

BIBLE STUDY

# *Restoration*

Bringing Us Back to God's  
Original Plan

'For the Lord will restore the excellence of Jacob Like the excellence of Israel, for the emptiers have emptied them out and ruined their vine branches.' Nahum 2:2

The year 2020 has been quite peculiar for a lot of us. For some our faith has been stretched to almost breaking point as we have faced challenges in different areas – health, career, finances, family and so on. For some we have given up on hope because there doesn't appear to be a way out of our current situation. For others we may feel paralysed and unable to take any steps due to fear of failure.

The Bible lets us know that in this life believers will face many troubles, but we have the assurance that the Lord will deliver us from them all as He sees fit. We also have the assurance that God has the ability to restore whatever we may have lost.

In this study we will explore God's plan for restoration in many areas of our lives. We pray that this series will inspire us to keep holding on to God and His word as we are re-assured that He is very interested in every detail of our lives.

Stay Connected.



## Day 1

### What is Restoration

'For the Lord will restore the excellence of Jacob like the excellence of Israel, for the emptiers have emptied them out and ruined their vine branches.' Nahum 2:2

According to the dictionary, to restore means to return (**something**) to an earlier or original condition. When we think of restoration, we may think of returning something to its previous state, the way it was before something happened to it. However, when God talks about restoration, His intention is to bring that person or situation back to His original plan for it.

What is the difference? As an illustration: Perhaps you feel you have lost time in a particular area and are asking the Lord for restoration of lost time. From God's perspective, where you are coming from may not be where God intended you to be. So when God restores you, He won't take you back to the less than ideal state you were before. Rather He will begin the process to return you to where He originally intended for you to be at that point.

Why is this important? As we pray and seek God to bring restoration in certain aspects of our lives, we must understand that He may not necessarily follow our own agenda. In fact, our first prayer point should be for the Lord to show us what His original intention is for that area we're seeking restoration for. That way we will align with Him when the process begins.

**Anchor Scripture for Prayer:** 'For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding' Colossians 1:9

## Day 2

### The Original Plan

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. Genesis 3:8

The Lord created us for fellowship with Him. Before the fall of man, when sin separated us from God, it was not unusual for Adam and Eve to have a personal relationship with God. So when the Lord was walking in the garden in the scripture above, it's very likely something He did quite often. But sin brought a separation between us and Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden of Eden.

'For I was born a sinner— yes, from the moment my mother conceived me.' Psalms 51:5

This separation meant that sin became our default nature and we became focused on ourselves, rather than on God and His will. But God had a plan to restore man to Himself through the sacrifice of Jesus who paid for our sins in full.

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you. Psalm 89:14

'For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.' John 3:16

Our God is a just God, and because of His impartial justice sin must be punished. But out of His love for us, He devised a plan to save us from the kingdom of darkness and restore us to Him by Jesus paying for all our sins – a wonderful gift we have access to once we accept Jesus as our Lord and saviour. That's what opens the door for us to have a relationship with Him and restore us back to our state of intimacy and fellowship. It's in the place of fellowship that the Lord not only reveals His heart to us, but also transforms us to become more like Him in our character until we grow into the fullness of the stature of Christ. Let's pray that our hearts will be softened toward Jesus and we will open the door of our hearts to Him.

**Anchor Scripture for Prayer:** 'Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends.' Revelation 3:20



## Day 3

### Health

'Then He said to her, "Daughter, your faith [your personal trust and confidence in Me] has restored you to health; go in peace and be [permanently] healed from your suffering." ' Mark 5:34

In the scripture above a woman with a longstanding health issue had approached Jesus by faith, trusting that once she touched Him she would be healed. When Jesus spoke to the woman, He showed us His mind for us with respect to our health: that we should be in a permanent state of not just good health, but wholeness. This tells us two key things.

He answered, "Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant will be torn up by the roots." Matthew 15:13

First is that when Jesus gets involved, He doesn't do temporary fixes, He intends for whatever He is doing or has done to be permanent in our lives. Second is that when He heals, He doesn't just take care of the visible issue, but even things we may not even know exist. He goes right to the root of the issue and takes out everything that isn't part of His plan for your life.

"...Go in peace and be [permanently] healed from your suffering." ' Mark 5:34b

With all the issues the woman had been going through for so long, she had lost her peace and may have suffered emotionally from the trauma of having a longstanding issue with no clear way out, financially with all the medical bills and possibly socially from being stigmatized because of her issues. When Jesus restored her health, He also restored her peace and healed her internally, not from the physical ailment, but all the underlying suffering she was facing as a result.

