

What God Says About Relational Boundaries

Here is a limited assortment of New Testament verses that address essential boundaries in relationships, including ending relationships--even with family. I have listed the passages in the order in which they appear in Scripture. These words, the most forceful and explicit spoken by Jesus Himself, plainly challenge some common, cherished assumptions Christians have about remaining in relationship with others at any cost. I urge you to prayerfully read through them, lingering on the ones that elicit a response in you. Pray, meditate, explore cross-references, research others, and journal how the passages apply to your situation. Talk to God about it and get still to listen to what He tells you without judgment. When prompted, respond in faith.

¹⁵ *If your brother or sister^[a] sins,^[b] go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. ¹⁶ But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.'^[c] ¹⁷ If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector. Matthew 18:15-20 (NIV)*

⁶ *"Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces." Matthew 7:6 (NIV)*

¹⁴ *If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet. Matthew 10:14 (NIV)*

⁴⁶ *While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. ⁴⁷ Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you." ⁴⁸ He replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" ⁴⁹ Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. ⁵⁰ For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother." Matthew 12:46-50 (NIV)*

²⁹ *And everyone who has given up houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or property, for my sake, will receive a hundred times as much in return and will inherit eternal life. Matthew 19:29 (NLT)*

²³ *So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Matthew 5:23-24 (ESV)*

Jesus said to them, *"A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home." Mark 6:4 (NIV)*

²⁶ *If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Luke 14:26 (ESV)*

¹⁸ *If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. ¹⁹ If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. John 15:18-19 (NIV)*

⁵¹ Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. ⁵² From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three. ⁵³ They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.

Luke 12:51-53 (NIV)

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:2 (NIV)

¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it^[a] to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." ²⁰ To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Romans 12:18-21 (ESV)

⁹ When I wrote to you before, I told you not to associate with people who indulge in sexual sin. ¹⁰ But I wasn't talking about unbelievers who indulge in sexual sin, or are greedy, or cheat people, or worship idols. You would have to leave this world to avoid people like that. ¹¹ I meant that you are not to associate with anyone who claims to be a believer^[a] yet indulges in sexual sin, or is greedy, or worships idols, or is abusive, or is a drunkard, or cheats people. Don't even eat with such people. ¹² It isn't my responsibility to judge outsiders, but it certainly is your responsibility to judge those inside the church who are sinning. ¹³ God will judge those on the outside; but as the Scriptures say, "You must remove the evil person from among you." 1 Corinthians 5:9-13 (NLT)

³³ Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals." 1 Corinthians 15:33 (ESV)

¹⁴ Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? ¹⁵ What accord has Christ with Belial?^[a] Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? 2 Corinthians 6:14-15 (ESV)

⁴ You adulterers!^[a] Don't you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God? I say it again: If you want to be a friend of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God. James 4:4 (NLT)

⁷ But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin. 1 John 1:7 (NLT)

¹⁰ If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching [The Gospel], do not take them into your house or welcome them. ¹¹ Anyone who welcomes them shares in their wicked work. 2 John 10-11 (NIV)

SELECT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

There are countless outstanding resources on this topic. Explore what works for you!

- Patrick Weaver Ministries
- Lysa TerKeurst
- <https://shaneenmegji.com>
- <https://markdejesus.com>
- Kris Reece
- *Necessary Endings*, Dr. Henry Cloud
- *Good Boundaries & Goodbyes*,