

Outside The Box... Inside the Lines | Laws and Lines Part 2 | Discussion

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Bible Reading:

☐ Jeremiah 17:5-10 ☐ Romans 12:1-21 ☐ Ephesians 4:17-32 ☐ Matthew 5:13-20 ☐ Hebrews 10:31-39

In his book, *"The Lord of the Flies"*, William Golding explored the potential outcomes of a society when it abandoned all rules of respect and conduct. In his dark tragedy, freedom gave way to destruction, individuality fell into mob rule, and order was quickly lost to chaos.

Jeremiah 17:9 (NLT) "The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?"

The world is filled with heartbreak that is often caused by the choices of normal people. We often deny our responsibilities and blame God for the suffering. If we were honest we would have to admit that the only time we let God be God is when we need someone to blame.

When we truly allow God to rule in our lives, we then seek out the principles and laws that He has established. When we discover them, we are empowered to greatly change our circumstances. Today we will explore the remaining five laws for good boundaries.

The Law of Evaluation

Matthew 7:13-14 (NLT) "You can enter God's Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way. 14 But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it."

Like Jesus' analogy of the gate, our lines may be difficult to draw but they will produce something better later. *This law simply acknowledges that our choices affect our future and the lives of other people.* The law of evaluation requires us to be honest and make choices based on purpose rather than fear or ease.

Consider the things God desires for your life. He wants you to have salvation, eternal life, freedom, holiness, strength, and even power. Even though people may be hurt when we pursue those truly important things, they will not be harmed. In fact, they will probably grow themselves as a result of our influence.

The Law of Pro-activity

Romans 12:21 (NLT) Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.

Anytime we begin a new journey it is common to go through a reaction phase. Especially if others have tried to control you. When we realize we have allowed others to use us, we don't always react calmly. The reaction phase is actually a normal stage, but it can't be the only stage.

The Law of Proactivity recognizes that we cannot live our lives deploring a negative. We must pursue the positive. When we live proactively, we take action to understand our true values, desires, and needs in light of God's Word. Then we solve our problems based on them.

The Law of Envy

James 4:2 (NLT) You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what others have, but you can't get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them. Yet you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it.

Envy is miserable because we're dissatisfied yet powerless to change. It ensures that we can never possess that which we envy. Why? Because Envy keeps my energy and thoughts focused on someone else. *When we are focused on others rather than our own responsibilities, we cannot change or grow.* Envy, like all sin, always robs us of the very thing it desires.

When we discover envy within ourselves we need to quickly admit there is a problem. We can then stop asking the question, "Why don't I have what they have?". Then we can ask much better questions like, "Is that even important to me?" or "What does God have for me?"

The Law of Activity

James 4:17 (NLT) Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it.

"*Let go and Let God.*" It's a common expression from many support groups and is very helpful when it comes to releasing control of things we can't actually control. But, it is a terrible way to live life. God expects us to be aggressive in our personal growth and in the expansion of His wonderful Kingdom.

Evil is certainly not passive. It takes an active effort to hinder the spread of evil. Many heroes of our faith, found within the pages of the Bible, took action before God showed in a big way. *The law of activity simply means in order to change we need to get moving.*

The Law of Exposure

Ephesians 4:25-27 (NLT) So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. 26 And "don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 for anger gives a foothold to the devil.

Our last law, *the law of exposure, reveals that our lines need to be made known.* People need to be exposed to our boundaries. If our lines are not communicated then they are not working.

This last law is again a matter of honesty. When we withdraw by passively saying "yes" when we really need to say "no", we are breaking this law. We then end up carrying the irresponsibility of others when we should tell them how we feel. Then they would also have a chance to grow, too.

We all have work to do. When we know the rules, we can avoid unnecessary consequences.

Talk About It...

- *What are your first thoughts regarding today's topic? Please share with the group.*
- *How might your boundaries affect others? Discuss the difference between hurt and harm.*
- *Discuss the difference between pursuing good and resisting bad. Do you think it is important to fight for the good? Is it possible to resist evil by fighting for the good?*
- *Discuss the phrase "Let Go and Let God". When is it appropriate? When is it out of place?*
- *Have you ever failed to "expose" others to your boundaries? What happened? How can we let people know where we stand?*
- *What do you think about these laws? Which do you prefer? Which do you dislike?*
- *Is there anything in today's topic that you would be excited to share with a friend?*

Additional Resources:

Adapted from "Boundaries: When to Say Yes, How to Say No To Take Control of Your Life" Cloud, Townsend

Chapter 5 - The Ten Laws of Boundaries