

Spiritual Growth

Repairing & Rebuilding Firm Foundations in Christ

Session Five

Restoration

God's Wall God's Hedge

Opening Prayer

Objective:

- ❖ *Develop faith, hope, and trust in God for every situation and desire wholeness in Christ.*
- ❖ *Acknowledge where we are right now, align ourselves with the Word, and submit everything to God.*
- ❖ *Develop a deep lasting relationship with Christ; fall deeply in love with Him*
- ❖ *Desire to commune and fellowship with Him consistently and continually as we go on with God from glory to glory.*

If we are to obtain in our lives the fullness of what Jesus did for us on the cross, we must know that **God's Word is the First, and Final, Authority.** Once we have accepted this as the absolute truth, we begin to **align ourselves with the Word of God** by doing and being what God has said in His Word. This decision places a **narrow gate** before us. Sometimes that narrow gate seems very hard to enter. We may even say we can't get through, but there are things being worked in and through us preparing us to enter in. During this preparation time we are in a place of **acknowledgement** as we begin to see things in our nature that need to change in order to align with God's ways. Once we have acknowledged our natural ways and see that we are out of the will of God our heart is broken and we are brought to repentance. In **repentance** we receive God's **forgiveness**, as well as forgiving others of their trespasses against us. Then **restoration** comes, change begins to take place in our life, and peace & joy are renewed. Repentance prepared the way for restoration. John the Baptist brought the message of repentance. He prepared the way for Jesus who brought restoration. So repentance prepares the way for restoration. Restoration took place when Jesus conquered death, hell and the grave. Restoration is available to you right now. It became available to you the moment you were born again (repented of your sins and declared Jesus as Lord and Savior of your life).

Once we begin to walk with God we are motivated to continue following Him by our deep love for what He has done for us. Everything we do is love motivated. When we are walking in love we have peace and joy in our lives. If peace and joy leave we need to check our hearts. When we resist change our heart grows hard toward the things of God. A hard heart leaves us broken and hurting, left reliving the past and becoming blinded to the future. This is the downward spiral of the sin nature, which is never satisfied. Remember the devil wants to kill you, steal from you all that God has for you, and destroy you; spirit, soul, and body.

Resisting a Heart Change

Resisting a heart change can be the most detrimental thing to do in our Christian life. When we resist, we are placing more emphasis on our past than God's ability to change our future. If we can't get over the past, our focus is on the past. We literally have turned our back to God, and we are looking back at what should have been left behind. We will never get beyond our past if we don't trust God to change our future. Allow yourself to give God all of your heart. Let it be like clay in the Master's hand so that He can mold and shape it for His use. Allow change to come. Acknowledge that things in your heart and life need to change. Ask God to help you, invite Him in and He will work wonders in you.

God's Wall & God's Hedge

Instructor's note: Ask the class to give one word to describe how they feel when someone or something backs them into a corner and there is no way out.

Analogy: *Corralling a Wild Stallion*

A wild stallion can only be tamed by gentle care. The caretaker brings him in the coral, feeds him, waters him, and allows him to jump the fence and leave. When the stallion leaves, the caretaker goes back out to get the horse and brings him in again feeding, watering and caring for him. The jumping of the fence and bringing back in continues until the stallion no longer wants to leave the caretaker for he knows it is better for him to stay there than to go.

Now ask the class: How would you respond differently to this question if you knew that it was God who backed you into that corner?

Instructor's note: Help the group members see that it is God's love and mercy that wants to bring change in their lives. And that He will do anything to get them to recognize that all they need is Him. His wall or hedge, though painful, protects us from destruction and gives opportunities for correction, repentance, and deliverance. Think of Job's life. The Scripture says that Job was a righteous man, yet he was tested as with fire. Job 3:23 says, "Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden, and whom God has hedged in?" Job 19:8, "He (God) has fenced up my way, so that I cannot pass; and He has set darkness in my paths." Job goes through self-examination as God reveals more and more of Himself. Job 42, "Then Job answered the Lord and said: 'I know You can do everything. And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You. You asked, 'Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge? Therefore, I have uttered what I did not understand. Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. Listen, please, and let me speak; You said 'I will question you, and you shall answer Me.' I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.'"