As we pray for restoration of our health (mental, emotional, physical) ask the Lord to go to the root of every ailment, seen or unseen so not only will you be healed physically, but you will also be made whole.

**Anchor Scripture for Prayer:** And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees. Matthew 3:10a



## Day 4

### Soundness of Mind

'For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.' II Timothy 1:7

God didn't create us to walk in fear, but in power (fueled by faith in His word and revelation of His character), love (fueled by intimacy with Him) and soundness of mind which is the consequence of the first two. Picture these as a 3-layer cake with power and love being layers one and two and sound mind being on top. All three layers go hand in hand.

The greatest threat to a person's soundness of mind is fear. It could be fear of loss of life or other material things, rejection, lack, inability to control things around you or around others and so much more. The Bible tells us clearly that fear is a spirit and once you open the door to it, it takes away your faith and your peace. Once your faith is gone, you've lost power. This typically doesn't happen all at once, but once fear enters it gradually robs you of a sound mind and you may begin to make irrational decisions as a result.

"Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God" 1 John 4:1

'Finally, believers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable and worthy of respect, whatever is right and confirmed by God's word, whatever is pure and wholesome, whatever is lovely and brings peace, whatever is admirable and of good repute; if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think continually on these things [center your mind on them, and implant them in your heart].' Philippians 4:8

We need to be diligent gatekeepers of what we allow into our space, particularly in these times so we do not create an environment for fear to come in and get a foothold. Question everything you see and hear using the litmus test that Philippians 4:8 gives us. If it doesn't pass the test, shut it down and consciously replace it with what does.

**Action Step:** Consciously audit what you look at and listen to and ask yourself – is this opening the door to fear or faith?



## Day 5

### Finances (1)

“No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”  
Matthew 6:24

God is very interested in every aspect of our lives and our finances are no exception. In God’s original plan, man was designed to be a steward and manager of all the earth’s resources which God owns as creator of all things. One of the tools that man is to use to manage these resources is finances.

‘Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others.’ 1 Timothy 6:17-18

“And you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.”  
Deuteronomy 8:18

There is nothing wrong with money, it can be a very useful resource in expanding the frontiers of the kingdom of God on earth and making life easier for a lot of people. In fact the Lord desires that we prosper in every way, but not at the expense of our walk with Him. The issue is when we begin to trust in money more than we trust in God, forgetting that He is the one that made it possible to get whatever we have in the first place. It’s also an issue when we begin to knowingly compromise on God’s standards in order to acquire more money.

‘For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.’ 1 Timothy 6:10

Money is a servant, it goes wherever we send it. – good or bad. Unfortunately we may be serving what was designed to serve us. When we do this, the message we’re sending to God is that we trust our finances more than we trust Him and we open ourselves up to many sorrows.

How do we serve money? We will look at this in more detail tomorrow.



## Day 6

### Finances (2)

'The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to him.'  
Psalms 24:1

Yesterday we started looking at how we may be serving money rather than God. Recall we said that there's nothing wrong with money and the Lord delights in blessing us. However, we err when we place the pursuit of money over the things of God. For us to have clarity on this, let's look at what Jesus said.

'For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.' Matthew 6:32b-33

What are "all these things"? They are essentially the legitimate daily pursuits of life which includes earning a living. Jesus tells us that our Father in heaven recognizes that we need these things, so He doesn't deny that at all. What Jesus is saying though is that we should not place the pursuit of "all these things" above the kingdom of God and His righteousness. He assures us that when we get our priorities right, "all these things" will be added to us.

Does this mean we shouldn't work, invest or make purchases and only stay in our prayer closet 24/7? Not at all. The Lord expects us to be good managers on the resources He gives us – this includes our intellect, time, talent and finances. The key is for us to understand that whatever money comes to us is given to us by God – which means He owns it, we just manage it on His behalf. If we have that mindset then we will be more conscious of the choices we make regarding not just of how we earn an income, but also what we deploy the finances in our care to.

**Reflect:** Are you chasing what should be added to you? Are you trusting in your bank balance more than God? Be honest with yourself and the Lord and ask Him to help you where you may have gotten it wrong.



## Day 7

### Work

'The Lord God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it.' Genesis 2:15

"Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life."  
Genesis 3:17b

God designed work and one of the first things He did with Adam was to assign the task of tending and watching over the Garden of Eden. However, when man sinned, the dynamics changed. The ground didn't immediately yield to Adam anymore and it now took toil to get food. The major difference between working hard and toiling is that toil requires an inordinate amount of effort that does not yield commensurate results. In popular parlance, it can be described as working like an elephant but eating like an ant.

