



# Helping people encounter God in His Word



For use on Sunday, December 7, 2003

## Introduction

# 30

*Core Competencies  
of a follower  
of Christ*

### 10 Core Beliefs

TRINITY  
SALVATION BY GRACE  
AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE  
PERSONAL GOD  
IDENTITY IN CHRIST  
CHURCH  
HUMANITY  
COMPASSION  
ETERNITY  
STEWARDSHIP

### 10 Core Practices

WORSHIP  
PRAYER  
BIBLE STUDY  
SINGLE-MINDEDNESS  
**BIBLICAL COMMUNITY**  
SPIRITUAL GIFTS  
GIVING AWAY MY TIME  
GIVING AWAY MY MONEY  
GIVING AWAY MY FAITH  
GIVING AWAY MY LIFE

### 10 Core Virtues

LOVE  
JOY  
PEACE  
PATIENCE  
KINDNESS/GOODNESS  
FAITHFULNESS  
GENTLENESS  
SELF-CONTROL  
HOPE  
HUMILITY

**This week's Core Competency:**

**Biblical Community  
I fellowship with other  
Christians to accomplish  
God's purpose in my life,  
other's lives, and in the  
world.**

## **Reality Check: When Life Requires a Balance No Place Like Home . . . When You Wandered From Faith**

"Johnny!" Exclaimed Brendan, "It's great that you're back from the Gulf! I'm glad you're in one piece, Man."

"Brickhead," said Private Johnny Capal, "It's good to see you! I see you're still hangin.' What's new, man?"

"I got a new board and have been grinding like we used to," said Brendan euphorically. "Hey, check this out," said Brendan smiling and pulling out his tooth, "I wasted my front tooth on the steps at the library. I was trying to helicopter and bit it. I got a temporary from the dentist. Cool, huh? Hey, since you're back, we should go out and get wasted to celebrate! I know some guys where we could score some 'weed.'"

"Yeah, man, cool," said Johnny, "I'd like to celebrate with you, but I don't want any 'weed.' I've changed, man."

"Changed! What do you mean you changed?" asked Brendan.

"I don't do drugs or drink anymore, Brendan. I have seen stuff in the Gulf that would make your skin crawl. It made me wonder if what I had been doing all this time was worth it. It is really messed up over there. I started going back to church. It has given me a new perspective on life, a sense of peace and comfort," said Johnny reflectively.

"Dude, back to church?" asked Brendan, "I thought nothing would scare you back into church. The Gulf must be totally whacked! When we went to church together, I thought that was scary enough. Hey, remember when we were in Sunday school together back in 4<sup>th</sup> grade with old Mrs. Duluth. That woman was nasty."

"Yeah," laughed Johnny, "I remember when you put paste on her chair and she got stuck. I thought for sure you were a goner."

"Me too, man, but luckily I survived that scrape," said Brendan jokingly.

"I'll tell you Brendan, I pray I have as much luck as you did then," said Johnny. "I had two guys in my unit get killed by a mortar while on patrol. One guy, Mikey, was eighteen, like me, and the other, Pascal, was a father with two kids. It woke me up. Made me start thinking that I may not be coming home. I knew that I needed to get back to what was important, so I went back to church."

"Has it helped, man?" asked Brendan.

"Yeah, it has. I rededicated my life to Christ, and gave up drugs and drinking. I've had more peace than before while on patrol in the Gulf. I can't explain it, but I just sense that I'll be okay and that God is watching over me," said Johnny assuredly. "Hey, Brendan, why don't you come with me to a college meeting tomorrow at Primrose Church. I guess they do BBQ and volleyball. It will be our celebration together before I have to ship back out."

"I don't know, man. Me? Back at church?" asked Brendan uncertainly.

"Well I've already committed to helping so I need to be there and it'd be awesome to hang with you." stated Johnny.

"Say no more, dude, I'm there," exclaimed Brendan.

"Okay, I'll see you there at 6:00. It'll be good to spend time with you," said Johnny.

## Observation

What do you see?

### James 5:19, 20

<sup>19</sup>My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, <sup>20</sup>remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

### Jude 20-23

<sup>20</sup>But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup>Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

<sup>22</sup>Be merciful to those who doubt; <sup>23</sup>snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear--hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.

**Record your first impressions from what you read.**

### Interact with the passages

- In James underline “should.” Draw an arrow from the “should” to its accompanying verb.
- Highlight “brothers,” and then draw an arrow to “one” and “someone.”
- Circle “turns a sinner,” “will save,” and “cover over.” Draw arrows to the phrases that further explain each verb’s action.
- Put a square around “wander,” and draw an arrow to “sinner.”
- In Jude circle “build,” “pray,” and “keep.” Draw arrows to what they are to do to act out these verbs.
- Underline all forms of “mercy.” Draw arrows to who receives mercy.
- Circle the words, “snatch” and “fire.” Draw a picture of what this looks like.
- Highlight “show mercy, mixed with fear,” then draw an arrow to “hating.”
- Next to the Jude passage identify the three groups of people, or “others,” who Jude is talking about in 22 and 23.

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## Interpretation

What does it mean?

**As believers in Christ involvement in each other’s lives is not optional. We have a responsibility to allow other believers to lovingly speak into our lives to build up and protect us in the truth and love of Christ.**

### Insights

- “Wander” and “error” are similar Greek words and James intentionally uses them to stress that wandering from “truth” is an error.
- The “if” in v. 19 is tied to aorist subjunctive verb that is an inceptive aorist and refers to the beginning “wandering,” of a believer.
- The verb “bring back” can be interpreted two ways. It could mean turning to God for salvation or it could mean return from the faith one strayed from.
- The term “death” is used in James 1:15 and refers to end times judgment, but the term implies continuing sin that brings death.
- When referring to covering sin, it is unclear if it is the sinners or the one who turns the sinner whose sin is covered. The second option is more awkward than the first so it likely refers to a sinner who repents and comes back to the truth.
- “Show mercy” is a command and implores believers to speak to the intellectual and

moral doubts of other believers who have been influenced by false teachers.

