

Drawing The Line



Written by: Bill Fairchild, Jr.
www.walkinginsunlight.com



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INTRODUCTION


When you are trying to decide what to do with your life, the possibilities will at first seem limitless. There are hundreds of occupations to choose from. There will be a time in your life when you will choose a mate to live with for the rest of your life as your husband or wife. You will have to choose where you are going to live, whether in California, New York, Paris, London, etc.

But even when you're happily married, working at your occupation, and living in your dream house, you will still have to decide **what to do with your life!** There are actually only two choices: Live for yourself or live for God.

When you think of all the mistakes you've already made, and think of all the mistakes you have seen others make, you should have a healthy fear of making your own decisions and "doing your own thing." Since God has revealed Himself to us through His Son, Jesus Christ, and since He has given us the Bible, there is only one logical choice ... **and that is to live your life (all of it) for God!**

Listen to the words of Moses recorded in Deuteronomy 30:15-16, 19-20: *"See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. In that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess." "I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."*

You see, God who made the world and created every one of us, has given us rules to help us live in a way that pleases Him. God has already decided that there are certain things that are right for all people, for all times, for all places. The Bible gives us very clear guidelines which help us know right from wrong. It appears that our world is determined to destroy itself by abandoning all pretense of Biblical rightness! Most people in the world are not really all that interested in God, Jesus Christ, the church, the Word of God, or in what's right or wrong. Christians in the first century were known because of their different way of life. Their commitment to purity in an impure society was a powerful statement to those around them. The result was that others were led to Christ by these early Christians who stood up for what is right and lived it daily!



Your commitment to honesty, truthfulness, purity and the other virtues which belong to Christianity will be **YOUR** most powerful statement to people you know. **Christians who live no differently from their non-Christian friends won't be successful in sharing Christ!**

Young people ... it is time for us as God's people to DRAW THE LINE! To stand up, even if everyone else is sitting down!

Bill Fairchild, Jr.

Lesson 1 DRAWING THE LINE!

Read the Text: Psalm 119:9-16

INTRODUCTION

1. Questions:
 - a. How important is God to you in your life? Discuss.
 - b. What would your life be like without God?
 - c. How important is the church to you?
 - d. Have you ever been tempted to just give up on the church and upon serving God? Discuss.

2. What makes one a Christian? Discuss.
 - a. Which of these would most certainly be a Christian?
 - b. Charlene Church Attender; Dudley Do-Gooder; Baptized Benjamin; Confirmed Cynthia; None of the above. _____

3. A lot of people think that believing the right things, using the right words, etc., makes one a Christian. What do you think?
 - a. Read John 3:3-5.
 - b. Explain what "being born again" really means. _____
 - c. Read Matthew 7:21.

4. PROBLEM AREA: After many young people have obeyed the gospel, they lose interest, drift away and more often than we would like to think about, they JUST QUIT!
 - a. Why does this happen? _____

5. The time has come to draw the line! The time has come to make sure this doesn't happen to you! There is a way to live with joy and purpose. Jesus Christ is the central figure in a truly happy life!
 - a. Living under His Lordship is what we must all learn to do! Read Romans 10:9,10.

6. To do all of this requires guidance, instruction, a compass, a map, a light to lead us; and that is exactly what God's word does! Read Psalm 119:105.

DISCUSSION

THE BIBLE GIVES US COUNSEL

1. The Bible speaks to young people with inspired counsel about living.
 - a. Some of it is negative and warns against things that will harm and destroy. Give some examples. _____
 - b. Some of it is positive and shows the alternative which believers adopt in preference to sin! Give some examples. _____
 - c. Read Galatians 5:19-23. Can you see the difference? _____
 - d. Explain the difference you see. _____

2. Read Psalm 119:9-12.
 - a. David, because of his relationship with God, wanted to do what was right.
 - b. How important is my (your) relationship to God?
 - c. If it is not really very important, will God's word mean anything to us? Discuss.

3. If one knows and loves Jesus Christ, he will submit his heart and life to God and the doing of His Word! What does this mean? _____

4. Read Psalm 119:10, 97.
 - a. Application of these biblical principles in our lives will bring about a change for the good which we ourselves, our friends, family, and the world ... but most importantly, God ... will be able to see!
 - b. Read Romans 12:1,2.

