

In closing, James stresses the importance of restoring those who wander from the truth. Restoring straying saints is a responsibility given to ALL who are truly the children of God (**Galatians 6:1-2**; **1 Thessalonians 5:14**). Yet, it is a responsibility that is so easy to neglect, and in most cases IS neglected!

James 5:19a: "My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth..."

- **Grammatical Usage:** "**wanders**" or in the Greek, "planēthē" meaning, "led into error; deceived"; "**truth**" or "alētheias" meaning, "expressing one's beliefs in habits of thought and modes of living".
- **Literal Interpretation:** My dear friends, if you know people who have wandered into error, being deceived away from God given their thoughts and lifestyle...
- **Contextual/Comparison:** God keeps His Word: God continually uses His Word. James advises how we should approach:

I. THE CONDITION OF SAINTS/SINNERS WHO HAVE STRAYED FROM THE TRUTH

A. SAINTS AS DEFINED BY JAMES IN OUR TEXT...

1. They are in danger of DEATH! (**James 5:20**)
2. One who has wandered from the truth has also wandered from the from the source of forgiveness (**1 John 1:6-7**)
3. Separated from the blood of Christ to cleanse him of his sins, he is in danger of suffering the consequences of sin: DEATH! (**Romans 6:23**)

B. SAINTS AS DEPICTED BY PETER...

1. "**the latter end is worse for them than the beginning**" (**2 Peter 2:20-22**)
2. That such a person is in danger of more serious punishment is stressed by Jesus in **Luke 12:47-48**

II. RESTORING STRAYING SAINTS

A. IT REQUIRES SPECIAL ATTRIBUTES...

1. PEOPLE WHO ARE SPIRITUAL - **Galatians 6:1**
 - a. Those producing the fruit of the Spirit in their lives (**Galatians 5:22-23**)
2. A SPIRIT OF GENTLENESS - **Galatians 6:1**
 - a. We are engaged in delicate "soul surgery"
 - b. This is not the time to misuse the "sword of the Spirit"!
3. A CONSTANT SENSE OF SELF-EXAMINATION - **Galatians 6:1**
 - a. If we are not careful, we can easily fall into the same fault!
 - b. As many do when they counsel those with marital problems without proper supervision

4. A WILLINGNESS TO BEAR ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS
 - **Galatians 6:2**
 - a. Which involves an expense of time and energy to help the weak to overcome their faults
 - b. Our responsibility is not fulfilled by simply pointing out our brother's faults!
5. HUMILITY
 - a. This is implied in **Galatians 6:3**
 - b. It is stated outright in **2 Timothy 2:24-26**
 - c. People will not accept correction or advice coming from an arrogant person!
 - d. In many cases, we may need to confess our own sin of negligence first! (for not coming sooner)
6. AMPLE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S WORD – **2 Timothy 2:24**
 - a. We must be able to teach and apply God's Word to the situation
 - b. For it is important that they respond to GOD'S word, and not just to OUR views or opinions!
7. PATIENCE (longsuffering) – **2 Timothy 2:24**
 - a. The same kind that we receive from God for our faults
 - b. The same kind that Paul showed towards the church at Corinth - **2 Corinthians 1:23-2:3**
 - c. Of course, if repentance is not forthcoming, we can wait for only so long – **2 Corinthians 13:1-2**
8. A SINCERE DEMONSTRATION OF LOVE
 - a. Both at the time of rebuke - **2 Corinthians 2:4**
 - b. And at the time of repentance – **2 Corinthians 2:6-8**
- B. IT REQUIRES THE PROPER PROCEDURE...
 1. The wrong procedures:
 - a. Running around and talking to everyone but the person who needs to be corrected and restored!
 - b. Preaching about these people from the pulpit at the very outset!
 - c. Bringing it up at congregational business meetings at the very first!
 2. The proper procedure is outlined by Jesus in **Matthew 18:15-17**
 - a. Even though the sin may not be against you personally...
 1. This is still a good way to avoid misunderstanding
 2. This is still more likely to succeed
 - b. Therefore...
 1. Go to the person first
 2. Then take others, if necessary
 3. Then tell it to the church, if necessary
 4. If he won't hear the church, withdraw any association that might appear to give approval to their behavior – **1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; Romans 16:17**

➤ **Conclusion:** If I truly love and care, will I be approachable or approach to correct error?