

LINE IT UP

SCRIPTURE:

As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; (Ephesians 4: 14)

MATERIALS LIST:

- (1) Chalk Line String
- (1) Small Piece of Wood

MAIN MESSAGE:

There are a lot of lines out there in the world, as far as standards for living. As followers of Jesus Christ, we must know the difference between the world's standard and God's standard, and we must strive to line up with the correct one.

SONG: "Give Me the Bible"

LESSON:

I vividly remember roofing the top of a shed I built in my backyard. First of all, I am not a fan of heights unless I'm strapped into a roller coaster and going really fast. I had never roofed before on my own. In the past, I was always the grunt worker who hauled shingles up the ladder to the "real workers". This time was different though, and I needed some advice. I was in luck because one of my neighbors was a construction worker, a handy man of all sorts, and he was more than willing to help.

He gave me a roll of the black felt paper which goes on the roof before the shingles, and a small yellow device that contained a string and a bunch of blue chalk. He told me that once the paper is up, I needed to snap a chalk line near the top of the roof, making sure it was straight from the front of the shed to the back. The reason this line was so important was because not only would the first row of shingles be placed on this line, but from there, every line after would be chalked. Thus, the first line was crucial for making sure the rest of the shingles were lined up and functioned to prevent water from pouring into the shed.

I did as he said, being very careful to make the first line the perfect standard. After laying the entire roof, and trimming the edges (and a piece of my thumb), I was able to look back and see a finished product of which I was truly proud. To my knowledge, this roof is still holding strong to this day.

In the book of Ephesians chapter 4, the apostle Paul refers to "doctrine", which means a "standard". However, he doesn't simply mention one doctrine. He says it's possible to be blown or tossed from standard to standard, and describes this as something a spiritually immature person would allow to happen. That's why in the verses surrounding verse 14, he talks about growing into spiritual maturity. Part of that growth is learning to recognize the doctrine which is laid by our Heavenly Father in His Word and placing our shingle (our life) on that line. Just as there's plenty of opportunity to mess up a roof by lining up with a bad line, spiritually speaking, we can really mess up our lives by living according to the wrong line. It's only when we line up with God's doctrine, do we find God's blessings.

So, snap a chalk line on the piece of wood. Then allow each child in your family to snap their own line. Make sure some of them are crooked lines. Then, ask them which one is the only line the father (you) snapped. Explain that the world has many lines to live by, but there's only one line that God has snapped that brings eternal life.

PRAYER: Help us to devote ourselves to studying Your Word so we can discern Your line from the world's lines.