



REDEEMING LOVE

A CCF Biblical Guide to Church Discipline and
Restoration

August 2022-March 2023

FOREWORD: Restoration in CCF

*L*ove God, Love Others

*Consistent personal devotions, prayer time, and personal study of God's word
Love displayed even for people who are difficult to love; seek to maintain good
relationships*

*No critical spirit or participation in gossip
Private life is in order (free from immorality and pornography, computer games, and
other addictions)*

*Consistent sharing of the gospel and discipleship of others
-"L", CCF Core Values*

Christ's Commission Fellowship is a discipleship-centric church community. As a follower of Christ, we are aware that Christians are not exempted from encountering sin and conflict. The Bible does not sugarcoat and even warns the followers that we will become more susceptible, if not only more aware, of these challenges while we live in this broken world (Luke 14:27; Romans 8:17; 2 Timothy 3:12).

Sadly, most Christians nowadays are not so intentional, or perhaps not adequately equipped on dealing with sin and conflict. Churches across the globe fail in this area and lose a lot of members because sin and conflict were neither prevented nor fixed. Those who gave up on church communities were left with trauma, and spiritual wounds that give a bad reflection of what a Christian community ought to look like.

However, the power of the Gospel extends to difficult matters like these (John 16:33; James 1:12). He promises us that these are temporal, and we are not on our own as we deal with them. Acknowledging that it's unavoidable, we have to be prepared on how we can deal with, or respond to these matters in a Christ-like manner. This means, as a community, we are not only commissioned to proclaim the Gospel but to become restorers of those who have fallen, protectors of our brothers and sisters in faith, and peace-makers just like Jesus (2 Corinthians 1:7; Galatians 6:2).

As Christ-committed disciplers, we must come alongside those who are struggling with the burden of sin and work to restore them to a healthy and loving relationship with God and the community.

"Wherever monastics tell stories, someone is sure to speak of the two monks who wove baskets and took them to the market to sell. They agreed to separate and sell their baskets in two different areas of the market. At sundown, they would meet again and return to the monastery.

When the sun set, the first monk gathered his unsold baskets and walked to the designated meeting place. But his partner was nowhere to be seen. He waited through the night and well into the next day. Finally, the second monk appeared, a look of total defeat on his face. "I have fallen into temptation and committed fornication," he said. "I cannot ever return to the monastery and face judgment alone." The two sat down in the dirt and wept. Then the first monk—the one who had waited so long—stood to his feet and said, "Come, let us return to the monastery and repent together."

The second said, "Return? Repent together? Then both of us would face judgment. Both of us might be expelled from the monastery. No one would be sure which of us was truly the sinner." "What you say is true," the first monk replied. "So let us be all the quicker to return so that we can repent together. Neither of us will be alone."

This is what community is supposed to look like."

-From a CT Article by Gordon MacDonald

CONTENTS

REDEEMING LOVE A CCF Biblical Guide to Church Discipline and Restoration.....	1
FOREWORD: Restoration in CCF	2
CONTENTS	4
INTRODUCTION	5
PREVENTION	7
Self Examination	7
Spiritual Accountability.....	10
Honesty.....	11
Commitment to Growth.....	12
Spirituality.....	12
APPLICATION.....	14
RESTORATION	15
PRINCIPLES of Church Discipline and Restoration	15
ATTITUDE of Church leaders in Restoration	15
STEPS: Confronting & Correcting.....	16
CASE STUDIES FOR APPLICATION.....	24
JOURNEYING ALONGSIDE RESTORATION	28
RESOLVING CONFLICTS	31
PEACEMAKING RESPONSES	31
PERSONAL PEACEMAKING	31
A Commitment to Biblical Conflict Resolution.....	33
GLORIFY GOD	34
GET THE LOG OUT OF YOUR EYE.....	34
GENTLY RESTORE	34
GO AND BE RECONCILED.....	34

INTRODUCTION

When someone joins a Christian church community, he or she signs up for its set of Biblical convictions, Christian lifestyle, and core values (1 Corinthians 5:11-12). In CCF, we have GLC modules that teach the foundations of our Christian faith. We also learn the distinctions of what it's like to be a full-fledged CCF DGroup member, and once we intentionally embrace the CCF DNA, we eventually become a CCF DGroup Leader. We learn how to get in and grow: in knowledge, character, and skills needed to live out the Great Commission. But as part of this community, we also need to know how to preserve, protect, and restore our brethren. This is why we need church discipline. "In a broader sense, discipline is everything the church does to help its members pursue holiness and fight sin. Preaching, teaching, prayer, corporate worship, accountability relationships, and godly oversight by pastors and elders are all forms of discipline."¹

Church discipline purifies the church as a whole, and promotes the glory of God (1 Cor. 5:7; 1 Peter 2:12).² Church Discipline is a provision from God to restore someone into faith and the community through His Gospel of grace. It is not the end goal as a justification for Christians to judge each other; it is a means for redemption. In most instances, the reason why a person drops out of the Christian community is malpractice in church discipline. It's because they were handled or dealt with wrongly, or that they did not have confidence in the methodology of the discipline they underwent. That's why it's very important to have resources available for DLeaders to help us in handling those in our community who have gone astray, fallen away from grace, or are in danger of doing so. The CCF community's role is to pursue the sinner in making efforts to restore him or her back to faith.

If we have no condemnation in Christ (Rom 8:1), then the community should also not condemn the person. Paul challenges us in Hebrews 10:24 to stir up one another to love and good works—including judging sin rightly—and this includes challenging each other to do better.

¹ <https://www.9marks.org/answer/what-church-discipline/>

² Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*, pp 188-190

We hope that this comprehensive manual will help you understand the importance of dealing with sin in a way that reflects God's standards for His people. First, we will discuss the biblical principles as we implement church discipline. The following sections are divided into 3: The Bible is clear that sin needs to be prevented (PREVENTION), the sin needs to be dealt with and the sinner needs to be restored (RESTORATION), and conflicts need to be resolved (RESOLVING CONFLICT) by Christians who ought to be peacemakers like Jesus. We can accomplish this as we always rely on the presence, provisions, and power of an ever-present Christ through the Gospel.

