

# ***The Psychology and Methods of Sin*** ***-contrasted with-*** ***The Mindset and Fruits of the Spirit***

***“The heart is deceitful above all things...who can know it?” (Jer 17:9)***

## ***“Dealing With The Abuser – Sin is a Trespasser”***

**November 14, 2010**

### **Sermon Text:**

**Scripture Reading: Isaiah 1**

### **Introduction**

This is good stuff!!! Listen very carefully!

- Locks and keys, safes and combinations
- The outer doors of your home
- The lock on your bathroom door
- A “No Trespassing” sign
- The property lines of your residential lot or acreage
- The borders of a nation or state or county
- Passports
- Rules of Etiquette
- Passwords
- A security clearance at a jobsite
- Yellow tape around a crime scene

What do all of these things, and more, have in common with – *this list* –

- You shall have no other gods
- You shall not make a graven image
- You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain
- Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy
- Honor your father and your mother
- You shall not murder
- You shall not commit adultery
- You shall not steal
- You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor
- You shall not covet

Do you see the connection? *Boundaries*. Just as locks and doors and property lines, proper manners and security clearances are all concerned with setting boundaries and providing proper means of granting selected people permission to cross those boundaries – to come into your home; to open a safe; to enter another country; to address a president or governor or judge –

“you may approach the bench” – *so the Law of God sets in place certain inviolable boundaries that are not to be crossed.* In fact, these boundaries have no key nor password. They may not be violated.

Codes of law in society are boundaries, right? You shall do this. You shall not do that. A speed limit is a boundary. Shoplifting is a violation of a boundary. Our lives, it would seem then, are filled with boundaries against which we must not trespass. Boundaries are GOOD and necessary, especially in a fallen world.

Do you understand then why the Bible uses the word trespass for sin?

*“...and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us...”*

*Sin, in its very essence, is lawlessness. It trespasses the boundaries that the Law of God has established. As sinners then, we are trespassers. We have trespassed into areas that God has pronounced “Off Limits!” And therefore we came under the condemnation of God. Just as civil law recognizes that trespassing on private property is a crime, so the Law of God declares that sin is a trespass, a*

*violation of divine boundaries. It brings condemnation.”*

## **I. The Abuser as Trespasser**

What does all of this boundary talk have to do with the subject of *abuse*? Well, because sin is a trespasser, we should understand then that the abuser is a trespasser of boundaries. Not only legal and social boundaries, BUT IN PARTICULAR, PERSONAL BOUNDARIES.

What do we mean by personal boundaries? Well, we might call them personal *rights*. The Declaration of Independence, for instance, recognized that -

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.*

So that these rights are boundaries that not even the king can cross.

The sinner in general and the abuser in particular and especially IS A VIOLATOR OF PERSONAL BOUNDARIES.

*The abusive man or woman denies that all men are created equal. The abuser is far above everyone else. The abuser denies that his victim(s) have unalienable rights – he believes he has the authority to alienate them from those rights. The abusive person takes life, liberty, and happiness away from his victim and feels entitled and justified in doing so. The abuser is a trespasser, a violator of personal boundaries.*

### **Examples of Boundaries and Trespasses**

What does this mean? What does it look like? Well, let's think more about *personal boundaries*. We all possess them. Consider a few of these and let's see how the abusive man trespasses them –

#### **A. The right to various kinds of privacy.**

Every person, every human being, has a right to expect certain levels of privacy. Of course there has been great debate about this – at what point can government for instance intrude upon our privacy? Search warrants are required. Unreasonable searches are illegal.

But a wife, for example, has a right to certain privacy in her life. Privacy connected with modesty.

Privacy in regard to her thoughts. Privacy in respect to her conversations with others (phone calls, emails, etc). Privacy about what she did with her day. She may choose to share these things. And in a normal relationship, that sharing occurs. But ONLY because *she granted permission for her boundary of privacy to be crossed by someone – her husband for example. AND IN A NON-ABUSIVE, LOVING RELATIONSHIP – THOSE BOUNDARIES ARE RESPECTED!*

But the abusive man recognizes NO boundary of privacy in the life of his victim. He demands –

- to know where she is every moment
- to know to whom she talks to and what that conversation was about
- to be able to intrude upon her – he despises locked doors, email passwords, unshared correspondence
- He may even monitor her telephone conversations and isolate her by forbidding her to speak with certain people

#### **B. The right to govern her own body**

Now, here is a favorite Scripture passage of the abusive man who

uses Christianity and the Bible as his façade and justification for abuse –

1 Corinthians 7:2-4 ESV

(2) But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.

