

Faithful Boundaries:

HOW CHRISTIAN WOMEN CAN SET LIMITS WITHOUT GUILT

FAITHFULLY SHE

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And if you've been blessed by what you've found here, we'd love for you to tell a friend or share the news about Faithfully She with someone who could use a little extra peace and encouragement today.
Thank you for being part of this community—your story truly matters to us.

Table of CONTENTS

Part 01

ROOTED IN TRUTH: THE FOUNDATION OF GODLY BOUNDARIES

1. Understanding Godly Boundaries
2. The Guilt Cycle & How to Break It
3. Emotional Boundaries

Part 02

PROTECTING WHAT MATTERS: TIME, ENERGY & FAMILY

1. Time Boundaries
2. Family Boundaries
3. Ministry Burnout

Part 03

RELEASING APPROVAL: PEOPLE-PLEASING & RELATIONAL LIMITS

1. People-Pleasing Patterns
2. Boundaries in Marriage
3. Boundaries With Parents

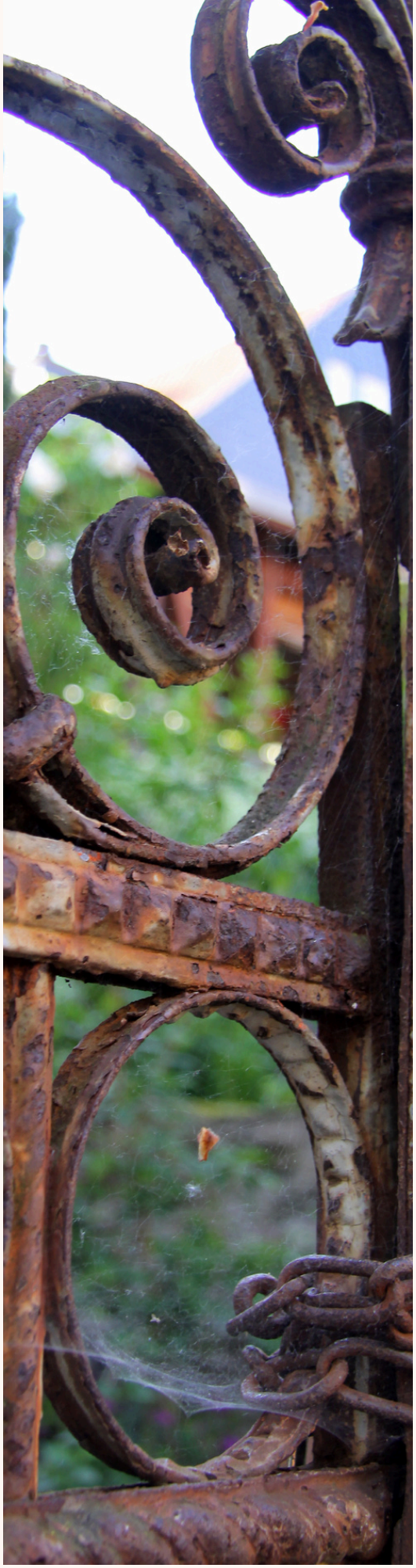
Part 04

LIVING A BALANCED, PEACEFUL LIFE WITH GOD

1. Boundaries With Friends
2. Boundaries With Work & Calling
3. Living a Boundaried, Balanced Life

Bonus

HELPFUL TOOLS FOR YOUR BOUNDARIED LIFE





Introduction



Hello, Friend!

We are so honored that you're here—with an open heart, a willing spirit, and a desire to grow in the kind of strength that comes from God's gentle, steady hand. If you're reading this book, we imagine you may be tired of carrying too much… tired of saying yes when your soul is asking for space… tired of feeling guilty for needs that are not wrong, but human. You may be longing for peace, clarity, permission, and confidence to step into a healthier, more grounded way of living.

We want you to know: You are not alone in this. And you are not wrong for needing boundaries. As a mother and daughter, we've walked our own journeys of learning how to honor God, love others well, and still remain whole ourselves. We've both navigated seasons where we stretched too far, poured too much, and tried to be everything for everyone. And we've learned —through Scripture, life experience, and years of working with women—that boundaries are not barriers. They are blessings.

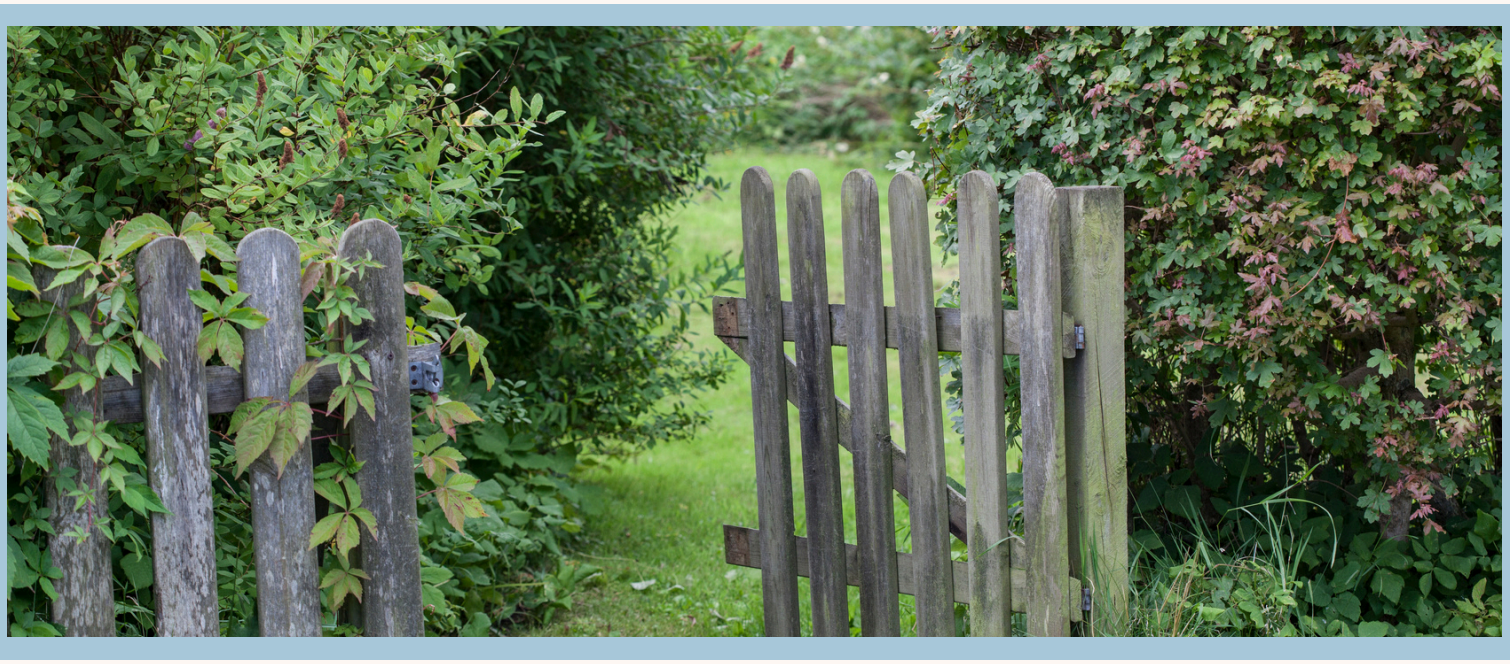
Together, our hope is that these pages become a companion to you—encouraging you, equipping you, and gently reminding you that your worth is not measured by how much you endure… but by the One who calls you His. You deserve a life marked by peace, purpose, and presence. You deserve relationships that honor your heart. You deserve to walk in confidence—without guilt, without fear, and without apology.

May this book help you step into a new season…
A season of clarity.
A season of courage.
A season where your boundaries reflect the love, wisdom, and freedom God has always desired for you.

We're cheering for you.
We're praying for you.
And we're with you in this journey toward a more faithful, peaceful, beautifully balanced life.
With all our love,

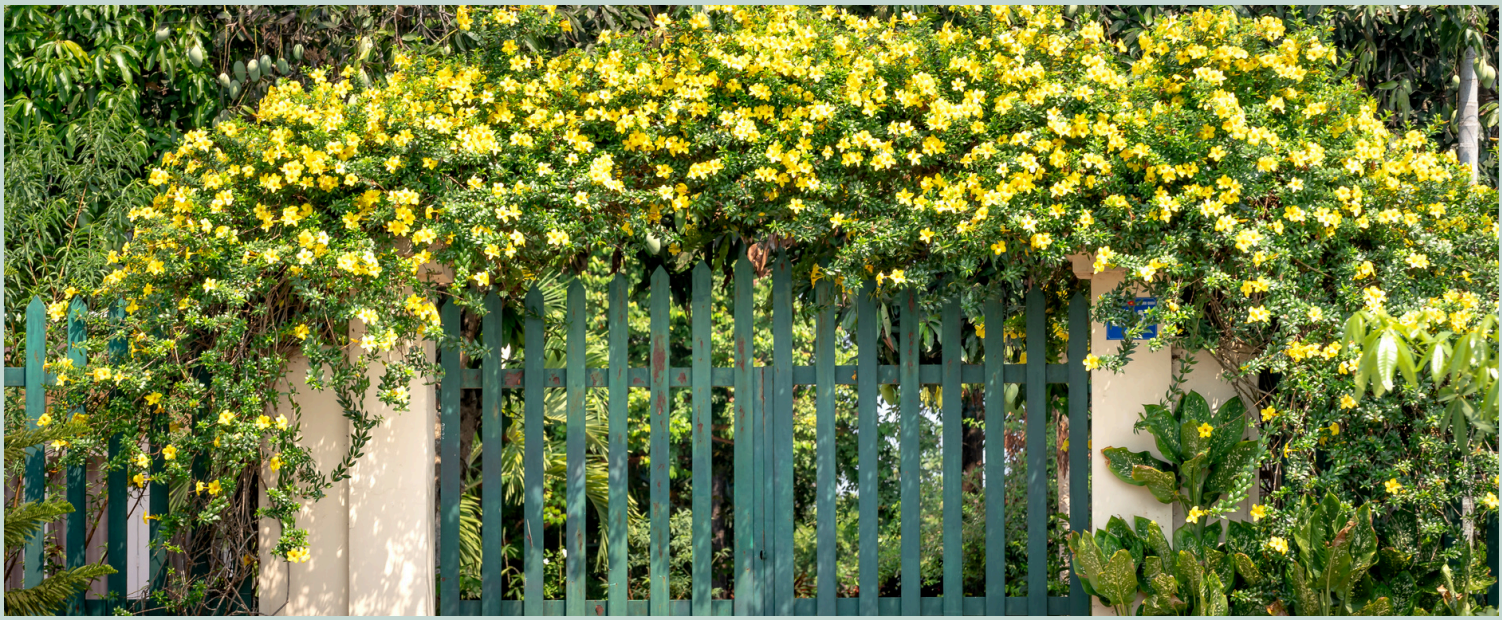
Tricia and Regan

PART 1



Rooted in Truth:
Understanding Godly Boundaries

CHAPTER 1



Understanding Godly Boundaries

A MOMENT TO BREATHE

Take a slow breath in… and out. Let your shoulders soften. Let your mind settle. Let the weight you've been carrying loosen its grip just a little.

God is not asking you to do everything, fix everything, or hold everything together. He has never measured your worth by your productivity, your busyness, or how much you can endure without breaking. Instead, He is gently inviting you into a wiser, steadier, more grace-filled way of living. A way where you listen before you respond. Where you pause before you say yes. Where you choose peace over pressure, purpose over people-pleasing, wisdom over overwhelm.

He is calling you to a life that honors your soul, protects your heart, and makes room for rest, margins, and holy quiet. This is not weakness. This is wisdom. This is maturity. This is choosing to walk with Him, not ahead of Him.

So breathe again—slowly, intentionally. You don't have to do it all. You were never meant to. God is inviting you to live wisely… and He will meet you, sustain you, and guide you every step of the way.



Let your ‘yes’
be yes



and your ‘no’
be no–



Matthew 5:37





FROM MY HEART

Dr. Tricia

Many women tell me they feel wrong—almost sinful—for wanting space, rest, or limits. And I understand that feeling more deeply than I've ever admitted out loud. For years, I believed that "faithfulness" meant saying yes more often, giving more than I had, and pushing through exhaustion because people needed me… and I thought God needed me to be endlessly available too. But biblical boundaries aren't selfish; they are stewardship. They are wisdom. They are alignment with the heart of God.

I learned this the hard way. Throughout my career—especially the years spent building, leading, nurturing, and showing up for everyone around me—I overextended myself again and again. I pushed past emotional and physical limits. I ignored the signals in my own body because I felt responsible for so much. And eventually, my body told the truth my mouth refused to say:

"I am overwhelmed." I found myself coping in quiet ways—one of them being emotional eating. Food became comfort when everything else felt chaotic. It was a way to soothe, to escape, to keep going when I was running on empty. And slowly, the weight I carried emotionally became weight I carried physically. It wasn't about lack of discipline. It was about lack of boundaries. But here's the grace in it: God didn't shame me. He didn't scold me. He gently slowed me down. Not as punishment, but as protection.





FROM MY HEART (CONTINUED)

Dr. Tricia

In that season, He whispered to my weary heart: “You don’t have to do everything. You’re allowed to rest. You’re allowed to nourish yourself with more than food — with peace, with rhythm, with limits that honor the body I gave you.”

Jesus Himself withdrew to quiet places. He rested. He stepped away from crowds. He said no — not from selfishness, but from deep purpose and alignment.

If the Son of God embraced boundaries to remain whole, healthy, and aligned… why do we believe we must live without them? Boundaries aren’t barriers to love — they make your love sustainable. Boundaries aren’t rejection — they are clarity. Boundaries aren’t selfish — they are stewardship of the life and body God entrusted to you.

Learning to set boundaries helped me heal emotionally, spiritually, and physically. It helped me stop running to food for comfort and start running to God again. It helped me anchor my life in wisdom instead of pressure.

And if you’re walking a similar journey — carrying more than you should, coping the best you can, and longing for a healthier, more peaceful rhythm — I want you to know this: You are not broken. You are not behind. You are not failing. You are human. You are loved.

And you are learning, as I did, to live with wisdom, grace, and permission to rest. Boundaries will not pull you away from your purpose — they will bring you home to it.





BEHAVIORAL INSIGHT (CONTINUED)

By Regan

One of the core truths in behavior science is this: what you consistently reinforce will consistently repeat. When you say “yes” while tired, overwhelmed, or unsure, you unintentionally reinforce a pattern that teaches two things:

- To yourself: “My needs matter less than keeping the peace.”
- To others: “You can access me anytime, even at my expense.”

Over time, these reinforced moments shape relationships around silent expectations instead of mutual respect. The pattern feels automatic because your brain has learned it through repetition.

The good news? Boundaries can be retrained using replacement behaviors.

In ABA, when an undesired behavior is occurring — like automatic people-pleasing or reflexive yeses — we don’t simply try to stop it. We teach a healthier replacement behavior that meets the same need without sacrificing your well-being.

For example, instead of a rushed “yes,” your replacement behaviors might be:

- “Let me check my schedule and get back to you.”
- A 10-second breathing pause before responding.
- “I don’t have capacity for that today.”

Each replacement behavior interrupts the old reinforcement cycle and strengthens a new one. Your nervous system begins to feel safer because your responses are rooted in intention, not pressure.





BEHAVIORAL INSIGHT (CONTINUED)

By Regan

Your voice steadies. Your identity becomes anchored instead of stretched thin. But change brings what we call an extinction burst — a temporary increase in pushback or confusion as others adjust to your new boundaries. This is normal. It means the old pattern is losing reinforcement. Consistency is key. Compassion is powerful. And your “no” is not a punishment — it’s an invitation to healthier connection and a calmer mind. Saying yes from guilt breeds resentment. Saying yes from peace builds relationship. Your worth has never been measured by your availability — only by your God-given identity.

Here is a simple tool we teach...

START WITH A "PAUSE PHRASE."

Examples:



"Let me check my schedule."



"I'll need a moment to think about that."



"I want to be thoughtful before I answer — can I get back to you?"



"I need to look at my week before I say yes."

This disrupts automatic "yes".

Reflection Prompts

- Where do I feel stretched too thin?
- What am I afraid will happen if I say no?

Your Thoughts

Prayer

Lord, teach me wisdom in my yes and peace in my no. Help me discern what is mine to carry and what I need to release. Guide my choices so they honor You, protect my heart, and align with the purpose You've placed within me. When I am tempted to say yes out of fear, guilt, or people-pleasing, calm my spirit.

When I need to say no, steady my confidence and surround me with Your peace. May every decision I make reflect Your wisdom, Your grace, and Your loving leadership in my life. Amen.

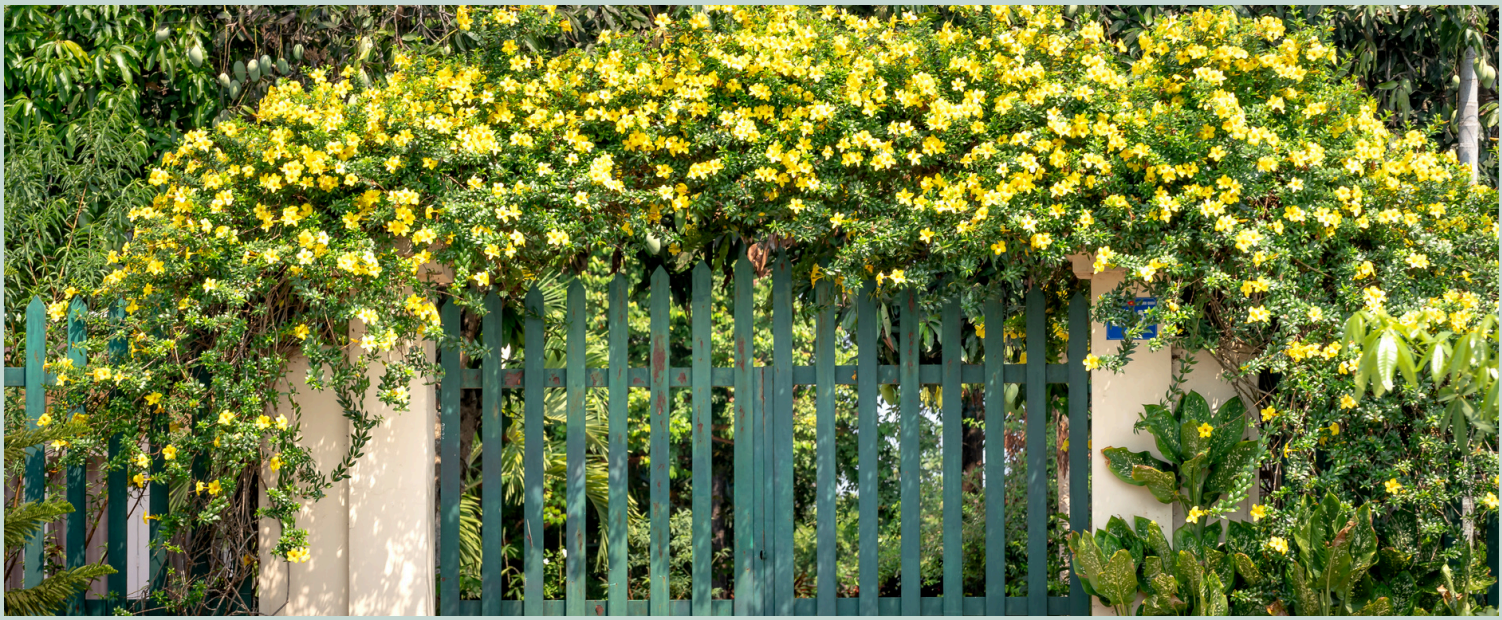


Gentle Weekly Challenge

Use a pause phrase at least once this week.

