

AMKPC LIBRARY E-NEWSLETTER

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dear AMKPC Friends,

BOOTH will run on 3 and 17 September 2017.

LIBRARY UPDATES

We are in the midst of clearing out old titles. If you would like to have any of the books to bless someone, please let us know.

If you are looking for a particular resource, you can do a search in the church website (<https://www.amkpc.org.sg/library/>) or contact us.



Respecting God's Boundaries

by Dr. Henry Cloud & Dr. John Townsend, from *Boundaries: When To Say Yes, How To Say No, To Take Control Of Your Life*

God expects His boundaries to be respected. When He makes choices, or says no to us, that is His right, His freedom. If we are to have a real relationship with Him, we need to respect that freedom.

When we try and put Him into binds where He “has to do something,” we are testing His freedom. When we are angry with Him for what He does not do, we are not allowing Him the freedom to be who He is.

The basic problem in human relationship is that of freedom. We call people bad because they do not do what we want them to do. We judge them for being themselves, for fulfilling their wishes. We withdraw love from them when they do what they feel is best for them, but it is not what we want them to do.

We do the same thing with God. We feel entitled to God's favor, as if He has to do what we want Him to.

How do you feel when someone asks you for a favor but does not give you a free choice? This childish entitlement gets

many people dissatisfied with God the same way that they are dissatisfied with others in their lives. They hate the freedom of others.

God is free from us. When He does something for us, He does it out of choice. He is not “under compulsion” or guilt or manipulation. He does things, like dying for us, because He wants to.

We can rest in His pure love; He has no hidden resentment in what He does.

His freedom allows Him to love.

Many Bible characters ran into God’s freedom and learned to embrace it. Embracing His freedom and respecting His boundaries, they always deepened their relationship with God. Job had to come to accept the freedom of God to not rescue Him when he wanted. Job expressed his anger and dissatisfaction with God, and God rewarded His honesty. But Job did not “make God bad,” in his own mind. In all of his complaining, he did not end his relationship with God. He didn’t understand God, but he allowed God to be Himself and did not withdraw his love from Him, even when he was very angry with Him. This is a real relationship.

In the same way, Paul accepted the boundaries of God. When he planned trips that didn’t work out, Paul accepted the sovereignty of God. He asked God repeatedly for a certain kind of healing that God would not give him. God said, “No. I do not choose to love you in the way that you want right now. I choose to love you with My Presence.” Paul did not reject God for setting that boundary.

Jesus was perfected through His suffering (Hebrews 5:7-10). In the Garden of Gethsemane, He asked that His cup of suffering pass from Him, but God said no. Jesus accepted God’s wishes, submitted to them, and through that “became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him” (Hebrews 5:9). If Jesus had not respected God’s boundaries and God’s no, we would all be lost.

In the same way that we want others to respect our no, God wants us to respect His.

He does not want us to make Him the bad guy when He makes a choice. We do not like others trying to manipulate or control us with guilt, and neither does He.

“I Respectfully Disagree”

Then again, God does not want us to be passive in our relationship with Him either. Sometimes, through dialogue, He changes His mind. We can influence Him because ours is a real relationship of the kind Abraham had with God (Genesis 18:16-33). God said that He would destroy Sodom, yet Abraham talked Him out of it if he could find ten righteous people.

In the same way that we want others to respect our no, God wants us to respect His.

When we make our feelings and wishes known, God responds.

We do not often think of God this way, but the Bible is clear. It is as though God says, “If it really means that much to you, it’s okay with Me.” One of the most astounding teachings of the Bible is that we can influence God. It wouldn’t be a real relationship if we couldn’t.

‘Come now, let us reason together,’ says the LORD. — Isaiah 1:18

Like a real friend, or a real father, He says, “Let me hear your side of things and I will consider them. They matter to Me. Maybe you can convince Me to change My mind.”

Consider Jesus’ parables about prayer. In one story a judge who “neither feared God nor cared about men,” for some time refused to grant a widow her request for justice. But because the widow kept bothering him, he changed his mind and granted her wish (Luke 18:1-8). Jesus told

them this parable so “that they should always pray and not give up” (Luke 18:1). In another story, a neighbor who persistently asks for bread is granted the request because of his continuing boldness (Luke 11:5-9). Other people Jesus decided to heal after they persisted in asking for healing.

God wants us to respect His boundaries; He doesn't want us to withdraw our love when He says no. But He has nothing at all against our trying to persuade Him to change His mind. In fact, He asks for us to be tenacious. Often he says, “Wait,” seeing how much we really want something. Other times, it seems He changes his mind as a result of our relationship with Him. Either way, we respect His wishes and stay in relationship.