(3) The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband.

(4) For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.

Of course, the abuser always rips Scripture away from its context AND he ALWAYS (don't forget this) operates with a double standard – one for his victim and one for himself ., Watch for it, the double standard will always be there in the abuser's mentality. In this case of course, he emphasizes verse 4a, but leaves out the rest of that verse. He also perverts the Apostle's meaning to justify any use of his wife's body that he decides upon – regardless of whether she objects or not. It is not uncommon for the abuser then, in connection with his low view of women as persons, to force perverse actions

upon her. Human beings have a right over their own body.

**NOTE:** Of course this argument is perverted, isn't it, in respect to abortion. Let's just note that abortion is the taking of a life that is NOT the woman's body. In some cases morality and ethics could conceivably justify aborting a pregnancy (not all will agree with this) – to save the mother's life, for example. NOR does this right mean that any of us have the right to use our bodies in sinful, immoral ways.

Now, let me give you still another way in which the abusive man very commonly violates his victim's rights over her own body. Ready? This one will get more argument, but we must not let the abusive man get away with this –

***Many abusive men deny their victim/wife the right to bear or not to bear children. That is to say, the abuser dictates that she will use birth control and what kind she will use. Or, even more commonly, he will dictate to her that she will not use birth control.***

Ephesians 5:22-29 ESV

(22) Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

(23) For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the

head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.

(24) Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

(25) Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, (26) that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, (27) so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. (28) In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. (29) For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church,

Are you thinking now? Time for some self-examination perhaps? Some abusive men, have actually demanded that their wife NOT take any type of anesthesia during childbirth for pain, and if she does yield and have the doctor give her one, he flies into a rage and calls her vial, demeaning names!

Other abusive men deny their wives the right to decide about medical treatment that a doctor has advised.

Deny them the means to have a necessary surgery, etc.

Do you understand then? In a healthy, one-flesh marriage, these things are decided *together*. The husband recognizes that his wife has certain personal rights, personal boundaries that only she can give permission to intrude upon. From the wife's standpoint, she will recognize that her husband has a part in these decisions as well – particularly as regards childbirth decisions.

Still another kind of boundary that an abusive man will commonly ignore is *his wife's/victim's choice of clothing, makeup, or hairstyle*. It is not uncommon for an abusive man to demand to select ALL of these things for his wife, claiming that this control is a sign of his love for her. Not so. It is abuse. It is a trespass of her personal boundary regarding her own body. Are we saying that a husband has NO say in these things at all? Of course not. But you must understand that the abusive man denies his victim any say, any rights, any opinion in these things.

***“The next time you hear this – ‘Wow! What a great guy! He picks out ALL of his wife’s clothes for her’ – I hope that a warning light goes off for you. What does this***

*mean? It may or may not be a sign of real love for her.”*

### **C. The Right to Happiness and Self-Fulfillment**

Still another important boundary/right that every human being has is the right to happiness and self-fulfillment.

*“Christians need to take special care with this boundary. We know that it is very often abused, and that the Bible tells us to consider others more important than ourselves, that we are to patiently endure with contentment whatever God brings our way. These rights do not give us the right to DEMAND of God! Any rights we have all derive from Him. Nor do these rights mean that we are entitled to become the center of the universe ourselves. To do that is to become the abuser!”*

*But knowing these things from His Word must not lead us to deny that God grants us boundaries which other people are not to cross without permission. We are not to become enslaved to anyone except Christ – whose slavery is actually freedom.”*

The abuser denies his victim the right to happiness and self-fulfillment. She exists only for HIS

happiness and for HIS self-fulfillment! The universe revolves around him and if she forgets it, he has many weapons of abuse to remind her.

What are some examples of boundary violations in regard to happiness and self-fulfillment? (the abuser hates these things because they take time and energy that he insists must be spent upon him alone) -

- Pursuing a hobby
- Taking a course of study
- Involvement in a church
- Relationships with others
- A decision to get a job outside the home
- Selection of what she would like to read
- Development of new abilities – driving a car (some abusers prohibit this), learning to use a computer, running a marathon

More often than not, in a healthy, biblical marriage – the husband will support and encourage her in these things.

