



ENTHEOS

Welcome to 'Entheos' (gk for 'full of God, a word from which we also derive our English word 'enthusiasm'). Christians who live loved, knowing the Grace of God should be a people who are so enthusiastic about life, it's contagious. *Entheos* will be a brief fortnightly newsletter/devotional with articles on a variety of interesting Christian topics.

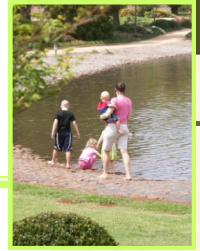
Love cannot exist without freedom, and freedom cannot exist without responsibility.

Dr Henry Cloud - 'Changes that Heal'.



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Recently in exploring the issues of boundaries with the growth group, I saw a greater depth than I had previously seen. While in hindsight it seems so logical, the reality is that we sometimes fail to 'connect the dots' so to speak, when looking at things we are very familiar with.

When Adam was created in the image of God it was as you know, for the purpose of a deeply connected and loving relationship with our heavenly Father. Free will is the evidence of that loving relationship, as Dr Henry Cloud states 'Love cannot exist without freedom'. It was for the purpose of freedom and relationship that there were two trees in the garden, providing us with freedom to choose. Living reactively as I once did, while having the illusion of freedom, I was in fact living in bondage to my fears and anxieties. I lived compelled to react to every real or perceived threat to my fragile ego. To live reactively means being controlled by the people and circumstances around us. This is what the bible refers to as 'fear of man' and psychologist call insecurity. It is evidenced by a life lived from 'ought, should and must' thinking. While this is less obvious than my angry reactive-ness, it is none the less, living a life which is dictated by the external reality of relationships and the circumstances around us.

Freedom like happiness is an inside job.

Our freedom is about the power even God cannot, because of His desire for deep and authentic relationship, violate. He cannot override our free will without losing what He most desires from us, which is a loving relationship. Boundaries are not primarily about protecting my rights as many have erroneously supposed. Boundaries are fundamental to knowing who I am as a person and my ability to spiritually and emotionally develop as a healthy mature adult.

Boundaries are essential to developing and maintaining a healthy sense of 'self', allowing me to express my uniqueness, my values, and my character. They preserve the freedom of choice, without which there is no 'free will'. They are a deep and intrinsic part of my soul ... what I think, believe and feel as well as my attitudes and actions. These are God given responsibilities for me to nurture as I respond to His love. This responsibility is called 'stewardship' and while God provides through salvation, the freedom to live as 'new creations in Christ', the choice to live in and from our vital union with Him remains ours.

Boundaries are less about 'rights' - and - more about responsibility.

The evidence of freedom and healthy boundaries are:

- A healthy sense of self and worth
- A capacity to respect self and others
- Having an opinion and owning it without discomfort
- To be Less reactionary, but thoughtfully responsive
- An ability to calmly state what they like and don't like
- Not needing to use anger to express themselves
- Not needing to use anger to deal with their frustration.
- Actively pursue and remain true to values and character
- Able to manage their fear and anxiety appropriately
- The ability to say 'no' with peace and 'yes' with joy
- They respect others boundaries and right to say 'no'
- not using intimidating, or shaming tactics to coerce others to change their 'no', to comply .
- They respect the God given freedom of choice in adults
- The ability to pursue their own goals and dreams
- To prioritise life choices to achieve those goals
- To be a good steward of their time, energy, health and talents as God given resources.

Apart from me you can do nothing: John 15:5

Boundaries are not a self help process, nor a process of works. They are fully reliant on the empowering life and nurture we receive from the Holy Spirit within us, as we relate to Father God. Jesus provided freedom for us through His death and resurrection. This freedom places us in a relationship with our Abba Father, so that we can grow up both emotionally and spiritually to become who we were created to be before the foundation of the world. What is 'normal' for a child, is whatever culture they are nurtured by. As in the natural so it is in the Spiritual. Our relationship with Holy Spirit, Jesus and Father nurture and model to us what Kingdom culture and values are. Kingdom life is to become our 'new normal' as we cast off the old and put on the new...walking in harmony with Fathers household and Kingdom culture.

Boundaries are only learned in relationships

This can be best understood in the words of Dr Cloud in Changes that Heal... 'If becoming an adult is a task that requires power and expertise, it is easy to see why it is so difficult. When we are born, we have very little of either. As we grow, however, we gain more ability and expertise through the process of internalization and identification. As we internalize aspects of our parents and begin to identify with them as role modes, we become like them'. (pg 217)

Parents can inhibit the power of choice through over managing and controlling their children.

If we have been overly controlled and not empowered to make appropriate decisions, problem solve and learn from mistakes then making decisions becomes very scary. We are so afraid of 'getting it wrong' for a myriad of reasons. Sometimes the responsibility freedom brings with it can be for some, more scary than living life feeling powerless.

We have the power of choice whether we know it or not. Our choice to abdicate personal responsibility and blame others for our frustration and sense of powerlessness, is in itself a choice. People who feel powerless fail to recognize they are in fact exercising the power to choose by holding others accountable for their happiness.

There are many scriptures which, when viewed through the lens of 'boundaries' highlight the outworking of the 'freedom of choice'. The Cross empowers us to exercise Godly choices in our day to day life. Father God understands our need for the process of growth. We need time to learn, if we are to acquire the new skills needed for us to grow up in our faith. Keep that 'lens' in place as you read the following scriptures. New Birth delivers us out of the tyranny of our bondage to fear (slavery) and provides us with the power of freedom and choice. Through our relationship with Abba Father, we learn to grow up by nurturing our new life of freedom on the inside. Internalizing and identification with our Perfect parent—we begin to know who we are because we know whose we are. We can then make that life visible through appropriate boundaries.

Devotions Wk 1: John 8:36, Eph 4:15, 4:17 - 24, Col 1: 10 - 14, Acts 13:39, Rom 12:2, 2 Tim 2:20 - 24, Romans 6:16- 22, Gal 4:1-7

Devotions Wk 2: James 5:12, 1Peter 1:18, Col1: 21-23, 1Thes 2:4, 2 Cor 10:5, Psalm 31: 1-11, 2Cor 10:5, Gal 5:1, 4:8-9 .

Jesus Proclaim Liberty

*The Lord in His love has freed me
He has given me room to grow,
Releasing in me the knowledge
That through his love I can truly know, free-
dom...*

*Freedom from all that would keep me bound
To the hurts and fears of the past,
Freedom to know in his love I have found
A peace and a joy that will last.*

*The future is one of choices
With the freedom to choose God's plan,
As I walk in faith with my father,
Like a child I will hold his hand
Knowing that I'm not caught up
in the streams of this worlds strife,
I'm not carried away on its currents
Nor dashed on it's rocks of strife.*

*To the prisoner Jesus proclaims liberty
To the bound he brings release,
To those who faithfully love him,
He give the fruit of his Spirit ... peace,
Joy ... to the heart that is heavy
Love where once there was hate,
Peace that flows like a river
And
His forgiveness for all my mistakes.*

Sylvia Fraser

God given authority provides us with the power to have authority/rule over our own internal world.

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