

Restoring Steps

Restoration Studies

The restoration studies are designed for a former member of our church who wants to be restored to God and to the fellowship. Contrary to popular teaching in many groups, the Bible clearly teaches that it is possible to leave God and step outside of his grace (**Hebrews 10:26-31**). Coming back to God requires humility and courage because Satan (“The Accuser”) tells people they can never return. Our task in helping those who have left the Lord come back to him is a very important mission!

My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

James 5:19-20

We need to encourage friends and family who wish to return with the heart of God for the prodigal who comes back:

“...We had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.”

Luke 15:32

Remain in Me

Understanding the value and necessity of staying connected with Jesus

Remember Your First Love

Remembering the love you had for God at first and the actions you did out of faith

Repentance

Understanding the value and necessity of true repentance

Relationships

Understanding the power and priority of Christian relationships

Remain in Me

Study Objective

Understanding the value and necessity of staying connected with Jesus

Background

Express your appreciation for their efforts in coming back to church. Remember that it takes courage for them. Encourage them to be open about their life.

What led to you leaving?

To understand them better, draw them out by asking questions such as:

- Who were you closest to before you left?
- What were your quiet times like?
- Is there anyone that you are unresolved with?
- When did you first start thinking about leaving?
- Did you discuss this with anyone? Were you open?

Remain in Christ

John 15:1-17

- vs. 4 - What did Jesus mean when he said “remain in me”?
- To be faithful disciples, we must remain in Christ. Discuss the importance of Bible study, prayer, avoidance of sin, sharing the gospel with others.
- vs. 2 - “He prunes so that it will be even more fruitful” - How do you see God pruning you? Why does God prune you? How do you respond to God’s pruning?
- vs. 9 - “Remain in my love” - To overcome sin and stay grateful, we must go back to the cross often and grow in our understanding of grace.
- vs. 17 - “Love each other” - To remain in the vine, we must be united with our brothers and sisters. Critical thoughts and attitudes can build walls between us and other disciples and destroy unity.

God Still Wants You to Be Saved!

2 Peter 3:9

- What does this verse say God’s will is?
- How does that apply to you? God is reaching out to you once again. He has not given up on you! He still has a plan for your life!

Remember Your First Love

Study Objective

Remembering the love you had for God at first and the actions you did out of faith

Revelation 2:1-5

- What did the Ephesian disciples do well?
- What did they lack? Heart motivation - they stopped loving God with their whole heart.
- How did you feel when you were a young Christian?

Hebrews 2:1

- For you, what does it mean to drift away from God? What caused you to drift away from God?
- How can you “pay more attention”, as this verse says?

Revelation 2:5

- How do we get back our first love?
- “Remember”- Go back to the Bible as the standard for your life.
- “Repent” - What sins crept into your life that led to your leaving? What sins were committed while you were gone? (Ephesians 4:20-5:5, Galatians 5:19-21, James 4:17)
- “Do the things you did at first”
 - Read the Bible daily. Pray daily.
 - Attend all the services.
 - Start rebuilding relationships and making new ones in the church.

Repentance

Study Objective

Understanding the value and necessity of true repentance

Who Needs Repentance?

Luke 13:1-5

- Everyone must repent
- The alternative to repentance is perishing

Acts 26:20-21

- Repentance = change of heart/ mind. It is a decision.(Greek = metaneo, from meta, “after” and noia “world-view”) - whole different world view, completely different direction for your life.
- Repentance is followed by deeds – your life reflects the change.
- Can be done in an instant, but the effects last a lifetime.
- vs. 21 - Preaching the biblical message of repentance creates a backlash. (Some do not want to change and do not appreciate being confronted!)

Personal Sharing

2 Peter 2:20-22, Colossians 3:1-5

- Sin has the ability to entangle and overcome us.
- These are strong words that we must accept!

As in the Light and Darkness study, the leader should begin by opening up his life, sharing his main temptations and sins (as a disciple). Then the other person can share. Get Specific.

Mark 7:20-21

- Discuss the sins of the heart, such as bitterness, resentment, and lack of forgiveness.

Worldly Sorrow / Godly Sorrow

2 Corinthians 7:8-11

- Worldly Sorrow – We’re sorry we got caught, or that we have suffered. We are emotional, not because of what we did to Jesus, but because of the consequences.

- Godly Sorrow – Look at what it produces:
 - Earnestness – sincerity and seriousness – “I will change.”
 - Eagerness – characterized by a desire to get together, study, etc.
 - Indignation – anger toward Satan, personal weakness, etc.
 - Alarm – we cannot be nonchalant about our sin
 - Longing (affection) – characterized by an appreciation of the people that brought conviction into our lives
 - Readiness to see justice done – a willingness to face the consequences of our sin.
- Are you prepared to repent (of the specific sins confessed earlier)?

