

# The “How Close Can I Get?” Mentality



Discovering God's Word

Bible Study Series

# The “How Close Can I Get?” Mentality

Learn how to avoid this mentality and live a holy life

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Discovering God’s Word Bible Study Series

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**About the author:** My name is Eric Krieg. I am a disciple of Jesus, a Bible student, a truth seeker, and an evangelist. My interest is in using the Bible as my only guide in my faith. My desire is to help others understand the message of the Bible and pursue true, New Testament Christianity.

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**My plea:** It is my hope and prayer that you are searching for the truth that is contained in God’s word, the Bible. My desire is to help you understand and obey these truths God has revealed in the pages of His word. It is to that end that I write this material. Please observe all of the Scripture references and evaluate whether the conclusions I have drawn are in harmony with God’s word. If they are, I ask that you make honest application of those truths to your life and obey God’s instructions.

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# The “How Close Can I Get?” Mentality

In 1988 Iron Eyes Cody (a Native American actor) repeated an old Indian legend to Guideposts magazine. This legend goes as follows: Many years ago, Indian youths would go away in solitude to prepare for manhood. One such youth hiked into a beautiful valley, green with trees, bright with flowers. There he fasted.

But on the third day, as he looked up at the surrounding mountains, he noticed one tall rugged peak, capped with dazzling snow. “I will test myself against that mountain,” he thought. He put on his buffalo-hide shirt, threw his blanket over his shoulders and set out to climb the peak. When he reached the top, he stood on the rim of the world. He could see forever, and his heart swelled with pride.

Then, he heard a rustle at his feet, and looking down, he saw a snake. Before he could move, the snake spoke. “I am about to die,” said the snake. “It is too cold for me up here and I am freezing. There is no food and I am starving. Put me under shirt and take me down to the valley.” “No,” said the youth. “I am forewarned. I know your kind. You are a rattlesnake. If I pick you up, you will bite, and your bite will kill me.” “Not so,” said the snake. “I will treat you differently. If you do this for me, you will be special. I will not harm you.”

The youth resisted for a while, but this was a very persuasive snake with beautiful markings. At last the youth tucked it under his shirt and carried it down the valley. There he laid it gently on the grass, when suddenly the snake coiled, rattled, and leapt –

biting him on the leg. “But you promised...” cried the youth. Then, as the snake slithered away, he said, “You knew what I was when you picked me up” (adapted from Bits and Pieces, June 1990, p. 5-7; accessed from [www.christianglobe.com/illustrationsTwo/a-z/t/temptation.htm](http://www.christianglobe.com/illustrationsTwo/a-z/t/temptation.htm)).

Are you ever guilty of getting “too close” to sin? Are you ever guilty of trying to “toe the line” between what is right and what is wrong, trying to get as close to sin as you can possibly get – while still staying on the side of right?

Do you recognize the danger that is inherent within such a mindset? Proverbs 6:27-28 asks: “Can a man take fire to his bosom, And his clothes not be burned? Can one walk on hot coals, And his feet not be seared?” In the context, this passage is warning about the immoral woman who attempts to seduce a man to commit fornication with her, especially warning the man who commits adultery with his neighbor’s wife of consequences (verse 29). Yet, even in a general sense, this passage makes an excellent point regarding sin – indicating that you can’t “play with fire” regularly and never be burned, just as you can’t dabble in sin and there not be consequences!

Yes, we need to draw lines and determine to stay on the right side of the lines. But, I want us to understand the danger involved in trying to get as close as we possibly can to this lines that have been drawn!

Now, I am not here to judge whether or not you will be saved or whether you will be lost if you get as close to the line as you possibly can without crossing it! Instead, I am here to warn of the danger that this mindset poses to crossing the line! Realize that there is no room for slipping – if you are getting as close as you can possibly be to this line!

I am also here to warn of the failure in such a mindset. I believe it is possible for an individual to be practicing the right things, but be wrong in the eyes of God because of his/her heart! Perhaps the “How close can I get?” mentality will show to God that I am not really interested in giving myself to Him; but, that I am only interested in putting myself above Him! We must be careful!

In this lesson, I want to warn you about the dangers of this mindset – and encourage you to adopt a much different mindset regarding to ways of sin and the ways of righteousness!

