

February 20, 2011

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Monday

James 1:14 But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.

"Reel him in!" the devil shouts to his minion imps. "I have thrown the bait and captured the unsuspecting fool." That is the picture of James' words. This is the picture of a baited hook and the unsuspecting fish. Sin is deceitful. Sin is enticing. Sin is devastating in its capture. Still the strength of sin is not found in the devil's temptation but in the individual's desires. David cried, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there be any hurtful way in me." (Psalms 139:23–24)

Tuesday

Gal. 6:1 ...you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path.

The idea of restoration as returning one to a 'position' or even a 'place of service' is not found in this verse. Though many translations use the word 'restore', the idea presented is not of placing a fallen statue back on a pedestal or hanging a picture back on a wall. Instead it is a picture of gluing a busted statue back together or mending the damage done to a slashed picture. The call is one of restoring by fixing, nursing, and mending. So you are to tenderly take the broken believer and nurse him or her back to spiritual health. Position is not God's concern, but health and wholeness.

Wednesday

Gal. 6:1 ...restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness.

Gal. 5:23 But the fruit of the Spirit is...gentleness...

Perhaps there is no greater test of our walk with Christ, of our 'Christ-likeness', of our 'fullness of the Spirit' than our reaction to a brother or a sister who has fallen to sin's trap. How do we react? How do we respond? God does not call for believers to turn 'blind eyes' to sin. That is not God's way. But it does call on each of us to react with compassion, forgiveness, and grace. 'Gentleness' is a fruit of God's work in you. How you respond to the 'fallen other' is God's test of your surrender to Him. Gentleness!

Thursday

John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and **destroy**; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

The thieves broke into the Cairo Antiquities Museum during the riots a week ago. It wasn't that they stole a bunch of valuable stuff. It was that they destroyed a bunch of irreplaceable stuff. It wasn't that they made it unworthy of display, but that they smashed it to pieces. Now the concern of the caretakers is not to restore the antiquities and display them publicly or to put them back in a certain exhibit. Their concern is to get the broken pieces into a back room, away from the eyes of the public, and put them back together. God has taken many a child out of the public eye so that He might restore them. Have you let Him restore you?

Friday

Luke 6:40 "A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been **fully trained**, will be like his teacher."

The word translated 'restored' in Galatians 6:1 is here translated 'fully trained'. It is a word of instruction, correction, and discipleship. Sin always involves some misunderstanding of scripture, some error in doctrine, and/or some erroneous reasoning. To restore necessarily involves helping another through instruction and correction. We too often underemphasize the need for doctrinal training. But such training in the scriptures is essential to keeping you from sin and in restoring the one who has fallen to sin. Unto God I pray that each believer in our congregation will desire to grow in his/her understanding the doctrines of God's word.