Results of Repentance

Acts 3:19-20

- Reconciliation with God
- Refreshing from God
- Restoration of Christian Relationships

Relationships

Study Objective

Understanding the power and priority of Christian relationships

The Standard for Christian Relationships

John 13:34-35

- What is the standard that Jesus sets for our relationships?
- What is the result of these kind of relationships?

I Thessalonians 2:17-19

- Describe Paul's relationships.
- When you were previously in the church, in what ways were your relationships either like his or unlike his? Why?
- Discuss prior relationship problems. Is there anyone in the church that you are not resolved with?
- To what degree were the following sins involved in past relationship problems?
 - Pride - **Proverbs 13:10**
 - Bitterness - **Hebrews 12:15**

Resolving Conflicts

Ephesians 4:2 - Humility

Colossians 3:13 - Forgiveness

Elements in Great Relationships

Hebrews 3:12-14 - Daily contact. Discuss how to make that happen.

James 5:16 - Openness and confession

Ephesians 6:18 - Praying for one another daily

Colossians 1:28-29 - The goal of presenting one another perfect in Christ

Ephesians 4:3 - Making every effort to be unified

Are you willing to strive to do these things in your relationships with other Christians?

Sharing Your Faith

Philemon 1:6

- God has a purpose for your relationships outside the church.
- Are you starting to share with your friends again?

Sound Doctrine

Study Objective

Review and discuss the conversions accounts in Acts and the different false teachings prevalent today

Begin the session with a summary of the New Testament teaching on conversion:

- Hear the message - **Romans 10:17, Acts 11:14**
- Believe (trust) - **John 3:16, Acts 16:31**
- Repent - **Luke 13:3, Acts 3:19**
- Confess Jesus as Lord - **Romans 10:9, 1 Timothy 6:12**
- Be baptized - **Acts 2:38, 1 Peter 3:21**

The Major Conversions in Acts

Acts 2:36-47	First Christians in Jerusalem
Acts 8:26-39	Ethiopian Eunuch
Acts 16:22-34	Philippian jailer and his family
Acts 18:24-26	Apollos
Acts 19:1-5	Ephesians
Acts 9:1-22	Paul
Acts 22:3-16	Paul

Questions concerning conversions

- What was preached?
- What was the person's (people's) response to the message?
- How long did the person (people) take to make the decision?
- What was their response after baptism?

False Teachings

2 Timothy 4:1-5.

- Why are there so many denominations today?

Galatians 1:6-10

- We must take a stand and not be “people-pleasers” (v10).
- No one—religious leader, angel, apostle—has the right to “update” the gospel!

Infant Baptism (“Original Sin”)

Ezekiel 18:20

- Clearly, this Scripture shows that guilt is nontransferable.

- Infant baptism is refuted by **Colossians 2:12** and **Galatians 3:26-27** because personal, not proxy faith is key in baptism.
- Can babies have faith? No. Neither do babies have the ability to repent.

“Baptism is Not Necessary for Salvation”

I Peter 3:21

- Some say “Baptism does not save you”, yet this passage says that baptism does save you through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- **Acts 2:38** teaches that sin is forgiven at baptism - one is saved at the point that sin is forgiven.

“Baptism is an outward sign of an inward grace”

Romans 6:1-4

- This passage states that baptism is an actual participation in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. It is not merely a sign, seal or symbol.

“Once saved, always saved”

Hebrews 10:26-31

- This passage clearly teaches that someone can lose their salvation by rejecting God.

Salvation by “Faith Alone”

James 2:14-26

- This passage clearly shows that “faith alone” is not sufficient for salvation.

John 3:16

- Faith/belief is the basis of our entire response to the gospel. But this must not be taken out of context.
- Consider all relevant passages (**John 8:30-32, Hebrews 5:9, Romans 1:5, Romans 16:26**)

The “Sinner’s Prayer”

Revelation 3:20

- The false doctrine of **“praying Jesus into your heart,” “accepting Christ”** or **“receiving Christ”** was invented on the American frontier in the early nineteenth century from this verse. For more info refer to article written by Steve Staten (made available through our website studies section, www.coastallachurch.com)

- Must examine this passage carefully, and its context! Not instructing us to be born again.
- It was written to Christians, who had *already* saved (**Revelation 3:14, 22**).
- The passage mentions nothing about faith, confession or baptism, as the readers were already converted.

The “Thief on the Cross”

Luke 23:39-43

- The false doctrine of the thief on the cross says, “The thief was not baptized, but Jesus said he would see him in heaven. What do you say about that?”

Mark 2:10

- Jesus had authority during his earthly ministry to forgive sins. If he told anyone their sins were forgiven, they were!

Romans 6:3-4

- Baptism is a participation in Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection.
- The penitent thief could not have been baptized, as Jesus had not yet died, been buried or resurrected.

Hebrews 9:17

- The new covenant (New Testament) was not yet in effect, as Jesus had not yet died under the old covenant.

