

MID-MORNING FEATURING DR. MITCHELL KRUSE
SEPTEMBER 18, 2012
First Steps on Restoration Road: Part One
NEXT SHOW: OCTOBER 16

Christ's Vision: Authenticity—the Vertical Restored with the Horizontal

The *cross*, a symbol of the most horrific death created by mankind, is a picture of the *vertical* intersecting with the *horizontal*. The vertical represents our relationship with God. The horizontal portrays our relationships with others, including the tasks that we desire to achieve. Jesus Christ who lived, died on a cross, and resurrected to provide us with His Spirit, is the embodiment of the vertical and the horizontal: fully God and fully man, restoring man with God and man with man.

Each person is created in the image of God with one primary purpose: to live where the vertical intersects with the horizontal. No wonder the postmodern culture's number one value is *authenticity*: reflecting the design of the Designer from the inside out. Authenticity begins in our hearts, beats through our desires, and breathes through our lives.

Our Culture's Problem: Pretense from Pride's Prison—separating the Vertical and the Horizontal

Pretense, the opposite of authenticity, misaligns our lives from the *outside in*. Pretense focuses on the outside at the expense of the inside. We pretend that we are the ultimate designers in our lives. Consequently, we pretend that we do not need restoration. We pretend with God. We pretend with others. The result is a life trapped in continual, progressive pretense that leaves us dissatisfied.

Pride is the lock on the human heart. Humility is the key. Pride is a hard heart. It comes in two forms: stone or sand. A stone heart is legalistic. It pretends to connect with the vertical at the expense of the horizontal. It requires a severe tool to be shaped. A sand heart is loose. It pretends to connect with the horizontal at the expense of the vertical. It needs a storm in order to be shaped. Both stone and sand hearts break apart the cross, separating the vertical from the horizontal, resulting in four walls that form a prison. This imprisonment is the incarceration of pride that creates our need for restoration of the vertical with the horizontal.

We attempt to free ourselves from pride's prison of pretense through self-restoration. Either we become more religious in our stone heartedness as we turn off the relationships around us, or we find ourselves loose in our convictions as we ignore God. Both fall short. In the end, we learn that stone and sand are the same substance, just a different aggregate. In essence, sand is stone that is broken into tiny pieces. Both are in need of restoration by Another.

The Solution (Christ's Mission): Restoring the Vertical with the Horizontal

A clay heart is a humble heart, one that is malleable in the hands of the Designer, the One Who longs to restore our stone and sand hearts to clay. Whereas a stone heart is legalistic, and a sand heart is licentious, a clay heart is loving.

When Jesus was asked to bottom line His message, he crafted it succinctly: "Love God with all your heart. Love others as yourself. This is what connects people with God" (Matthew 22:37-40). Jesus' answer was a picture of restoring the vertical with the horizontal through *love*. His choice for the word *love* arose from many options. He chose *agape*, a self-sacrificial love that *humbly* serves others. The Master Key that unlocks restoration in our lives is cross-shaped: humility vertically toward God and horizontally toward others. The Master Key frees us for restoration to authenticity, which we experience on Restoration Road.

Eight Steps on Restoration Road:

(1) Life

Jesus Christ is the life of God (John 14:6). He came so that we would experience life in Him (John 10:10). When we fully surrender our lives to Christ, He restores us from death to life (John 5:24). This life that is by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8) is portrayed in our public baptism (Romans 6:3-4). This new life is both eternal and abundant, restored vertically with God and horizontally with others when we bend the knees of our hearts to Christ (John 17:3). He is our life (Colossians 3:4; cf. Deuteronomy 30:20).

This new life permeates 168 hours a week. God is not regulated to a particular style of worship, at a certain hour, on a selected day, in a chosen building. At the same time, the power of a church gathering on Sunday morning, the day of the week that the first disciples chose to meet together in order to celebrate the resurrection of Christ and therefore, the restoration of all things, is transformational. This is the same day that our culture sets aside to investigate God. Consequently, both restored and unrestored alike can be inspired to live in the sweet spot where the vertical intersects with the horizontal by attending a worship gathering. As the people of God, we delve into the Word of God and dive into the Spirit of God in order to leave transformed to release the mission of God 168 hours a week.

