

PURPOSE-LED DISCIPLESHIP

RESTORED

A Gentle Afternoon of Truth, Healing, and Hope

A Sunday Afternoon Retreat • Leader's Guide

Restoration is not erasing what happened. It is allowing Christ to decide what happens next.

A companion to Restored: Experience God's Healing

Kristal Walden

Purpose-Led Discipleship

Welcome to Restored

Restored is a gentle Sunday afternoon retreat for people who are carrying wounds, regret, grief, fear, shame, difficult memories, or the exhaustion of trying to hold everything together. It can stand completely on its own. It can also serve as a companion experience to *Restored: Experience God's Healing*.

No one needs to have attended Surrender, Abide, Becoming, or any other Purpose-Led Discipleship experience. Begin at the beginning. Explain Christian truth plainly. Make room for people who already know Christ and for those who are still learning who He is.

This retreat does not promise that every wound will be resolved in one afternoon. Its purpose is quieter and more honest: to help each person notice what they are carrying, let truth enter the story, place one burden into Christ's hands, and leave with one faithful next step.

What This Afternoon Is Meant to Do

- Give language to pain without making pain a permanent identity.
- Help participants distinguish grief, guilt, shame, fear, responsibility, and control.
- Let Scripture and truth correct conclusions formed in wounded places.
- Make room for forgiveness, boundaries, wise support, and patient healing.
- Present the gospel clearly and invite an honest response to Christ near the close.
- Release participants with one realistic next step rather than a dramatic promise.

What This Afternoon Is Not Meant to Do

- It is not group therapy, trauma processing, or a substitute for pastoral, clinical, medical, or emergency care.
- It is not a place to require public disclosure or to measure healing by tears, raised hands, or visible emotion.
- It is not a place to pressure forgiveness, reconciliation, restored trust, or renewed access.
- It is not a promise that faith removes every painful feeling immediately.
- It is not an invitation for leaders to investigate stories or decide who is right in a participant's private relationships.

CENTRAL POSTURE

Tell the truth without forcing the story. Point to Christ without trying to become anyone's savior. Honor one faithful step without demanding a finished healing process.

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Scripture quotations marked KJV are from the King James Version, which is in the public domain.

The Sunday Afternoon Experience

The schedule is intentionally contained. Healing cannot be completed on command, so the afternoon does not try to uncover everything. It gives participants three clear movements, two short breaks, a closing gospel invitation, and a timely release.

This schedule is one adaptable planning example. Change the day, starting time, refreshments, and breaks to fit the host setting while keeping the three movements in order and protecting private reflection, the quiet gospel response, and the promised release.

TIME	EXPERIENCE
12:45–1:00 PM	Arrival, refreshments, and seating
1:00–1:20 PM	Welcome, retreat foundation, and opening prayer
1:20–2:00 PM	Movement One: Name What You Are Carrying
2:00–2:10 PM	Short break
2:10–2:55 PM	Movement Two: Let Truth Correct the Story
2:55–3:05 PM	Short break
3:05–3:40 PM	Movement Three: Release What Is Not Yours to Carry
3:40–3:55 PM	The gospel and a quiet response
3:55–4:00 PM	Blessing and release

The Rhythm

1. Arrive: become present without being asked to perform.
2. Listen: receive Scripture and teaching in plain language.
3. Notice: name what Christ is bringing to your attention.
4. Respond: choose one truthful and faithful next step.
5. Release: leave the outcome with God and return to ordinary life.

TIMING NOTE

Protect the closing twenty minutes. If earlier conversation runs long, shorten optional sharing instead of rushing the gospel, assurance, blessing, or release.

Preparing the Room and the Leaders

Room and Supplies

- Arrange chairs in a circle or gentle curve, with a writing surface nearby.
- Set out light refreshments and water before participants arrive.
- Bibles and pens
- One Participant Workbook for each person
- Leader's Guide, a visible clock, tissues, and blank response cards
- A quieter place where someone may step away and return without explanation
- A written list of pastoral, clinical, medical, and emergency support contacts

Leader Posture

Lead as a steady witness to Christ, not as the person responsible for producing a breakthrough. Your calm presence matters. Speak clearly, honor silence, and resist the urge to rescue someone from every uncomfortable feeling.

