

"A Renewed Mind"

Sin darkens the understanding of the individual causing them to become self-focused and increasingly isolated from God (Ephesians 4:18). The entrance of Christ into our lives brings a new clarity to our thinking. We begin to see the much larger picture of life from God's perspective and learn to build one truth upon another. Isaiah says it this way, *"For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line...here a little and there a little"* (28:10). Gradually we *"grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ"* (2 Peter 3:18). Our minds become open to amazing new possibilities because of the divine power at work in us (Ephesians 3:20). Even the person who has abused their mind for years with drugs and alcohol can find a surprising new clarity of thinking because of Christ's work of restoration.

"Appropriate Emotions"

Within a few moments of disobeying God in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve began to hide in fear, experience shame and guilt, as well as starting to blame others instead of taking responsibility for their actions (Genesis 3:7-13). Sin has utterly destroyed God's original design for our emotions causing them to become the dominant force in our lives. God never wanted us to be controlled by our emotions. Our emotions were designed to add expression to our experiences so we could sense appreciation, love, gratefulness, compassion, sorrow and joy as we worshipped our Creator. Jesus wants us to join in His compassion for others (Matt 9:36).

"A Submitted Will"

Before we have an encounter with Christ all our decisions are made according to what best suits us. Even if our choices get us into trouble we excuse ourselves or accuse others (Romans 2:15) in



stead of taking personal responsibility. God wants us to have a restored will, one that is submitted to the truth found in Jesus Christ. We stop making choices based on our understanding of right and wrong. We learn to say like Jesus to the Father, *"not my will"* but yours (Luke 22:42.) We begin to trust God with every decision.

"A Restored Life"

As Christ's inward work of restoration proceeds in our lives, we will see outward changes as well. *"And I will restore to you the years that the locust has eaten..."* (Joel 2:25a). *"Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree; and it shall be to the Lord..."* (Isaiah 55:13). God is compassionate and He loves to re-create things. He takes the broken pieces of our lives and designs a life filled with purpose. The seemingly wasted experiences of our past become the transformed building materials of our new lives. Praise God for His work of restoration!

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"Restoration"

How Christianity Works Series

By Pastor Curt Carter

Psalm 23:3

"He restores my soul; he leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake."

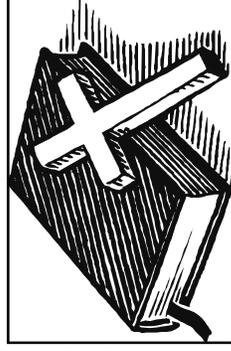
2 Corinthians 5:17

"Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

Revelation 21:5a

"And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new...."

The story of Ruth & Naomi illustrates to us God's commitment to restoring our lives. Naomi, a Jewish woman from Bethlehem-judah, lost all that she had when her husband and two sons died. Accompanied by her daughter-in-law, Ruth, she returned to her homeland destitute and feeling that God may have deserted her (Ruth 1:20-21). But in reality God wanted



to use her story to teach us all a valuable lesson in being restored. A relative of her husband, named Boaz, entered Ruth and Naomi's lives and helped them to recover from their loss and to establish a new existence. Boaz, who is called a "kinsman-redeemer", points us to Christ the great redeemer of humankind. Ruth 4:15 says, "And he shall be to you a restorer of your life..." speaking of Boaz but pointing to the Lord Jesus Christ who is the restorer of our lives. We have all been severely damaged by sin which has invaded our entire human soul and impacted every facet of our lives.

"The Pervasiveness of Sin"

When sin entered the world through our first parents, Adam and Eve, it immediately changed everything (Romans 5:12-14). They felt shame for the first time revealing the impact of sin upon their self-image (Genesis 3:7). They began to blame others to justify their own sinful behavior (Genesis 3:12-13). Human relationships and parenting changed. Even the fruitfulness and enjoyment of work was changed by disobedience (Genesis 3:16-19). Worst of all, their fellowship with God had been broken by their willful defiance which violated their love relationship with Him. We now follow in Adam's footsteps being born with a sinful nature (Psalm 51:5 & Romans 5:12). But there is good news for those that have believed in Jesus Christ.

"He Restores Our Souls"

At the moment of salvation, Jesus begins to heal the painful damage done to our souls by sin. He redeems us from the curse of sin by taking upon Himself our curse while on the cross of Calvary (Galatians 3:13). He has shown His intent to progressively reverse the affect of sin upon our lives. He promises that from day one old nature things will begin to pass away being replaced by new divine nature realities (2 Corinthians 5:17). He gives us a "new heart" and "new spirit" with which to reestablish a new fellowship with God (Ezekiel 36:26-27.) He shares His mind with us (1 Corinthians 2:16) so we can have a renewed point of view concerning our purpose in life. He restores to our lives what has been lost because of sin so that we can become what He designed us to be.

Paul reminds us that the entire creation of God is waiting anxiously for deliverance from the bondage of sin. Even we are waiting for the day when God will give us perfect physical bodies. But until that day, we experience the ongoing work of the indwelling Holy Spirit (Romans 8:19-23). He is progressively remodeling us into a unique believer who reflects the character and behavior of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29).

"Inside Out"

The effect of salvation is to progressively restore to health our sin sickened souls. James tells us to "...receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (1:21b).

The word for "soul" is "psuchē" in the Greek which is where we get the words, "psychiatry" and "psychology". It represents the seat of our emotions, desires, our will, our intellect or mind, our personality, and our conscience. The Bible often uses the word "heart" in reference to our entire mental and moral activity, our intellectual and emotional dimensions. So the Holy Spirit begins the work of restoration in our hearts "for out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries..." (Matthew 15:19-20). While he works on the inside, we begin to learn objective truth from the Word of God, the Bible. We now have an accurate standard to measure our thoughts, words, and behaviors against. This inward work of the Spirit and outward influence of the Word effectively brings about restoration in our life.

