

Where Do You Draw Your Moral “No Line”?

INTRODUCTION:

1. A few weeks ago, we considered the question: “Where do you draw your ‘no line’?”
 - A. In that lesson we focused on how the Christian **identity** affects our answer, because we are:
 - i. Born again to a new life with an imperishable inheritance in heaven (1 Pet. 1:3-5).
 - ii. To seek the things that are above where Christ is (Col. 3:1-4).
 - iii. To no longer live for self, but for Christ who died for us (2 Cor. 5:14-15).
 - iv. To bear our cross and deny self for Christ’s and the gospel’s sake (Mk. 8:34-36).
 - v. Aliens and strangers in this world (1 Pet. 2:11-12).
 - vi. Make the most of our time, seeing the days are evil (Eph. 5:15).
 - B. In the second half of that lesson, we considered how that identity must affect the way we answer that question concerning the **use our time and resources**, especially concerning worldly matters.
 - i. We talked about saying “no” to things that although not sinful, may distract us from who we are to be in Christ.
 - ii. And we discussed how difficult saying no can be while living in our affluent “yes culture.”
2. Today I want to continue our study of this question. But I want to talk about **where we draw our moral “no” line**, focusing on how it relates to our **holiness and purity** of life before God.
3. For, our affluence has not only overburdened us with secular things but has also led us to say **yes** to many things that God warns against and has condemned as sinful.
4. So, how do I determine where to correctly draw my moral “no” line?
 - A. To address this, first we must again consider our Christian identity and what it demands of us.
 - B. Once that is done, we can make some practical applications to some moral matters.

BODY:

I. Our Christian identity:

- A. **Dead to sin** (Col. 3:5-6 – “Therefore consider the **members of your earthly body** as **dead to immorality, impurity**, passion, evil desire, and **greed**, which amounts to idolatry. ⁶ For it is **because of these things that the wrath of God will come** upon the sons of disobedience”).
 1. We must consider the members of our earthly bodies as **dead** to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed.
 2. When something is dead, or (lit.) put to death, desires of that fleshly body are done, over.
 3. So, as a Christian I must make sure the members of my body are completely done with, separated from, immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, greed, etc.
 4. Why? Because these bring God’s wrath upon the disobedient.
- B. **Proclaim the excellencies of Christ** (1 Pet. 2:9 – “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a **holy nation**, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may **proclaim the excellencies of Him** who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light”).
 1. God has chosen to make me a part of a holy nation of priests belonging to Him.
 2. God’s intent in this is that I proclaim to the world the excellencies of Christ who brought me **out of the darkness** of sin into **His marvelous light**.
 3. So as I live in the light of righteousness I am to proclaim to others the excellencies of Jesus.
- C. **Sinful behavior must not even be named in us, but exposed** (Eph. 5:3-5, 8-12 – “But immorality or any impurity or greed must not **even be named among you**, as is proper among saints; ⁴ and there must be no **filthiness** and **silly talk**, or **coarse jesting**, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks...⁸ for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light ⁹ (for the fruit of the Light consists in all **goodness** and **righteousness** and **truth**), ¹⁰ trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹ **Do not participate** in the **unfruitful deeds of darkness**, but instead **even expose them**; ¹² for it is **disgraceful even to speak of the things** which are **done by them in secret**.”).
 1. The unfruitful deeds of darkness (or sin) “must not even be named/spoken of among us.”
 - a. That does not mean these sins cannot be addressed (because Paul just addressed them), but that Christians have no part in them, whether by action or conversation.

