

Take-Away

What is your take away from our time together?

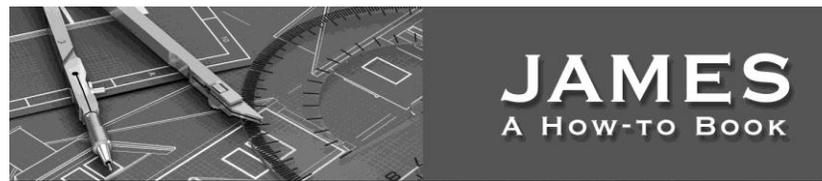
Next Steps:

- I am thankful that God welcomes returning wanderers like me.
- With God's help, I will strive to be an agent of reconciliation for others.
- I will seek a balance between "confronting" and "comforting."
- I need to lovingly encourage _____ to return to the truth.

Memory Verse – James 5:19–20

My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

Prayer Requests



James: A “How To” Manual for Life

This Week: How To Rescue Strays James 5:19–20

So Far: James encouraged his readers to joyfully endure trials, which leads to steadfastness and maturity. They can ask God for wisdom, because he gives generously and without reproach. They must be doers of God’s word, quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger. He affirmed that faith without works is dead, while faith with works energizes and completes faith. Disciples of Jesus must avoid bitter jealousy and selfish ambition, which lead to disorder and sin. They must live in godly wisdom, which leads to righteousness and peace.

He said the passions that war within people lead to quarrels, unanswered prayer, and friendship with the world. Disciples must submit to God and resist the devil. They must change their attitudes and behavior, mourning their sin, and humbling themselves before God. Speaking evil about others is the same as judging others, God’s law, and even God himself.

Believers must include God in their plans, because life is brief and uncertain. He denounced the rich for their accumulation of wealth, for defrauding their workers of their wages, and for living self-indulgently. Those being oppressed are to be long-suffering and patient, so they can persevere in their trials. They must be honest, trustworthy and authentic. They should deal with suffering, sickness and sin with “the prayer of faith” and confession of sin. The fervent prayer of a righteous person is effective.

This Week: Finally, James calls his readers to help others live out their faith, especially those brothers and sisters who have wandered from the truth.

Open

1. Share a story of a time you got lost and had to ask for directions.
2. How do you typically respond when you know someone needs help?

[Guardrails for Discussion – This passage is sometimes used as part of a discussion of the doctrine of “Eternal Security.” Christians of various theological slants disagree over whether it is possible for a person to lose their salvation, but we can all agree that those who move away from their faith are in trouble and need to repent. Our concern here is how to help someone who has wandered, rather than to debate a theological issue.]

Read James 5:19–20: My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

The Problem

1. To whom is this sentence addressed?
2. Is James writing about disciples or unbelievers? Explain
3. What does “wander from the truth” mean?
4. How would you know if someone had “wandered”?

Read 2 Timothy 4:1–5

5. What reason is given here as to why people might wander away from the truth? (vss. 3–4)
6. Can you think of some present day examples of this?
7. What is Timothy’s responsibility in this? (vss. 1–2, 5)

The Solution

1. What is the responsibility of disciples when someone wanders from the truth?

2. What are some themes from James that might help someone who tries to bring a wanderer back?

Read Galatians 6:1–5

3. How can you help restore a brother or sister who is caught in a transgression, while avoiding feeling superior to them, or being tempted yourself?

The Results

1. What is the first result?
2. Salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus, yet James says the one who “brings back” a brother “saves his soul from death.” What is James saying about the role that people play in the restoration process? What role does God fulfill?
3. What is the second result?
4. Whose sins are covered? The one brought back? The one bringing them back? Others?
5. How does this motivate you toward bringing back a wanderer?

Read 1 Peter 4:7–11

5. In what ways does love cover a multitude of sins? (vs. 8)
6. Why has God gifted us? (vss. 10–11)
7. How does this motivate you toward bringing back a wanderer?

Reflect

8. How can you discern between the time to confront and the time to comfort?
9. How can you make sure that you are an agent of reconciliation and not an agent of retaliation?
10. What are some practical actions you can take so that you can be ready to bring back a wandering brother or sister?