

# **"THE IMPORTANCE OF MAKING RESTITUTION"**

## **(A Publication Of "The Inner-city Church Planting Mission")**

Introduction: There is a very important principle given to us in the Scriptures that is often misunderstood or neglected by those who would desire a closer walk with the LORD and a more powerful service for HIM. This very important principle is "THE IMPORTANCE OF RESTITUTION". The purpose of this study is to learn what the Scriptures teach on this subject, so that we can begin to implement this principle into our lives, and thus experience that closer walk with the LORD and a more powerful service for HIM.

"restitution" (Hebrew shalam)= To make whole, to recompense, to repay. The Hebrew word has also been translated in the King James as "restore".

**NOTE:** Although the word "**restitution**" (in this context) does not appear in the New Testament, and the word "**restore**" only appears there once, we will still learn that this is a principle that is taught throughout all the Scriptures.

### **I. Scriptures That Teach The Importance of Restitution**

#### A. Exodus 22:1-15

*"If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep. If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him. If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be blood shed for him; for he should make full restitution; if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep he shall restore double. If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall put in his beast, and shall feed in his own field, and of the beast of his own vineyard, shall he make restitution. If fire break out, and catch in thorns, so that the stacks of corn, or the*

*standing corn, or the field, be consumed therewith; he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution. If a man shall deliver unto his neighbor money or stuff to keep, and it be stolen out of the man's house; if the thief be found, let him pay double. If the thief be not found, then the master of the house shall be brought unto the judges, to see whether he have put his hand unto his neighbor's goods. For all manner of trespass, whether it be for ox, for ass, for sheep, or raiment, or for manner of lost thing, which another challenge to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges; and whom the judges shall condemn, he shall pay double unto his neighbor. If a man deliver unto his neighbor an ass, or an ox, or a sheep, or any beast, to keep; and it die, or be hurt, or driven away, no man seeing it; Then shall an oath of the LORD be between them both, that he hath not put his hand unto his neighbor's goods; and the owner of it shall accept thereof, and he shall not make it good. And if it be stolen from him, he shall make restitution unto the owner thereof. If it be torn in pieces, then let him bring it for witness, and he shall not make good that which was torn. And if a man borrow ought of his neighbor, and it be hurt, or die, the owner thereof being not with it, he shall surely make it good. But if the owner thereof be with it, he shall not make it good: if it be an hired thing, it came for his hire."*

It is in this passage that we find the word "**restitution**" mentioned for the first time in Scripture. Notice that the "**restitution**" here is dealing with the theft and loss of property. It is very clear that GOD expects the person responsible for the theft or loss of property to "**restore**" or "repay" that what was stolen or destroyed, even paying back "double" (vv. 4,7,9), four fold (v.1), or fivefold (v.1) at times!

Proverbs 6:30-31 sheds further light on this principle . . .

*"Men, do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry, but if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold, he shall give all the substance of his house."*

According to this Scripture, if the person is found who has stolen anything from someone else he is to "**restore sevenfold** . . ." He is to make this "**restitution**", even if it means giving his whole "**house**"!

B. Leviticus 6:1-7

*"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, if a soul sin, and commit a trespass against the LORD, and lie unto his neighbor in that which was delivered him to keep, or in fellowship, or in a thing taken away by violence, or hath deceived his neighbor; or have found that which was lost, and lieth concerning it, and sweareth falsely; in any of all these that a man doeth, sinning therein: Then it shall be, because he hath sinned, and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or the lost thing which he found, or all that about which he hath sworn falsely; he shall even restore it in the principal, and shall add the fifth part more thereto, and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the day of his trespass-offering. And he shall bring his trespass-offering, unto the LORD, a ram without blemish out of the flock, with thy estimation, for a trespass-offering unto the priest: And the priest shall make an atonement for him before the LORD: and it shall be forgiven him for any thing of all that he hath done in trespassing therein."*

Notice in this passage, an important "cause and effect" sequence is given to us. In verses 1-5, **"restitution"** is made by the offender. It is then that the offender comes to the LORD with his **"trespass-offering"**, makes **"atonement... before the LORD"** and then receives forgiveness from the LORD for his sin (see verses 6-7).

We learn a very important principle from this passage. We cannot worship GOD and be in fellowship with HIM to our fullest potential, until we have first cleared up past offenses with others, including making proper **"restitution"** if needed! NOTE: This same principle would apply to us realizing our fullest potential for CHRISTian service as well.

JESUS also taught this when HE said . . .

