

1) Moving on let's look at our last two verses ...

***James 5:19–20 (NASB 2020)***

<sup>19</sup> My brothers *and sisters*, if anyone among you strays from the truth and someone turns him back, <sup>20</sup> let him know that the one who has turned a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

2) Ok if someone strays from the truth...

***What do you think James means by “the truth”?***

...

***To ask this a little differently, could it be that he is talking about perhaps all the things he has been laying out before us in the past 5 chapters?***

- 3) He continues by saying that if we turn that person back from their strayed position, we will “save his soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.”
- 4) It is I think important to get planted in our minds that we are indeed speaking of a Christian brother or sister – not someone who is unsaved.
- 5) So now, we think wow! That's great! I would like to do that.
  - a) However, we instantly run into some issues – perhaps not so much issues but things we should consider carefully before proceeding.

***Matthew 7:1–5 (NASB 2020)***

***Judging Others***

<sup>1</sup> “Do not judge, so that you will not be judged. <sup>2</sup> For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. <sup>3</sup> Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? <sup>4</sup> Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ and look, the log is in your own eye? <sup>5</sup> You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye!

***Does this mean we have to be perfect before we can turn someone back who has strayed from the truth? Why not?***

***Does it mean we just can't have a bigger sin in our lives than the one we are looking at in our brother's life?***

***So what is the real point Jesus is making here?***

6) Even if we were to set the judgement issue aside, we still have other things to consider ...

***John 7:22–24 (NASB 2020)***

<sup>22</sup> For this reason Moses has given you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and *even* on a Sabbath you circumcise a man. <sup>23</sup> “If a man receives

circumcision on a Sabbath so that the Law of Moses will not be broken, are you angry at Me because I made an entire man well on a Sabbath? <sup>24</sup> Do not judge by the outward appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.”

- 7) Here, Jesus is saying we must be careful NOT to judge on outward appearance but judge with a righteous judgement.

**What do you think He means by righteous judgment?**

**So, how do these two teachings fit together and how do they impact what James is telling us we should do?**

- 8) Ok then, Paul has a possible solution over in Galatians...

**Galatians 6:1 (NASB 2020)**

<sup>1</sup> Brothers *and sisters*, even if a person is caught in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual are to restore such a person in a spirit of gentleness; *each one* looking to yourself, so that you are not tempted as well.

- 9) Paul gets rather specific – “caught in any wrongdoing”.

**Pretty obvious this does NOT call for judgement or does it?**

- a) However it comes with a caution – make sure we don’t fall into the sin ourselves.

- 10) Even James himself has a reminder for us along these lines...

**James 4:11–12 (NASB 2020)**

<sup>11</sup> Do not speak against one another, brothers *and sisters*. The one who speaks against a brother *or sister*, or judges his brother *or sister*, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge *of it*. <sup>12</sup> There is *only* one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you, judging your neighbor?

- 11) Don’t judge our neighbor.

- 12) Only one judge and we are NOT Him!!!

**So, where does that leave us? How do we go about knowing when and then how to approach a brother or sister who, “strays from the truth”?**

- a) Obviously, we as Paul says in Galatians if we “catch someone in a sin” then we can and should approach that situation.
- i) By that I think Paul means a situation where the sin is not something we have to figure out by whatever means.
- ii) Not something we have to judge. Rather, it is something that is blatant and obvious.

**Oh, I know, what we do then is follow as many brothers and sisters as we can around in their lives hoping to catch them in a sin so we can save them right?**

- b) Obviously not!

***So, what is the solution to this problem – making sure we are able to save a brother or sister from sin by turning them from their ways while NOT JUDGING?***

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13) To me, the answer has several facets.

- a) First and foremost, we must know God's word and be able to recognize sin and differentiate it from what we may "think is sin".
  - i) Our opinion MUST NEVER be the guiding factor.
- b) Second, our responsibility is to OBSERVE.
  - i) We are NOT detectives hired to spy-out wrongdoing in the lives of our brothers and sisters.
  - ii) We have talked about the alternative in the past and I have and still do call it "fruit inspection."
  - iii) The fruit is what God recognizes as bad so we can call that bad but what God is silent on we must also be silent on.
  - iv) We cannot make this about traditions or almost worse, the way we think a person should act or seem.
- c) Third – We must never allow ourselves to JUDGE.
  - i) Not questionable but not truly bad actions.
  - ii) And absolutely not the motives behind someone's actions – judging their heart – we cannot ever have that ability.
- d) The bottom line here is that we love our brothers and sisters in Christ and we never want them to go astray.
  - i) However, in that love and our zeal for that desire for them we must never fall into the mode of looking for reasons to condemn
  - ii) We must never point out things that are perhaps only our opinions of what they are doing without any basis.

14) Finally, there is the issue where sin is for sure there, "how do we turn them" how do we approach someone "caught in sin" in a way that will bring them back?

15) There are a couple of vital facets to that answer as well.

- a) First, personally, I think there has to be a relationship there.
  - i) Not superficial, not causal. It must be solid and loving.
  - ii) Even if there is a relationship there but it is strained for any reason, we should be cautious about confronting any sin.
  - iii) If we do not have that relationship we might consider bringing the issue to someone who does.
    - (1) That is also a path that, as you can imagine, has a set of problems all its own.
  - iv) Perhaps a subset of this relationship issue is to make sure the offense is not against you.
    - (1) If that is the case you are in a losing position from the start!
- b) Second is the method we use to approach the person on the topic.

- i) Much prayer and consideration must be given to this.
- ii) We cannot under any circumstance be confrontational – i.e. “IN YOUR FACE”.
- iii) Our approach must always be from a position of love and gentleness.
- iv) We must be thoroughly prepared to explain our position. Now, a little explanation here...
  - (1) Part of this is we must be divorced from any “opinion” – what we are saying must be based squarely on scripture.
  - (2) We must as much as possible be sure our emotions are in check – assure that we are not doing this because we are upset at the action personally.
  - (3) Again, we should be ready to explain (only if necessary) from scripture why this is the sin it is.
- c) In truth, as one can see with even a little thought there are a lot of things to consider and be concerned about in attempting to turn someone from a sin.
- d) That is not to say that we should be afraid to do so but, it is to say that it is imperative that we are prepared in the most loving and thorough way we possibly can be.

***Further Comments / Questions / Thoughts?***

- 16) Well, here we are – the end of our study.
- 17) James has led us through a challenging time of what one might call “great expectations.”
- 18) He has laid out for us many, many different things that are expected of us as followers of Christ.
  - a) Perseverance in Suffering
  - b) How to deal with temptation and who is responsible.
  - c) Response to the Word
  - d) Being impartial in Love
  - e) What are righteous Works
  - f) How to handle our Tongue
  - g) How to deal with Wisdom and where it comes from.
  - h) Staying away from Worldly Indulgences
  - i) Depending on God
  - j) Being patient in trials and tribulations
  - k) Being truthful
  - l) Being prayerful
- 19) My hope is that we all now see and understand that what James is teaching here is not a checklist mentality – not a bunch of works to be ticked off.
- 20) Instead, he is showing his readers and us that these are some of the precepts, ideas, and motives we should be modeling in our lives to Demonstrate Our Faith.
- 21) None of us is going to get all of this right all the time but we can absolutely try.

This is not a letter of condemnation but a letter of hope and inspiration.