



PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

By Vincent M. Newfield

As a teenager, did you ever ask the question, “How far is too far?” I did, and I wasn’t the only one. “What can I watch and listen to and not sin? What places can I go and what things can I do and still be *okay* with God?” And here’s the *biggie*: “How far can I go with a girl and it not be wrong?” I was living life on the edge—*pushing the envelope* of pleasure to find out what I could get away with and still be accepted by God.

Have you been there...are you there right now? Compromise—it’s one of the greatest temptations we face. It’s the silent killer that is slowly but surely sucking the life out of any believer who will give it the time of day. What is compromise? Basically, it is knowing in our heart what is right but choosing to push beyond that standard. People compromise every day for all kinds of reasons, and it is destroying their lives and the lives of others.

Compromise Dilutes and Pollutes Do you remember drinking Kool-Aid when you were a kid? Ah, there was nothing quite like a cool refreshing cup on a hot summer’s day to quench your thirst. But one thing I really hated was when my mom added too much water. Do you remember what that tasted like? That’s right—a tasteless, colored liquid. The mixture was so *diluted* that it had lost its flavor, and quite frankly, left us wanting water instead.

I think that’s what compromise does in our lives as Christians—it causes us to become watered down and tasteless. We have an appearance of being refreshing, but we lack the true flavor of our Savior. As a result, many people would rather reach for something else to *quench their spiritual thirst*.

By definition, to *dilute* means “to lessen the strength of by mixing with something else.” Compromise dilutes our lives...it lessens our spiritual strength by mixing it with sin. As a result, we experience unsatisfied, “tasteless” lives, and all we have to offer those around us is a *form* of godliness absent of power.

Like a muddied fountain and a polluted spring is a righteous man who yields, falls down, and compromises his integrity before the wicked. —Proverbs 25:26

What’s the Cure for Compromise? The strongest weapon I know against compromise is to be head over heels in love with the Lord. Nothing is greater. I’ll never forget one fateful Friday night Bible study at the end of my freshman year. God met me in a way like He had never met me before. That evening He gently but firmly whispered in my ear that He loved me, and with those words He deposited a deep sense of His love within me. Words cannot describe what I felt. Like the intense heat of the midday summer sun, God’s love melted the hardness of my soul. All I could do was cry under the weight of His affection.

That experience changed my life forever. For the first time, I had a fresh awareness of God’s passion for me and His desire to be my friend. Instead of wanting to see what I could get away with, I wanted to get as far from sin as possible. Instead of feeling like I *had* to do what was right, I now *wanted* to do what was right. His sweet expression of love for me created a deep desire in me to please Him.

That was over twenty-two years ago. There have been some ups and downs in my devotion to the Lord, but there have also been many fresh infusions of God’s love along the way, each one pulling me closer to Him with greater passion. As a Christian, I have learned that the answer to the question *how far is too far?* is already in us. Oh, it’s not in our head...it’s in our heart. Whatever we have peace about in our spirit, we can do. But anything we don’t have peace about, we shouldn’t do. And when in doubt, *don’t*.

My prayer for you is [that you may really come] to know [practically, **through experience** for yourselves] the love of Christ, which far surpasses mere knowledge [without experience]; that you may be filled [through all your being] unto all the fullness of God [may have the richest measure of the divine Presence, and become a body wholly filled and flooded with God Himself!] (Ephesians 3:19) Yes, the tug of temptation is strong, but it’s no match for the overwhelming power of God’s love!

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