

2 Cor 6:14-7:1
Boundaries

In some way I have always had a sense of the importance of boundaries. And like most, if not all humans, I have also struggled with adhering to said boundaries, even when I knew crossing the boundary would be to my detriment. Like most, tell me what boundaries I am not to cross, and the temptation rises up in me to cross said boundaries. Having lived a little longer now, I understand the importance boundaries play and the good they produce in life. But up until now, I never truly considered how chaotic and perilous life would be without them. Every aspect of life is defined or marked by boundaries. I want us to take a moment and consider all the necessary and practical boundaries and what life would be like without them. Time, calendars, red lights and green lights, stop signs, parking lines, speed limits, cross walks, sidewalks, property lines, fences, doors, windows, window curtains and shades, shower curtains, men's and women's stalled bathrooms, required distances between airliners during taxi, takeoff, and flight, shorelines, night and day, seasons of the year, addresses, last names, colors, units of measurement, zoning requirements. Church, boundaries bring about much needed order and without them life would be, quite possibly, unbearable. Considering all the necessary and practical boundaries that define everyday life we should not be surprised that God, the author of boundaries, still imposes them upon his people for their good. **Gen 2:16** ¹⁶And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷but of the tree of the knowledge of good and

evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you^[1] shall surely die.” How often have I heard people say life in the church is too restrictive. Life in general is restrictive and necessarily so. Boundaries are good. They serve to protect us, not harm us. I believe it is the lack of boundaries that poses the greatest risk to society. And as it concerns the church, it is the blurring of necessary lines that land us in unnecessary trouble. With this said, let us examine more deeply what Paul has to say regarding boundaries in this text.

First, we are to be careful about who we attach ourselves to.

V14a “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.” In an unequally yoked situation, someone gets the “short end of the stick”, and no one likes the short end. To help us better understand the detriment of being unequally yoked I want to share Duet 22:10. It reads, “You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together”. Why this prohibition to yoke these two animals? Should it matter the animals yoked together as long as the field gets plowed, or the cart gets from point A to point B? Yes, it matters. First, the ox is much stronger than the donkey. Thus, the donkey would be unable to keep pace and the ox’s strength would soon overcome the donkey, catastrophically even. Don’t assume because you are a disciple that in an unequally yoked situation you are the ox. You very well may be the ass. Second, there is a stark difference in the temperament of the two animals and temperament affects behavior. As such, in an unequally yoked situation there are bound to be clashes of nature effecting the animals’ ability to work side-by-side, impacting short-term and long-term outcomes. Here’s my point,

don't waste time trying to make an unequally yoked relationship work. Better yet, avoid them all together.

Palm 1 “Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers.² But they delight in the law of the Lord, meditating on it day and night. ³ They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do. ⁴ But not the wicked! They are like worthless chaff, scattered by the wind. ⁵ They will be condemned at the time of judgment. Sinners will have no place among the godly. ⁶ For the Lord watches over the path of the godly, but the path of the wicked leads to destruction.”

Proverbs 13:19-21 “It is pleasant to see dreams come true, but fools refuse to turn from evil to attain them. ²⁰ Walk with the wise and become wise; associate with fools and get in trouble. ²¹ Trouble chases sinners, while blessings reward the righteous.

1 Cor 15:31-35 “³¹ For I swear, dear brothers and sisters, that I face death daily. This is as certain as my pride in what Christ Jesus our Lord has done in you. ³² And what value was there in fighting wild beasts—those people of Ephesus—if there will be no resurrection from the dead? And if there is no resurrection, “Let's feast and drink, for tomorrow we die!” ³³ Don't be fooled by those who say such things, for “bad company corrupts good character.” ³⁴ Think carefully about what is right, and stop sinning. For to your shame I say that some of you don't know God at all.”

Second, just like oil water, holy and unholy do not mix. V14b-16 “For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? ¹⁵ And what

accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among *them*. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." Hear me. Since God lives in us and among us, everything we attach ourselves to we attach God. And since that which is holy has no fellowship with that which is unholy, neither should God's people. The key word here is fellowship, and it means communion, which is the sharing or exchanging of intimate thoughts and feelings, especially when the exchange is on a mental and spiritual level. Here's my point, Paul is not advocating isolation or segregation. The believer must interact with nonbelievers if the mission of the church is to be fulfilled. But we are instructed not to commune with nonbelievers. The proverb is true, one bad apple spoils the bunch.

1 Cor 1:18 ¹⁸ "The message of the cross is foolish to those who are headed for destruction! But we who are being saved know it is the very power of God."

Gal 5:9 (AMP) "A little leaven [a slight inclination to error, or a few false teachers] leavens the whole batch [it perverts the concept of faith and misleads the church]."

Finally, we must separate to elevate. V17- 7:1 ¹⁷ "Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." ¹⁸ "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty." ⁷ Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Some of us are

stuck in unhealthy, unproductive, languishing situations because we will not separate ourselves. When you are a child of the King you do not live in the slums, metaphorically speaking.

1 John 2:15-17 “¹⁵ Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. ¹⁶ For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. ¹⁷ And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.” Boundaries, they are necessary and good. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.