1	2	3
Notice the moment you feel pressured to say yes. Become aware of your automatic response.	Choose a pause phrase to create space. For example: “Let me think about that and get back to you.”	Give yourself time to decide with wisdom, not pressure. Respond only after considering your capacity and peace.

CHAPTER 2



The Guilt Cycle & How to Break It

A MOMENT TO BREATHE

Release the guilt.

Let it fall off your shoulders, even if slowly, even if you have to let it go one layer at a time. God is not disappointed in you—not for needing rest, not for asking for space, not for honoring the limits He Himself designed you to have. He is not shaking His head at you. He is not keeping score. He is not expecting you to carry what is breaking you.

God sees your heart. He sees your desire to love well, to serve well, to show up with grace— and He also sees how hard you've tried, even when you were running on empty.

He meets you with compassion, not criticism. With understanding, not frustration. With mercy, not judgment. Release the guilt, friend. It was never yours to hold.

Step into the truth that His delight in you is steady, His patience is endless, and His love does not rise and fall based on what you can give. You are safe, you are seen, and you are held by a God who does not measure you by your exhaustion, but by His unchanging grace.



There is no condemnation  *for those* who are  in Christ Jesus. — *Romans 8:1*





FROM MY HEART

Dr. Tricia

Guilt often comes from habit, not holiness. So many women apologize for needing rest, needing space, or needing time—but guilt is not your guide. God is. And He never leads through fear, pressure, or shame. I know this intimately because for years I lived under the weight of expectations—mostly unspoken, often assumed, and almost always self-imposed. I felt guilty anytime I didn't meet what I thought others expected of me. If someone needed something, I answered. If someone hinted at disappointment, I rushed to fix it. If someone wanted more of me, I stretched myself thinner.

I was a chronic people-pleaser, though I didn't recognize it then. I thought it was kindness. I thought it was humility. I even thought it was godliness.

But in truth, I was operating from a place of fear—fear of letting someone down, fear of appearing selfish, fear of being misunderstood, fear of being seen as "not enough."

And the hardest part? I rarely, if ever, consulted the Lord before saying yes. I consulted people's reactions, not God's direction. I let guilt speak louder than grace. I allowed fear to shape my decisions instead of the Holy Spirit.

Looking back, I can see it so clearly: That type of guilt wasn't conviction from God... it was conditioning. It was habit. It was the result of years of believing that my worth was tied to how much I could do, give, or hold.





FROM MY HEART (CONTINUED)

Dr. Tricia

But guilt is a terrible guide. It rushes you. It pressures you. It pushes you to override your body, your peace, and your God-given limits. God, on the other hand, leads gently. He invites, He guides, He whispers. He gives you peace about your yes and peace about your no.

When I finally began consulting Him— God, what do You want me to do here? God, is this mine to carry? God, is this a wise yes or a pressured yes?—everything changed. I realized He was never the one demanding more of me. Most of the pressure I felt came from people… and the rest came from the expectations I placed on myself.

Friend, if you feel guilty for needing space or slowing down, hear this:

Your guilt is not holy.

Your guilt is not God.

Your guilt is not telling you the truth.

The Lord leads through peace, not pressure. Through wisdom, not worry. Through love, not fear. You don't have to be everything for everyone. You don't have to meet every expectation. You don't have to apologize for having limits. Your boundaries are not a sign of selfishness. They are a sign of surrender— a surrender to God's way, God's rhythm, and God's guidance.





BEHAVIORAL INSIGHT

By Regan

Guilt is one of the most misunderstood emotions women face when setting boundaries. That sinking feeling — "You're letting someone down… you should be doing more… a good woman would say yes" — often feels like a moral alarm. But behaviorally, guilt doesn't always signal wrongdoing. Many times, it signals conditioning.

From a young age, women are often reinforced for being agreeable, helpful, flexible, and self-sacrificing. Over time, the brain forms an automatic association: "When I say yes, I'm good. When I say no, I disappoint."

This pattern becomes so ingrained that your nervous system reacts long before your logic can catch up. This is why you can fully understand that a boundary is healthy yet still feel guilty the moment you set it. The guilt is not evidence that your boundary is wrong — it's evidence that your brain has rehearsed one pattern for too long. The hopeful truth is that the brain is teachable. Through repetition and new emotional reinforcement, the guilt response can be retrained. When you begin saying "no" in aligned and thoughtful ways, your brain may fire the old alarm simply because it hasn't yet learned that:

- Saying no protects your well-being.
- Saying no honors your calling.
- Saying no supports healthier relationships.
- Saying no strengthens your leadership and identity.





BEHAVIORAL INSIGHT (CONTINUED)

By Regan

Like any behavior change, discomfort is part of the rewiring process. But as your boundaries create more peace and stability, your brain forms a new association: "Saying no is safe. Saying no is healthy. Saying no honors who God created me to be."

Old Path:

No → Fear → Guilt → Say Yes → Overwhelm → Resentment

New Path:

No → Small Discomfort → Peace → Stability → Confidence

That small discomfort is not failure — it's the doorway to freedom. As your brain adjusts, guilt weakens and confidence grows. You are creating a new emotional pathway rooted in clarity, self-worth, and faith-led living.

That is the quiet work of transformation.

Here is a simple tool we teach...

NAME THE GUILT. NEUTRALIZE IT.

Say out loud:



"This emotion is real, but it isn't the whole truth."



"What I'm feeling is valid—
but it doesn't define what is actually happening."



"My feelings can guide me, but they don't get to decide the facts."



"I can acknowledge this feeling without believing everything it's telling me."

"This is a feeling, not a fact."

Reflection Prompts

- Where does my guilt show up most?
- Who taught me that boundaries equal selfishness?

Your Thoughts

Prayer

Lord, free me from false guilt and renew my mind. Release me from the pressure to please, perform, or carry what You never asked me to hold. Quiet the voices—internal and external—that tell me I must earn love, approval, or worthiness. Fill my thoughts with Your truth, Your wisdom, and Your peace.

Teach me to recognize the difference between conviction and condemnation, between Your gentle guidance and the heavy weight of guilt You never placed on me. Restore clarity to my mind, strength to my spirit, and confidence to my choices. Lead me in freedom, one step at a time. Amen.



Gentle Weekly Challenge

Say one guilt-free no this week.

1

Identify one request or expectation that feels heavy or overwhelming. Notice where guilt shows up the strongest.

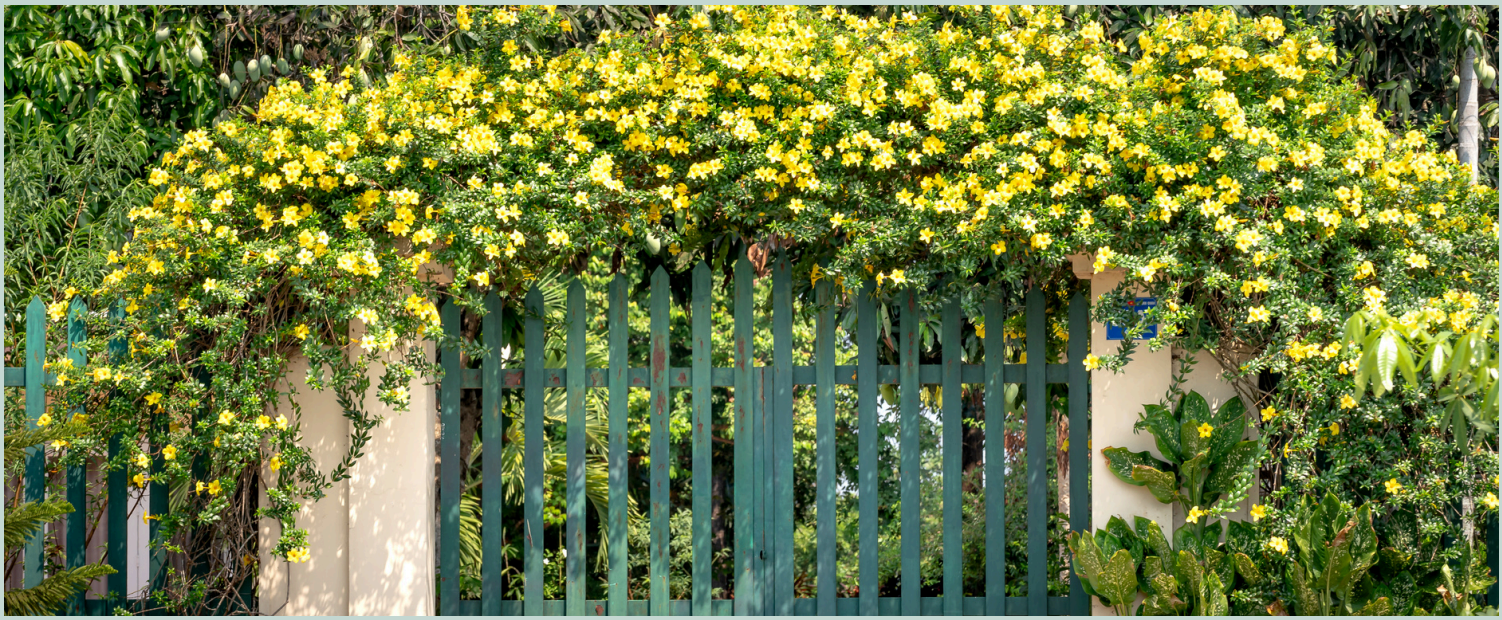
2

Choose a clear, kind statement that allows you to honor your boundary.
For example:
“I’m not able to take that on right now.”

3

Say your no without apologizing or over-explaining. Stand in peace, trusting that your value is not tied to your yes.

CHAPTER 3



Emotional Boundaries

A MOMENT TO BREATHE

Your emotions matter to God. Every feeling that rises up in you—whether it's confusion, overwhelm, sadness, frustration, or even joy—matters deeply to Him. He designed your emotional capacity. He understands it. And He never shames you for it.

But many of us learn to handle our emotions in ways that leave us depleted.

Instead of bringing our feelings to God first, we often bring them to people:

– looking for reassurance,
– seeking approval,
– hoping for understanding,
– wanting someone to tell us we're okay.

It's human to long for connection and affirmation—but it's also easy to begin depending on others in ways our hearts were never meant to. When our emotional grounding rests on how people respond, we become more reactive, more anxious, and more sensitive to disappointment. Human validation is inconsistent. God's affirmation is steady. People can love us and still misunderstand us. They can support us and still have limits. They can encourage us and still not know the full story of our heart.

But God knows every layer, every unspoken need, every silent fear, and every moment you wish you could hide. He sees beneath the emotion to the longing behind it— the longing for safety, identity, belonging, and peace.

When emotions rise, God invites you to come to Him first.

To lay your overwhelm at His feet.
To process with Him.
To ask Him for clarity.
To receive His peace instead of waiting for someone else to offer it.



A MOMENT TO BREATHE (CONTINUED)

He is the One who:
– stabilizes your heart,
– speaks truth to your mind,
– calms your spirit,
– and anchors your identity.

Turning to Him doesn't mean you stop needing people — it means you stop depending on people to define you. Because God never grows tired of your needs. He never withholds comfort. He never turns away from your honesty. He never minimizes your feelings. Your emotions matter to God. And when you bring them to Him first, you become grounded in a way that people cannot shake, circumstances cannot undo, and guilt cannot overshadow. He is the safest place for your heart—always has been, always will be.



Above
all else 
guard your
 heart.

— *Proverbs 4:23*





FROM MY HEART

Dr. Tricia

You are not called to absorb everyone's emotions. Compassion does not require self-abandonment. But for many of us, especially those with tender histories or early attachment wounds, people-pleasing becomes almost instinctual. For me, being adopted created a deep, unspoken drive to maintain connection, to not rock the boat, and to keep everyone around me happy. Even though I was loved and cared for, there were underlying feelings woven into my story—questions of belonging, fears of rejection, and the quiet belief that I needed to be "easy," agreeable, or accommodating to stay accepted.

When you grow up with those emotional roots, it's easy to carry them into adulthood:

– You feel responsible for other people's comfort.
– You read the room before you check in with yourself.
– You apologize for having needs.
– You say yes to hold relationships together.
– You avoid conflict because conflict feels unsafe.
– You internalize disappointment as failure.

These patterns often form long before we understand them. They feel natural… even holy. We confuse people-pleasing with kindness, harmony, or Christlike humility. But over time, people-pleasing silently turns into self-abandonment. You begin absorbing everyone's emotions as if their feelings are your responsibility. You begin carrying burdens God never asked you to lift. You begin betraying your own needs in order to maintain peace around you.

And here is the gentle truth: God never designed your heart to carry the emotional weight of an entire room. You are not the Holy Spirit.

You are not the fixer, the balancer, or the emotional caretaker of every relationship you're in.





FROM MY HEART (CONTINUED)

Dr. Tricia

God created you with compassion, yes—but He did not call you to trade compassion for self-neglect. Your story matters. Your early experiences shaped your instincts. Your desire to keep peace came from a place of survival, not sin.

But now, as a grown woman, God is inviting you into a different way—a way where compassion includes yourself, where love includes boundaries, where peace includes your emotional safety, and where your worth is no longer tied to how well you manage other people's feelings. You don't have to absorb everything. You don't have to fix everything. You don't have to abandon yourself to be loved. Your story shaped you…but it does not limit you. And it certainly does not define your worth.

You can be compassionate without carrying what isn't yours.

You can be loving without losing yourself.

You can be a peacemaker without being a people-pleaser.

This is where real healing begins.





BEHAVIORAL INSIGHT

By Regan

Most women can feel when they've crossed an emotional boundary long before they can name it. The tight chest. The knot in the stomach. The racing thoughts. The silent pressure to hold everything together. These aren't personality flaws — they're physiological signals that your nervous system is carrying more emotional weight than it was designed to hold.

Behaviorally speaking, emotional boundaries function like internal guardrails. They protect your mind from absorbing other people's stress, expectations, or emotional turmoil. When those guardrails are unclear or absent, your brain does what all human brains do under threat: it shifts into overwhelm mode.

In overwhelm mode, the nervous system becomes unregulated. You may notice:

- Difficulty focusing
- Irritability or short fuse
- Feeling responsible for everyone's emotions
- Shutdown or withdrawal
- Excessive overthinking
- Guilt for needing space

None of this means you're weak. It simply means your system is overloaded.

Your brain was created with a limited emotional capacity — a range where it can process, problem-solve, connect, and lead. Emotional boundaries are what keep you within that healthy range. They allow you to notice someone's feelings without absorbing them, to care deeply without collapsing internally, and to show compassion without abandoning yourself.





BEHAVIORAL INSIGHT (CONTINUED)

By Regan

When you consistently operate without emotional boundaries, you train your nervous system to stay in high alert. It begins scanning for what others need, what might go wrong, or how you can prevent conflict. This keeps your body in a low-level stress response, draining energy you desperately need for clarity, creativity, and spiritual grounding.

But the moment you begin setting emotional boundaries — even small ones — your nervous system responds. You shift from hyper-responsibility to healthy responsibility, from emotional entanglement to emotional clarity.

Here's what the brain experiences when you set an emotional boundary:

Safety — "I am not responsible for fixing everything."

Stability — "I can feel my feelings without absorbing someone else's."

Space — "I have room to breathe, think, and respond."

Strength — "My worth isn't tied to emotional caretaking."

Emotional boundaries don't push people away. They protect your ability to stay present, compassionate, and grounded. They preserve the very parts of you that make you a safe and loving person to others. And perhaps most importantly, emotional boundaries teach your nervous system that peace is not something you stumble into —it's something you choose, cultivate, and protect. Your overwhelm is not a personality problem. It's a boundary problem. And it's absolutely retrainable.

Here is a simple tool we teach...

THE ENERGY CHECK



Pause and Notice the Emotion
Before reacting, take a moment to identify what you're feeling—stress, sadness, pressure, anxiety, or responsibility.



Ask: "Is this mine to carry?"
Determine whether the emotion is truly your responsibility or if you're absorbing someone else's feelings, expectations, or urgency.



Clarify Your Role
If it is yours, decide what you can realistically do. If it's not yours, gently release it back to the person or to God.



Choose a Healthy Response
Respond from a place of peace and clarity—not pressure—by setting a boundary, offering support without over-functioning, or stepping back entirely.

Reflection Prompts

- Whose emotions do I carry unnecessarily?

- What drains me emotionally?

Your Thoughts

Prayer

Lord, help me love others without losing myself. Teach me to care with compassion while still honoring the limits You've designed for my heart. Show me how to give support without carrying burdens that are not mine, and how to offer kindness without abandoning the needs of my own soul.
Guide me into relationships that are balanced, healthy, and rooted in Your wisdom. May my love reflect You—not through exhaustion, but through peace, strength, and truth. Amen.

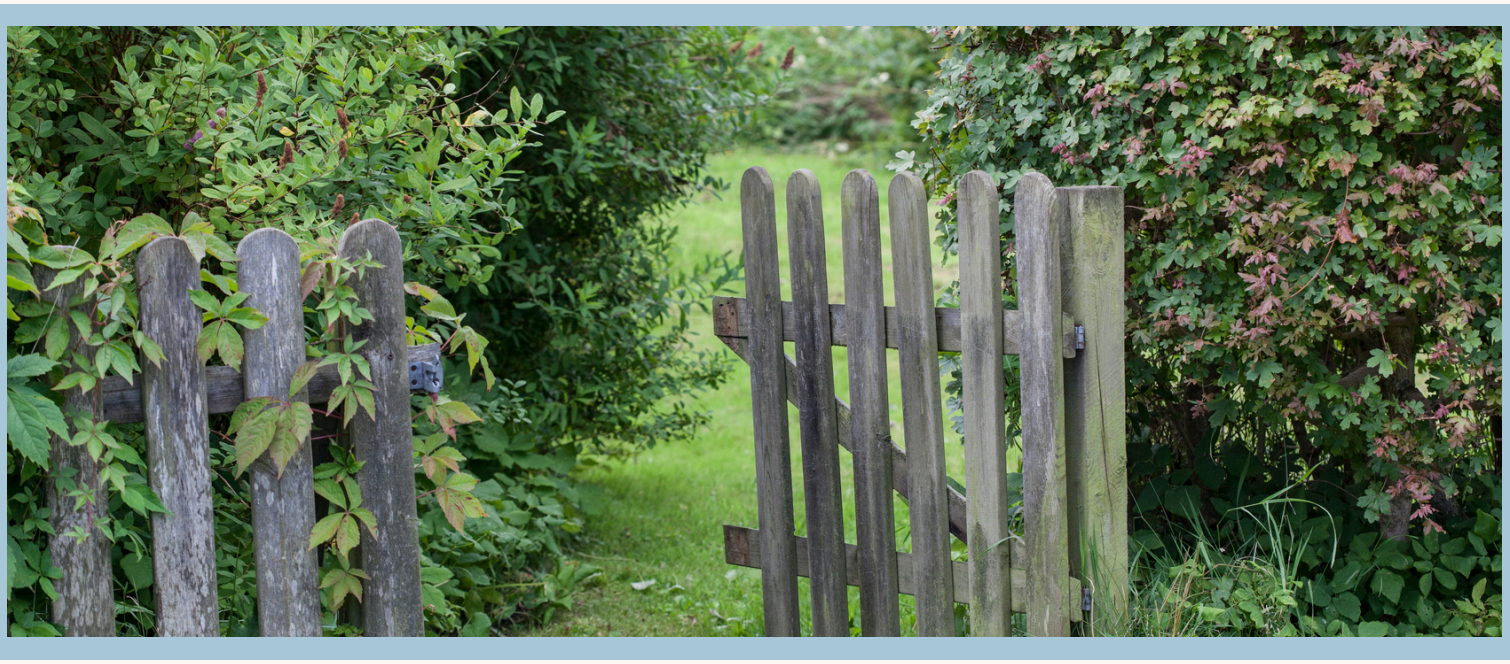


Gentle Weekly Challenge

Practice the Energy Check once a day.

