

## Winning Wayward Wanderers James 5:19-20 (NKJV)

19 Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, 20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

In our day people don't wander from the truth they just make up their own truth.

It must be possible to recognize truth or we could never know if someone was wandering from it.

There is no absolute truth. And that is absolutely true. ??????????????

Only those who stand by absolute truth are wrong.

Isaiah 8:20 (NKJV)

20 To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

- I. We live in community as God's church and are responsible to guide one another.
  - A. It springs from the love we have for one another.
    1. John 13:34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.
    2. When someone wanders away from the truth we are not to stop loving them but lovingly bring them back into the way.
      - a. Ephesians 4:15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head — Christ —
    3. Do not tell me this is no business of yours. It most certainly is your responsibility and mine. We need the tenderness of James for our brothers and sisters in Christ who have gone astray. Such passion will not permit us to gossip about them nor turn from them, but will contrariwise draw us to them in loving concern. Biblical Christianity has a message of divine love for the unsaved, but no stronger appeal will be made to those who are outside of Christ than to see Christians loving and restoring their own who have fallen. This is indeed the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Lehman Strauss, Lehman Strauss Commentaries – James, Your Brother: Studies in the Epistle of James, (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1967), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 227.*
    4. If we are going to help an erring brother, we must have an attitude of love, for "love shall cover the multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8). Both James and Peter learned this principle from Proverbs 10:12—"Hate stirreth up strife: but love covereth all sins." *Warren W. Wiersbe, The Bible Exposition*

*Commentary, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 385.*

5. But, whatever the cause, it is not impossible for brethren to go astray “from the truth.” One way to treat them is to kick them out of the way down the hill. Another way is to go after them with hammer and tongs to beat them back into the path. Another way is to give them up in disgust and to wash our hands of all responsibility. . . . But there is a more excellent way, the way of love. See, not only 1 Cor. 13, but also Gal. 6:1ff. *A. T. Robertson, Practical and Social Aspects of Christianity: The Wisdom of James (New York: George H. Doran Company; Hodder & Stoughton, 1915), 265–266.*
  6. Galatians 6:1-5 (NKJV) 1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. 2 Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. 3 For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. 5 For each one shall bear his own load.
- B. Like the parent that tries to correct the child.
1. The child sees it as the parent is trying to control the child.
  2. But out of love the parent is trying to save the child from harm.
  3. A parent that does not correct their child does not show love for them.
    - a. Proverbs 13:24 ¶ He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him promptly.
  4. We are reaping the fruit of parents letting the child go without correction.
- C. But it is also for the community’s sake.
1. When part of the community wanders from the truth, more will follow if they are not corrected.
    - a. 1 Corinthians 5:6 Your glorying *is* not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?
- D. If we stop holding to the truth we are finished.
1. The origin of this problem is found in the statement "wander from the truth" (James 5:19). The truth means, of course, the Word of God. "Thy Word is truth" (John 17:17). Unless the believer stays close to the truth, he will start to drift away. "For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it" (Heb. 2:1, NASB). Jesus warned Peter that Satan was at hand to tempt him, and Peter refused to believe the Word. He even argued with the Lord! When he should have

been praying, Peter was sleeping. No wonder he denied three times.  
*Warren W. Wiersbe, The Bible Exposition Commentary, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 384.*

2. Truth is something which a man must love (2 Th 2:10); it is something which a man must obey (Gal 5:7); it is something which a man must display in life (2 Cor 4:2); it is something which must be spoken in love (Eph 4:15); it is something which must be witnessed to (Jn 18:37); it is something which must be manifested in a life of love (1 Jn 3:19); it is something which liberates (Jn 8:32); and it is something which is the gift of the Holy Spirit, sent by Jesus Christ (Jn 16:13-14). *William Barclay, Barclay's Daily Study Bible (NT), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "The Truth Which Must Be Done (Jas 5:19-20)".*

II. It is possible for anyone to wander from the truth.

A. *A. T. Robertson*

1. "Err" is from the Latin *errare* (to wander, to go astray). The Greek word here (*πλανηθ*) suggests the picture of one who is lost in the mountains, who has missed his path, without passing on the question of his own part in the process.
2. Our "planet" is this word from the notion that these luminaries were wandering stars, not fixed like the rest. *A. T. Robertson, Practical and Social Aspects of Christianity: The Wisdom of James (New York: George H. Doran Company; Hodder & Stoughton, 1915), 265.*

B. None of us are above temptation.

C. None of us should think we cannot fall.

1. 1 Corinthians 10:12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.
2. Luke 22:31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired [to have] you, that he may sift [you] as wheat:

III. It is possible to turn a wanderer back to the truth.

A. We often give up before the fight.

1. Christians so easily allow the wandering brother or sister go on astray.
2. I think most of us are gentle people and are not fussing for a fight.
3. But that is because we see it as a conflict.
  - a. Sometimes it is but not because it has to be but that is the way we make it up in our mind.

- B. The transgressor in 1 Corinthians 5 turned back to the truth through the tough love shown him by the Corinthian church.
  - 1. 1 Corinthians 5:4-5 (NKJV) 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5 deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.
  - 2. 2 Corinthians 2:6-8 (NKJV) 6 This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man, 7 so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow. 8 Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love to him.
  - 3. But the purpose is always for the repentance of those who have sinned.
- IV. It is possible that wandering from the truth brings an early death.
  - A. Saving the soul from death means saving one from an early death.
    - 1. 1 John 5:16 (NKJV) 16 If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. There is sin leading to death. I do not say that he should pray about that.
    - 2. 1 Corinthians 11:30 (NKJV) 30 For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.
- V. Forgiveness is available to all who will turn back to Him.
  - A. Scriptures
    - 1. Psalm 32:1 (NKJV) 1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered.
  - B. Once forgiven it is covered
    - 1. 1 Peter 4:8 (NKJV) 8 And above all things have fervent love for one another, for “love will cover a multitude of sins.”
    - 2. Proverbs 10:12 (NKJV) 12 Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all sins.

So we see James, a no nonsense teacher with his stern words closes out his book with some of the tenderest words in scripture.

Let us reach out to those who have wandered from the truth and let us do all that we can do to bring them back. For we may save a soul from death, turn a sinner back into the way, and cover a multitude of sins.