

Restoration: Part 1

By Todd Bentley

Before we get started, let's quiet ourselves before the Lord, take a big deep breath, and then let all our hot air out slowly! Just begin to thank God now for His unending, immeasurable love for you and your loved ones.

GOD LOVES TO RESTORE

Next, I want to invite you to join with me so that we can nourish ourselves on the Word of God together, as we read a portion from the Apostle Paul's letter to the Ephesian church. Here we go.

"My response is to get down on my knees before the Father, this magnificent Father who parcels out all heaven and earth. I ask him to strengthen you by his Spirit—not a brute strength but a glorious inner strength— that Christ will live in you as you open the door and invite him in. And I ask him that with both feet planted firmly on love, you'll be able to take in with all Christians the extravagant dimensions of Christ's love. Reach out and experience the breadth! Test its length! Plumb the depths! Rise to the heights! Live full lives, full in the fullness of God. God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us. Glory to God in the church! Glory to God in the Messiah, in Jesus! Glory down all the generations! Glory through all millennia! Oh, yes!" (Eph. 3:14–21 – The Message Bible).

Oh yes! Oh, the love of God! The Lord is ultimately and intimately acquainted with you. He sees you and He wants you to "know that you know" that He has not abandoned or forsaken you (Heb. 13:5). He wants you to know that at all times, especially in the dark night of your soul, He is with you and He is the Great Restorer.

Listen to what God said through the prophet Joel: "So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten..." (Joel 2:25a). God loves to restore what has been devoured in our lives. That's His specialty.

Joel records God's message of hope—"Fear not, O land: be glad and rejoice, for the LORD has done marvelous things" (v. 21). God talks about the abundance— emphasizing the process of renewal and the release of the latter rain and the spring rain (v.23). There would be harvest and fruitfulness again (v. 22). The vats would overflow with new wine (v. 24). He says, "I am not just going to fill your vats again, your vats are going to overflow! Your barn walls are going to bust down!" That's what God does. Biblically, that's what restoration looks like.

GOD RESTORES BY INCREASE AND MULTIPLICATION

Restore in Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible is: #7999 Hebrew: shalam . . . make amends, (make an) end, finish, full, give again, make good, (re-) pay (again), (make) (to) (be at) peace . . . proper (ous), recompense, render, require, make restitution, restore, reward, surely.

I've come to realize that when God restores, He brings an increase! When God restores, He multiplies! There is something about the "restoring nature" of God. In the process of restoration God brings the object of restoration back in a better way than was its former state AND He increases it and multiplies it. He always likes to add more! Look at Job. When God restored Job, He gave unto Job—double (Job 42:10). That's just the nature of God.

In the Bible we see that if harm came to someone or something was stolen, that God would command that the return be greater than what was plundered or robbed. The odd time the return would "one for one," but almost every single time the return was ordered to be more than that—a double blessing, or four or five times greater (Ex. 22:1; 22:4; Lev. 6:5, 22:14). And it didn't stop at that point! There was a "seven fold" principle in connection with restoration (and vengeance) as well. Proverbs 6:31b says, "Yet when he (the thief) is found, he must restore sevenfold..."

Today, I believe that God ordains it like this in the spirit. When the thief steals he must give back sevenfold. When the devil comes to kill, steal and destroy, God has set forever in eternity that you must get back sevenfold. And God will restore you in a better way than you were at first and then He will increase and multiply what was stolen. That's our God because God is good. Listen. We need this revelation.

For instance, when God wants to restore your anointing, it honors Him that you make a declaration like this: "He wants to give me a double portion of anointing!" When God restores, you are going to have double joy, everlasting joy, a double portion! He is going to bless you with an increase and command the thief to give back sevenfold.

If your marriage needs to be restored then stir up your faith and ask "My God, please, I want You to restore my marriage and I want it to be better than it was in the first place. I want there to be double the intimacy." Get aggressive. Don't just settle for an "okay, restore my marriage" attitude. "Restore my marriage and give it to me double!" "Restore my finances and give it to me double!" "Restore my anointing and give it to me double!" We can ask God because of the nature of the restoration process of the Holy Ghost. He increases and He multiplies.

