

## Readings

Don't have a Bible? Access the readings at [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com).

### Sunday, October 28

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

How strong is your support system? As we consider our needs, and our boundaries, it's important to know where our support lies.

### Monday, October 29

2 Corinthians 9:7

What choices have you made that your parents have let you know, in one way or another, that they don't approve of? Have you made these choices on the inside, or only on the outside? Do you feel apologetic or guilty about them? How does God want us to feel about our decisions?

### Tuesday, October 30

Matthew 18:21-35

Nothing clarifies boundaries more than forgiveness. When you refuse to forgive someone, you still want something from that person, and it keeps you tied to him/her forever. Do you think it's harder to forgive a family member than a friend or colleague? Why? Is there some one you're not forgiving?

### Wednesday, October 31

Galatians 5:23

In a family, it's easy to react instead of responding. Responding means we stay in control, with options and choices. Reacting, or losing control, means some one else is in control of us. Consider where and when you should be responding, rather than reacting.

### Thursday, November 1

Matthew 7:1-5

A family can be a place of refuge – or hurt. As we consider our own boundaries, think about how we affect family members around us. Are you overstepping boundaries?

### Friday, November 2

Matthew 10:35-37

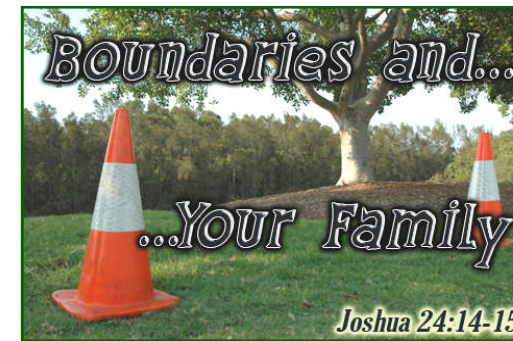
Choosing to follow Christ can cause conflict within a family. Even so, scripture teaches that spiritual ties are the most important. Have you experienced family conflict due to your faith? Are you prepared for it?

### Saturday, November 3

John 13:34-35

God intended us to love freely, and not in response to guilt. Are you free to love your family as God loves us – freely? Establishing stronger boundaries with our family of origin can enable us to show love freely.

Readings  
Reflections



## Boundaries and Your Family

October 28, 2007

Establishing boundaries with our family of origin is a tough task, but one with great reward. It is a process, with certain distinguishable steps. The basic question is this, "Where have you lost control of your property?"

### Joshua 24:14-15

'Now therefore revere the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. Now if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.'

## Reflections

My wife and I try to spend time together in the morning, talking – usually over a cup of coffee or two. We find it helps us keep 'in sync' and get the day off to a good start. Not long after our first child learned to walk, however, our morning time started coming under attack. I remember how it started. One morning, in the middle of a conversation, a little head popped up - directly between my wife and I. If I moved to the left or right, the little head would follow. Our child wasn't hurt; she didn't need anything. She just didn't know how to respect a boundary. Over time, and with some help outside help, we established our first family rule: Kids aren't invited to morning coffee time. We have established other times to focus on our kids.

Any one who has raised a child – or, for that matter, has been in close proximity to one for more than a few hours - may find the following statement

surprising: Children need to be taught how to say 'no', and they need to know how to do it appropriately. In the story above, it may seem like we were simply telling the kids 'no'. From our perspective we were modeling healthy boundaries given in love by demonstrating when and how to say 'no'. Living together can make boundaries hard to see. But, learning where our boundaries are, and how to protect them, is an important part of our personal and spiritual growth.

God calls each of us – adult, child, parent - by name. Regardless of the kind of family we grew up in, God has a plan for us as individuals. Scripture reminds us that, "a man will leave his mother and father". Along the way from infancy to adulthood, we begin to learn who we are, and who we are not. Learning when and how 'no' is appropriate, helps clarify our identity – both to others and ourselves.

— Mike West

## Resources

**Boundaries: When to say yes, how to say no, to take control of your life.**  
Henry Cloud & John Townsend. Zondervan, 1992.

### Videos:

**"Verbal Boundaries"**  
<http://www.cloudtownsend.com/videoserver/video.php?clip=CCNT2049>

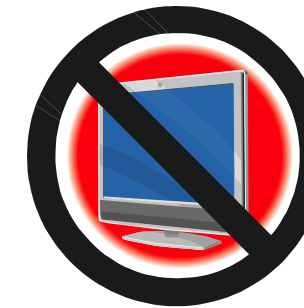
**"How to help your children develop 8 character qualities that will make them healthy adults"**  
<http://www.cloudtownsend.com/videoserver/video.php?clip=cloudT1025>

LOOK INSIDE  
for

**"Sharing  
Highs & Lows"  
A New Family  
Tradition**

# Christian Family Traditions: **Sharing Highs & Lows**

<h2 style="color: orange;">Gather</h2>	<p>Bring everyone in your family or household together for a time of sharing and prayer. Meal time is a great opportunity when there is the fellowship of eating together. Aim to establish this as a weekly tradition. It may help to select a certain day of the week so that everyone schedules to be together.</p>
<h2 style="color: purple;">Share</h2>	<p>Introduce the idea of sharing <b>highs</b> &amp; <b>lows</b> as a way to listen and care for one another.</p> <p>A <b>HIGH</b> is a <i>good</i> thing that happened in the past week. A <b>LOW</b> is a <i>bad</i> thing that happened in the past week.</p> <p>Pick one of each and tell each other about it. Everyone takes a turn. Everyone else will listen and focus on whoever is sharing.</p> <p>Keep it simple as you get started. In the future, this tradition might open the door to longer family conversations. Encourage and thank each person for sharing.</p>
<h2 style="color: blue;">Pray</h2>	<p>When everyone has had a chance to share, conclude with prayer. Prayer recognizes that God cares for every aspect of our lives and that with his help, we grow in love as a family. Two prayer examples are below, depending on what you think will work best for you and your family.</p> <p>1. Heavenly Father, thank you for the <i>highs</i> or blessings in our life. We know that you delight in these things, too. Help us with the lows. We trust you to help us to handle them. Thank you that we can share our <i>highs &amp; lows</i> as a family. Help us to listen to one another and to show our love. We know that you love and care for us in all of our ups and downs. In Jesus' name, Amen.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>2. Heavenly Father, thank you for the <i>highs</i> in our life: _____ (<i>briefly name the highs that were shared</i>) _____. We know that you delight in these things too. Help us with our <i>lows</i>: _____ (<i>briefly name the lows that were shared</i>) _____. We trust you to help us handle them. Thank you that we can share our <i>highs &amp; lows</i> as a family. Teach us to listen to one another and to show our love. We know that you love and care for us in all of our ups and downs. In Jesus' name, Amen.</p>



**Adults & teens — turn off the cell phones and block all distractions. Your family needs you! Make this uninterrupted time with them.**

## Why “Sharing Highs & Lows”?

This tradition gives us the opportunity to learn what delights and troubles each person and share these as a family in God’s presence. These intentional conversations offer a simple way to better understand of one another. Listening is a way of showing love and respect. Praying together about these things enriches the family bond and faith in Christ. It reminds us that God is with us in all things. He brings celebration and growth into our lives. He teaches us to love and help one another as a family, and as people in the world.

## Ways to enhance “Sharing Highs & Lows”

