

STUDY GUIDE

JAMES: Week 14 9.8.13

Note: Often, you receive more questions than it's possible to use in your LG meeting time. So, as a leader, please be selective about which questions will be best for your group. And remember, you can always craft your own questions as you disciple the people in your LG. Thanks!

[set up]

Has there ever been a time in your life when you were tempted to quit something – a task, a team, a relationship, a school, a job, etc. – but you didn't quit? Why didn't you quit?

Was there a particular person who helped you persevere? How do you feel about that person now?

Remember: We don't go to church; we are the church. We don't bring people to church; we bring the church to people. Who has a story to tell about how you blessed someone in your neighborhood, at your school, or where you work?

[digging deeper]

Quickly scan the entire letter of James – all 5 chapters. Make a list of some of the truths – beliefs and behaviors – we have studied throughout the book of James. Discuss how believers might wander from these truths.

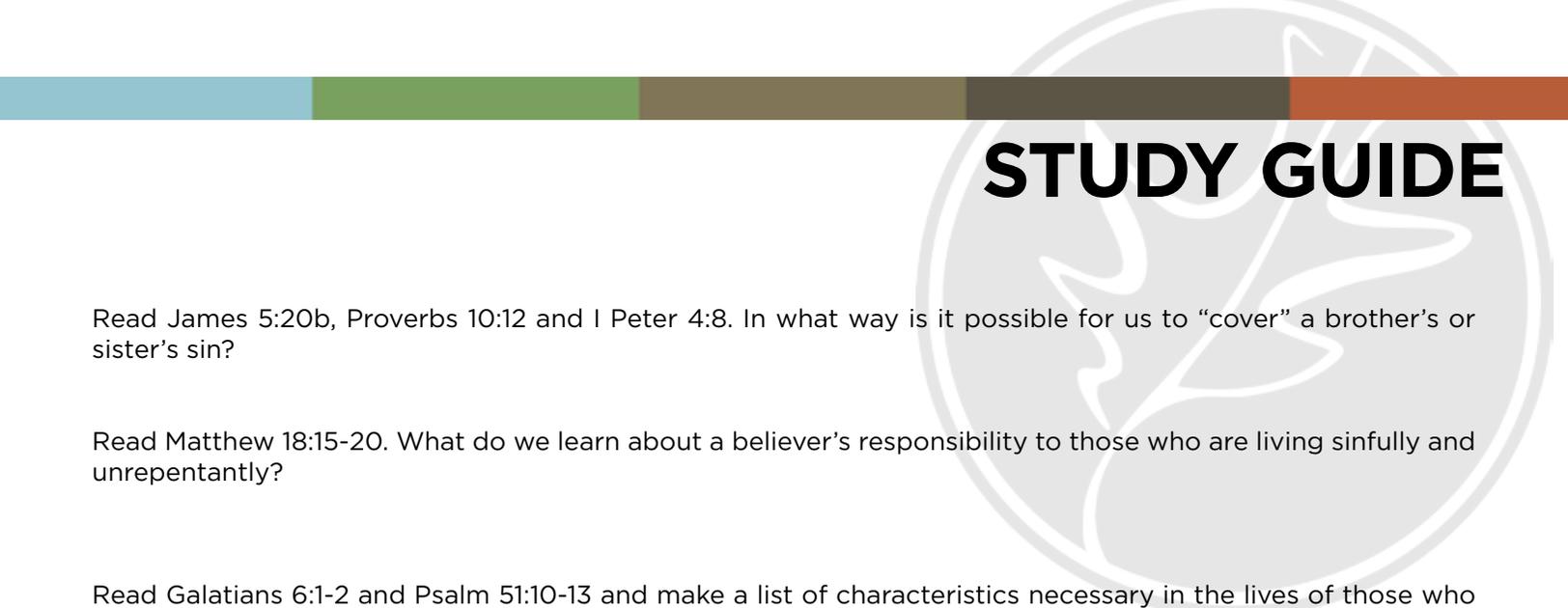
Read James 5:19a and note that it is possible (and even probable) that believers, like straying sheep, will wander from the truth. But many of us choose to look the other way. Why is it so common for us to not “see” the strays? What can we do to better “see” them?

Read the following passages in order to answer the question: “What's so bad about straying”? In other words, why is straying so dangerous? Ecclesiastes 9:18, Joshua 7:1-15, Hebrews 12:6-11, I John 5:16-17, I Corinthians 11:30, and I John 2:19.

Read James 5:20b and describe what “bringing them back” means. (See also Luke 15:3-7.)

Discuss how the following credos can keep us from bringing the strays back: 1) Live and let live. 2) Leave well enough alone. 3) Mind your own business. 4) Judge not lest you be judged. Which of these mantras is most likely to keep you from obeying James 5:19-20? Why?

Read James 5:20a and Romans 11:13-14. Although we know only Jesus truly saves, the word “save” is used to describe our responsibility to help those who have wandered far away from God. Why is it appropriate for James to say that we can save a wanderer's soul from death?

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Read James 5:20b, Proverbs 10:12 and I Peter 4:8. In what way is it possible for us to “cover” a brother’s or sister’s sin?

