

Guard Your Life

God's Word will help us discipline the desires of our flesh and keep out demonic oppression.

We are surrounded by boundaries. From the white and yellow lines that color our highways to the fences around our yards, boundaries set limits, provide protection and help keep us on track. A life without them is a life that is out of control.

Spiritual boundaries are important because they help us define how we are going to live. They serve as protection from the enemy, other people and ourselves.

To live a balanced life, we must allow ourselves to be led by the Holy Spirit to establish boundaries—especially in our thinking and speaking. The foundation for setting limits is knowing God's Word. John 8:31-32 teaches, "If you abide in My word [hold fast to My teachings and live in accordance with them], you are truly My disciples. And you will know the Truth, and the Truth will set you free" (The Amplified Bible).

As Christians, we can't accept every thought that comes into our heads. Instead, we need to measure each thought against the standard of Scripture (see 2 Cor. 10:5).

For example, if people are rude and hurt our feelings, we can't just sit around for days upset over what they did. This only gives Satan the opportunity to plant seeds of bitterness, resentment and unforgiveness in us, and we are to resist him at all times (see Eph. 4:27). The more we think about it, the harder it will be to treat them right the next time we see them.

Instead, we need to reject negative thinking and refuse to let it drain us of our peace, joy and time. Then we must turn to God and say: "Father, I need Your strength. By faith I choose

to receive Your grace so that I may forgive and release those who mistreated or wronged me. I ask You to bless them and help me go on with my life. In Jesus' name, amen."

With God's Word renewing our minds, we'll be challenged to change our thinking so that it lines up with Scripture. Day by day, boundaries around our thoughts will be established and reinforced. These limits will help us discipline the desires of our flesh and keep out demonic deception.

We also need to establish and maintain boundaries with our words. Proverbs 10:19 states, "When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise" (NIV). In other words, people who talk a lot will often find themselves in trouble.

I can certainly testify that this is true. But I have learned that if I am quick to hear and slow to speak, I can guard my mouth and avoid many potential problems (see James 1:19; Prov. 21:23).

Because our words carry so much power, you and I need to learn to say only what needs to be said. I like to call it "talking net." When we get paid, most of us get a net paycheck—everything that needs to be taken out has already been removed from the gross. We can apply this same principle to our speech.

We need to remove certain types of words from our speech before they ever come out of our mouths. These include negative statements, gossip, insincere flattery, sarcasm and coarse jesting, or being funny in a rude way. Instead, we can choose to speak well of others, finding and focusing on good qualities in them.

As we establish and abide by boundaries, we are developing a lifestyle of discipline. Proverbs 6:23 confirms this: "Reproofs of discipline are the way of life" (The Amplified Bible). Discipline is not our enemy—it is a gift from God.

If you have spent years living life without boundaries, it will take some time to turn things around. But don't be discouraged—little by little, God will show you how to set limits in your life and what your personal borders need to be.

I challenge you to make up your mind to start living within the boundaries of God's Word. If you are faithful to do your part, He will be faithful to do His.

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