

“Lifesaving”

James 5:19-20

Introduction

On a boat, a lifesaver or life buoy is a flotation device used to save the life of someone who has fallen overboard. These lifesaving devices are absolutely essential and required to be part of a boat’s safety equipment. Christians should be used by God as lifesavers to restore sinning believers back into spiritual life. Lifesavers are needed because believers backslide. Believers can wander away from the faith and into sin. When they choose to wander, they have abandoned the truth of God’s Word for the lies of Satan and then must bear the consequences of spiritual departure. Even if most consequences are not seen immediately, they eventually show up. God does not want believers to suffer those consequences, but they are the inevitable result of moving away from Him.

The responsibility of lifesavers is to intervene in the course of backsliders who go in the wrong direction. Christians should care about other believers who are going the wrong way rather than thinking it is not their business. It is their business because the body of Christ is a family whose members are connected to each other spiritually. Our spiritual and familial connections should not be ignored. Lifesavers should help backsliders see how they abandoned the truth for lies when they adopted a sinful lifestyle. For backsliders, the lie has become more real than the truth. Knowing God's Word is vital for lifesavers to evaluate the lies themselves.

If we as lifesavers can restore other believers caringly, lovingly and truthfully, we can lead them back into fellowship with God and other believers in the church. This can reverse or even cancel the consequences of their sin. Christians should want to help backsliders avoid those consequences as much as possible by intervening in their lives. This can be done when we approach the situation with the right spirit and a humble attitude. Our goal as lifesavers is achieved when backsliders return to God, return to fellowship and no longer have the consequences of sin dominating them. Then we can celebrate their restoration together as a family!

Getting Started

1. What other images come to mind when you think of lifesavers or lifesaving devices?
2. Have you ever saved someone’s life or witnessed someone saving a life? How did it feel?

Let’s Get Personal

1. When have you found yourself in a backslidden condition, and what choices led you there?
2. Has another believer intervened when you were backsliding? What consequences could have been if the other believer had not led you back into fellowship with God?
3. When you have seen other believers backsliding, have you intervened to help them, or have you thought it was not your business? What could you have done better?

Take the Next Step

1. In what areas of your life are you most prone to backsliding? How can you strengthen your walk with God this week to prevent backsliding in those areas?
2. Do you know someone who is backsliding and needs help? What would you say to that person? How can you better prepare yourself to see the truth and to have a humble attitude so you can intervene?
3. Want to go deeper? Take time to look at the following passages: James 5:19-20; Luke 22:31-34; Hebrews 5:11-14; Hebrews 10:23-26; 1 Corinthians 11:29-31; James 1:19-21; 1 John 5:19; 1 Peter 4:8; Genesis 9:18-27; Matthew 5:23-24; Matthew 18:15-17; 2 Corinthians 7:8-9; Galatians 6:1-5; Luke 15:11-32.

Renew Your Mind

"Let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins."

James 5:20
