweet gesture, but Jacob was worried about the strain that would put not only on him, but his wife who was already maxed out taking care of the family, the home, and working part time. He was so torn.

Trina only called when she needed something. Barbara KNEW this, but nonetheless still got sucked in every single time. Trina extended no warmth, no courtesy, and no reciprocation whatsoever. Yes, they were family by marriage, but to what degree was Barbara obligated? She wanted to draw a healthy boundary when it came to Trina but feared this would bring an array of consequences. The thought rattled her to her core.

Sword of the Spirit:

“It teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope – the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,”
Titus 2:12-13

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing, and perfect will.” Romans 12:2

Breaking It Down:

It would have been much easier to call this Trouble Topic *‘Unhealthy Boundaries’*, but as I thought about it, is there really any such thing? Think about it. If you have an unhealthy boundary, isn’t that akin to no boundary at all? If you don’t draw the line at *what is right*, does it matter how far down the line the *‘wrong’* line is drawn? I guess for that matter, should I really have even qualified the title with *‘healthy’*? Shouldn’t boundaries be synonymous with healthy by sheer default?

The point is when it comes to boundaries, there are as many different opinions and executions as there are situations which warrant them. But help is here! Together, let’s break down the discussion into logical, manageable chunks and construct helpful guidelines and stellar solutions.

When forming boundaries, there are three major components to consider:

1. Do you have a clear and realistic understanding of the situation?

- Denial sure is a slippery sucker. How can you fix something that you don’t see? The truth is, sometimes we DO see it and we CHOOSE to ignore it. The only one you are hurting, however, is yourself. If you genuinely desire change, you’ll call things for what they are. If you’re honestly blind to the truth, rely on those around you whom you love, trust, and respect. Are they all singing a similar tune? If so, better pay attention.

2. Do you know what it will take to establish the necessary boundary?

- Once you determine there is a boundary issue, what will it take to rectify the situation? Do you need to completely remove yourself from the problem or might a little tweak here and there do the trick? It’s okay to seek the path of least resistance IF it’s sufficient to get the job done, but if it’s not, no use toying with something that doesn’t have the teeth required to take care of business. Construct an Action Plan.

3. Are you capable of implementing what needs to be done?

- This is where it can get really tricky and sticky – executing your plan. There's no way around it, establishing healthy boundaries often involves awkward, uncomfortable, and downright difficult decisions, discussions, and actions. But you're the boss applesauce, and while God will always have your back, He also expects you to do your part. Think about it, though. IF the person you are confronting has your best interests at heart and is truly concerned about you, won't they consider, with patience and love, what you have to say? If not, perhaps it's not a relationship worth having? Or maybe the person is in a dark place and doesn't have the ability to understand what you are feeling and sharing. In the case of the latter, healthy boundary lines are still required, but this doesn't prohibit you from pointing the person in the right direction for help and praying for them. It's often not up to a single player to get the job done. Sometimes God orchestrates a team of brothers and sisters in Christ to come together and make a difference.

Not having healthy boundaries in place definitely invites big 'Trouble.' You'll leave yourself wide open for being used, abused, and hurt by others. Not setting your own personal healthy boundaries is also counter-productive and produces disastrous results. If you sell yourself short and cave to whims and poor behavior choices, you'll get caught up in so much backtracking with wasted time and energy that you'll thwart any chance for forward motion and success.

The Benefit in Decluttering Trouble:

While establishing healthy boundaries can be a challenge at best, the benefits are profound. By managing or decluttering negative people, situations, and behaviors, you open yourself up to receiving the good stuff. And who doesn't need as much good stuff as they can get their hands on?

Declutter the hurtful and damaging time and energy wasters in your life. Clear the path for success and relish the opportunity to make the most of the life you have. There's a joy and freedom that comes with taking responsibility for the people you allow to impact your world and for the decisions you make. You have the power to choose. You have the ability to change your future. You hold the keys to your own success. Go get em' tiger!

*www.thefreedictionary.com

@2016 www.actionplanministries.com Permission granted to reproduce this document providing website is not removed.