Our three resources of life, *time*, *talent*, and *treasure*, are used primarily to advance Christ's kingdom of the heart in others. We are designed to minister where we already work and play. Rather than adding God on to our lives, we multiply God throughout our lives, freeing our time, talent, and treasure to be used for His kingdom. Rather than add ministry on to our calendars, we minister throughout our already busy schedules. Rather than add ministry on to our talent, we minister within our talent, whether a mom, a dad, a butcher, a baker, or a candlestick maker. Rather than give part of our treasure by donating to a non-profit corporation and maintaining control of our own lives, we apply

God's wisdom to earn, invest, live, and give in an act of worship.

STREET SMARTS FOR THE RESTORATION ROAD...

What characterizes your life? How do you invest your time, talent, and treasure in the cause of Christ? Ask God to reallocate your resources to restore others. Make everything in your life an act of worship. If you are not connected with a local body of believers, ask someone to help you find one and visit that church.

(2) Light

Jesus Christ is the Light of God (John 8:12). He came to bring that light to us (John 12:46). When we fully surrender our lives to Christ, He restores us from darkness to light, a clear vision for life that connects the vertical (ministry) with the horizontal (marketplace). This gives us purpose. We begin to see every part of our lives as an opportunity to advance the heart of Christ in others.

We must be restored as a priest. Each person is created to be a minister of restoration, one who lives where the vertical intersects with the horizontal. The Bible calls this person a priest (1 Peter 2:9). God desires us to be restored with Him and restored with each other, so that we can be used by Him to restore others to authenticity. Priests marry, bury, baptize, counsel, teach, and administer communion. They also conduct surgeries, invest in the markets, buy and sell businesses, practice law, broker real estate, and swing hammers.

We must discover our unique ministry. Each person is unique. Therefore, his or her ministry of restoration is unique. As a result, we must discover the unique expression of Christ in us, releasing the Restorer's work in us as we go throughout our week. We must refuse to major in minors and communicate relationship over religion, developing and deploying our spiritual gifts to minister to others.

STREET SMARTS FOR THE RESTORATION ROAD...

What is your purpose? Take a spiritual gifts test to help discover your unique design. Find a friend who can help you determine how to utilize one of your gifts for the kingdom.

(3) Listening

Jesus Christ is the peace of God (Ephesians 2:14). He came to offer us His peace (John 14:27; 16:33). When we fully surrender our lives to Christ, He restores us from being deaf toward things of the Spirit to listening. This frees us from hurry in order to receive a peaceful life that comes from listening vertically in prayer and obedience to

God and horizontally in intimacy with others. We become rapid Holy Spirit responders.

Jesus taught each of us how to be a person who *PRAYS* (Matthew 6:9-15): *Praise, Renew, Ask, Yield, and Surrender to be Spirit-led*. We praise God for who He is. We renew our minds to be focused on the advancement of His kingdom, rather than our own. We ask for the resources we need to advance the heart of Christ in others. We yield all unsettled relational accounts to Him. Amidst the threat of temptation, we surrender to be Spirit-led.

STREET SMARTS FOR THE RESTORATION ROAD...

Does hurry categorize your soul? You cannot listen in a hurry. Become a person who *PRAYS*. For the next thirty days, pray on your knees and experience God's peace in Christ. Write down promptings that come to your mind as you pray, and be a rapid Holy Spirit responder.

(4) Learning

Jesus Christ is the wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:24). He came to preach (Mark 1:38), to teach (John 7:16), and to testify to the truth (John 18:37). When we fully surrender our lives to Christ, He restores us from a dense, or foolish, life to a wise one that learns God's heart vertically and connects it with street smarts horizontally. This occurs best through studying the Bible.

Here are four approaches to learning wisdom from the Word of God:

Study Wisdom 101: read a chapter in Proverbs each day that corresponds with the date of the month. Proverbs has 31 chapters, so you will read through the book once each month during the course of the year.

Study Wisdom 201: accomplish Study Wisdom 101 plus read a chapter from the New Testament each day. This will allow you to read the entire New Testament in less than a calendar year.

Study Wisdom 301: accomplish Study Wisdom 201 plus read three chapters each day in the Old Testament in order to read through the entire Bible in a year.

Study Wisdom 401: accomplish Study Wisdom 301 plus memorize one verse each week that you will apply to your life, recalling it several times throughout the week.

STREET SMARTS FOR THE RESTORATION ROAD...

Select one of the above strategies to read the Bible and apply its wisdom to your life.