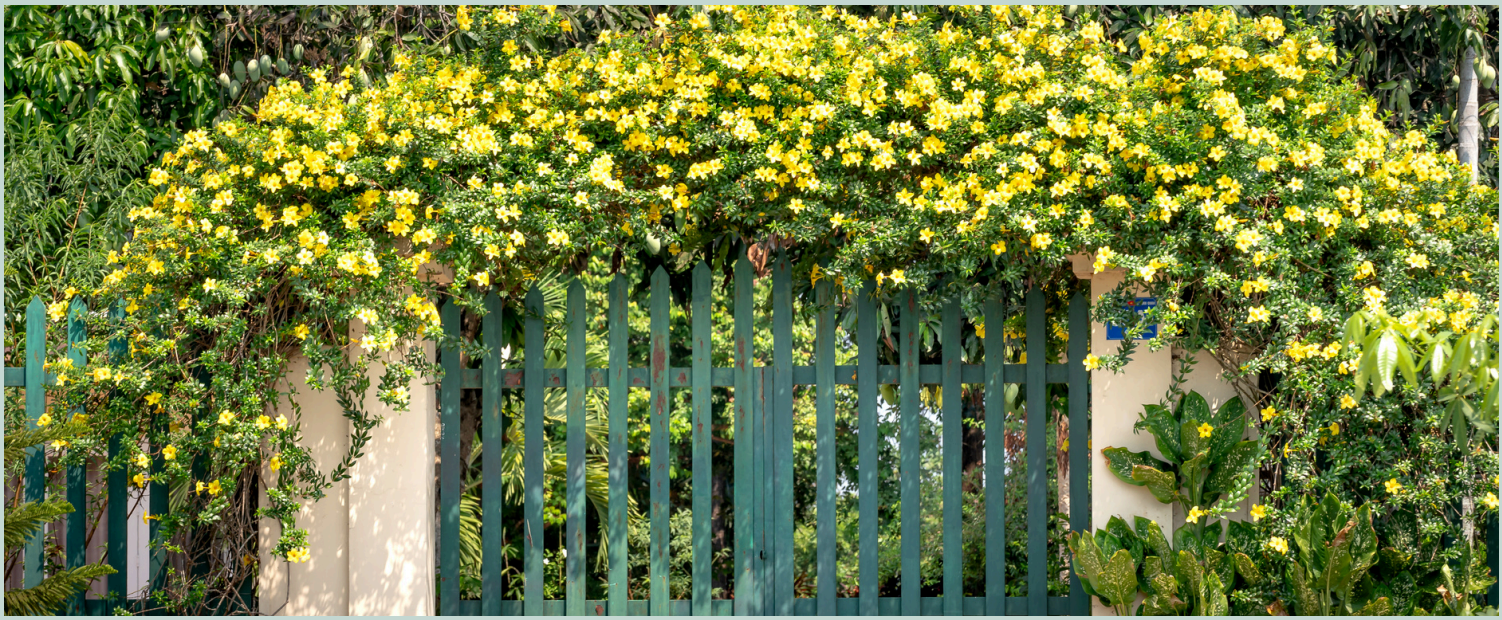
1	2	3
Pause when you feel tension, overwhelm, or responsibility rising. Notice the moment your body or emotions shift.	Ask yourself: “Is this mine to carry?” Identify whether the emotion, problem, or pressure truly belongs to you.	Respond from clarity, not impulse. If it is yours, take one small step. If it’s not yours, gently release it and set a boundary if needed.

PART 2



Protecting What Matters: Time, Energy & Family

CHAPTER 4



Time Boundaries

A MOMENT TO BREATHE

Your time is a God-given resource. It is one of the most precious gifts He entrusts to you, because unlike money, energy, or opportunities—your time cannot be replaced, restored, or taken back once it's spent.

Every hour you're given is intentional, purposeful, and woven into the seasons God has planned for your growth, your rest, and your calling. Your time is not meant to be poured out endlessly, drained freely, or given away without discernment. It is meant to be stewarded with wisdom, protected with boundaries, and aligned with what God has actually asked of you—not what others expect from you.

When you treat your time as sacred, you begin to notice:

– what truly matters and what doesn't,

– what brings peace and what brings pressure,

– where God is leading you and where guilt is pushing you,

– what deserves your yes and what requires a loving no.

Honoring your time isn't selfish—it's obedience. It's acknowledging that your life has God-ordained purpose and rhythm, and that constantly rushing, overcommitting, or stretching beyond your limits works against the design He lovingly built into you.

God invites you to live intentionally, not frantically.

To walk, not sprint.

To receive, not strive.

To align with His pace, not the world's expectations.

When you protect your time, you protect your peace. When you steward your time, you honor God. And when you let Him guide your time, you step into a life marked by clarity, rest, purpose, and steady grace.



Teach us to  *number* our days.



— *Psalm 90:12*





FROM MY HEART

Dr. Tricia

You cannot pour from an empty schedule. Rest, margin, and space are holy. For so long, I treated rest like a luxury—something I'd earn once every task was complete, every person was cared for, every need around me was met. But the truth is, life never slows down on its own. You have to choose to slow yourself down.

I began noticing that when my schedule was packed to the edges, my spirit felt the same—tight, drained, stretched thin. I was showing up for everyone else, but disappearing from my own life. So I started making small, intentional changes that brought breath back into my days. I began incorporating slow walks with my dog—simple, quiet moments where the world softened enough for me to hear my own thoughts again. These walks became a reset for my mind and a way to reconnect with God in the stillness.

I made space for date nights with my husband—not rushed dinners squeezed between obligations, but intentional time to laugh, reconnect, and nurture the relationship God entrusted us with. Protecting that time became an act of love and stewardship. And I started beginning my mornings with worship—letting my heart settle into God's presence before stepping into the demands of the day. Those sacred minutes realigned my spirit, grounded my emotions, and reminded me that I wasn't meant to carry anything alone. These rhythms didn't just fill my schedule… they filled my soul. They reminded me that rest is not a reward; it's nourishment.





FROM MY HEART (CONTINUED)

Dr. Tricia

Margin isn't laziness; it's wisdom. And space isn't selfish; it's spiritual alignment. When you create room for what restores you, you create room for God to speak, guide, and strengthen you. You show up better—not because you pushed harder, but because you finally allowed yourself to breathe. A full schedule doesn't make you faithful. A healthy rhythm does.





BEHAVIORAL INSIGHT

By Regan

Most women don't set out to overcommit. It usually begins with good intentions — wanting to be helpful, reliable, supportive, or simply "the one who shows up." But from a behavioral and neurological perspective, chronic overcommitting activates a mental state your brain was never meant to live in long-term: rush mode. Rush mode is your brain's short-term survival response. It helps you meet a deadline, get through a busy day, or manage unexpected stress. But when you fill your schedule with more responsibilities than your emotional or physical capacity can handle, your brain has no opportunity to return to its baseline. Instead, it stays in a heightened state of urgency.This is where burnout begins.

In rush mode, the brain prioritizes speed over reflection, task-completion over rest, and problem-solving over presence. Cortisol rises. Attention becomes scattered. Emotional regulation weakens. You may notice:

- Feeling constantly behind
- Difficulty relaxing even during free time
- Snapping at loved ones
- Feeling guilty when you rest
- Trouble focusing or making decisions
- Emotional numbness or exhaustion
- Pressure to keep saying yes





BEHAVIORAL INSIGHT (CONTINUED)

By Regan

This is not a sign that you're failing. It's a sign that your brain has been operating in overdrive for too long. From a behavioral standpoint, overcommitting becomes a self-reinforcing loop: You say yes. You receive praise, relief, or avoidance of conflict. Your brain interprets this as a reward. The pattern repeats — even when it harms you. Boundaries interrupt this cycle.

When you begin saying "no," "not this week," or "I need margin," you signal to your brain that it is safe to slow down. Safe to breathe. Safe to rest.

This shift retrains your nervous system in profound ways:

- Your stress hormones decrease.
- Your focus improves.
- Your emotional stability returns.
- Your ability to hear God's direction deepens.

Most importantly, your decisions begin coming from peace instead of pressure. Burnout happens when your schedule expands beyond what your nervous system can sustain. Healing begins when your boundaries shrink your commitments back to what is realistic, healthy, and God-honoring. You were never created to rush your way through life. You were created to live with rhythm, rest, intention, and grace. A healthy boundary doesn't just reduce your workload —it restores your brain, your energy, and your sense of self.

Here is a simple tool we teach...

THE TIME BUDGET



Identify your “non-negotiables.”
These are the essentials that nourish your faith, health, and relationships—quiet time with God, rest, family, worship, movement, and meaningful connection.
These get placed on the schedule first.



List your weekly responsibilities and commitments.
Write down work hours, appointments, ministry tasks, home responsibilities, and anything that requires your time and energy.
Seeing it all on paper helps you understand your true capacity.



Assign realistic time limits to each area.
Just like a financial budget, decide how much time you can invest without draining yourself.
This is where you protect your boundaries and prevent “time overspending.”



Review and adjust before saying yes to anything new.
Before adding commitments, check your time budget:
Do I have the margin for this?
Does this align with my priorities?
Will this cost me peace?
Let your budget guide your decisions, not pressure or guilt.

Reflection Prompts

- Where is my time leaking?
- Which obligations are optional?

Your Thoughts

Prayer

Lord, direct my days with wisdom.
Guide my decisions, my pace, and my priorities so they reflect Your heart and not my hurry. Show me where to invest my time and where to gently step back. Give me discernment to recognize what is essential and what is simply noise. Help me honor the limits You lovingly designed for me, and teach me to move through each day with intentionality, grace, and peace. May every moment be aligned with Your purpose and every step be led by Your Spirit. Amen.



Gentle Weekly Challenge

The One "No" That Protects Your Time

1

Identify a request or expectation that consistently drains your energy.
Notice the invitation, task, or obligation that pulls you away from what matters most.

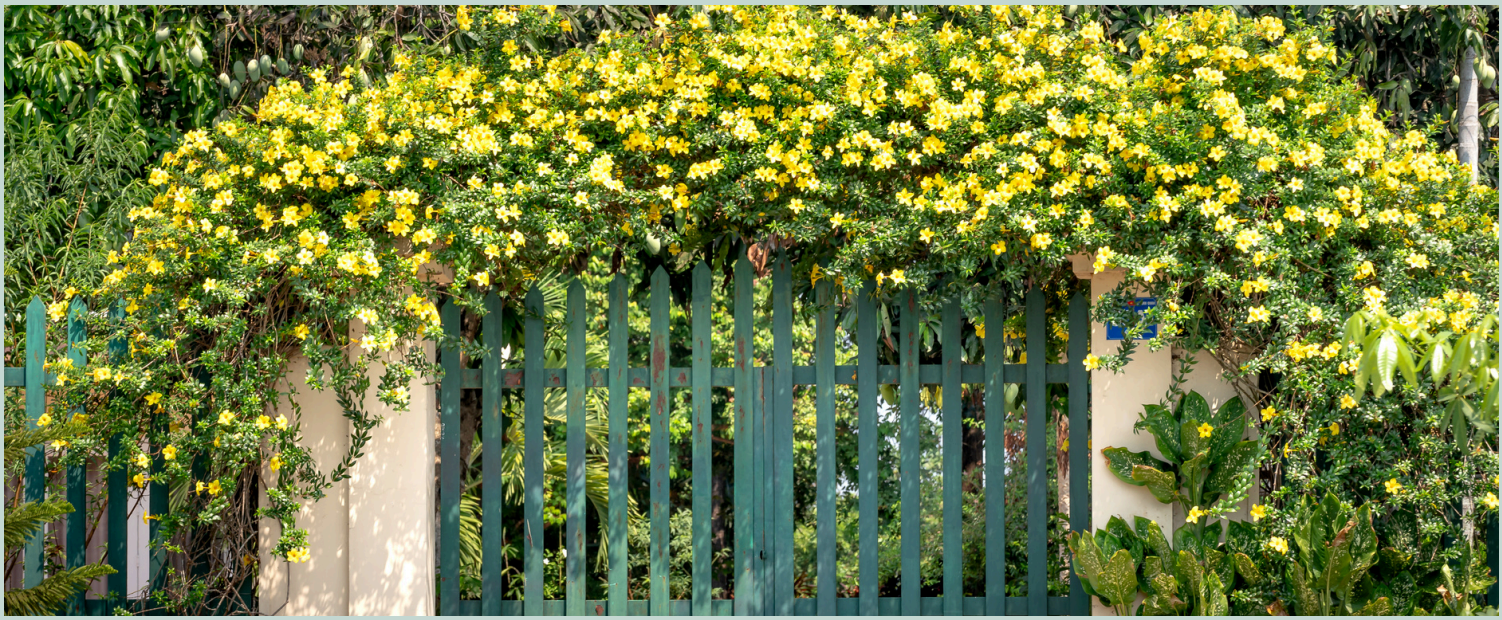
2

Choose a kind, clear boundary statement.
Something like:
"I won't be able to take that on this week."
or
"That doesn't fit my schedule right now."

3

Say your no without apologizing or over-explaining.
Stand in peace, trusting that protecting your time is wisdom —not selfishness.

CHAPTER 5



Family Boundaries

A MOMENT TO BREATHE

Family love does not eliminate the need for limits.

In fact, healthy limits are what allow love to grow, relationships to flourish, and peace to remain. Just because someone is family does not mean you must carry every burden, meet every expectation, or say yes to every request.

Love is not measured by how much you sacrifice yourself—it is measured by the health, honesty, and connection within the relationship. Boundaries in family settings don't weaken love—they protect it.

They prevent resentment from building, prevent emotional exhaustion, and prevent patterns where one person over-functions while the other under-functions. God created families to support one another, not to drain or overwhelm one another. He designed relationships with balance, mutual respect, and emotional safety in mind. When you set limits with family, you're not withholding love;

you're creating space for love to be shared in a healthier, more sustainable way. Limits remind you—and those you love—that your heart, your time, and your energy matter too.



Let
each one 
test his
 own work.

— Galatians 6:4–5





FROM MY HEART

Dr. Tricia

Love and boundaries can coexist—beautifully. Boundaries don't weaken families; they strengthen them by removing resentment, restoring clarity, and creating healthier, more respectful relationships. For a long time, many of us believed that loving our families meant constantly stepping in, fixing everything, smoothing every emotion, and absorbing every crisis—especially with our kids. But that emotional "all in" approach often turns into what feels like an unpredictable roller coaster. Their highs become your highs. Their lows become your lows. Their emotions run your entire day.

I've learned, with time and grace, that I can love my children deeply without riding every emotional wave with them.

I can support them without being swept into the storm.
I can care without carrying.
I can guide without controlling.
I can listen without losing myself.

Stepping off the roller coaster doesn't mean I'm disconnected or indifferent.

It means I'm grounded.
It means I'm steady.
It means I'm a safe place—not a reactive one.





FROM MY HEART (CONTINUED)

Dr. Tricia

When I stopped treating every crisis as mine to fix, something changed in our home:

- My kids grew stronger because I wasn't rescuing them from every feeling.
- I grew calmer because I wasn't absorbing emotions that weren't mine.
- Our relationships grew healthier because love was no longer tangled with exhaustion.

Boundaries don't diminish love—they refine it. They allow you to show up present instead of depleted. They help you respond with wisdom instead of urgency. They remove the quiet resentment that builds when you give beyond your capacity. They protect the closeness you want with your family, instead of letting stress fracture it. When love and boundaries work together, your home becomes a place of peace, not pressure. And you become the woman God designed you to be—steady, grounded, wise, and present in the ways that matter most.





BEHAVIORAL INSIGHT

By Regan

Family dynamics are powerful teachers. Long before we had words for our needs, we learned how to behave, respond, accommodate, and belong. These early patterns — whether healthy or harmful — become deeply conditioned into our nervous system. This is why setting boundaries within family relationships often feels harder, more emotional, and more guilt-triggering than setting them anywhere else.

Your brain has spent years, sometimes decades, rehearsing the same relational choreography. You learned who “keeps the peace,” who sacrifices, who absorbs tension, who rescues, who apologizes first, and who must stay flexible for the family to function. Even when you're grown, your brain still defaults to these familiar emotional roles. This is conditioning — not calling. And the only way to change conditioning is through consistent, repeated practice. When you start implementing boundaries in a family system, it’s normal to face resistance or confusion. Not because your boundary is wrong, but because it’s new. The family is used to one version of you — the one who said yes quickly, smoothed conflict, sacrificed quietly, or held everything together. When a familiar pattern changes, the system reacts. This reaction is not failure — it’s evidence that the pattern is shifting.

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BEHAVIORAL INSIGHT (CONTINUED)

By Regan

Behaviorally, change requires two things:

1. Consistency from you
2. When you communicate a boundary with clarity and follow through gently but firmly, your nervous system learns safety, and the family learns new expectations.
3. Tolerance for temporary discomfort
4. Old patterns often protest before they adjust. This is normal. It means the boundary is doing its job.

Think of boundaries like teaching a new rhythm. At first, the beat feels unfamiliar. But with practice — steady, calm, repetitive practice — the entire relational pattern begins to shift. Your emotional role becomes more balanced. Your needs gain visibility. Your nervous system feels less burdened. And the relationship has the chance to become healthier and more respectful.

This is why practicing boundaries once is not enough.

Family conditioning is strong — but consistency is stronger.

Every time you maintain a boundary, you send a message to your brain:

- “I am safe to express my limits.”
- “I don’t have to over-function to be loved.”
- “I can break cycles without breaking connection.”

Over time, your nervous system becomes more regulated, your emotional presence becomes steadier, and your relationships become grounded in clarity rather than assumption.





BEHAVIORAL INSIGHT (CONTINUED)

By Regan

Boundaries do not dishonor your family. They honor the woman you are becoming — and the peace God desires for your home. And remember: you're not just creating new boundaries. You're creating a new legacy.

Here is a simple tool we teach...

THE LOVING SCRIPT



Begin with connection.
Start by affirming the relationship so the other person feels seen and valued.
Example: “I love you,” or “I care about our relationship.”



Gently express your boundary.
Use the phrase “and I need...” to communicate your limit with clarity and kindness.
Example: “and I need some quiet time to recharge.”



Keep the message simple and specific.
State only what you need—don’t over-explain, justify, or apologize.
Example: “I need to step away for a bit,” or “I need to focus on work right now.”



Hold your boundary with calm consistency.
Repeat your need if necessary, kindly and confidently.
Your steadiness teaches others how to respect your limit.

Reflection Prompts

- Where do I feel obligated rather than loving?

- Which patterns need to change?

Your Thoughts

Prayer

Lord, help me honor my family while honoring my limits. Teach me to love well without losing myself, to show up with compassion without carrying what isn't mine, and to support the people I care about in ways that are healthy, sustainable, and aligned with Your wisdom. Give me clarity to know when to step in and when to step back, strength to set boundaries with grace, and courage to choose what leads to peace, not pressure. May my heart reflect Your love, and may my limits reflect Your design for my life. Guide me in creating relationships rooted in respect, truth, and steady, Christ-centered love. Amen.



Gentle Weekly Challenge

Use the Loving Script once.

1

Identify a situation where a boundary is needed.
Choose a moment with a family member, friend, or loved one where you feel stretched, overwhelmed, or overlooked.