Read Matthew 18:15-20. What do we learn about a believer’s responsibility to those who are living sinfully and unrepentantly?

Read Galatians 6:1-2 and Psalm 51:10-13 and make a list of characteristics necessary in the lives of those who are seeking to restore a straying brother or sister. Discuss why these characteristics are so vital.

Read Daniel 12:3 and describe what God says about those who turn many people to righteousness. Based on your Christian experience to date, is this something God could say about you?

Read the following Bible stories about caring confrontation that resulted in the rescue of someone who strayed: II Samuel 12:1-13, John 21:15-23, and Galatians 2:11-14. What principles can you glean from these stories about how we are to help save those who stray?

Discuss the difference it would make if you actually saw that you could be part of a rescue effort that is spiritually dramatic, daring, and heroic and that has ramifications for all eternity?

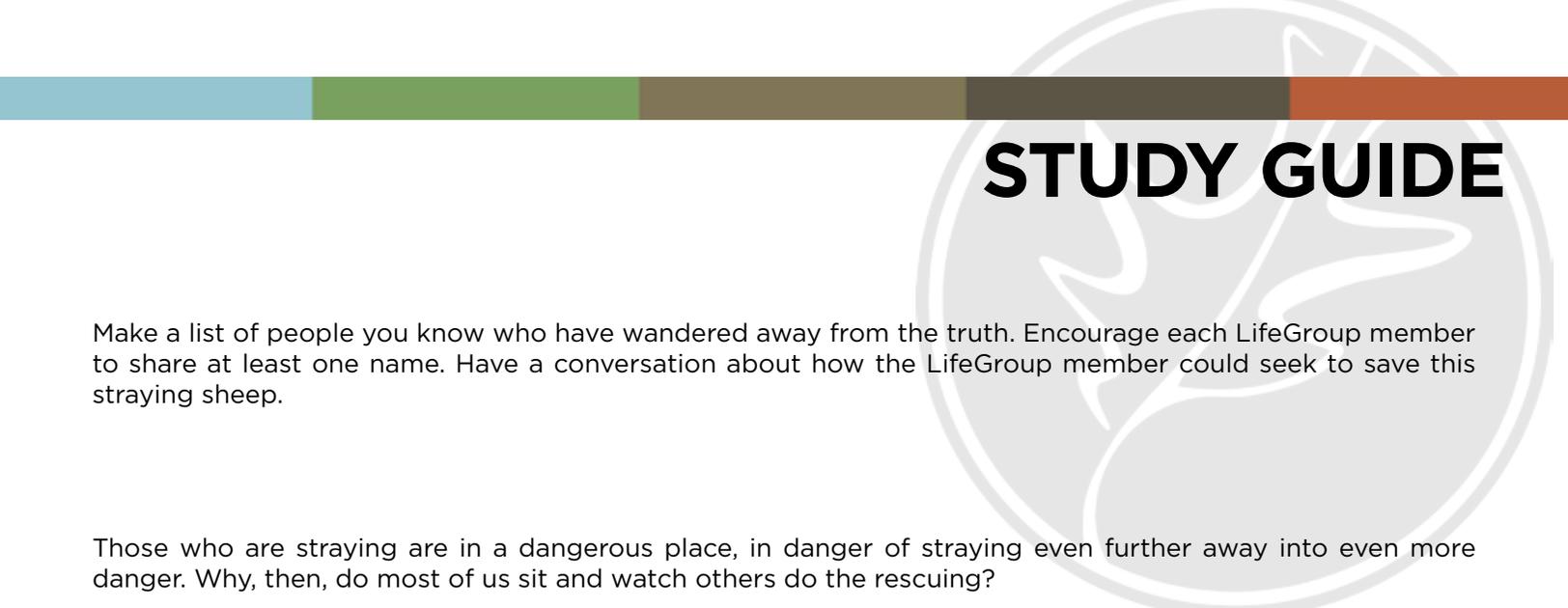
As we close out our study of James, what has challenged you? What has encouraged you? How have your views been changed? How has your life changed?

What is one of your main take-aways from the book of James?

[living it out]

In what area of your life are you most tempted to stray? In what area of your life are you currently straying? (This is a time to be vulnerable! Please be truthful and transparent. Take a risk. Intimacy will grow in your LifeGroup as you trust one another with difficult truths about your life.)

Rate your LifeGroup on a scale of 1-10. How are you doing as a Caring Community? How could you increase your rating?

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Make a list of people you know who have wandered away from the truth. Encourage each LifeGroup member to share at least one name. Have a conversation about how the LifeGroup member could seek to save this straying sheep.

Those who are straying are in a dangerous place, in danger of straying even further away into even more danger. Why, then, do most of us sit and watch others do the rescuing?

Make a list of practical ideas about the “how” of bringing back a straying brother or sister. Who has the “right” to confront? What are the kinds of things you could say to open up the conversation? Where might you connect with a straying person? When would be the best times to confront? What are some more “how tos”?

Will you ask God, “Would You use me to save this soul? What do You want me to do?” He’ll tell you something. Then, will you purpose in your heart to do it? Will you bring your talent, your experiences, your money, your passion to an eternally significant rescue operation?

Close your time praying in a God Dependent way for the straying people on your list so that they begin to Live New.