



Morningside Church

Sermon Discussion Guide

Title: Others

Date: February 18, 2024

Scripture Text: James 5:19-20

Series: The Behavior of a Believer

Notes:

Today we wrap up the sermon series *The Behavior of a Believer*, the study of the book of James. James was the half-brother of Jesus; he was saved after Jesus' resurrection and eventually became the leader of the Jerusalem church. He wrote a very practical letter giving his readers tangible ways of living obedient Christian lives. Today we look at the last two verses of his letter and the focus of our engagement with others. Our culture today is very 'me' focused. We are hesitant to get involved without a better understanding of the impact on ourselves. Jesus wants us to be 'others' focused, as He was. We will look at the topic of engaging others from two perspectives, if they are *saved*, and if they are *lost*.

I. The Restoration of Saints (James 5:19-20)

These verses apply both to saved and lost individuals. From the saved point of view, we have a believer who has backslidden. It is not usually a sudden change, but slowly over time they find themselves further and further from Jesus. Jesus hasn't moved, but they have. They have strayed from Jesus and from the truth of His word. But the one who is willing to step in and redirect the backslidden believer back toward Jesus, will help restore him to a right relationship with his Savior.

- Look up Jesus' parable of the Sower in Matthew 13. How is the soil described in [Matt 13:20-21](#) (shallow soil) and [Matt. 13:22](#) (thorny soil) reflective of a backslidden believer?
- What are the reasons given in the parable for them falling away?
 - Are those similar reasons backsliders today might fall away?
- How can understanding why someone has fallen away from the faith help as you work to restore them?
- Describe someone you knew who fell away from involvement in the faith.
 - What eventually happened to them?
- What are some strategies in approaching a backslider?
 - What role can prayer play?
- How can the approach influence the response?
 - "Don't let being *right* talk you out of being *kind*." (Bob Goff)

It is said that some of the most miserable people are disobedient Christians.



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II. The Redemption of Sinners (James 5:19-20)

At the core of these two verses is the reference James makes to the *truth*. It is the target for the restoring of the saint and the redemption of the sinner. There is only one truth, and it encompasses who Jesus is and His redemptive work as described in God's word, the Bible. As we engage the lost, our focus with them is the truth. This is where the power is for the lost to be saved ([Rom. 1:16](#)). "These last two verses are an appropriate closing summons to action. Not only should the readers of James 'do' the words he has written; they should be deeply concerned to see that others 'do' them also. It is by sharing with James the conviction that there is indeed an eternal death, to which the way of sin leads, that we shall be motivated to deal with sin in our lives and in the lives of others." (Douglas Moo)

- Describe in your own words what the 'truth' is.
- How can your knowledge of the truth help you describe it to a lost person?
- Describe a time when you were able to share the truth of the gospel with a lost person.
- How can understanding the consequences for the lost who die without being saved create an urgency in us to act?
- Describe what you would tell a lost person who needed to know the truth.

Personal considerations:

- Ask God to help you fall in love with the truth.
- Consider how your life aligns with the truth (and what may need to change).
- Identify who you can bring closer to the truth.