

# GUARD RAILS

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## PART 1: DIRECT AND PROTECT

### Introduction

Guardrails are designed to keep vehicles from straying into dangerous or off-limit areas. They minimize damage by keeping us in the safety zone. But the highway isn't the only place we need guardrails.

### Discussion Questions

1. Were you here nine years ago when Andy originally did this series? If so, what do you remember? How did it intersect with your life at that time?
2. During the message, Andy said, "The highway isn't the only place we need guardrails . . . perhaps your greatest regrets would have been avoided if you had established personal guardrails." Is that second statement true for you? If so, would you be willing to share that part of your story?
3. Andy listed four areas where guardrails may be helpful: finances, relationships, morality, and profession. Do you have an example of establishing guardrails in any of those areas?
4. Do you agree that culture doesn't value the concept of guardrails and criticizes those who attempt to live within the safety zone? Why or why not? Have you ever been criticized for setting standards or establishing boundaries?
5. What was your initial reaction to what Andy referred to as the "Billy Graham Rule"? Do you think it's a good idea? Is it too extreme? Have you seen it penalize women in the workplace?
6. Read Ephesians 5:15-18. To which are you most prone, careless or careful living? In what area of your life could you benefit from establishing a guardrail?

### Moving Forward

Stepping away from what has the potential to harm you is stepping in the direction of the One who loves you. God isn't trying to keep you away from something; he is drawing you toward someone—himself. In preparation for next week, spend some time thinking about where you need to establish or re-establish guardrails.

### Changing Your Mind

*Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.*

**Ephesians 5:15-18**



## **PART 2: PROXIMITY**

### **Introduction**

Have you ever met someone that later you wish you'd never met? Is there a person you wish your husband, wife, son, or daughter had never met? Sometimes people are our greatest regrets because they influence us to ignore our guardrails and step into the danger zone.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Who is someone in your life that has stood by you in good times and bad?
2. Talk about a time when you saw someone suffer because of his or her relationships. What happened?
3. Read Proverbs 13:20. Who is a person in your life whose wisdom you rely on? In what ways have you seen his or her wisdom rub off on you over time?
4. During the message, Andy said, "Judgmental is when I draw a harsh conclusion about you. Good judgment is when I draw conclusions about myself based on wisdom." To what extent has not wanting to be judgmental drawn you into unhealthy relationships in the past? How do Andy's definitions of judgmental and good judgment change your perspective?
5. During the message, Andy said, "Friends can be dangerous. And danger requires guardrails. You need to establish a standard that informs your conscience." In what area of your life do you need to establish a standard? What first step could you take in establishing that standard?
6. Do you have a relationship that could benefit from guardrails? What can you do to begin to establish guardrails? What obstacles will you have to overcome? How can this group support you?

### **Moving Forward**

Friends influence the direction and quality of your life. Is your core group moving in the direction you want your life to move? Can you be yourself with that core group or do you have to pretend you are someone you're not? Do you often feel pressure to compromise? If so, it's time to establish some relational guardrails.

### **Changing Your Mind**

*Walk with the wise and become wise,  
for a companion of fools suffers harm.*

**Proverbs 13:20**

# GUARDRAILS

## PART 3: FOREVER YOURS

### Introduction

Guardrails keep vehicles from straying into dangerous or off-limit areas. We need personal guardrails so we don't stray into areas of life that can harm us or the people we love. If there's one area in which personal guardrails are most needed but also most resisted, it's in our relationships.

### Discussion Questions

1. In what ways, for good or bad, did your friends influence you growing up?
2. Who do you know whose life would have been better if he or she had had relational guardrails?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 6:18-20. What do you think it looks like to honor God with our bodies? How might putting that into practice affect your relationships with other people?
4. During the message, Andy called sexual sin "uniquely damaging" because we can never fully escape the damage it does. Do you agree that it can make you a liar and secret-keeper for life? Why or why not?
5. Is it difficult for you to believe that you are a sacred image bearer of God? Why or why not? If you were to embrace that truth, how would it influence the decisions you make going forward?
6. Do you need to begin to flee from instead of flirt with sexual immorality? What are some specific guardrails you need to establish? Share them with your group if you're comfortable doing so. What can your group do to support you?