PREVENTION

Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. - Hebrews 3:12, ESV

When we travel to a mountain area, we'll see guardrails along the edge of the cliff on the side of the road. If a car loses control and shoots off of the road, it will hit the guardrails. The car will surely get damaged, but you can imagine how irreversible it would be if your car fell off of the cliff. Surely, you would be thankful there were guardrails there to protect you from further catastrophe. In dealing with sin, we also need to set up guardrails to protect us from irreversible damage. We propose these guardrails or tools for us to be constantly guarded internally (Self Examination) and with externally (Spiritual Accountability).



Self Examination

We all face temptations now and then. Sometimes the tempter is within us, because of our self-centeredness, or depravity. Sometimes the tempter is external - the world around us: images, cultural expectations, the "system" at work, and so on. The Bible tells us, the tempter is "the prince of this world" (John 12:31)—the Devil and his forces. We have a responsibility, as self-admitted sinners in need of constant saving of Christ daily to do our part in killing sin (1 John 1:8-10). We need to know how we are usually tempted, and disarm temptation right from its roots. We will eventually be pushed into a corner if we don't deal with temptations. *"Sin will not only be striving, acting, rebelling, troubling, disquieting, but if let alone, if not*

continually mortified, it will bring forth great, cursed, scandalous, soul-destroying sins.”³

Activity: Letter from your Tempter⁴

In the following exercise, you will write a fictional letter to yourself, as though a senior demon were instructing your internal voice on how to tempt you. The point is to get you thinking about how temptation and sin work in your life.

Knowing yourself the way you do, write as one wishing and plotting for your downfall. How would your tempter set you up to be rendered useless for the kingdom of God? How would he make use of your flesh and the world around you? Note them down.

Then choose one specific sin you struggle with, and write your letter about that. Your goal is to learn how to listen to the Holy Spirit’s conviction and evaluate how sin affects your life. Your goal isn’t to understand and write about every area you struggle with. If you cultivate an attitude of attentiveness to the Spirit of God and His conviction of sin in your life, you will experience a lifetime of growth in your struggle against sin. Therefore, choose only one area and try to clearly describe the dynamics of how your flesh, the world, and the Enemy tempt you in that area.

Think about yourself in practical terms. How does it happen that you are prone to react in anger toward your kids? How is it that you find yourself spreading gossip instead of remaining quiet? What are the usual triggers that convince you that watching porn is ok to do?

The letter ought to go beyond the behavior to the root of the sin. Why do you do it? What payoff do you get or expect to get? What lies are you falling for? What selfish motive makes you susceptible? Why do you let the world’s pressure get to you in this area? What lies does the tempter feed you? In what situations are you most vulnerable to the tempter’s voice? What sins do you frequently fall into or struggle with, and how does that occur?

³ John Owen. *Overcoming Sin and Temptation* (Foreword by John Piper) (Kindle Locations 1084-1086). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

⁴ Adapted from *INTEGRITY: Examining How I Live*, Center for Christian Leadership at Dallas Theological Seminary, 2004, p96

At the end of this activity, the goal is to break down the machinery of sin, go at its roots for us to have a very strong consciousness of all that could tempt us, lead us into sin, or trigger it. It is like taking a vaccine and letting your body generate immune systems to fight off a certain virus it became familiar with. Do your best in reflecting and answering these guide questions:

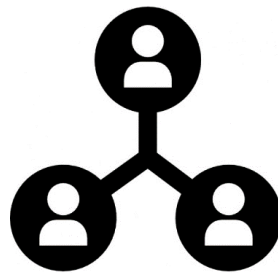
1. How has your sin manifested itself recently?
2. When are you most susceptible to temptation in these areas?
3. What kind of consequences can you associate with your sin?
4. What payoff do you feel you get or might get from the sin? In other words, when you are tempted, what do you think you will gain or what benefit will you receive as a result of giving in?
5. How do you tend to rationalize this area of sin? What does the reasoning process look like when you are rationalizing?⁵

Below are some principles from one of greatest books about fighting temptation and sin: "The Mortification of Sin" by John Owen:

- **Self-Examination** (Chapter 2): Regularly examine your heart and thoughts to identify areas of sin and temptation.
- **Gospel Remembrance** (Chapter 3): Continually remind yourself of the gospel and the power of Christ's sacrifice for your sins.
- **Prayer and Dependence on God** (Chapter 5): Seek God's help and grace through prayer in the battle against sin.
- **Putting Sin to Death** (Chapter 6): Take intentional steps to put sin to death, both in actions and desires.
- **Scripture Meditation** (Chapter 8): Meditate on God's Word to gain a deeper understanding of sin and its consequences.
- **Pursuit of Holiness** (Chapter 9): Make it your aim to grow in holiness and actively resist sinful habits and patterns.

⁵ Adapted from INTEGRITY: Examining How I Live, Center for Christian Leadership at Dallas Theological Seminary, 2004, p96

- **Watchfulness** (Chapter 10): Be vigilant and alert, guarding against the subtleties and temptations of sin.
- **Cultivating Spiritual Disciplines** (Chapter 11): Engage in regular practices such as prayer, fasting, and Scripture reading to strengthen your spiritual life.
- **Community and Accountability** (Chapter 13): Seek support from fellow believers and engage in accountability relationships for mutual encouragement and growth.
- **Patience and Perseverance** (Chapter 14): Recognize that the battle against sin is ongoing, and be patient with yourself as you strive for progress and rely on God's transforming work in your life.



Spiritual Accountability

Accountability is the best way to prevent destructive sin. Satan has mastered deception by feeding us with small lies that make sin seem tolerable until it builds up and explodes into something that could destroy our lives and relationships. Accountability keeps us from being weighed down by these temptations - by exposing it intentionally. A Puritan pastor, Robert Bolton (1572–1631) described accountability or holy discourse as a time when ordinary Christians allowed “free, unreserved communication of their souls, mutual exchange of their hearts, faithful revelations of the spiritual state of their consciences one unto another . . . in ardent sanctified affection”.