- “Save,” is a command while “snatch from the fire” refers to judgment like in Sodom and Gomorrah. The “some” tied with this phrase could be unbelievers who can still come to Christ even after they have been under the spell of false teachers.
- “Stained” is a perfect participle that refers to the state or result of their clothing. In other words the sins of these people are so grievous that even the clothes they wear are permeated with sin. It could refer that the “some” here are false teachers.

### **Answering Questions of Interpretation**

How does one go about “bringing him back” to truth if a believer strays? Obviously James has addressed many problems in the church that would be considered “straying.” How does one go about evaluating the changes of “coming back to the truth?” How far does one go to “bring them back?” Who determines what the “truth” looks like and normative behavior that is associated with it?

Does a believer who turns a sinner “save” himself or does the “save” refer to only the sinner who turns? Give arguments for both options. What does it mean to have sins “covered”?

How does one “build yourselves up” and “keep yourselves in God’s love”? What do those expressions mean and what behaviors do they indicate?

Jude talks about doubters and “some” people. Who are these people? Are they Christians? Are they non-believers? Are they apostate teachers? Explain your reasons for your thoughts. How does he say to handle interacting with each group? Define the terms he uses when telling believers how to interact with these folks. Define “mercy,” “save them,” and “mercy, mixed with fear.” What implications does Jude’s words have for us today?

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### **Application**

What do I do?

How well am I living out the truth that James has spoken about throughout the book? Do I have some “wandering” that I am currently doing? What areas do I need to correct so I won’t wander? Have I resisted allowing others to speak into my life to correct my wandering? If so, why? What steps do I sense the Spirit wants me to take to begin to follow the truth?

Have I ever used the Bible to persuade some other believer to accept my way of thinking about truth? Have I lacked mercy, gentleness, and compassion when I approached someone about their sin? Do I have an attitude of moral superiority or spiritual arrogance about things I know? If the answer is ‘yes,’ to any of these questions ask yourself this question, “How can I begin to share God’s truth in a manner that doesn’t demean or belittle the hearer?” What role does humility play in interacting with people who have “wandered” from the faith? What steps do I need to take to be more humble about approaching people who are entangled in sin?

How can I begin to “build myself up” in the faith? What are some building blocks I can use to keep from wandering? Write down three things that you sense you need to build into your life to grow. Make specific goals for yourself in these three areas. Pray that you can find someone to hold you accountable with these things and ask about your progress toward your goals. One way to grow this way is to get into a Home Group.

## Correlation

How do we work this into our Home Group, Family, youth group, ministry, class, small group?

## Core Competency: Biblical Community

**Creed:** I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purpose in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

**Commentary:** Family gives us place to belong and to be loved. When we are children our parents and siblings build us up. They help shape us to be the people we become in our later years. Their influence can be a positive step to us becoming mature adults.

Of course, as we are growing up, we are trying to find our way in the world. Many times our behaviors are problematic and disruptive to others. As kids we showed we did not understand the effects of our actions on others. But at those times when we were not behaving well our parents and family would give us loving but stern direction to correct our behavior. We likely did not enjoy the discipline, but in the long run it helped us learn how to act and behave appropriately. Families are an invaluable resource for developing children into healthy adults.

Biblical community, like family, is a place where Christian people are to have a sense of belonging and affirmation. We all have the same name in Jesus Christ, and are filled with the same Holy Spirit. Biblical community also gives other believers we are close to the right to speak into our lives to correct waywardness from morality and faith. The corrective advice and counsel that other believers pour into us helps develop and bring us to be more mature and stronger believers. As a family of believers we are obligated to spur one another to growth and protect one another from the corruption of the world.

**Question:** Describe a time that you were disciplined as a child. What did you do and how did you feel about being disciplined? What did you learn from that discipline that is usable yet today? Why is it so hard for us to allow others to speak into our lives to correct sin?

### **Kid's Corner – Mama's Watching Out for You**

Today we are going to play, family. I need one person to be Mama, who is going to take care of us. Mama is going to tell us when we need to behave. Mama will also tell us when something is safe or not. So who is going to be Mama? Great! Now the rest of us, including adults, can ask Mama if we can do something or tell on someone else who did something to us. She will tell us what we need to do, because Mama is watching out for us.

**Say:** Ask Mama several questions like the ones below or do some behaviors that would make Mama discipline you or encourage you. Raise your hand so she can call on you.

**Ask:** Mama, can I only eat candy? Mama, can I stand in the potty? Mama, can I feed my brother dog food? Mama, can I have a drink of water? Mama, can I give you a hug?

**Say:** A mother in a family has a lot of responsibility to correct, teach, encourage, and discipline. She loves each child the same, is patient with each child, and calls them her own. That is why being a mom is such an important job. Moms want their children to grow up to be good people who know how to treat other people well.

Do you know that in the church that all people who believe in Jesus have the job of correcting, teaching, encouraging, and disciplining one another? That is right! It is a job, like being a mom, of great love and responsibility. Each individual in the church is asked to show great love to one another and correct one another if they do something wrong. It makes the church a family. So if you saw me break a window and run away, you would need to tell me to talk to the person who owned the window and offer to pay to replace it. That way you are helping me grow to be more like Jesus and become a better person. You and I, and everyone else need someone to watch over us, like a mom, so we can be more like Jesus.



## Grace Community Church

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