

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, January 13, 2016 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

BUILDING KOINONIA “Concern and Restoration”

Galatians 6:1-5, James 5:19-20, 1 John 3:16-18

“Walk a mile in my shoes... see what I see, hear what I hear, feel with I feel... then maybe you’ll understand why I do what I do. Till then don’t judge me.” –Anonymous

“Don’t judge someone until you’ve walked a mile in their shoes.” – Anonymous

“The church is the only army that shoots it’s wounded.” – Anonymous

“The one day I read about a book that said that the church is the only army that shoots its wounded.” – Keith Miller

“The church has become a sacred society for the snubbing of sinners.” – Dr. Adrian Rogers

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some guidelines for determining whether to talk to someone about their sin or to let it go for a while?
2. Do you agree that most Christians are too passive in confronting sin? How can we grow in godly boldness?
3. What are some barriers or excuses which keep us from attempting to restore a sinning Christian? How can we overcome these?
4. How can we know if we are “spiritual” (Gal. 6:1)?

One of the most needed and yet most neglected ministries in the body of Christ is that of going after and seeking to restore a brother or sister who has fallen away... either into sin, or into hurt, or into drifting. However you want to say, they have fallen away for one reason or another.. We avoid doing it... going after them... for a number of reasons.

4 Reasons We Avoided Restoring Those Who Fall Away:

1. **Uncomfortable with confrontation** - No one likes confrontation.
2. **Confusion on what to say** - We don’t know what to say or how to go about it.
3. **Fear of being judgmental** - We don’t want to be judgmental or critical.
4. **Our own shortcoming** - We’re aware of our own shortcomings and don’t want to come across as hypocrites.

So we say, “It’s none of my business,” and let the person go on in his or her sin. Or, perhaps you leave it to one of the pastors or leaders in the church to deal with it.

But the instruction of Galatians 6:1 are pretty clear, “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.”

Key truth: *The ministry of restoring those who fall away belongs to all who are spiritual.*

The ministry of restoring a fallen brother belongs to all who are spiritual, which means, spiritually mature, those who walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-26). While never easy, it is vital to the spiritual health of the church... to building “koinonia.” You cannot be faithful to the Lord if you don’t grow in your ability to perform this important ministry.

Restoring a sinning brother calls for a faith that is both bold and humble--bold enough to confront sin and do battle with the forces of darkness, and yet humble enough to see how prone I am to sin and humble enough to depend on the Lord so that I don’t fall into sin in the process of seeking to restore my brother.

This is such an important and perhaps unexplored part of building genuine “koinonia”... genuine fellowship. It has been said, “We are only as strong as our weakest link.” If that is true it may explain why the church is weak, weakening and failing to have the impact on our society and culture we ought. So how do we begin to put in into practice the biblical mandate to restore and care for our fallen and drifting brothers and sister that are often forgotten about, sometimes maligned for their drift, and left to fin for themselves in a culture and world at drift.

I. INTRODUCTORY STATEMENTS THAT HELP WITH THE PROBLEM CONCERN AND RESTORATION

2 Introductory Statements from Scripture That Help With Our Restoration and Concern:

1. **We need to put ourselves in other peoples’ shoes (Matthew 7:12, Jesus)** - “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.” (Mt. 7:12) There is a command, “do so.” There is a comparison, as “to you,” so “to others.” And there is a concise summary of the entire New Testament. “... for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.”
2. **We need to see other people’s shoes as our own (Romans 12:10, 13, Paul)** - “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves (v.10)... Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality (v.13).” In a practical sense, Jesus declared, “Put yourself in others’ shoes.” Paul added, “In doing this, look upon another’s need as though it were your very own.”

II. WARNINGS TO THE ONE WHO WOULD BE A RESTORER OF OTHERS (Galatians 6:3-5)

The Apostle Paul gives the warning in the very first of verse of Galatians 6 in his call for believers to be in the concern and restoring business. There is no doubt of his strong encouragement and exhortation to believers to restore those who fall away, but with that exhortation there is also strong caution. He says (v.1), *“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.”* Do you see it? He says restore with *“...a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.”* Wow! It is as if he is saying that you need to restore others, but it very dangerous and risky business. I take this as a strong caution to us. As important as this is to building genuine “koinonia” and a healthy and fellowship it is equally as important that it be done in the right way with the right heart attitude...

