



# MIND

session page

## Walk the Line

**Amos 7:7-15 | Session 10.28**

### Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media).
- Find web links for underlined items on this session's webpage at [faithelement.net](http://faithelement.net).

### Context

Start by asking:

- What kinds of expectations do we have of other people with whom we are in relationships?
- How often are those expectations spoken aloud?
- What happens when they are not met?
- What expectations are there in our relationship with God, whether from our side or from God's?
- What happens when those expectations aren't met, from either side?

## Content

Read [Amos 7:7-15](#), and watch the Bible Background Video. Ask:

- When Amos uses this image, what is he saying about the people's behavior?
- What might be the measuring "standard" to which they are being compared?
- What must we do when a wall or structure is out of alignment or off-plumb?

Have someone read [Amos 2:6-8](#), [5:11-15](#), and [5:21-24](#), then continue by asking:

- What "standard" is Amos' plumb line set to measure, and in what ways do those standards continue to apply?
- What is God saying must be done to these people who have strayed so far from his expectations?
- Since Amaziah seemed to think Amos' message was too strong ("the land is not able to bear all his words," ), what might we assume the people were used to hearing... or wanted to hear?
- Since Amaziah wrongly assumed that Amos was a professional prophet, making money for his messages, how might Amos' background and calling give even more weight to his message – both then and today?

## Closure

Continue by asking:

- While some Christians place a lot of emphasis on “orthodoxy” – what we believe and what we say, or how we worship - why is it so hard to put a “plumb line” against someone’s beliefs or ways of worship?
- In what ways might our behaviors toward others reveal our beliefs about God?
- How clearly are God’s expectations of our behavior toward others spelled out in the Bible and what does it mean that so many might answer such a question differently?
- Where else might we look to discover those expectations or standards of what it means to be just?
- If Amos were to come into our communities of faith today, what do you think his message would be?
- How do you think we line up when placed by the plumb line?

Close with prayer.



# CURRENT

session page

## Walk the Line

**Amos 7:7-15 | Session 10.28**

### Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Thoroughly review all the referenced resources for this session in advance.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media).
- Find web links for underlined items on this session's webpage at [faithelement.net](http://faithelement.net).

### Context

Watch together this [video of the Poor People's Campaign](#) and ask:

- What current situation do you think most lends itself to a revival of the the Poor People's Campaign?
- What are your thoughts of groups that have lately been protesting social injustices?
- In what ways do you think our stances on social injustice line up with God's plumb line?
- For what events are we willing to take a stand on despite what our leaders say?

## Content

Read [Amos 7:7-15](#), and watch the Bible Background Video for this session.

Continue by asking the group:

- Why do you think so many people tend to confuse the idea of a prophet, who literally speaks for God, with a soothsayer, who predicts the future?
- What is the purpose of a plumb line?
- In what ways does Amos' image of a plumb-line translate to our lives and why would he use that illustration to his original audience?
- If a prophet walked into our church or community and stretched out a plumb line to measure us, how would we expect our leaders to reply and why?
- Given that Amos was asked to leave the city after prophesying, what have we learned from this experience that we can apply, as a society today?
- What does it mean to say "the land cannot bear the weight of those words," especially in today's context?
- What kinds of things make us reluctant to speak, as Amos was?

## Closure

Continue by watching John Dickerson's [commentary on civility](#) and asking:

- How do you feel about this commentary and why?
- We have heard a lot of talk on social media and in reports of "Why can't we just be civil?" and "Listen to everybody and respect others' opinions," yet prophets, like Amos, called out society for not taking care of widows, children, orphans and others. Why were his actions considered to be the "proper" actions of a prophet, while doing so in today's climate might not be?
- To what degree do Christians have a responsibility to point out injustice versus appearing "civil?"
- How do we navigate the difference between the need to turn the other cheek and the need to speak or act?
- On what social issues might God be calling you to speak with a prophetic voice?

Close with a prayer that God may lead us to stand up when appropriate and care for "the least of these."

