

Faith and Football 101:

Staying Within God's Boundaries

Introduction

I don't know if you're into football, but some people are. We talked a little about football last week, and today, we're going to talk about faith and football again. If I were to title this message, it would be "**Faith and Football 101: Neither is for the Faint-Hearted.**"

It takes guts and courage to live a life of faith for the Lord, just like it takes courage to step onto a football field and hammer it out. Have you ever noticed how long a football game takes? The quarters are 15 minutes each, yet somehow, the game lasts for hours! Why? A thousand commercials and a halftime show—who needs that? I tuned in to watch gladiators slam into each other, and then we're shocked when someone gets hurt!

But now, I'm off my notes—so thank you for that! Let's turn to **Jeremiah 29:11**:

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord. Plans to prosper you and not to penalize you, plans to give you points and a glorious victory!"

I modernized that a bit, but it works! Amen?

Playing Within the Lines

A football field is **100 yards long and 53 1/3 yards wide**—it's been that way since 1881. If we were standing on the sideline, we'd see a bunch of white lines: end lines, sidelines, goal lines, the 50-yard line, hash marks. The **field of play** is the area inside those boundaries. These lines are painted with precision because the game has to be played **within the lines**. Step over, and the referee throws a flag.

In professional football, there are over **100 different penalties and rule violations**. Imagine that! In our lives, we have boundaries too—lines drawn by God. In His eyes, the winner is the one who **plays by the Book and stays in bounds**. God's plan is our place. God's law is our lines. Got it?

The World's View vs. God's Truth

Titus 1:15 tells us:

"To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure."

People with a soiled conscience see everything through a dirty window. **Right becomes wrong, light becomes dark, and there are no absolutes.**

Isaiah 5:20 warns us:

"Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness."

Why would people do that? Because their conscience is no longer clean before the Lord. They've **gone out of bounds**. When we ignore God's boundaries, we destroy ourselves. His moral laws, embodied in the Ten Commandments, are the lines He has drawn for us.

The Ultimate Referee

Football has **seven officials** on the field to enforce the rules. They wear zebra-striped shirts, carry whistles, and throw bright yellow flags to signal penalties. **The influence they have over the game is huge.**

Isn't it funny how some people say, "*Church has too many rules,*" but then pack themselves into stadiums for a game with over 100 rules? The NFL has referees, umpires, line judges, and back judges—yet they say **we're judgmental?**

But listen, we only have **one Judge**:

"The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether." (Psalm 19:9)

God never makes a bad call. His calls are always **true and righteous**. So don't bother challenging His call on the field—this isn't the NFL, where you can throw a flag and argue. When God makes a ruling, **it stands**.

God's Boundaries

When God gave the Ten Commandments, **He didn't send a prophet—He spoke Himself**. He didn't use a scribe—**He wrote them with His own finger**.

His commandments are boundaries that keep us safe. Imagine playing a game with no lines and no rules. Chaos! God's law applies **to all nations**—it works in any country, culture, or time period. **When the lines go hazy, people go crazy.**

"There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end, it leads to destruction." (Proverbs 14:12)

We can't rewrite the playbook. We can't make our own rules. **We belong to God.**

Jesus: The Only Perfect Player

Jesus said:

"I did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it." (Matthew 5:17)

He didn't erase the lines—He **lived them out**. Jesus is the **only person who has ever perfectly obeyed the Ten Commandments**. His Father never had to throw a flag. **Spotless. Perfect.**

Why Did God Give Us His Law?

1. To show His righteousness and our sinfulness.

- "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)
- We have all violated His commandments. We are all guilty.

2. To protect us.

- Every commandment is for our benefit:
 - *No other gods?* Protects our relationship with Him.
 - *No idols?* Guards us against false worship.
 - *Honor your parents?* Strengthens families.
 - *Do not kill?* It keeps us from harming one another.
 - *Do not commit adultery?* Protects marriage.
 - *Do not covet?* Protects our contentment.

These boundaries **aren't to restrict us**—they are to **secure us**.

Staying in God's Will

Have you seen those **invisible fences** for pets? If the dog crosses the line, it gets a little jolt. It quickly learns not to go beyond the boundary.

God's commandments work the same way. **Cross the line, and there are consequences**. One violation leads to another, and soon, you start **rationalizing sin**. But God's laws are **etched in stone**.

When you **live inside God's will**, you have peace. It's like the eye of a hurricane—calm in the center while everything around you is in chaos. **There is security in staying within His boundaries**.

The Final Call

Some people say, *"These commandments cramp my style."* But if you ignore them, **your style will be one of self-destruction**. God's law tells us **how to live a life that pleases Him**.

When we break God's law, we **break His heart**—not because He's harsh, but because **He loves us**. His boundaries protect us, guard us, and keep us safe.

"The Word of our God stands forever." (Isaiah 40:8)

You can violate God's laws, but **you can't change them**. His Word is true and unshakable.

Conclusion

Until we **kick off** into eternity, let's **play it by the Book**.

God's plan—**our place**.

God's law—**our lines**.

Let's be winners in **His** eyes.

Father, we thank You for choosing us for Your team. Help us to stay within the boundaries You've given us. Keep us safe, and may our lives glorify You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