- b. Thus, God does not want His people joking, talking silly, or speaking with pleasure about sin, seeing we must never leave any impression that we approve of it in any way.
 2. Instead, we are to speak of sin with **caution** and **rebuke** [expose them].
- D. **Make no provisions for the flesh** (Romans 13:12-14 – “The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³ Let us behave properly **as in the day**, not in **carousing** and **drunkenness**, not in **sexual promiscuity** and **sensuality**, not in strife and jealousy. ¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and **make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.**”).
 1. We are to put away deeds of darkness and guard our lives with Christ’s light.
 2. This requires living our lives so that everything we shines Christ’s light.
 - a. So, note that not just **drunkenness** is forbidden, but **carousing** (to enjoy oneself by drinking alcohol while partying with others).
 - b. Along with this, it is forbidden for those of light to be **sexually promiscuous** (loose) and **sensual** (lack of restraint, **indecent bodily movements**, unchaste [impure] handling of males and females – **Vine, Thayer, BDAG**).
 3. Because of this, God’s people “**make no provision,**” or **do not provide for**, the flesh to help fulfill its lusts in any way.
- E. **Fight to the death against sin** (Heb. 12:1-4 – “Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also **lay aside every encumbrance** and **the sin** which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² **fixing our eyes on Jesus**, the author and perfecter of faith, **who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame**, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. ⁴ **You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin**”).
 1. Christians put sin out of their lives as they look to Jesus for strength to do so.
 2. In light of Christ’s sacrifice to save us from sin, Christians strive, or fight, against sin with such determination that **we would die** before giving up our moral integrity.
 3. Have I or you really thought about what this says about our view of sin and righteousness?
- F. **Our abstinence makes us appear strange to the sinful world** (1 Pet. 4:1-5 – “Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, ² so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. ³ For the **time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles**, having pursued a course of **sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties** and abominable idolatries. ⁴ In all this, they are **surprised that you do not run with them into the same excesses of dissipation, and they malign you;** ⁵ but they will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.”).
 1. People say the N.T. is out of date, but nothing really changes among people and their sin!
 2. I must view my **past time** in the **world** and **sin** as **sufficient**, meaning that **I have no more time to spare** for pursuing drunkenness, sensuality, lusts, carousing, drinking parties, etc.
 3. My change of life in Christ is so drastic that the world will be **surprised**, or think it **very strange**, that I no longer do what they do, so much so that they **speak evil of me**.
- G. Note that all these characteristics are extremely **counterculture**, even **counter to the current Christian culture**.
 1. Our identity demands that we be strikingly different from the world, the unsaved.
 2. For, worldly people, including many who claim to follow Christ, are very much “yes” people when it comes to these things. But that **is not who we are!**

II. Where will you draw your “no” line?

- A. I present this question with the realization that different people are tempted in different ways.
 1. You may not be tempted to **go** to certain places that would encourage you to sin, but may be tempted to **do** or **view** things, maybe in private, that would lead to sin or is sinful.

2. So, I am encouraging you to ask this question in the context of your life, your strengths, and your weaknesses.
 3. With that said, however, I believe it true that all Christians must take care to **avoid** drawing their moral “no” line at the point where **one step further means sin**.
 - a. For, seeking to draw your line just before something **becomes sinful** means you are setting yourself up for failure, setting yourself up for sin.
 - b. For many, or even most, of us are not that good at moderation, at stopping at the proper line or place, to ensure we do not cross the line.
 - i. How well do you do this with eating? Can you eat and always stop at just the right point where one more bite means you have overeaten?
 - ii. How well do you deal with the influence others have over you? Can you go with the crowd, but resist their pressure and stop just before you cross the line of sin?
 - iii. Honesty would say that most of us fail more than we succeed in these matters.
 - c. Coming to **the edge of the moral line** in hopes of stopping short of crossing is not wise.
- B. The “no line” and what I **view** (i.e., for entertainment)?
1. This is a very important subject because technology and our affluence have made it very easy to say **yes** to non-stop programming through the internet, smartphones, etc.
 - a. There are paid streaming services like Netflix, Amazon TV, Hulu, Apple TV, etc., that most of us **can afford**, and a plethora of free streaming services through the internet.
 - b. These offer hundreds of channels and 1000’s of TV shows and movies on demand.
 - c. The problem, however, is that the vast number of these offerings contain profanity, nudity, and sexual immorality.
 2. You may consistently uphold your “no line” at the point of refusing to watch anything with the profanity, nudity, sexuality, etc., that is commonly offered. And that is good!
 - a. But, as a parent, are you sure those in your family can draw this same line? Are there locks, filters, and chaperoning that ensure they do so, not just on TV, but on their phones?
 - b. If not, then will those you care about and are responsible for to eventually cross that moral line and commit the sin of lust, etc.?
 3. You may believe that viewing **TV-Mature** content is fine because **you** can **see** and **hear** these things as long as you **do not imitate them** or **have lustful thoughts**, etc.
 - a. Because this lesson is about the process by which we determine where to say no, I would ask you, “How is that working out for you?”
 - i. Do those profane words pop into your mind? Do those explicit images linger?
 - ii. How do you **feel** if **others** are watching these Mature rated shows with you (i.e., brethren)? Are you sure others are *as strongly protected against this sin as you are*?
 - b. How does watching mature rated content fit into the Christian’s identity that demands that...
 - i. The **members of your body**, including your **eyes**, be **dead to**, totally separated from, the **sin of immorality, impurity, etc.** (Col. 3:5-6)?
 - ii. You **proclaiming the excellencies of Christ** and His marvelous light to those who see you watch these things or watch them with you (1 Pet. 2:9)?
 - iii. Sinful behavior is **not even to be named** among you, but rather **expose them** (Eph. 5:3-5, 8-12)?
 - iv. You **make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts** (Rom. 13:12-14)?
 - v. If these questions make you uncomfortable concerning where your line is drawn, then you have drawn your moral “no line” in the wrong place!
- C. The “no line” and what I **do** and where will I **go**?
1. Beyond what I choose to view, there are prominent questions today like:
 - a. Should I **do** things acceptable to the world like **social drinking**, or should I **go** to places and parties where drinking is the focus or a prominent part of what is taking place?
 - b. Should I **dance**, or should I **go** to places or events where **dancing** is the focus or is a prominent part of what is taking place?