Why do you think this might be? *Because God cares about people. He cares about you and he cares about the one who has fallen away. He doesn't want you destroyed and he doesn't want the one who has fallen away pushed further away or pushed further into his or her drift.*

So, Paul goes on is verse 3-5 of Galatians 6 to give us these instruction and warnings, *“³ For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. ⁴ But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. ⁵ For each one shall bear his own load.”* – Galatians 6:3-5

Cautions Concerning Those Who Would Restore Another:

- 1. Approach the situation with a truly humble heart** – What is Paul talking about when he begins verse 3 with these words, *“³ For if anyone thinks himself to be something...”*? Pride! Spiritual pride. Personal pride. Pride that exalts itself over the one who may have fallen. We must never think that we ourselves are above falling and falling hard, and/or falling in the very same way and over the very same things that the one we are seeking to restore has fallen. We say things like, “Well, that will never happen to me!” or “I would never make that mistake!” or “I’m so glad I don’t struggle in that area!” or “Well, I’m spiritually more mature than that person and I would never let that get a hold of my life and heart like he or she did!” Watch out! You are setting yourself up for a fall on a grand scale! The enemy, Satan, loves statements like that! We really should approach the situation saying in all humility, “There but my the grace of God go I.” Approach with a truly humble heart!
- 2. Be aware that your heart will deceive you** - Paul says, *“³ For if anyone thinks himself to be something, he deceives himself...”* Have you ever thought of this... How can I deceive myself? The Prophet Jeremiah said in **Jeremiah 17:9**, *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?”* What is he saying? Moses wrote in **Deuteronomy 11:16**, *“Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them.”* And James says in **James 1:26**, *“If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceive his own heart, this one’s religion is useless.”* Those are some pretty powerful words of caution. Our own heart can deceive us, which to me means

not only should be humble, but truthful with ourselves when we go about trying to help another. Proceed with great caution and don't think you can't fall into the very same trap, in the very same way, at the very same time.

3. **Always check yourself** – Paul says in **verse 4** of Galatians 6, *“⁴ But let each one examine his own work...”* The word translated as “examine” literally means “to approve something after testing it.” Believers first must be sure their lives are right with God before giving spiritual help to others. You must... must be honest about where you are spiritual yourself if you hope to every help another. This is why it is so important that as believers we be in a growing, maturing, developing relationship with Christ with those things (disciplines) going on in our life that make for our own spiritual growth. I'll say, if you are not consistent in your own prayer life, and Bible study, and growth in his Word, faithful to church, tithing, giving, witnessing, serving chances are you are not ready to be this person that builds “koinonia” through restoration... you may in fact do more harm than good. Beware! Don't kid yourself!
4. **Take care of your own load** – Sometimes we can't help carry the load of others because our own load get in the way. First take care of your own load. This may have been what Jesus was talking about when he said in **Matthew 7:3-5**, *“³ And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? ⁴ Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? ⁵ Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.”* When Paul says in **Galatians 6:5**, *“⁵ For each one shall bear his own load.”* Paul is reinforcing Jesus' teaching in His Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7. We need to take care of ourselves spiritually in order to build “koinonia” in others who may be struggling.

III. EXPLANATORY STUDIES CONCERNING THREE TYPES OF NEEDS OF THOSE WHO MAY DRIFT AWAY

1. **CASE: The Blundering Believer (Galatians 6:1-2)** – *“Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”* (Gal. 6:1-2) Willful disobedience is not implied!
 - a. **The Concern** – *“Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin...”* (v.1)
 - **“Caught”** is from the term meaning “to take beforehand, before one is aware of danger.” The idea is caught unaware or trapped. **The idea is someone gets caught up in something (some sin) before he or she really even realizes what has happened to him or her... like an animal lured in a caught in a trap. It is still sin, but a sort of innocence is implied. Not that they are not guilty of sin, but not willful sin.*
 - The word translated here as **“sin”** or **“trespass”** literally means “a blunder, a false step, a slip or lapse.”