FOLLOWING THE RULES

1. Lots of people make a mistake in thinking they can serve God on Sunday and live like they want to during the rest of the week.
 - a. How do you feel about this kind of thinking? _____
 - b. How does God feel about this kind of thinking? _____
 - c. Read Matthew 6:24 and 12:30.

2. The result of this big mistake is an unhappy life. Trying to serve God and trying to be like those in the world at the same time only produces conflict within a person's mind. Discuss.
3. If you have two sets of values, one will eventually win out over the other.
 - a. What is a 'Sunday Christian'? _____
 - b. Do you know someone who just might be one?
 - c. Any possibility that you might be one?
4. Take a minute and think about it. Does the language you use, the jokes you listen to and laugh at, the places you go, and the things you do depend on who you are with?
5. God has a different idea. The more consistently you try to do what is right, the more contented you will be!
6. Every game has rules that must be followed, or else the players will be disqualified.
 - a. Read 2 Timothy 2:5.
 - b. Could you play in a baseball game if you used the rules of football?
 - c. Why not? Discuss _____
 - d. Paul said it this way in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. The only way to live a life that God will be pleased with is to live by His rules! Read John 14:15.
7. God has given us rules so that we can be really happy. Like a train that must stay on the track or it will wreck, we must abide by His rules in our lives!
 - a. Why is this so? _____
 - b. He knows what is best for us. Read Jeremiah 10:23. You see, our lives will be ruined, wrecked, just like the train that jumps the track, if we fail to live our lives in the way He has prescribed for us to live them!
 - c. Do you really believe that obeying God ... regardless of how difficult it seems ... is the way to a happier life?
8. We must all follow His rules. Following these rules will lead us to **draw the line** in all areas of our lives and bring them in harmony with what God wants us to do!
 - a. Which rule among God's rules do you have problems keeping? _____

GUIDELINES ABOUT RIGHT AND WRONG

1. How can we help ourselves and others to determine right and wrong? Since we acknowledge Christ as Lord and realize we must listen to Him, the following guidelines will be appealed to time after time in our study of these lessons.
2. **Number One: Does the Bible specifically approve or condemn the matter in question?**
 - a. We're talking about "thou shall" and "thou shall not" statements.
 - b. For example: Obeying parents is commanded (Ephesians 6: 1,2) and lying is forbidden (Exodus 20:16).
3. **Number Two: Is there a Biblical principle which is directly related to the matter?**
 - a. The Bible could not possibly list every approved or disapproved action in life. It would be an incredibly large volume. But, the Bible does identify basic principles (i.e., the Golden Rule in Matthew 7:12) which are to guide our decision making as followers of Christ.
 - b. Gambling is not discussed specifically, but certain fundamental principles in the Bible allow us to determine that it is wrong! (i.e., covetousness, focused on love of money, and undeniably tempts with the promise of quick and easy riches)
4. **Number Three: What effect will it have on my influence as a child of God?**
 - a. People who are serious about living under the Lordship of Jesus take this guideline to heart! You see, we desire to imitate Christ and to bring others to him!
 - b. Do you resemble Christ in your life? See 1 Corinthians 11:1 and 1 Peter 2:21. _____
 - c. Therefore, we must not become involved in things which would compromise our allegiance (what is this?) to Christ in the eyes of others.
 - d. **Listen: If an action consistently puts one in evil company, causes him/her to be absent from assemblies of the church, or leads others to question his/her commitment to the Lord ... he/she should stop it immediately if not sooner!**

APPLICATION

1. Read Titus 2:11-14. Being followers of God means our lives are governed by two words ... YES and NO. The one we say to God, the other we say to sin. We dare not even flirt with that which is evil and wrong.
2. We must live self-controlled, upright and godly lives! We must say an emphatic YES to all that is good and which glorifies (what does this mean?) God! And then, we will be able to look forward to the Lord's return with anticipation, not fear!
3. Young people, it is time to stand up for the Lord ... His ways, His will, His cause, His people, His word ... and be counted among those who love the Lord with their entire being!

Lesson 2 HOW HONEST ARE YOU REALLY?

Read the Text: Psalm 101:7

INTRODUCTION

1. You can't believe it! Just yesterday you were attending worship services, and here you are one day later, upset with yourself because you cheated on a test! Does this sound familiar?

LISTEN: Winning over any sin is never easy!

