

# THE LINE IN THE SAND





# The Line in the Sand

## Men's Retreat Preparation Guide

### Introduction

Every man draws a line.  
Most just never do it on purpose.

Some lines are drawn clearly, with conviction and courage. Others are drawn quietly through compromise, delay, and silence. Many men do not intend to drift, but drift is exactly what happens when decisions are postponed and obedience is negotiated. Over time, what was once conviction becomes comfort, and what was once clarity becomes confusion.

The line in the sand represents the moment a man stops drifting and starts deciding. It is the moment when excuses lose their power, when compromise is no longer tolerated, and when faith moves from words into obedience. It is the moment when a man accepts responsibility for his spiritual life instead of blaming circumstances, culture, or other people.

This retreat is not about emotional hype or temporary motivation. It is not about creating a moment that fades once you return home. It is about clarity. It is about decision. It is about choosing who you are going to be as a man of God when no one is watching, when there is no applause, and when obedience costs something.

Joshua stood before the people of Israel and said, “*Choose for yourselves today whom you will serve*” (Joshua 24:15, LSB). That was not a suggestion. It was a confrontation. Joshua understood that neutrality is an illusion. To refuse to choose is still a choice. To delay obedience is still disobedience. Indecision is still a decision.

That same question still confronts men today. Who will you serve. What will you tolerate. Where will you draw the line.

This weekend will challenge you to face the areas of your life where you have lived undecided. It will call you to draw a clear line with sin that has been justified or hidden. It will challenge you to draw a line with misplaced priorities that have crowded out obedience. It will confront how you lead, or fail to lead, in your home. Most importantly, it will call you to draw a line before God that is marked by surrender, repentance, and resolve.

You will not be pressured or manipulated. No one will force a decision upon you. But you will be confronted with truth. And truth always demands a response.

Come ready.  
Come honest.  
Come willing to decide.

Pastor Jody Burkeen  
Founder- Man Up God's Way

## What The Line in the Sand Means

The line in the sand is not symbolic fluff. It represents a real spiritual boundary that defines what you will tolerate and what you will not. Every man has boundaries in his life, whether he admits it or not. The problem is that many of those boundaries have been shaped by comfort, culture, and convenience rather than conviction.

The line in the sand marks the difference between knowing truth and obeying truth. Many men know what Scripture says, but knowledge alone does not produce obedience. Truth that is not obeyed eventually becomes truth that is ignored. Over time, conviction dulls, conscience weakens, and faith becomes something a man talks about rather than lives out.

It is also the difference between intention and action. Good intentions have never transformed a man. Saying you want to grow, lead, or change means nothing if it is not followed by decisive steps of obedience. The line exposes where intentions have replaced action and where excuses have been allowed to linger.

The line in the sand is the difference between calling yourself a Christian and living as a disciple. A Christian title without discipleship produces a passive faith. Discipleship requires surrender, discipline, and submission to the authority of Christ. It requires a man to deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Jesus daily, not occasionally.

This retreat is designed to help you identify where your line actually is right now, not where you wish it was or where you tell others it is. You will be challenged to face the areas where you have been negotiating with sin, slowly drifting in your faith, or repeatedly delaying obedience. Avoidance will not be an option. Honesty will be required.

A line is only meaningful if it is enforced. Drawing it once is not enough. It must be guarded, defended, and lived out daily. This weekend is about drawing a line that lasts, one that shapes your decisions, directs your priorities, and anchors your walk with God long after the retreat is over.

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## What to Expect This Weekend

You can expect a focused and intentional environment. This weekend is designed to remove distractions and create space for God to speak clearly. There will be no pressure to perform, but there will be an expectation to be present, engaged, and honest. Everything about the retreat is built with purpose.

You will receive clear, biblical teaching rooted in Scripture, not opinions or trends. God's Word will be opened carefully and applied directly to the real issues men face. Teaching will be straightforward, challenging, and anchored in truth, calling men to obedience rather than comfort.

There will be time for personal reflection and prayer. Silence and stillness are intentional parts of this retreat. You will have space to listen, examine your heart, and respond to what God is revealing. These moments are often where clarity begins.

You can also expect honest conversations with other men. This is not a place for surface level answers or spiritual posturing. Men will be encouraged to speak truthfully, listen carefully, and support one another without judgment.

Accountability will be present, but it will not shame. It will sharpen. The goal is not to expose weaknesses for embarrassment, but to strengthen resolve and commitment. Iron sharpens iron, and that sharpening often happens through humility and honesty.

This retreat will include a clear call to make real decisions, not vague commitments. You will be challenged to move beyond good intentions and take concrete steps of obedience. Words without action will be confronted, not to condemn, but to call you forward.

This is not a spectator weekend. You will be asked to engage, reflect, pray, and respond. Nothing will be forced, but everything will be intentional. Passivity will be challenged. Participation will be encouraged.

You will leave with clarity, direction, and next steps. More than inspiration, you will leave with a plan and accountability to walk out the line you draw long after the weekend ends.

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## How to Prepare Spiritually

Start preparing your heart now. Do not wait until the weekend arrives and hope something changes. Preparation is part of obedience. A man who comes ready will hear more clearly, respond more honestly, and leave more grounded than the man who shows up distracted and guarded.

