# Where Do I Draw the Line?

*Sermon by Edwin Crozier with minimal adaptations*

Links: [Gospel Meeting at North Terrace](http://www.ntchurch.com/sermons/gospel-meetings/2016/04/23/where-do-you-draw-the-line), [Sunday AM at North Livingston](http://www.christiansmeethere.org/sermons/sermons/2016/04/17/where-do-i-draw-the-line)

1. Introduction
	* + - 1. Examples

Modesty – middle school rules

Gossip – helping or gossiping

Gluttony – potlucks and buffets

* + - * 1. Where are these lines crossed?

Realize that God has not drawn all the lines

Leaves the question, where do I draw the line?

* + - * 1. Scripture expressly condemns: (but where is the line?)

(1 Corinthians 5:11) Greed and materialism – when do I move from a healthy desire into a covetous desire which is crossing the line?

(Hebrews 10:25) Forsaking the assembling – when do we move from missing an assembly that is not forsaking into forsaking?

(Hebrews 13:4) Sexual immorality – the question is at what point of contact have I crossed the line into now this is immorality?

* + - * 1. These are questions we have to answer

God did not state the specific line in a passage

Let us think, where do I draw the line

how do I answer these questions?

How do I help others draw these lines?

What lines am I going to draw for my children?

* + - * 1. I have been studying this for years and I have discovered:

God has defined 3751 lines that can be categorized into 482 broad categories and I am going to share them all with you right now.

☺ Joke ☺ – In fact when a preacher starts a sermon with a phrase like that (and is serious), BEWARE! False doctrine likely approaches.

* + - * 1. Point HOW CAN I draw these lines?

Especially where God has left us some latitude for us to figure it out

Why was this left for us to struggle and figure it out? I THINK…

It is so we can grow through the wrestling and the struggle

If God had drawn 3751 lines

we would spend our time drawing close to the line

not drawing close to God

* + - * 1. Let’s look at where we draw the lines
1. Discussion
	* + 1. Before we jump into how, let’s look at why this discussion is important
	1. The Problem
		* + 1. Not merely academic

Not a matter of definitions, lexicons, tense, mood, even context

This is a matter of life altering decisions, life changing moments

* + - * 1. Potentially soul shattering because of the nature of sin

Let’s read: Romans 7:1-14

Paul states how he loves is committed to and wants to abide by Gods law

Paul personifies sin and shows how sin comes along
(Covet – Romans 7:8,11, Deceived – Romans 7:11, Destroyed – Romans 7:9,11,13)

distorted God’s law

deceived him

caused him to sin

and killed him

If it were anyone but Paul wouldn’t we tell him to buck up, try harder?

We need to understand what sin does, not an academic discussion, but emotional, life or death preservation, **sin destroys**!

Satan promised life, wonder – he promises all.

But all he provides is death!

If we do not draw these lines well, we need to understand where we will be lead is death!

But death is not the end of it…

Continue reading: Romans 7:14-24

Sin is not satisfied with destroying us, sin wants to dominate us!
(Paul hated his actions yet he did them anyway – Romans 7:15)

If you give sin an inch, it will take you on an ultra-marathon

Sin will:

take you further than you wanted to go,

keep you longer than you wanted to stay and

cost you more than you wanted to pay

As we consider these lines and drawing close to the line, remember that sin is right there itching to dominate us

* 1. Do we think about the potential to be dominated by sin?
		+ - 1. ***The Big Book***[[1]](#footnote-1) – the manual for Alcoholics Anonymous

No alcoholic thought the first social drink would lead to alcoholic domination.

Consider Dave. B. He had no idea alcohol would get him in an accident that would cost him his **toes and facture his skull**. Who knew alcohol would cause a **brain hemorrhage** that would **paralyze half his body**. He had no idea alcohol would send him to **jail**, put him in **psychiatric hospitals**, cost him his **job** and **almost his family** before he finally started the road to recovery. He did not think his life would be ruined when he took his first drink. *He was afraid merely that his school friends would not like him if he did not go along.*

* + - * 1. ***The White Book***[[2]](#footnote-2) – the manual for Sexaholics Anonymous

No one addicted to pornography and sex thought their first foray into lust would lead them into slavery.