- a. Winning over sin is a process. It happens as you grow and get to know the Lord better.
 - b. A list we all need is found in 2 Peter 1:5-8 ...
 - 1) Faith ... belief and trust in God.
 - 2) Virtue (Goodness) ... a desire to do the right thing.
 - 3) Knowledge ... knowing your limit and what you can and can't do.
 - 4) Temperance (Self-control) ... saying no PERIOD to drugs, alcohol, sex, as well as any sin!
 - 5) Patience (Perseverance) ... saying no twice, sometimes three times or more.
 - 6) Godliness ... spend time talking with God and study His Word to learn what He is like.
 - 7) Brotherly kindness ... not being selfish.
 - 8) Love ... having respect for other people and their property.
 - c. Do you possess all of these traits? How about some of them?
2. How would you define cheating? _____
Discuss your definitions.
Are there other ways to be dishonest besides cheating? _____
Discuss.
 3. Honesty is defined as "the quality of being free from deceit. It is straight-forwardness, fairness, sincerity, and truth." Honesty is that quality of a person that shows that person to be fair and truthful in speech, above cheating, stealing, and misrepresentation.
 - a. You see, honesty means being fair with those around us, those we know and love, and with ourselves.
 4. Have you ever known anyone who was like this?
 - a. Did you enjoy being around them? Why or why not? _____

b. Do you enjoy being around someone who is not always honest?

Why or why not? _____

c. Are you an honest person? Think about it!

DISCUSSION

THE PROBLEM IS CLEAR

1. Is classroom cheating widespread where you attend school? _____

a. Is it generally accepted among your friends? _____

2. "Cheat" means "to deceive by trickery; defraud; swindle". It implies dishonesty or deception which is designed to obtain an unfair advantage for oneself.

a. With these thoughts in mind, wouldn't cheating include: (1) turning in homework that has been copied, (2) reporting outside reading you did not actually do, (3) submitting a paper someone else wrote, and (4) changing answers on papers graded in class?

b. Wouldn't giving of answers to someone else or doing a report for a friend be equally as deceptive and dishonest as receiving such work? **THINK!**

3. Determining to be honest in the rest of your life will not always be easy either!

a. How does cheating affect sports? Is winning everything, no matter what you have to do to win? Discuss. _____

4. Other than school situations, how does the issue of honesty verses dishonesty relate to young people? Discuss the following:

a. Shoplifting, handling money at work, truthfulness with parents, dating, etc.

HOW GOD'S PEOPLE VIEW ALL OF THIS

1. The Bible frequently and consistently condemns dishonesty, lying, or any other form of cheating.

a. Write down the seven things Solomon lists in Proverbs 6:16-19 which are hated by God.

b. No less than three of these relate to honesty. Can you pick them out?

c. You should memorize all seven of them!

2. It is no wonder that Heaven hates all such conduct, for deception and trickery are devices of the devil. Read Genesis 3:1-4 (changed what one word _____) and John 8:44.
 - a. Dishonesty is a trait of the Prince of Evil and children of God are committed to following the Prince of Righteousness!
 - b. Example: Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1-11. What did they do wrong? _____

3. Dishonesty is a sin!
 - a. WHEN is one most likely to be tempted to be deceitful? Discuss.

 - b. How does dishonesty affect our conscience, our friends, our God and our future? Discuss.

 - c. What is a half-truth? Isn't it just as dangerous, or sometimes even more dangerous, than an outright falsehood? _____
The best counterfeit dollar bill is the one that looks most like the real one. Discuss.

4. Those who are trying to do what is right are saved by the blood of Jesus Christ, who is truth (John 14:6) and can follow Him only by living in truth and integrity!

5. Honesty, self-control, and truthfulness are not just the best policy for Christians, BUT THE ONLY POLICY!

THREE SUGGESTIONS ABOUT HONESTY

1. It will require effort for you to maintain your integrity! How can it be done? Here are three suggestions which will help.

2. **Number One: Decide in your heart you're going to be honest in all things.**
 - a. A person's conduct is governed by thoughts and purposes of the heart. Read and discuss Proverbs 4:23. _____
Therefore, listen to the words of Paul in Philippians 4:8-9.
 - b. You must therefore 'make up your mind' to be honest!
 - c. Daniel is a good example of a person who simply made up his mind not to sin.
Read and discuss Daniel 1:4-8. _____

- d. When you form a deep commitment to refuse something that is wrong, you've taken a major step in the right direction!
- e. If you wait until the temptation is actually on you to decide how to handle it, you're at a real disadvantage! Failing to plan could equal planning to fail!