Biblically, we are all accountable to God (Romans 14:12), we are accountable to one another (James 5:16), and being accountable makes us stronger (Proverbs 27:17).

You will notice those who are easily offended are people who lack accountability. Because pride causes us to think we don't have to let other people

know what we're doing based on 2 reasons: we don't think we're doing anything wrong, we don't want anyone to discover what we're doing wrong.

For authentic spiritual accountability to happen, 3 key ingredients are crucial: Honesty, Commitment to Growth, and Spirituality. Spiritual Accountability without Honesty is a breeding ground for gossip. Without Commitment to Growth, it only cultivates hypocrisy. Without Spirituality, real transformation of the heart will not happen.

Honesty

First key element for successful accountability is honesty. Be honest about your struggles, failures, and victories.

Honesty is often associated with the character of humility. An acknowledgement that we are not perfect and that we are most likely in need of help. Honesty also cultivates a culture of trust, respect, vulnerability, and transparency.

One of the best ways to describe vulnerability is opening yourself totally to another. People are afraid to do this because we have been hardwired to protect ourselves from harm, which is the opposite of being vulnerable. The beauty of it lies in the act of surrendering and coming as you are because we know that we are welcome in Christ - who justifies the weak, broken, sinful, and ungodly. When we let go of our self-coverings as opposed to what Adam and Eve did (Genesis 3:7), we are allowing God to fully cover us in whatever it is we could be shameful of.

We need to be reminded that the devil is waiting for every opportunity that we are isolated (1 Peter 5:8). While the community is God's gift to us, isolation is definitely dangerous. The most devastating sins start in secret so we need to let someone know what's going on in our secret lives.

Bringing darkness into the light breaks its power.

In order to keep this culture that is founded on trust, we need to maintain confidentiality. We must ensure that what is shared within the spiritual accountability session remains confidential. This creates a safe space for continued honesty, and further trust throughout the accountability relationship. Jesus' teaching in Matthew 18:15-20 is one of the common frameworks used by Christians

in dealing with sin in the church community. One thing that is especially noticeable about this passage is its emphasis on confidentiality. A more detailed framework for dealing with sin is discussed in Restoration. The basic principle is that no one else needs to know what is going on unless the person being dealt with is directly affected by it.

As partners, we should be supportive, encouraging, and willing to ask tough questions as often as needed.

Commitment to Growth

Of course, the main goal of accountability is growth in maturity in Christlikeness. We don't go to spiritual accountability sessions with the end goal of simply dumping out the garbage from our hearts, nor is it a random and reckless confession. We go there with the intention and hope of slowly being transformed through the power of the Gospel in our lives. This means we need each other in making sure each of us is on track. And that we are all committed to being sanctified. We must establish regular meetings and check-ins to ensure progress.

We also need to include practical and actionable steps that will help them grow and get closer to the agreed goals. We should, however, strive not to be directive in this approach and always encourage them to create their own biblical goals with our support, and the Holy Spirit's guidance. This empowers ownership of their God-given goals and milestones for change.

Spirituality

This means that we should treat each conversation as a spiritual one. Jesus turned all kinds of conversations to kingdom conversations and spiritual matters. What we're avoiding is the fatal flaw of dichotomizing our conversations, thinking that God doesn't know, or His Spirit isn't present. When we are having accountability with another person, Christ is present in it—He knows the details we leave out and He is very aware if we are being completely truthful or not. Our conversations then should always be considering truth, humility, and without shame (John 8:32).

Prayer should be an integral part of any spiritual accountability relationship. Praying for each other, and together, can provide strength, guidance, and a deeper sense of connection with God.

Scripture is the foundation for spiritual growth and should be a key component of any accountability relationship. Sharing and studying scripture together can provide insight, guidance, and inspiration for both parties.

Lastly, accountability should be approached with grace and compassion, recognizing that we are all human and make mistakes. Ultimately, the purpose of spiritual accountability is to draw closer to God and to honor Him in our actions and attitudes.

Real accountability happens when we have achieved a deeper level of conversation with the other person more than asking relevant questions. We should also do our best not to neglect asking the hard questions:

1. How is your quiet time with the Lord, Bible reading, and prayer?
2. How is your relationship with your spouse? children? parents? siblings?
3. When was the last time you shared the Gospel? Are you discipling or taking steps to disciple other men/women?
4. How is your thought life? Have you been struggling with impure thoughts? Have you looked at questionable materials (e.g. movies, TV, books, websites, magazines) which would bring shame to the Lord?
5. Are you struggling with any addiction/ substance abuse (e.g. pornography, games, drugs, alcohol, tobacco)?
6. Have you been in any kind of situation with a man/woman when your feelings and/or actions became inappropriate?
7. How is your financial situation? Do you have any debts? Have you been faithful in giving your tithes to the Lord?
8. Are there any problems or challenges in your personal life, work, or ministry?

Let's also be reminded about the danger of hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is the gap between words and action. Hypocrisy is when we hide our own faults. It is when we are quicker to give advice than to empathize with the sinner. Hypocrisy is evident when integrity is not honored.