**Writers: Crystal Shepherd and Steve McClain**



# MYSTIC

session page

## Walk the Line

**Amos 7:7-15 | Session 10.28**

### Before the Session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Hang a plumb bob or other dense object in a central place where the group can see it. If you are using a replacement object, try to make it as plain as possible.
- *Optional: Prepare a fishing weight at the end of a short line (approximately twenty-four inches) for each person in the group (See Below).*
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media).
- *This is a reflection on a physical metaphor, helping the group see added depth in an everyday object.*
- Find web links for underlined items on this session's webpage at [faithelement.net](http://faithelement.net).

### Context and Reflection

Begin by referring to the hanging plumb bob (or substituted) and asking:

- What is this object and for what it is typically used?
- How might you use one of these if you had it, or how might you alter it for another use?
- What do you think your use of such an object might say about your personality?

Encourage the group to sit in silence and think about this object while you read aloud [Amos 7:7-15](#) then share the Bible Background Video. Continue by encouraging the group to sit in silence for a few moments as they contemplate the object in the light of the message they just heard, then continue by encouraging the group to hold their focus on the object as they reflect, using the following prompts, with a few moments of pause between each:

- What or who are the "plumb lines" or measures by which you judge your own actions?"
- By what measure do you discern your feelings about the world in which you live and the things that take place in your society?
- What is or is not measuring up in either your life or the society around you?
- What corrective measures can you take, first for yourself, then for your community?
- Listen for God's voice in your heart. What are some words that might be too heavy to share with other people in your life?

After the group has a few moments to contemplate the last prompt, stop and ask:

- What did you learn from having taken part in this reflection?
- As you think about God's measure for the world, what are some things that God might be calling you to do?
- How might we help people better sense and adhere to a sense of having standards?

(Optional: Give each person a small fishing weight at the end of a piece of line and encourage them to hang them in their homes as a reminder of the plumb line that they have developed through their relationship with God.)

Close with group prayer.



MEDIA  
session page

## Walk the Line

**Amos 7:7-15 | Session 10.28**

### Before the Session

- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media).
- Find web links for underlined items on this session's webpage at [faithelement.net](http://faithelement.net).

### Context

Play [Protest against a King](#) and ask your group:

- What is an injustice in another country that you wish you could go to in order to speak out against and why?
- Why is it sometimes easier to injustice in other countries or in your country?
- How well received do you think your protest against injustice would be received by the nationals of another country and why?
- What difference does it make whether you're protesting against a king or someone else?
- In what ways does the presence of a crowd affect your ability to stand for things that are right?

## Content

Read [Amos 7:7-15](#), then watch the Bible Background Video.

- What do you think of the plumb line illustration and why?
- Why was a plumb line such an important image for the people of Israel?
- How serious do the words of the Lord sound here and why?
- Why does Amaziah seem to feel a need to inform Jeroboam of Amos' words?
- Why is Amos told to leave?
- What does it mean that Amos was not a professional clergy but a lay person called to go speak by the Lord?
- How do you think Amos felt giving this prophecy to people who clearly didn't want to hear it?

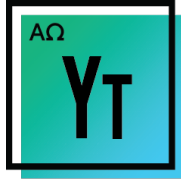
## Closure

Play [Found Wanting 1](#), followed by [Found Wanting 2](#) and continue by asking:

- What are some differences between the two scenes that most stand out to you?
- Which scene do you think is more like the world you live in, or would like to live in, and why?
- In what ways do you think you may currently be "found wanting" by God, and what might be done about it?
- If a prophet from another country came to speak of you your country's failures, what would they be most likely to point out and how might they be received?
- How can a society move beyond the passions of the moment and into an attitude that might be more in line with the measure God wishes to see?

Close in prayer.

**Writer: Jon Self**



# YOUTH

session page

## Walk the Line

**Amos 7:7-15 | Session 10.28**

### Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Set aside three chairs and provide pens and paper (See Context).
- Listen to the FaithElement podcast for this session.
- Use the social media prompts on this session's web page to help youth begin engaging the session ahead of their gathering.
- Find web links for underlined items on this session's webpage at [faithelement.net](http://faithelement.net).