3. Number Two: Dishonesty will reflect unfavorably on Christ and the church.

- a. It is no secret that non-Christians watch the lives of people who say they are following Jesus Christ!
- b. They are eager to see something wrong in our behavior. Read and discuss 1 Timothy 4:12,16 _____.
- c. Your influence over friends will be forfeited if you live as they live and act as they act!
- d. If you've already cheated, repent and decide not to ever do it again!
- e. The real test of whether or not we're genuine followers of Jesus comes at school, work, home, and at play!

4. Number Three: Be honest in spite of the possible consequences.

- a. Jesus never promised his followers that it would be easy to walk in His steps.
- b. Doing the right thing sometimes involves doing an unpopular thing!
- c. But there is something worse than suffering for doing right. There is the terrible suffering that comes from the guilty conscience now, and the eternal consequences of sin!
- d. Read and discuss Matthew 5:10-11 and Revelation 2:10.

APPLICATION

1. Using the three guidelines of Lesson 1 (write them below):

Number One _____

Number Two _____

Number Three _____

- a. The Bible forbids dishonesty. Read Psalm 101:7.
 - b. Every verse in the Bible about truthfulness and honesty points to your spiritual obligation before God. Every verse about lying, deception and trickery warns against cheating or taking unfair advantage.
 - c. Influence has already been discussed in this lesson.
2. We must **draw the line on dishonesty!** We must not let the world set our standards!
3. Our lives are to reflect Christ to the world, not the other way around!

4. Your responsibility to Christ has not been fulfilled when you attend Bible Class 52 times a year. Doing His will involves making right decisions about honesty at school, at work, at home, and at play! Read 2 Corinthians 8:21
5. What are others seeing in you?
6. What do you see in yourself?
7. Please read the following poem, discuss it, and consider it.

I have to live with myself, and so
I want to be fit for myself to know,
I want to be able, as days go by,
Always to look myself straight in the eye;
I don't want to stand, with the setting sun,
And hate myself for things I have done.

I don't want to keep on a closet shelf
A lot of secrets about myself,
And fool myself, as I come and go
Into thinking that nobody else will know
The kind of man I really am;
I don't want to dress up myself in sham.

I want to go out with my head erect,
I want to deserve all men's respect;
But here in the struggle for fame and wealth,
I want to be able to like myself.
I don't want to look at myself and know
That I'm bluster and bluff and empty show.

I can never hide myself from me;
I see what others may never see;
I know what others may never know,
I never can fool myself, and so,
Whatever happens, I want to be
Self-respecting and conscience free.

Lesson 3 MONEY ISN'T EVERYTHING ... OR IS IT?

Read the Text: Luke 12:15

INTRODUCTION

1. Questions:
 - a. Would you like to be rich for just one day?
 - b. What would you do with your riches for that one day?
 - c. How would you spend your money?

2. Do you ever wonder what really counts in life?
 - a. Are we missing out on life and on good times by serving God?

3. Hundreds of years ago, another person was concerned about all of this and he was already rich and famous. In fact, he was probably the wealthiest king of all. He wanted to know what really counted in life.
 - a. So he went on a journey and kept a diary. He looked at partying, working hard, getting richer, being young, and even at the weather.
 - b. In the end, he came to what conclusion recorded in Ecclesiastes 12:13? _____

 - c. That's it! Can you believe it? Discuss.

4. Your world is changing rapidly. There are lots of voices out there to tell you what each thinks is really important.
 - a. Don't listen to them, but listen to God! Read Ecclesiastes 12:1.

5. Is there anything wrong with being rich? Discuss. _____
 - a. Is it a sin to want to be rich? Discuss. _____
 - b. Does a person have to be dishonest in order to prosper? _____
 - c. Can you think of a godly Christian who has become wealthy by honest means and is using his wealth to the glory of God? _____

6. Please read Luke 12:13-21.
 - a. Why was this rich man a fool? Discuss. _____

b. Have you ever been greedy? Discuss. _____

7. When you and I become wrapped up in having money and things, we become greedy and covetous.

8. In the parable of Luke 12, the rich fool was prosperous but selfish!

a. What is selfishness? _____

b. This man discovered too late that money wasn't everything. He put all of his energy into this world and not the next. Compare Matthew 6:19-21.

