

# To Dream the Impossible Dream

## How Trial Erases Error

I John 1:7

There is an important religious concept known as “restoration.” Although the idea carries a storied history, it has been effectively erased by Postmodern, relativistic thinking. The idea is rather simple in its essence. The process followed in restoring an old, vintage automobile can illustrate the point. The goal in such a project is to restore the car to its original showroom condition. In Christianity, the principle is employed by seeking to restore a tradition-riddled denominationalism to the complete, mature, pattern of the ancient church. There were, after all, no denominations in the orthodox expressions of first-century Christianity.

There are, however, problems to acknowledge in any restorationist attempt. No individual congregation will ever attain absolute perfection—the job of restoration will never be flawlessly complete. Imperfect humans are charged with following a pattern of absolute perfection. Since we will always fall short of the mark, a troubling question arises, “Does it really matter how close we come to the ideal pattern since no congregation will ever arrive at perfection?” Or, to phrase it another way, “Since no two congregations will ever be exactly the same, and since no one congregation is ever entirely complete, how could any particular group ever be critical of another?”

Is the principle of restoration doomed to be no more than an impractical, idealistic effort predestined to frustrating failure? Is there a biblical way to pursue it with integrity? Can imperfect people and imperfect congregations ever find a basis to judge their successes and failures? Is it realistically possible to succeed at restoration? Can the church of the New Testament live today?

## To Dream the Impossible Dream

"The Impossible Dream"  
from MAN OF LA MANCHA (1972)  
music by Mitch Leigh and lyrics by Joe Darion

To dream the impossible dream  
To fight the unbeatable foe  
To bear with unbearable sorrow  
To run where the brave dare not go

To right the unrightable wrong  
To love pure and chaste from afar  
To try when your arms are too weary  
To reach the unreachable star

This is my quest  
To follow that star  
No matter how hopeless  
No matter how far

To fight for the right  
Without question or pause  
To be willing to march into Hell  
For a heavenly cause

And I know if I'll only be true  
To this glorious quest  
That my heart will lie peaceful and calm  
When I'm laid to my rest

And the world will be better for this  
That one man, scorned and covered with scars  
Still strove with his last ounce of courage  
To reach the unreachable star

- The song draws on three key themes
  - A person willing to pursue a great, but impossible dream
  - A person willing to courageously, sacrificially, and painfully follow the dream
  - An optimum level of success that can only be attained by reaching for what cannot be grasped

### **Two Understandings of Success (I Jn. 1:7; Jas. 2:10)**

- One biblical level of success is based on sinless perfection, but every person fails at this level (Jas. 2:10; Rom. 3:23)
- The other biblical level of success is found only in the sinless Jesus and credited to us through faith ((I Jn. 1:7; Rom. 4:4-5)
  - This is the success we can all attain (Jn. 3:16)
  - In our flesh, we cannot be sinless, but we can be faithful (Rom. 8:3; 1:5; 16:26)
  - An indispensable characteristic of a faithful person is that his or her life is characterized by walking in faith (I Jn. 3:4-10)

### **Romans Six**

- It is unacceptable to live a life of sin (Rom. 6:1-2)
- It is equally unacceptable to reckon occasional sins as acceptable (Rom. 6:14-15)
- With both ideas, there is an uncompromising “God forbid” in Scripture (Rom. 6:2, 15 KJV)
- The point is that while we sin, we must not give sin an acceptable place in our lives.

### **Why Restoration?**

- God wants perfection to be the standard to which we strive (Matt. 6:33)
- The higher our goal, the more we attain (cf. Matt. 25:14-30)
- Jesus, our example, never compromised the standard (Matt. 5:17-19; Jn. 4:34)
- While some kingdom concerns are definitely weightier than others, there are no insignificant teachings or principles we might choose to neglect (Matt. 23:23)
- Luke 16:16 shows the importance of being faithful in “little” things

### **What are We Getting at?**

- We are trying to be faithful restorationists at Karns
- We are, therefore, looking for others who seek a nondenominational, back to the Bible dream
- We want to share things we have learned by following the dream
- We want to learn from others who will also follow the dream

We will never be a perfect church, but we can uncompromisingly follow a perfect standard. We cannot completely undo a fragmented, disunited Christendom. However, as imperfect people, we can call other imperfect people to join us in abandoning denominational divisions. We can invite others to dream the impossible dream that allows faith to be reckoned as righteousness! In this way I John 1:7 shows us how trial erases error. Will you dream with us?