

# The Restoration Movement Isn't Over

**Introduction.** The famed men of history like John Wycliffe, Martin Luther, and Ulrich Zwingli laid the groundwork for religious dissent against the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Later in history, the pioneers of the Restoration Movement were seeking to reform the church from within and sought “the unification of all Christians in a single body patterned after the church of the New Testament.” Two groups, which independently developed similar approaches, were particularly important. The first, led by Barton W. Stone, began at Cane Ridge, Kentucky in 1801. The second began in western Pennsylvania and West Virginia in 1809 and was led by Thomas Campbell and his son, Alexander Campbell.

These men’s collective works might well be summed up in Bernard Rothmann’s affirmation in 1533, “It is essential that everything required or desired by men should be done in the name and at the command of God through the positive word of God as Peter affirms (1 Peter 4:11) and certainly we should discontinue everything else that God has not expressly commanded.” They bravely set out to faithfully serve God regardless of the personal consequences.

In a real sense, we are all restorers who are dedicated to seeking the illusive, pristine image of the gospel as it came from the mind of God. And we sorely need to restore, if they have fallen, the following practical items in our walk with God.

## ***I. The Spirit Of Christ***

- A. The spirit of Christ included a spirit of obedience (John 8:29), humility (2 Corinthians 8:9), and sacrifice (Philippians 2:5-8).
- B. So this same spirit needs to be restored in me (Romans 8:9). I have to be obedient (Matthew 7:21), humble (James 4:6), and willing to sacrifice myself for others (Matthew 10:37-42).

## ***II. Interest In The Scriptures***

- A. If people will not speak according to the word, there is no light in them (Isaiah 8:20). Having light in you is equal to having Jesus in you (John 1:4).
- B. We are to take heed to the doctrine of Christ and continue in it (1 Timothy 4:16). This is the way we save ourselves and those who hear us.
- C. In developing the proper virtues of a godly person, one of them is knowledge (2 Peter 1:5-6; cp. Isaiah 34:16). That means I am going to read (1 Timothy 4:13), and develop the skill of mediating on the scripture (Psalm 1:1-2; 1 Timothy 4:15).
  1. Reading is a simple process that we all can do, but meditation goes much deeper. It is taking the text and really processing it in your mind and heart.
  2. For example, I can read David’s comments in Psalm 51:1-4 quickly and easily, but I then need to ask, “Would I react the same way to sin?”, “Is my heart soft enough to feel the keen hurt of disobeying God?”, and, “Will I stand against temptation knowing how deeply it would hurt me?”

### **III. Dedication And Zeal To The Lord**

- A. Thematically, dedication and zeal are expressed by Joshua 24:15. This manifests itself in several ways:
  1. A giving of oneself to the Lord (2 Corinthians 8:5).
  2. A dedication to all good works (Titus 2:14).
  3. A desire to assemble with brethren (Hebrews 10:25).
  4. A yearning to tell the gospel to others (Acts 8:1-4).
- B. The people who are successful and grow into a deeper relationship with God are those who don't let their love grow cold (Hosea 10:12; Matthew 24:12).

### **IV. Brotherly Love**

- A. Brotherly love demonstrates itself in charitable deeds (1 John 3:16-18). It is to "continue," which is an imperative word indicating an active, abiding state (Hebrews 13:1). It isn't "on and off" based on the feeling of the moment.
- B. Brotherly love is used to provoke or motivate each other to love and good works (Hebrews 10:24). If you want to "stir up" something, this would be it!
- C. Brotherly love has to be sincere and from a pure heart; it is a fervent, genuine love (1 Peter 1:22). It isn't "put on" with hugs and smiles at the church building and then displayed with biting criticism and gossip when you go home.

### **V. Prayer**

- A. Prayer is an integral part of our relationship with God (Psalm 116:1-8).
- B. In times of distress, the church made petitions to God (Acts 12:5), and so can the individual (James 5:16):
  1. When you are sick — Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:1-3).
  2. When you are worried — Daniel (Daniel 2:17-18).
  3. When you are penitent — Ezra (Ezra 9:6-15).
  4. When you are thankful — Solomon (1 Kings 8:22-53).
  5. When you are tempted — Jesus (Matthew 26:39, 42).
- C. In short, we can restore the desire to pray all of the time, and then get to the business of doing it and growing closer to God (Colossians 4:2).

### **VI. Erring Christians**

- A. Christians who are in sin need correcting (Galatians 6:1). People who are "spiritual," or filled with and governed by the Spirit of God, are the ones to do the restoring.
- B. Jesus put the reconciliation of two people against each other above even the duty to worship (Matthew 5:23-24). That should demonstrate just how important it is. Converting a sinner will save a soul from death (James 5:19-20).
- C. God's work of restoration was accomplished through Jesus. God would destroy the impenitent (Ezekiel 34:16). Likewise, we try to restore, but we feed them with judgment if they do not repent (1 Corinthians 5:3-5; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15).

**Conclusion.** The work of restoring is every Christian's work. We are called to walk in perfect unity in our commitment to speak as the oracles of God. When we do, we join an army of those whose stories, truly told, let us know that we are not alone.