How can we get “caught” in sin? (doesn’t imply a lack of responsibility or guilt)

1. **Getting caught up in the wrong crowd** – Sometimes Christians can get caught up in the wrong crowd that leads them astray, and sometimes the one leading them astray may be a Christian living in a backslidden or compromising situation themselves. A weaker Christian, not yet very grounded in his or her faith, can be easily led to fall into sin and compromise when someone they thought was a more mature Christian is setting a poor example for them. *Reminder for Christians: It is important how you live your life, someone is always watching you. We must never allow other to stumble because of what we allow in our lives.*
 2. **Getting caught up in the wrong circumstance** – Sometimes life can cave in on us and if we are not very grounded those bad circumstances can cause us to retreat to old ways that perhaps helped us to cope before becoming a Christian. Bad circumstances, difficulties, and hardships may lower our defenses to sin and we may find our selves “caught.” *Reminder for Christians: We need each other. This is a part of why church, the body of Christ, and genuine fellowship are so important in the life of a believer. We can support, encourage and hold each other up when bad things happen.*
- b. **The Restoration** – “...restore him gently.” (v1)
- “Restore” has the thought of “mending a tear.” The next verse describes practically how restoration works... by carrying each other’s burdens (v.2).
 - The major idea... “burden-bearing” involves providing what is needed and adding that which is missing... always in a spirit of gentleness.
- c. **The Principle** – God has established a mutual ministry for His family whereby the healthy assist the weak... the strong bear the infirmities of the struggling (v.2). See Romans 15:1

Some Things worth remembering:

- (1) **Sometimes we are the weak and sometimes we are the strong** – Remember that the shoes we wear today can be changed and sometimes overnight. Just because you are the strong and healthy today, does not mean you will be the strong and healthy tomorrow. Remember there may come a day when you are the one who is hurting, lonely, straying, struggling and in need of compassion, concern and restoration.
- (2) **The weak and struggling are not of lesser importance or significance because they are not the strong** – The church is not to take on a “survival of the fittest” mentality, whereby only the strong survive and the struggling and weakest are pushed away. This often happens in a church, where those who may be struggling and drifting away are just said to be “going their own way” or “never faithful anyway,” and we are content to let them go so that we can be stronger. Remember the church is not a social club for the spiritually elite

(strong) but a hospital for the sick and hurting. This is supposed to be a place where “needs” (and we all have them) are met.

- (3) **Remember 1 Corinthians 1:27-31** – *“But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things – and the things that are not – to nullify the things are, so that no one may boast before him. It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God – that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: ‘Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.’”*

2. **CASE: The Carnal Christian (James 5:19-20)** – *“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.”* Willfully disobedient!

- a. **The Concern** – *“... if one of you should wander from the truth...” (v.19)*
- **“Wander”** or **“stray”** implies a deliberate waywardness. Our word “planet” comes from this Greek word, and literally means “wandering body in the sky.”
 - **“Truth”** represents specifically all that Jesus Christ lived, taught, instituted – the standard of life he presented and prompted.
- b. **The Restoration** – *“... someone should bring him back...” (v.19)* Here is grass-roots Christianity. How is it performed?

How To Bring Him Who Wanders Back:

- (1) **Through incessant (*nonstop, ceaseless, relentless, persistent*) prayer**
- (2) **Show personal concern**
- (3) **Use Spirit- directed words**
- (4) **Exhibit loving actions**

- c. **The Principle** – The one who turns the sinning one back to his original condition will achieve two results (v.20)...