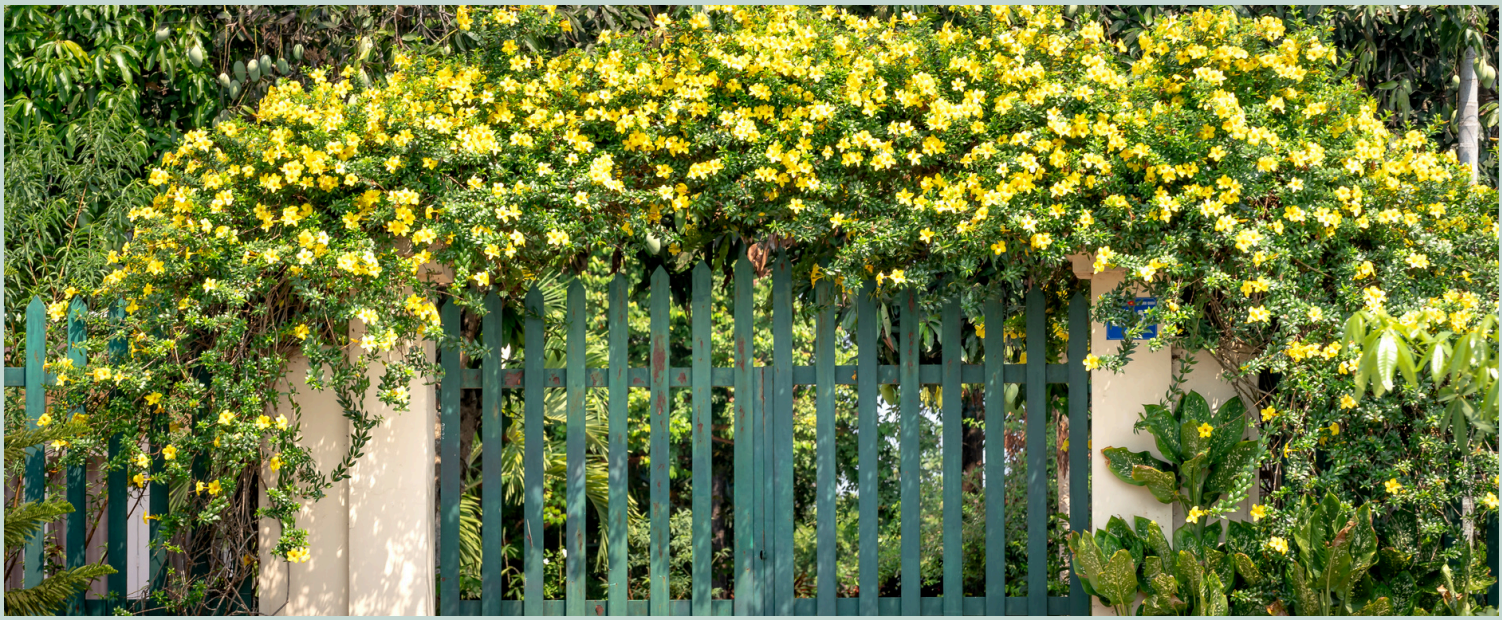
2

Practice the Loving Script beforehand.
Say it out loud or write it down:
“I love you, and I need…”
This helps you speak calmly, not reactively.

3

Share it with kindness and confidence.
Use the script in real time—without apologizing or over-explaining—to communicate your need with love and clarity.

CHAPTER 6



Ministry Burnout

A MOMENT TO BREATHE

Ministry is meaningful, but not meant to exhaust you. Serving God is a beautiful privilege, but it was never intended to drain your spirit, deplete your energy, or consume every corner of your life.

God does not call you into ministry so you can run yourself empty—He calls you so His strength can flow through you.

Somewhere along the way, many of us began believing that faithfulness meant saying yes to everything, showing up for everyone, and sacrificing rest for the sake of serving. But Scripture never paints exhaustion as a requirement for ministry. Jesus Himself modeled a rhythm of serving and withdrawing, pouring out and resting, healing others and protecting His own time with the Father.

Ministry becomes unhealthy when:

– You're carrying more than God asked you to.

– You mistake constant activity for spiritual fruit.

– You feel guilty for resting.

– You say yes out of obligation instead of obedience.

– You serve from depletion instead of overflow.

When your calling begins to cost you your peace, your health, your joy, or your family, it's not ministry anymore—it's imbalance.

God never requires you to abandon yourself to serve Him.



A MOMENT TO BREATHE (CONTINUED)

His yoke is easy. His burden is light. His leadership never pulls you into burnout; it leads you into purpose, wisdom, and sustainable rhythms of grace. Ministry should fill you, not empty you. It should grow you, not bury you. It should bring you closer to God, not further from yourself. You are not more holy when you are exhausted— you are more vulnerable.

You are not more spiritual when you neglect your limits—

you are more depleted. You are not more faithful when you say yes to everything—you are simply more overwhelmed. You are allowed to rest. You are allowed to step back. You are allowed to serve in ways that strengthen you instead of draining you.

Ministry is meaningful, yes—but it is meant to be lived in partnership with God, not in the pressure to do everything for Him.

Let Him guide your pace, your capacity, and your calling so your service becomes a joy, not a burden.



My yoke is  *easy* and my burden is light.



—Matthew 11:28-30





FROM MY HEART

Dr. Tricia

Serving God should not cost you your health or your home. Boundaries in ministry are essential— not optional, not selfish, and not unspiritual. For too long, many women have carried the quiet belief that the more they sacrifice, the more faithful they are. They pour out every ounce of energy, every moment of free time, and every bit of emotional capacity for the sake of serving others—often while their own lives, marriages, health, and peace quietly fray at the edges.

But God never asked you to give yourself away to the point of depletion. He never asked you to choose ministry over your wellbeing, or to sacrifice your family on the altar of service, or to ignore the needs of your own heart so that someone else's needs are met. If the cost of ministry is chronic stress, emotional burnout, resentment, or disconnection at home, then the ministry is no longer being stewarded—it's being carried beyond the boundary God intended.

Your first ministry is your relationship with God. Your second is the health and steadiness of the life He entrusted to you—your home, your family, your body, your peace. Everything else flows from those foundations.

Boundaries in ministry are essential because:

– They protect your relationship with God from being replaced by busyness.

– They protect your home from becoming neglected in the name of serving others.

– They protect your body from burnout and exhaustion.

– They protect your joy in serving so that ministry remains meaningful, not draining.







FROM MY HEART (CONTINUED)

Dr. Tricia

– They ensure you are leading and loving from overflow rather than obligation. Even Jesus—perfect, powerful, fully capable—set boundaries in ministry. He withdrew from crowds. He went to quiet places alone. He rested. He honored the rhythms of work and retreat. And He did it without apology.

If the Son of God chose boundaries to stay aligned with His purpose, how much more do we need them? Ministry should be a place of joy, calling, and connection with God—not a source of exhaustion, pressure, or constant sacrifice. You can love the Lord deeply and still say no. You can serve wholeheartedly and still rest. You can give generously and still guard your health and home. In fact, boundaries are what keep your ministry pure, sustainable, and Spirit-led. They create space for God to move, rather than you striving to hold everything together. Serving God should strengthen you—

not undo you. Boundaries ensure that the work He called you to remains a blessing, not a burden.





BEHAVIORAL INSIGHT

By Regan

Burnout is not a personality flaw, a moral failure, or a sign that you "should be able to handle more." Behaviorally and neurologically, burnout occurs when the expectations placed on you — whether from others or from yourself — consistently exceed the emotional, physical, and mental capacity you actually have.

Your brain is designed to operate within a window of tolerance: a balanced range where you can think clearly, regulate emotions, make decisions, and stay present. But when responsibilities, pressure, or emotional load exceed that window, your nervous system goes into survival mode. It begins to prioritize getting through rather than living well.

This is where burnout begins.

In this state, expectations feel heavier, decisions feel harder, and normal tasks feel overwhelming. You may notice:

- Constant fatigue, even after resting
- Emotional numbness or detachment
- Irritability or sudden tears
- Loss of motivation
- Difficulty focusing or completing simple tasks
- A sense of being "behind" no matter how much you do

These symptoms aren't signs that you're weak — they're signs that your capacity has been exceeded for too long.





BEHAVIORAL INSIGHT (CONTINUED)

By Regan

Here's the behavioral truth: capacity is not fixed, but it is finite.
No one thrives under unchecked pressure. Even if you've "handled it all" in the past, your body and brain keep score. Chronic overextension eventually drains your emotional reserves and diminishes your ability to function in a healthy rhythm.
Meanwhile, expectation — both internal and external — often grows silently:

- You say yes out of habit.
- Others ask because you always deliver.
- You don't want to let anyone down.
- You feel guilty for needing rest.
- You equate slowing down with losing value.

This widening gap between expectation and capacity becomes the breeding ground for burnout.
Boundaries close that gap.
When you begin to honor your limits with clarity and compassion, you realign expectation with what your brain and body can realistically manage. You create space for rest, reflection, and renewal — the very things your nervous system requires to stay regulated. A boundary is not a refusal to help; it's a recognition of what's sustainable. It's the wisdom to steward your energy so you can remain whole, not depleted.





BEHAVIORAL INSIGHT (CONTINUED)

By Regan

As you begin to adjust expectations:

- Your stress hormones lower.
- Your emotional resilience strengthens.
- Your problem-solving improves.
- Your sense of peace returns.

Most importantly, capacity grows when it's protected — not when it's stretched beyond recognition. Burnout is not a failure of character. It is a signal — a compassionate alarm — that something must change. And boundaries are the change that brings you back to breath.

Here is a simple tool we teach...

THE CAPACITY CHECK



Pause before committing.
Take a moment to breathe and step out of the automatic yes.
Notice how your body feels—tense, calm, overwhelmed, steady.



Ask the core question:
"Do I have the emotional margin for this?"
Consider your current stress level, energy, bandwidth, and what you're already carrying this week.



Weigh the cost gently and honestly.
Will this add peace or pressure?
Will it support your wellbeing or stretch you thin?
Will it honor your priorities or drain them?



Respond from wisdom, not guilt.
If you do have margin, say yes with intention.
If you don't, offer a kind boundary:
"I'm not able to take that on right now."

Reflection Prompts

- What ministry tasks drain me?
- Which ones bring life?

Your Thoughts

Prayer

Lord, realign my heart with what You've actually called me to. Clear away the noise, the pressure, and the expectations that pull me in every direction but Yours. Show me where I've taken on responsibilities You never assigned, and reveal the places where I've said yes out of guilt, fear, or habit rather than obedience. Bring my desires, my priorities, and my schedule back into harmony with Your purpose for my life. Anchor me in clarity, steady my steps, and help me choose only what leads me closer to You. May my heart beat in rhythm with Your will, and may every yes—and every no—reflect the calling You've placed on my life. Amen.



Gentle Weekly Challenge

Release one unnecessary ministry task.

1

Identify a ministry task that drains you more than it grows you.
Notice what feels heavy, obligatory, or misaligned with your current season or calling.

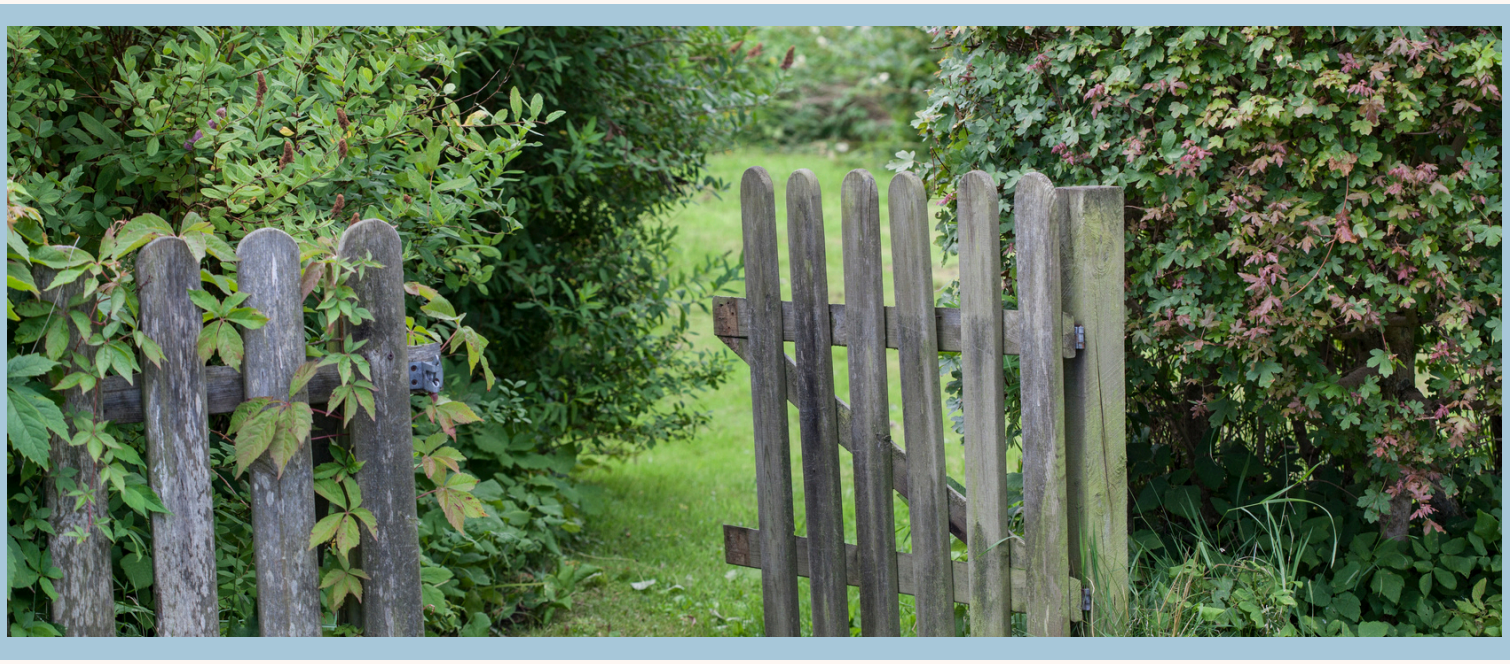
2

Pray for clarity and courage to let it go.
Ask God to show you whether this task is truly yours —or something He's inviting you to release.

3

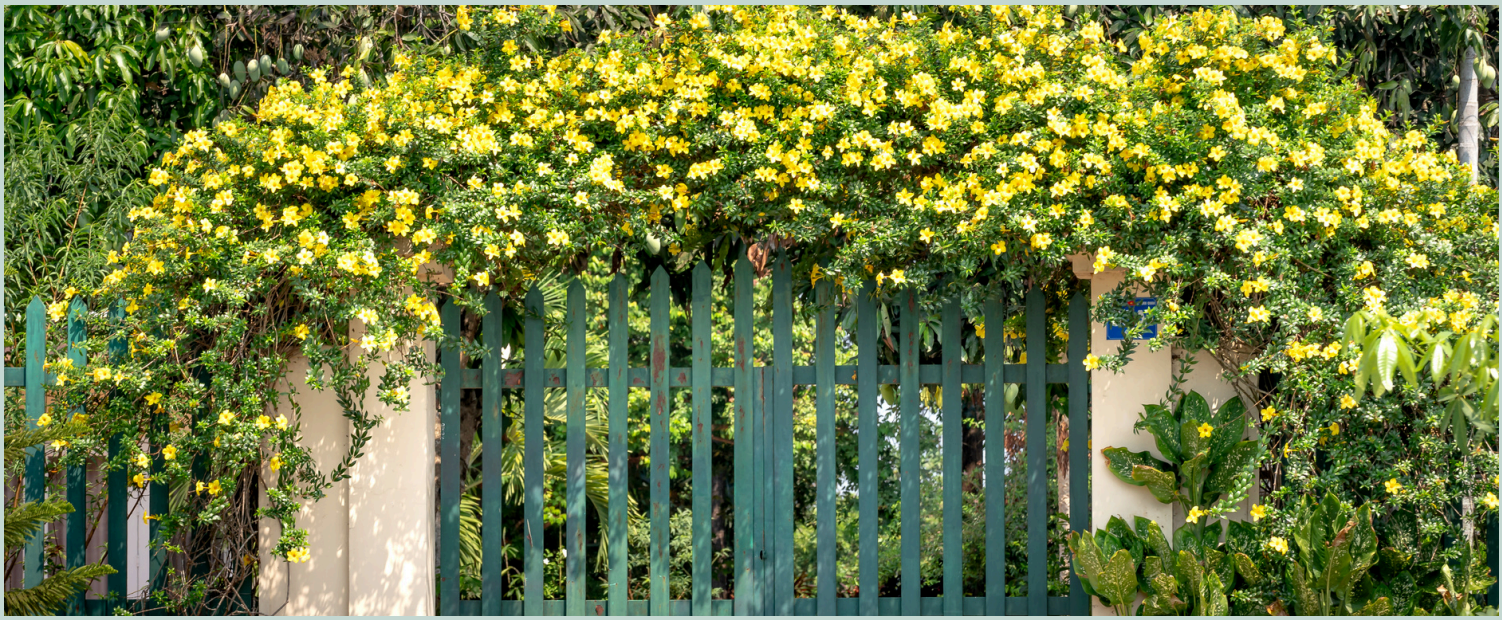
Communicate your boundary with grace. Let your leader or team know: "I need to step back from this responsibility in order to stay healthy and aligned with what God is asking of me." Release it peacefully, trusting God to fill the gap.

PART 3



Releasing Approval: People-Pleasing & Relational Limits

CHAPTER 7



People-Pleasing Patterns

A MOMENT TO BREATHE

You don’t have to earn love. You don’t have to hustle for it, perform for it, or perfect yourself to deserve it.

Love—real, God-rooted, steady love—was spoken over you long before you ever tried to prove your worth. You were cherished before you achieved anything. Chosen before you checked the boxes. Seen before you ever stepped into a role, a calling, or a responsibility. The world may tell you that love is conditional… that you must be easier, quieter, stronger, less emotional, more put-together. But God’s love does not operate on the world’s terms. His love is not a reward for good behavior. It is a promise. A covering. A constant.

You don’t have to earn love—you get to receive it. Rest in it. Grow from it. Lead from it. Because when you finally realize you are already loved, you stop striving for approval and start living from confidence. The kind of confidence that is rooted in Him, not in your performance.



Am I trying to  *please* man or  God?

— *Galatians 1:10*







FROM MY HEART

Dr. Tricia

People-pleasing is usually rooted in fear—fear of rejection, fear of conflict, fear of disappointing others... and I wish I could say I've fully outgrown it. But the truth? I still wrestle with it in my family life. Even as a mom. Even as a daughter. Even as a sister. It shows up in the quiet ways—agreeing to things I don't have the capacity for, holding back my true feelings to "keep the peace," overthinking my tone in a text message, replaying conversations at night because I'm afraid I said the wrong thing. Sometimes it shows up in the bigger ways—carrying emotional weight that isn't mine, trying to be the glue for everyone, or absorbing tension so others don't have to feel it. People-pleasing can feel holy at first—like serving, giving, being selfless. But underneath, there is often a tremble in the heart:
What if they're upset with me?
What if I disappoint someone I love?
What if I'm not enough for them?
And when it comes to family, the fear feels even deeper. Because these are the people whose voices helped shape us. The people we want to love well. The people we don't want to fail. But here's what God keeps gently leading me back to: Love doesn't grow in fear. And peace doesn't grow in pretending. When I trade honesty for harmony, I lose both. When I trade boundaries for approval, I lose myself.
And when I trade authenticity for acceptance, I end up loved for who I pretended to be—not who I am.







FROM MY HEART (CONTINUED)

Dr. Tricia

As a mom, I'm learning that my children don't need a perfect, endlessly accommodating version of me—they need a grounded, emotionally honest one. As a daughter, I'm learning that honoring my parents doesn't mean abandoning my God-given voice. As a sister, I'm learning that connection can survive hard conversations—and often becomes stronger because of them. And as a woman of faith, I'm learning that God never asked me to please people...He asked me to love them. And love, real love, is rooted in truth. So I'm practicing. Slowly. Softly. Sometimes shakily.

I'm practicing letting God's approval matter more than perfection. 'm practicing saying no without apologizing for existing. I'm practicing showing up as who I am instead of who I think others need me to be. Because I want my family to know the real me—not the polished, agreeable version, but the honest, growing, grace-filled one. And I believe that's the version God intends to use.