Things to consider as a group:

- ❖ Recognize God's plan hedges us in so that we can examine ourselves and turn to Him
- ❖ Know that God is sovereign and He is all we need
- ❖ See God's tremendous love for each of us
- ❖ Know there is nothing He would not do to obtain our love and desire for Him alone
- ❖ Stress that anything or anyone we give our attention to other than God is an idol or false god, and God will not allow any other gods before Him.
- ❖ Understand that nothing will deliver us from the hand of God. He will stay with us in the hedge until we reach true repentance and turn away from our sinful nature. Then restoration will come.

The **main objective** in this lesson is to understand that God hedges our way to allow us

- ❖ To see ourselves as we really are,
- ❖ To turn away from the sinful nature that separates us from God, so that He can deliver us and bring us into all that He desires for us.

Read Hosea 2:6 & 7

“Therefore, behold, I will **hedge up your way** with thorns, and wall her in, so that she cannot find her paths. She will chase her lovers, but not overtake them; yes, she will seek them, but not find them. Then she will say, ‘I will go and return to my first husband, for then it was better for me than now.’”

Explain to the group about the relationship between Hosea and his wife, Gomer.

What does “hedge up your way mean?”

V6, I will hedge up your way: Hebrew Dictionary #7753, shut in (for **formation, protection** or **restraint**).

What does this hedge of thorns represent in your life?

Just think for a moment and be honest about how you are reacting right now.

When you were hedged in by thorns, what did you do?

How did it make you feel?

What is God doing by hedging us in?

- ❖ Putting us in a place where we will cry out to Him.
- ❖ Protecting us from making poor decisions.

His wall or hedge, though painful, protects us from destruction and gives opportunities for correction, repentance, and deliverance.

Let’s read: Hosea 2:10, “Now I will uncover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and no one shall deliver her from My hand.”

Who or what are your lovers?

Think for a moment and tell me what a false god is? It is your lover...

A false god is ANYTHING or ANYONE you give more attention and love to than God. What did God say about this? Exodus 20:3, YOU shall have no other gods before me. This includes our husbands, friends, food, drugs, alcohol,... EVERYTHING!

Now let’s read verse (v10) again: “Now I will uncover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and no one shall deliver her from My hand.”

What promise is God making in this verse?

NO ONE or NO THING will deliver you from His hand! Hallelujah!!!! Read the verse again.

What has God done to ensure the fulfillment of this promise?

He has hedged your way!!! He has prevented you from continuing on this path of destruction. Think about your own situation and tell me how is God trying to prevent you from continuing on your current path?

Now let's read: Hosea 2:14 – 16,

"Therefore, behold, I will allure her, will bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfort to her. I will give her her vineyards from there, and the Valley of Achor as a door of hope; she shall sing there as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt. And it shall be in that day, says the Lord, that you will call me My Husband, and no longer call Me 'My Master...'"

Application:

Both Job and Hosea were restored by God and used to bring restoration to others. Their restoration did not take place until they did exactly as God had told them to do (Job 42 & Hosea 3). Likewise, we must do exactly what God tells us to do in order that restoration may come in our lives. We may say, "we don't know what God is telling us." But that is wrong, His word tells us exactly what to do in every situation, we will both submit and do it, or we will turn away. If we turn away, we will remain in the hedge until the next time we are at the crossroad of decision, at which time we will again have to choose, will we go God's way or will we go our own.

This week's assignment:

- ❖ Acknowledge today the areas in your life that need to change.
- ❖ Repent, forgive, and allow God to move in each one. Give Him an open door and He will take it – doing marvelous things in your life. He wants to do you good!
- ❖ Journal about the things God is revealing to you