## ***What Is This Mentality?***

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### **Defining this mentality**

This mentality is desiring to be (at least in most cases) as much like the world you can be – while still being on God’s side. This mentality desires to fulfill as many of your own physical desires as you possibly can fulfill – while still trying to be right with God.

### **What this mentality accomplishes**

As you can already see, this mentality does accomplish some things. Please take a moment to consider three definite things that are accomplished through this “How close can I get?” mindset.

#### **(1) This mindset tries to serve two masters.**

This mindset attempts to serve God while also attempting to serve your own desires. This is true simply because God’s desires are *not* your only consideration. Instead, in this mindset, you are desiring to serve God – *and* you are also focused on fulfilling as many of your own desires as you possibly can. However, Jesus warned about attempting to do exactly that: “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon” (Matthew 6:24).

#### **(2) This mindset results in lukewarmness.**

Because this mindset attempts to serve two masters, this mindset results in a lukewarm life toward God. Just think about it. Since you are not giving God your *entire* focus, you are not going to be *entirely* devoted to His service. Instead of being zealous for every good work (as Jesus desires you to be, according to Titus 2:14), you are concerned about doing whatever you can do to “get by” with God – and still live to please yourself. In Revelation 3:15-16, Jesus rebuked an entire congregation for their lukewarm

attitude: “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.” So, Jesus hates this lukewarm, “How close can I get?” mentality!

**(3) This mindset results in never living up to your full potential in Christ Jesus.** This mindset simply is not focused on being everything God wants you to be – as often as God wants you to be! Instead, this mindset is focused on being *as little* as God wants you to be – as often as you can “get away” with it! So, you will *never* live up to your full potential as a Christian in your service to the Lord – as long as you maintain this mindset! Jesus’ parable of the talents depicts this very well (recorded in Matthew 25:14-30). Each of the three men who were given talents (certain weights of gold or silver) were only given what the master knew they could handle while he was away. Two of the men (the “5 talent” and “2 talent” men) diligently put their talents to use – and gained an additional 5 talents and 2 talents each. However, the “1 talent” man was content simply not to lose what the master had entrusted to him, as he hid his talent in the ground – and returned it to the master upon his arrival. Yet, the master was not pleased – and delivered this servant over to be punished. Similarly, the “How close can I get?” mentality seeks to “get by” by doing as little as possible with what we have been given. Yet, this is a very dangerous mindset – and one that does not imitate the mindset of the 5 and 2 talent men, who desired to do as much as they could with what they had been given.

### **Some questions this mentality asks**

Now, before we go any further in this lesson, I want to be more specific as to what this mentality looks like. Here are some examples of the kinds of questions this mentality will ask.

- “How many assemblies of the local church can I miss without being guilty of forsaking the assembling of ourselves together? Can I willingly miss Bible study? Can I only attend on Sunday mornings? Do I really have to attend every night of a Gospel Meeting?”

## ***Establish What Is Right***

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- “How many drinks of wine/alcohol can I take before I am guilty of banqueting, carousing, drunkenness, or insobriety?”
- “How short can my skirt be, how low-cut can my blouse be, how tight can my pants be, before I am guilty of dressing immodestly?”
- “How far can I go with my boyfriend/girlfriend before my conduct becomes improper?”
- “How far can I stretch the truth before it becomes a lie or deception?”
- “Can I watch a PG-13 (or many times even a PG) movie as long as I fast-forward or look away from the *really bad* scenes? How many times can someone use profanity, use God’s name in vain, or tell a dirty joke before I need to turn off the television?”
- “How much can I talk about someone else and how much of what I know can I tell to others before it is considered gossip?”
- “How many people do I have to teach the gospel before it is pleasing to God?”
- “How close of a relationship can I have with those who are trying to pull me away from the Lord before they succeed in pulling me away from the Lord?”

### **This mentality must be avoided!**

This is just a sample of the kinds of questions this mentality will ask. This mentality reminds me of a child who is trying to do as little as possible to make his parents happy, instead of simply doing everything his parents would desire! However, I hope that you can see that this mentality manifests a heart problem! This mentality manifests a desire for your service to God to be as little of an inconvenience as it can possibly be! This mentality manifests the desire for a religion that *doesn’t get in the way* of how you desire to live your life!

