

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, November 27, 2011

Passage: James 5:19-20

Memory Passage: James 5:19-20

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read James 5:19-20.** What phrase is common to vs. 19-20 and vs. 13-18? How are the themes related? What ways do you see vs. 19-20 fitting into the rest of James' letter?
- (b) To whom does "anyone" refer (v. 19)? As you read this verse, do you see yourself as a potential part of this group (not that you are necessarily guilty of wandering, but that you are part of the "anyone")? How does this affect the way you listen to James in vs. 19-20?
- (c) What is the "truth" mentioned in v. 19 (i.e. is it doctrinal truth or the practice of truth or both)? What does it mean to "wander" from it? Why is it so dangerous to wander from the truth? How do you know if you or someone else is wandering from the truth? What is your immediate, knee-jerk reaction when you (a) see evidence of someone else wandering from the truth and (b) see evidence that you are wandering from the truth?
- (d) *Family:* Take your family outside (or inside in a large, sparsely furnished room) and bring a blindfold. Blindfold one of your kids, spin them around a few times (do not make them too dizzy!), and then tell them to find their way to the house (or the door, if inside). Ask part of your family to try & guide them in the correct direction, and part to try to guide them in a false direction, and instruct them that they can only use their voices to guide (no touching or physical prodding). You might need to allow several of your kids to have a turn being blindfolded. Then **Read James 5:19-20** and explain that this week you will learn about wandering from the truth. Ask each person what it felt like to "wander" without knowing what direction to turn, and receiving both good and bad advice. Then discuss how they would have been able to better reach their destination (by only hearing the truth about which way to go), and tell them that wandering from the truth is dangerous, but God has given us His word, His Holy Spirit, & the church body to help keep from wandering. This is what you will learn about this week.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Matt. 24:3-5, Gal. 5:7, 2 Tim. 2:14-19, 3:12-14, & James 5:19-20.** What do you learn from these verses about the connection between knowing doctrinal truth and obeying truth? Does knowing and affirming truth always lead to obeying it?
- (b) What are the ramifications of teaching/learning false doctrine? Do Jesus & Paul think one has fully known the truth if it is not obeyed? Can right practice flow from wrong doctrine? Does right doctrine always produce right practice? Why/why not?
- (c) Before you consider your role in the life of a wanderer, you must first consider your life as a wanderer: Have you wandered/are you wandering from the truth during this season of your life? What are the risks involved in your behavior? Are you willing to be challenged in this area through this text? Are you willing to be challenged (rescued) in this area by others?
- (d) *Family:* **Read James 5:19** and ask, "What does it mean to 'wander from the truth'?" After discussion, use the following passages from Psalms to teach your children what it means to "walk in truth" and how one might "wander" from it: **Psalm 15:1-5, 25:4-5, 85:11 & 119:60.** Using your white board, record your answers under 2 columns: "Walking" & "Wandering." If possible, save your answers for Day 4.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read James 5:19-20.** To whom does "someone" refer in v. 19? What does James call upon them to do? What does this presuppose about our relationships in the body of Christ?
- (b) How do we "bring back a sinner from his wandering?" Have you ever obeyed this command? If so, what were the results, and if not, why not, and are you willing to love other in this way in the future?
- (c) These verses presume that believers can sin and be in need of rescue. What must your relationships with other believers in the body look like in order to know that someone is a sinner in need of rescue from his/her wandering? Do all sins fall under this command? How would you approach someone who you believe to be wandering? What Scriptures would guide your approach? What are things to avoid as you approach such a person?
- (d) *Family:* Have crayons/markers & paper available and instruct your family to read Matt. 18:10-14 and draw a picture of the scene the words convey. Then **Read Matt. 18:10-14** and teach this passage to your family, remembering that the little ones/sheep are not children but new professing believers, God is the Shepherd, and "going astray" is the same as one who "wanders" in James 5:19 (it is the same Greek word). Focus on the loving care of God and His desire that we stay obedient to the truth and not go astray. **Then Read Ps. 95:6-7** and show your family that when we lead a life that is obedient (not going astray) our lives are an act of worship. Have them add anything they desire to their drawings after reading Ps. 95:6-7.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read James 5:19-20.** What 2 things will happen when a brother/sister sins and is brought back from their wandering? Is the “death” mentioned physical or spiritual death?

(b) **Read Ps. 32:1, 85:2, Prov. 10:12, & 1 Pet. 4:8.** With these verses to help our understanding, how does the rescuer “cover a multitude of sins” (James 5:20)?

(c) **Read Heb. 3:12-13, Gal. 6:1-2 & James. 5:19-20.** These 3 passages help us to understand the love we must show each other in the body, as well as inform us of a part of what we know as church discipline (along with several other passages such as Prov. 27:5, Matt. 18:15-17, Rom. 16:17, 1 Cor. 5, 2 Cor. 7:9-11, Eph. 5:11, 1 Thess. 5:14, 2 Thess. 3:6, 14-15, 1 Tim 1:18-20, 5:20, Tit. 3:10-11 Heb. 12:14-16, 2 John 9-11). What types of activities will happen in our body life if these 3 passages are regularly obeyed? What actions to these 3 passages demand of you today given the circumstances in your own life, and/or the circumstances you know about in the lives of others? How do the passages listed in (b) above guide your understanding of your heart attitude as you obey James 5:19-20 & Gal. 6:1-2? *Remember: Love is always the method of delivery and reconciliation is always the goal!*

(d) *Family:* Review the lists concerning “Walking” & “Wandering” you made on Day 2. **Now Read Prov. 10:12 & 1 Pet. 4:8.** Spend time helping your family understand how to address the activities listed on your “Wandering” list with love and reconciliation as your guiding principles. Be specific, coming up with actual offenses and sins with which one might deal as we walk according to James 5:19-20.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) In a moment you will **Read James.** Yes, all 5 chapters! As you read, write down (1) Any questions you still have, (2) new insights that you have gained as you studied this letter over the last 19 weeks, and (3) any applications of which you remember being convicted but did not follow through on the changed behavior the conviction demanded. Ready, set, read!

(b) Now spend some time in prayer (1) giving thanks to God for what He has taught you through your study of James, (2) repenting of any lack of repentance & follow-through you might have neglected but that the Holy Spirit reminded you of as you read all 5 chapters of James, (3) thanking God that sin no longer has dominion over you and that because of Jesus’ work on the cross applied to your life you are no longer under condemnation for your sin nor a slave to it and you are now slaves to God, and (4) asking God to give you wisdom to persevere with complete joy through the trials He sends your way so that you will be sanctified (James 1:2-8), to pursue Christ rather than be enticed by your own desire (1:14-16), and that if you fail in these matters, that He will send to your rescue other believers who love you and will bring you back from your wandering so your soul will be saved from death and that the forgiveness of sins Christ purchased for you will be revealed as your sins are covered with love by His children (5:19-20).

(c) *Family:* Walk your family through questions (a) & (b) above. Possible variations: Prior to the lesson, think through your times of family worship during our study of James and remember promises that were made, new behaviors that were talked about, attitude changes that were encouraged, etc., and write down any that were talked about during your study but were never implemented. Remind your family of these, have them read aloud the passages in which they were learned/promised, etc. Then remind them that when we study Scripture and God reveals to us new ways to bring glory to Him and benefit to ourselves by obeying what we have learned, we must follow through with that obedience, through the power of the Holy Spirit, so that we continue to be sanctified (i.e. conformed to the image and likeness of Christ).

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How to Love a Wanderer

James closes his letter in 5:19-20 by giving us 3 steps to follow if we are to love the one wandering from the truth.