

1. The HEART for restoration in the church

- **Matthew 18:14** “So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.”
- **John 6:37** “All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.”
- **John 10:27-30** “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.”
- **Ephesians 4:15** “Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.”
- **Psalms 141:5** “Let a righteous man strike me—it is a kindness; let him rebuke me—it is oil for my head; let my head not refuse it.”
- **Proverbs 27:5-6** “Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy.”
- **Hebrews 12:5b-6** “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”

2. The PATTERN for restoration in the church

What NOT to do

- **Rage** – any outbursts of anger at the person is sin – James 1:20 “for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.”
- **Revenge** – Romans 12:19 “Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.’”
- **Slander** – maligning someone verbally or electronically to falsely accuse them is sin – 1 Peter 2:23 “When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.”
- **Gossip** – whether what is said is true or not, speaking to others before directly to the person, whether to leverage allies or just hurt the person, is sin – Ephesians 4:29 “Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.”

- **Fear** – sometimes we think the person will not respond well and we fear the person’s rejection, disapproval, mocking, or even loss of friendship – 1 John 4:18 “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.”
- **Nothing** – often, we make all sorts of excuses to ultimately do nothing.
 - “The timing isn’t right; I’m going to wait” – Matthew 5:23-25b “So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Come to terms quickly with your accuser...”
 - “I shouldn’t be the one initiating; she needs to come to me first to apologize!” – Romans 12:18 “If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.”
 - “I’m too shy, that’s not my personality” – we all have different personalities, but this is never given in Scripture as an excuse to not obey. In fact, as born again believers, 2 Timothy 1:7 says, “God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.”
 - “I just don’t know what to say!” – ignorance isn’t a sin, but we want to all be ready to love one another well through biblical restoration.

What TO do: COVER in love

- **Proverbs 19:11** “Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense.”
- **1 Peter 4:8** “Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.”
- Wayne Mack and Dave Swavely advise, “we should confront our brother when he commits any action that is forbidden in Scripture and cannot be overlooked.”
- Practical questions to ask yourself to discern if you should cover in love, or confront in love:
 - Is it a sin? Has a real sin been committed where God’s clear command has been broken?
 - Is there disunity? Does division and discord exist?
 - Will this sin hurt others?
 - **Hebrews 12:14-15** “Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled”
 - Is this sin a pattern? Has it been happening repeatedly or is it a one-off event?

What TO do: CONFRONT in love

1. Speak PRIVATELY

Here are ten things we should aim for in this first STEP:

- Prepare your heart.
 - Confess any sinful way you've contributed to the situation – Psalm 139:23-24 "Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!"
 - Remove the log of judgmental arrogance – Matthew 7:5 "You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye."
 - Forgive – Ephesians 4:32b "...forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."
- Plan an appropriate time and place to meet.
- Affirm your genuine love for the person.
- Share your concern objectively ("I saw you do..." "I heard you say...").
- Ask lots of questions ("can you help me understand what you meant by that? Or why you did that?" – Be teachable and keep gathering truth).
- Be humble, gentle and patient – Galatians 6:1 "Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness."
- Define the issue biblically – once you've clarified the issue, go to specific Bible passages to address the sin as sin, and ask if the person understands.
- Call the person to repentance and allow for a response.
- Pray with and for the person.
- Follow up within a week (call or text within two days to affirm your love and prayers, and meet within a week to hear what God has done).

Depending on how the person responds, the meeting can go one of two ways

- If he confesses his sin and wants to repent, then help him layout a plan of repentance. Luke 3:8a "Bear fruits in keeping with repentance". Don't just say it with your lips, but show it in your life. Take practical steps that reveal a transformed heart.

- If there is no confession and repentance during the first meeting, plan to meet up again within a week, giving enough time for the person to think and pray more about what you've said – God may grant him repentance later that night or week.

If, however, in the second follow up meeting, there is still no confession and repentance, read Matthew 18:15-16 to him. Explain ahead of time your intention of inviting a couple of other people whom the person knows into this conversation out of love. This way, your loving motives and actions are always clear.

2. Bring ONE or TWO others

- Invite someone who is already responsible for the spiritual well-being of the person (e.g. Small Group Leader, Ministry Leader, Pastor, etc.)
- All the aims outlined in STEP 1 apply here too.
- The main objective at this level is to establish the validity and seriousness of the sin by the presence of witnesses.
- Similar to the first STEP, there may be two or more meetings at this level with two or three of you meeting with this person, laying out your case, calling him to repentance, and giving him time to pray and respond.
- If he finally confesses and repents, restoration has begun and this process stops. You begin to celebrate with him and help plan practical ways of seeking reconciliation, forgiveness, and transformation so that he can bear fruit in keeping with repentance.
- If, however, there is still no confession and repentance, then Jesus gives a third STEP of pursuing this person for restoration.

3. Tell it to the CHURCH

- This can be done in a variety of faithful ways depending on your church government.
- The elders and several of those who know the unrepentant person will make attempts to speak with the person and call him to repentance.
- If the person rejects these calls for repentance and continues on in disobedience, then Jesus commands a fourth step in church discipline.

4. Consider as OUTSIDE the church

- This person is considered an unbeliever and in need of salvation.
- Depending on the situation, such a person may be able to continue to attend the church in hope of their repentance.