Consider *The Personal Story*. This unnamed man had no idea his **lust would destroy his ability to have relationships with other people, including his wife and children, destroying his marriage**. He did not know it would **ruin his schooling** as he studied theology in seminary and **cost him his job** as an assistant in a local church. He had no idea it would lead him to rely on **prostitutes**, **become a pimp**, and put his life in danger from **disease** as well as **criminals**. He never guessed he would go so far as to be **arrested** by the vice squad. He thanked God for this wake-up call and swore off immorality, but was back on the streets looking for another sexual hit as soon as he was released. Where did his descent start? He was born in the 1930s and his nosedive into the domination of sin began with ***Flash Gordon* comics**—Azura the scantily clad Queen of Magic destroyed him as a child and he did not even know it until he was an adult.

* + - * 1. This is what Paul is speaking about in Romans 7 – when we entertain these things, we are endangering out soul
				2. A couple of caveats: Not everyone will experience these dominations after the first sip of alcohol or foray with lust; however:

Romans 3:23 – all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God

We will all fall prey to sins domination

That is why it is important to consider how we will draw these lines

1. (Guideposts)
	* + - 1. Imagine two paths that seem equally good, going the same direction

Start close, might even be indistinguishable

By the end are miles apart

Not impossible to change paths, but will be painful (cf. Matthew 5:29-30)

* + - * 1. How do we tell these two paths apart and choose wisely? (cf. Matthew 7:13)
				2. Example of getting lost on the Western trails – looking for guideposts
	1. Guide Posts
		1. Can I do this in the name of the Lord?
			+ 1. Colossians 3:17
				2. This does not mean everything you do you have to say “in the name of Jesus”
				3. It does mean what I am doing is done by his power and his authority or his permission and blessing

Can you drink what you are drinking in Jesus’ name?

Can you eat what you are eating or as much as you are eating in Jesus’ name?

Can you look at what you are looking at in Jesus’ name?

Can you touch what you are touching in Jesus’ name?

Can you go where you are going in Jesus’ name?

* + - * 1. Romans 14:23 – If you can’t act in absolute conviction, then stop. If it is not from faith, it is sin.
		1. Am I pursuing a course of the flesh or following the lead of the Spirit?
			- 1. Galatians 5:16-25 – presents two warring factions trying to pull us on divergent paths (like Paul discussed in Romans 7)—the flesh and the Spirit.
				2. As you walk your path, honestly assess whether your words and deeds correspond or follow the lead of the flesh or the Spirit.

Does what you are about to do with your girlfriend or boyfriend fit more in line with love and self-control or immorality and sensuality?

Does that lottery ticket you are about to buy fit more in line with love and patience or with covetousness and jealousy?

Does that party you are attending fit more in line with joy and goodness or with drunkenness and orgies?

* + 1. Am I providing for the lusts of the flesh?
			- 1. Romans 13:14 – word picture, make provision, prepare for the trip

Making provision is not the same a taking the trip

99% of the time the provisions are made, the trip is taken

* + - * 1. When we get academic with the meaning of words and nuance of the grammar so that the line is clear and we know how close we can get without sin, all we are doing is making provisions for that sin

We will know where the line is, we pack our bags for the trip

But once the line is present, though we are packed we will not take the trip

If you pack and prepare, you will probably take the trip

* + - * 1. Christians make plans to go to the lake, be on a boat or ski or whatever, wear what people typically wear while on the water, but we all made a pact to not lust after each other

There might be some people out there that could do that

But you packed and made every provision for the flesh, what do you think is going to happen?

* + - * 1. The number of times it has been said “I don’t know how it happened but we commented sexual immorality”

We were home alone, parents/roommate gone, lights low, nice dinner, romantic movie… I don’t know how it happened…we crossed the line

Go to a restaurant and public theatre! Eat a picnic at a park and watch your Tablet

You can’t prove that it is wrong for an unmarried couple to be alone together in a house

No, but more cross the line in that scenario than in the restaurant (wisdom).