The sin must be brought into the light. The unexpressed must be openly spoken and acknowledged. . . . Now he stands in the fellowship of sinners who live by the grace of God in the Cross of Jesus Christ. Now he can be a sinner and still enjoy the grace of God. He can confess his sins and in this very act find fellowship for the first time. The sin concealed separated him from the fellowship, made all his apparent fellowship a sham; the sin confessed has helped him to find true fellowship with the brethren in Jesus Christ. - Bonhoeffer

**Further reading on Holy Discourse and Accountability: <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-missing-conversation-in-our-accountability>*

APPLICATION:

1. Do you have sins that you'd rather hide to avoid looking bad or getting judged?
2. Do you have an accountability partner/s whom you feel safe to be completely transparent with without getting condemned?
3. What other guardrails do you need to set up to prevent yourself from falling into sin (i.e., site blocker, app restrictor, GPS location sharer, adding spouse into chat conversations with the opposite sex, etc.)?
4. Among the following list of pitfalls, which one do you think you need help with:
 1. Pride
 2. No accountability
 3. Sexual immorality
 4. Money/Finances
 5. Busyness
 6. Hidden sin
 7. Loss of love (for Christ)
 8. Neglect time with family

RESTORATION

PRINCIPLES of Church Discipline and Restoration

In church restoration we must exercise extreme care. Scripture does not warrant the exercise of discipline for an individual's or a church's taboos or pet peeves. It is not our opinions or dislikes that should guide our actions. Scripture must be our primary guide for dealing with sin. Further, we must not become hypercritical. We should always keep in mind that like them, we too are sinners in need of grace.

General Indications that would require discipline or restoration: Disorderly conduct, conduct clearly out of line with the prescribed commands of Scripture and which negatively impacts the testimony and unity of the church (2 Thess. 3:6-15). We could easily use the CCF **L.O.V.E. Core values** as means to gauge someone who need to be restored.

Specific Causes: Immoral conduct; sins of the type mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5 such as incest, immorality, covetousness, idolatry, abusive speech, drunkenness, swindling, or idle busybodies who refuse to work and run around spreading dissension (1 Cor. 5:1, 11; 2 Thess. 3:10-15).

ATTITUDE of Church leaders in Restoration

The key concerns that guide us in this are: (a) the holy character of God, (b) the testimony of the flock, (c) the effect upon the unity and purity of the flock, and (d) the edification and restoration of the individual. These goals or purposes automatically govern the spirit in which all disciplinary action is to be given. Thus:

1. Restoration must be done by those who are spiritual, truly walking by the Holy Spirit and growing in the Lord. Restoration must be done in a spirit of humility, gentleness and patience, looking to ourselves lest we too be tempted (Gal. 6:1-2; 2 Tim. 2:24-25).

2. Discipline must be done without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality (1 Tim. 5:21). Those who walk disorderly are to be admonished, warned, and appealed to in love (1 Thess. 5:14-15; 1 Tim. 5:1-2; Eph. 4:15; 2 Tim. 4:2). This admonishing, is not restricted to church leaders, but may be done by any person in the body with another if that person is Spirit controlled and spiritually minded (cf. 1 Thess. 5:14 with Gal. 6:1).
3. Finally, discipline in the name of our Lord always should lead to restoration which includes a readiness to forgive. The many or majority who discipline must also be ready and eager to forgive, comfort, and reaffirm their love to the sinning person (2 Cor. 2:6-8). Confront the sin, not the person - two of the main objectives is to get the person to confess (James 5:16) and repent (Proverbs 28:13; Psalm 32:2; 1 John 1:8-10).

IMPORTANT NOTE: *Getting the facts and details straight is very important. If in our best efforts, we could not get any more details, let's entrust that God would reveal to us through the person what needs to be exposed to the light. We need discernment to balance between taking their word and gauging if they are speaking in truth. At the end of the day, they are accountable to God.*

STEPS: Confronting & Correcting

STEP ONE:

"If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. Matt. 18:15"

1. First, seek private correction and/or reconciliation with the offender (Matt. 18:15). In Matthew 18:15 many manuscripts have "and if your brother sins against you, go and reprove him in private." This is regardless if you are the offended or the offender reached out to you after their failed effort to correct the offender. Matthew 18:16-17 should not be limited to the problem of one believer sinning against another in view of Galatians 6:1. So, the one offended

or who recognizes the offense or sin is to go privately and try to rectify the problem.

Taking into account verse 21 and Galatians 6:1, there is a two-fold application:

- A. When the problem involves one believer sinning against another, there are two problems that need to be taken care of: **reconciliation** and **restoration** (Matt. 5:23-24).
- B. When the problem involves a believer overcome in or by some sin, as was the case in Galatians 6:1, the need is **restoration**.

2. Begin by expressing your genuine appreciation for the person and their good qualities to show you are genuinely concerned about their welfare. Then and only then bring up the matter which is of concern.

In some situations, the sin is apparent and there is no question, but we must allow for the possibility that we have misjudged or have wrong information. We must listen to the other person's side of the story and seek the facts in the interest of truth and fairness.

If the person fails to respond, warn them that, according to the instructions of Scripture (Matt. 18:16), you will have to get others as witnesses and return with them to deal with the problem.

STEP TWO

But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. Matt. 18:16

If the first step fails, take witnesses to strengthen the active restoration process. They should preferably be spiritual leaders or more mature followers, so that the person will not feel that the church is not merely ganging up on him/her. The aid of church leadership should be sought if the problem involves an offense that is against the whole body or if it is a threat to the unity of the body. If the sin was not clear, the witness should either confirm or deny the offense if it's clearly wrong. If it is and the person admits, then you have succeeded. (Matt. 18:16-17; 1 Tim. 5:19).

These initial contacts, private and with witnesses, provide opportunity for loving admonition, correction, and forgiveness. On the other hand, if these first steps do not produce results, it constitutes a warning that further action will be taken and provides occasion for serious rebuke (2 Tim. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; Titus 2:15; 3:10).

STEP THREE

If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. Matt. 18:17a

If the second step fails, seek reconciliation and restoration through the whole body. If further action is necessary, it is to be taken before the whole church (2 Thess. 3:14-15; Matt. 18:17; 1 Tim. 5:20).

It is to indicate to the offender that his/her action has dishonored the Lord and has caused a rupture in the harmony of the body. The goal is always restoration and the person is still to be counted as a brother (2 Thess. 3:14-15). More than merely creating fear in the rest of the flock as a warning against sin, some situations serve as protective measures for the congregation from being the victim of sinful acts like scams, deception, fraud, etc (1 Tim. 5:20).