- Invite rather than pressure.
- Never ask participants to explain what they wrote.
- Allow anyone to pass during conversation.
- Do not diagnose people or label their relationships.
- Do not tell someone to return to an unsafe person or situation.
- Do not promise confidentiality when someone may be in danger.
- Know who will provide private prayer and who will respond to a safety concern.

Before Participants Arrive

- Pray for humility, discernment, and freedom from the need to create an emotional result.
- Review the schedule and decide which optional prompts can be shortened if needed.
- Confirm the location of the quiet room and the names of available support leaders.
- Place workbooks and pens where participants can receive them without becoming the center of attention.
- Ask the leadership team to protect privacy and avoid discussing participants after the retreat.

When Someone Needs More Support

If a participant discloses abuse, self-harm, danger, severe distress, or a concern beyond the scope of the retreat, stay calm and take it seriously. Do not investigate. Follow applicable reporting requirements and connect the person with qualified help. Spiritual care and professional support can work together.

LEADER REMINDER

A person may need prayer, a boundary, a counselor, a doctor, a pastor, an advocate, emergency help, or more time. Do not reduce every need to a single spiritual instruction.

Retreat Foundation and Opening

Psalm 34:18 (KJV)

“The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.”

Opening Aim

Help participants understand that they are not being asked to relive every painful moment or prove how deeply they have been hurt. Christ meets people in truth. He is not frightened by grief, confused by fear, or disappointed by the fact that healing takes time.

Suggested Welcome

Say: “Welcome to *Restored*. You do not have to share anything you are not ready to share. You do not have to force a feeling, forgive on command, or pretend that one afternoon can resolve an entire story. You may write privately, pass during conversation, step out for a moment, or ask for support. We are here to tell the truth, listen for Christ, and take one faithful step.”

Where Restoration Begins

Restoration does not begin with pretending the wound did not matter. It begins when we stop asking pain, fear, shame, or regret to tell us who we are and what happens next. We bring the real story to God. We let Him separate what happened from the conclusions we formed. We receive truth, mercy, wisdom, and help one step at a time.

Some people will need to repent. Some will need to grieve. Some will need to forgive. Some will need a boundary. Some will need to receive care. Some will simply need language for a burden they have carried so long that it began feeling normal. The work is not identical for everyone, but Christ is sufficient for every honest beginning.

How to Frame the Gospel

Do not assume everyone already knows Christ. Explain that Christian healing is rooted in relationship with Jesus, not in positive thinking or a spiritual experience. Keep the gospel present throughout the afternoon, then offer a focused invitation near the end. Do not ask participants to make an early public response.

Settling Question

Invite participants to write privately: “What do I hope God might help me notice today?” Make clear that they do not need to name the most painful part of their story.

Opening Prayer

“Father, thank You that You are near to the brokenhearted. Help us be honest without becoming overwhelmed. Bring truth where pain has confused us, mercy where shame has accused us, and wisdom where we need a faithful next step. Keep our eyes on Jesus. Let this afternoon be gentle, clear, and useful. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

Movement One

Name What You Are Carrying

Psalm 55:22 (KJV)

“Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.”

1 Peter 5:7 (KJV)

“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”

Leader Aim

Help participants name one burden without asking them to recount an entire history. The goal is not exposure. The goal is clarity about what they are carrying and what kind of response it may need.

Teaching Direction

Begin with the way heavy things can become normal. People can carry grief, fear, guilt, shame, responsibility, regret, or the need to control an outcome for so long that they stop recognizing the weight. They may simply call it strength, loyalty, love, maturity, or survival.

