



sermon  
SNAPSHOTS

*God's*  
GUARDRAILS:  
Relationships

People convicted of drunk driving in Tennessee get a special wardrobe...a bright orange vest. They are required to wear it on three different days for eight hours at a time as they pick up litter on the side of the highway. Stenciled in four-in-tall letters are the words, "I am a drunk driver." The strategy of the state is to shame offenders and to make others take a long look, it could be you, if you're caught driving drunk.

The convicted in Tennessee aren't the only ones who dress themselves in their mistakes. We tend to do that...we wear vests that say, "I disappointed my parents," "I wasted my youth," "I neglected my kids," "I lied to my wife," "I cursed my God." We try to cover up these vests. Sometimes we cover them with smiles. Other times we try to hide behind good deeds. Yet we know deep down inside these vests are there. If only we could go back and have a do over...if only we had done better the first time.

God is trying to keep you from those very mistakes. His word works. His way is right. This morning we continue our series on Guardrails. God's guardrails for your life. They are placed on dangerous curves, on bridges and along cliffs. The purpose of the guardrail is to keep you out of danger. Hitting a guardrail will damage your car but it will keep you from destroying your life. God's word serves as guardrails. It keeps us from danger. It keeps us from going over the edge. When we hit God's guardrail, our conscience produces guilt. That guilt will cause you to have a course correction. Without the guardrail, we'd go right over the edge.

**Culture will take you right up to the edge of danger, it will look hard over the edge  
(Proverbs 27:12, Romans 12:2)**

#### **A. One area that God places guardrails is around relationships**

**1. We have many different levels of relationships, some of them don't affect us much & some define and shape our lives.** (Roommates, co-workers, neighbors, family, church members, friends)

#### **2. At a young age our parents told us to hang around nice people...**

- They taught us that sometimes the most popular kids are not the nicest people
- The desire to be accepted, to fit in, led to peer pressure... becoming like our friends

#### **3. That line defining who was nice and who wasn't often got fuzzy in our minds, and for many of us, the trouble we got into came from our friends.**

- It may have been a friend that dared you to do something that was foolish or even illegal
- It may have been a friend that offered you your first taste of alcohol, first cigarette, your first smoke of dope.
- It may have been friends encouraging you to skip school, cheat on a test, or immoral relationships
- Now, years later, here we are, still wearing the orange vests - from some of those mistakes...It may have led to a lifelong battle with guilt, addiction, shame and hurt
- We didn't hit God's guardrail, we went around it and what a crash it was! Our troubles may have started with our friends, but we can't place the blame on them, it was our choice, our decision.

#### **4. And many years later we still struggle with relationship issues**

- Friends who seem to take advantage of us...family members who love to make you feel guilty, they call and expect you to drop what you are doing and come running. You resent it but you don't have the nerve to say anything. Fear and guilt define the relationship.

**Continued...**

## **B. The guardrails that God places around relationships are designed to keep the good in & bad out**

### **1. God understands the powerful impact that relationships have**

- 1 Corinthians 15:33: This was not written for a youth minister to use in a teen devotional on Friday nights. This was written to a church—the evil companions was not the long haired tattooed kid down the street who rides a loud motorcycle. The “evil company” was those in the church who denied the resurrection
- 1 Corinthians 15:12: They were grown-ups going to church, that had influence on others
- 1 Corinthians 5:6; Matthew 16:6; Proverbs 27:17, 6
- God also understands that it is much easier to go downhill than it is uphill.

### **2. We look at the examples of this in our Bible**

- Amnon (2 Samuel 13:3-5) - it was his friend who designed the plan
- Rehoboam (1 Kings 12:10) - his friends advised raising taxes...

### **3. God has guardrails to keep the good in and the bad out**

- The bad can be language, attitudes, poor decisions, selfishness, a journey away from God.
- Proverbs 12:26; 13:20; Proverbs 1:7; 10:23; 14:16b; 15:5; 18:7; 29:11
- A person is known by the company that they keep...
- Right or wrong people judge you by your company (Matthew 11:19; Luke 15:2)

### **You hit God’s guardrails when you realize that your friends are so different than you**

- When their definitions of success, fun, good, righteousness are different than yours.
- When you find their attitudes about people and God are different than yours
- When you find their language is different than yours
- God is trying to keep you from being influenced by them
- God is trying to keep you from going over the edge and ruining your life

### **You hit God’s guardrails when you start trying to defend the wrong behavior of friends**

- You find yourself telling others, “you just don’t know them like I do...” or, “you just don’t understand them” - is that the truth or are you unwilling to admit that they are doing wrong
- God is trying to keep you from being influenced by them
- God is trying to keep you from going over the edge and ruining your life

### **You hit God’s guardrails when you feel the struggle to compromise with your friends**

- It may be skipping church services, going to a movie that you wouldn’t go to, or even social drinking
- The uneasiness that you feel is your conscience. It’s hitting God’s guardrail
- God is trying to keep you from being influenced by them
- God is trying to keep you from going over the edge and ruining your life

### **You hit God’s guardrails when you become more like them than they are like you**

- In other words, they are influencing you more than you are influencing them
- You are going downhill more than they are going up hill
- God is trying to keep you from being influenced by them
- God is trying to keep you from going over the edge and ruining your life (Proverbs 22:24; 3:31; 24:1-2)

**Continued...**

**1. This is not a call for us to have no contact with those who are not Christians**

- We are not implying a monastery approach to life
- Many here are here because your friends thought enough of you and invited you

**2. God wants you to stand up for yourself and to be defined by you**

Ephesians 5:15-18: Property lines in a neighborhood...you can't control nor be responsible for how the neighbor takes care of his yard...but you can do something about yours. You make it what it is. (Galatians 6:16, 18, 25)

- You may be surrounded with negative, selfish people, but you define what kind of heart you have
- You may be surrounded with people who have all sorts of problems and issues, that doesn't mean you have to be like that (Colossians 3:15-17)

**3. God wants you to see the value of those who walk with Him and include them in your life**

(Psalms 34:3; Psalms 119:63; 2 Timothy 2:22; Galatians 6:1; Psalms 122:1)

**Guardrails...guardrails around relationships. God has placed them there to help you**

*Roger Shouse*

# *Fishers* Church of Christ

## Times of Service

Sunday Worship: 10 am  
Sunday Bible Study: 5 pm  
Wednesday Bible Study 7 pm

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**Guardrails Around:  
Purity – Attitudes - Finances**