Caught vs Confessed

Confession simply means admitting or agreeing. Some forced public confessions don't lead to true repentance simply because they were forced to do it. Confession, in a true sense, should be a self-initiated act. On the other hand, some sinners are caught. It could be that their sins were exposed through confrontation or circumstances. Whether they are caught or confessed, we should carefully discern/gauge if they are humble to admit the sin they committed against God. Symptoms of not owning up would be: blaming others, blaming circumstances, retaliation, looking for someone to take his/her side, arrogance, escaping, etc. But those who take responsibility show evidence of remorse and increase their success in the restoration process. Remorse is of the same nature as humility, and it creates an opportunity for repentance and reconciliation.

Now that we've gone through the Biblical approach on confronting sin and church discipline, the next step is to apply Biblical Restoration. Restoration is a process that doesn't happen overnight. We treat a person's restoration with utmost care just as we take care of someone who, like a child, has just been introduced into saving faith and relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ. In the same fashion, we follow a progression of re-establishing intimacy with God, reconciling relationships that may require fixing affairs, before the restoration to the community.

Progressive RESTORATION

I. RESTORE INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD (CONFESSION & REPENTANCE)

The first step for an unbeliever to be 'born again' is to confess that Jesus is their Lord and Savior. This confession also entails admitting that he or she is a sinner, and is unable to save himself or herself. The word confess literally means "*to agree*" - agreeing with God about sin, admitting one's sins and turning away from them. It involves identifying sin for what it truly is and honestly acknowledging the offenses we have committed (1 Jn. 1:9; Prov. 28:13a). Whether the person being restored is an unbeliever or a professing Christian, confession is a crucial part in the restoration of our relationship with God. He or she will demonstrate a genuine change of heart, a real concern and godly sorrow over his actions, not merely to be forgiven, but because of the harm caused to the glory of God and the hurt caused others (2 Cor. 7:8-11; Ps. 51:17)

Through Christ, we are cleansed and restored in our fellowship with God if we make a private confession. In the same way, when we seek reconciliation with someone who has mistreated us or hurt us, we are seeking restoration in our relationship with God and the person who wronged us: "So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift." (Matthew 5:23-24, ESV). So he or she will decide in his/her heart to make restitution and/or ask for forgiveness from those hurt as it is applicable (Phil. 18-19; Matt. 5:23-24).

In some cases with careful discretion, a public confession is necessary. Just as James encourages, if we have sinned against the church, we are to confess it

publicly (James 5). Public confession of sin is also seen in Acts 19:18: “Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed what they had done.”

A proper confession should lead to repentance - an attitude of turning away from sin. In the same way, that repentance requires confession, one without the other makes either of them meaningless. Turning away from sin produces fruits that the Bible considers as fruits of repentance (Matthew 3:8; Luke 13:6–10; James 2:14–26). We don't want to be legalistic in any way, but Christians over the centuries have always considered the Habits of Grace as leading indicators to gauge a Christian's growth in their faith, knowledge, wisdom, and love for our Lord. These habits of grace include (but are not limited to):

- Spending quality time with God through pious meditation or solitude
- Listening to God through the unhurried reading and meditation of the Bible
- Praying privately, consistently, and fervently
- Continuous humble approach to accountability and counseling

The good news is that true reconciliation with God leads to restoration of the person's relationship with others as part of the wonderful works of Christ's redemption through the Gospel. With God's help and the person's active faith restored as well, we will eventually see the next steps unfold. The fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Gal. 5:22-23) will naturally manifest according to God's grace, and God will also restore however He wants to use them in His church “. . . that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance” (Acts 26:20). However, the person still needs our guidance until he or she is fully restored to the community.

II. RESTORE AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS (FAMILY, DGROUPS)

A FELLOWSHIP THAT REDEEMS Interestingly, much of the effort in these next items comes from the church. The success of these steps relies on the DLeaders, and pastors/overseers. We have to be reminded that those whom we are restoring are in their most vulnerable and weakest state. They need all the support

and encouragement we can give them. It seems counter-intuitive because the world dictates that they need to be punished based on their actions. But in the kingdom of God, consequence and justice are in His hands. We don't impose them. They are already suffering, bleeding, and down on their knees even if it doesn't look like it. Remember that the majority of churches fail in the implementation of Church Disciplines fail because they focus on the Discipline, not the Restoration. So they do not require another word of rebuke for we are past that point (further on this subject in the case study of Job's friends). Our focus now is to constantly assure them that they are loved (2 Cor. 2:8), forgiven, and accepted. We provide support, comfort, and encouragement to them so they can move forward (2 Cor. 2:7b). We have to be intentional in letting them feel God's mercy, and compassion through us. This kind of grace is the best fuel for their full recovery.

MAKING AMENDS In certain cases, the person being restored needs to take responsibility to reverse the damage they have caused. If it's related to money or an offense they have done towards another person, they need to pay them back or seek forgiveness for this phase to be completed. This needs to be discussed between parties involved to arrive at an agreement that will help them both to move on and be reconciled with one another, and honor God.

III. RESTORE COMMUNION WITH SAINTS (COMMUNITY & LORD'S SUPPER)

One of the things we look forward to as believers is the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is a commemoration of Christ's unblemished life, death on the cross at Calvary, and His resurrection. When He instituted this ceremony, He did it with His followers. Paul explained this thoroughly in his letter to the Corinthian believers, reiterating how this is meant only for those who have examined themselves and have come to Christ. Only sinners who are in need of a Savior are welcome to this table of mercy. And because it is special, the Lord's Supper becomes a momentous event for this person's restoration to the community.

Another thing we can encourage them to do is to write down their testimony. Contrary to a public confession where they could be targets of condemnation, a

testimony's focus is on the victory of Christ. It highlights the grace of God to a sinner that led to restoration and transformation. The format of the testimony could be similar to the Life App during GLC. The details could include the sin, its consequences, how it impacted the community or others, and how the Lord dealt with it (with much grace, mercy, and provision through a community that helped him/her back on their walk with God).