Pain does not only leave a memory. It can leave a meaning. A person may move from “This happened” to “I am unsafe everywhere,” “I am too much,” “I am not enough,” “I must keep everyone together,” or “If I stop carrying this, no one will.” Those conclusions can continue shaping reactions long after the original moment has passed.

Naming the burden helps us bring the right thing to God. Not every burden needs the same response.

- **Sin may need confession, repentance, and restitution.**
- **Loss may need grieving and permission to miss what mattered.**
- **Harm may need truth, safety, boundaries, and wise support.**
- **Responsibility may need one obedient next step.**
- **Control may need surrender of an outcome that belongs to God.**
- **Shame may need the mercy and identity Christ gives.**

- **Trauma or ongoing distress may need pastoral and professional care.**

Explain that a person can be responsible for a faithful action without being responsible for everyone's reaction or the final outcome. Responsibility asks, "What is mine to do?" Control asks, "How can I make everything turn out the way I need?" Restoration often begins when those two are separated.

Private Workbook Response

1. Name one thing you are carrying today.
2. Write what happened in one or two factual sentences, without explaining the entire story.
3. Notice what you began believing about yourself, others, God, or the future.
4. Circle what this burden may need: grieving, repentance, forgiveness, truth, a boundary, support, surrender, or time.

DO NOT RUSH

Silence may feel long to a leader and necessary to a participant. Give people seven to eight quiet minutes. Do not fill the room with extra teaching.

Optional Conversation

Invite participants to share only a truth they noticed, not the private details of the event.

Suggested questions:

- What is one difference between responsibility and control that stood out to you?
- Why can a burden begin feeling like part of our identity?
- What helps a person tell the truth without becoming overwhelmed by the whole story?

Prayer Into the Break

"Lord Jesus, You see what we carry and why we learned to carry it. Give us courage to name the burden without letting it name us. Show us what belongs in Your hands, what faithful action belongs in ours, and what support we need. Sustain us as we learn to release the weight. Amen."

Movement Two

Let Truth Correct the Story

John 8:32 (KJV)

“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

Romans 12:2 (KJV)

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind...”

Leader Aim

Help participants distinguish a real event from the fear-filled prediction or shame-filled identity that may have grown around it. Truth should not be used to dismiss emotion. It gives emotion a safe place to be heard without letting it become the only voice.

Teaching Direction

Pain remembers. Fear predicts. Christ leads. Pain looks backward and says, “This happened.” Fear looks forward and says, “It will happen again.” Both can contain important information, but neither can see the whole story. Jesus can lead us in the present without denying the past or pretending the future holds no risk.

Emotions give us information, but they do not have to give us direction. Fear may tell us that something feels unsafe. That deserves attention. It does not automatically prove what another person means, what tomorrow holds, or what God has abandoned. Anger may reveal a boundary violation. Sadness may reveal a loss. Shame may accuse us of being permanently unworthy. Each feeling can be acknowledged and then brought under truth.

Acceptance is not approval. A person can accept that something happened without calling it good. Forgiveness is not the same as reconciliation, trust, or access. A person can release vengeance to God while still requiring truth, fruit, time, and safety. Repentance is not shame. Conviction names what needs to change and leads us toward Christ. Shame gives us a permanent name and tells us to hide.

The truth about God matters most. He is near. He sees. He does not confuse endurance with permission for ongoing harm. He can correct us without humiliating us. He can lead us to forgive without requiring unsafe closeness. He can restore identity without erasing memory.

The Lens and the Light Exercise

1. What happened or what is happening? Write only what you know.
2. What is pain, fear, or shame telling you this means?
3. What truth from Scripture or the character of God needs to enter the story?
4. What would a wise response look like if truth, not fear, led the next step?

IMPORTANT DISTINCTION

Truth does not require a participant to talk themselves out of danger. If the known facts point to harm, coercion, abuse, or credible risk, the truthful response may include distance, help, reporting, or a firm boundary.

