



Crossing the Line
Guard Your Heart (Proverbs 4:20-23)
 By Pastor David Hillis, 23 April 2017

BIG IDEA: Setting healthy boundaries starts with the ones we set for ourselves.

- God made us to be relational beings; we were made to be in community, and if we don't guard our hearts and protect ourselves from unhealthy relationships, then we tend to become unhealthy and start hurting others.
- 1. **Healthy boundaries started with God.** (Genesis 2:15-17; Isaiah 59:1-2)
 - God designed the world with boundaries that were to be respected.
 - Everything that really matters in life can be boiled down to relationships, and God always prefers that we learn to live together within healthy boundaries.
- 2. **We are responsible for taking care of ourselves emotionally first.** (Proverbs 25:28; Matthew 7:1-5; Mark 12:30-31)
 - In Matthew, Jesus is reminding us that when we start to get judgmental and critical of others, that it should be a cue that we have stuff going on that's blinding us from really seeing things objectively.
 - Having critical or judgmental thoughts about someone is a good indicator that something is off – that our hearts are not being guarded carefully or that someone is intentionally or unintentionally stirring things up for us and creating stress in our lives.
 - If we are not taking care of ourselves emotionally first, our natural response to the situation is going to either be anger or avoidance (or both). Good self-care first notices troubled emotions, and then does something constructive with them:
 - It involves asking God if what we are thinking and feeling is really, fully the truth or just a little part of the truth.
 - It also involves asking God to help us see clearly to what extent we should, or should not, be involved with what is going on.
 - If we don't take care of ourselves, we have no overflow of love for the person with whom we are struggling.

NEXT STEP:

In any relationships I am struggling with today, what part of the problem can I own? How can I first set healthy boundaries for myself?

FOR MY PERSONAL TIME WITH GOD THIS WEEK:

1. Reread Proverbs 4:20-23 this week. Why do you think the author stressed so much that we pay close attention to guarding our heart? What does it look like for you to guard your heart these days?
2. Read Luke 6:43-45. In this passage, Jesus develops the idea behind Proverbs 4:23 a bit further. He says that the words we speak flow from what is in our hearts. As you read these verses, what is your personal takeaway?
3. Consider the more challenging relationships you have today. Are there any people you have cut out of your life? Are there any people that you tend to try to avoid being around, or spending time with? In those relationships, pray and ask God these 3 questions about those relationships:
 1. God, why does this person *bother me*?
 2. God, what are you trying to *teach me*?
 3. God, how do you want to *change me*?
4. Consider picking up a copy of the book *Boundaries* by Henry Cloud & John Townsend, and/or the book *The DNA of Relationships* by Gary Smalley, and begin reading them. They are great supplemental tools to Scripture that Pastor Dave recommends to discover how to maintain healthy relationships in your life.

PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK: For the Homeless and for those in need

Pray for Pastor Amos at The Loving Church as well as Tucson Homeless Connect and for the spiritual and physical needs of the poor and homeless to be met with dignity and stability. May God release them from the cycles of oppression and despair.