### **D. The Right to be Respected and Shown Consideration as a Person – ie, the Right to Have one’s Feelings Considered**

We have all used the phrase “don’t hurt his feelings.” Human beings are emotional beings. We have *feelings*. If we are going to love one another, we must understand this and consider other people’s feelings – how saying or doing a particular thing is going to impact them on an emotional level.

The abuser is cruel in this regard. He has little or no consideration for his victim’s feelings and often trespasses this boundary. He mocks the notion –

Ephesians 4:29-32 ESV

(29) Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

(30) And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

(31) Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

(32) Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Now, understand - we all hurt other people’s feelings sometimes. We all trespass against them and against God (we can *grieve* the Lord). But

when we do – there are the convictions of conscience. In a Christian, there is the conviction of the Holy Spirit, so that we repent and even feel the pain we have caused.

Not so with the abusive man. The abuser trespasses with a profound sense of entitlement and justification. Coolly. He will tell his devastated victim -

-Oh you are just too sensitive!

But oversensitivity is not the problem. When boundaries are crossed, you feel it because it hurts. Love is a respecter of boundaries. Love is considerate – polite, you might say. Love does not intrude without permission -

1 Corinthians 13:4-5 ESV (4) Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant (5) **or rude**. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;

## II. Dealing With the Abuser Through the Enforcement of Boundaries

### A. You Can Feel It

How do you recognize when you are being trespassed against by the abusive person? This is the first

thing. You must understand that as human beings we all have the right to these boundaries – privacy, our own bodies, the right to self-fulfillment and so forth. THEN you must recognize when and how the abuser is violating your boundaries.

Let me suggest that the first warning is that *you will feel the violation*. Someone has trespassed into a region of your life and being *and you have not granted them permission to do so*. You are uneasy. Anxious. Something is not right. For example –

***As part of your right to LIFE and happiness, you have the right to a sense of safety and security. A common tactic of abusive men is to violate this boundary, putting the victim in danger and fear – without permission to cross that boundary. It might be through recklessly driving the car she is riding in. It could be unsafe use of firearms – pointing a gun at her but laughing because “it’s unloaded.” And the victim can FEEL this trespass. She feels unsafe around the abuser. THE ABUSER WILL TRY TO MINIMIZE AND RIDICULE THESE FEARS, BUT THEY NEED TO BE ACKNOWLEDGED.***

Think about it – you FEEL boundary violations when someone -

- Acts overly ‘familiar’ with you,
- Begins to speak about an inappropriate topic,
- Knocks on your door without permission and proceeds to intrude upon your values and beliefs,
- Tries to control your personal, private life with no authority to do so,

**NOTE:** The church must take care not to cross boundaries that God has not given authority to cross. Obviously, the Christian is subject to the admonishment and discipline of the church and fellow believers. We are not our own, in this sense. We must glorify God with our bodies. So our “personal” business is the Lord’s business, and the Lord calls upon the church body to hold one another accountable. Nevertheless, churches themselves and church leaders CAN become abusers – and it has happened often in the history of the church.

- Tries to dominate you by telling you what God’s will is for you, insisting that they know better than you,
- Defines you. Defining is a term that means *dictating to*

*someone what their thoughts and motivations are, the abuser insisting that he knows his victim's inner being better than she does. This is VERY common in the abusive man.*

These are trespasses. They are boundary violations. They are sin and they are examples of abuse. You can FEEL that they are boundary violations and your feelings are indeed valid. THERE IS A REASON FOR YOUR FEELING OF BEING VIOLATED – YOU HAVE INDEED BEEN TRESPASSED AGAINST.

Colossians 2:20-23 ESV

(20) If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, **why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations--**

(21) "Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch"

(22) (referring to things that all perish as they are used)--according to human precepts and teachings?

(23) These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

These false teachers, you see, were trespassing, crossing a boundary that the believers at Colossae had a right to in Christ. Notice that the Apostle Paul is calling US to enforce our boundaries – “*why do you submit to these trespasses?*” *Stop permitting it.*

### **What About Bob? – The Intruder**

Most of you have probably watched the movie, What About Bob? In the movie, Bob Wiley is funny. He forces himself and his desires on Dr. Leo Marvin and family, pressing himself into their home and even into their son's bedroom! One of the reasons the movie is so comical is because we recognize the boundaries that Bob is violating – but in the movie he is harmless.

