

NEXT LEVEL RELATIONSHIPS: PICKET FENCES—ESTABLISHING RELATIONSHIP BOUNDARIES
GALATIANS 6:2–5, REVELATION 3:20–21

Three Reasons for Establishing Relationship Boundaries

1. Boundaries SECURE IDENTITY
2. Boundaries BUILD RESPONSIBILITY
3. Boundaries OFFER PROTECTION

Questions for Community Groups and Individual Bible Study

For Starters: Think of different kinds of boundaries. Why are they important? What is their purpose? What would happen if boundaries did not exist? Why are they vital to healthy relationships, yet often difficult to establish and maintain?

The Basics: In relationships, a boundary determines where one person ends and another begins—what a person is and is not responsible for. What boundaries are currently established in your relationships (marriage, family, work, church, friends)? What boundaries would you like to establish?

Quick-Fire Round

1. Read Genesis 2:8–15. What boundary did God establish in Eden and why was it necessary? Why are boundaries God’s idea for our protection, preservation, and provision? Does a boundary need to be permanent and/or permeable? Discuss.
2. Read Exodus 3:14–15 and John 14:6–7. What do you learn about boundaries centered on the identity of both Father and Son? Read Psalm 139:14–15, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 1:11–13, and Ephesians 2:8–10. Why is it important to establish boundaries based on your identity in Christ?
3. How can boundaries on the following help you mature in your relationship with God and others? *Beliefs* (Galatians 1:6–9, 1 John 4:1–3, Colossians 2:8–10); *thoughts* (Romans 8:5–8, 13:14, Colossians 3:1–2); *morality* (Proverbs 4:23, Ephesians 5:15–16, 1 John 2:3–11).
4. Read Matthew 5:37, Galatians 6:7–8, and 2 Thessalonians 3:10. How can boundaries be established by one’s words, behaviors, and actions?
5. Read Galatians 6:1–5. Why did Paul say we are to *bear one another’s burdens, yet carry our own load*? What is the difference?

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY: Read Luke 15:11–32. Why did the father choose not to rescue his son? What did the son need to learn? What was the father’s role throughout the story? When does helping actually hurt? Relate this to your relationships. Are you a rescuer? Do you rely on other people to save you? What changes are you willing to make, or what boundaries will you establish to have healthier relationships?

Community Group Prayer: Share a boundary that you need to establish with someone and pray for one another using the Bible passages from this week’s lesson.

Prayer: Father, thank you that my identity is in you alone. Help me establish boundaries in my relationships and respect other people’s boundaries so I can personally mature and see my relationships grow stronger and deeper. Give me the courage to establish boundaries when it is difficult. Amen.