### Intro

Watch the "World's Worst Attempt at Parallel Parking" and ask:

- How do you feel about this driver and why?
- When have you been with someone who was having a hard time doing something right?
- How do you generally feel when you see someone else struggle, and what difference does it make when the thing that they struggle to do is something you might have to do, too?
- How long do you typically stick with something that is hard to do before giving up, and why?

## Context

Select two or three teams, give each some pens and paper, and have them choose a volunteer who is wearing shoes with laces. Have the volunteers take off their shoes and sit in chairs in front of the group, with their shoes in their laps, and tell each team that they have a few minutes to come up with instructions for their teammate to tie their shoes and walk across the meeting area. Their volunteer will have to follow their team's instructions exactly, so the teams will need to consider the person to whom they are giving the instructions and plan accordingly. There will be up to three rounds, so they do not have to complete all the instructions on the first try.

After making sure that everyone understands the instructions, give the teams about five minutes to write their first set of instructions, then give them to their volunteer, who has to follow them exactly. After their first attempt, give them another chance or two, as time allows. Once a team has succeeded at their task, or you are out of time, stop and ask:

- Which team got farthest along and how did they do it?
- What was the most difficult part of doing this and why?
- What are some other things that you struggle to get right sometimes, and why do you struggle?
- How fair do you think it is to expect people to do everything correctly in real life?
- What difference does someone's attitude make when it comes to judging their actions?

## Content

Read [Amos 7:7-15](#), then watch the Bible Background Video before and ask:

- What does a plumb-line really do and why is that a good image to use when talking about society?
- By what criteria was God judging people in this passage and in what ways does that differ from the ways God judges today?
- What threat was God making to the people in this passage and how might a similar threat be phrased for today?
- What parallels do we have today from the way the priest and king in this passage responded to Amos' words?
- What are some things that need saying today that we, like Amos, might be reluctant to say and why?

## Closure

Watch together the ["Real English: How to Complain About a Problem" video](#) and ask:

- Some people tend think instructional videos are boring, while others think they're pretty funny. How do you feel about this video and why?
- What was the best or worst advice you heard from this teacher and why?
- What are some small things that you think people should or should not complain about and why?
- What are some of the bigger things that people should feel responsible to complain or otherwise take action about and why?
- Amos seemed to have a lot of excuses for why he couldn't speak for God. What are some of the things that you think you're not qualified to speak about and why?
- Where should Christians draw the line between being "nice" and resisting injustice and what are the consequences of that choice?
- Over what kinds of things might your group need to take action, and how might you do it?

Close this session in prayer.



MIX  
session page

## Walk the Line

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### Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

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- Find web links for underlined items on this session's webpage at [faithement.net](http://faithement.net).

### Context (From the Mind Session Page)

Start by asking:

- What kinds of expectations do we have of other people with whom we are in relationships?
- How often are those expectations spoken aloud?
- What happens when they are not met?
- What expectations are there in our relationship with God, whether from our side or from God's?
- What happens when those expectations aren't met, from either side?

## Content (From the Current Session Page)

Read [Amos 7:7-15](#), and watch the Bible Background Video for this session. Continue by asking the group:

- Why do you think so many people tend to confuse the idea of a prophet, who literally speaks for God, with a soothsayer, who predicts the future?
- What is the purpose of a plumb line?
- In what ways does Amos' image of a plumb-line translate to our lives and why would he use that illustration to his original audience?
- If a prophet walked into our church or community and stretched out a plumb line to measure us, how would we expect our leaders to reply and why?
- Given that Amos was asked to leave the city after prophesying, what have we learned from this experience that we can apply, as a society today?
- What does it mean to say "the land cannot bear the weight of those words," especially in today's context?
- What kinds of things make us reluctant to speak, as Amos was?

## Closure (from the Media Session page)

Play Found Wanting 1, followed by Found Wanting 2 and continue by asking:

- What are some differences between the two scenes that most stand out to you?
- Which scene do you think is more like the world you live in, or would like to live in, and why?
- In what ways do you think you may currently be "found wanting" by God, and what might be done about it?
- If a prophet from another country came to speak of you your country's failures, what would they be most likely to point out and how might they be received?
- How can a society move beyond the passions of the moment and into an attitude that might be more in line with the measure God wishes to see?

Close in prayer.