BEHAVIORAL INSIGHT

By Regan

People-pleasing rarely begins with insecurity — it begins with reward. From a behavioral standpoint, any action that receives praise, approval, or relief from conflict becomes reinforced in the brain. This reinforcement makes you more likely to repeat the behavior, even when it drains you.

When you say yes, go the extra mile, smooth tension, or sacrifice your own needs, you often hear:

“You’re so helpful.”

“I can always count on you.”

“You’re the dependable one.”

These comments feel good in the moment. They provide a burst of connection, validation, or affirmation. Over time, your brain learns a powerful association:

Compliance = Approval

Approval = Safety

Safety = Belonging

So even when saying yes leads to exhaustion, resentment, or overwhelm, the reinforcement pattern keeps pulling you back. Your nervous system becomes conditioned to prioritize peace-keeping over authentic expression.

This is why people-pleasing is difficult to break:

you’re not fighting a habit — you’re fighting a reward loop.





BEHAVIORAL INSIGHT (CONTINUED)

By Regan

The solution isn't to reject kindness or stop being helpful. It's to retrain the brain by creating new forms of reinforcement:

- Praising yourself for saying "no" when needed
- Celebrating moments of honesty
- Surrounding yourself with people who respect limits
- Noticing the peace you feel when you honor your capacity
- Reminding your nervous system that belonging doesn't require burnout

Over time, these new rewards weaken the old people-pleasing cycle. You learn that your value doesn't come from compliance — it comes from clarity, authenticity, and God-given identity.

People-pleasing may have been reinforced in the past,
but boundaries can rewrite the pattern.

Here is a simple tool we teach...

THE TRUTH REFRAME



When you feel yourself scrambling for approval — breath tightening, thoughts racing — stop. Take a slow breath and place a hand over your heart. Before you explain or fix anything, simply pause. Fear demands urgency; worth rests in stillness.



IAsk yourself: “What am I afraid will happen if someone is disappointed with me?”
Rejection? Conflict? Being misunderstood?
Naming the fear softens its power and reminds you this is emotion — not evidence against your worth.



Tell your heart: “My worth is not on trial.”
You’re not waiting for anyone’s verdict. God has already called you chosen, loved, and seen. Your worth is settled — not voted on.



Choose your response from peace, not fear: set a boundary, say no, speak truth, or simply move forward without over-explaining.
When your worth isn’t on trial, your decisions become clearer and your boundaries stronger.

Reflection Prompts

- Who am I most afraid to disappoint?
- Where do I pretend to be okay?

Your Thoughts

Prayer

Lord, deliver me from the pressure to please. From the heaviness I feel when I'm trying to keep everyone happy. From the quiet fear that whispers I'm only as good as my last yes From the exhaustion of carrying expectations You never asked me to hold. Free me from the need to be understood by everyone. Free me from the urge to over-explain, over-apologize, and overextend myself. Free me from the habit of shrinking who I am just to make others more comfortable. Remind me that I am not responsible for managing everyone's emotions. I am not the glue that must hold every moment, every relationship, or every family dynamic together. You are. And You are a far better Savior than I am. Teach my heart to rest in Your approval, not in the shifting opinions of others. Teach me to honor You with honest boundaries, quiet courage, and gentle truth—even when it feels uncomfortable. Teach me to love people deeply without losing myself in the process. Lord, calm the part of me that fears disappointing others. Strengthen the part of me that desires to walk in integrity. Grow the part of me that trusts You more than I fear their reactions. Deliver me from people-pleasing and lead me into God-pleasing— not performance, but presence. Not striving, but surrender. Not pressure, but peace. Make my heart steady, my voice clear, and my steps rooted in Your love. For it is Your approval that anchors me, Your truth that frees me, and Your grace that carries me. Amen.



Gentle Weekly Challenge

Say no once without explaining.

1

Give Yourself Permission Before You Speak

Remind your heart: “I am allowed to say no. No is not selfish. No is stewardship.” Center yourself before answering so you’re responding from clarity, not guilt or panic. A grounded “no” starts internally long before it’s spoken aloud.

2

Say the No Clearly and Kindly — Just Once

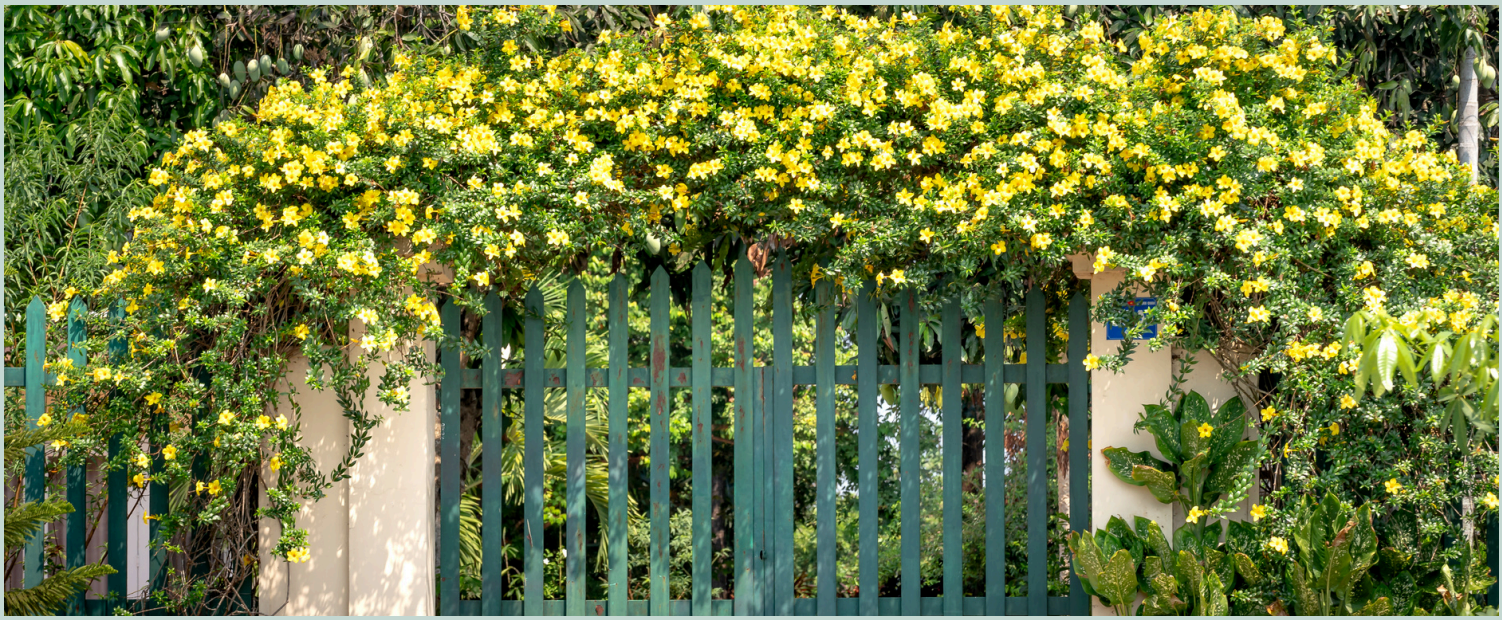
You don’t need a paragraph, a justification, or a softening story. A simple, steady response is enough: “No, I won’t be able to.” “No, not this time.” “No, that doesn’t work for me.” Say it once. Say it calmly. Then stop talking. Silence is not a gap you must fill — it’s a boundary being honored.

3

Hold the Boundary Without Backtracking

This is the hardest part. When the urge to explain rises — when you feel the tug of guilt, the weight of expectations, or the discomfort of someone’s disappointment — breathe deeply. Stay steady. Your “no” is still valid even if someone else doesn’t like it. When you resist over-explaining, you teach your heart a powerful truth: You do not need to justify your limits to be worthy of love.

CHAPTER 8



Boundaries in Marriage

A MOMENT TO BREATHE

Healthy boundaries strengthen love.
Not weaken it.
Not distance it.
Not damage it.
Strengthen it.
Because love without boundaries slowly becomes resentment. Love without limits becomes exhaustion. Love without honest edges becomes blurred, unstable, and heavy to carry. Boundaries are not walls to keep people out—
they are guardrails that protect what God has entrusted to you: your heart, your peace, your energy, your purpose, your relationships.
Healthy boundaries say,
"I want connection, but not at the cost of my well-being."
"I love you, but I cannot abandon myself to maintain this relationship."
"I care about us, which is why I need clarity around what is healthy and what is not."
Boundaries help love breathe. They create space for honesty instead of pretending, communication instead of guessing,
respect instead of assumption, and mutual care instead of one-sided sacrifice. And when love is met with truth, clarity, and consistency—it becomes stronger. Healthy boundaries teach others how to love you well.



A MOMENT TO BREATHE (CONTINUED)

They teach you how to love yourself in a Christ-centered way. And they create the emotional safety every relationship needs to thrive. When you set a boundary, you're not pushing someone away—
you're making room for connection that is healthier, gentler, and more sustainable. You're choosing depth over depletion. Truth over tension. And peace over people-pleasing. This is how love grows deeper: not through over-extending,
but through honoring what God gave you to steward— your heart, your voice, your needs, and the beautiful worth He placed within you. Healthy boundaries don't close doors. They open the right ones.



Speak
the 
truth in

love.

— *Ephesians 4:15*







FROM MY HEART

Dr. Tricia

Marriage thrives when both people feel safe expressing needs respectfully. Not perfectly, not effortlessly, but honestly and consistently. For a long time, I believed that love meant absorbing everything quietly…
carrying the emotional weight, smoothing every edge, avoiding discomfort to keep the peace. But God has been teaching me that true peace isn't the absence of hard conversations—it's the presence of safety, trust, and grace between two people choosing each other daily. And in my marriage with Chris, I've watched this truth unfold slowly and beautifully. As we've learned to voice our needs—not as demands, not as accusations, but as invitations—our connection has deepened. We're not always perfect at it. Sometimes we misunderstand each other, sometimes we speak too quickly, sometimes we need space to process. But over time, something sacred has happened: It's getting better. We're getting better. Little by little, conversation by conversation, choice by choice…we've learned how to be gentler with each other, clearer about our needs, and slower to assume. We've learned that sharing what we need isn't a burden— it's a bridge. We've learned that honesty isn't harmful—it's healing. We've learned that boundaries aren't barriers—they're protection for the love we're building. And every time we choose respectful communication over silent resentment, every time we choose truth over guessing, every time we choose grace instead of defensiveness, our marriage grows a little deeper, a little safer, a little stronger.







FROM MY HEART (CONTINUED)

Dr. Tricia

Marriage thrives when both hearts feel seen, heard, and valued. And I'm grateful that with Chris, we're growing into that more and more—not overnight, but over time. Because the beauty of marriage isn't perfection— it's two people learning, evolving, and choosing each other with increasing tenderness and wisdom. And that kind of growth? That's holy. That's love maturing. That's God at work between two imperfect, willing hearts.





BEHAVIORAL INSIGHT

By Regan

Most boundary breakdowns don't happen because someone is malicious — they happen because the communication around the boundary is unclear or inconsistent. From a behavioral perspective, people learn how to treat you based on the patterns you reinforce.

If you set a limit but then bend it, soften it, or contradict it, your brain experiences discomfort, and others receive mixed signals like:

"Maybe she didn't mean it."

"Maybe she'll say yes if I keep asking."

"Maybe this boundary isn't firm."

This creates confusion for them and resentment for you.

Resentment is what grows in the space between what you need and what you allow. Clear communication closes that gap. It gives your brain a sense of safety and gives others a sense of clarity.

When you stick to your boundaries with consistency:

- Your nervous system relaxes.
- Your relationships feel more honest.
- People learn to respect your limits.
- You stop carrying emotional weight that isn't yours.

Consistency doesn't mean rigidity — it means alignment. It means your words and actions match.





BEHAVIORAL INSIGHT (CONTINUED)

By Regan

And here's the behavioral truth:
Inconsistency reinforces boundary testing. Consistency reinforces boundary respect.
Every time you hold your ground with calm confidence, you retrain both your brain and your relationships. You teach others that your yes means yes, and your no means no — not maybe, not eventually, and not if pressured.
Clear communication is not harsh.
It is kindness, clarity, and self-respect in action.
And it's one of the most powerful tools God gives you to protect your peace.

Here is a simple tool we teach...

THE CALM CONVERSATION FRAMEWORK



Pause to breathe and pray, asking the Holy Spirit to steady you. When you begin from calm, not tension, your words carry clarity. Remind yourself:
"My goal is connection, not control."
This centers your tone and prepares you for a healthy conversation.



Start with the simple phrase: "When you..."
Name the behavior, not their character. This keeps the conversation safe and reduces defensiveness.
Examples:
"When you cancel plans last minute..."
"When you raise your voice..."
"When you walk away during a disagreement..."



Follow with: "...I feel..."
This offers your experience without blame and invites understanding.
Examples:
"...I feel dismissed."
"...I feel unimportant."
"...I feel overwhelmed."
"...I feel anxious."



This is the growth moment: "I need..."
It's not a demand — it's clarity that helps the relationship strengthen.
Examples:
"I need more notice when plans change."
"I need us to talk calmly."
"I need reassurance when things shift."
"I need a moment to process before responding."
Speaking your needs with gentleness honors both your heart and the relationship.

Reflection Prompts

- What do I need more of in my marriage?
- What boundary would bring peace?

Your Thoughts

Prayer

Lord, strengthen our connection and communication. Draw our hearts closer, even in the moments when our words feel tangled and our intentions feel misunderstood. Teach us to listen with grace, to speak with honesty, and to respond with patience that reflects Your heart. Where distractions have quietly created distance, pull us back toward one another with gentleness. Where assumptions have replaced understanding, restore clarity and compassion. Where silence has felt safer than honesty, give us courage to express what is true in love, not fear.

Lord, help us communicate in a way that builds, not breaks—that invites unity instead of tension, that honors each other's feelings instead of dismissing them, that strengthens trust instead of weakening it. Give us the humility to admit when we're wrong, the wisdom to choose soft words, and the discernment to pause when emotions are high. Help us see each other through Your eyes—with kindness, patience, and a willingness to understand rather than defend. Restore what's been strained. Deepen what's already good. And anchor our relationship in the kind of connection that only Your love can create— steady, honest, resilient, and rooted in grace. Lord, strengthen our connection and communication, so that our relationship becomes a reflection of Your peace, Your wisdom, and Your unfailing love.



Gentle Weekly Challenge

Have one calm conversation using the framework.

1

Choose the Moment With Intention

Pick a time when emotions are settled and both hearts are open.

Not in the middle of conflict.

Not while rushed or overwhelmed.

A calm conversation begins before the first word is spoken.

You might say,

"Hey, when you have a moment later, I'd love to talk about something with you."

This sets the stage for safety, not surprise.

2

Use the Framework With a Gentle, Steady Tone

When the moment arrives, speak slowly and simply. Let compassion—not pressure—guide your words. "When you ___, I feel ___. I need ___."

This keeps the conversation grounded in truth, not blame.

You're sharing your heart, not attacking theirs. You're building understanding, not defensiveness. The calm tone matters as much as the words themselves.

3

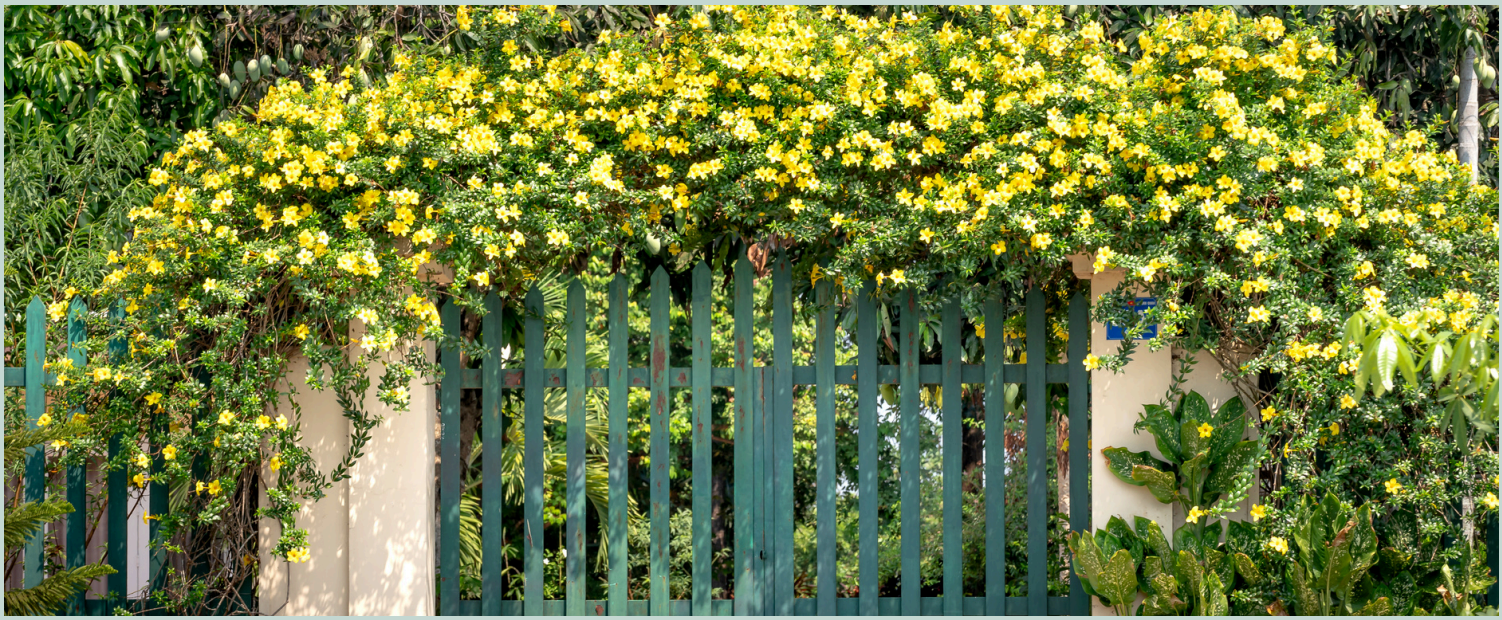
Listen Without Defending, and Receive Without Reacting

After you share, pause. Let the other person respond without interrupting or fixing.

Calm communication is a two-way bridge. Listen for clarity, not for a comeback. If emotions rise, breathe and stay steady— you're practicing connection, not perfection. And when you finish, celebrate the small victory: You had one healthy, honest, God-centered conversation.

That's how relationships strengthen— one calm exchange at a time.

CHAPTER 9



Boundaries With Parents

A MOMENT TO BREATHE

You can honor your parents and still set limits. Those two things are not opposites— they are often the very ingredients that make a healthy relationship possible. For years, many of us believed that honoring our parents meant saying yes to everything, staying quiet to keep the peace, or carrying emotional weight we were never designed to hold. But honoring is not the same as overextending. Respect is not the same as self-abandonment. And love is not measured by how much you absorb.

Honoring your parents means treating them with dignity, speaking with kindness, and valuing the relationship— but it does not mean you must sacrifice your mental, emotional, or spiritual well-being.

Sometimes honoring actually looks like:

- choosing clarity instead of resentment,
- speaking truth instead of stuffing feelings,
- creating boundaries that allow love to be healthy rather than heavy,
- and giving from overflow rather than obligation.

Healthy limits protect the relationship from bitterness. They create room for authenticity. They allow you to show up as the adult you have become—not the child you once were.



A MOMENT TO BREATHE (CONTINUED)

And God never called you to dishonor yourself in the process of honoring someone else. You can say “I love you,” and also say “I can’t do that right now.” You can say “I respect you,” and also say “This crosses a boundary for me.” You can say “I’m here,” and also say “Here’s what I’m not able to carry.”

Boundaries don’t break the command to honor—they often fulfill it. Because they help you maintain a relationship built on truth rather than tension, respect rather than resentment, connection rather than emotional depletion. And over time, something beautiful happens: the relationship becomes more stable, more honest, and more honoring—for both of you.

