LG Leader

11/15 - James 5:19-20

LOVE

A new commandment I give to you, that you love *one another*... (John 13:34)

- *Internal*: How was your week? Any new life updates? How was your walk with the Lord this week?
- *External*: Practically, is there any individual or family that needs encouragement from us as a group?

TRUTH

Let the word of God dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing *one another*... (Col. 3:16)

Understanding:

1. When you reflect on the message from Sunday, what most resonated with you?
   [Open Discussion]
2. Let's read our primary text. James ends his letter not with a greeting or benediction but with a call to go after a wandering brother or sister. Why is that a fitting way for James to close?
   James has spent five chapters confronting faith that does not show up in life: favoritism, an untamed tongue, worldliness, quarrels, arrogant planning, and misused wealth. Some of his readers were drifting. Rather than ending with a final rebuke, he hands the whole church a mission: when someone drifts, go get them. The letter that exposed dead faith ends by calling living faith to act in love. It also fits the flow of 5:13–18. A church that prays for one another and confesses sin to one another is the kind of community that notices when someone is slipping away and moves toward them.
3. What does it mean to "wander from the truth" (v. 19)? Is James describing only wrong doctrine, or something broader?
   The word for "wander" is the same word James used in 1:16, "Do not be deceived," and it pictures being led astray or drifting off course, like a sheep that wanders from the flock. In James, "the truth" is not only correct belief but the word of truth that gave us new birth (1:18) and must be lived out (1:22–25; 3:14). Wandering can be doctrinal error, but in James it is often moral and practical: a life that drifts from what we say we believe.
4. James says "someone brings him back" (v. 19). What does this phrase suggest, and what does restoring someone actually look like?
   "Brings back" means to turn someone around, the same word used for repentance and conversion elsewhere (Luke 1:16–17; Acts 3:19; 1 Thess. 1:9). It is not merely pointing out a fault but helping a person turn back to God. Galatians 6:1 says the spiritual should restore such a person "in a spirit of gentleness," watching themselves lest they too be tempted. Restoration takes initiative (going to them), honesty (naming the drift in love), humility (remembering our own need for grace), patience, and prayer. It is the opposite of gossip, which talks about the wanderer instead of to them (cf. 4:11).

5. Verse 20 says the one who brings back a sinner "will save his soul from death." Whose soul is saved, and what kind of death is James talking about?
   Most commentators understand "his soul" as the soul of the wanderer who is brought back. The "death" in view is more than physical death; it is the spiritual and eternal death that sin produces if it runs its course. James already traced that path: "desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death" (1:15). Restoration interrupts that deadly trajectory. Of course, it is God who saves, not the person who goes after the wanderer. But God uses ordinary believers as the means of rescuing others, just as He uses preaching and prayer (Rom. 10:14; 1 Tim. 4:16).
6. How can a genuine believer "wander" in a way that leads toward death? How do we hold this warning together with the Bible's promise that God keeps His people?
   Scripture holds both truths together. God preserves His people: no one can snatch them out of Christ's hand (John 10:28–29; Phil. 1:6). Yet Scripture also gives real warnings so that we persevere (Heb. 3:12–14; 2 Pet. 1:10). One of the means God uses to keep His people is the loving pursuit of other believers. Sometimes wandering reveals that faith was never real (1 John 2:19); often it is a true believer who has drifted and needs to be brought back. Either way, we are not called to sort out the state of someone's heart from a distance. We are called to go after them while there is time.

Application:

7. Have you ever been a "wanderer," or been brought back by someone who cared enough to pursue you? What did they do that helped, or what do you wish someone had done?
8. Is there someone you know who has drifted from the Lord or from our church family? What is one concrete step you could take this week to reach out to them in love?
9. Where do you sense yourself drifting right now, even slightly? Who could you invite to speak into your life and pray with you before the drift grows?
10. Any other thoughts you would like to share before we wrap up this text?

GREAT COMMISSION

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations... (Matt. 28:19-20)

- *Internal:* Did you make time to disciple your family this week? Pray with them?
- *External:* Is your life marked by joy/contentment? Are you prepared to share the gospel if the Holy Spirit prompted? Is the name of Jesus on your lips in your day-to-day activity?

CONFESSION/PRAYER/REPENTANCE

But exhort *one another* every day, as long as it is called "today,"... (Heb. 3:12-14)

- Confession is agreeing with God about our sin according to the Scriptures. Is there anything you want to confess before the group (generally)? *[apathy, idolatry, selfishness, jealousy, anger, envy]*
- Let's pray, asking God to help us apply His word to our lives.[1]

[1] Sources: ESV Study Bible, GotQuestions.org, Multiple AI Resources