In most cases, this concludes the restoration process. This should mean that the Habits of Grace that were formed should continue, as well as the regular meetings with the DLeader. Depending on the need, counseling may or may no longer continue.

RESTORATION TO MINISTRY

For positions of leadership, there should be a time of testing to demonstrate their qualifications after the analogy of 1 Timothy 3:10.

In certain cases, leaders need to be asked to completely let go of their responsibilities, either temporarily or permanently depending on the severity of their case. Based on the efforts and observations of those who walk alongside their restoration, they may not return to their previous responsibility anymore. We should carefully discern the character transformation in terms of repentance, and humility of the sinner (another term maybe). This is for the spiritual, emotional, relational, and mental welfare of the person, as well as what's best for the ministry and the church of God. We should not be afraid of leaving a certain role vacant for it is the Head (Christ) who will provide the needs of His body. Do not forget to exercise Truth and Grace in these matters.

A pastor was once asked to take a few weeks to rest from ministry due to his rough behavior. The pastor agreed with the recommendation along with his superiors. This was supposed to be discussed with the rest of the leaders of the church. But during the meeting with the rest of the COS, and ministry heads, the pastor snapped once more and slammed the table hard. The initial plan which was a few weeks of rest became a 6-month Sabbatical that focuses on restoration. It was

observed that he has an unrepentant heart, he lacks humility, and he's no longer showing the L.O.V. Core values that's why it would be best to take a step back and revisit his relationship with God. While the whole council is supportive of his restoration, the hub pastor and his wife will also walk alongside the pastor and his wife. The pastor's wife was advised to switch roles from her previous ministries and make this her primary role: to support her husband.

When does Church Discipline lead to excommunication?

And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them. Matt. 18:17b-20

If there is no response in repentance and obedience, then the sinning believer is to be rebuked publicly and members of the body are to withhold intimate fellowship through a distinct path of restoration (2 Thess. 3:6, 14-15; Tit. 3:10; 1 Tim. 5:20). The church is to apply the procedures of excommunication as directed in Matthew 18:17: *"let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. "*

Several examples of church discipline are found in Scripture. The Corinthian believers were to be "gathered together" in order to take action on this matter (1 Cor. 5:4-5; Rom. 16:17; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; Phil. 3:17-19).

you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord. (1 Cor. 5:5)

The Word of God is clear that He still desires that this person be saved. He would go as far as destroying the flesh so that he or she may be made holy. Should it result in excommunication, we should continue to pray for this person and reach out to them that the Holy Spirit will cause them to have a change of heart. We should continue to have mercy and compassion for them just as the Lord Jesus Christ did for us.

CASE STUDIES FOR APPLICATION

Take your time going through some case studies on Restoration. Apply the principles and steps that you have learned from the previous topic.

CASE STUDY 01

Bryan began serving as a campus missionary at a young age and showed strong leadership skills. His mentor saw his potential as the future youth coordinator, so when the mentor had to leave, he recommended Bryan as his replacement. Soon after, Bryan was promoted again, but he felt that these promotions were coming too fast. Despite sharing his struggles and grievances with his leaders, he was asked to take on even larger responsibilities. This made Bryan feel like the roles were simply being filled without regard for qualifications or calling.

As part of his new role, Bryan worked closely with the hub satellite's pastors and observed shortcomings in one of them. He reported this to his immediate leader, but was invalidated and gaslighted several times. Over time, Bryan began to feel that his ministry was becoming routine and lacked intentionality.

As he struggled with the ministry, his personal life was also suffering. During this time, he was in an immoral relationship with his girlfriend that was kept hidden from his leaders.

Bryan eventually reached his breaking point, unable to bear the guilt any longer and overwhelmed by bitterness towards church leadership. He stepped down from his position and confessed his immorality and bitterness. However, the church

leadership did not allow him to confess publicly and did not seem to acknowledge their own shortcomings. While his ministry leader announced plans to meet with Bryan for his restoration, no follow-through actually occurred.

1. From the time that Bryan confessed, and based on his context, what's the best approach to restoring Bryan? Did the leaders make the right decision to not let him confess publicly?
2. If you were in Bryan's shoes, how would you want the community to help you be restored?
3. Write down step-by-step, how his case should've been handled better in a way that will promote his restoration.

CASE STUDY 02

Carl is a passionate Bible teacher, church leader, and preacher. Meanwhile, his wife, a successful professional, is a dedicated discipler in the church. They have been serving in the church together since their dating season. Carl's pursuit of greater knowledge in ministry and theology led him to pursue formal studies in the seminary. He received his wife's wholehearted support when he responded to the call to go into full-time ministry and study at the Bible seminary. She became the breadwinner while he studied and volunteered at the church.

Despite being surrounded by a godly community and the overwhelming demands of school, Carl succumbed to temptation and committed adultery, keeping it hidden for years. Despite this, Carl graduated and had an opportunity to start anew. He stopped what he was doing and prayed to God to keep his sin concealed. Several years later, Carl and his wife were called to minister in another church. As they served there, Carl began to be reintroduced to larger church leadership roles. After some years, his wife learned about his former unfaithfulness and felt deeply betrayed. Carl realized he committed two major offenses: committing adultery and living with unconfessed sin. Knowing it was useless to hide anything after God exposed his past sin, Carl told his wife everything and reached out to his disciple and discipler to confess, ask for forgiveness, and seek advice on how to restore his family.

1. If you were Carl's discipler, how would you respond? What would be the first things you would want to tell Carl?
2. As Carl's church leader, what are the things you would require Carl to do? Does he need to step down? If yes or no, what are the reasons?
3. Describe step-by-step how the church leaders can help Carl restore his family, and help him be restored into the community.

