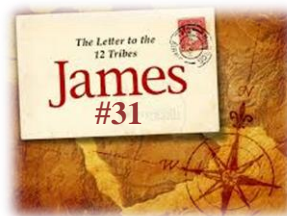




Chico Alliance Church
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Pastor David Welch



“Faith’s Response to the Wayward” Pt 2

James prescribed a process whereby those struggling in any of multiple areas of life can find renewal, healing, help through the mutual confession of sin and faithful prayers of the church family.

Is anyone among you weak? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is weak, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.

Last week we specifically addressed the privilege of helping those who have stumbled, wandered or fallen return to a healthy walk and avoid further destruction and devastation from sin.

My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins. James 5:14-20

Multiple passages address church family interaction. Many of those passages address interaction and ministry to the fallen.

I want to explore several key passages today in order that we might find further instruction and motivation to minister to one another.

James pointedly addressed numerous issues in life all thought his letter.

Grumbling under trials.

Partiality and prejudice

Stumbling in many ways

Caustic tongue

Unbridled tongue

Hearing but not doing the word.

Phony or dead faith.

Friendship with the world.

Demonic disturbance.
Selfish ambition.
Foolish living
Blaming God for temptation
Quarrels and fighting
Pride and arrogance
Presumption

Insensitively to the poor
Grumbling
Impatience
Doubleminded
Doubt
Impure hearts.

James encouraged the ministry of prayer and confession because it works and because it has great value to the individual and the church.

Let him know with certainty that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

Whoever seeks to minister to the wayward embarks on a difficult but rewarding venture. The key point to understand is that all of us stumble in many ways. All of us wander from the path at some time. That straying from the path can be intentional or unintentional. It may be the result of deception.

1. Do everything you can to regularly strengthen and encourage one another.

Hebrews prescribes preventative measures. The writer warns against an unbelieving heart. He warns against failure to really trust God and fall into sin.

*Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But **encourage** one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Hebrews 3:12-13*

The prescribed prevention is regular mutual encouragement. Sin causes deception. Regular mutual encouragement prevents sin. I believe that mutual encouragement is the life blood of a healthy body. The Greek term comes from a combination of the verb "to call" and the preposition "beside".

The word means to be by the side of another; to relieve and support; to give solace, consolation, and encouragement. But there is always an underlying meaning to the word. There is the idea of strength, an enablement, a confidence. It consoles and relieves a person, but it strengthens him at the same time. It charges a person to go out and face the world.

It communicates the idea of urging or imploring someone to do the right thing.

It was used to describe a pleading for help. It describes coming along side another with positive words of encouragement. It describes someone coming along side in troubled times not just to console but to strengthen. It references someone sent to advocate on our behalf; like a lawyer. Not one English word communicates all these ideas. The translators translate the same term by “urge, beg, comfort, exhort, encourage, advocate, counsel, help, ask. The noun and verb appear nearly 150 times in the New Testament. God does it. People practice it. God commands the church to practice it toward one another. Jesus does it. It is the central function of the Holy Spirit. The instruction to come along side one another appears all thought the New Testament. This coming along side does three things.

1. We come along side to offer divine perspective.

God designed us for community. He Himself exists in community. Because we are created in His image, we function best in community. The destruction that sin spread make community even more necessary. Sin is deceitful. Sin dulls the senses. Sin distracts. We need transformation by the renewing of our thinking. To do that, we need continual reminders of God’s ways. We come along side one another to speak truth into each other’s lives. A significant aspect of encouragement involves words. In times of difficulty we need God’s perspective on life in a broken world.

Many times, our discouragement comes from faulty thinking. These, along with a multitude of other negative “messages” play over and over in our thoughts even to the point of mental paralysis. We need renewed thinking. God calls us to speak the truth of the Scriptures to one another.

For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. Romans 15:4

God comes along side us in our struggle so that we can come along side one another in our struggle

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all **encouragement**, who **encourages** us in all our affliction so that we will be able to **encourage** those who are in any affliction with the **encouragement** with which we ourselves are **encouraged** by God. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4*

In times of difficulty, we need divine perspective on the past, present and future.

Divine perspective helps us address things that happened in our past.
Divine perspective aids our struggle with things in the present.
Divine perspective assures us of God's continued grace in the future.
Divine perspective encourages the soul to endure, repent, move on.
Divine perspective sometimes helps us see a higher purpose in our struggle.