Book: “Misreading Scripture Through Western Eyes”

Eastern in general is group and public, western is private

We heard you allow young men and women who like each other to go spend time together, alone? Amazing, if that happened here they would end up pregnant.

* + - * 1. We spend too much time arguing the box definition of a word rather than considering the provision it will be making for that very sin!

We need to be packing our suitcase for righteousness and holiness

You will take the trip you prepare for!

* + - * 1. If we pack our bags for sin, we will take the trip

Once or twice we will stop and not take the trip

I am convinced the devil allows or even helps you in that to make you arrogant so you will think “I got this!”

Take heed lest you fall (1 Corinthians 10:12)

* + - * 1. Don’t just ask is this activity sin, ask what is it leading to? What is it providing for?

What is this music/podcast/movie/TV program promoting?

This date I am planning or agreeing to go on, is it making provision for the flesh?

This promotion or overtime at work, is it making provision for the flesh?

* + 1. What hunger am I filling with this action?
			- 1. Matthew 5:6 – Is the action you are about to take helping you pursue the righteousness for which you hunger?
				2. Or is it helping you pursue a hunger for power, fame, money, pleasure?

Why are you working so hard for that promotion?

Promotions in themselves are not wrong, but if the only hunger you are filling is for prestige and power, you have crossed the line.

* + - * 1. Why have you picked the girl or guy of interest? Inner beauty or external? Righteousness or flesh?
				2. Thirsting for ease, recreation and entertainment, hungering for wealth, fame, power you will never be filled
				3. Hunger and Thirst for righteousness, you will be filled
		1. Am I professing godliness?
			- 1. 1 Timothy 4:7-8 – We should train ourselves for godliness, that is, piety and reverence for God.
				2. 1 Timothy 2:10 – Paul told Timothy to teach women to dress in a way that professes godliness.
				3. Am I showing reverence to God with the movie I am about to watch?
				4. What about with the song with which I am singing on the radio?
				5. Does the joke I am about to tell show reverence, piety, and respect for God? Or are my actions dishonoring?
				6. Do not forget: as Christians we wear the name of Christ. Everything we do reflects on Him. Does it honor or dishonor Him? What do my actions say about my godliness?
		2. Do my actions demonstrate I am set apart for holiness and sanctification?
			- 1. 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8 – God did not call us for impurity but for holiness.

His will for us is sanctification.

Sanctification means being set apart for holy use.

* + - * 1. Does the way I walk and talk tell people I am set apart for holy use by God?

Do my clothes say I am set apart for holy use by God?

Do the messages on my clothes say I am set apart for holy use by God?

Or do they say I am just like the rest of the world pursuing a course of popularity, prestige, and pleasure?

* + - 1. I know it is hard to be different, but…
1. Conclusion
	* + - 1. God has not given us an arbitrary set of rules to try to hinder our fun, make life boring
				2. He is teaching there is an enemy, the enemy is looking to destroy you

Iraq War example

If you didn’t put it down don’t pick it up (thing on a land mine)

Don’t take posters of the walls (would pull a pin from a grenade)

They were in war; the rules were there to save the soldier’s life

* + - * 1. Because we are fleshly, sometimes we think God’s goal is to ruin our fun, he is not, he is trying to save our eternal souls!
				2. It is important to answer these questions

We will not all answer them the same

Some will be stricter, some less

Needs to be grace and respect for those differences

* + - * 1. If you have already entered sin’s domination, I do not want to leave you without hope.

As Paul said in Romans 7:24-25, “Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (ESV).

Jesus can deliver you.

Throw yourself on His mercy and grace.

Allow Him to live through you.

It will not always be easy, but His path leads to life.

Get on it today.

* + - * 1. Be baptized into Christ and into His death, be set free from your sins by His blood (Romans 6:3-4).

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1. Alcoholics Anonymous. 4th ed. New York: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. 2001, pp 193-199. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Sexaholics Anonymous. 5th ed. SA Literature, 1989, pp 9-25. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)