

## **I. Vision**

A. At the beginning of this year, we took some time to fast and pray as a church family to ask the Lord to speak to us about what He wanted us to do or focus on in 2024. On day three of the fast I had a strong impression or vision of Jesus taking Restoration Church through a focused time of training and teaching that would cause us to be confident and unified for a greater manifestation of ministry both in our church family and in the community.

1. Our focused time ended with us receiving a PhD from Him that empowered us to joyfully and confidently do ministry. I felt like He showed me that this is what a PhD does; it equips people to have confidence to practice a skill and produces trust in the community where that skill is practiced. This was by no means an arrival but rather a safe and unified platform to operate from.
2. As we were receiving this PhD I remember a distinct feeling or understanding that it was specifically going to remove confusion and fear and create a safe, inclusive, and natural environment for ministry.
3. As I asked in my prayer time what specifically this time of ministry training would be focused on, I feel like he said “PhD”. In my heart I said, “I know it's a PhD but I am asking what the PhD would be focused on?” He said again, “PhD”. Then I had another impression of a PhD being handed to us and on it was written PHD as an acronym for Prophetic, Healing, and Deliverance.

**P.** - Prophetic

**H.** - Healing

**D.** - Deliverance

B. As I shared this impression or vision on the corporate sharing and prayer night of the fast I received quite a bit of feedback that many others were feeling a similar impression from the Lord during the fast. He wanted to bring us into greater unity, bring maturity, and increase our gifting in these three areas. In saying all this, we truly believe that this is an ordained season for us and we are so excited to go into this new series.

## II. Equipping

A. This particular series is going to be heavily geared towards equipping the saints for ministry. Our goal is to give basic but solid biblical teaching in conjunction with foundational practical teaching and methods to minister more effectively, safely, and confidently. We will be encouraging you guys to start engaging more in ministry in our gatherings, such as Sunday mornings and lifegroups.

1. To those who believe they are immature - I really want to encourage you if you feel you are not spiritual enough or mature enough in your walk with the Lord to step into a place of personal ministry. Or perhaps you find yourself intimidated or unsure how you feel about these specific spiritual gifts. (Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:11; Eph. 4:7)

- Jesus gave His disciples power at the very beginning of their walk with Him. This includes some who did not have correct theology nor proven Godly character, including Judas. The scriptures make it clear that the gifts of the Spirit are given according to grace, not merit or maturity in God. I pray that this series will stir up the gifts that are in you the moment you first believed, and give you the confidence you need to bless the community around you with the love and power of God. (Mat. 10:1-4)

2. To those who believe they are Mature - Some things we will cover in this series will seem like a review or basic and possibly boring to you. To you, I would encourage you to take the posture of a spiritual father or mother and help encourage, and equip those around you. Please bear in mind that the power of your gift, or the maturity you carry can easily overwhelm and intimate those who are less mature. (1 Cor. 4:14-15; Gal. 4:19)

## III. Balance

A. Pentecostalism is the largest and fastest-growing expression of the Christian faith. I have been in environments where they believed in the gifts but did not encourage them, and I have been in environments where the entire goal and focus of the church seemed to be the gifts. I believe the greatest need of the charismatic movement today is balance. It is clear that when the pendulum of balance gets too far to one decree or the other unhealthy practices and beliefs soon follow. As we go into this series and beyond, we want to encourage intentional balance in the following areas...

1. Prioritization - There are aspects of prioritization that we want to be intentional with when it comes to our time, focus, and strength that we give to cultivating and ministering in the gifts versus other things.
  - Relationship with Jesus - Walking or even ministering in a gift of the Spirit is oftentimes not synonymous with cultivating your personal relationship with Jesus. Therefore, personal prayer, dialoguing with Him in the word, worship, and other spiritual disciplines that cultivate intimacy must remain a higher priority than studying, practicing, and focusing on spiritual gifts. (1 Cor. 12:31-13:13)
  - Spotlighting a certain Gift or Ministry - We can over-emphasize and get caught up with a certain gift or ministry as individuals and as a church family. I believe this is especially unhealthy when an entire church family or ministry is solely focused on one or two gifts. This will immediately produce a gift-centered and exclusive culture rather than a Christ-centered inclusive one. (1 Cor. 12:17-22)
2. Accountability Balance - The two extremes of this pendulum swing are no accountability for the gifts of the Spirit, or there is such rigid oversight and intense training or requirements that only a select few are empowered to operate in their gifts. Both of these extremes are governed by fear and pride and produce ripe environments with all kinds of control, manipulation, and abuse.
3. Scripture must trump Experiences - In general, the danger here is that we tend to value our experiences over the scriptures when it comes to manifestations of gifting and ministry. If a certain person ministers in power in a certain way we tend to operate in legalism and mimic the method in hopes of the same results. Another way we get off track is having an experience in ministry or gifting through which we hold the implications of it to as high or sometimes an even higher level than scripture. Pretty soon the bulk of your theology and methodology is built on experiences, not on the word. (2 Jhn 1:9)

4. Character over Power - Of all the categories to maintain proper balance, I believe this is the most widespread and accepted error in the charismatic church. As a whole, we are extremely focused upon manifestations of power or anointing in the gifts of the Spirit to a much higher degree than manifestations of the fruits of the Spirit. Success or value is often measured by ministry impact rather than on the manifestation of patience, gentleness, and self-control. Biblically, we want to be a culture in which the fruits of love upstage the raising of the dead, and vibrant healthy marriages and families are a greater story than a room of empty wheelchairs. (Gal. 5:16-26)
  
5. Spiritual Battle in Scriptural Context - Lastly, we tend to struggle to maintain proper balance and perspective biblically when it comes to spiritual warfare. In general, we overemphasize the activity of our enemy in his limited power and influence. This is especially true when it comes to the gifts of healing and deliverance. This overemphasis paralyzes the church and causes her to operate in fear and trepidation, unable to engage in the joy and grace of the Spirit. Scripture is replete with truths concerning the confidence and power of the believer and the church, through Christ, over the enemy. (Eph. 6:10-20; 1 Jhn 4:4)

B. As we move forward in this series and its implications we are committed as a leadership team to uphold balance in these areas and strive to continue to provide spiritual covering and care that causes us all to grow together. We encourage you all to pray with us as we pursue all that God has for us in the days to come.

#### **IV. Additional Resources**

##### **A. Media and Books**

1. Restoration Fellowship Teachings
  - a. Gifts and Manifestations of the Spirit Series
  - b. Fostering the Spiritual Gifts Series
  - c. Search Jack Deere (2 Part Healing Series)
  - d. Jeremiah Johnson (Walking in Prophetic Anointing)
  
2. Remnant Radio Podcast/Youtube Channel
  
3. Other Trusted Teachers - Jeremiah Johnson, Sam Storms, Craig Keener, Wayne Grudem, Gordon Fee, D.A. Carson