(5) Leaning

Jesus Christ is the power of God (1 Corinthians 1:24). He came to call all sinners to trust in His power through repentance and faith (Mark 1:15; Matthew 9:13). When we fully surrender our lives to Christ, we are restored from a divided life to one of repentance and faith that leans vertically on God, trusting in Him, and leans horizontally into others. Repentance says to God, "I can't." Faith says to Him, "You can." The Restorer transforms us from slaves to sons and daughters. Therefore, we reclaim and restore our relationships for Him.

God's ultimate small group is family: not only biological or adopted, but the family of God. Thus, we must first minister to our spouses and children. Marketplace relationships are: unique, natural, and seasonal. We already have relationships; so rather than rip us from them, God guides us to restore our existing connections to authenticity and solicit new relationships to help us on our journey down Restoration Road. We will benefit by meeting weekly with one or two other believers of the same gender who can help us to continually be CLAY: *confess* shortcomings, *learn* the Bible, *apply* what we learn to our calendars, and *yield* the outcomes to God through prayer. Connecting with other priests whose ministries synergize with ours will advance the kingdom.

STREET SMARTS FOR THE RESTORATION ROAD...

Solicit one or two believing friends of the same gender and lean on God and each other in a CLAY group. Confess. Learn. Apply. Yield.

(6) Leading

Jesus Christ is the truth of God (John 14:6). He is Lord (Philippians 2:11). He came so that we would lead others to Him (Mark 1:17), to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10), and to call us to be countercultural (Matthew 10:34-35). When we fully surrender our lives to Christ, He restores us from a deceitful life, one that disguises the truth, to an influencing life that follows God vertically and impacts others horizontally, evangelizing in order to make disciples (1 Corinthians 11:1). God equips and releases us to connect culture with Christ, the only One who can truly restore.

A believer's body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, or the Spirit of Christ (1 Corinthians 6:19). God does not dwell merely in a tent, or in a stone temple; rather, God dwells in those of us who fully surrender our hearts, desires, and lives to Him. This makes every encounter a three-way call. Pride causes static on the line, but humility offers a clear connection.

Connection Number One is our vertical connection with God. This occurs when we ask God to be Lord and Savior of our lives. This means that anyone we lock eyes with represents our audience for ministry.

Connection Number Two is our horizontal connection with others. This includes those who already fit in our agenda as well as our agenda adjusters. We connect when we ask others about their lives.

Connection Number Three is others' connections with God. This takes place when they ask God to restore their lives. Seeing every encounter as a three-way call makes our lives an act of worship.

God restores us and equips us to be used by Him to restore others. When those whom God has used us to restore are actually used by Him to restore others, then we see the kingdom of God at work through multiplication.

STREET SMARTS FOR THE RESTORATION ROAD...

See every encounter as a three-way call. Ask God to use you to bring His restoration to a friend or acquaintance. Ask that person to share his story with you. Ask him if he would like to invite Christ to restore his life.

(7) Loving

Jesus Christ is the love of God (John 3:16; 15:13; 2 Corinthians 8:9). He came to serve and give His life (Mark 10:45). He seeks worshipers who will do the same (John 4:23). When we fully surrender our lives to Christ, He restores us from a detached life to a sacrificial one that serves God vertically in communion and serves others horizontally in community.

We are designed to give and serve both those who fit in our agendas and the agenda-adjusters. We are called to help feed the hungry, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, comfort the sick and dying, and educate the marginalized. We can buy Valentine's Day gifts for strippers, build houses for widows, buy vehicles for single moms, pay off mortgages for recovering drug addicts, scholarship students who live in a city dump in Manila, and offer friendship to the forgotten because that's what love does.

STREET SMARTS FOR THE RESTORATION ROAD...

Think of someone who loved you unconditionally. Now go love like that. Make an appointment with someone in need and ask God to help you meet that need.

(8) Letting Go

Jesus Christ is the forgiveness of God (Matthew 9:6; John 8:11). He came to save and forgive (John 3:17; 12:47). When we fully surrender our lives to Christ, He restores us

from the dungeon of sin and un-forgiveness to a free life that is forgiven by God vertically and forgives others horizontally. We confess our sins to God who forgives and restores us in communion with Him (1 John 1:9). We also confess our sins to others in community whom God uses to heal us (James 5:16).

STREET SMARTS FOR THE RESTORATION ROAD...

Ask God if you are withholding forgiveness from someone. If so, confess this sin and pray that the forgiveness you have received in Christ will be equally issued to your offender through you.

Conclusion

When we live in the sweet spot of the cross, we receive from God and release toward others. This is authenticity, reflecting the design of the Designer, as He shapes us to be like Christ (Romans 8:29) and uses us to make lives new, again.