

10 STEPS TO FREEDOM
Week 8: Living on the Edge
SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS



RECAP

In this eighth sermon on the journey to freedom, Josh looked at the outrageous teaching of Jesus in Matthew 5:27-30 and discussed how the principle of guardrails is essential to our freedom.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Josh started by talking about guardrails. Do you ever remember driving on the edge of a cliff with guardrails? Were those guardrails a welcome sight or did they infringe on your freedom to drive close to the edge? Have you ever had a car accident when some type of guardrail helped prevent even greater damage?
2. Josh shared a story of counseling a recovering alcoholic who struggled with finding freedom from alcohol. Even though he worked at a bar, he couldn't see the connection. Have you ever seen how a lack of guardrails led someone to "drive off the cliff" with their freedom?
3. Read Matthew 5:27-30. Why do you think Jesus used such an extreme exaggeration (hyperbole) of gouging out eyes and cutting off arms to drive home his point? How should that influence the extremes to which we enforce the principles of guardrails in our lives?
4. Everyone's guardrails are different because everyone's struggle for freedom is different. What are some guardrails you have established in your life and in the life of your family to protect your freedom? How have they worked?
5. Josh gave twelve examples of guardrails. Which ones could benefit you the most? *Join and be active in a church small group, get a strong internet filter in your home, exercise for at least three hours per week, go to bed earlier and get a minimum of seven hours of sleep a night, take a course or ask for personal coaching with your finances, remove all the alcohol from your home, make some new friends, buy an old-fashioned alarm clock and don't sleep with the phone next to your bed, don't ride in a car or eat a meal alone with a person of the opposite gender, get some preemptive marriage counseling before your little problems become big problems, start giving 10% of your income to the church to keep your heart right, join a Freedom Group to work through your issues with other believers.*

NEXT STEP

- Guardrails work if you have people with permission to enforce them in your life. Who in your small group can you ask to help you establish and enforce guardrails in your life to protect your freedom?

For more information (training and support) on how to start a small group, contact steve.lizzio@cbcva.org



CENTREVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH
SUNDAY, JANUARY 27, 2019
WEEK 8: LIVING ON THE EDGE
MATTHEW 5:27-30

Step EIGHT to Freedom: Establish _____ to protect your _____

4 QUESTIONS TO HELP ME ESTABLISH GUARDRAILS

1. Where do I keep _____?
2. What are my _____?
3. What _____ do I need to establish to protect my freedom?
4. Who is _____ to keep my guardrails in my life?

Bonus Content

Sunday (This Handout) - 7 Questions on Matthew 5:29 and Small Group Questions for this message
Monday (Blog) - How the Principle of Guardrails is Essential to Your Freedom
Wednesday (Blog) - 4 Essential Questions to Help You Establish Guardrails in Your Life
Monday - Friday (Blog) - Devotionals from 10 Steps to Freedom book

For bonus content and much more, visit: joshdaffern.com

Matthew 5:29

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If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

Matthew 5:29

1. WHAT DID IT MEAN TO THE ORIGINAL READERS?

If you start with today you're twenty centuries too late.

“Obviously Jesus is speaking figuratively of those things, physical or otherwise, that cause us to be tempted or make us more susceptible to temptation. In Jewish culture, the right eye and right hand represented a person’s best and most precious faculties. The right eye represented one’s best vision, and the right hand one’s best skills. Jesus’ point is that we should be willing to give up whatever is necessary, even the most cherished things we possess, if doing that will help protect us from evil. Nothing is so valuable as to be worth preserving at the expense of righteousness. This strong message is obviously not to be interpreted in a wooden, literal way so that the Lord appears to be advocating mutilation. Mutilation will not cleanse the heart. The intent of these words is simply to call for dramatic severing of the sinful impulses in us which push us to evil action.” *John MacArthur, Matthew 1-7, p. 304*

Jesus knew of the human tendency to rationalize and hold onto sin, however comforting it might be, even when it poses a greater threat to the spiritual health and life of the believer. By using such stark language, Jesus aimed to shake us out of our sinful stupor and helps us make the hard decisions that we need to make in order to live a life free from encumbrances and the sin that so easily entangles and to run the race marked out for us.

GREEK WORD OF THE WEEK

σκανδαλίζω (*skandalizō*) is the Greek word for “causes you to stumble” and contains a powerful word picture. It is a variation of the Greek word *skandalon*, which was the stick placed in a trap on which bait is placed, and which springs up and shuts the trap at the touch of an animal. It carries the idea that something (in this case your eyes) can knowingly or unknowingly deceive you and entice you into a trap with painful and lasting consequences. Our natural human desires are not to be trusted.

2. WHAT’S THE CONTEXT? *Scripture without context makes no sense.*

The context of Jesus’ advocacy for gouging out an eye is the larger conversation that Jesus is having in Matthew 5:21-30 talking about murder and anger and adultery and lust. Jesus takes the sin of murder and pulls it back to its beginning point: anger. Murder always starts as anger. Once he identifies the beginning point, he gives a practical way to vanquish the anger before it blossoms into murder: don’t offer a sacrifice at the altar until you’ve made things right with your brother (v. 23-24) and settle matters quickly with an adversary before things get out of hand (v. 25). In the same way, Jesus identifies the sin of adultery and traces it back to lust. Adultery always starts as lust. After the beginning point is identified, Jesus gives a practical (although severe) way to vanquish lust before it blossoms into adultery: gouge out an eye (metaphorically) and cut off an arm (metaphorically).

3. WHAT TIMELESS TRUTHS ARE THERE?

Since the Word doesn’t change it still matters today.

- Sin outside of us and the sin nature inside of us will always tempt us to make decisions that will trap us and harm us.
- Extreme measures (gouging out an eye) may be necessary to ensure that sin does not take hold of us and choke out our lives.
- To successfully gouge out an eye (metaphorically speaking), you have to know what’s at stake and understand that the gouging protects you from greater harm.

4. WHERE ELSE IN SCRIPTURE DOES IT

SAY THIS? *The best interpreter of Scripture is Scripture.*

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. *Colossians 3:5*

Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. *John 12:25*

I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman. *Job 31:1*

5. HOW DOES IT APPLY TODAY?

Information without application becomes stagnation.

- Your freedom, your spiritual health, your vitality are far too important to imperil by holding onto the fleeting pleasures of sin.
- The guardrails you establish in your life may seem too extreme to others (like gouging out your eye), but if it protects your soul it is worth it. Protect your soul and spiritual health above all else.
- You have to be so afraid of wrecking your life that you joyfully establish guardrails to protect your freedom.

6. HOW SHOULD THIS CHANGE THE WAY I

LIVE IN COMMUNITY? *The Bible comes alive in me when I live it in community.*

- How have you seen a lack of guardrails lead to the addiction of sin or a loss of freedom in your life or in the life of someone you love?
- What are some practical guardrails that you have established in your life to protect your freedom and spiritual health? What eyes have you metaphorically gouged out to protect what’s most important?

7. HOW CAN MY LIFE GET BETTER BECAUSE OF THESE VERSES? *If I trust God and step in faith, what kind of life will God create?*

We live in a fallen world, meaning the hope of living how we want and enjoying all the vices this world has to offer without being trapped by the scandalous and destructive power of sin is unrealistic. No one wants to walk around with one less eye, but it sure beats death, in the same way no one wants to wreck their car on a guardrail, but it sure beats driving off a cliff to certain death. How your life can get better because of these verses is through life and spiritual health. By putting this verse into practice in your life, you will willingly give up some things so that you can protect the most important things. You will give up some indulgences, maybe even some rights, but you will protect your health, your family and your freedom.