And let the [gracious] favor of the Lord our God be on us; Confirm for us the work of our hands— Yes, confirm the work of our hands. Psalms 90:17 AMP

'For you shall eat the fruit of [the labor of] your hands, you will be happy and blessed and it will be well with you.' Psalms 128:2

'Simon replied, "Master, we worked hard all night [to the point of exhaustion] and caught nothing [in our nets], but at Your word I will [do as you say and] lower the nets [again]."' ' Luke 5:5

'Seek His will in all you do, and He will show you which path to take.' Proverbs 3:6

Because God designed work, He knows what it takes for you to get results and in His mercy, the Lord has made provision for us to be free from toiling so that we will be able to enjoy the fruits of our hard work. The key requirement is that we yield to Him, acknowledging that He is the source of all fruitfulness and obey whatever it is He has asked us to do. He knows better than we do the path for success and how to maximise the result of our hard work.

**Reflect:** Have you actively sought the Lord's direction and instruction for your work or are you going it alone?

## Day 8

### Rest

'It's useless to rise early and go to bed late, and work your worried fingers to the bone. Don't you know he enjoys giving rest to those he loves?' Psalm 127:2

As important as work is, rest is also just as important. In the times we live in it's common to hear people talk about the 'rat race' which evokes a picture of constant frantic activity with very little rest. In fact there are some who take pride in just how little rest they get. Technology has also made it possible for us to be 'on' 24/7 for 365 days. But what does God say about rest?

'On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from all his work of creation.' Genesis 2:2-3

Not only did God rest when He finished the work of creation, He also blessed the day and declared it holy – so clearly rest is important to God. Yet it's one of the things we routinely rob ourselves of. What does rest do for us?

'He lets me rest in green meadows; he leads me beside peaceful streams. He renews my strength. He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to his name.' Psalms 23:2-3

It can be difficult hearing God in a busy, activity filled day. When we intentionally take time to rest, we give the Lord the opportunity to renew our strength and receive His guidance. How would your life be if you intentionally took a day out to really rest, not just from the busyness of work but also the noisiness of life – no mobile phone, TV or other gadgets but a time spent consciously reconnecting with God, family and focus? Recall the Bible tells us that it's God who makes our way successful and guides us along the best pathway for our lives (Psalm 32:8).

Rest in this context does not necessarily mean sleep but spending time to reflect on God's word and fellowship with Him to make sure we haven't strayed off His path for our lives. Rest is an entire study on its own, but for today the goal is to bring to our consciousness that rest is part of God's original plan for us and He designated one day in the week for it. Are we following His template?

**Action Step:** Try and put this into practice this week, select a day to disconnect from the 'noise' and allow the Lord to refresh and re-center you.



## Day 9

### Bible Study

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. Psalms 119:105

There's a difference between Bible reading and Bible study. Bible reading is going through a series of Bible verses, maybe selecting a chapter a day for example. Bible study is going in-depth to bring out what the Bible says about a certain area, topic, personality, etc.

While it's wonderful to go through several chapters a day, it can also be easy to get overwhelmed if you try to do too much and you run the risk of being inconsistent and forgetting what you read. It's possible to take a verse in the Bible and do a deep dive on that verse to bring out many learnings. Let's take our anchor scripture above as an illustration.

One of the things that can be brought out is that the word of the Lord brings illumination and guidance to the steps we take. Without illumination we would stumble in the dark, potentially harming ourselves. This means God's word helps us stay on track, shows us the way to go and also keeps us from harm.

It also speaks of walking in faith as a lamp on a person's feet will provide illumination for just a few steps ahead. So you will constantly have to keep going back to the word of God for light for the next step. Jesus shared this principle when teaching His disciples to pray: Give us today our daily bread (Matthew 6:11). This means we're to go to God's word daily for sustenance (direction, guidance) for the day.

Interestingly God's word not only lights our feet which guides our steps, but also shows us the specific path we should take. Note that the verse says a light to MY path. This means there are many paths one can follow in life, but God's word shows us which path is ours and provides guidance and direction for your specific journey in life. The psalmist refers to this in Psalms 32:8: 'The Lord says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for YOUR life. I will advise you and watch over you.'

God's word is so dynamic it will speak to us all in different ways and gives us the opportunity to learn from one another.

