

"Jacob Separates from Laban"

Genesis 31:1-21

Overview of Previous Passage:

- Desires to Leave Laban. (25-26)
- Laban resists due to God's Blessings thru Jacob. (27-28)
- Deal worked out for Jacob to get Lessor Valued livestock. (29-34)
- Laban Removes all Lessor Valued livestock to trick Jacob. (35-36)
- Jacob Uses form of Reproductive Manipulation and Selective Breeding and Grows Huge Flock and Prospers Greatly. (37-43)

Today's Topic: How do I know if it's time to put boundaries up between me and the people in my life in order to move on to personal growth and healthiness?

1. If they manipulate me, or put pressure on me that keeps me from growing in Christ, it might be time for some boundaries. (30:25-31)

- A. Anyone who wants to control me might be a danger to my health and growth in Christ. *(We really must begin to see things this way and not write them off as insignificant, but rather detrimental to my well being.)*
- B. Jesus put major boundaries up in His own life:

His Family:

"When His family saw all the crowds that were following Jesus, they went out to take custody of Him; for they were saying, 'He has lost His senses....' When His mother and brothers arrived, they sent word to Him and called to Him from outside. When He was told 'Your mother and brothers are outside' He answered and said to them, 'Who are My mother and brothers?' And looking about at those who were sitting around Him, He said, 'These are my mother and brothers! For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.'" - Mark 3:20-21, 31-35

*Now the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths, was near. Therefore His brothers said to Him, "Leave here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may see Your works which You are doing. For no one does anything in secret when he himself seeks to be known publicly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." For not even His brothers were believing in Him. So Jesus *said to them, " My time is not yet here, but your time is always opportune....Go up to the feast yourselves; I do not go up to this feast because My time has not yet fully come." Having said these things to them, He stayed in Galilee. But when His brothers had gone up to the feast, then He Himself also went up, not publicly, but as if, in secret. - John 7:2-10*

The Public:

"Now when He was in Jerusalem...many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing. But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew them...,what was really in their hearts." - John 2:23-24

- C. If it is a spouse, or parents of children still living at home, this becomes a bit more complicated. *(However, there are other kinds of boundaries you can put up if someone is trying to control your life away from Christ. There are heart, mind, and soul boundaries that no one can touch.)*
- D. Becoming a follower of Christ will require a sacrifice of people and things either literally, or spiritually my life.

"And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life." - Matthew 19:29

- I. If my house, family, income - whatever - gets in the way of me and Christ I must take serious action to remedy this hindrance if I'm serious about growing to healthiness in Christ.

"If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell." - Matthew 5:29-30

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth." - Matthew 6:24

- II. BTW: Don't over do it! Only what is necessary for your growth in Christ is needed when it comes to setting up boundaries.
 - a.) Example: If T.V. is getting in the way of you and Christ, you might have to cut it out for a time so that when you come back to it it is no longer keeping you from Christ.

2. If their words become consistently hostile towards me, or if bitter jealousy becomes an evident quality about them, it might be time for some boundaries. (31:1)

A. Words are powerful things. *(So, you want to watch over who you allow to speak into your life.)*

a.) If you allow people in your life to constantly wear you down with their words, over time, like water against rock, it will slowly chisel away at you and what Christ wants for your future.

B. Do your best to only allow people with healing words to have access to your heart.

"The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing." - Proverbs 12:18

"Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones." - Proverbs 16:24

C. You have control over who you respect and who you allow to speak into your life.

I. Heart, or physical boundaries will be necessary to your spiritual health and growth.

II. You will have to leave certain friendships or avoid certain people in order to keep their words from you.

D. Jealousy is evil. *(So, avoid people who have a real problem with it.)*

If you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. - James 3:14-17

E. Bitterness spreads.

See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled. - Hebrews 12:15

F. Don't deceive yourself - those you spend the most time with you will become like:

Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals." - 1 Corinthians 15:33

G. The real point here: Take very good care of your heart and who has access to it.

Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life. - Proverbs 4:23

3. If their attitude towards me becomes consistently aggressive and unfriendly, it might be time for some boundaries. (31:2)

A. Again, these kinds of people will rub off on you if too much access to your life is given to them:

"Do not associate with a man given to anger; or go with a hot-tempered man, or you will learn his ways and find a snare for yourself." - Proverbs 22:24-25

B. So, watch out for them:

"I urge you, brethren, to keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them." - Romans 16:17

4. If the Lord, Himself, has been prompting me to separate from certain people, I ought to listen to Him! (31:3)

A. He will call you to do this from time-to-time in your walk with Him.

In all your ways acknowledge the LORD, and He will make your paths straight. - Proverbs 3:6

5. If I have sought council from those nearest to me, and if they have agreed, it might be time for some boundaries. (31:3-21)

Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed. - Proverbs 15:22

Close: The people you allow around you and who you give access to will directly affect your spiritual growth, health, and success in Christ. Therefore, take these things seriously. Too many allow unhealthy people to continually wear them down at the cost of their own well-being in Christ.