You can honor your parents and still set limits. In fact, healthy limits may be the very thing that helps love grow in the right direction.



For this reason  *a man* shall leave  his father and mother.

— Genesis 2:24







FROM MY HEART

Dr. Tricia

Becoming an adult means redefining roles—not rejecting relationships. It means learning how to show up with love, wisdom, and healthy limits... even when the dynamics shift in ways we never expected. When my dad passed, everything changed. Not just the grief. Not just the loss. But the way the roles in our family had to be rebuilt. Suddenly I wasn't just a daughter anymore— I became a helper, a supporter, a steady presence for my mom as she navigated a world she never imagined walking alone. And loving her well in this season has required me to grow in ways I didn't see coming.

To be present without losing myself.

To be supportive without becoming the replacement source of strength she truly needs from the Lord.

To give what I can, while trusting God with what I cannot carry.

And then there is my mother-in-law—also a widow. Two women in my life who lost the men who held their hearts for so many years. Two women learning how to be whole in a new way. Two women I love deeply, yet must love with clarity, boundaries, and tenderness all at once. Walking with them has shown me that adulthood in families isn't about stepping away—it's about stepping in with maturity. Not as the child we once were, but as the adult God is forming us to be.

Redefining roles doesn't mean we love less.

It means we love wiser.





FROM MY HEART (CONTINUED)

Dr. Tricia

It means:

- honoring their grief without absorbing it,
- offering help without becoming the hero,
- supporting them without abandoning our own emotional health,
- being available without being consumed,
- and loving them in ways that are sustainable, respectful, and rooted in truth.

As adults, we learn that love must evolve in order to remain healthy. We learn that boundaries don't weaken relationships—they protect them. We learn that God can hold our parents' hearts far better than we ever can. And we learn that redefining roles is an act of honor, not rejection. Becoming an adult means showing up differently— with strength, steadiness, and spiritual maturity— not because we love our parents less, but because we love them enough to walk alongside them in a way that honors both them and the person God is shaping us to be. And in a season marked by loss, shifts, and new responsibilities, God has been faithful to show me this: I can love them fully without losing myself. I can support them deeply without taking on the role only God can fill. I can redefine our roles and still protect our relationships. This is the holy work of adulthood—love growing up, love maturing, love becoming wiser and more anchored in grace.





BEHAVIORAL INSIGHT

By Regan

Parent–child dynamics are some of the strongest behavioral patterns we ever learn. Even as adults, our nervous system often reverts to familiar roles: the peacemaker, the fixer, the over-giver, the quiet one, the one who never says no. These roles feel automatic because they've been rehearsed for years — sometimes decades.

When you begin setting boundaries with a parent or child, you're not just changing a rule; you're changing a reinforcement history. And whenever you stop reinforcing an old pattern, the brain expects resistance. This resistance is called an extinction burst.

An extinction burst sounds like:

- A parent becoming more persistent
- A child protesting louder
- An increase in guilt, pressure, or emotional pushback
- Attempts to pull you back into the old role

This does not mean the boundary is wrong.

It means the old pattern is losing power.

Just like a child might push harder before accepting "no," adults do the same — not out of manipulation, but because the old interaction style is familiar and comfortable.





BEHAVIORAL INSIGHT (CONTINUED)

By Regan

Staying consistent teaches the nervous system — yours and theirs — a new rhythm:

- "This boundary is real."
- "This relationship can adapt."
- "I am safe saying no."

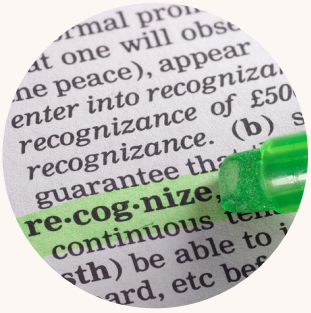
With time, the emotional intensity decreases and the new pattern becomes the norm. Boundaries create healthier relationships, but only when practiced with calm consistency.

Hold steady.

Your patience is rewiring a family legacy.

Here is a simple tool we teach...

THE RESET PHRASE



Before you can reset, you must recognize when you're slipping into an old habit — people-pleasing, over-explaining, shutting down, rescuing, or absorbing emotions that aren't yours.
Pause, breathe, and name it:
"This is my old pattern showing up."
Awareness is the doorway to change.



Say, "I'm doing things differently now."
This simple phrase anchors your heart, shifts you from reacting to responding, and reminds you that you're not obligated to repeat patterns God is helping you outgrow.



This is where change happens. Your new behavior may be:

- saying no without explaining
- speaking truth instead of staying silent
- setting a loving limit
- letting others feel their own emotions
- asking for what you need
- choosing calm over rushing

It may feel uncomfortable at first — new growth often does. But each healthy choice strengthens the muscle of change.



When you start changing patterns, some people may question or resist it. Their reaction doesn't mean you're wrong — it means you're growing.
Return to your grounding phrase: "I'm doing things differently now."
Say it with calm, love, and confidence.
You're not creating distance — you're creating healthier connection.
Not being harsh — just honest.
Not abandoning others — but honoring God, yourself, and the relationship.

Reflection Prompts

- Where do I feel treated like a child?
- What needs to shift?

Your Thoughts

Prayer

Lord, help me navigate family roles with wisdom. You see every layer— every responsibility, every shift, every unspoken expectation, every place where I'm stretched between who I was, who I am now, and who You are shaping me to become.

Teach me how to show up with grace, without losing the boundaries that protect my heart. Teach me how to support my family in ways that are healthy, not heavy. Loving, but not draining. Present, but not consumed. Give me wisdom in the moments when roles are changing — as a daughter, as a wife, as a mother, as a sister, as a helper, and as a woman carrying my own emotions while tending to the emotions of others. You know how complicated it can feel. You know how old patterns try to pull me back, how responsibilities shift unexpectedly, and how easy it is to slip into doing too much or carrying what was never mine. Lord, give me discernment to know when to step in, and when to step back. When to speak, and when to stay silent. When to offer help,

and when to trust You to be their strength instead of me. Help me release the pressure to fix everything. Help me let go of guilt that whispers I'm not doing enough. Help me rest in the truth that love does not require me to abandon myself.

Guide my words, guide my emotions, guide my posture—
so that everything I do in my family reflects Your peace,
Your gentleness, and Your wisdom. Show me how to honor my parents with boundaries. Show me how to love my spouse with grace. Show me how to raise my children with steadiness. Show me how to support extended family without becoming overwhelmed. And when I feel torn, unsure, or too tired to understand what is mine to carry, remind me that You are the ultimate Leader, the ultimate Healer, and the ultimate source of wisdom in every relationship I hold. Lord, help me navigate family roles with wisdom— so I can love well, live freely, and walk in the purpose You designed for me with confidence, clarity, and calm.



Gentle Weekly Challenge

Use the Reset Phrase once.

1

Notice the Moment You Need a Reset

Pay attention to the internal signal—the tightening in your chest, the urge to over-explain, the pull toward an old pattern, or the familiar anxiety rising when someone reacts a certain way. That moment is your invitation to pause. Awareness is the doorway to change.

2

Say the Reset Phrase Calmly and Clearly

Speak it gently but confidently— out loud if you can, or quietly in your spirit: "I'm doing things differently now."

Say it once.

Say it steady.

This phrase helps re-center your heart, redirect your mind, and remind you that you are no longer living from old habits or fear-based responses. It's a grounding truth you step into—not something you have to defend.

3

Follow Through With One Healthy Action

After you speak the phrase, choose a small action that reflects your growth:

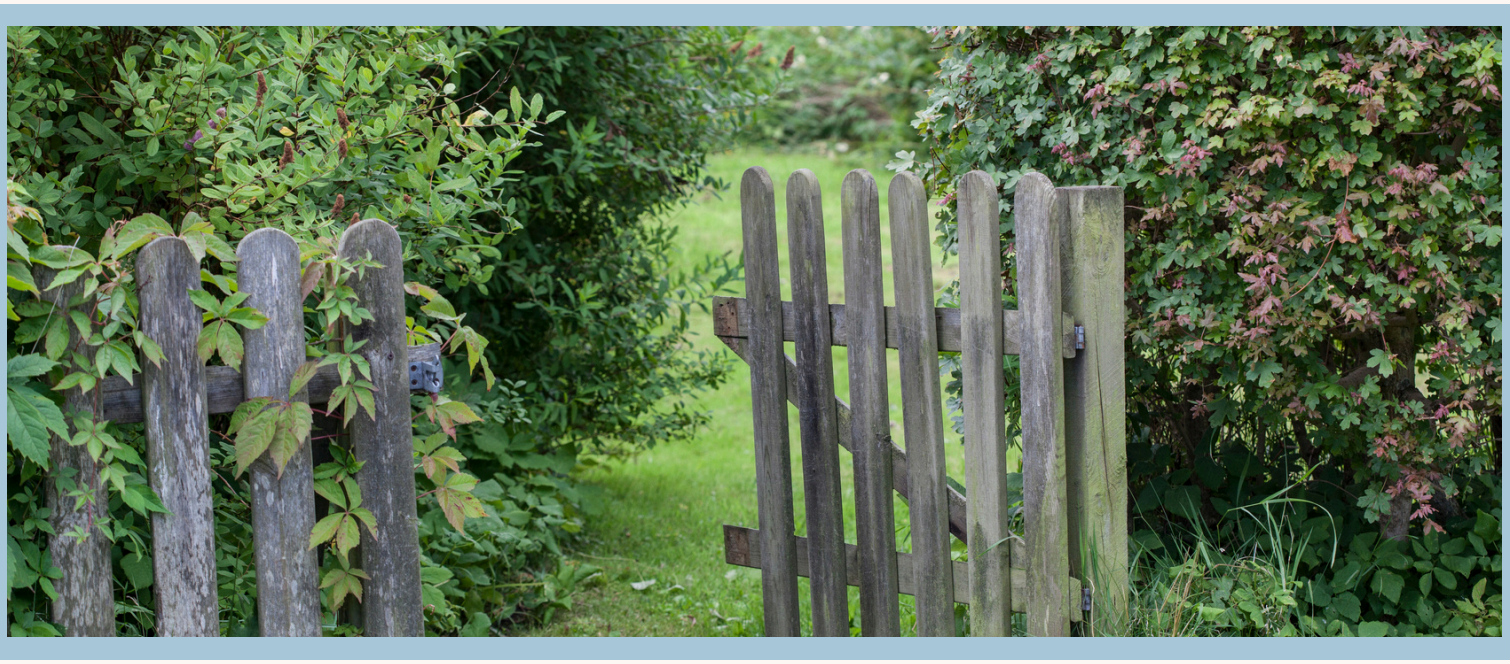
- say no without explaining
- pause instead of reacting
- state a boundary
- ask for what you need
- walk away to regain calm
- shift your tone to something softer and steadier

Your action is the evidence of your reset.

It tells your heart, "I really am doing things differently now."

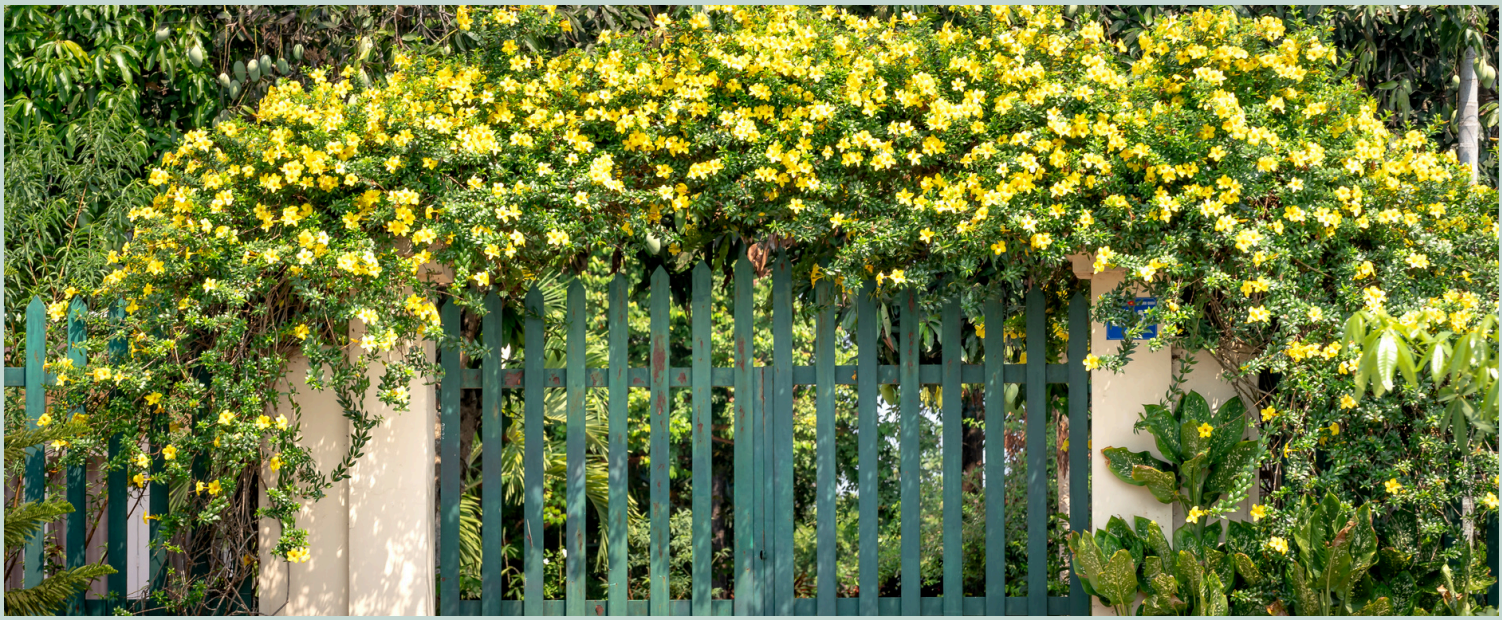
And over time, one reset at a time, your new patterns become your new normal.

PART 4



Living a Balanced, Peaceful Life With God

CHAPTER 10



Boundaries With Friends

A MOMENT TO BREATHE

Friendship should lift your soul. It should feel like light, not pressure—like encouragement, not exhaustion. God-designed friendship is meant to strengthen your spirit, not drain your peace. True friendship isn't built on competition, comparison, or convenience. It's built on connection—the kind that reminds you of who you are and who God says you are.

You shouldn't have to shrink yourself to keep the relationship steady or silence your needs so someone else feels comfortable. Healthy friendship is a place where you can breathe. Where you can laugh, cry, process, and pray without fear of being judged or misunderstood. Where your heart feels safe, your voice feels heard, and your presence feels valued—not merely tolerated. Soul-lifting friendship looks like:

- someone who celebrates your growth instead of feeling threatened by it
- someone who listens to understand, not to gossip
- someone who prays for you behind the scenes
- someone who corrects gently and loves consistently
- someone who speaks truth with tenderness
- someone who honors your boundaries instead of resenting them
- someone who wants to see you whole, not weighed down



A MOMENT TO BREATHE (CONTINUED)

And just as important: you should become this kind of friend to others. Because friendship that lifts your soul is mutual—not one person doing all the giving, all the comforting, all the emotional labor. There is a holy balance in God-centered friendship: sometimes you are the encourager, sometimes you are the one who needs encouragement. Sometimes you pour out, sometimes you receive. Friendship should help you rise—not crumble. It should remind you of God's faithfulness, not push you toward insecurity. It should inspire you to live with more peace, more purpose, and more courage. And if a relationship constantly drains, diminishes, or destabilizes your spirit, you are allowed—with love and wisdom—to loosen your grip and choose connection that reflects the peace God desires for you. Some friendships are for a season. Some are for a lifetime. But the ones God plants deeply in your life will always lift your soul closer to Him.



Two
are 
better than
 one.

— *Ecclesiastes 4:9*







FROM MY HEART

Dr. Tricia

Some friendships are life-giving; others drain joy. Boundaries protect what's healthy. I've learned this so deeply through the years—especially when I look at my friendship with Michelle… my Shelly. We've been friends since kindergarten, the kind of friendship that grows up with you, changes with you, holds space for every version of who you've been and who you're becoming. She's not just a friend; she's like a sister woven into the fabric of my life. We've walked through childhood memories, teenage seasons, adulthood shifts, loss, motherhood, and healing. There are years when life pulled us in different directions, and years when God knit us close again—each time reminding me that some friendships aren't just connections… they're callings. And Shelly has always been a life-giving friend. The type who listens without judgment, who shows up without being asked, who prays without needing details. The type of friend who lifts your soul just by being in the room. The kind where you leave the conversation lighter, steadier, more yourself. But not all friendships feel like that. Some relationships start to drain joy, peace, and emotional energy. Not because people are bad—sometimes they're just not meant to hold that level of access to your heart. And that's where boundaries become sacred. Boundaries don't punish; they protect. They protect your emotional health, your spiritual growth, your God-given peace—and they protect the friendships that are truly meant to last.







FROM MY HEART (CONTINUED)

Dr. Tricia

Healthy boundaries help you recognize which friendships nourish your spirit and which ones slowly deplete it.

They help you steward your capacity with wisdom instead of guilt. They remind you that you can love people deeply without letting every relationship have unlimited access to your heart. And ironically, the friendships that are healthiest—like the one I have with Shelly—thrive because boundaries are respected. There's no pressure to perform. No weight of unrealistic expectations. Just honesty, safety, laughter, prayer, and decades of shared life. Some friendships are meant to hold your story. Some are meant to teach you a lesson and then release.

And some—like the kind Shelly and I have carried since kindergarten—are gifts God plants early, knowing you'll need them for the rest of your life. Boundaries keep the unhealthy relationships from draining you, and they allow the healthy ones to flourish in freedom, respect, and grace.That is how friendship becomes life-giving—steady, secure, and beautifully anchored in God's wisdom.





BEHAVIORAL INSIGHT

By Regan

Healthy friendships can absolutely adapt to boundaries — but the adjustment doesn't happen all at once. From a behavioral perspective, humans learn through shaping, which means we respond to gradual changes that are reinforced over time. Just like we don't jump from one habit to another overnight, relationships also shift through small, consistent steps.

When you begin setting boundaries in a friendship, you're often introducing a new pattern: more honesty, clearer limits, or a healthier pace. At first, your friend may not respond perfectly — not because they don't care, but because they are adjusting to a new rhythm.

Shaping teaches us an important truth:

People don't learn from one big boundary moment — they learn from many consistent ones.

Each time you reinforce the boundary with calm clarity, you strengthen the new pattern. Each time you communicate your needs without apologizing for them, you reinforce mutual respect. Even tiny steps — responding slower, saying "I can't today," or clarifying your availability — help both your brain and theirs adapt.

And here's the beauty:

Healthy friends will rise to meet the boundary.





BEHAVIORAL INSIGHT (CONTINUED)

By Regan

Over time, you may notice:

- Fewer assumptions about your time
- More thoughtful requests
- Better reciprocity
- Less guilt when you say no
- More emotional space in the friendship

These are signs the shaping process is working.

Consistency is the key. If you send mixed signals — firm one day, flexible the next — the learning pattern becomes unclear, and the friendship may default back to old expectations.

But when you introduce boundaries gently and reinforce them steadily, the relationship strengthens. Boundaries don't push good friends away — they help them love you better.

Here is a simple tool we teach...

THE HONEST DIALOGUE



Before addressing the boundary, affirm the relationship:
"I value our friendship..." or "Your presence means a lot to me..."
This creates emotional safety and sets the tone for honest, caring communication.



After affirming the relationship, add: "...but I need..." and name the boundary calmly and specifically.
For example:
"...but I need more space when I'm overwhelmed."
"...but I need us to communicate more consistently."
"...but I need to feel respected when we disagree."
Specificity creates understanding.
Gentleness creates peace.



Boundaries don't push people away — they guide healthier connection. You can say:
"It would help me if we could..."

