

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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RESTORE SUCH AN ONE

Those who have very little concern for the lost will not make much effort to restore them to the Lord. Those who love the lost and are concerned about their eternal destiny will work and pray for the salvation of their souls. The difference between these two groups is the difference between the spiritual mind and the carnal mind. This will depict the zealous and devout workers in the kingdom versus the indifferent bench warmer who finds fault and criticizes every effort on the part of the faithful.

Galatians 6:1 says: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

Restoring that one who has been overcome in a fault requires more than knocking at the door and scolding him for his sins. It involves more than sending a card, or making a phone call and talking with generalities. These things will help show the sinner that he has someone's attention, and that they are expressing some concern for him. Restoring the lost requires an attitude of love for the lost and a respect for the word of God that propels that person to seek opportunity to communicate with the one who has been overcome with sin and convince him to repent of his sins, confess his sins and pray to God for forgiveness.

There are so many hindrances to getting this work done. I suppose that is the reason we have so few who are willing and ready to attempt to restore the lost to the Lord. Often there is little interest in and desire for the salvation of the lost in the hearts of those who claim to restore the lost. These will talk about how others ought to be doing the work, but they will make no effort themselves. Some will boast of what they have done in this area, but they sometimes do more harm than good.

The Holy Spirit said the man to be "restored" is the one who has been "overtaken in a fault." The word used by the Holy Spirit for "overtaken" indicates one who has been caught in sin without premeditating the sin; his terrible trespass overcame him. His

"fault" was not simply a mistake in judgment or a weakness he may have. It was a serious sin which would cause him to be lost in eternity. It does not mean that the "spiritual" person caught him in the act of sinning and therefore has the responsibility of restoring him. But he does observe that the person has been overtaken in sin, and he responds by trying to "restore" that one.

"... ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Those who are "spiritual" refer to the previous chapter where the works of the flesh are in contrast to the fruit of the Spirit. Those who walk in the Spirit will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh (5:16). "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (5:25). There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:1).

The "spiritual" one is sometimes too harsh and cold in his attitude and judgment of the sins of others. I do not suggest that one should compromise with sin to any degree or in any matter. Sin is sin and it damns one in hell if he does not repent. Godliness and love for the truth do not permit any deficiency in dealing with sin. Love and kindness alone, without conviction and urging repentance, will not rescue from sin. If they could, no one would be lost because God has unlimited love and kindness toward mankind. God is no respecter of persons and we sin if we show respect to persons (Acts 10:34, 35; Romans 2:11; James 2:9). The restoration of anyone overtaken in sin is not a penalty, but an attempt to rescue him from the consequence of his sin. It is an act of love, not revenge.

The "spiritual" one is admonished to give heed to himself as he goes about the work of restoring the overtaken. He is to do it in the spirit of meekness. In the previous chapter the fruit of the Spirit includes love, gentleness and meekness (5:22, 23). Here the spirit of meekness must characterize the one who restores the offender. But he is also to consider himself lest he be tempted. Tempted to do what? Clearly it refers to the trespass into which the one to be restored fell. One could hardly help another out of a situation into which he himself has fallen, or is likely to fall. One who has a reputation for gossiping, tale-bearing and lying or adultery could hardly do much with one who was overtaken in a terrible sin which was destroying him. Could one cry out to another who is as weak in the same area of temptation? The deceitful and seductive nature of sin and the persistence and subtlety of Satan should put every Christian on 24 hours a day watch lest he be overtaken in a trespass. It is even more important that one watch himself and pray when he is trying to recover another from sin.

The "spiritual" person who attempts to restore the person overtaken in a trespass must remember where the power is that recovers the lost — the gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16). Opinions, personal evaluations of behavior, psychological analysis and

conformity to denominational doctrines will not restore anyone. We must teach the truth and encourage those who are in sin to repent and turn to the Lord for the forgiveness of their sins. Every Christian who loves the lost, especially those who have fallen away, will put forth every effort to "restore such an one" to the Lord.

- H.E. Phillips, via Searching The Scriptures, January, 1989

Discernment

"And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment," (Philippians 1:9)

Barclay writes concerning "discernment,": "aisthesis is 'sensitive perception'. It is the quality of heart and mind which is sensitive to that which is wrong. It is the experience of life that the first time a man commits a wrong action he does so with a kind of shuddering reluctance; if he does it twice he does it more easily; if he goes on doing it he will end by doing it without thinking at all. His sensitiveness to sin is gone; his heart is hardened. It is indeed true that the most awful thing about sin is exactly its power to beget sin."

- (Barclay, William: The Daily Study Bible)

TAKE IT TO YOUR HEART: THERE IS NO OTHER!

Jehovah is presented to us in the Scriptures as "a jealous God" who detests any service, affection, or homage given to the idolatrous gods of man's imagination. "--for you shall not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God--" (Exodus 34:14; cf. Exodus 20:5). Notice: "Then Joshua said to the people, "You will not be able to serve the LORD, for He is a holy God. He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgression or your sins. If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you after He has done good to you." (Joshua 24:19-20).

The heathen influencers of God's people had made them establish a home in their hearts for idols. The Lord called their abominations with idols "adultery" (Ezekiel 23:37). Many attempted to divide their affections between Jehovah God and an idol. But the Lord God of heaven will share affections with no other. It is not acceptable to worship other gods just so long as we worship Jehovah first, or give Him more of our time or

more of our service than the idols. Just as no self-respecting husband would allow his wife to love another man, God will never allow His people to love and worship other gods. Spiritual fellowship and communion must be reserved only for Him. No other gods must EVER find a place in our hearts!

The Lord Jesus provided an applicable principle: "He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters." (Matthew 12:30). The illustration is taken from man's practice during harvest. Contextually, the point of this statement is proving that Jesus was not in league with Satan; He opposed Satan at every turn. However, the general principle holds true. One cannot serve Jehovah God and at the same time serve ANY gods who are in opposition to Him. With Jehovah God, there is only one to whom service may rightly be rendered: "Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that the LORD, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other." (Deuteronomy 4:39; cf. 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; 1 Kings 8:60-61). One must wholly and completely surrender his will and allegiance to God, belonging exclusively to Him, or, either by choice or default, he belongs to God's enemy, Satan, and works for the overthrow of God and His righteousness.

The principle is also seen by what man chooses to serve. Jesus declared, "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth." (Matthew 6:24). Attempting to serve two masters at the same time would in effect divide the affections and service. One must dutifully adhere to one or the other. Dual acceptable service is impossible. Man cannot love good and evil at the same time, just as man cannot walk in two directions at once.

Since one's affections, service and allegiance cannot be supremely given to two at once, a choice must be made. Every man faces and makes this choice. What have you chosen for yourself?

- Gary Smalley

* "The only difference between a grave and a rut is the dimensions!"

* "Blessed is the man who refrains from speaking until he knows what he is talking about!"

* "If a man's conscience is as comfortable as his mattress, he should have no trouble getting a good night's sleep!"

* "A weak mind is like a microscope which magnifies trifling things, but cannot receive great things!"

* "Are the rules you live by commands of God or commands of man?"

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

HEAR THE GOSPEL

(Romans 10:14-17; John 20:30-31; Romans 1:15-17)

BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

(Acts 8:37; John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6)

REPENT OF PAST SINS

(Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30)

CONFESS CHRIST

(Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37)

BE BAPTIZED

(Romans 6:3-4; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-39; 1 Peter 3:21)

LIVE A FAITHFUL LIFE

(Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:5-11; John 15:1-8; Hebrews 10:23-25)