Now, if you realize the inherent dangers in this mentality, it is my hope that you have a desire to avoid this mentality. But, how can you accomplish this?

Let me be perfectly clear. I am not at all suggesting that there is something wrong with trying to establish “lines” between what is right and what is wrong. As we will see in just a moment, there are many clear lines between what is right and what is wrong. However, I am warning about the mentality that wants to get as close to that line as possible (likely, because there is a desire to cross the line; but, the individual is afraid of the consequences). Still, the first, “step” in avoiding this mentality is establishing what is right.

### **Do everything in the name of the Lord**

In Colossians 3:17, Paul instructed: “And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”

Notice that this passage clearly instructs that we must be diligent to find out whether the things that we do and say are pleasing to God – or not! To do something “in the name of the Lord Jesus” is to do it by Jesus’ authority. So, this instruction implies that we must establish Bible authority for everything that we do and say – in order to make sure that it is pleasing to God!

Whatever the issue or question is, then, you must determine that whatever God says on the matter is the final authority! It is His word that draws the line between what is right and what is wrong. You must simply acknowledge that “line” and determine to live your life on the right side of that “line.”

### **Do all to the glory of God**

As you seek to establish the “line” between what is right and what is wrong, you must do so in order that you might bring glory and honor to God through your life. After all, God has created you so that you would live your life to glorify Him (Isaiah 43:7) – and the only way you can bring glory to God is if you will be obedient to His instructions!

The Bible is clear that God desires for you to do everything that you do, say everything that you

say, and think everything that you think to His glory (in a way that will bring Him glory and honor). 1 Corinthians 10:31 says, “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 says, “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

Now, this is *not* just about saying that you are doing something to “God’s glory.” Instead, this is about truly doing, saying, or thinking those things in a way that is pleasing to Him! So, if you desire to be pleasing to God, you will always be asking the question, “Is what I am about to do, think, or say going to bring glory to God?”

## **WWJD?**

One “test” you can use to establish what is right is to ask the question, “What would Jesus do (WWJD)?” What would Jesus do if He was faced with the decision you are faced with? What would Jesus say in the situation you are in? What would Jesus think if He was in your position?

Now, as you evaluate these sorts of questions, you must always remember who Jesus is – and the kinds of decisions that He made while He was on the earth! You must never be guilty of changing Jesus into “one of the guys” who sought to have a “good time” while He lived on this earth! Instead, Jesus Christ came to fulfill on a very specific mission to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10) and live His life entirely to the glory of the Father. Consider Jesus’ prayer to His Heavenly Father in John 17:4: “I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.”

Jesus, therefore, faced every decision that needed to be made during His life with the glory of God in His mind! He was determined to accomplish the mission the Father had sent Him to accomplish. Thus, whenever Jesus was tempted to fulfill His own desires rather than live according to God’s desires, He refused – answering every temptation with Scripture (see Matthew 4:1-11). Hebrews 4:15 simply records this statement about Jesus’ life: “For

we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.”

So, as you use this test to determine what is right and what is wrong during the course of your life, you need to realize that Jesus is entirely holy and pure. That is, He is entirely separated from everything that is evil. Since Jesus possesses the same qualities as God (John 1:1), the following statement is also applicable to Him: “This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5).

Jesus, clearly, was *not* interested in trying to get as close to the “line” between right and wrong as He could possibly get. Instead, Jesus was entirely devoted to staying away from what was evil – because He wanted no part of it! Therefore, if you ask “What would Jesus do?” in making your decisions, you also will be concerned with establishing what is right – and staying as far from evil as you can possibly be!

## **Is God only concerned about you doing what is right?**

Clearly, God desires for you to do what is right. But, is that *all* that God is concerned about? As we have already seen, the “How close can I get?” mentality searches for what is technically right and technically wrong; but, it fails to wholly dedicate your heart to God!

However, God is *not* interested in empty praise – nor is He interested in empty service. God wants your heart ***and*** He wants your actions! Consider two passages that demonstrate this to be true.

(1) John 4:23-24. Jesus said, “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” So, you could do everything God wants you to do in worship to Him – and still not worship Him acceptably! This is true because God does *not* only want your right actions; but, He also wants your

sincerity in worship. That is, He wants you to be *fully* engaged in your worship!