Begin praying daily that God would reveal areas of compromise or indecision. Ask Him to put His finger on what you have ignored, excused, or hidden. Many men live with blind spots, not because God is silent, but because they have learned to avoid what makes them uncomfortable. Pray with clarity and courage. Ask the Lord to expose what needs to be exposed so it can finally be dealt with.

Ask God to give you honesty with yourself and humility before Him. The biggest barrier to growth is not a lack of information. It is pride. Pride keeps men defensive. Pride keeps men rationalizing. Pride keeps men pretending they are fine when they are not. Humility opens the door to repentance, and repentance opens the door to change.

If there is unconfessed sin, bring it before the Lord now. Do not carry it into the retreat like baggage you refuse to set down. Sin grows in secrecy. It thrives in silence. Confession is not weakness. It is the beginning of freedom. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9, LSB). Start there. Be honest with God. Stop negotiating. Stop delaying.

Read Joshua 24 and Romans 6 slowly and prayerfully. Do not rush. Ask God to make His Word personal. Let Joshua's call to choose confront you. Let Romans 6 challenge any idea that you can belong to Christ and still live at peace with sin. Read like a man who wants to obey, not like a man checking a box.

Come ready to listen, not defend. A defensive man cannot be disciplined. A guarded man cannot be helped. God does His deepest work in men who are teachable, men who are willing to hear hard truth and respond with repentance and faith. If you come humble, you will leave changed.

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## **How to Prepare Mentally and Emotionally**

Decide ahead of time that you will be present. Presence is a decision, not a feeling. Many men attend events physically while remaining mentally and emotionally elsewhere. This weekend will only be as impactful as your willingness to fully show up. Make the decision now that you are not coming to observe, critique, or coast through the sessions. You are coming to engage.

Put work on pause. Emails, phone calls, and unfinished tasks will still be there when the retreat ends. Constant connection to work keeps your mind divided and your heart distracted. Giving God your full attention for a short time is not irresponsible. It is necessary. Clear space so you can hear clearly.

Silence distractions. Turn off notifications. Step away from social media. Limit anything that keeps you from being still and attentive. Distraction is one of the enemy's most effective tools because it rarely feels sinful, yet it robs men of clarity and conviction. This retreat is an opportunity to quiet the noise and listen.

Resist the urge to stay guarded or distant. Many men protect themselves by staying emotionally closed off, believing distance equals safety. In reality, distance often keeps men stuck. You are not being asked to share everything with everyone, but you are being asked to be honest before God and open to what He wants to do.

This retreat will challenge you, but it will not embarrass you. No one is here to expose you or shame you. The goal is not humiliation. It is transformation. Vulnerability is not weakness. It is where freedom begins, and freedom is found when a man stops hiding and starts responding in faith.

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## **How to Prepare Practically**

Bring what you need to be fully present. Preparation is not just spiritual and mental. It is also practical. Being ready in simple, tangible ways helps remove unnecessary distractions so you can focus on what matters most during the weekend.

Bring a Bible. This retreat will be rooted in the Word of God, not personal opinions or motivational ideas. Having your Bible in hand allows you to read, mark, and return to the

passages God uses to speak to you. Scripture is not something to consume quickly and move past. It is something to sit with, wrestle through, and obey.

Bring a notebook and pen. God often brings clarity through reflection. Writing slows you down and helps you process what you are hearing and sensing. There will be moments where something lands personally, and those moments should be captured, not trusted to memory alone. What you write may become part of the line you draw and the plan you walk out afterward.

Bring comfortable clothes. This weekend is about engagement, not appearance. You will be sitting, standing, praying, and possibly spending time outdoors. Comfort removes distractions and allows you to stay focused on the purpose of the retreat rather than your surroundings.

Bring an open mind and a willing heart. Come teachable. Come honest. Come ready to be challenged without immediately resisting or explaining things away. God does His work most deeply in men who are willing to listen and respond rather than defend.

Come rested if possible. Do not arrive exhausted and expect to be fully engaged. Make rest a priority leading into the retreat. Eat well beforehand. Take care of your body so it does not become a distraction. Stewardship of your physical health supports your ability to engage spiritually, mentally, and emotionally throughout the weekend.

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## A Final Word

Do not come to this retreat hoping to feel better. Emotional relief is not the goal. Feelings come and go, and they rarely sustain long term change. Many men chase experiences that make them feel inspired for a moment but leave them unchanged once life resumes. This weekend is not about chasing a feeling. It is about confronting reality.

Come ready to decide. Decisions, not emotions, shape the direction of a man's life. God works through obedience, not moods. You will be challenged to make clear choices about sin, priorities, leadership, and faith. Those choices may feel uncomfortable, but discomfort is often the doorway to growth.

The line you draw this weekend is not just for a moment. It is not a weekend commitment or a temporary resolve. It is a line meant to guide your daily decisions long after you return home. It will affect how you lead your family, how you guard your heart, how you steward your time, and how you walk with God when no one else is watching.

This line matters because your life does not exist in isolation. Your choices shape your marriage, your children, your church, and your witness. A man who refuses to decide forces others to live with the consequences of his indecision. A man who draws a clear line creates stability, direction, and safety for those he leads.

Choose wisely. The line you draw will either move you toward faithfulness or keep you stuck in compromise. One leads to life. The other quietly erodes it. The choice is yours.