Practical Application and Challenges

- Which false doctrine have you personally run into the most? Which scriptures would you use to refute it?
- What portion of this study challenges you most to accept?
- Are you willing and ready to accept the teachings of the Bible? People must have a deep conviction of the Biblical doctrine of conversion.

Counting the Cost

Study Objective

This study should be done before a person gets baptized to ensure that they have counted the cost and are ready to make Jesus Lord of their life

Before someone gets baptized it is your responsibility to make sure, to the best of your abilities, that the individual has “counted the cost” in following Jesus (**Luke 14:25-33**). This is the most important decision a person will make in his or her life.

Principles in conducting a cost counting session:

Seek Help. When a person gets to this point, in general, it would be good to include a ministry leader. The more disciples who can help, the better.

Be Thorough. If previous studies have been done well, then the cost counting session should not take very long. Do not necessarily turn to all the scriptures unless you encounter a barrier.

Don’t Be Surprised If There Are Barriers. It’s common to get to this point and find barriers why they aren’t a Christian yet. Don’t be surprised. Patiently work through any questions or concerns they have.

Look Not Just For Answers, But For Attitudes. Do you sense and see this person’s life really changing? Are they joyful entering the kingdom or is it a burden?

Have Their Future Discipling Partner(s) Present. We believe it’s important that every young Christian have a specific discipling partner to train and teach them. It’s best to have a Christian from the very start of the studies be the one to disciple this young Christian.

Things To Be Aware Of:

- When people say, “I’ll try,” or “probably.”
- You need to play your hunches.
- Do you think they could fall away?
- Are they the kind of person who tries things and then quits?

Three Areas That Typically Need Special Attention.

- Who’s lost and who’s saved?
- How are relationship with the church?
- Is the person open to discipling?

Count the Cost

The Christian life is a marathon not a sprint. It's the most fulfilling life we can live, but it can also be the hardest life we live. That's why Jesus wants to make sure people know what it costs them. There shouldn't be any surprises after you become a Christian. God wants you to finish what you start.

Luke 14:25-33

- Why do you think Jesus asked them such probing questions?
- Why do you think it is important to count the cost and consider the alternatives of surrendering to the Lordship of Jesus or not?
- Are you ready to surrender your life to the Lordship of Jesus and get baptized?
- If someone were to ask you how to become a Christian, what would you tell them? (listen for Believe, Repent, Confess Jesus as Lord, and Be Baptized)

Believe (Hebrews 11:1-2, 6)

- Do you believe in God? His promises? Are you ready to put your trust in Him?
- Do you believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God? All of it? How are you doing in your Bible reading? Daily time with God. Time and place each day. Don't give God your leftover energy.
- Do you believe that the Bible must be your standard above feelings, traditions, opinions? Why? Are you completely convinced? Are you ready to obey it regardless of how hard it may seem?
- Do you believe that Jesus was the Son of God, died on the cross, and was raised from the dead?

Repent (Acts 2:38, Luke 13:3, 5)

What is it?

- Not just feeling sorry, but changing completely.
- Literally to turn away from sin and replace it with righteous acts.
- Never wanting to do it again.

Attitude toward sin

- How do you feel like you've changed? What have you already repented of?
- What will be the hardest sin(s) for you to repent of or change?

Confess Jesus as Lord (Romans 10:9-10)

What does that mean for Jesus to be your Lord?

- He controls everything. Time. Money. Life. Jesus owns it all.
- Are you ready for Him to own you? What does that mean?

Purpose and Mission

- Make sure the person knows that his purpose is to have a relationship with God.

- His mission is to seek and save the lost.

Commitment to Church

- Are you ready to commit to all the meetings of the body? Ready to prioritize church in your life?
- Explain how we must attend only a church which follows the Bible.

Being Discipled

- Explain that there are still follow up studies you want them to do over the next several months.
- Stress the need for openness and advice seeking. Ask how they feel about being trained by someone older in the faith.

Taking a Stand with Family and Friends

- Does he/she understand whether his/her family have done what they need to do in order to become Christians? Ask how he would react if persecuted by family members.
- For younger people, make sure they've communicated to family members their appreciation for what they done for them in building their love for God and about their decision to follow Him.

Dating and Marriage

- How do you feel about keeping yourself pure in your relationships?
- How do you feel about dating and/or marrying only disciples?
- God must be the center of our dating relationships, marriages and parenting.

Finances

- Are you ready to do your part in financially contributing to the work of the church?
- Explain weekly contribution and missions. **Proverbs 3:9** says that we are to honor God with our money.

Baptized (Acts 2:36-38, Acts 16:22-34)

- Ask the person to explain how one becomes a Christian. Review any false doctrines.
- Why do you want to be baptized? What is the purpose of baptism?
- Can I be saved before I'm baptized? Why or why not?
- Why do you think the Jailor and family got baptized in the middle of the night?

Practical Application

- Set a time to be baptized
- Get as many of the important people there for the baptism as possible; the Family Group, family members and close friends, etc.