- text before stopping by
- avoid certain topics
- use gentler tones
- set clear expectations
- pause when emotions rise

This offers hope, not distance — and shows you want the relationship to grow.



Not everyone reacts calmly to boundaries. If emotions build, stay grounded. You don't need to over-explain or take back what's true for you.
Simply repeat:
"I value our friendship, and I also need..."
Saying it once is honesty.
Saying it again calmly is clarity.
You don't have to say it ten times out of guilt.
Healthy relationships grow with truth — and truth gently reveals what is healthy.

Reflection Prompts

- Which friendships feel draining?
- Which feel supportive?

Your Thoughts

Prayer

Lord, bless and align my friendships with Your will. You know the people who surround my life— the ones who lift me, the ones who stretch me, and even the ones who drain me. You see every conversation, every emotion, every shift I'm still learning how to navigate. So I place my friendships in Your hands. Bless the friends who are life-giving— the ones who refresh my soul, speak truth in love, and hold space for who I am becoming. Strengthen those connections, deepen them, and make them safe places where Your presence dwells. And for the friendships that feel misaligned, imbalanced, or heavy, give me wisdom.

Show me where to release, where to redefine, and where to set boundaries that protect the peace You've given me. Teach me to love well without losing myself, to discern without judging, and to walk in grace without carrying what isn't mine. Lord, align my friendships with Your purpose. Bring people into my life who sharpen me, encourage me, and challenge me toward holiness. Remove relationships that are rooted in drama, confusion, or insecurity. Heal the ones that can be restored, and gently close the doors that no longer honor the woman You are shaping me to be. Surround me with friends who pray more than they gossip, who uplift more than they compete, who honor my boundaries, my growth, and my calling. Friends who stay through the hard seasons, celebrate the victories, and love me with the steady, Christ-like love that reflects Your heart. And Lord, make me that kind of friend too— faithful, wise, trustworthy, gracious, a woman who brings peace into the spaces she enters and encouragement into the hearts she holds. Bless and align my friendships with Your will, so my relationships become reflections of Your goodness— life-giving, purposeful, and anchored in truth. Amen.



Gentle Weekly Challenge

Have one honest—but gentle—conversation.

1

Prepare Your Heart With Prayer and Calm
Before you say a single word, take a moment to breathe and invite God into the conversation.
Ask Him to steady your tone, soften your posture, and guide your words.
Gentleness begins before the conversation starts—in your spirit, not just your voice. Remind yourself: "My goal is connection, not correction." This shifts your heart toward love instead of defense.

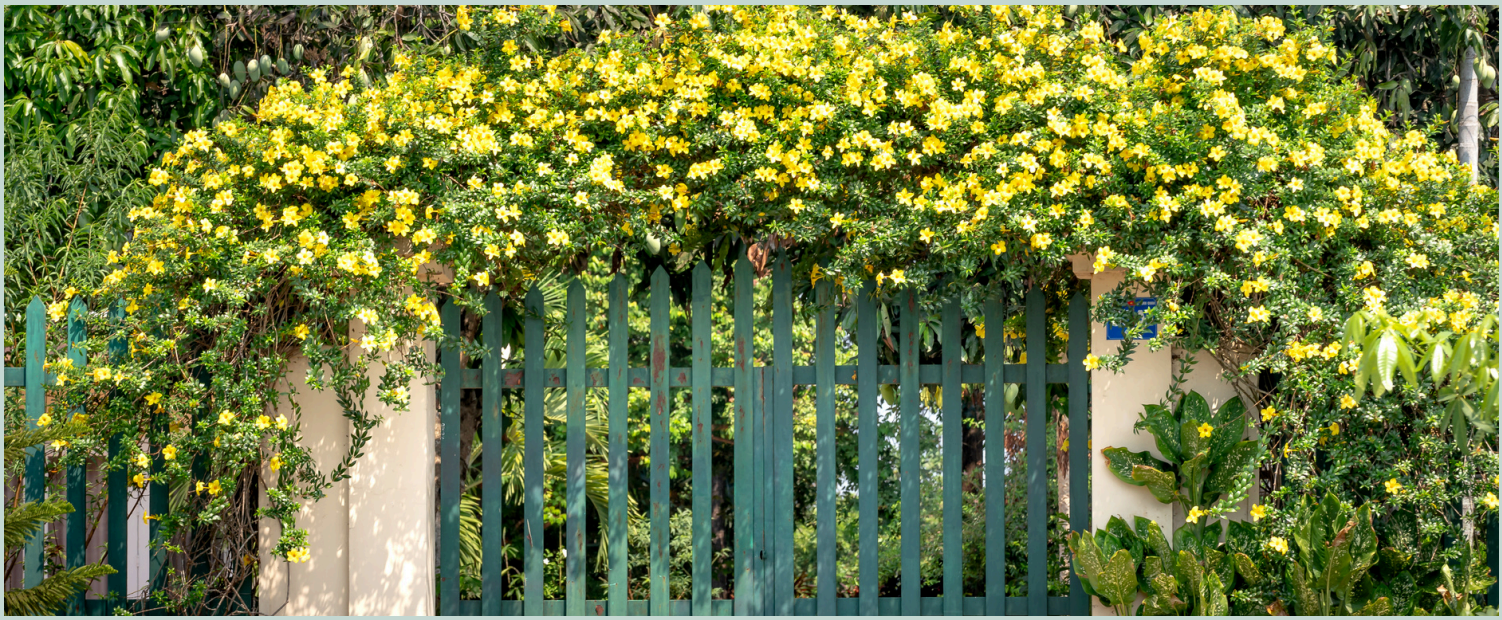
2

Speak Your Truth Clearly, Softly, and Respectfully
Choose honesty without harshness.
Share what you feel, what you need, or what's been weighing on your heart—but do it in a way that protects the relationship, not pressures it.
You can use a gentle starter like: "I care about us, and I want to talk about something honestly..." or "This matters to me, so I want to share it with love..." Gentle truth opens doors. Harsh truth closes them. And your tone can carry compassion even when the words are difficult.

3

Listen Fully, Without Defending or Rushing
After you speak, pause.
Let the other person process, respond, and be human. Listen with curiosity, not combat.
Let the conversation breathe.You don't have to fix everything. You don't have to convince them.
You don't have to revisit your entire childhood to justify your feelings.
Just stay present, stay calm, and stay open. Honesty + gentleness creates safety—and safety is where true healing, trust, and reconnection grow.

CHAPTER 11



Boundaries With Work & Calling

A MOMENT TO BREATHE

Your worth isn't based on productivity. It isn't measured by how much you accomplish, how fast you move, or how many people you keep happy in a day. You are not more valuable when your to-do list is checked off, and you are not less valuable when you need rest. Your worth doesn't rise and fall with your momentum, your energy level, your output, or your ability to hold everything together. We live in a culture that praises constant motion—busy schedules, overloaded calendars, overextended hearts. Somewhere along the way, many of us learned to tie our identity to how much we get done… to how useful we are… to how well we perform. But God never asked you to earn your worth. He never tied your identity to your productivity. He never told you that being tired makes you less faithful or that slowing down makes you less valuable.

Your worth was established long before you ever achieved anything. It was spoken over you before you performed, produced, or proved a single thing. Your worth is fixed because it is rooted in who made you—not in what you make happen. You are allowed to rest. You are allowed to slow down. You are allowed to have days when you do less,

move gently, and breathe deeper. You are allowed to be human. And even on the days when you feel behind, when the laundry piles up, when the inbox is overflowing, when the world seems to expect more than you can give—God's love for you does not shrink. Productivity is a tool, not a measure of identity. Accomplishments are blessings, not validation. And rest is not laziness—it is worship, stewardship, and obedience. Your worth is steady because God is steady. Your value is constant because His love is constant. And you are enough—even when you are not producing a thing.



In vain
you rise 
early and stay
 up late.

— *Psalm 127:2*







FROM MY HEART

Dr. Tricia

Work is good. Overworking is not. Calling should not crush you. I've had to learn this in a very personal way—

because even in retirement, even in a season that was supposed to be quieter, I stepped into Faithfully She with passion and purpose… and immediately found myself slipping into old patterns of overworking. Not because I'm trying to prove anything, but because I'm task-oriented by nature. I love building, creating, planning, serving. It's how God wired me. But sometimes the very strengths He gives us can become heavy when we carry them without boundaries.

Even a calling—something holy, meaningful, God-ordained— can start to feel crushing if we forget that we are human. If we forget that God didn't design us to run at full speed all the time. If we forget that rest is not the opposite of purpose; it is part of it. Work is good. Purpose is good. Stewarding your gifts is good. But not when it costs the health of your heart, your body, your marriage, or your peace.

Overworking isn't simply about doing too much— it's about carrying more than God asked you to. It's saying yes out of habit instead of obedience. It's mistaking constant motion for spiritual maturity. It's forgetting that God moves even when you pause. And I've felt this deeply as Faithfully She has grown. The ideas come. The excitement rises. The desire to serve becomes so strong…and before I know it, I'm pouring out from a place that isn't sustainable.







FROM MY HEART (CONTINUED)

Dr. Tricia

But the truth is:
Calling should lift you, not break you.
Calling should grow you, not drain you.
Calling should partner with grace, not push you into burnout.
You can be committed without being consumed. You can be diligent without being depleted. You can be purposeful without losing your peace. God didn't call you to serve Him through exhaustion. He calls you to serve Him through abiding. Through surrender. Through rhythms of rest and renewal.
So even in retirement—even with big dreams and a task-oriented heart—I'm learning to let God pace me. To work from a place of overflow, not obligation. To trust that if He called me to it,He will also sustain me for it...
but only when I align with His rhythms, not my urgency. Work is good. Overworking is not. And your calling—your beautiful, God-breathed calling—was never meant to crush you. It was meant to grow you in grace.





BEHAVIORAL INSIGHT

By Regan

When your nervous system is overwhelmed for long periods of time, your brain shifts into survival mode. In this state, you're wired for reacting, not reasoning. You may find yourself saying yes too quickly, avoiding hard conversations, overcommitting, or shutting down — not because you're weak, but because your brain is trying to protect you.

ABA teaches us that when a behavior isn't serving us, we don't just "stop it."
We replace it with something that meets the same need in a healthier way.
This is where regulation routines become powerful.

A regulation routine is a small, practiced sequence that helps bring your nervous system out of survival mode and back into your window of tolerance. When you pair these routines with boundaries, you retrain your brain to respond from calm instead of panic.

Here's how replacement-behavior training works:

1. Notice the Trigger

Stress, pressure, or emotional overload are signals that your nervous system is leaving regulation.

2. Insert a Replacement Behavior

Instead of reacting automatically, you practice a regulating action such as:

- Taking a slow inhale/exhale
- Saying, "Let me think about that"
- Doing a 2-minute grounding exercise





BEHAVIORAL INSIGHT (CONTINUED)

By Regan

- Using a calm boundary script
- Taking a brief sensory break

This behavior blocks the old stress-driven pattern and creates space to choose a boundary that honors your capacity.

3. Reinforce the New Pattern

Your brain learns through reward. Reinforce the calm by noticing:

- Relief
- Clarity
- Peace
- A sense of control

Over time, these routines rewire your stress response.

Chronic stress doesn't get the final say.

With consistent regulation and compassionate replacement behaviors, your boundaries become stronger — and so do you.

Here is a simple tool we teach...

THE WORK WINDOW



Set your start and stop times based on what your life and energy can truly hold today, not what your inner perfectionist demands. Ask yourself: "What is sustainable for me today?"
A work window isn't restriction — it's stewardship. It protects both your purpose and your peace.



When your start time arrives, begin calmly and purposefully — maybe with a breath, a prayer, or "Lord, bless the work of my hands today."
A grounded start keeps you focused and centered.



Stopping is often harder than starting, but your stop time protects your health, your relationships, and tomorrow's clarity. When it arrives, close your computer, silence notifications, and remind yourself: "My work matters, but so does my rest."
Your calling shouldn't consume the hours meant for peace and restoration.



As you end your work window, don't focus on what's unfinished. Notice what you did accomplish and trust God with the rest.
Say to yourself: "I did what I could today. God will cover what I couldn't."
This turns your stopping point into worship instead of worry — and teaches your heart that productivity and peace can coexist.

Reflection Prompts

- Where do I overextend at work?
- What boundary would protect my peace?

Your Thoughts

Prayer

Lord, help me honor my calling without losing my wellbeing. You see the passion in my heart, the desire to serve, the excitement I feel when I step into what You've asked me to do… but You also see the places where I run too fast, carry too much, or forget that I am human. Teach me the holy balance between purpose and peace. Show me how to pursue the work You've given me without slipping into striving. Help me remember that You never called me to exhaustion— You called me to obedience. And obedience includes rest. When I feel the pull to do more, remind me that more is not always Your will. When I am tempted to measure my worth by productivity, center me in the truth that my identity is anchored in You alone. When the weight of responsibility feels heavy, lift my shoulders and teach me to place the load back into Your hands. Lord, protect me from the mindset that tells me I must sacrifice my health, my marriage, my peace, or my joy to walk in my calling. You did not design my purpose to drain me— You designed it to shape me, grow me, and allow Your grace to flow through me. Help me build healthy rhythms. Help me pace myself with wisdom.

Help me listen when my body is tired and my spirit is overwhelmed. Help me honor the boundaries You're teaching me to set— with work, with people, and with myself. Give me discernment to know when to pour out and when to step back. When to speak and when to rest. When to show up in strength and when to be still before You. Lord, align my calling with Your timing, Your pace, and Your priorities. Let the work I do bring You glory— not burnout. Let my calling be a place of joy — not pressure. Let my obedience lead me toward life— not depletion. Help me honor my calling wholeheartedly, and help me protect my wellbeing faithfully. May purpose and peace walk together in my life held by Your steady hand. Amen.



Gentle Weekly Challenge

Honor your stop time for three days.

1

Set a Realistic Stop Time—and Treat It Like an Appointment With Peace
Choose a stop time that matches your season, energy, and responsibilities. Not the version of you that tries to do everything, but the version of you who wants to live with balance and wellbeing. Write it down. Say it out loud. Let it become a boundary you honor the same way you'd honor a commitment to someone else. This is your intentional closing of the day —your exhale.

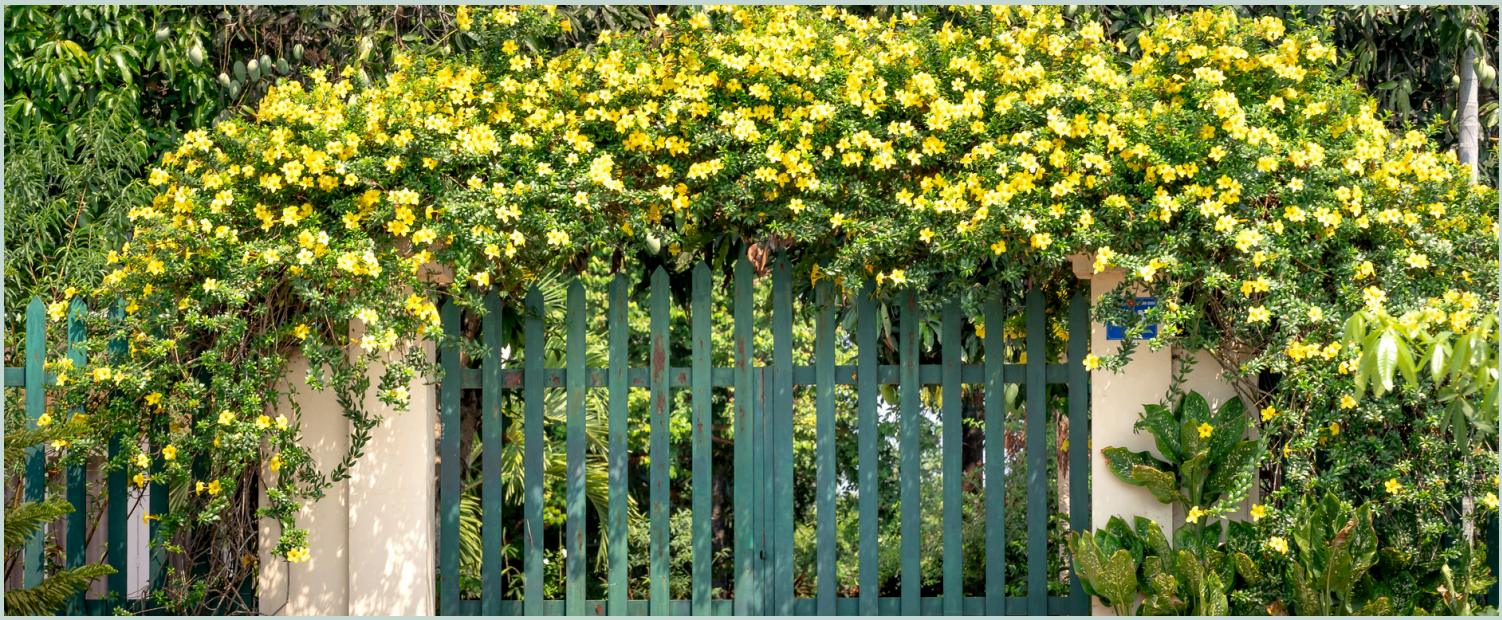
2

When the Stop Time Arrives, Close the Day Completely
For three days, practice fully stopping at the time you set. Shut the laptop. Turn off the notifications. Walk away from the tasks that will still be there tomorrow. And if your mind tries to pull you back—gently remind yourself: "My calling matters, but so does my wellbeing."
This is the moment you break old patterns and build new ones. Stopping is a spiritual discipline for the woman who has always been driven to do more.

3

Fill the After-Work Space With Something Restorative
Instead of drifting back into tasks, choose something that nourishes your heart:
• a quiet moment with the Lord
• a walk
• time with family
• laughter
• reading
• a calming routine
• simply enjoying stillness
When you replace overworking with life-giving rhythms, your body learns safety, your mind learns peace, and your spirit learns that rest is not wasted time — it's worship.
Honor your stop time for three days, and watch how your heart begins to trust that productivity isn't your purpose— obedience and wellbeing are.

CHAPTER 12



Living a Boundaried, Balanced Life

A MOMENT TO BREATHE

You were created for peace. Not chaos. Not constant rushing.
Not the never-ending pressure to perform, please, or prove yourself. Peace is not a luxury for you—it is part of your God-given design.
Before the world told you to hurry,
before responsibilities piled up, before you learned to measure your worth by productivity or perfection, God breathed life into you with peace at the very center of your being.
His first gift to humanity wasn't tasks or expectations—
it was shalom: wholeness, rest, harmony, inner steadiness. A soul that knows it is held. A heart that knows it is safe. A mind that knows it is loved. Peace isn't something you earn. It's something you return to. The world may glorify busyness, but heaven glorifies stillness. The world may praise striving,
but God blesses surrender. The world may shout that you must do more to be enough, but God whispers that you already are. And even when your days are full, even when your roles stretch you in different directions—wife, mother, daughter, friend, leader—the peace God designed for you is not fragile. It doesn't disappear when life shifts. It's not dependent on circumstances being perfect. Peace is your inheritance. Your covering. Your grounding place. Your spiritual home. And every time you slow down, breathe deep, pray, or choose rest over pressure, you are returning to what God built into you from the beginning. You were not created for overwhelm.



A MOMENT TO BREATHE (CONTINUED)

You were not created to carry every burden alone. You were not created to live tied to anxiety, guilt, fear, or endless expectation. You were created for peace—
for rhythms that restore you, relationships that support you,
and a life paced by God, not by pressure. Let that truth settle into your spirit:
Peace is not something outside of you. It is something God placed within you. And He is inviting you back to it—again and again, moment by moment, breath by breath.



The Lord
is my 
shepherd; I shall

not want.