Not so in real life. A real Bob Wiley is an abusive, wicked man who victimizes people by intruding across their personal boundaries.

*“Dolores, now in her 60's, is the mother of four sons and three daughters. When her first husband died 16 years ago, she married a successful surgeon and is consequently rarely short of funds. Yet instead of taking expensive vacations or buying designer dresses, she spends most of her*

money on two of her children, Natalie and Larry.

Natalie, who is 40 years old, has never quite found herself, has been on welfare most of her adult life, and cannot seem to hold a job. Why should she? By supplementing what Natalie gets from the state, Dolores ensures that her daughter's material needs are met. There is, of course, a blemish on the landscape of Natalie's paradise, which is that she can do almost nothing without Dolores, who tells her what to eat, how to style her hair, and even where to buy groceries. [Do you begin to see that Dolores is a trespasser, a boundary violator? And the damage she is doing? Which of us do not have to admit some guilt here?]

Larry is a 38 year old ex-plumber who 4 years ago announced that he wanted to go to college. He has never taken more than one course per semester, rarely opens a book, and has less interest in learning than a tired frog. Dolores pays his tuition and keeps him supplied with cash. Not a bad life, you might conclude, until you notice that Larry is at his mother's beck and call. He cannot even date without her approval. She picks out his clothes, shows up unannounced at his apartment, and insists that he take

her out to dinner at least once a week. The surgeon doesn't mind because she's as intrusive with him as she is with her children.

On those rare occasions when Natalie or Larry tries to go it alone, to think or act independently, Dolores reminds them of how much she's sacrificed. And if that doesn't work, she breaks into sobs, talks about how no one cares whether she lives or dies ('Maybe it'll be better for everyone if I'm gone'), and locks herself in the bathroom. Because she once swallowed a bottle of pills, this makes short work of any attempt on their part to separate from her." [Toxic Relationships & How to Change Them, by Dr. Clinton McLemore]

Dolores is a trespasser into the lives of her son and daughter – big time. She is guilty of a mass of boundary violations – but Natalie and Larry permit this abuse to continue through their ignorance and their selfish desire for the things their mother can provide them. Dolores is a real life Bob Wiley, and she is not so funny at all, right?

### **What to Do –**

Do not, like the one lady in McLemore's book, keep whimpering or trying to get him to

understand your feelings. It won't work. He has no feelings for your feelings. Others may, the abuser doesn't.

If a victim is in real danger, then her course of boundary enforcement is to leave the abuser (which requires some planning and help). If she decides to stay, then she must learn to recognize boundaries, boundary violations, and begin *to enforce her borders*. *"If you continue to speak to me in that manner, then I will need to leave."* It is vital that victims of abuse, and all of us really, learn and understand how the abuser violates the boundaries and rights of his victims so that we can begin to call him to account for his trespasses.

**Parents:** You **MUST** teach your children these things. They must learn about boundaries. How to enforce their own boundaries, and how to respect other people's boundaries. We do this by teaching them the Law of God – raising them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

### **Conclusion**

What can we say then to all this as we bring the gospel, the redemption of Christ, to bear upon all of this?

**1. Christ came to be the great Trespass Offering for us.** Every single person here this morning, and every human being that has ever lived, has trespassed against the Lord. We have violated His boundaries – His Laws, and we stand condemned. So that even our **WORSHIP** of God becomes nothing more than a great trespass and trampling of His Temple -

Isaiah 1:11-12 ESV

(11) "What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the LORD; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats. (12) "When you come to appear before me, who has required of you this trampling of my courts?"

Christ's sacrifice is the **ONLY** payment sufficient for our high crimes. Christ is surely the only way that any of us can –

Isaiah 1:16-18 ESV

(16) Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil,  
(17) learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.

(18) "Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.

**2. Because of Christ, so thorough and complete is His redemption and rescue of His people – *our feelings will never be violated again one day.*** No one will ever violate a boundary in heaven. In fact, there will not even need to be a single "trespass sign." That is to say, the threatenings of the Law of God will not be required there. Because we will love the Lord and our neighbor perfectly. Even now, even now – it has begun in us. If you know Christ, His Law has been put right on your heart.

Revelation 21:3-4 ESV (3) And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

(4) He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."