

**James 5:19–20 (ESV)** *My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, 20 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.*

Together we pursue wandering people.

The word wander is *planao* (pla-no') in GK

**2 Peter 2:15 (ESV)** *Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray. They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing,*

**Revelation 2:20 (ESV)** *But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.*

### **There are two types of wanderers**

#### 1. The straying sheep

There is no one who does not wander. Even if it is for a moment in a bout with doubt. For some it is a huge walking away from the Lord and His church for years – some of you are here today. For some it is an ebb and flow of closeness to God then distance from God. For some of you it is a constant struggle every week and sometimes every day. We all wander.

**(Prov 9:13-18 MSG)** *Then there's this other woman, Madame Whore—brazen, empty-headed, frivolous. She sits on the front porch of her house on Main Street, And as people walk by minding their own business, calls out, "Are you confused about life, don't know what's going on? Steal off with me, I'll show you a good time! No one will ever know—I'll give you the time of your life." But they don't know about all the skeletons in her closet, that all her guests end up in hell.*

When you do wander, it feels like everyone else around you is self-righteous and perfect but the truth is that there are some who are not perfect but are in progress and just so happen to be close to the Great Shepherd and desire to obey him which includes bringing you back into the fold. Again, this is God's design. We flourish under His design.

If you are the one being pursued, why take offence? Your brothers and sisters are only being obedient to the Lord and desire good for you.

#### 2. The rebellious goat

Not everyone who wanders from the faith and from the church is simply seduced by the world; some are simply not saved. They look like good church folk, but the truth is they are lost and

undone. When Jesus gave the parable of the lost sheep, he said the shepherd will leave the 99 and go get the 1 wandering sheep. I need you to know that he did not say go get the wandering goat – there is a difference.

We can't assume everyone is saved who arbitrarily mentions God and church in conversation. To do so is to see the world through the lens of cheap grace. It is actually unloving to do so.

**Matthew 18:12–13 (ESV)** *What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? 13 And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray.*

Church discipline is a rescue operation in Mat 18 – Jesus goes to get the sheep.

### **There are two types of pursuers**

#### **1. The Bounty Hunter**

A bounty hunter is a person who pursues a criminal or fugitive for whom a reward is offered.

The bounty hunter does not love the straying sheep. He is working to reward himself at the expense of the sheep.

#### **2. The Gentle Shepherd**

The gentle shepherd loves the straying sheep. He is working for the Father and the reward is the sheep himself.

**Galatians 6:1–2 (ESV)** *Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*

We all stumble in many ways...

**1 John 1:8–10 (ESV)** *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

Goats love gain more than God; Sheep often stray and need a Savior to bring them back in. Most of the time, he uses people to do that.

There is one more category not mentioned on the graph...the apathetic brother or sister.

**John 10:10–11, 14 (ESV)** *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. 11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep... 14 I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me*

Extra NOTES:

**Proverbs 9:13–18 (ESV)**

13     *The woman Folly is loud;  
she is seductive and knows nothing.*  
14     *She sits at the door of her house;  
she takes a seat on the highest places of the town,*  
15     *calling to those who pass by,  
who are going straight on their way,*  
16     *“Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!”*  
*And to him who lacks sense she says,*  
17     *“Stolen water is sweet,  
and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.”*  
18     *But he does not know that the dead are there,  
that her guests are in the depths of Sheol.*

Dr. Andrew Bonar tells of how in the Highlands of Scotland, a sheep would often wander off into the rocks and get into places that they can't get out of.

The grass on these mountains is very sweet and the sheep like it, and they will jump down ten or twelve feet, and then they can't jump back again, and the shepherd hears them bleating in distress. They may be there for days, until they have eaten all the grass. The shepherd will wait until they are so faint they cannot stand, and then they will put a rope around him, and he will go over and pull that sheep up out of the jaws of death.

"Why don't they go down there when the sheep first gets there?" I asked.

"Ah!" He said, "they are so very foolish they would dash right over the cliff and be killed if they did!"

And that is the way with men; they won't go back to God till they have no friends and have lost everything. If you are a wanderer I tell you that the Good Shepherd will bring you back the moment you have given up trying to save yourself and are willing to let Him save you His own way.