(2) 1 John 5:3. John wrote, “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.” So, you could keep all of the commandments of God – and still not be pleasing to God. Involved in truly loving God is keeping His commandments; but, also not considering the commandments of God to be burdensome!

The “How close can I get?” mentality considers the commandments of God as being burdensome and does not fully engage in God’s service! Therefore, you certainly *do* need to establish what is right; but, it does not end there!

## ***Hunger And Thirst For Righteousness***

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Next, as you seek to avoid the “How close can I get?” mentality, you must develop a hunger and thirst for righteousness.

### **Matthew 5:6**

As part of the “Sermon on the Mount,” Jesus said, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled” (Matthew 5:6). Implied by the terms “hunger” and “thirst” is more than a casual interest in righteousness. Instead, they imply an intense devotion to righteousness, even recognizing it as necessary to sustaining your spiritual life!

Furthermore, the term “righteousness” implies that which is right with God. So, this intense longing is *not* for that which is right in your own sight. Instead, it is for that which is right in God’s sight!

### **Your doing what is right must not be motivated by fear only**

Clearly, the Bible teaches that fear is a motivator for doing what is right. Hebrews 10:31 says, “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the

living God.” 2 Corinthians 5:10-11 says, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.”

Perhaps when you became a Christian, your conduct was primarily motivated by the fear of being condemned to Hell. Yet, as you grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord, your understanding of who God is and what He desires of you ought to increase as well! This spiritual growth, therefore, ought to bring you to a point where you are not *just* motivated by fear; but, that you develop an intense longing for what is right – so that you can be in fellowship with God!

### **God desires for you to long for what is right!**

Your doing what is right must be out of fear for the consequences of failing to do what is right – and out of your deep desire to glorify Him in your life by doing what is right! Consider the example of David (a man after God’s own heart), as he writes the 119<sup>th</sup> Psalm and describes his great love for the truth and longs to live according to God’s commandments (note that these verses are only a sample of the verses we could consider).

- Verse 10: “With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!”
- Verse 11: “Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.”
- Verse 14: “I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, As much as in all riches.”
- Verse 16: “I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word.”
- Verse 20: “My soul breaks with longing For Your judgments at all times.”
- Verse 53: “Indignation has taken hold of me Because of the wicked, who forsake Your law.”
- Verse 63: “I am a companion of all who fear You, And of those who keep Your precepts.”
- Verse 123: “My eyes fail from seeking Your salvation And Your righteous word.”



- Verse 127: “Therefore I love Your commandments More than gold, yes, than fine gold!”
- Verse 131: “I opened my mouth and panted, For I longed for Your commandments.”

You need to hunger and thirst for righteousness! You need to be desperately longing to be right with God! In fact, I would suggest to you that you *will* hunger and thirst for *something* – and, you will be filled with whatever you are searching for! If you are searching to just get by, you will never accomplish anything greater. If you are searching to fulfill your fleshly lusts, you will find a way to do so. And, if you are searching for truth and righteousness, Jesus says you will find it (see Matthew 5:6 and Matthew 7:7)!

## ***Make No Provision For The Flesh***

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As you seek to develop a mindset that is pleasing to God rather than living according to the “How close can I get?” mentality, you will need to make no provision for the flesh.

### **Romans 13:11-14**

Consider what Paul instructed in Romans 13:11-14: “And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”

One of the dangers of the “How close can I get?” mentality, I mentioned earlier in the lesson, is that it leaves no room to slip. In fact, this mentality actually tends to leave many doors of opportunity open for sin! Sometimes it is that folks simply are not willing to “cut ties” with sin; but, they also don’t want to be lost. So, they see this as a “middle ground”

between the two (keeping as close to sin as they can possibly be *without technically sinning*)! Yet, remember that Jesus said you cannot serve two masters (Matthew 6:24)!