DISCUSSION

COVETOUSNESS OR GREED

1. Covetousness or greed can best be defined as an obsession with money and the things money can do!

2. Read 1 Timothy 6:9-10. Discuss.

a. For the love of money, people might do anything. What are some of the things people might do to get money? _____

3. As you grow older in the next few years, you will need to be very careful in regard to money, success, etc., not to let your desire for these things come ahead of your service to God!
Read and discuss Matthew 6:31-34.

a. Many adults have no time for themselves, their families or for God because they are just too busy making money!

4. Read Luke 16:19-31. In this passage of Scripture, which of these two men would you judge to be successful? _____

a. One's bank account or the car he drives, or the house he lives in, or the clothes he wears, does not determine one's standing before God! I'm thankful for that, aren't you?

5. The Bible teaches those who are rich how to look upon and use their riches.

Read 1 Timothy 6:17-19.

a. Is money sinful? _____

- b. Is it a sin to work hard, invest wisely and become wealthy? _____
 - c. Only when we attach too great an importance to it does it become sin!
6. Abraham and Job were men of tremendous wealth, yet they were faithful men of God. Lydia was a successful businesswoman according to Acts 16:11-15.
7. Prosperity is a blessing from God. Remember the rich young ruler of Luke 18:18-23.
- a. What was the real problem? Discuss. _____
 - b. Not that he was rich or young, but that he loved his money more than he loved the Lord.
 - c. When it came down to a choice between the Lord and his money, he chose his money!
 - d. What would your choice have been? _____
 - e. Have you already started making a choice? Think about it!
8. What are your chances of going to heaven with this kind of attitude? _____
- a. Read Luke 18:24-25.

HEAVEN'S VIEW OF THIS

1. The world has always thought that happiness and prosperity go together. Not so!
2. Jesus insisted that **happiness depends on what you are, not on what you have!**
 - a. The world gives praise to the rich and famous who live in mansions and drive big expensive cars, but God looks on the heart and praises the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, etc.
3. God made you and me to have dominion or rule over this earth and its wealth. Don't let life turn the tables on you and put you under its rule!
4. God would have you to love people and use things for their sakes. Don't reverse your priorities and wind up loving things so much that you use people for the purpose of getting things!
 - a. How can you use people to get things? Discuss. _____

APPLYING THE GUIDELINES

1. Let's look at our three guidelines again.
 - a. There are **specific commands** against being greedy and covetous! Colossians 3:5.
 - b. There are **principles of right living** violated by covetousness.
 - 1) Read Matthew 6:24 again.
 - 2) Read Colossians 3:1-3.
 - c. Your **influence** for Christ will hurt to whatever degree you put money above serving God!
2. We must always remember that one day we will leave **everything** of this life behind!

APPLICATION

1. Speaking to a graduating class at a university, the English poet Rudyard Kipling advised the graduates not to care too much for money or power or fame. He said,
"Someday you will meet a man who cares for none of these things, and then you will know how poor you are."
2. Jesus Christ was just such a person! He gave up heaven, glory and service by angels to humble Himself for our sakes.
 - a. He washed the feet of His disciples.
 - b. In great suffering, He gave His life on the cruel cross.
3. My young friend, you cannot follow Him and be caught up in selfishness.
4. Let each of us **Draw the Line** on putting so much emphasis on getting rich and on having money, money, money (things, things, things).
5. Be a wise builder and build your life on the rock, Jesus Christ, not on the sand of the world! Matthew 7:24-27.

Lesson 4 THAT MOUTH OF YOURS

Read the Text: Psalm 141:3

INTRODUCTION

1. "Why did I say that?" Who hasn't asked this question to himself/herself at some time?
2. Living the Christian life is like operating in enemy territory ... sin is everywhere and we must be on the lookout!
3. The story is told of an Egyptian ruler who sent a sacrificial animal to the residence of a respected sage. His request of the wise man was that he send back the best part and the worst part to his king. To the surprise of the monarch, not two parts, but one was returned to him. The tongue was sent back as that which is both best and worst in any living thing. Think about that for just a moment!
4. Questions:
 - a. How important is our speech? Discuss. _____
 - b. Is it really a sin to use profanity? _____
 - c. Is it really wrong to 'cut somebody else down'? _____
5. The Bible teaches that the name of God must be treated with special reverence. Read and discuss Exodus 20:7 _____ and Psalm 111:9. _____
6. One distinguishing mark between God's people and the world is the use of God's name.
 - a. Slang expressions such as "gosh, golly, gee," are slang versions of God's name.
 - b. Look it up in your dictionary when you get home and you will see this is so.
7. The kind of language we hear in videos, movies, TV shows, in some music, at school, etc., is obscene and evil. We must **draw the line** to make sure we don't do these things ourselves!

