Rediscovering the Bible for Involvement and Insights for Spiritual Growth for the Restoration Church Member

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Abstract
This dissertation proposes that many individuals in the Restoration Church, an early nineteenth-century American church movement founded by Barton Stone and Alexander Campbell that today includes hundreds of Churches of Christ/Christian Churches, are experiencing spiritual malnourishment, while finding in the tradition a lack of resources, rhetoric, or guidance to stem the hunger. Section 1 describes the influence of contextualization, tracing the history of the Restoration Movement back to its early philosophical and social influences that resulted in a rationalist and Biblicist interpretation of the Bible that focused primarily on conversion and church organization, while distracting attention from spirituality and divine immanence. Section 2 critiques popular spiritual formation literature from the rationalist-Biblicist mindset to determine its ability for both invitation and instruction for spiritual formation for Restoration members. Section 3 argues for a modest movement toward a more authentic Christian spirituality by maintaining a solid hold on two foundational Restoration beliefs of biblical authority and conversion. Moving forward will involve, first, the rediscovery of Scripture to include the entire canon. This will allow, second, the possibility for a richer soteriology that includes a more informed pneumatology. Third, it will be argued that a more robust and experiential understanding of conversion will lead to a more effectual Christian life. Sections 4 and 5 outline a non-fiction book for the church member to rediscover a wider view of the Bible, salvation, and service that will invite and empower the believer to move into a deeper faith and active Christian life based squarely on the familiar foundations of the Restoration tradition. The artifact will be several chapters of the book described in Sections 4 and 5.

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Group members pray and consider what the Scriptures say and how they apply to daily life. But don't worry, you don't need to be a Bible scholar to lead a session. Consider the standard questions found along-side the Bible passages in the Group Discussion Flow section of each session, or choose from the alternate questions found in the hear section of the Notes and Preparation Checklist. Feel free to come up with your own questions, based on the spiritual interest and maturity of your group. For example, if your group consists mainly of non-Christians or very young Christians, you may need to ask questions which clarify or ensure proper understanding, such as, “Is there anything about this passage that isn’t making sense to you?” Spiritual growth is expected of the believer. The author of Hebrews reprimands his readers for “no longer try[ing] to understand” (Hebrews 5:11 NIV) and “being still an infant” (Hebrews 5:13). The criticism leads to exhortation: “Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity” (Hebrews 6:1). The apostle Peter says, “Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). Scripture offers valuable insights into how a Christian can grow spiritually. It is Christ's power in the believer that ... Involvement in a local church and the exercise of our spiritual gifts are invaluable to the development of maturity (Ephesians 4:11-16). This same idea about restoration is also on God’s heart! Sin corrupts and weakens us, and it even causes us to suffer loss and pain in many ways. So God wants to bring people back to Himself, because He knows that the peace and joy that we all want for our lives can only be found in Him. Here God is talking about the restoration of Israel. They had disobeyed God and had been taken into captivity, but after repenting and calling out to Him, He promised to restore them to the promised land and to a position of protection and right relationship with Him once again. He goes on to list, explain and elaborate on some of the blessings that they are going to receive. No one is more spiritual than anyone else, as we all have been filled with the same gift of the Holy Spirit when we are saved. It is this spiritual growth that becomes a birthmark of our faith! Here is a collection of our favorite bible verses on growth. As you spend time in Scripture and pray, you will experience growth and blessings as you pursue righteousness! 1 Samuel 2:26. Chapter Parallel Compare. 26 And the boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with the LORD and with people. 2 Peter 3:18. Chapter Parallel Compare. 18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.