The One Another Life – A Gospel Community

Week 9 – Restore One Another
(Matthew 18:12-20)

OPENING QUESTION

Do I love other believers enough to pursue them **when I see them wandering away from Christ**?

KEY VERSE

"If your brother sins against you, go tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won your brother."
-Matthew 18:12-20

THE INSTRUCTION

1. When someone wanders, **care enough to pursue them**.

   "What do you think? If someone has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, won't he leave the ninety-nine on the hillside and go and search for the stray? And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he rejoices over that sheep more than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray. In the same way, it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones perish."
   — Matthew 18:12–14

   Jesus shows that restoration begins with pursuit. The shepherd does not wait passively for the wandering sheep to find its own way back; he goes after it, seeking to bring it home.

   ***What is true*:** God cares about His wandering people, so we should care when a brother or sister begins **moving away from faithfulness to Christ**.

   ***What to do*:** Do not simply look the other way. Pray for wisdom, examine your heart, and **pursue a wandering believer for their good**.

2. When a fellow Christian sins, go to them **before you go to others**.

   "If your brother sins against you, go tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won your brother." – Matthew 18:15

   Jesus tells us to begin privately. Biblical love does not gossip about sin, spread the matter unnecessarily, or avoid the person involved. It goes directly to them with restoration as the goal.

   What is true: Biblical love addresses sin directly and privately with the goal of **winning a brother or sister back**.

   And when someone says, *"Who am I to judge?"* we need to remember what Scripture actually teaches. Jesus condemns **hypocritical and self-righteous judgment** (Matthew 7:1–5), but He does not forbid believers from making moral judgments according to God's Word. He says, *"Judge according to righteous judgment"* (John 7:24), and Paul says that Christians have a responsibility to judge those **inside the church** (1 Corinthians 5:12).

   So biblical judgment does not mean condemning someone's soul, assuming motives, or acting as though we are morally superior. **It means discerning**

conduct by Scripture and lovingly holding one another accountable to Christ. God alone is the final Judge, but His people are still responsible to help one another recognize sin, repent, and walk faithfully.

What to do: Before talking to others about someone's sin, ask: ***Have I talked to them****?* Go humbly, prayerfully, and biblically.

3. When private correction is refused, **bring help and not a crowd**.

   "But if he won't listen, take one or two others with you, so that by the testimony of two or three witnesses every fact may be established." — Matthew 18:16

   What is true: Restoration should be pursued carefully, patiently, and with enough accountability to **establish what is actually true**.

   What to do: If private correction is rejected, involve one or two mature believers who can help **pursue truth, repentance, and restoration**.

4. When someone refuses to repent, **the church must take sin seriously**.

   "If he doesn't pay attention to them, tell the church. If he doesn't pay attention even to the church, let him be like a Gentile and a tax collector to you. Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will have been loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you, if two of you on earth agree about any matter that you pray for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there among them." — ***Matthew 18:17–20***

   What is true: Christ gives His church the responsibility to hold its members accountable to His Word, always with **repentance and restoration** as the goal.

   What to do: **Follow Christ's pattern**; begin privately, widen the circle only when necessary, establish the truth carefully, call for repentance clearly, and when repentance comes, be eager to forgive and restore.

THE MAIN IDEA

Main Idea: When a brother or sister wanders into sin, Jesus calls His people to pursue them with truth and love for the purpose of restoration.

LOOK TO CHRIST

Jesus is the Shepherd who came after wandering sheep. We were once *"like sheep going astray,"* but Christ brought us back to the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls (1 Peter 2:25). The Good Shepherd laid down His life for His sheep (John 10:11). We therefore do not restore others from a position of superiority. **We pursue wandering believers as people who have ourselves been pursued, forgiven, and restored by Christ.**

APPLICATION

- Is someone I know wandering whom I have simply watched walk away?
- When another Christian sins, do I talk to them—or about them?
- Am I willing to call something sin when Scripture clearly calls it sin?
- How do I respond when another believer corrects me?
- When I confront someone, is my goal restoration or proving that I am right?
- If someone genuinely repents, am I willing to forgive and restore them?
- Am I praying for the right opening to speak? Am I willing to take it when God gives it?

One Sentence Application:
Love a wandering believer enough to pursue them humbly, speak the truth clearly, and seek their restoration to faithful fellowship with Christ and His church.