### Moving Forward

The point of a guardrail is to light up your conscience before you hurt yourself or others. If that sounds extreme, dangerous environments call for extreme measures. When it comes to your relationships, honor God, yourself, your spouse, your kids, your future spouse and kids. Flee, don't flirt.

### Changing Your Mind

*Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.*

### 1 Corinthians 6:18-20

# GUARD RAILS

## PART 4: MONEY MATTERS

### Introduction

Guardrails keep vehicles from straying into dangerous or off-limit areas. We need personal guardrails so we don't stray into areas of life that can harm us or the people we love. When it comes to our finances, it's easy to cross the line into the danger zone. That's why it's essential to establish guardrails against greed.

### Discussion Questions

1. Are you a saver or a spender? In what ways have you benefited from that tendency? In what ways has it created challenges for you?
2. How much do you value generosity toward those in need? Based on your current finances, to what extent are you able to prioritize generosity toward others? In what ways, if any, would you like your current level of generosity to change?
3. During the message, Andy said, "You can be completely out of debt with money in the bank and have driven off the edge financially." Do you agree that you can be financially responsible but still have an unhealthy relationship with money? Why or why not?
4. Read Matthew 6:24. In what ways do you currently "serve money"? How do you think that affects your relationship with God?
5. On a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being, "I'd have to make few changes" and 10 being, "It feels impossible," how difficult would it be to reprioritize your finances from "live, save, give" to "give, save, live"?
6. What is your best next step toward establishing a guardrail against greed by prioritizing giving? What is one thing you can do this week to begin to take that step? How can this group support you?

### Moving Forward

Establish guardrails around greed. The best way to avoid greed and irresponsibility is to give, save, and live . . . in that order. To begin, pick a percentage and give it first to a church you trust and that is making a difference in your life and community. That's how you guard against greed. That's how to ensure you have money, but money doesn't have you.

### Changing Your Mind

*"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."*

**Matthew 6:33**

# GUARD RAILS

## PART 5: THE HEART OF THE MATTER

### Introduction

Guardrails keep vehicles from straying into dangerous or off-limit areas. We need personal guardrails so we don't stray into areas of life that can harm us or the people we love. It's vital to erect guardrails around our hearts. An unguarded heart can overpower our most guarded behavior. What's done cannot be undone. What's said cannot be unsaid. Our behavior defines the quality of our relationships and our lives.

### Discussion Questions

1. When have you seen someone blow up a marriage, finances, or a career when something on their inside got loose on the outside?
2. Read Proverbs 4:23. What connections do you see between what's in your heart and the way you behave? How has what is in your heart influenced your relationships with others? How has it influenced your relationship with God?
3. During the message, Andy said that God is more bothered by how we treat others than by how we follow religious rules. Has a religious rule ever caused you to treat someone poorly? If so, what happened?
4. Read Philippians 4:6-7. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being "none" and 10 being "I'm overwhelmed," how much anxiety are you currently experiencing in life? Does the idea of addressing your anxiety by thanking God and taking your requests to him seem realistic? Why or why not?
5. Do any of these emotions regularly ding your conscience—guilt ("I owe you"), anger ("you owe me"), greed ("I owe me"), or jealousy ("God owes me")?
6. What is one thing you can do this week to begin to establish a guardrail around your heart? What can you do to take a step toward confessing if you feel guilt, forgiving if you feel anger, giving if you feel greed, or celebrating if you feel jealousy? How can this group support you?

### Moving Forward

Are you angry? Do you have hurt feelings? Have you recently broken a promise? Do you have secrets? Are you obsessed with something somebody did to you? Is there stuff from your past you can't let go of? Are you celebrating someone else's misfortune? If everything isn't okay in your heart, it's time to establish a guardrail. It's time to confess, forgive, give, and celebrate.

## **Changing Your Mind**

*Above all else, guard your heart,  
for everything you do flows from it.*

**Proverbs 4:23**

## NOTES

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# GUARD RAILS

Guardrails. They're everywhere,  
whether we need them to be or not.  
The thing about guardrails is that  
we don't need them . . . until we do.  
And when we need one, it can be the  
difference between life and death.



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