Truth Statements to Read Slowly

- I can accept reality without approving harm.
- I can grieve without losing faith.
- I can repent without living under shame.
- I can forgive without restoring trust or access before there is truth and fruit.
- I can set a boundary without hatred.
- I can receive help without calling myself a failure.
- I am not required to know the entire future before taking the next faithful step.

Optional Pair or Group Conversation

Keep this conversation general. Do not ask people to name the person or event connected to their workbook response.

- Which truth statement feels most freeing or most difficult to believe?
- How can we honor emotion without letting emotion make every decision?
- What is the difference between accepting reality and approving what happened?

Prayer

“Father, renew our minds with truth. Show us where pain has rewritten our identity, where fear has predicted a future You have not declared, and where shame has told us to hide. Give us discernment that is honest about risk and still led by Christ. Teach us to see clearly and respond faithfully. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

Movement Three

Release What Is Not Yours to Carry

Matthew 11:28–30 (KJV)

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me... For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

2 Corinthians 5:17 (KJV)

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

Leader Aim

Help each participant choose one burden to release, one truth to receive, and one faithful step to take. Do not ask for a promise that they will never struggle with the burden again.

Teaching Direction

Healing is not erasing the story. It is no longer allowing the wound to decide every response, relationship, and expectation. A memory may remain. Grief may return. A boundary may still be necessary. Restoration means Christ is becoming more authoritative than the wound.

Some people need to release the demand that another person finally understand. Some need to release self-punishment after genuine repentance. Some need to release the role of rescuer. Some need to stop carrying responsibility for an adult’s choices. Some need to forgive again. Some need to receive permission to grieve. Some need to accept that a relationship may be changed even when the heart is becoming free.

Boundaries and walls are not the same. A boundary names what is needed for truth, safety, and responsible love. A wall refuses all vulnerability because hurt must never be possible again. The goal is not to become untouchable. It is to become truthful, wise, and free enough to love without abandoning what God has asked us to guard.

We do not have to become anyone else's savior. We can pray, love, tell the truth, offer appropriate help, and obey God. We cannot repent for another person, force their healing, control their choices, or guarantee the outcome. Our job is faithfulness. God remains God.

One Burden, One Truth, One Step

1. **Release:** Name one burden, outcome, debt, role, or accusation that belongs in God's hands.
2. **Receive:** Name one truth, mercy, permission, or promise Christ is giving you.
3. **Respond:** Name one faithful step for the next seven days.

Possible steps include asking for prayer, contacting a counselor or pastor, making an apology, creating a safety plan, keeping a boundary, resting, grieving, returning to Scripture, or refusing to rehearse an accusation against yourself.

Guided Open Hands Prayer

Invite participants to rest their hands open if that posture is comfortable. Read slowly, leaving silence between each sentence:

"Lord Jesus, this is what I have been carrying. You know what happened, what it cost, and what I still do not understand. Show me what belongs in Your hands. Show me what faithful action belongs in mine. I release the outcome I cannot control. I receive Your mercy, truth, wisdom, and presence. Lead me in the next step. I do not have to finish healing today. I only need to keep walking with You. Amen."

Transition to the Closing Invitation

Say: "Restoration is not something we manufacture. It begins with the One who came to rescue us from sin, reconcile us to God, and give us new life. Before we leave, I want to explain clearly who Jesus is and what it means to receive Him."

The Gospel and a Quiet Response

Make the Gospel Clear

Say: “God created us to know Him, but every person has sinned. Sin separates us from God, and we cannot repair that separation by becoming better, becoming religious, or healing ourselves. Because God loves us, He sent Jesus Christ, His only Son. Jesus lived a blameless life without sin, died on the cross for all our sins, and rose again. On the cross, He stood in our place and bore what our sin deserved. He bridged the gap we could never cross. Jesus is the only way to the Father.”

John 14:6 (KJV)

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

Continue: “Salvation is God’s gift, received through faith rather than earned by works. To receive Christ is to acknowledge your sin, turn from sin and self rule, believe that Jesus died and rose again, and trust Him alone as Savior and Lord. This is more than having an experience. It is the beginning of a real relationship with the living Christ.”