8. Sometimes we get the idea that God's people are supposed to walk around and talk holy all of the time, quoting Scripture, never using a swear word, never telling a dirty joke, never gossiping about someone they know.
 - a. What do you think of this description? _____
 - b. Is this the way it is supposed to be? _____

9. Well, the fact of the matter is that God does care about how you talk and the words you use and the jokes you tell, etc.
 - a. He doesn't expect us to quote Scriptures 24 hours a day, but he expects us to exercise self-control! Read James 1:26.

DISCUSSION

OUR RESPONSIBILITY

1. Some of the things God-fearing people are to eliminate from their lives are found in Colossians 3:8-9. Which ones involve your mouth? _____
_____ Read also Ephesians 4:29.

2. Profanity, off-color stories, lying, swearing, and similar uses of the tongue just have no place in the life of a young man or woman who serves the Lord.
 - a. Would you want to tell any of these kinds of stories, jokes, or use any of these kinds of words in the presence of Jesus? Discuss. _____

3. The Word of God teaches us that we are not through with our words once they have been spoken. Read Matthew 12:36-37. _____
 - a. In Matthew 12:34, Jesus taught that what comes from the mouth reveals the condition of the speaker's heart!
 - b. What is in the heart that produces profanity? Discuss. _____
 - c. What is in the heart that gossips about someone else? Discuss. _____

4. The Bible is very clear ... we better be careful about what we say!

A LOOK AT JAMES 3

1. This well-known chapter warns us about the danger of the tongue. This chapter teaches us that the tongue is tough to tame! James 3:8
 - a. Does this mean then that we shouldn't even try to tame our tongue? _____ Discuss.
2. Of all of the figures used in James 3, none is more graphic than the one involving the fire and the forest. Read James 3: 5, 6. Fire can warm a weary family's food; but uncontrolled fire can destroy both property and lives! Listen carefully: Fire itself is neither good nor bad! Its help or harm depends on its use. So it is with the tongue!
3. The gift of speech is neither good nor evil. It all depends on the use we make of it!
4. You see ... the tongue can inspire, teach and praise; it can also defeat, discourage, and destroy!
5. Churches divide, families break up, and friendships are destroyed by the spark struck from an angry word!
6. Read James 3:9,10. The ultimate inconsistency in the life of a child of God is to praise God and then curse men!
 - a. Have you ever heard someone sing praises to God and then talk about someone on the next pew in a bad way? This is what James is talking about! **IT'S WRONG!**
 - b. Have you been guilty of this?
7. Young people, it is time to **draw the line** about our words!

THINGS TO GUARD AGAINST

1. Besides profanity and cursing, there are other wrong uses of the tongue we need to avoid.
2. Questions:
 - a. Are you ever tempted to gossip about someone?
 - b. Have you ever known of someone suffering tremendous harm from a lie?
 - c. It is amazing how false stories can get started, isn't it?
 - d. Have you ever had a false story told about you?
 - e. How did you feel? Did it hurt? _____
 - f. Have you ever started a false story? Why: _____

3. The story is told about a woman who came to see her preacher. She said, "I've been guilty of spreading false rumors, and now I want to undo all the damage." The preacher told her to come with him. He ripped open a pillow and went to the roof of the building. He told the lady to drop the feathers out of the pillow. The wind quickly scattered them. "Now," the preacher ordered, "go down and gather the feathers." "But preacher," the woman protested, "that would be impossible." "I know," he replied; "just as impossible as taking back all the words you've spoken." **You see, words don't just disappear! Discuss.**
4. Have you ever been tempted to lie to cover your tracks? Remember the Lord hates lying. Proverbs 6:16-19.
 - a. One little boy in a Bible class described a lie as "a terrible sin, but a very present help in time of trouble."
5. Then there is always the filthy jokes and off-color stories. Even if you don't tell them, do you listen? Laugh? Encourage others who do? _____
6. Instead of filling your conversation with all of these bad things, why not try the biblical pattern of healthy speech? Read Colossians 4:6. _____
7. People often comment on beautiful eyes or hair, wonderful complexion, and lovely smiles; but no one ever says "what a beautiful tongue you have!"
 - a. Do you have a beautiful tongue? _____
 - b. How would you describe a beautiful tongue? _____
8. Words of encouragement can help someone through an especially hard day! Try it ... with those in your Bible class, with your parents, with your siblings, with your school classmates.
 - a. Telling your parents you love them will brighten up their whole lives!
 - b. Saying thank you to others will do wonders for others!
9. Your tongue can say something cheerful when everyone else is complaining and it can say something nice about the person everyone else is putting down!
 - a. Do you speak before thinking? _____
 - b. When was the last time you gave encouragement to someone who needed it? _____

