



Welcome To The Restoration Business

I know I'm not the only one who would love to share a best friends necklace with Joanna Gaines--you know the type where each friend wears a half? She could wear the BE FRI part, and I would wear the ST ENDS part. We could feed goats and shop at Anthropologie together. It would be great.

I admire the *Fixer Upper* star's passion, her joy, her hair, the crush she still has on Chip, her simplicity, her testimony, and her amazing success as a #girlboss. I mean she turned Waco (yeah, Waco!) into a tourist destination, and a love for shiplap into a million dollar brand! She's killin' it.

From her best-selling book to the darling Magnolia Market, **her claim to fame was birthed out of an ability to restore an awful house into a dream home.**

Restore: To put in order, bring back to former condition, to mend, to strengthen, perfect, complete, make one what he or she ought to be.

A restored car, a piece of furniture, or in Joanna's case, a restored home, are all something to see, **but nothing can compare to the sight of a restored life.**

Galatians 6:1 *Brethren (or Sistren!), if any person is overtaken in misconduct or sin of any sort, you who are spiritual [who are responsive to and controlled by the Spirit] should set him right and restore and reinstate him, without any sense of superiority*

and with all gentleness, keeping an attentive eye on yourself, lest you should be tempted also.

Welcome to the restoration business, sweethearts! I've heard the saying, "God is in the restoration business," many times, and God IS in the restoration business, but God always, always, always works through people, and **when it comes to restoring individuals, those in sin or overtaken by wrong thinking, He's put that responsibility on Spirit-led believers.**

I think it's safe to say that most of us don't like confrontation, and in an effort to avoid awkward conversations with the people we do life with, **we bow out of the command to RESTORE and give in to the world's ways, which are to IGNORE or CLOSE THE DOOR.**

When we see someone going down the wrong path, not living according to the Word, being too hard on themselves, working too hard and not honoring God's command to rest, letting fear dictate their decisions, hurting others feelings, not honoring their spouse, comparing themselves to everyone else, grumbling and complaining constantly, letting their emotions rule their lives, seeing their kids as burdens and treating them that way, in an unhealthy dating relationship, making poor financial decisions, overtaken in misconduct or sin of any kind, **the scripture does not say we are to butt out, make excuses for them, or cut them off; it says we are to RESTORE them.**

Restore: To put in order, bring back to former condition, to mend, to strengthen, perfect, complete, make one what he or she ought to be.

To be the voice in this community that God has called us to be, we are going to have to purpose to be women who have mastered the art of restoration. We are going to have to **turn off our default "ignore" settings.** We are going to have to realize that **making excuses for people doesn't help them, it hurts them.** And we are going to have to offer **grace on top of grace on top of some more grace.**

Now, along with the command to restore, in the same verse, we get three VERY important guidelines for how to enter into a situation where someone needs mending to take place in their life.

1. Without any sense of superiority. When the Spirit leads you to restore someone, the goal is not to show them how awesome you are and how off the mark they are. The goal is for them to see you bow low and humble yourself. Be vulnerable. **The**

restoration process will be cut short if we are concerned about presenting our ideal self to the person we want to see strengthened because as Jess Connolly says, “Our ideal self is not our most influential self.” Lay down your pride. It’s okay to let the person you are mending know that you aren’t perfect either. We all fall short of the glory of God. **Set aside any desire for people to see you as their superior and you’ll be amazed at how quickly they let their guard down.** A great way to demonstrate you aren’t on a power trip is to ask the person for permission to speak into an area of their life which you are concerned about.

2. With all gentleness. Not some gentleness and some sassiness, but ALL gentleness. Gentleness is closely tied to humbleness. It comes from an awareness of our own weaknesses and proclivity for mistakes. **Proverbs 15:1 says, “A gentle answer turns away wrath, a harsh word stirs up anger.”** Watch your tone, your body language, and your facial expressions. An angry person who feels they are being attacked or put down is not going to walk away restored, but probably more off track than before you brought up the issue.

3. Keeping an attentive eye on yourself. Before having conversations that are restorative in nature, take a good look at your intentions. **Check your heart and make sure your concern for this person is coming from a place of love and concern,** because if your motive is not pure, they will see right through you, hindering your chances of having any kind of influence in their life.

We all have blind spots, and **I’m learning to appreciate people who care enough about me to gently point out things in my life that are broken and need to be reset.**

Not too long ago a close friend, through tears, told me she missed the way things used to be between us. I was so caught up with work and kids and figuring out how to pastor a church and lead well that I was overlooking a relationship that I valued and that breathed life into me. **I’m so thankful my sister in Christ did not ignore what was happening, or get angry with me and shut me out, but instead she made a way for restoration to take place in my life and in our friendship.**

Part of our call as HIS heart, hands, and daughters is to, *“Love from the center of who we are; don’t fake it. Run for dear life from evil; hold on for dear life to good. Be good friends who love deeply; practice playing second fiddle” (Romans 12:9-1).*

Good friends who love deeply from the center of who they are in Christ see beauty in restoration. When the Spirit asks, “Do you have the guts to take on a fixer upper?” we

respond with joy and excitement because it's our delight to be a doer of the Word. It fills us with great purpose to know that God wants to use us to take broken things and make them beautiful. **We don't shy away, we don't push away, we lead the way.** Like Joanna, make restoration your claim to fame.



CONVERSATION STARTERS

1. What setting do you default to when you see someone who is in need of restoration: ignore or close the door? Discuss reasons why those methods are counter-productive.
2. Proverbs 27:17 "As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend." Why do you think it's so hard to have conversations with friends which actually sharpen them?
3. How do you handle correction? What's your first response when someone comes along and points out that you may be missing it somewhere? Are you teachable or easily offended?
4. Sarah shared how a friend pointed out her priorities were out of balance. Share about a time when someone has helped you see a blind spot and brought restoration to an area of your life.



HIS HEART WORK

Study: The word *gentle* is used 21 times in the New Living Translation. Use biblegateway.com to perform a keyword search for *gentle* and spend a few quiet times reading, meditating, and writing down some of those verses that really speak to you. Don't forget to share to remember! Share with your group what God is showing you about being gentle.

Act: We all need people in our lives who know they have permission to speak into any areas where they may see us slipping. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you three people. Then reach out to those people to simply let them know you value their friendship, and tell them that they have the all-clear from you to speak restoration into your life at anytime.



PRAYER NEEDS

Write down the prayer requests of your group members, and pray fervently for them! Let your group members know when you are praying for them, if you have any scriptures or encouraging words for them, etc.