Romans 10:9–10 (KJV)

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

Suggested Invitation and Prayer

Say: “Prayer is a conversation with God. It is the response of faith in which a person acknowledges sin and need for God, confesses Jesus as Lord, believes God raised Him from the dead, accepts His gift of salvation, and receives Christ as Savior and Lord. Prayer does not earn salvation; Jesus saves. If you are ready, speak to Him honestly in your own words or use the prayer in your workbook.”

Read the prayer slowly, then allow one or two quiet minutes without filling the silence.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, I believe You are God's only Son. You lived without sin, died on the cross for all my sins, and rose again. I know I have sinned and cannot make my own way to God. I turn from my sin and trust You alone. Forgive me. I accept Your gift of salvation and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Come into my life and help me follow, serve, and love You. Thank You for giving Yourself for me, standing in my place, and making the way for me to know the Father. In Jesus' name, amen.

Assurance and a Path to Celebration

After the quiet, say: “If you turned from sin and placed your trust in Jesus Christ today, your confidence does not rest in a feeling or in perfect words. It rests in Jesus, in what He has done, and in His promise that the one who comes to Him will not be cast out. You have not merely had an experience. You have begun a relationship with Christ.”

John 6:37 (KJV)

“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”

Then say: “Following Christ is personal, but it is not meant to be hidden or walked alone. If you trusted Christ today, please tell me or another leader before you leave. We want to celebrate with you, answer your questions, pray with you, and help you begin well. If you would like to share with the group, tell us; we would be honored to celebrate with you. We will not put you on display or ask for an immediate testimony.”

Leader Guidance

- Present the invitation once, clearly and calmly. Do not prolong it to produce a visible response.
- Do not ask everyone to repeat the prayer aloud or use raised hands, standing, tears, music, or silence as proof of salvation.
- Invite voluntary disclosure. When someone tells you they trusted Christ, celebrate warmly and ask how they would like to be supported.
- Ask gently what they understand they have trusted Jesus to do. Clarify the gospel without turning the conversation into a test.
- Help them begin with Scripture, honest prayer, baptism, and connection to a healthy, Bible-believing church.

Response for Those Who Already Belong to Christ

Invite believers to return to the workbook response: one burden to release, one truth to receive, and one faithful step to take. Remind them that returning to Christ is not pretending they never struggle. It is choosing again where they will bring the struggle.

Blessing and Release

“You do not have to leave with every answer. You are leaving with Jesus. May He meet you in the places that still hurt, correct the stories fear has written, free you from what is not yours to carry, and give you courage for the next faithful step. May your wound lose its authority, your identity become secure in Christ, and your life become a place where healing can travel. Go gently. Keep walking with God.”

Closing Prayer

“Father, thank You for meeting us in truth and mercy. Protect what began here. Give each person wisdom, support, and patience for the road ahead. Lead those who need help to safe and qualified people. Keep us from shame, false urgency, and self-reliance. Teach us to surrender, abide, and obey one faithful step at a time. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

Leader Follow Through

Before Participants Leave

- Name the available pastoral and support contacts.
- Give anyone who received Christ a clear way to speak privately with a leader.
- Remind participants that they may keep every written response private.
- Do not post photographs, names, or stories connected to a response without explicit permission.

Within One Week

- Follow up with anyone who requested prayer or support.
- Provide a clear path to a healthy church, baptism, counseling, pastoral care, or practical help as appropriate.
- Do not make curiosity sound like care. Ask only what you need to support the person faithfully.

One Month Later

Consider a brief optional gathering or message built around three questions: What burden have you continued placing in God's hands? What truth has become steadier? What support or next step do you need now?

CLOSING WORD TO LEADERS

You are not responsible for manufacturing restoration. Prepare prayerfully, speak truth carefully, respond wisely, and let Christ remain the Savior in the room.