- c. These questions do not apply just to younger people. For, these questions came up recently for my family concerning a relative's wedding.
- 2. Maybe you have drawn your moral "no line" at the point where you:
 - a. **Go** to these places and events and you **socially drink** but **do not get drunk** and/or you **dance** but refuse to **have lustful thoughts**.
 - i. Questions: Are you sure you have never crossed God's "drunk" line? Are you always successful in controlling lustful thoughts when you dance or go to such places?
 - ii. How does your "no line" fit with your Christian identity that demands that...
 - 1) You **make no provisions for the flesh** including **carousing** (Romans 13:12-14)?
 - 2) **Fight to the death against sin and compromise** (Heb. 12:1-4)?
 - b. **Go** to these parties and places but **do not drink** or **dance**.
 - i. How does your "no line" fit with your Christian identity that demands that...
 - 1) Such sin is **not even to be named** among you but rather **expose them** (Eph. 5:3-12)?
 - 2) Your **abstinence** makes you appear **strange** (1 Pet. 5:1-5)? For, while enjoying the event/atmosphere with them, are you getting so close to the line that you do not appear significantly different to them?
 - c. Could it be that your "no line" is drawn in the wrong place?
- 3. **Question:** If I am not around sin and those sinning, how can I be a light to them?
 - a. God puts limits on where we cast the valuable seed/light of the gospel (Mt. 7:6 – "Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.").
 - b. Such language may sound harsh, but the point is that there are times and places when people are not of the mind to hear of or see God's light.
 - c. And such times and places where **the purpose for which people have come together is that of drinking, dancing, and other things of this sort** is not the time or place to attempt to cast the pearls of the gospel's light.
- D. So, in light of your Christian identity and of the sacrifice Christ made for us, what would it take for you to give up the things that are clouding the world's vision of who you are, that are causing you to come way too close to the moral line, or more likely cross it?

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Being a Christian means:
 - A. I have to say **no** to a great number of things that the **world easily says yes to**.
 - B. That I am **drastically different** from those of the world, so much so that I am seen as **strange** to the point that they **speak evil of me**.
 - C. That our suffering we might face here for doing what is right and holy does not compare to the glory Jesus provides in the end (Rom. 8:18)!
- 2. So, you must decide which way it is going to be.
 - A. Will you draw your moral line where it unquestionably pleases God, or where it pleases you or the worldly people around you?
 - B. Will you choose to stand with Christ, to live for Him, to enjoy the light of Christ and His salvation? If so...
 - i. And you have been living way too close or crossed God's moral "no" line and the world knows it, will you determine to repent and confess that sin so that we can pray for you?
 - ii. And you want to enter Christ and be saved from sin, will you come today in F-R-C-Bp?