— *Psalm 23:1*







FROM MY HEART

Dr. Tricia

A boundaried life is a fruitful life. It creates space for joy, rest, clarity, and presence — the very things your soul has been craving, and the very things God desires for you. For so long, many of us believed that saying yes to everything made us loving. That stretching ourselves thin meant we were strong. That being available 24/7 proved our devotion—to family, to friends, to ministry, to purpose.

But the truth is this: a life without boundaries doesn't make you more faithful—it makes you more fatigued. You cannot pour deeply when you are poured out. You cannot love well when you're beyond empty. You cannot hear God clearly when your mind and heart are constantly overwhelmed.

Boundaries are not barriers; they are protection. They are wisdom in action. They are grace wrapped in clarity. They are the spiritual discipline of choosing what aligns with God's peace over what demands your people-pleasing. A boundaried life creates space—holy, needed space—for joy to return, for rest to heal you, for clarity to guide you, and for presence to make you whole again. When you protect your time, you gain margin. When you honor your limits, you gain strength. When you guard your emotional energy, you gain peace. When you choose intentional relationships, you gain connection. Fruitfulness doesn't come from busyness. It comes from alignment. From purpose. From intentional living. From the quiet, steady refusal to carry what is not yours to carry. A boundaried life allows you to show up with your whole heart—not the pieces left over after everyone else has taken what they want. It allows you to love from overflow instead of depletion.







FROM MY HEART (CONTINUED)

Dr. Tricia

It allows you to hear God's voice more clearly because your soul is not drowning in noise. It allows you to be present with your spouse, your children, your calling, and yourself. It allows you to cultivate a life that is spacious enough for God to move. And in that space— fruit begins to grow. Not the fruit of striving, but the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. A boundaried life is a fruitful life because it is a God-honoring life. One that protects what matters, releases what drains, and makes room for the woman He is shaping you to become.





BEHAVIORAL INSIGHT

By Regan

Your nervous system craves predictability. It feels safest when your actions match your intentions and when your limits are clear — both to you and to others. This is why boundaries feel chaotic at first but calming over time. In the beginning, every "no," every pause, and every moment of honesty feels like a big emotional effort. But as those actions become habitual, your nervous system begins to settle.

From a behavioral standpoint, consistency transforms boundaries from something you do into something you are. Each time you hold a limit, you reinforce a new neural pathway. Each time you communicate clearly, you strengthen your sense of safety. Each time you follow through, your brain learns:

"This is how we protect our peace now."

Inconsistency, however, keeps your nervous system on high alert. When you waver, people push back, or you say yes after saying no, the brain interprets this as unpredictability. Unpredictability triggers stress — not because the boundary is wrong, but because the pattern is unclear.

Consistency is what rewires the pattern.

As boundaries become routine, you'll notice:

- Less internal conflict
- More emotional regulation
- Reduced guilt
- Fewer boundary violations
- Calmer communication
- A stronger sense of identity





BEHAVIORAL INSIGHT (CONTINUED)

By Regan

Your nervous system feels grounded because the boundary is no longer a decision — it's a rhythm.

Think of it like training a muscle. You don't get stronger after one repetition. You get stronger from showing up consistently, even in small ways, until the effort becomes natural. Boundaries work the same way.

Your peace grows in proportion to your consistency.

And your nervous system stabilizes when your boundaries stop being a battle — and start becoming your new normal.

Here is a simple tool we teach...

THE BOUNDARY AUDIT



Take a moment to notice the boundaries you're already doing well — the "no" you said without guilt, the work hours you protected, the healthier rhythms you've started. Write them down and acknowledge them.
Progress is holy.
What you honor, you reinforce.



Pay attention to where stress, resentment, or emotional fatigue keeps appearing. These are clues that a boundary is missing or unclear. Ask yourself:

- Where am I overcommitted?
- Where do I feel drained or obligated?
- Where am I slipping into old patterns?

This isn't about guilt — it's about clarity so you can protect your peace.



Notice the gaps or tensions, and ask God where shifts are needed. You may need to strengthen a boundary, communicate it more clearly, follow through, reduce emotional access, or add structure to your rhythms.
Adjusting isn't failing — it's maturing.
It's choosing alignment over autopilot.



You don't need to fix everything at once. Choose one small shift you can make today — a simple no, honoring your stop time, limiting emotional labor, speaking up about a need, or creating a supportive rhythm.
Boundaries grow through action, not intention.
One aligned step can shift everything.

Reflection Prompts

- Which boundaries helped me most?
- Which do I need to strengthen?

Your Thoughts

Prayer

Lord, anchor my life in peace, purpose, and healthy boundaries. You see every part of me—the places where I flourish, the places where I overextend, and the places where I'm still learning how to protect what You've entrusted to me. Anchor me in peace, Lord. Not the fragile kind the world offers, but the deep, steady, unshakeable peace that comes from You alone. The peace that quiets anxiety, calms my thoughts, and reminds me that I am held—even when life feels overwhelming. Teach me how to return to that peace again and again, not through striving, but through surrender. Not through perfection, but through presence with You. Anchor me in purpose, Lord. Help me walk with clarity, not confusion; with intention, not urgency.

Show me where You are calling me to invest my time, my heart, and my gifts— and where You are inviting me to release what no longer aligns with who I'm becoming. Let my purpose be paced by Your wisdom, not my pressure to do more or be more. And Lord, anchor me in healthy boundaries. Teach me that boundaries are not rejection—they are protection. They safeguard my peace, my relationships, and my emotional wellbeing. They help me live from a place of overflow instead of depletion. Give me discernment to know when to say yes and courage to say no when needed. Help me recognize where I am carrying burdens that aren't mine, absorbing emotions that don't belong to me, or giving more than You've asked me to give. Strengthen the boundaries that honor You, and soften the ones that were built from fear. Lord, anchor my days so I don't drift back into old patterns—overworking, overthinking, over-pleasing. Anchor my heart so it beats in rhythm with Yours. Anchor my life so it reflects peace instead of pressure, purpose instead of panic, and health instead of heaviness.

Let Your Spirit guide my steps. Let Your truth shape my identity. Let Your wisdom define my limits. Let Your love steady my soul.

Lord, anchor my life in peace, purpose, and healthy boundaries—for in that place, I am free, I am whole, and I am aligned with Your will.

Amen.



Gentle Weekly Challenge

Choose One boundary to strengthen this week.

1

Identify the Boundary That Will Bring the Most Peace
Take a quiet moment to reflect— Where in your life are you feeling the most drained, overwhelmed, or stretched? Is it with work? Family? Friendships? Time? Emotional availability? Ask yourself: "Which boundary, if strengthened just a little, would make my week lighter and my heart calmer?" Don't choose five. Don't overhaul everything. Choose one.

2

Define the Boundary Clearly and Simply Write it down in one sentence. Make it specific and doable.
Examples:

- "I will stop working at 5 PM."
- "I will say no to last-minute requests."
- "I will not absorb someone else's emotions."
- "I will limit how often I check my phone."
- "I will honor my rest without guilt."

Clarity is what turns a wish into a boundary.

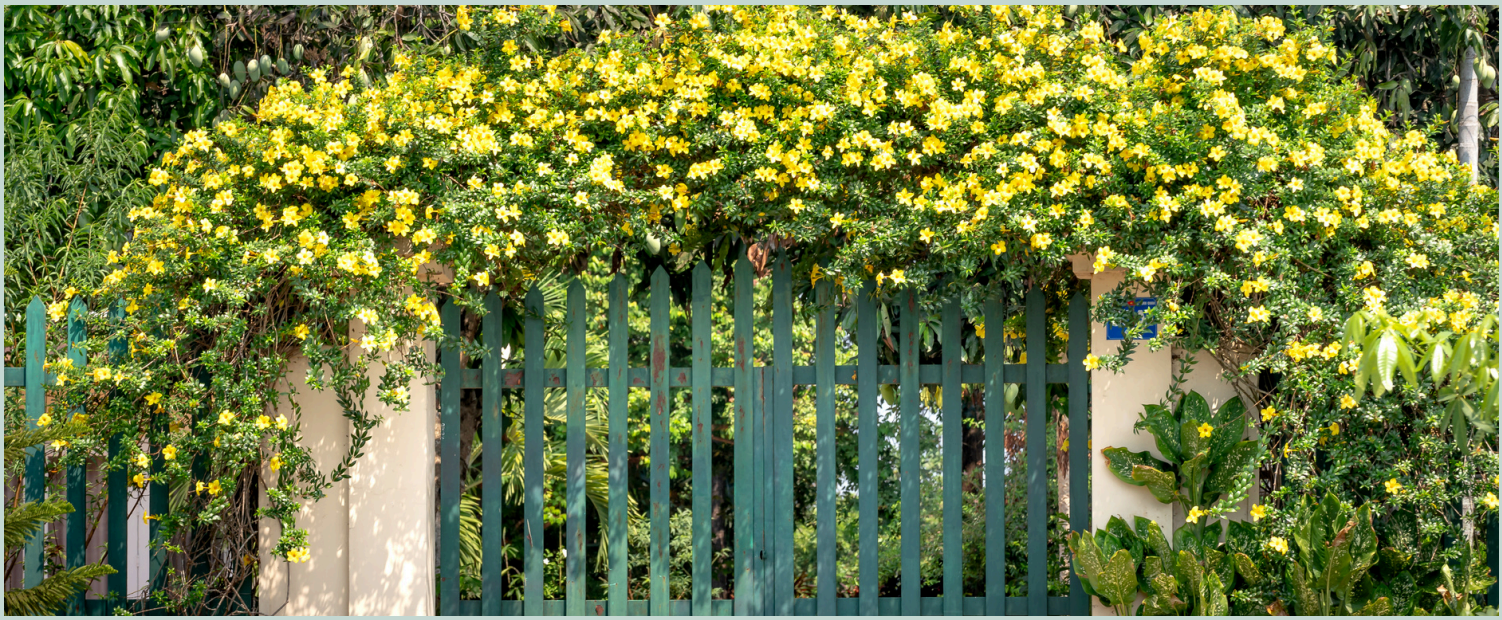
3

Practice It Consistently for One Week—With Grace
For seven days, honor that boundary like it's sacred. There will be moments when you feel guilty or pulled back into old patterns — that's normal.
When the discomfort rises, remind your heart:
"This boundary is protecting my peace." Each time you follow through, you strengthen your confidence, your emotional health, and your ability to create a life aligned with God's wisdom.
One boundary, practiced faithfully, can shift an entire season.

You are worthy of peace.
You are worthy of rest.
You are worthy of boundaries.

May this guide help you walk in confidence, clarity, and Christ-rooted wisdom—without guilt.

BONUS SECTION



Helpful Tools for Your Boundaried Life

Boundary
SCRIPTS LIBRARY

A collection of ready-to-use phrases for real-life moments.
Organized by category:

01

TIME BOUNDARIES

- “My schedule is full, so I’ll have to pass.”
- I don’t have the capacity for that this week.”

02

EMOTIONAL BOUNDARIES

- “I care, but I’m not able to take this on emotionally right now.”

03

FAMILY BOUNDARIES

- “I love you, and I’m choosing a different approach.”

04

WORK BOUNDARIES

- “I’m available between 9–4. After that, I’ll respond tomorrow.”

05

PEOPLE-PLEASING SUPPORT

- “I’m choosing what’s healthiest for me right now.”

"Is This Mine to Carry?" WORKSHEET

01

WHAT'S MY RESPONSIBILITY?

List only what is truly yours to manage.

- My actions:
- My emotions:
- My choices:
- My boundaries:
- What God is nudging me to do:

Reflection: Is this something I can realistically control or influence?

02

WHAT'S SOMEONE ELSE'S RESPONSIBILITY?

Identify what belongs to another person—emotionally, mentally, or practically.

- Their emotions:
- Their reactions:
- Their choices or habits:
- Their boundaries or lack of boundaries:
- Their spiritual growth process:

Reflection: Am I carrying something that belongs to them?

03

WHAT DO I NEED TO RELEASE?

Release the weight that is draining your peace.

- Worries I can't fix:
- Situations outside my control:
- Expectations others placed on me:
- Guilt or pressure I'm not meant to hold:
- Emotional burdens that aren't mine:

Reflection: Lord, what am I holding that You're asking me to lay down?

04

WHAT DO I NEED TO COMMUNICATE?

Clarify what needs to be voiced calmly and kindly.

- A boundary I need to express:
- A truth I need to share:
- A request I need to make:
- A pattern I need to address:
- Appreciation or affirmation:

Reflection: How can I communicate with honesty, clarity, and grace?

05

CLOSING

Lord, help me carry only what belongs to me, release what does not, and communicate what honors You and protects my peace.

Boundary Mapping
TEMPLATE

LET'S MAP IT OUT:	
MY BOUNDARY	
WHY I NEED IT	
WHO IT IMPACTS	
WHAT I WILL SAY	
WHAT I WILL DO IF IT'S VIOLATED	
WHAT REACTION I EXPECT	
HOW I WILL STAY STEADY	

FAITHFULLY SHE FATHFULLY SHE FAITHFULLY SHE FAITHFULLY SHE. FAITHFULLY SHE FAITHFULLY

Weekly CAPACITY TRACKER

A printable weekly page where you can note:

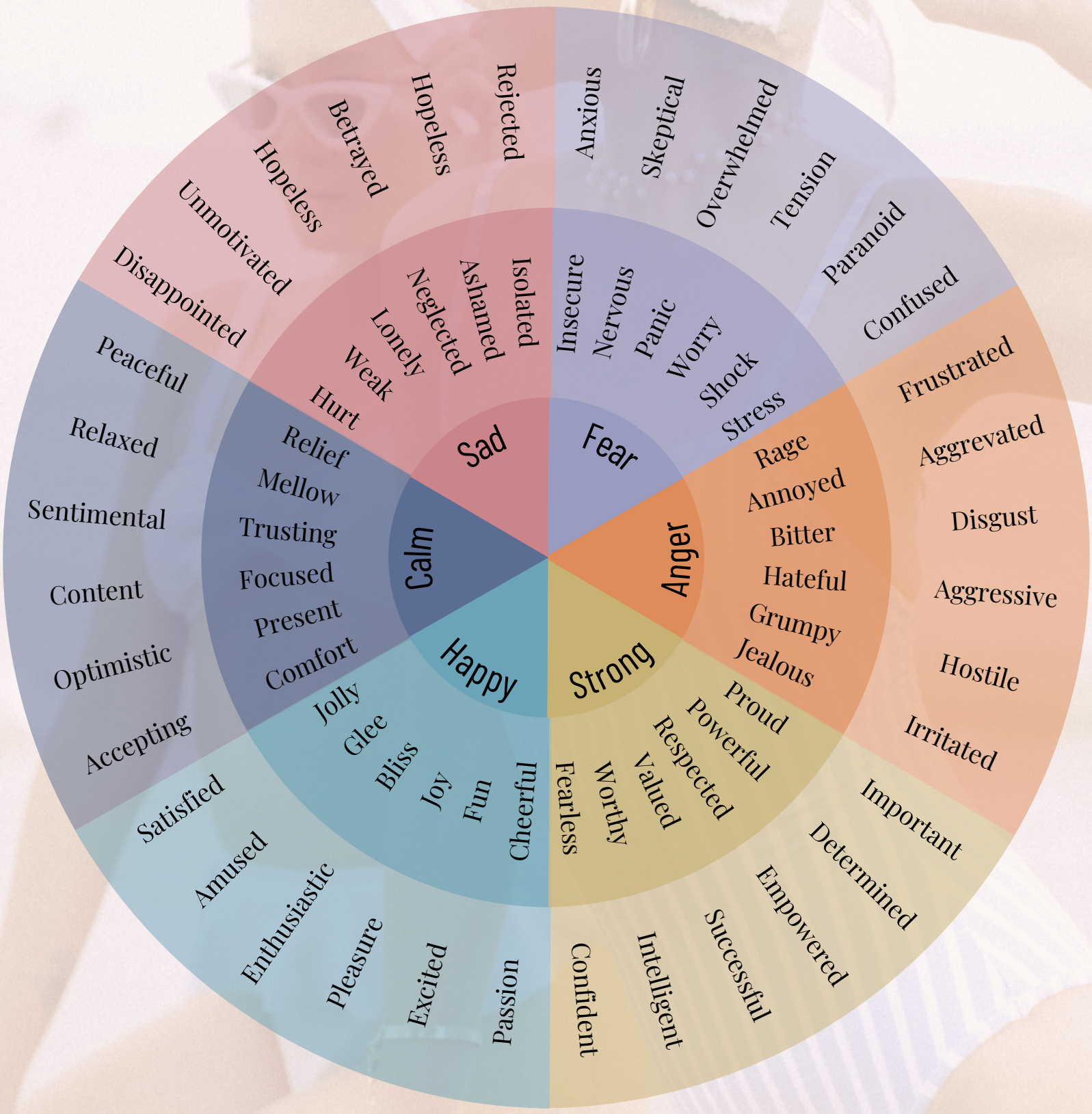
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- What drained my energy?
- What restored my energy?
- What boundary protected me this week?
- What boundary needs reinforcement?

This builds boundary awareness and habit formation.

FULLY SHE FATHFULLY SHE FAITHFULLY SHE FAITHFULLY SHE. FAITHFULLY SHE FAITHFULLY SHE

The Feel Wheel



AFFIRMATIONS FOR A BOUNDARIED WOMAN

- “I am worthy of rest, not just responsibility.”
- “I can show up with love and still honor my limits.”
- “God strengthens me when I choose peace over pressure.”
- “I am allowed to protect my emotional and spiritual wellbeing.”
- “Saying yes to myself is not selfish—it’s stewardship.”
- “I am not responsible for managing everyone else’s emotions.”
- “My voice matters, and my truth deserves space.”
- “I release the urge to over-explain. Clarity is enough.”
- “I can set boundaries with gentleness and confidence.”
- “God guides me as I create a life aligned with His peace.”



Scripture CARDS

These can be used for boundary support.

Psalm 23
"The Lord is my shepherd; I have all that I need. He lets me rest in green meadows; He leads me beside peaceful streams. He renews my strength. He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to His name."
This reminds your heart that God cares for your needs and leads you into peace— not pressure, not overwhelm.

Proverbs 4:23
"Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it." A foundational boundary verse— you are called to protect your heart with wisdom and intention.

Galatians 1:10
"Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ."
This truth breaks the cycle of seeking validation from others.

Matthew 11:28
"Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."
Jesus invites you to bring the weight you're carrying— and let Him hold it.

Romans 12:18
"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."
Your responsibility is peace—
not perfection, not control, not carrying what isn't yours.

Isaiah 26:3
"You will keep in perfect peace
all who trust in You,
all whose thoughts are fixed on You."
This verse supports boundary work because it reminds you that
your peace is anchored in God, not in managing everyone else's emotions.

Thank-you!

Thank you so much for purchasing Faithful Boundaries. It means more than we can express that you've invited us to walk alongside you as you reclaim your peace, protect your purpose, and learn to honor the limits God designed for your wellbeing. Our prayer is that as you read, you will sense the gentle, steady presence of the Lord meeting you right where you are—in the middle of your real, everyday moments. May these pages remind you that you don't have to carry every burden, absorb every emotion, or navigate every relationship alone. God is with you. He is guiding you. And He is shaping you into a woman who lives with clarity, calm, and confidence.

We would love to stay connected with you beyond this book. Join our Faithfully She email community for weekly encouragement, biblical reflections, and practical tools to support your journey into healthier boundaries and a more grounded, grace-filled life. You'll receive gentle reminders of truth, wisdom for real-life situations, and faith-centered guidance as you continue learning to love others without losing yourself. We are praying for you—that your heart finds rest, your mind renews with God's truth, and your spirit grows stronger in His grace. May Faithful Boundaries be a companion on your journey toward peace, purpose, and a life aligned with the One who sustains you.

With love and gratitude,

Dr. Tricia & Regan

Faithfully She — Rooted in Faith. Rising in Confidence.



Contact:

hello@faithfullyshe.com