

Outside the Box... Inside the Lines | Hard To Hold | Notes

www.ordinaryfaith.net/sermons/it-s-hard-to-hold-the-lines/

Bible Reading:

☐ Philippians 2:12-18 ☐ 2 Peter 1:3-11 ☐ Matthew 20:1-16 ☐ Luke 9:21-27 ☐ Galatians 4:21-5:1

Sometimes we get the impression that if God wants us to have something, He will simply make it happen through no effort of our own. But God has never worked that way. The Disciples had to "go" *before* the Lord worked through them. Peter had to step out of the boat *before* his water walk. And, Paul had to tell the lame man to "stand up" *before* he stood.

2 Peter 1:4-5 (NLT) he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires. 5 In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises.

God has made promises to us as well. Jesus' death on the cross secured peaceful, satisfied, abundant, and eternal life for us. So, Why are we sad, lonely, anxious, angry, and dissatisfied?

We Need To LOVE But We Have LIMITS

When We Think Of All The Things That Love Is To Us, We Are Inspired. Paul tells us in **1 Corinthians 13** that Love is patient, kind, and doesn't hold grudges. We know of love personally as warmth, acceptance, respect, and concern. BUT, we must admit that we have limits.

Think Of Jesus. Jesus could not be everywhere at once, so he went only where the Father was working. Jesus had no money, so he gave what he had, a lesson, compassion, and healing. He had limited energy and took naps.

2 Corinthians 9:7 (NIV) Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

We Also Decide What To Give Based Upon Our Love And Limits. We are also allowed to be kind, to serve, and to wisely use that which we have been given.

We Also Will Have To Fight For The Promises

We Will Have To Overcome The Anger Of Others. Sometimes the anger of others just terrifies us and we will do anything to avoid it. When it shows up, we want to agree, rescue someone, seek approval or get angry ourselves.

The Anger of Others is Not Our Problem. We often believe that we made them angry and feel we are in trouble. That is not true, an angry person chooses to be angry. Even when they say they can't help it, or that we made them angry, the truth is that they are making an immature choice to be angry.

Proverbs 19:19 (NLT) Hot-tempered people must pay the penalty. If you rescue them once, you will have to do it again.

Anger is not our cue to do anything. We don't need to rescue them, seek approval from them, or get angry with them. We can just let them be angry while we do what we need to do. As the wise grandmother said, "They can get glad just like they got mad." Remember, the angry person has some growing up to do and we are giving them an opportunity to grow.

James 1:20 (NLT) Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires.

Of course, that may be very hard for us. So we should make sure we have some good friends to help with those “voices” in our heads. The ones that torment us when under stress. Safe, respectful Christian friends are able to speak truth to us in a way that overpowers these fears.

Proverbs 12:1 (NLT) To learn, you must love discipline; it is stupid to hate correction.

We Will Have To Overcome The Guilt Messages Of Others. There is a difference between CORRECTION and GUILT. One we need and the other is intended to control us and take from us things that should be ours to give or not give. We need to learn to recognize the difference.

Guilt messages are just a mask for anger, hurt, and sadness. Instead of changing our “No”, we could empathize with the person. We could help them with their distress and pain. We could pray for them. We just need to keep in mind that this is THEIR distress and THEIR responsibility.

If guilt works on us, then we need to realize that the problem is inside of us. We should not blame people for using guilt but realize that we are surrendering our responsibility to the wrong person.

We Must Consider The Cost In Order To Stay The Course. If we think about it, we could certainly ask, “Why would we take the chance?” Why risk a fight, an upset parent, child, or friend.

Luke 9:25 (NIV) What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?

So, count the cost because freedom does have a price. In most cases, we will find better relationships with our friends, spouse, boss, or children BUT there is a risk. Not everyone chooses to grow when given the opportunity. We may lose friends. Our marriage could go through some difficult times. Our children may not like us, and may not respond as we thought they would. And, we may have to learn to deal with some aloneness, find a new job, and even make new friends. When walking toward Jesus, we often walk away from other things

Romans 12:1 (NLT) And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.

We must reclaim responsibility for our life because it is supposed to be an offering to God.

This is our last lesson in this series. Remember, this series is the beginning of a journey, not a quick fix. May we start well, and enjoy the journey towards freedom.

Talk About It...

- *What are your first thoughts regarding today's topic? Please share with the group.*
- *Read **Deuteronomy 31:8**. Does this verse encourage you? How? How could we work with God?*
- *Read **Psalms 16:5-6**. How do you feel about your boundaries? Are they pleasant? Why?*
- *Review **Luke 9:25**. Have you ever lost your very self? Would you share with the group?*
- *Discuss Love and Limits. What are the realities represented by those words? How can we realistically love others while respecting our own limits?*
- *Which changes your “no” to a “yes” more often, Anger or Guilt? Why? What would help you stick to your “no” in the future?*
- *What would help replace the “voices in our head” when we are in a stressful situation?*
- *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 15 - Resistance To Boundaries