Here are some observations we made from various verses of Scripture.

The early church grew through the encouragement of the Holy Spirit.
The Holy Spirit specifically gifts certain people to encouragement
Encouragement flows out of the character of God and His Word.
We gain encouragement from observing love demonstrated in the family.
Christ's encouragement of us motivates us to encourage others.
Encouragement comes as an answer to prayer.
Encouragement is a primary role of pastors.
God promises encouragement in sorrow.
Encouragement strengthens believers to persevere.
The manner of encouragement is like a loving father and his children.
Encouragement desires to build up others.
Encouragement may be corrective in nature.
Encouragement is a continual function of the gathered community.

2. We come along side to offer "divine" presence.

Encouragement often comes without words. Just showing up encourages. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit, the ultimate encourager would be WITH us and IN us.

3. We come along side to offer partnership.

Jesus sent His followers out two by two. Isolation was part of Elijah's depression. He dropped out because he felt all alone. God had to remind him that he wasn't alone. God assigned Elisha to minister to him the rest of his life. Regular encouragement serves to prevent straying. Hebrews encourages preventative action. *Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed. Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. Hebrews 12:12-14*

This is instruction for the family regarding those struggling. Strengthen, protect, allow time to heal pursue peace.

What about when people do stray?

Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. Gal 6:1-2

This passage encourages two actions associated with turning back the wayward.

2. Gently Restore

This is a rich term with a wide range of meaning. It is translated eight different ways in its thirteen appearances. It means to set in order, adjust, set broken bones, unite factions, make complete, equip, train.

It was used for the disciples **mending** their nets. Mark 1:19

It was used for a teacher **training** his disciple. Luke 6:40

It was used in relations to God **creating** the world. Heb 11:3

It was used regarding God **equipping** us for every good work Heb 13:21

It was used regarding God's **restoration** after suffering.

Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, encourage one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. 2 Corinthians 13:11

This restoration was to be done with gentleness, humble introspection, and caution.

3. Bear one another's burdens.

Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Galatians 6:3-5

This term means to lift up, carry, support. It refers to a transferable or sharable burden. Two possible applications. Take on my fellow believer's burden. Share my fellow believer's burden.

We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Rom 15:1

A few verses down Paul taught that each one must bear their own "burden."

But each one must examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another. For each one will bear his own load.

This is a different word for burden. There are some things we cannot do for someone else. I cannot spend time with God for them. I can't read the Bible for

them. I can't obey for them. Some things each one must do for themselves but there are things we can do to help others bear their load.

This next passage prescribes three more things.

And have mercy on those who doubt; save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh. Jude 1:22-23

4. Have mercy on the doubting

5. Snatch the perishing out of the fire

6. Reverently Show mercy on the sinning

7. Carefully watch for signs of disease.

Seeing to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. Hebrews 12:15-16

This is a family function. Ya all watching out for disease in the family. Not appropriating God's grace Not dealing with bitterness. Not maintaining godly values

8. Gently teach truth without debate but with kindness and longsuffering

The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will. 2 Timothy 2:24-26

9. Lovingly seek restoration through conversation

"If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. "But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED. "If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Matthew 18:15-17

Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ... Eph 4:15

So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Matthew 5:23-24
The goal is always restoration of relationship.

10. Cease close association

Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. 2 Thessalonians 3:6

As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good. If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother. 2 Thessalonians 3:13-15

This next passage includes three more instructions that balance out or provide correction for an extreme.

*Sufficient for such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the majority, so that on the contrary you should rather **forgive** and **encourage** him, otherwise such a one might be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. Wherefore I urge you to **reaffirm your love** for him. 2 Corinthians 2:6-8*

Paul addressed overreaction a brother who did something that affected the whole church.

11. Forgive

Release from debt. Don't hold it against them.

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Colossians 3:12-13

12. Encourage

Our same word meaning to come along side. Come into close relationship to.

Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal encouragement and good hope by grace, encourage and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word. 2 Thess 2:16-17

Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. Ephesians 4:29

13. Reaffirm love

This word means to ratify, confirm, reassure. It was use in relation to a public or legal action. This was intended to be some sort of public affirmation of acceptance.

Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God. Romans 15:7

14. Pray

If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death. 1 John 5:16

My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

James 5:19-20