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A Measure of *Grace*

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Boundaries *by Roger Jones*

Often when I sit down to write an article like this, I feel intimidated by the topic I have chosen. It doesn't help when the first thing I type is "Boundaries, by Roger Jones." Seeing that at the top of the page some how implies that I am an expert or that I am doing really well at maintaining boundaries. More often than not, the topic I choose is based upon one of the issues I am currently facing in my own life. I have picked up (again) the book *Boundaries* by Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend.

In the past few years, a lot has changed in my life. Two things of note are that I have transitioned into a new role at Where Grace Abounds (Executive Director), and have been married for just

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over a year. These two things have impacted most of my relationships in some way or another. For example, at one time I was Scott Kingry's assistant in the Program Department. Then I became the Operations Director and was Scott's peer on the organizational flow chart. Now I am his boss. Even though my promotion was mutually agreed upon by the entire staff, these changes have affected my relationship with Scott. And to complicate things further, Scott has been my best friend through all of this. We have managed to maintain a good and healthy friendship through it all. But, some of the boundaries are different now.

Getting married seems to have impacted things much more. It began when Jill and I started spending time together. I am an introvert, so I need more "down time" than some of my extroverted friends. As a single man, I had found a pretty good life schedule that worked for me: crazy, busy weekends filled with some work and lots of fun balanced by fairly uneventful weeknights on which I

could rest and recuperate from my weekends. When Jill entered my life, I didn't really adjust that schedule or my time with friends. Eventually, I was exhausted!

Rather than disappointing my friends, coworkers, or Jill, I just decided to take on more. Rather than disappointing myself, because I do like to have fun, I chose to let self care (rest, time with God, personal hobbies) go out the window. I could not keep up the pace I was setting for myself. Ultimately, I had to make some changes that would allow to me maintain all of my relationships for the long-term, not just the short-term.

A frustrating reality is that when it comes to relationships and boundaries, things change. Just when I think things are settled, a new circumstance or relationship creates a new dynamic to navigate. In my vast experience of marriage, I have found this to be true in several areas, one of which I will share with you. Jill is a student at Denver Seminary. When she is in school, I have a much easier time finding

A frustrating reality is that when it comes to relationships and boundaries, things change.

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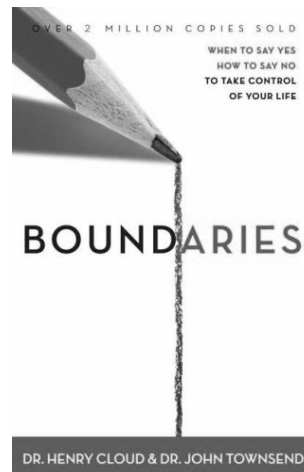
time alone to recharge my battery. When she is not in school, I have to be more intentional about carving out time for myself. It is sometimes a balancing act to take care of myself, allow Jill to do the same for herself, and still have the time we need together as a couple.

When I am clear with myself about what I need, I can communicate those needs to the people in my life. Sometimes I need time with people, and sometimes I need time alone. If I never take time for myself, I will become resentful of all of my time with other people. If I never have time with other people, I will become resentful of the time I have alone. In the same way, my relationships need to be able to communicate their needs to me. Balance and communication are important for these to continue to grow and be healthy.

When single, I worked hard to build a strong network of friends; my wife did the same. By marrying each other, we expanded our circles considerably, each of us adding a whole new group of friends and family. This means that sometimes I have to say, “no.” When I fear that I am going to disappoint someone, I experience stress. I am getting better at carrying this tension as time goes by,

but I often still feel anxiety in those situations.

Perhaps you can relate to some of the experiences I have shared. Although your circumstances may be different than mine, boundaries are a necessary part of living an emotionally healthy life. In next month’s article, I will revisit this topic. Drawing from Cloud and Townsend’s book, I will explore some of the common boundary personalities: the compliant, the avoider, the non-responsive and the controller.



Celebrate, Celebrate~25 Years~Of Memories!

by Mary Heathman

We haven't neglected to mention that we are having our 25th Anniversary Celebration on September 17th, have we? If this is news to you, please read the announcement elsewhere in the newsletter and mark your calendars. We are planning a fun evening to celebrate and are praying that many, many of our friends and supporters will come to enjoy. Let's remember together the beginnings of WGA, 25 years of happenings and a look at our future! You will be receiving an official invitation in a few weeks.

At the invitation stuffing party this past Saturday, about ten of us (staff, leaders and group members were represented), had lunch together and then folded, stuffed and addressed envelopes for a

couple of hours. The administrator/organizer type folks had an efficient assembly line set up, and my place in the process was hand-addressing envelopes. It was a task to do—with people I enjoy, so it was very fun—but nonetheless simply a task to be done.

Just a task to be done. . . . that was my expectation. . . . until I read the first name on my list and started addressing the envelope. Suddenly memories flooded to mind and tears welled-up. The name was that of a group member from our first year—we shared some rich times for a few years as she worked through her pain and confusion surrounding her sexuality. Memories of many shared points of darkness and light, grief and joy, came rushing to my awareness, triggering emotion as if I was actually reliving the experiences. I found myself wanting to call and ask her, "Do you remember agonizing and praying together about telling your family?" "And, do you remember laughing at Mary & Lou's when we were having so much fun that

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another patron came and plopped himself down at our table and asked what we were laughing about?”

