
Reflection

1. The Bible affirms God's necessary and effective role in our salvation (Eph 2:8-9) and perseverance (Php 1:6), even as it also underscores our responsibility to be faithful (Heb 3:12-14) and describes consequences if we are not (Heb 10:35-39). What are we to make of this tension and what gift(s) do we find in it?
2. The Bible describes life in Christ as a thoroughly communal experience. How open do you find people are to welcoming discussions about Christ and Christianity? In your opinion, what seems to lead people to insist on religion being a private matter? What do Christians lose if/when they stifle their own voices regarding faith and Christ? If you were to identify five things every Christian should know how to discuss calmly accurately and winsomely with wanderers, or non-Christians in general, what would those five things be?
3. James uses the phrase "covers a multitude of sins," which also shows up in Pr 10:12 and 1 Pt 4:8, with the idea being that someone might wander due to ungodly treatment within a congregation. Without naming names, what patterns have you witnessed in your own church experiences that might have caused people to give up on Christianity? How would your showing love, grace and mercy to someone who has walked away from Christ help address a wanderer's concerns?

Action –

1. **Pray** ... pray diligently for someone you know who used to prioritize faith in Christ but has now wandered from the truth.
2. **Humble Integrity** ... reflect on the mercy God has shown you and commit to showing the same mercy toward others.
3. **Direct Encounter** ... Whom would God have you reach out to in order to help him/her find their way back to faith in Christ?

Pray – If studying in a group, pray for one another and for each other's spiritual growth throughout the coming week.

Living Faith [a study of James] – James the Just, a central leader in early church and the half-brother of Jesus, cares deeply for his Christian *brothers and sisters* and writes to them to encourage wise and faithful living. Bringing both a deep connection to Christianity's Hebrew roots and a solid recognition of the lordship of Jesus, James provides wise, practical, godly instruction on *living faith*—faith which is necessarily, consistently and broadly manifested in action. His teaching provides everyday ways we can apply our faith and thereby expect to grow.

Begin with Prayer – *Father, with an expectation that you will use this study to grow me/us more into the image of your Son, I/we open our hearts and minds to your Spirit. Amen.*

Follow Up on Pray – What thoughts, questions, actions, etc. resulted in your life this past week as a result of last week's sermon study?

The Sermon's Main Point – *Bring Back Wanderers ...*

God uses us to bring back people who stray from the way of Christ, and when a person returns to faith and faithfulness, there is great rejoicing in heaven.

Begin – Choose from the following questions to begin thinking about the study's topic.

1. In what type of store are you more likely to wander?
2. Would you say that you're more of a "color in the lines" type of person or a "wild doodler"? What are the satisfactions and/or frustrations you have as a result of being more one way than the other?
3. Who introduced you to Jesus? Has your faith always been a priority in your life or have there been times when you've strayed from the faith? If you've strayed, what helped to bring you back?

Living Faith [a study of James]

Speak with Integrity

James 5:19-20

Grasping, Sharing, Learning and Appreciating

1. James ends his letter with an encouragement to bring people who stray back into faith and faithfulness, knowing that such great work (1) saves a soul from death and (2) covers a multitude of sins (i.e. overcomes the strife that might have led to the wandering).

What do each of the following passages add to our understanding of James' closing encouragement?

- a. 1 John 1:6
- b. Proverbs 10:12
- c. Hebrews 3:12-14
- d. Romans 8:26-39; Ephesians 2:8-10
- e. Luke 15:4-7
- f. Philippians 1:6