



## Restoring The Damaged Soul

By Steve Gallagher

“The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul...” (Psalm 19:7)

In a period of man’s history when the often-conflicting teachings of psychology are held in almost reverential awe, it takes a real step of faith to believe David’s statement that a sin-ravaged soul can be restored through the Word of God. When I read this verse, my mind immediately went to the words of Paul: “Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently...” (Galatians 6:1 NIV) Another translation says, “...you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path.” (NLT)

The word restore is the same term used for a doctor who sets (or restores) a broken bone. What an apt picture of the man who has been involved in pornography and/or fornication! His soul has been crushed to pieces by the destructive nature of sin. Proper perspectives of sexuality have been warped and distorted. Evil has penetrated his heart with spiritual darkness. Spiritually speaking, he has fallen off a three story building: he’s still alive, but he’s all busted up inside. What will you do to help him?

Paul said, “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” (II Timothy 3:16-17) His claim—like that of David a thousand years earlier—was that the Word of God was sufficient—adequate—to provide the answers to life’s many problems.

### **The Four-Fold Use of Scripture**

Unquestionably, there is an important place for teaching. Believers must be educated in all that the Bible has to say about life. The pulpit is the perfect vehicle for this greatly needed gift. It gives the pastor the opportunity to bring out important truths needed for living the victorious Christian life—and he can do it all at once to his entire congregation! However, in my opinion, too many pastors short-change their people by limiting their usage of the Bible to Sunday services. This is tragic, because it means that their ministry is only operating at one-fourth its power! It’s like a four-cylinder engine firing on a single cylinder. You might make it down the road, but it sure won’t be very effective.

Paul also told this earnest young minister named Timothy that he should use the Word of God to reprove people. This is an exceedingly important tool in the hands of the minister who is helping someone who is in habitual sin. The picture here is of a man attempting to walk the narrow path of Christianity. Occasionally strong temptations show up along the way. Solomon paints a vivid picture of the young man who runs into a beautiful prostitute in the street. “With her many persuasions she entices him; with her flattering lips she seduces him. Suddenly he follows her, as an ox goes to the slaughter...” (Proverbs 7:21-22) This is also a picture of a man being tempted into pornography. He has drifted off “the highway of holiness” and has gone astray. When the man of God (who is responsible for this man’s spiritual well-

being) sees this happening, he steps between him and the source of his temptation and in passionate, godly love says, “No! You can’t do that!” He is stopping this man from going over a cliff. This is biblical reproof. “...if another Christian is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path...”

Biblical correction is slightly different. This occurs when the believer is in some type of unrepentant sin and the minister confronts him about it. This man desperately needs someone to step into his life and point out what he cannot see for himself because of the deceptiveness of his sin. He needs to be shown in Scripture how his actions are falling short of godly standards. Biblical confrontation—done in love and meekness—is perhaps the most powerful tool the minister has in dealing with sin. It is correcting the “broken bones” of his soul.

Lastly, Paul said that the Word of God is to be used to train people in righteousness. Training is different from teaching in that it is personal. Rather than picking and choosing from a pulpit sermon what he may or may not want to adopt into his life, the man receives face-to-face discipling from his pastor. His spiritual mentor teaches him how to live a life pleasing to God and then holds him accountable to follow through in his daily life. This one-on-one discipleship is greatly needed by the struggling saint. Without accountability, it is simply too easy to disregard the teaching that comes from the pulpit.

It will be noticed that the first usage of the Sword of the Spirit is done corporately, while the other three are practiced through interpersonal relationships. Teaching from the pulpit is important, but people change when the minister gets involved in their lives. Unfortunately, many pastors have adopted a worldly concept of ministerial success. The world only sees numbers: the size of the congregation, the amount of money flowing into the till, and the extent of the pastor’s influence.

God does not see any of this when He looks down from heaven. Success in His kingdom does not revolve around numbers but around faithfulness. Christians will not be judged by mathematical formulas (number crunching), but by their love for others. There is nothing inherently wrong in pastoring a large church, if that is what the Lord has called the man to do. However, there are many pastors of small congregations who will be counted faithful because they have lived sacrificially to meet the needs of others. Perhaps worldly Christians don’t respect them but heaven does. They will be counted faithful because they have put the lives of others above their own ambitions.

If people are to be effectively helped through their struggles, someone will have to get their hands dirty! Somebody must be willing to get involved in their personal lives. There must be a man or woman of God who will teach, reprove, correct and train in righteousness. Perhaps this is what Paul meant when he said, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.” (II Timothy 2:15) The pastor who does this will find that David’s statement is true: “The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul.”

**Steve Gallagher** is the founder and president of Pure Life Ministries. He has dedicated his life to helping men find freedom from sexual sin and the abundant life in God that comes through deep repentance.

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