

# UNDERSTANDING HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

Boundaries Are Not Walls. They Are Lines of  
Stewardship.

*'Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow  
the springs of life. '*

— Proverbs 4:23 (AMP) —

I'm glad you're here. Thanks for taking a few minutes to slow down with me each week.

*One quick note before we jump in: I'm starting to keep PDF versions of these newsletters so they're easier to save, revisit, and share. If you'd like this one as a shareable PDF, just reply to this email and I'll send it your way.*

Over the next few weeks, I want to spend some time talking about healthy boundaries. Not as a trendy self-help phrase or to be used as a weapon; and definitely not as a way to cut people off, punish people, or protect ourselves from ever being uncomfortable. I want to talk about boundaries as a necessary part of living honestly, peacefully, and faithfully before God.

I think a lot of us have misunderstood boundaries because many of us were never taught what they are. Some of us were taught, directly or indirectly, that boundaries are selfish. Some of us learned that love means unlimited access. Some of us were conditioned to believe that being “good,” “kind,” or “Christian” means saying yes even when our spirit, body, conscience, and capacity are all saying no.

Then, on the other side, some of us have seen the language of boundaries used in ways that aren't healthy either. Sometimes people call something a boundary when it's actually avoidance, control, or punishment, and sometimes it's fear dressed up in therapeutic language. So before we talk about setting boundaries, upholding boundaries, or living from boundaries, we need to slow down and begin with the foundation.

A healthy boundary is not about controlling someone else's behavior. It's about stewarding our own heart, time, energy, body, peace, integrity, and obedience to God. That distinction is important because control and stewardship can look similar from the outside, but they come from very different [\*heart postures\*](#).

Control says, *"You need to change so I can be okay."* Stewardship says, *"I'm responsible for how I respond, what I allow, what I participate in, and where I remain aligned with truth."* Control tries to manage another person's choices, emotions, reactions, maturity, healing, or behavior. A healthy boundary accepts that other people are responsible for themselves, while we remain responsible for ourselves before God.

That's why I don't think healthy boundaries should be understood as walls. Walls are usually built from fear. Walls say, *"No one gets close."* Walls keep everything out, including love, correction, intimacy, repair, tenderness, and growth. They may create distance, but they rarely create health.

Boundaries are different. ***Boundaries are lines of stewardship.*** They help us love honestly without losing ourselves, remain open without becoming overextended, and stay compassionate without becoming responsible for what God never asked us to carry. A boundary isn't the refusal to love. Many times, it's the structure that allows love to remain truthful.

That's why Proverbs 4:23 gives us such a strong place to begin:

***“Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life.”***

**— Proverbs 4:23 AMP**

Scripture doesn't tell us to harden our hearts, it tells us to *watch over them*. There's a kind of guarding that comes from fear, but there's also a kind of guarding that comes from wisdom. One closes us down while the other helps us live with discernment, honesty, humility, and clarity.

We're not called to live guarded in the sense of being closed, suspicious, cynical, or unavailable. But we are called to live watchful; to pay attention to what's:

- Forming us
- Draining us
- Influencing us
- Pulling us away from truth
- Asking for access to places in our lives where trust, maturity, and alignment haven't been established.

Our hearts have been entrusted to us. Our peace has been entrusted to us. Our time, energy, attention, body, relationships, calling, and obedience have been entrusted to us. Even our “yes” and our “no” are part of our stewardship before God. Jesus said it plainly:

***“But let your statement be, ‘Yes, yes’ or ‘No, no’ [a firm yes or no]; anything more than that comes from the evil one”***

**— Matthew 5:37 AMP**

In other words, a healthy life requires **congruence**. What we say, what we mean, and what we're actually able to carry need to come into truthful agreement. When they don't, we may appear agreeable on the outside while resentment, exhaustion, or disconnection grows underneath the surface. We'll come back to this in a future article, because **congruence** is one of the quiet foundations of emotional health, spiritual integrity, and healthy relationships.

When we refuse to practice healthy boundaries, we don't become more loving by default. Often, we become divided. We say yes with our mouth while resentment grows in our heart. We show up physically, but we aren't truly present. We keep giving access, but internally we're becoming bitter, exhausted, or detached. We call it love, but sometimes it's fear.

Fear of:

- Disappointing people
- Being misunderstood
- Rejection
- Being alone Being seen as selfish
- Conflict
- Someone else's reactions
- What might happen if we stop managing what was never ours to manage.

This is where boundaries become deeply spiritual work, because they force us to examine not only what we're doing, but why we're doing it.

