

“Restoration”
By Brother Kenneth Ray
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Defined: 1) Restoring or being restored. 2) Reinstatement in a former position. 3) Put or bring back into a former, normal, or unimpaired state or condition. Using car restoration as an example, there are three steps to restoring a car: 1) you choose to do the restoration, 2) you choose a car to restore, and 3) you do the physical work of restoring the car. Here are a few points regarding car restoration: 1) The car had no choice; some person imposed his/her will on the car. 2) The car did not express a desire to be restored; it didn't have a 'restore me' sign on it ('Wash me' maybe, but not 'restore me'). 3) Once restoration is completed, the car is put away to keep it out of the elements; otherwise, the elements will return the car to the state you found it in. 4) The best results come from the car being idle, to limit wear and tear.

Unlike the car example, though, people must have a will or desire to be restored. We can't impose our will on someone else to see them restored. It is not within our power to restore other people. You can share the Gospel with someone, but unless God has dealt with them, and melted their heart, they won't receive it.

Galatians 6:1 ...restore such an one...

1 Peter 2:9 ...called you out of darkness, into His marvelous light

It is (or was) Jesus who first pulls someone out of darkness, and only Jesus can do it again. God is the only One who can draw people to Him.

Luke 9:11 ...He received them, and spake unto them the Kingdom of God...

Yes, we shine our light; yes, we show forth good works. The Bible says that he who repents and gets baptized shall be saved, it doesn't say that he that is string-armed into it shall be saved, or he that is talked into it, or he that invited to church enough times... The physician's assistant is not the physician. So why does the Bible say to restore such a one?

Galatians 6:1 ...ye which are spiritual, restore such an one...

Matthew 13:10-11 ...it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven...

John 14:10 ...the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

God is a Spirit, and the spirit has to do the works. Unless God is working through you, nothing you do is going to count for anything. That's why it says, "Ye which are spiritual..." But notice also, it says, "...considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

2 Corinthians 5:19-20...we are ambassadors for Christ...

If you were an ambassador of the United States, to some foreign country, you would represent the US to that country. If you are an ambassador of Jesus Christ, then you represent Him to other people. It doesn't say that you should be trying to reconcile people to the church; you should be trying to reconcile people to God. If they don't have a personal relationship with God, then they won't be kept.

Acts 1:6 *"...Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"*

Jesus and the disciples had a different vision. It wasn't that their vision was bad, it was just different. They wanted to see things as they were, but Jesus had something different in mind, and He answered them by saying:

Acts 1:7 *"...It is not for you to know..."*

Acts 1:8 *"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you..."*

He wanted to use them to build the next great layer, not to go back to what Israel had before. You can't drive forward while constantly looking in your rear-view mirror (except for Ed Kretzer). Do you miss the "glory days?" there's nothing wrong with that, but growth will bring restoration. Sometimes we focus so much on seeing people restored that we stop the growth of God's moving that would see them restored. If the body of Christ continues to grow and do what it's called to do, then people will see that God is still at work, and that hope remains. Otherwise, they see nothing, and why should they come back to that?

Restoration is not growth. Giving back to God what was already God's is not the same as adding new names to the list. God wants to use us to build the next big chapter. We have had great moments; now let's have more of them.

If you have ought against your brother, then you need to reconcile with him. If you can't love everybody in the church, then why love anybody? Yes, I understand that you relate better to some people than to others, but you ought to be able to love everyone; if any one of your brothers or sisters calls you in the middle of the night because they need help with something, you should be ready to go.

Some people have developed the attitude that, "I'm going to do what seems right to me, because nobody is keeping tabs on me." You need to get out of the beauracracy of church, and develop a relationship with God. Your calling is not to be idle. The Bible says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God..." (Matthew 6:33). Ask God to restore His purpose to us; ask Him for understanding, and wisdom. Renew yourself daily; that's a full-time job.

Luke 22:33 *"...strengthen thy brethren..."*

That's not gender-specific; strengthen your brothers and sisters. We can't impose our will on someone else, but He didn't do all that work for nothing.