

# Outside the Box... Inside the Lines | Where to Start | Study Guide

[www.ordinaryfaith.net/sermons/where-to-start-drawing-lines/](http://www.ordinaryfaith.net/sermons/where-to-start-drawing-lines/)

## Bible Reading:

☐ 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12    ☐ 2 Corinthians 10:1-6    ☐ 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12    ☐ Psalm 63:1-11    ☐ Matthew 25:14-30

*When Things Get Worse.* Have you ever started a diet with the goal of improving your health and you started feeling worse? Or, have you started a new year's resolution to better manage your life and things became MORE chaotic? When you set out to truly grow, it's likely to happen again. Don't let that frighten you, but be aware.

As we learn to draw healthy lines within our limits, we quickly discover that it is Love that drives this process. So first we learn to Love God and allow His Love to draw the lines within us.

**Mark 12:30 (NLT)** And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.

## Love God with All Your Heart

*Our hearts are filled with beliefs.* Those beliefs give us a number of *feelings* that we often can't understand. Then our feelings tend to shape our *attitudes* about life and relationships.

*"It ain't what you don't know that gets you into trouble. It's what you know for sure that just ain't so."* - Mark Twain, attributed - The Big Short, 2015.

**2 Thessalonians 2:10 (NLT)** ...they refuse to love and accept the truth that would save them.

Our beliefs have the ability to greatly harm our well being. Often they are formed in our most traumatic moments and shape the rest of our lives. To invite God into our hearts, **Revelation 3:20**, is to invite Jesus to confront our beliefs. His Love will reveal our beliefs to be true or false. Then we experience healing and renewal as we surrender to Him.

## Love God with All Your Soul

*Our desires drive our choices, and our choices shape our behaviors.* If most people are living to satisfy their desires, why are so few actually satisfied?

**James 4:2-3 (NLT)** You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what others have, but you can't get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them. Yet you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it. 3 And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure.

We often believe God is trying to thwart our desires, but that is not true. In fact, He wants to give us the desires of our hearts, **Psalms 37:4**. He is, however, a very good Father and realizes we often desire things that are not good for us nor do they actually satisfy. Only when we experience God's Love within our soul do we clearly see our true desires.

## Love God with All Your Mind

*The thoughts of our minds will become the values we live.* We need to own our thought life. There is a world of its own that exists between our ears and we are responsible for it. Truthfully, the choice of what we actually think about is our own.

## 2 Corinthians 10:5 (NASB) ...we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ

We have a responsibility to expand our thinking, increasing our knowledge and to reflect upon it. Granted, few today require actual information before forming an opinion. However, we are responsible for our opinions so they need to be informed.

We also need to clarify any distorted thinking we have acquired. Jesus spoke of having a "log" in our own eye while criticizing the splinter in the eye of another. [Matt 7:3-5](#). Taking ownership of our thoughts means taking inventory and determining if we are correct.

Our thoughts form our values, and our behavior demonstrates our values. When we value the wrong things, like the approval of people over God's approval, we sabotage ourselves. [Matt 12:43](#).

### Love God with All Your Strength

*We need to admit that we have limits.* When we ignore them, we continually bump up against them. By acknowledging them and respecting our limits, we are better able to manage our own effectiveness. It is also important to understand that it is OUR limits that we control. We can't control the actions or feelings of other people. We are only responsible for what we personally will or will not do.

*We need to also understand that this is about living out of real and practical Love.* Often we act out of guilt or fear and then harbor resentment. Real Love doesn't resent those it serves. [1 Corinthians 13](#). Only as we take responsibility for our beliefs, thoughts, desires, and limits are we able to respond to others with authentic love.

### Talk about it...

- *What are your first thoughts regarding today's topic? Please share with the group.*
- *Have you ever started a new personal growth strategy that made things worse at first?*
- *Have you ever discovered a personal belief that was untrue? Would you share it with the group?*
- *Discuss [2 Thessalonians 2:1-12](#). Why did these people choose to reject the truth? What is the outcome? How could we guard against similar behavior in our lives?*
- *Discuss [Psalm 37:4](#). What doesn't God give us everything we desire? Could you identify with God's desire to bless us with His desire to protect us? Discuss?*
- *Review [2 Corinthians 10:1-6](#). How could we take responsibility for our thoughts? How do we "take the captive" to Christ? How could we contribute good thoughts to our thinking?*
- *Discuss a personal limit you have discovered. How has it changed your interactions with others? What advice would you give regarding personal limits?*
- *Is there anything in today's topic that you would be excited to share with a friend?*

*Additional Resources:*

*Adapted from "Boundaries: When to Say Yes, How to Say No To Take Control of Your Life" Cloud, Townsend"*

*Chapter 2 - What does a boundary look like?*