**Action Step:** Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth in the word to you and share what Ps 119:105 says to you from your perspective in the comments section. It will certainly bless us all.



## Day 10

### Relationships

“Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble.”  
Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

God designed people to be relational not to go through life alone. Relationships are critical because the people you walk with play a strong role in how your life and your walk with God turns out. When God wants to do something in you and with you, He will send people to you that will help you in the direction He’s taking you. Today we’re looking at close friends who have your ear and an impact on the decisions you make.

“As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.” Proverbs 27:17

“Walk with the wise and become wise; associate with fools and get in trouble.”  
Proverbs 13:20

“Can two people walk together without agreeing on the direction?”  
Amos 3:3

“Do not be deceived: “Evil company corrupts good habits.”” I Corinthians 15:33

First and foremost your close circle should be made up of people who share the same belief systems as you and are on the same journey. The people you choose to surround yourself with should sharpen you in the direction you want to grow. As a believer your primary consideration should be their walk with God as God’s original plan is for us to grow into the fullness of the image of Christ.

None of us is perfect and we’re all work in progress, but those who you stick to should at least have begun the journey. Otherwise you will find that you end up being distracted from placing a priority on your relationship with God and who He’s called you to be.

We must also ask the Lord to show us who He’s sent to walk with us per season. We each have a ‘company’ we’re assigned to who will help, encourage, chastise where necessary so we excel in every season of life.

**Prayer point:** Ask the Lord to show you your company and connect you to the people He’s assigned to you in this season.

## Day 11

### Stolen Time

And thieves who get caught must pay back seven times what was stolen and lose everything. Proverbs 6:31

One of the strategies the enemy uses against us is distractions that rob us of our time. These distractions come in varying forms but they all have the same goal: to take us off God's plan for our lives. Time is a critical element in our lives because God has appointed a time for everything in our lives. So when we're out of sync with God's timing, it doesn't only affect the 'now', but years to come. Time is one of the few things in life that you can never get back, yesterday will never come around again.

"But as for me, I trust in You, O LORD; I say, "You are my God." My times are in Your hand; Deliver me from the hand of my enemies, and from those who persecute me."  
Psalm 31:14-15

"When the LORD brought back the captivity of Zion, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, And our tongue with singing. Then they said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them." Psalm 126:1-2

"A thief has only one thing in mind—he wants to steal, slaughter, and destroy. But I have come to give you everything in abundance, more than you expect —life in its fullness until you overflow!" John 10:10

The enemy may want to destroy you, but Jesus paid the price for you to have life in its fullness. When you understand what Jesus did for you at the cross, you'll realise that you have the right to demand not just what the enemy has stolen from you, but 7 times what was stolen. This doesn't mean you will go back in time to make up for lost years. It means that God in His infinite mercy will put the machinery in motion to bring you to the point that you would have been had you not lost time, plus extra! That's why when God is done restoring you, it will be like a dream.

**Reflect:** Don't believe the lie that it's too late for things to change. Place a demand on the covenant you have with Jesus and demand a restoration of all the enemy has stolen from you. And don't forget, the enemy's bound to compensate you with minimum of sevenfold of what he's taken from you.

## Day 12

### Your Prayer Life

'The fire shall be burning continually on the altar; it shall not [be allowed to] go out.'  
Leviticus 6:13

In the Old Testament the priests had to keep the fire on the altar burning constantly and make sure it never went out. To make sure of this every morning fresh wood was to be placed in the fire to keep it going and then the sacrifices could be placed on the altar. That was in the old covenant. In the new covenant that we have through Jesus things are a little different.

'But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light' 1 Peter 2:9

'Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?' 1 Corinthians 6:19

Now we do not need to go to a priest to burn offerings on the altar on our behalf for God to hear us. As a priest your body is the temple of God and you have your own personal altar which is powered by your prayer life. The principle of keeping the fire burning remains the same – we have to ensure that our prayer life isn't allowed to grow cold otherwise we risk losing our connection with the Lord. How do we keep the fire burning? Through regular and consistent prayer and time in God's word.

'be unceasing and persistent in prayer' 1 Thessalonians 5:17

It seems very simple, yet it is often the most challenging thing to maintain especially when life gets very busy. But if we remind ourselves daily that prayer is the oxygen that keeps us burning for God, then it changes our approach to prayer. It reminds us that we cannot pray on our own so we need to draw on the Holy Spirit daily to help us stay consistent in prayer.

**Reflect:** If you treated prayer as your spiritual oxygen, how would it change your prayer life?



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