

What God Says About Relational Boundaries



Here's a limited assortment of New Testament verses that address essential boundaries in relationships, including ending relationships—even with family. Please see that the most forceful and explicit words (in red) were spoken by Jesus Himself, plainly challenging some common, cherished assumptions Christians have about remaining in relationships with others at any cost and what it means to be Christlike.

In fact, our willingness to stay in toxic, unequal, or otherwise unhealthy relationships may signal that we've made a person or system a higher power in God's place, and that's idolatry—Yikes! I urge you to prayerfully read through them, lingering on the ones that elicit an emotional response in you. It's important to explore what may be driving us, sometimes grounded in childhood patterns that no longer serve us. Help is available and Jesus can heal all things!

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. It may be very painful, but the freedom is worth it. I've also shared a very few resources below to help.

²⁵“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. ³²All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

³⁴“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’...⁴⁰“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

⁴¹“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels...⁴⁵“He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’³⁶“Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.” Excerpts from Matthew 25:31-46 (NIV)

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. ¹⁶But 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] ¹⁷If 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. ⁴⁷Someone told him, “Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you.” ⁴⁸He replied to him, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” ⁴⁹Pointing 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)

²⁸ Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Matthew 10:28 (NIV)

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)

⁸ The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. 1 John 3:8 (NIV)

³ But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. ⁴ Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. ⁵ For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.^[a] ⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. ⁷ Therefore do not be partners with them. [Ephesians 5:3-7 \(NIV\)](#)

Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. [2 Thessalonians 3:6 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 \(NLT\)](#)

³ You can be certain that in the last days there will be some very hard times. ² People will love only themselves and money. They will be proud, stuck-up, rude, and disobedient to their parents. They will also be ungrateful, godless, ³ heartless, and hateful. Their words will be cruel, and they will have no self-control or pity. These people will hate everything good. ⁴ They will be sneaky, reckless, and puffed up with pride. Instead of loving God, they will love pleasure. ⁵ Even though they will make a show of being religious, their religion won't be real. Don't have anything to do with such people.

⁶ Some men fool whole families, just to get power over those women who are slaves of sin and are controlled by all sorts of desires. ⁷ These women always want to learn something new, but they never can discover the truth. ⁸ Just as Jannes and Jambres^[a] opposed Moses, these people are enemies of the truth. Their minds are sick, and their faith isn't real. ⁹ But they won't get very far with their foolishness. Soon everyone will know the truth about them, just as Jannes and Jambres were found out. [2 Timothy 3:1-9](#)

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 \(NIV\)](#)

2 But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. ² Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. ³ In their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping. [2 Peter 2:1-3 \(NIV\)](#)

SELECT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

There are countless outstanding resources on this topic. Explore who works for you and your situation!

- Patrick Weaver Ministries
- <https://shaneenmegji.com>
- <https://markdejesus.com>
- Kris Reece
- Lysa TerKeurst
- Dr. Henry Cloud
- Facebook: The Spiritual Side of Narcissistic Abuse, The Narc Hunter, plus many others...