

July 19, 2019

## Along the Way: Crossing the line

After 15 years and 225,000 miles, I decided to get a new car. I'm enjoying my new, gas-efficient car but it has one annoying feature. It beeps whenever I cross over a line. Really! Every time I, even slightly, veer over a painted highway lane, it beeps! Unless of course, I am passing and have my blinker on.

I never realized how often I cross the line. I have been thinking about the term *cross the line* and its meaning. Apparently, it first appeared around 1725, and it means to overstep a boundary, to go beyond socially accepted behavior. When one crosses the line, one goes from being acceptable to being unacceptable. One may cross the line by asking questions that are too personal, by acting outside the rules or by giving in to some type of temptation. Someone who has crossed the line has behaved badly.

In John 8, Jesus has an encounter with a woman who has been accused of adultery. An interesting thing happens: In verse six, Jesus uses his finger to draw on the ground. A line perhaps? The men who are gathered intended to stone the woman. Jesus gives them this challenge: "Whoever is without sin may throw the first stone." No one would cross that line.

This week, the President accused four Congresswomen of hating the United States and stated that they should go back to the crime-infested countries from which they came. Yet, except for our Minnesota representative, they were all born in the United States. All four of these lawmakers are women of color. I think these racist tweets crossed a line.

But I am afraid that, like the "beeps" in my car which remind me of when I cross the line, I no longer hear them, or I am starting to ignore them. Neither one is good for the safety of our country. We must hear the beep. We must be the beep.

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