CASE STUDY 03

Emil is a very passionate volunteer and discipler. He's also active in numerous church ministries because he enjoys being involved wherever he sees a need for extra hands. You may consider that his love language is "act of service". He became a church leader quickly for that reason. Career-wise, his job gives him access to networks in the field of financing. One time, a friend named Jerome, who is another servant from the church asked for his help to get approved in a car loan. Since it is very challenging for Jerome to secure his own loan, Emil offered to apply for the loan himself. This implies that Emil's name will appear in all the documents involved in the paperwork relating to the ownership of the car, and the financing aspect. Everything seems ok at first until an unfortunate accident occurred which deems the car a "total wreck". Thankfully, the insurance company granted full coverage to the point of issuing a check for the total appraised value of the car. The insurance company issued two checks: one is for the financing institution, for the remaining balance of the car loan; the other check is issued to pay the owner for the total cost of cash installments. Since everything is under Emil's name, the 2nd check was addressed to him. Things became complicated since then. Emil became busy for a few months, always not having the time to encash the check and return the cash to Jerome. A few months later, Jerome took it up to the church leadership because it seems that the long wait is already unacceptable. The church leadership confronted Emil about it, until a time that the check already went stale. He's still firm with his statement that he just didn't have the time to encash the check. Jerome supposedly had plans for the money that he was expecting to get but his family already suffered financial challenges because of this. The issue, being unresolved for quite some time, became known among other church members.

1. What are the clear faults of Emil? What should we do when there's a lack of evidence that he stole it?
2. Despite the possibility of him saying the truth, does Emil need to step down until this is resolved? Why or why not?
3. Using the Peace-Making process, what are the steps we involved in resolving this matter, in restoring Emil, and his relationship with Jerome and his family?

JOURNEYING ALONGSIDE RESTORATION

30-Day Devotion:

Day 1 - Isaiah 59:1-2 - Separation from God - Recognizing the barrier that sin creates between us and God.

Day 2 - Romans 3:23-24 - Redemption through Christ - Understanding that we have all fallen short of God's glory, but we are justified through faith in Jesus.

Day 3 - Romans 5:8 - God's Love - Meditating on the fact that God demonstrated his love for us by sending his son to die for us while we were still sinners.

Day 4 - Ephesians 2:4-5 - Grace - Reflecting on the reality that we are saved by grace through faith, not by our own works.

Day 5 - Colossians 1:20-22 - Reconciliation through Christ's Blood - Contemplating how Christ's blood has made peace between us and God, and how we are now holy, blameless, and above reproach in his sight.

Day 6 - Romans 8:15-17 - Adoption as Sons - Grasping the reality that we are now children of God, adopted into his family, and heirs with Christ.

Day 7 - 1 John 1:9 - Confession and Forgiveness - Acknowledging our sins and receiving God's forgiveness through confession.

Day 8 - Psalm 32:1-5 - The Joy of Forgiveness - Celebrating the freedom and joy that comes from being forgiven by God.

Day 9 - Psalm 51:10-12 - Renewal of the Spirit - Asking God to renew our hearts and spirits, and restore us to the joy of our salvation.

Day 10 - James 4:7-10 - Submitting to God - Surrendering our will and desires to God, and submitting ourselves to him.

Day 11 - Matthew 6:33 - Seeking God's Kingdom - Focusing on seeking first the kingdom of God, and trusting that everything else will be taken care of.

Day 12 - Psalm 27:4 - Delighting in God - Delighting in the Lord and seeking his face above all else.

Day 13 - Romans 12:1-2 - Transformation - Offering our bodies as living sacrifices to God, and being transformed by the renewing of our minds.

Day 14 - Galatians 2:20 - Crucified with Christ - Recognizing that we have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer we who live, but Christ who lives in us.

Day 15 - Revelation 21:3-4 - The Promise of Restoration - Looking forward to the day when God will dwell with us, and wipe every tear from our eyes.

Day 1 - Ephesians 2:1-10 - Grace that Saves - Understanding the depth of God's grace and mercy in saving us.

Day 2 - Romans 3:23-24 - A Gift from God - Recognizing that salvation is a gift from God and cannot be earned.

Day 3 - Romans 5:6-11 - God's Love in Action - Understanding that God demonstrated His love for us by sending Jesus to die for us.

Day 4 - John 14:6 - The Way, the Truth, and the Life - Realizing that Jesus is the only way to the Father.

Day 5 - 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 - Ambassadors for Christ - Understanding our role as ambassadors for Christ and how He reconciled us to God.

Day 6 - Colossians 1:13-14 - Transferred to the Kingdom of Light - Recognizing that through Christ we have been delivered from the kingdom of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of light.

Day 7 - Galatians 2:20 - Crucified with Christ - Understanding that through Christ we have died to our old way of life and have been made alive in Him.

Day 8 - Romans 6:1-14 - New Life in Christ - Understanding that through baptism we have been buried with Christ and raised to new life in Him.

Day 9 - 1 Peter 1:3-5 - A Living Hope - Recognizing that through Christ we have a living hope that will never fade away.

Day 10 - John 10:10 - Abundant Life - Understanding that through Christ we have been given an abundant life.

Day 11 - Galatians 5:16-26 - Walking by the Spirit - Understanding that through the Holy Spirit we can live a life that pleases God.

Day 27 - Philippians 4:4-9 - Rejoice in the Lord - Understanding that through Christ we can have joy even in difficult circumstances.

Day 28 - Colossians 3:1-17 - Putting on the New Self - Understanding that as we put off our old way of life and put on the new self in Christ, we are being renewed in His image.

Day 29 - Ephesians 4:17-24 - The New Self in Action - Understanding that as we live out the new self in Christ, we will be characterized by love, forgiveness, and unity.

Day 30 - Revelation 21:1-5 - A New Heaven and a New Earth - Understanding that through Christ we have the hope of a new heaven and a new earth, where we will dwell with God forever.

RESOLVING CONFLICTS

When do we need to resolve conflicts:

1. Difficulties between members (Matt. 18:15-17).
2. Divisive or factious people causing divisions in the church (Rom. 16:17-18; Titus 3:9-11).
3. False teaching; erroneous teaching and views which concern the fundamentals of the faith and not lesser differences of interpretation (1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:17-18; also implied in Rev. 2:14-16; Phil. 3:2-3, 15-19; Rom. 16:17-18).