Then, as you think about this mentality, consider what the Hebrew writer said in Hebrews 12:1: “Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.” Those athletes who take their races seriously will recognize that they need as little to hinder them as possible when they are running the races. So, they are very diligent in training their bodies for these races and selecting all of the right gear that will provide the least amount of resistance during the races. Then, when the races comes, they focus intensely on reaching the finish line. Yet, if these athletes made provision to fulfill their own fleshly desires, they would not be ready to win these races (just think about if these athletes ate at McDonalds because they were hungry, didn’t train because they were sore, etc.)!

The same thing must be true if you desire to serve the Lord! You must determine to lay aside everything that hinders you in your “race” (namely, the sin which so easily trips you up), train yourself for righteousness, and run with endurance as you focus on the “finish line”! If you make provisions to fulfill your own fleshly desires, you will certainly not win the race!

### **What does it mean to make provision for the flesh?**

Consider this illustration: “A father ordered his son, ‘Son, don’t swim in that canal.’ ‘OK, Dad,’ he answered. But, he came home carrying a wet bathing suit that evening. ‘Where have you been?’ demanded the father. ‘Swimming in the canal,’ answered the boy. ‘Didn’t I tell you not to swim there?’ asked the father. ‘Yes Sir,’ answered the boy. ‘Why did you?’ he asked. ‘Well, Dad,’ he explained, ‘I had my bathing suit with me and I couldn’t resist the temptation.’ ‘Why did you take your bathing suit with you?’ he questioned. ‘So, I’d be prepared to swim, in case I was tempted,’ he replied” (C. Swindoll, *One Step Forward*, p. 85; accessed from



www.christianglobe.com/illustrationsTwo/a-z/t/temptation.htm).

That's you whenever you try to get as close to the line as you can! Technically, the father never said that he couldn't take his swimsuit with him! Yet, you could already see this boy had a heart problem – as his heart was prepared to violate his father's instructions if the right opportunity came along! So it is whenever you leave the door open to sin – you've taken your swimsuit with you! Though you might be doing what is *technically* right (nothing may be sinful in the things you are currently involved in), if the right opportunity comes along, it won't take much to persuade you to step to the other side of the "line"!

### How can you “make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts”?

Let me give you four steps to follow that will help you keep this command to “make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”

**(1) Put sin to death in your life.** Sometimes folks only give the sin that is in their lives a “cold.” That is, they only get rid of some of the sin or only get rid of it for a limited period of time. It soon “heals” and is in full effect in their lives again. However, God has told you to put sin to death in your life! Colossians 3:5 says, “Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth....” The word that is translated by the NKJV as “put to death” literally means to make something dead or to slay (Thayer). Therefore, don't allow any element of the sin to remain alive in your life! Instead, you are to consider yourself as being “dead...to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:11).

**(2) Crucify the passions and desires of the flesh.** Not only do you need to eliminate the sinful actions from your life; but, you need to eliminate the sin at its root – sinful passions and desires. As Paul described the way of the flesh as being contrary to the way of God (in Galatians 5:16-26), he concluded: “And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit” (Galatians 5:24-25). You, like Paul, need to consider your life as being devoted to the Lord's service. Consider what he said

in Galatians 2:20: “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

**(3) Be afraid of sin.** A fear of sin will help you have the desire to eliminate every sin from your life, as well as eliminate the sinful passions and desires of the flesh. Romans 12:9 says, “Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.” The word that is translated “Abhor” in the NKJV, literally means to have a horror of something. So, please take a moment to consider the thing that you are most afraid of on this earth. Now, consider how close you desire to get to that thing. You probably want to be as far away from it as you can possibly be! Now, God says that you need to be absolutely horrified of that which is evil! After all, it will do you greater harm than anything or anyone you are afraid of on this earth!

**(4) Love the way of truth.** Not only does Romans 12:9 instruct you to “Abhor what is evil.” But, it also instructs you to “Cling to what is good.” The word that is translated as “Cling” in the NKJV literally means to cement yourself to something. Now, think about the things that you value the most on this earth. You want to be as close to them as you can possibly be. Now, God says that you need to cement yourself to the way of truth! After all, it is the only thing that results in everlasting happiness for you in Heaven (see Romans 1:16)!

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## Seeing The Results

There will be a noticeable change in your life if you can eliminate the “How close can I get?” mentality – and develop an intense longing for that which is right in God's sight and determine to make absolutely no provision for the lusts of the flesh! Just consider a few examples (thinking back to the examples I gave at the beginning of this lesson). As we consider these examples, let's think of them in a before-after kind of way (before the change in mindset – after the change in mindset).

