23 Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. - *Proverbs 4:23 NIV*

the ten laws of **BOUNDARIES**

1. **THE LAW OF SOWING AND REAPING**
   - The law of cause and effect

   7*Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.* 8*Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.* - *Galatians 6:7-8 NIV*

   - The law contains specific cause and effect principles, which we all understand.
   - The law of Sowing and Reaping can be interrupted.
   - Sometimes people don’t reap what they sow, because someone else steps in and reaps the consequences for them.

2. **THE LAW OF RESPONSIBILITY**
   - Responsible TO OTHERS and FOR OURSELVES
   - The law of responsibility includes loving others.

   13*You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.* 14*For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”* - *Galatians 5:13-14 NIV*

   - We are to love one another, not be one another.
   - You are responsible FOR yourself and I am responsible FOR myself.
   - Another aspect of being responsible “TO” is not only in the giving but in the setting of boundaries
   - It is in keeping with God’s law of responsibility to set limits on another’s destructive and irresponsible behavior.
   - It is not good to rescue someone from the consequences of their sin... you will only have to do it again.
   - The bible teaches that we are to GIVE to needs and put LIMITS on sin... boundaries help us do this.

3. **THE LAW OF POWER**

   15*I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. 16And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. 17As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. 18For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. 19For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. 20Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. 21So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. 22For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; 23but I see another law*


at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. - Romans 7:15-23 NIV

- You have the power to agree with the truth about your problems.
  - This is called confession.

5This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 6If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. 7But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. 8If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 10If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us. - 1 John 1:5-10 NIV

- You have the power to submit to God.
  - You always have the power to ask for help.
  - You always have the power to yield to God.
  - We can admit that we are powerless and that God is all-powerful.
  - We can humble ourselves before God.
  - You may not be able to make yourself well... but you can call the Doctor!
- You have the power to turn from your evil ways and turn to God.
  - This is called repentance.
  - Being willing to admit what you can and can’t control is the first step toward recovery.
  - This is establishing boundaries.

4. THE LAW OF RESPECT
- We focus on others and lose clarity about ourselves.
  - This is a boundary issue.
  - Sometimes the problem is that we judge others’ boundaries.

1 “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. 2For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. - Matthew 7:1-2 NIV

- When we judge other’s boundaries then ours will fall under the same judgement.
  - This sets up a fear cycle inside that makes us afraid to set boundaries that we need to set.

12 So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. - Matthew 7:12 NIV

25But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do. - James 1:25 NIV

- If we love and respect people who tell us no, they will love and respect our no.
  - Freedom begets freedom
  - If we are walking in the Spirit, we give people freedom to make their own choices.

5. THE LAW OF MOTIVATION
- False motives keep us from setting boundaries.
  - Fear of loss, or abandonment. This is the dominant motive of martyrs. They give to get love, and when they don’t get it, they feel abandoned.
  - Fear of others’ anger. Because of old hurts and poor boundaries, some people can’t stand for anyone to be mad at them.
  - Fear of loneliness. Some people give in to others because they feel that that will “win” love and end their loneliness.
  - Guilt, Payback, Over identification with other’s losses...
It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. - Galatians 5:1 NIV

- The point is this: we were called into freedom, and this freedom results in gravitate, an overflowing heart, and love for others.
- The law of Motivation says: Freedom first, service second. If you serve to get rid of fear, you are doomed to failure.

6. THE LAW OF EVALUATION
- Things can hurt and not harm us.
- Some of those things can even be good for us.
- You need to evaluate the effects of setting boundaries and be responsible to the other person, but that does not mean you should avoid setting boundaries.
- Setting boundaries is difficult because it requires decision making and confrontation, which, in turn, may cause pain to someone you love.

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. - Ephesians 4:25 NIV

- Evaluate the pain our confrontation causes others.
  - It is good to see how this hurt is helpful to others.
  - Sometimes this is the best thing we can do for them and the relationship.

7. THE LAW OF PROACTIVITY
- Be proactive not reactive.
  - Reaction phases are necessary but not sufficient for the establishment of boundaries.

13You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. 14For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” 15If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other. - Galatians 5:13-15 NIV

- Find your boundaries, but don’t cross God’s in doing so.
- You must react to find you own boundaries, but having found them you must not use your freedom to indulge the “flesh”.

8. THE LAW OF ENVY
- The NT speaks strongly against the envious heart.

2You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. - James 4:2 NIV

- Envy defines “good” as “what I do not possess.”
- Envy is a self-perpetuating cycle.
  - Boundary-less people feel empty and unfulfilled; they look at another’s sense of fullness and feel envious.

9. THE LAW OF ACTIVITY
- God made us so that we would work for who we are.
  - God wants us to work to grow our boundaries.
- If God hatches us... we do not grow.
  - When a baby bird is ready to hatch, if you break the egg for the bird, it will die. The bird must peck it’s way out of the egg. This workout strengthens the bird, allowing it to function in the outside world.

7 “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. - Matthew 7:7-8 NIV
- If everything is done for us then we will not become who God wants us to be. Be active in growing boundaries.

10. THE LAW OF EXPOSURE
- The law of exposure says that your boundaries need to be made visible to others.

13But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. 14This is why it is said: “Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” - Ephesians 5:13-14 NIV

- Because of our own fears, we try to set secret boundaries... Instead of communicating honestly to someone we love.

25Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. 26“In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, - Ephesians 4:25-26 NIV

- Sometimes we do not reveal our boundaries until it is too late.

6Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb; you taught me wisdom in that secret place. - Psalm 51:6 NIV

7But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. - 1 John 1:7 NIV

Discussion
1. From last week; anything transpire recently that would be deemed impossible if it were not for our God who makes things possible?
2. In Galatians 6:7-8; what does Paul teach about sowing and reaping? What, if anything, have you sown “to (your) own flesh”, and what did you reap as a result?
3. What does this statement mean... ‘We are to love one another, not be one another”?
4. Read Romans 7:15-23. What phrases can you especially identify with? When have you felt this kind of powerlessness? Be specific (sin, unhealthy habit, addiction, etcetera).
5. How does our acceptance of other people’s freedom to set their own boundaries actually freeing to us? Why would someone’s respect for our boundaries be empowering?
6. What is your motivation in setting boundaries... and loving and serving others... or, perhaps, not setting boundaries... or loving and serving others?
7. Explain the difference between hurting and harming someone.
8. Proactive people show what they love, what they want, what they purpose, and what they stand for — as opposed to those who are known by what they hate, what they don’t like, what they stand against, and what they will not do. What benefits come from being proactive? Any real-life examples?
9. What things and what people do you tend to envy most? What does your answer say or show about yourself?
10. How easy or difficult is it for you to take initiative in life?
12. Brainstorm some ways you, as a group, could aid those impacted by the recent and unfortunate flooding in our area.
13. Pray with one another.