



FLAG ON THE PLAY

How to Handle Offense and Misunderstandings

Q2 · ENCROACHMENT · BOUNDARIES · Matthew 7:1–5

ABOUT THIS SERIES

Play on the Play is a practical, spiritually grounded series designed to help believers navigate the realities of offense, unforgiveness, and misunderstanding. Using biblical teaching and relatable analogies, this series identifies the common “penalties” that occur in relationships and equips us to respond in a way that produces growth, healing, and stronger relationships.

PENALTY

Encroachment

Stay in your lane; love doesn't give you the right to go where you weren't invited.

KEY TEXT

Matthew 7:1–5

“Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?”

MEET THE PRIDE FAMILY

Marcus Dad Age 42	Denise Mom Age 40	Caleb Son (Twin) Age 17	Zoe Daughter (Twin) Age 17
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THIS WEEK'S SCENARIO

“Neither of us told the whole truth. Both of us crossed the line.”

Denise & Zoe — Mother and Daughter

Zoe is a senior in high school and has been accepted into a competitive summer arts program (six weeks, three states away, fully funded). She applied without telling Denise because she already knew what Denise would say.

When she finally tells her mother, Denise's first response is not celebration. It's questions. Then concerns. Then movement. Without telling Zoe, Denise calls the program director to ask about supervision, curfews, and whether Zoe could come home on weekends.

When Denise calls the program director with her questions, she is told a parent had already called in January, around the time of the application. Denise didn't make that call. Zoe did. Zoe finds out at dinner that Denise called. She sets down her fork. "You called them?" Denise responds, "I just had questions." "Those were my questions to ask. I'm the one going," Zoe shot back. "You're seventeen. You don't get to make that decision by yourself," Denise said firmly. "I already did. You just couldn't let it be mine," Zoe replied.

INSIGHT

"Encroachment is not a lack of love. It is a failure to trust dressed up as love. Denise crossed the line because she cared so much, she forgot the boundary. Zoe crossed it because she was so determined to be in control, she didn't realize she'd already done what she was accusing her mother of. Two different moves. The same flag. Jesus says clean your own lens first because you cannot see someone else's line clearly when you've already crossed your own."






HOW TO AVOID ENCROACHMENT

- I **Check Your Peripheral** (*Matthew 7:1–3 | 2 Corinthians 13:5*)
 - Ask God to show you anything that might be clouding how you see things.
 - Don't make up your mind until you hear the whole story.
- II **Stay in Your Lane** (*Matthew 7:3–4 | Galatians 6:4–5 | Romans 14:4*)
 - Stop getting involved in decisions that no one asked you to handle.
 - Learn the difference between support and control.
- III **Wait on the Snap** (*Matthew 7:5 | James 1:19 | Isaiah 40:3*)
 - Stop talking about a situation until you really understand what's going on.
 - Stop trying to decide how fast or slow someone else should move in life.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Denise moved into Zoe's process out of love. At what point does love become control — and who gets to decide where that line is?
- 2 Jesus says deal with the plank in your own eye before addressing someone else's. What plank might Denise be carrying that made her reach for the phone before asking Zoe first?
- 3 Zoe called the program in January posing as the parent — handling questions, managing concerns, controlling the narrative before Denise ever had a chance to be involved. Then she confronted Denise for doing the same thing. What does that tell us about how encroachment works in both directions? How does the plank principle apply to Zoe in this moment?
- 4 Is there someone whose lane you have been driving in — a child, a friend, a spouse, a coworker — even with good intentions? What would it look like to pull back and stay on your side of the line?

WHERE ENCROACHMENT SHOWS UP — APPLICATION ALTERNATIVES

 Church	Unsolicited Spiritual Correction You felt led to tell someone what God said about their life — they didn't ask you. You called it "the Spirit." They experienced it as a verdict. Crossing into someone's spiritual lane without invitation is still encroachment.
 Workplace	Feedback Nobody Asked For You keep giving feedback about how it could be better. You say something. Again. And again. You think you're helping — they feel monitored. Good intentions don't change the flag.
 Friendship	The Self-Appointed Authority You've become the authority on your friend's relationships — who they should talk to, who they should avoid, who isn't good for them. They didn't appoint you. You appointed yourself.
 Family	Taking Over in Someone's Crisis Someone was struggling and you took over — made the calls, made the decisions, managed the situation. Not because they asked you to, but because you needed to feel useful. That's encroachment.
 Internal	Managing God's Timeline You've decided when someone should be healed, when they should change, when they should "be better." Now you're monitoring their progress. You've stepped into a process that belongs to God.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

What lane have you been driving in that doesn't belong to you? What will you do this week to correct it?