

Mixing up our “To” and “For”

*Live creatively, friends. If someone falls into sin, forgivingly restore him, saving your critical comments for yourself. You might be needing forgiveness before the day's out. Stoop down and reach out to those who are oppressed. Share their **burdens**, and so complete Christ's law. If you think you are too good for that, you are badly deceived. Make a careful exploration of who you are and the work you have been given, and then sink yourself into that. Don't be impressed with yourself. Don't compare yourself with others. Each of you must **take responsibility for doing the creative best you can with your own life**. Galatians 6:1–4, The Message*

God designed us to take responsibility **for** our lives—both relational and purposeful—and, when we fail to set limits and boundaries, we end up with all sorts of signs and symptoms that are not the issue—the issue is boundary boo-boos.

Relationship Issues

Boundary victim—can't say “No!”—keeps losing pieces of freedom

Boundary hater—can't hear “No!”—wants all the freedom

Manipulative boundary hater—indirect—passive/aggressive—more dangerous because it's unseen (A lying tongue conceals wrath . . .)

Function Issues

It's in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. Long before we first heard of Christ and got our hopes up, he had his eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living, part of the overall purpose he is working out in everything and everyone. It's in Christ that you, once you heard the truth and believed it (this Message of your salvation), found yourselves home free—signed, sealed, and delivered by the Holy Spirit.

The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance. I will praise the lord, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me. I have set the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Psalm 16:6-8 NIV

This signet from God is the first installment on what's coming, a reminder that we'll get everything God has planned for us, a praising and glorious life. Ephesians 1:11–14 The Message

Troubling Signs and Symptoms

Unrelenting disappointment leaves you heartsick. Proverbs 13:12

When we don't understand and practice healthy boundaries, we often replace expectancy (“What cool thing is God going to do in my life today!?”) with expectation (“Why isn't my life working the way I think it should?”), and we end up sick with the following symptoms: depression, resentment, rage, anger, obsessive and compulsive behaviors, sense of loss of freedom and loss of love, inability to complete a goal or task, extreme disorganization, low energy level and problems concentrating, high blood pressure, loss of temper, feeling overwhelmed, headaches, crying spells, self-pity, feeling trapped, feeling left out, worrying, envy, ulcers, fatigue, addiction issues, weight issues, etc. If one feels unsafe being or giving love in a relationship (walking on eggshells), he or she doesn't feel free to say no.

Troubling and Ineffective Coping Mechanisms

When we don't have decent skills for relating to others and functioning reasonably well in our work life, we have the following maladaptive coping attitudes: we blame others, we make excuses for our procrastination and incompetencies, we avoid admitting and acknowledging a problem, we minimize the conflict, we rationalize a reason for it without taking appropriate actions, etc.