PEACEMAKING RESPONSES

The six responses found on the top portion of the slippery slope are directed at finding a just and mutually agreeable solution to a conflict. These responses may be divided into two categories: *personal peacemaking* responses and *assisted* responses.

PERSONAL PEACEMAKING

responses are carried out in private between the parties themselves. Although it is appropriate for one or both parties to seek advice on how to implement these responses, they should normally try to resolve their differences one-on-one before asking others to intervene in the dispute.

Overlooking an offense—"A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense" (Prov. 19:11). Many disputes can be resolved properly by quietly overlooking an offense and simply forgiving the person who has wronged you (see Prov. 12:16; 17:14; 1 Pet. 4:8).

Reconciliation—"If your brother has something against you ... go and be reconciled" (Matt. 5:23-24). "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just

between the two of you” (Matt. 18:15). “Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently” (Gal. 6:1a). As these passages indicate, personal wrongs that are too serious to overlook should be resolved through confession or loving confrontation, which opens the way for forgiveness and reconciliation (see Prov. 28:13; Gal. 6:1-3).

Negotiation—“Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others” (Phil. 2:3-4). Substantive issues related to money, property and other rights should be resolved by negotiating solutions that meet the interests of all those involved (see Dan. 1:1-16; Matt. 7:12).

If the parties cannot resolve a dispute through personal peacemaking, they should pursue one of the assisted responses. This will require that they seek help from other people in their church or community.

Mediation— “If he will not listen [to you], take one or two others along” (Matt. 18:16). When people are unable to resolve a dispute in private, Jesus says they should ask one or more other people to meet with them to help them communicate more effectively and explore possible solutions. In this process, mediators give advice, but they have no power to impose solutions.

Arbitration—“If you have disputes about such matters, appoint as judges even men of little account in the church” (1 Cor. 6:1-8). When the parties cannot come to a voluntary agreement on a substantive issue, they may appoint arbitrators to listen to their arguments and render a binding decision.

Accountability—“If he refuses to listen to [others], tell it to the church” (Matt. 18:17-20). If a person who professes to be a Christian refuses to be reconciled and do what is just, his or her church leaders should formally intervene to promote justice, repentance, forgiveness and restoration.

When someone asks for your help in resolving a conflict, you can often do a great deal of good without getting directly involved with both sides. Instead, you can simply offer counsel on how that one individual might be able to go back to the other person and resolve their differences in private. In doing so, you are helping the individual to obey Jesus' instructions in Matthew 5:23-24, 18:15, and Galatians 6:1, "If you ... remember that your brother has something against you ..., go and be reconciled," and "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you, " and "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently."

This process of offering individual counsel is sometimes referred to as "conflict coaching," because the peacemaker is offering encouragement and advice from the sidelines instead of getting directly involved with both parties in the dispute. An effective coach promotes personal responsibility as he or she guides individuals through the basic steps of peacemaking. These steps may be summarized as the "Four G's:" Glorify God, Get the log out of your own eye, Gently restore, and Go and be reconciled. (The following discussion is condensed from *The Peacemaker*, by Ken Sande (Baker Books, 3d. ed. 2004).

A Commitment to Biblical Conflict Resolution

As people reconciled to God by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we believe that we are called to respond to conflict in a way that is remarkably different from the way the world deals with conflict (Matt. 5:9, Luke 6:27-36; Gal. 5:19-26). We also believe that conflict provides opportunities to glorify God, serve other people, and grow to be like Christ (Rom. 8:28-29; 1 Cor. 10:31-11:1; James 1:2-4). Therefore, in response to God's love and in reliance on his grace, we commit ourselves to responding to conflict according to the following principles.

GLORIFY GOD

Instead of focusing on our own desires or dwelling on what others may do, we will rejoice in the Lord and bring him praise by depending on his forgiveness, wisdom, power, and love, as we seek to faithfully obey his commands and maintain a loving, merciful, and forgiving attitude (Ps. 37:1-6; Mark 11:25; John 14:15; Rom. 12:17-21; 1 Cor. 10:31; Phil. 4:2-9; Col. 3:1-4; James 3:17-18; 4:1-3; 1 Peter 2:12).

GET THE LOG OUT OF YOUR EYE

Instead of blaming others for a conflict or resisting correction, we will trust in God's mercy and take responsibility for our own contribution to conflicts — confessing our sins to those we have wronged, asking God to help us change any attitudes and habits that lead to conflict, and seeking to repair any harm we have caused (Prov. 28:13; Matt. 7:3-5; Luke 19:8; Col. 3:5-14; 1 John 1:8-9).

GENTLY RESTORE

Instead of pretending that conflict doesn't exist or talking about others behind their backs, we will overlook minor offenses or we will talk personally and graciously with those whose offenses seem too serious to overlook, seeking to restore them rather than condemn them. When a conflict with a Christian brother or sister cannot be resolved in private, we will ask others in the body of Christ to help us settle the matter in a biblical manner (Prov. 19:11; Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 6:1-8; Gal. 6:1-2; Eph. 4:29; 2 Tim. 2:24-26; James 5:9).

GO AND BE RECONCILED

Instead of accepting premature compromise or allowing relationships to wither, we will actively pursue genuine peace and reconciliation — forgiving others as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven us, and seeking just and mutually beneficial solutions to our differences (Matt. 5:23-24; 6:12; 7:12; Eph. 4:1-3, 32; Phil. 2:3-4. By God's grace, we will apply these principles as a matter of stewardship, realizing that conflict is an opportunity, not an accident. We will remember that success in God's eyes is not a matter of specific results, but of faithful, dependent obedience. And we will pray that

our service as peacemakers will bring praise to our Lord and lead others to know His infinite love (Matt. 25:14-21; John 13:34-35; Rom. 12:18; 1 Peter 2:19; 4:19).