

'Boundaries' - short notes :)
a '*Snapshots of a Disciple*' study

This is a Snapshots of a Disciples study on 'Boundaries' and its focus is on stages of growth and maturity, and learning to trust - the right way.

In the Book of Proverbs, God talks about the major differences between the simple-minded and the wise. I know Proverbs is a Book (in the Bible) that is well-liked and very popular and has been for decades. I also know that many people want to be wise. Yet sadly, we live in a day where it seems like most of the prominent and influential voices are mostly only talking to us about how we can be happy and enjoy the things of this life and the pleasures that life offers (most teachers do not typically distinguish between wholesome, pure right choices/pleasures in contrast to sinful fun-for-a-season pleasures of rebellion that destroys us - i.e. choosing slavery to sin).

This boundary study seeks to fill out some details and a progression of spiritual growth that we can see in 3 different passages.

"I write to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. I write to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, little children, because you have known the Father. I have written to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one." (1st John 2:12-14)

>> Please note the 3 stages of spiritual growth: children, young men, fathers/teachers

"But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins." (2nd Peter 1:5-9)

>> The list there is a progression of spiritual growth, and there are depths of growth and levels of obedience in each of the 8 or 9 character traits. :)

"And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us." (Romans 5:3-5)

The whole chapter of Romans 12 has lots of little notes that are on the subject of growth in spiritual maturity

Stage 1

@ birth

- > very dependent on people,
not dependent (yet) on God
- > newly born - so, ignorant of
reality around them
- > has to trust everything and
everyone for survival
- > has no concept of good and evil
- > only aware of wants and dislikes
- > starting to learn do's and don'ts
- *(Some people don't grow much beyond
this basic stage of thinking)
- > the lies of fiction keep them here, as
well as real or false guilts and fears

Stage 2

@ early development
age of awareness

- > from very dependent to somewhat
dependent on people, not
dependent yet on God
- > growing towards being independent
of people
- > generally trusts everything and
everyone - constantly taking in
information as fact
- > one of several levels of knowledge in
actions and choices
- > learning some about good and evil
- > if the person gets stuck at this level,
usually they will settle for a set of easy
man's rules, manners, or 'social norms'
- > sadly many people stay at some
level of this category

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Stage 3

@ anytime in life

- > at some stage of
independence/dependence on people,
and dependence or non-dependence
on God
- > learning to hate what is evil/wrong
- > learning to love what is good and right
- > learning to love others the way
God loves us

Stage 4

@anytime in life

- > at some stage of
independence/dependence on people,
and dependence or non-dependence
on God
- > learning to love God with
all of our heart, soul, mind, and
with all our strength
- > learning to walk in His ways, and
to only aim to do what is pleasing to Him
- > learning to hate idolatry and run/turn
away from what is evil/wrong

Stage 5
@ anytime in life

> at some stage of
independence/dependence on people,
and dependence or non-dependence
on God

> learning to avoid appearances of evil

> growing in avoiding every form of evil

Stage 6
@anytime in life

> at some stage of
independence/dependence on people,
and dependence or non-dependence
on God

> learning how to start sharing with
others what God is teaching us from
His Word

> in effect, this happens when we
are keeping our consciences clear and
testimonies pure. The more time we
in God's Word - reading or listening to it
on CD or MP3, the more we desire to
share what God is actively teaching us
changing in our lives

Stage 7
@ anytime in life

> at some stage of
independence/dependence on people,
and dependence or non-dependence
on God

> regularly teaching others to depart from
evil, hold fast to what is good and right,
and to turn from fantasy and lies to instead
cling to the Bible and truth

> there are many varying levels and qualities
of maturity in this category

> to stay at this quality of stage, it requires
us to maintain a blameless testimony, and a growth
in purity of lifestyle, and with a clear conscience, as
well as a steady intentional progression in spiritual
understanding and obedience in keeping with that