*"Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar,  
and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought  
against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar,  
and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother,  
and then come and offer thy gift." Matthew 5:23-34*

Scripture further emphasizes the importance of making this **"restitution"** as soon as possible . . .

*"A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city, and their contentions are like the bars of a castle." Proverbs 18:19*

C. Luke 19:1-9

*"And JESUS entered and passed through Jericho. And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see JESUS who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way; And when JESUS came to the place, HE looked up, and saw him and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down, for today I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received HIM joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That HE was gone to be a guest with a man that is a sinner. And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the LORD; Behold, LORD, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And JESUS said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he is also a son of Abraham."*

In this Gospel account, we learn of a man (Zacchaeus), who comes face to face with the LORD JESUS CHRIST. It is CHRIST's own testimony that Zacchaeus becomes a child of GOD because of this encounter (v.9). Notice that Zacchaeus' very first act of obedience as a redeemed man is a willingness to make **"restitution"** and **"restore . . . fourfold"** to anyone he might have wronged (v.8)!

**The willingness to make "restitution"  
is a real indication of true repentance  
and salvation!**

Someone may ask, "How small of an offense must we seek to make right?"

**If an offense that we have committed against  
someone is remembered, no matter how small,  
it should be repaid, restored and made right.**

**NOTE:** The following Scriptures all deal with the importance of possessing a clear "**conscience**". If there are people in our past that we have offended, and we have not sought to make "**restitution**" with them, we cannot have this clear "**conscience**" . . . before GOD or man.

D. Acts 24:16

***"And herein do I exercise myself, to have always  
a conscience void of offence toward GOD, and  
toward men."***

**"exercise"** = To work hard for something, enduring pain to accomplish the desired end.

This was the Apostle Paul's testimony. He had a passion for a clear "**conscience**", even though it might have meant hard work and pain to attain it. (Notice he wanted this in his relationship "**toward GOD . . . and man**"). This should be our testimony and passion as well. Having a clear "**conscience**" may not only mean we ask for forgiveness of those we have offended, but also that we make "**restitution**" to them if needed. This may require "hard work" and "pain" on our part, but the powerful and eternal results are well worth it!

E. I Timothy 1:5a

***"Now the end of the commandment is love out  
of a pure heart and a good conscience. . . "***

Throughout the Scriptures, we are instructed that "**love**" is the greatest and most important virtue we are to possess (see Matthew 22:37-40; I Corinthians 13:1-8a; I John 4:11-21). According to the Scripture above

**We cannot "love" GOD and our fellow  
man to our highest potential if we  
have not made "restitution" and cleared  
our "conscience" before GOD and man first!**

F. I Timothy 1:18-19

***"This charge I (the Apostle Paul), commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare, holding faith, and a good conscience, which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck."***

It is in these verses that we have yet another reason why a clear **"conscience"** is so vital in our CHRISTian walk.

**Without a "good conscience" (which often comes through making "restitution"), our relationship with the LORD is weakened, even possibly destroyed ("made shipwreck")!**

G. I Timothy 3:8a,9

***"Likewise must the deacons be. . . holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience."***

*These verses are given to us within the context (vv. 1-10), of the Scriptural qualifications of elders and deacons. One of these qualifications to be a church leader is ". . . a pure conscience."*

**To be a righteous and dynamic spiritual leader, a leader that can be greatly used of GOD, "a pure conscience" is a prerequisite!**

H. I Peter 3:16

***"Having a good conscience, that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in CHRIST."***

This verse is given to us within the context (vv. 13-17), of CHRISTian suffering. Here, as in many other Scriptures, GOD's Word tells us that as we follow CHRIST, we will receive persecution from others. Here, the Apostle Peter admonishes us of the importance of **"Having a good conscience . . ."** in the midst of these attacks.

If there are people in our past that we have offended and hurt, and we have not attempted to ask for their forgiveness and make "restitution" (if needed), Satan will have great occasion and power to attack us and bring reproach to us, our ministry and the cause of CHRIST!

## II. Testimonies That Illustrate The Importance Of Restitution

### A. From daniel allen schutte's life

1. to the two high schools he attended because of cheating.
2. to a former employer because of stealing time.
3. to a church he formerly attended because of rebellion there.
4. to his mother for his disobedience and rebellion as a child.
5. to a fellow missionary because of angry things said at a meeting.
6. to an auto repair shop because of deceitfulness concerning a repair.
7. to a county road commission because of a construction light stolen worth twenty dollars.
8. to a businessman because of stealing cash.
9. to a former neighbor because of stealing items and destroying property.
10. to the I.R.S. and local governments for "tax evasion" of over twenty-five hundred dollars.

### B. From other's lives