## Evangelism

Before: “How many people do I have to teach before I am pleasing to God?”

After: “God’s word is a burning fire ‘shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, And I could not’ (Jeremiah 20:9) because I want to tell everyone I can about the saving message of the gospel!”

## Clothing

Before: “How short can my skirt be, how low-cut can my blouse be, how tight can my pants be, before I am guilty of dressing immodestly?”

After: “I am doing absolutely nothing to bring attention to my physical body. Instead, I am clothing myself with good works and am showing myself to be someone who professes godliness “with good works” (1 Timothy 2:10)!

## Alcohol

Before: “How many drinks of wine/alcohol can I take before I am guilty of banqueting, carousing, drunkenness, or insobriety?”

After: “I know that if I do not take the first drink, I don’t ever have to worry about getting too close to the line (or even stepping over it). Furthermore, I am going to do everything that I can do to keep my mind prepared for the right actions – because I am in a war for my soul against a fierce enemy, and there is absolutely nothing that drinking alcohol can do that can help me win this war (in fact, it can only hurt me)!”

## Attendance

Before: “How many assemblies of the local church can I miss without being guilty of forsaking the assembling of ourselves together? Can I willingly miss Bible study? Can I only attend on Sunday mornings? Do I really have to attend every night of a Gospel Meeting?”

After: “I am going to make every sacrifice possible to attend all of the assemblies of the local church and fulfill my God-given responsibility. Then, I will not have to concern myself with whether

or not I am forsaking the assembling of ourselves together. Furthermore, it is my great privilege and desire to be with my brethren to worship God and to be mutually encouraged in our faith!”

## Television

Before: “Can I watch a PG-13 (or many times even a PG) movie as long as I fast-forward or look away from the *really bad* scenes? How many times can someone use profanity, use God’s name in vain, or tell a dirty joke before I need to turn off the television?”

After: “I have decided to refuse to subject my mind to anything that is not pleasing to God (i.e. immodesty, filthy language, other sinful activity). I will evaluate everything that I watch by God’s standard of righteousness – and not by my standard for entertainment (see Philippians 4:8)!”

## Conduct with the opposite sex

Before: “How far can I go with my boyfriend/girlfriend before my conduct becomes improper?”

After: “I am going to keep my hands to myself, my thoughts in check, and my body pure at all costs – even if it costs me my relationship! I will ‘Flee...youthful lusts’ (2 Timothy 2:22) and ‘Flee fornication’ (1 Corinthians 6:18 KJV)!”

## Bottom line

Before: “How close can I get to sin without sinning?”

After: “How close can I get to God – and, consequently, how far away from sin can I get?”

## Conclusion

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I hope this lesson has encouraged you to get as far away from sin as you can possibly be – and to long for God’s righteousness. 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 simply says, “Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.”

Furthermore, please consider what is said in Romans 12:1-2 and apply it to the things we have discussed in this lesson: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

## ***Study Questions***

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Are you ever guilty of getting “too close” to sin?

Is there any danger in getting too close to the line? Explain your answer.

### **1. What Is This Mentality?**

Give a definition of this mentality.

What does this mentality accomplish?

(1)

(2)

(3)

What are some questions that this mentality asks?

Should this mentality be avoided? Why or why not?

### **2. Establish What Is Right**

What does Colossians 3:17 instruct? How is this significant to our study?

What does 1 Corinthians 10:31 and 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 instruct? How is this significant to our study?

How will asking “WWJD?” help us establish what is right? Where is Christ in relation to the “line” between good and evil?

Is God only concerned about you doing what is right?

### **3. Hunger And Thirst For Righteousness**

What does it mean for you to hunger and thirst after righteousness?

Should your obedience be motivated by fear only?

What does God desire of you? How is David an example of this in Psalm 119?

### **4. Make No Provision For The Flesh**

How does the “How close can I get?” mentality leave opportunity for sin?

What does it mean to make provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts?

List four things you can do to make no provision for the flesh.

### **5. Seeing The Results**

Give some results from changing this way of thinking.

What is the bottom line regarding this change of mindset?