10. How do we learn to say the things that would really help people?

a. Read Isaiah 50:4 _____

APPLICATION

1. Your speech and your reaction to the language others use around you is an index to your total character!
2. Applying our guidelines, **specific commands, principles of right thinking, influence:**
 - a. God's word forbids the use of profanity, cursing, gossip and lying. It requires truthfulness, reverent use of God's name, speaking the gospel and encouraging people in things that are right!
 - b. Ephesian 4:29 meets the second guideline concerning general principles. We should use speech that "builds others up" and "gives benefit to those who listen."
 - c. Are there implications for your influence in your speech? You bet! No one is going to be anxious to hear about the precious name of Jesus from a mouth that has been used to spread lies, or gossip, or filth!
3. The purpose of bridling either a horse or a tongue is not to take away its spirit and energy, but to channel that power constructively.
4. My friend, your tongue will never be so thoroughly controlled that you can become careless with your words.
5. DRAW THE LINE on the use of your tongue!

What does your speech say about you?

Lesson 5 BLUSHING IS STILL HEALTHY AND NECESSARY!

Read the Text: Psalm 51:1, 2

INTRODUCTION

1. "Sometimes my conscience bothers me when I do something wrong. Other times, it doesn't. I can't figure it out." Discuss
 - a. Ever feel this way? Welcome to the club!

2. Everyone knows what it feels like when his conscience bothers him. It's that sick feeling somewhere between your tonsils and your belly button that comes after you've done something wrong!

3. In today's world, having a conscience that bothers you is something most people don't care anything about.
 - a. That makes it tough for those who do care, doesn't it? _____
 - b. In what way? _____

4. It is one thing to do something wrong; it is something else again to be proud (or at least, unashamed) of having done it!
 - a. Should sin in the world bother us? _____
 - b. Should sin in our own lives bother us? _____
 - c. What does it mean when we begin to overlook sin in anyone's life or in our own life? Discuss.

5. JUST A THOUGHT: Have you ever said or heard someone else say, "I can just overlook all the bad language in a movie, song, TV show, video, etc.?" What does this really say about a person or about us? Discuss. _____

6. Sin is no little thing! It cannot be taken lightly! When a person truly loves God and realizes that he has broken the divine will ... he will grieve! Read and discuss 2 Corinthians 7:8-11.
 - a. Describe "grieving". _____
 - b. Is grieving over the death of someone we love the same as grieving over our sin? _____

- c. What is the difference? _____
 - d. What does godly sorrow bring about? _____
 - e. When we sin, do you think that it breaks God's heart? _____
7. Right conduct before God begins with an attitude of heart. It comes from setting our minds on things above. Read Colossians 3:1-2.
And is, therefore, shocked and repulsed by evil in any form. Read Romans 12:9.
8. Never forget: Sin hurts God and makes people unhappy!
9. Questions:
- a. What is a tender conscience? _____
 - b. Do you have one? _____
 - c. Do you ever think about Christ dying for you? _____
 - d. Do you ever grieve over so many in the world who don't care about God? _____
10. If you keep a tender conscience and learn to use the GUIDELINES we've established in these lessons, you will do well in making moral decisions. TAKE THE TEST ...
- a. Do you feel at odds with the world and the way it talks, thinks, acts, lives? _____
 - b. Does the sin in this world bother you or do you hardly notice it anymore? _____
 - c. Would you be embarrassed to hear the Lord's name used in vain, or profanity used? _____
 - d. Do you really feel shame when you do wrong or do you tell yourself that everybody you know does things a whole lot worse? _____

DISCUSSION

THE TIME OF JEREMIAH THE PROPHET

1. About 600 years before the birth of Christ, Jeremiah was told by God to prophesy to the people of Judah in their darkest hour. They had become so wicked God was ready to use another nation, the Babylonians to punish them.

