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## The Meaning of Restoration

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The scriptures show that restoration is a worthy and necessary endeavor, not only with the organization and practices of the Church, but on an individual and moral level. Before we can answer the call to restoration, we must understand what it means to be restored and how restoration can be achieved.

### What does it mean to be restored?

We have been given an exhortation in **Galatians 6:1** “**Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.**” The Greek word used for “restore” means to repair, to fit, frame, or mend. This implies not only that the recipient of restoration is in some sort of disrepair or error, but that there is a pattern by which we must be “framed or fitted”. All humans are aware of their imperfections and everyone agrees that “no one is perfect”. Ever since the beginning of time, God has given mankind a pattern and men and women have always fallen short of this pattern. Romans 3:23 tells us “**For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.**” Restoration means that we are in a constant state of repairing our broken lives. It also requires us to be submissive to a Power much higher than ourselves because it takes humility, on our part, to recognize that there are things in our lives that need to be fixed. This humility glorifies God because we gladly give Him the authority to dictate how we live our lives. When we find that we are living in a way or doing something more, less, or different than He has commanded, we recognize that we are the ones in error and must do the changing.

We are taught about being mended in **II Timothy 3:16 – 17**, “**All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.**” This passage tells us of a four step progression that makes up the restoration process:

### Doctrine

Doctrine is the original pattern or instruction that must be followed. Adding to, taking away from, or doing anything differently from this pattern is considered an error. Being in doctrinal error causes one to be a candidate for restoration. This pattern is provided by the scriptures which have been inspired by God.

### Reproof

Reproof is one coming to the knowledge of being in error. This is the step when one is informed of their differences from the pattern and is convicted to change. We might think of this step as

a laundry list of things that we are doing wrong. This step in the restoration process is accompanied by repentance. The knowledge of error, we are told, comes from the scriptures which have been inspired by God.

## Correction

Correction is the remedy for the error. We have seen the original pattern and have strayed from it; now, we must find the way to mend our errors. This is by far the most difficult step in the restoration process. In this step, we follow our convictions, swallow our pride, and make the changes that are required to be fitted into the original pattern. This is where we begin to abstain from things we should not do and we begin to do the things that we are commanded to do. This step is often ignored because of an individual's pride or because of a lack of conviction through true faith. The ways to correct our errors are provided by the scriptures, which have been inspired by God.

## Instruction in Righteousness

This step in the restoration process takes place after our errors have been fixed. This step is where we find out what to do in the future rather than falling back into error. This is the second most neglected step in the process because people often forget to take guard against future mistakes. This step is also very similar to the Doctrine step, but is different in that it gives instructions to each specific error previously made, rather than a master pattern to follow. Instructions to prevent future errors are found in the scriptures which have been inspired by God.

Notice that each of these steps have one thing in common, they are all focused around the "scriptures that have been inspired by God". This should emphasize the importance of our biblical studies. How can we begin even the first step of the restoration process without opening up a Bible and studying its truths? How can we fix our mistakes if we haven't even read what we are supposed to do? We can't, and so constant study is a necessity for someone who desires to be acceptable to God.

When talking of restoration, it is important to rely on God's Word rather than man's word. Since this is something so very important to our soul's salvation it is of utmost importance to make sure beyond any shadow of a doubt that the pattern that we use is the true one. The doctrines of men have changed countless times throughout history and will continue to change, but if we follow the Bible in its inspired form, we can rest assured that we are being restored to the pattern that God Himself created and has preserved in spite of countless attacks regarding its authenticity.

Restoration is based around the idea of following or being "fitted" to a pattern. When following a pattern to make clothes, it is important to note that when the pattern and the thing that is being fitted are not the same, the one that conforms is **never** the pattern. The pattern never changes because it is the thing that has been provided by the authority (in our case God) and has been tried and proven to be true. Restoration is the act of making alterations in our lives so that we can be in congruence with the perfect pattern of the Word of God.