- Am I saying yes because I'm aligned, or because I'm afraid of what'll happen if I say no?
- Am I carrying responsibility that belongs to someone else?
- Am I calling it compassion when it's actually codependency?
- Am I trying to keep peace by abandoning truth?
- Am I trying to control an outcome instead of obeying God with integrity?

Those aren't comfortable questions, but they're honest ones. And honest questions have a way of revealing where we've confused love with self-abandonment.

A healthy boundary isn't only about what we keep away from us. It's also about what we make room for. When we live without boundaries, our lives become crowded with things God never assigned to us. Things like other people's expectations, emotions, urgency, chaos, definitions of who we should be, or their unwillingness to take responsibility for themselves.

Over time, that kind of crowding leaves very little space for peace, prayer, obedience, clarity, healing, meaningful work, and real love. We become so busy reacting to everyone else's world that we lose connection with what God is forming in ours.

**Healthy boundaries** help us:

- Return to alignment
- Recognize what's ours to carry and what isn't
- Love without rescuing
- Forgive without pretending trust has been rebuilt
- Be kind without being constantly available
- Stay compassionate without surrendering discernment
- Tell the truth without needing to manage someone else's response to it

That may be where many of us need to begin this week. Not with a dramatic conversation, a confrontation, or even a long explanation that tries to make everyone understand. Just with a deeper understanding of what a boundary actually is.

A boundary isn't punishment. It's not rejection. It's not selfishness. It's not control. A healthy boundary is stewardship. It's one way we watch over the life God has entrusted to us.

When we understand that, we can stop apologizing for needing clarity, honesty, peace, and alignment. We can stop calling self-abandonment love or confusing access with intimacy. We can stop giving people unlimited permission to occupy places in our lives where they have not shown the maturity, trust, alignment, or responsibility to stand.

Love doesn't require the absence of boundaries, it requires them. Because without truth, love becomes distorted. Without wisdom, love becomes overextended. Without stewardship, love can become entangled with fear, guilt, shame, resentment, and control.

Healthy boundaries don't make us less loving. They help us love from a truer place.

If something's on your heart, if you're wrestling with something, or if you just want to say hi, I'd appreciate hearing from you. You can reply to this email or reach out through the [contact form](#).

## This Week's Articles:

No new articles were published this week.

But I didn't want to skip showing up. This felt like the right place to begin, especially because boundaries are not just a relational issue. They touch healing, honesty, fear, attachment, peace, obedience, and the way we live before God.

If you haven't already, you can check out the [Guided Series](#) or [Anchored Reflections](#) on the site. More is coming soon.

## Anchored Breathwork

### Reset Breathing (4–4–6) for Calming and Clarity

**Purpose:** To calm your body, steady your heart, and create enough internal space to tell the truth without fear taking over.

**Posture:** Sit comfortably with your feet grounded. Relax your shoulders. Open your hands in your lap as a physical reminder that you don't have to hold everything so tightly.

1. **Inhale** through your nose for 4 seconds.

Quiet cue: *"Lord, Steady My Heart..."*

2. **Hold** for 4 seconds

3. **Exhale** slowly for 6 seconds.

Quiet cue: *"Align me with Your truth."*

**Repeat** for 5–7 cycles.

**Pro Tip:** If the counts feel too long, shorten the rhythm slightly. That could look like 3–2–5, or even 3–5 with no hold. The goal is regulation, not pressure. A longer exhale helps your body settle and signals safety to the nervous system.

## This Week's Practice

This week, don't start by asking, "*What boundary do I need to set?*"

Start with a deeper question, like:

***Where am I living out of alignment because I'm afraid to tell the truth?***

Pay attention to the places where your "yes" doesn't match your heart. Pay attention to resentment, exhaustion, dread, and pay attention to the areas where you feel responsible for managing someone else's emotions, reactions, or choices.

Those places may be showing you where a boundary is needed. Not because you don't love people, but because you're called to love truthfully.

## Closing Prayer

Abba,

thank You for entrusting my heart, my life, my time, and my relationships to me. Teach me to watch over my heart with wisdom, not fear. Help me recognize where I have confused love with overextension, peace with avoidance, and compassion with carrying what You never gave me to carry. Give me courage to live truthfully, love honestly, and remain aligned with You.

Hallelujah. Amen.

## You Matter...


Every newsletter, article, and Anchored Reflection begins with a real question or burden. If something is pressing on your heart, send it my way. Each week I choose a focus for the newsletter, an article, or a reflection. What you share could be the catalyst for someone else's breakthrough. I would also love your feedback on recent articles.

 [Share What's on Your Heart](#)

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