2 Results of Bringing A Wandering One Back:

- (1) **Preservation** – *“... Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death...” (v.20).* When a Christian drifts and wanders away from the faith he or she is in grave danger, literally. For one thing, the enemy, Satan, stands ready to pounce on the believer who strays, like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. He will take you down and destroy you. He wants to destroy your witness and keep the many others who may have been drawn to Christ though you from coming to Christ. In that way he destroys not only you, but a host of others as well. But also for a believer to live away from a God who has saved and redeemed you, and desires to use you to draw others to Himself, that believer would be better off in heaven with Jesus and therefore may be hastening his or her own demise. Remember John spoke of a “sin unto death” that a believer can commit in 1 John 5:16 by saying, “... There is a sin

leading to death.” Much debate surrounds such passages, but the generally accepted understanding of “the sin unto death” is that this is not the “unpardonable sin” of an unbeliever, but rather the unconfessed and perhaps premeditated sin of a believer that finally prompts his own death and departure from this earth. Again, a Christian who sins, and sins, and sins, and strays and wanders so far as to do more earthly harm is better off in heaven where such struggles are ended and others are not destroyed and kept from finding God through a bad example and witness.

- (2) **Protection** - *Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will... cover over a multitude of sins.” (v.20).* Remember sin cost God his Son... it cost Jesus His life. He paid a high price for sins that we so casually and sometimes willfully trek in. A wandering, drifting believer does so because of “sin” and as they wander farther and farther from God and the church, and drift further and further away, they most surely will trek deeper and deeper into sin. The sooner a drifting, wandering Christian is brought back and restored the sooner the drift into deeper and more prolific sin is shut off. Sin that might have been, is thwarted when a wandering Christian is restored.

3. **CASE: The Suffering Saint (1 John 3:16-18)** – *“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers (and sisters). If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, now can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.”* No sin involved... simply overcome by need!

- a. **The Concern** – *“If anyone... sees his brother in need...” (v.17).* Needs vary – unemployment, loss of a child, a mate or a friend, marital or family failure, financial reversal, overwork or work related problems, etc. The one thing we all have in common is needs... we are all “needy!” However, as is often the case, if it my need it is great, if it someone else’s need it is not my concern, but it is! As Christians in this bond of “koinonia”... genuine fellowship, the concerns of the others in our midst are our concerns. To “see” the need as spoken of in our passage is to “know” of the need.” In other words, we know of the needs we are aware of the need. We see it, we know what it is... now what shall we do about it? I personally wish that within the church today we would get much more open, creative and willing about meeting these needs that are even with in our own fellowship.

- b. **The Restoration** – *If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need... (v.17)* Partly stated, partly implied!

- **Stated** – The process begins with “seeing” a brother in need, perhaps without solicitation (without asking or digging into, just being sensitive and noticing a problem)
- **Implied** – “Koinonia” will prompt opening the heart to assist the one in need. Real, genuine, dangerous fellowship will cause your heart to be much more sensitive to the needs around you and the smallest indication of such.

- c. **The Principle** – *“Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.” (v.18)* Love must be expressed in deed and in truth. This is personal, active love.

IV. FOUR STEPS FOR REACHING OUT TO OTHERS

1. **See the need... selection** – We must become much, much more sensitive to the needs around us and within our family of faith... A person in need must be recognized as being in needs... essentially singled out and chosen specifically. Go ahead, look around you, see a need, then make an effort to pursue God’s desire to use you in meeting that need practically.
2. **Willingness to get involved... association** – A personal contact must be made and maintained. This demands availability. You have to be willing to get involved. Some may see the need and actually know the need is great and something needs to be done, yet leave it to someone else to do. Many are unwilling to get involved and therefore they thwart genuine fellowship in this way.
3. **Investment of yourself... impartation** – There must be the giving of resources, time and self, to the point of sacrifice if necessary... even without thanks or public knowledge.
4. **Commitment to see it through... devotion** – True “koinonia” refuses to give up on someone else. This is the spiritual glue that binds.

NOW ITS YOUR TURN...

Acts Upon It – Do you know a “blundering believer”? Or a “carnal Christian”? Or a “suffering saint”? Have you considered the possibility that you may be the very one God wishes to use in that person’s life? Begin implementing the four actions steps in the process of reaching out to others (selection, association, impartation, devotion).

Talk About It – It’s possible you are in one of the three categories of people in need of concern and restoration. Don’t wait for someone to seek you out. God to a mature Christian brother or sister and talk it through with them. You need not go through this alone. Don’t be shy... speak with someone today.