I almost did take a break and call her, but then I looked at the next name on the list, and more memories rushed to take center stage. Another group member elicited another set of emotions. Name after name, memory tumbled upon memory, emotions ebbed and flowed as I addressed the envelopes. My internal experience didn’t show on the outside, though at one point I did say that reading some of the names was like a trip down memory lane for me.

At one point I quit writing for a moment as I remembered one man—his name isn’t on the list, but his parents’ are. I can’t call him because he died in 1987—before the new medications came out—I remember sitting at his memorial service praying, “Lord, I can’t do this; I don’t want to watch them get sick and die.” And I caught my breath again as I relived hearing a corrective response from the Lord, “No, you don’t want to watch them get sick and die—without me!”

There are so many memories—so many priceless times of teaching,

discipleship counseling, discussing theology/psychology, movie marathons, gallons of coffee in so many different places. All of these names on the invitation list are those of individuals or their families that have special places in my heart. And the ones I don’t know so well—are special too, as so many of them (of you) are the supporters that have kept this ministry going for 25 years! Praise God for you all—group members and supporters—and many of you are both! May the Lord continue to bless you in your journey with Him!

See you on September 17th!



Like a Virgin

By Scott Kingry



The subjects of “virginity” and “celibacy” sure have taken their share of hits over the millennia. From the suspicions related to the mother of Jesus’ questionable reputation to the exploits of another Madonna, flouncing around in a lingerie wedding gown and belting out “Like a Virgin,” abstinence has been viewed as unhealthy, repressive and even damaging to people. In our currently sexually charged culture, it is even an embarrassment, something to ridicule. But a new study conducted out of the University of Iowa and published in the *Journal of Marriage and Family* might help convincing young people to wait.

3,793 women were surveyed. The study found that 31% of those who lost their virginity as teens (about 42% of the total number polled) divorced within five years, and 47% divorced within 10 years. On the flip side, the divorce rate for the women who had waited to have sex was only 15% at the five year mark, and 27% by the time 10 years had rolled around. First sexual encounters, of course, will have lasting effects. It’s not a surprise that 42% of the women

polled and whose first sexual experiences took place prior to age 18, said they were not consensual and mostly unwanted. We know from our group members here at WGA that if sex occurs in a traumatic context, resulting wounds have a negative impact on how women feel about themselves, their relationships, or their relational skills.

Author Frederica Mathewes-Green adds another facet to the “waiting” dialog in her essay, “Let’s Have More Teen Pregnancy.” She advocates for men and women getting married younger—like before the age of 25. She cites many reasons for taking this view: our bodies are ready to reproduce by 18 or 20; younger parents aren’t too creaky to keep up with small children; and expecting young Christians to wait an additional 10+ years to have a sanctified sexual life is a challenge, even for the noblest of saints. She also believes that by waiting so long for marriage, “trying on” numerous relationships along the way, might also increase the chances of divorce:

Young people may not be getting married, but they’re

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still falling in love. They fall in love, and break up, and undergo terrible pain, but find that with time they get over it. They may do this many times. Gradually, they get used to it; they learn that they can give their hearts away, and take them back again....By the time they marry, they have had many opportunities to learn how to walk away from a promise. They've been training for divorce.

Our desire as a staff and ministry is to continue casting vision for God's specific plans, purposes and best contexts for our sexuality. We hope to prevent, or at least minimize relational heartaches. Controversy regarding sexuality will probably continue throughout the next millennium, as will Madonna's singing career. Please note that the above research didn't examine the divorce rates for men who lost their virginity in their teens. The study's author, Anthony Paik, when interviewed, however, said he thought research on men would make an interesting follow up. Stay tuned.

*Celebrate 25
years of ministry
with us!*

Included in the evening
are light appetizers and
desserts, silent auction,
inspirational stories and
the opportunity to invest
in the next 25 years of
Where Grace Abounds

**September 17, 2011
7:30-9:30 PM**

**Denver Tivoli Center
Turnhalle Room**

**Dress Attire:
Semi-Formal**

\$25.00 a Person

**Please RSVP By
August 25, 2011**



June In Review

June 10th: Men's event—Rockies Game

June 12th: Leadership Meeting

June 26th: Women's Event—yogurt and hike

Thursday Night Group

June 2nd: 23 people

June 9th: 32 people

June 16th: 29 people

June 23rd: 32 people

June 30th: 40 people

Orientation meeting: 5 new people

July And Beyond

July 23rd: Women's Event—movie night

August 6th: Intercessory Prayer. Join us from 8:00— 9:00 am at the WGA offices

August 7th: Roger will be speaking in the morning and evening services at Scum of the Earth Church

September 17th: WGA 25th Anniversary Celebration. We hope you will join us to recognize this milestone of WGA history. More information will be coming your way soon.

October 21-23: Leadership Retreat—please pray for our leaders!

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A Measure of Grace
is edited by
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*Where Grace Abounds
exists to guide and support
men and women who seek to
understand sexuality and
relationship, and to inspire
all people to know and
personally appropriate
God's plan for their
sexuality and relationships.*

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