2. Just prior to 586 B.C., Jeremiah warned them of God's displeasure and called them to repent of their evil ways. But Jeremiah was unsuccessful in his efforts to get the people to turn back to God. They were too far gone!
 - a. How do you suppose Jeremiah felt? _____
 - b. How about God? _____
 - c. Have you ever felt this way? _____

3. The people of Judah felt no guilt because of their inability to feel shame for sin!
 - a. One time God even sent a drought to try and bring them to their senses, but they wouldn't change. Read Jeremiah 3:3.
 - b. Later, Jeremiah said these words ... Read Jeremiah 6:15 and 8:12.
"They were not at all _____, neither could they _____."

4. God determined they were to be destroyed because their hearts were so hard and insensitive.
 - a. What is a hard heart? Describe it. _____
 - b. They were just not ashamed of their sins!
 - c. **They had lost the ability to blush!**

5. **The only sin a person cannot receive forgiveness for is the sin he/she refuses to repent of.**

6. Blush means "to become red in the face, especially from shame, modesty, or confusion; to feel shame or embarrassment."
 - a. Have you ever blushed? _____
 - b. Have you ever been embarrassed? _____

7. People in our day are like Judah of old! Even Christians are loosening up their morals. Drinking is approved by many and even practiced by some; they watch bad videos, movies and TV shows without thinking anything about it; dress immodestly; etc. All of this without blushing!

SHAMELESSNESS A WORK OF THE FLESH

1. Read Galatians 5:19-21. The word "*lasciviousness*" is a big word, isn't it? It describes a lifestyle that could care less about what is right and wrong. It includes moving our bodies in an indecent way, inappropriate touching of the body.

2. The person who lives this way isn't interested in pleasing God, but pleasing self!
3. When a person sins, he chooses to ignore God's law and his own conscience. When he does wrong and he knows it ... he can either repent, or begin to be hardened to sin.
Read Hebrews 3:13.
4. When he chooses to not repent, this person will lose his own self-respect.
 - a. What is self-respect? Discuss. _____
5. When you lose your self-respect, then you lose your reputation for good and gain a reputation for doing evil. Don't let this happen to you!

SAFEGUARDS FOR OUR HEARTS

Here are three suggestions to help the person who doesn't want to lose his/her love for sin and love for God.

Number One: Stay close to the Word of God.

1. Don't let a single day go by without spending some serious time with the Bible.
 - a. Read carefully
 - b. Try to memorize some verses.
 - c. Think about what you read.
2. One cannot be filling his or her heart with the Word daily without coming to see sin for what it really is!
3. Read Psalm 119:104, 128. We must hate _____ .
4. OBSERVATION: Recognize there is a very real difference between hating the sin and hating the sinner. Discuss.

Number Two: Pay attention to your conscience.

1. Conscience is related to the things one has been taught and cannot be an altogether safe guide.

2. You see ... it must be educated by Scripture and make its judgments on the basis of God's Word, not men's thoughts and ideas.
3. After your conscience has been instructed in God's Word ... when you start getting too close to something that can hurt you, your conscience protests.
 - a. Listen to it!

Number Three: When you sin, confess it at once and seek divine forgiveness.

1. Unrepented of sin in the heart is like a hot coal in one's hands; it must be gotten rid of quickly or it will burn and sear. Discuss.
2. Be ashamed. Blush.
3. Note David's attitude in Psalm 38:4-6.

APPLICATION

1. The attitude God would have all people of all ages to have toward their personal sins is demonstrated by David in Psalm 51.
 - a. He had schemed, plotted and sinned with Bathsheba.
 - b. Then he tried to cover his deed and got into deeper trouble.
 - c. Then came Nathan the prophet with the rebuke of the Word of God, and his heart melted.
 - d. He was ashamed! He cried! He prayed! He sought forgiveness! Read Psalm 51:1-3, 10.
2. What sort of heart do you have?
3. Develop a heart which fears and hates sin, which seeks after God. It is the best guarantee that your life will stay on track with your Lord! Read Psalm 19:14.
4. **DRAW THE LINE** on sin and your attitude toward it!