For instance, when God heals my body, when God restores my body, I'm not just going to be healthy, I am going to have divine health. And then I'm going to minister healing to the sick because I am getting a healing anointing in the process. That's restoration!

Listen to this. Anyone that gives up houses, lands, brothers, sisters, possessions in this life time for the sake of the gospel, God will restore back one hundredfold now! (Mark 10:29, 30). The Lord does abundantly above what you can ask. He does abundantly above what you can think (Eph. 3:20). We need to have a bigger vision! When we stand in faith and believe that God is hugely enthusiastic about wanting to bring restoration into our lives, we truly honor Him.

GOD'S PURPOSE IN RESTORATION

God wants you to know that He is extremely interested in accomplishing personal restoration in your life. His desire is that when you experience the blessing of personal restoration (and you will, so have faith), that yes, you will be blessed, but even more, that you will draw closer and closer into His heart. His biggest purpose for restoration is intimacy with you. Do you realize that without you, without your love and friendship, God is grieved? Think about that.

You know, restoration is something supernatural. After Jesus Christ died on the cross for you and me and we received Him as our Lord and Savior, He restored each one of us into personal relationship and fellowship with Him by taking our sins upon Himself and drawing us into His heart. It's like we are restored in such a way that the experience that Adam and Eve had with God when He walked with them in the cool of the garden is also our experience to enjoy. His presence and His glory were there in the garden. The secret place of His presence is the "garden." Such restoration redeems and it transcends time, space and eternity. And this blessing is available for us today. What an important revelation to have. Yet, the choice is ours.

Listen! We can actually choose to stand in faith believing that God wants to restore to us the same kind of special intimacy that He enjoyed with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. I don't believe that we have to wait for the day when we die and go to heaven to enjoy such fellowship with God because "the kingdom of heaven is within you" (Luke 17:21). From what I see in my Bible, heaven for me began the day that I received eternal life. That is heaven.

We are the bride of Christ whether we stand before God individually as His child, or collectively as the body of Christ. I want us to be an excited bride, anticipating and the union, the oneness and the intimacy that is reserved for us to take pleasure in, in Christ, with God. He desires to speak to us plainly as a friend speaks to a friend (Ex. 33:11; John 15:12–15). Oh! To desire the presence of God above all else, and in a much greater way than our common thinking dictates—this brings God such great delight!

Let's not let religiosity, man's tradition, or whatever denomination you were raised in, set limits for what you can or cannot receive from the hand of the Lord. There remains a rest in Him. Unbelief has kept us from walking in the full inheritance of everything that we can have in the spirit.

I want you to get hungry for God; be more focused on being hungry for the manifestation of the glory of God, union and intimacy. Look! God opened the garden again! He said to come boldly before the throne (Heb. 4:16). He ripped open the veil (Luke 23:45). We can enter "the most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus" (Heb. 10:19 NIV) "by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh ..." (v. 20).

GOD SAYS, "DON'T LOSE HOPE!"

Read about the Garden of Eden and say, "That's mine! There is nothing but me keeping me from that place! Because of the blood of the Lamb, I can enter." Adam and Eve lost access to the garden because of their sin (Gen. 3:22–24) but Jesus has set us free from the law of sin and death by His shed blood (Rom. 8:1, 2) and we aren't blocked from the place of intimacy with God in the garden anymore. Don't lose hope!

Listen. Today, God is going to restore hope to you. So why not prepare your heart right now for what God wants to do in your life. We've just barely begun this New Year, the year of restoration, new beginnings and intimacy with God.

So, just as I opened this teaching speaking about hope (from the Book of Joel), let's close it on the same note—HOPE. God is not going to disappoint you and He wants your heart to embrace hope once again—the restoration of hope. Let such knowledge become a healing balm to your heart while you reflect on Paul's encouraging message to the Romans.

"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us" (Rom. 5:1–5).

Next week we're going to discover what it takes to work with God, co-laboring with Him in our personal restoration process, and then how we can minister restoration to others whose lives have been robbed and plundered.

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CONTACT INFO

Fresh Fire USA
P.O. Box 820
Pineville, NC 28134

info@freshfireusa.com
803.802.0932