

The Restoration Story

WEEK FOUR LEADER'S GUIDE

Big Idea

God didn't send Jesus just to rescue the world, but to restore it. Each of us has been uniquely designed to be heroes in this restoration story.

Format Overview (1 hour)

- I. **INTRO** // Provide some direction
- II. **ARTICLE** // Read Greek Things
- III. **DIALOGUE** // Discuss concepts together
- IV. **WRAP-UP** // Transition to next week

INTRO: *Currently, we are going through a four-week series talking about the similarities between God's story and the Greek story. Last week, we explored how God decided to rescue his image and rescue us in the process. Last week focused on the rescue, this week we are going to focus on the restoration. Each of us has been uniquely designed to be a hero in this story. So, listen closely, underline quickly, and try to keep up as we cover a lot of material and wrap up this Greek Things series.*

ARTICLE (10 minutes)

Read the article together: Hand out copies to everyone and read it out loud together (taking turns at paragraph breaks). Tell your group to make notes or underline certain sentences that stick out to them that can be brought up during the discussion.

DIALOGUE (45 minutes)

Restoring the Image

1. Junior/Seniors: What type of job are you going to pursue after college? What wrongs currently exist in that part of the culture that need to be made right? How can you bring restoration?

Freshmen/Sophomores: What wrongs currently exist in your fraternity or sorority that need to be made right? How can you bring restoration?

2. How does the perception of "professional" Greeks and "professional" Christians hurt the Greek system and Christianity? How does this affect your Greek organization and/or church?

Optional (if the group has a hard time answering the question above): Does every Greek or every Christian think that they have what it takes to be a hero in this story of restoration? Why or why not?

Your Story within the Story

GREEK THINGS DIALOGUE: WEEK 4

3. “God has designed you to be... a main character with a special, specific, unique role to play in the story. But sadly, the world can't be changed when most of the image bearers are sitting on the sidelines...” How have you been sitting on the sidelines in recent months – whether you are investigating God or are currently committed to him?
4. How has the Greek Things dialogue these past four weeks affected your spiritual journey? What have you learned that has stuck with you? In what ways has your view of God and/or Greek Life changed?
5. What are some questions about God or the story of the bible that are still unanswered?

WRAP-UP: *Well, for the sake of time we are going to wrap things up. The conversation went really well today. Thank you for sharing. To wrap things up, we've learned that God not only came to rescue us, but to restore us and the world we live in.*

We have all been designed uniquely to play a huge part in this restoration story, but unfortunately, we often retreat to the sidelines and become background characters. Hopefully, this Greek Things series will propel you to take action and to move on to the next step on your spiritual journey.

CHALLENGE YOUR GROUP

Take this opportunity to challenge your group to move on to the next step, whatever that looks like for your group. For some, it might be moving on to a Greek bible study or Crusade small group. For others, it may mean sitting down with them over coffee and helping them to wrestle with spiritual questions.

Perhaps there are some mature students in your group. Challenge them to lead a Greek Things dialogue or start a bible study or discussion group in their Greek House.

The key is to give them somewhere to go after this dialogue is finished.

CONTACT US

We want to be encouraged by hearing about your Greek Things Dialogue experience. Let us know how your study turned out. Give us feedback so that we can make it better! Who knows, maybe you'll end up in a book!

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Greek Things

PART 8 OF 10 RESTORING THE IMAGE

Greek Life, at a national level, has started a restoration process.

Restoring the image that fraternities and sororities once had is now becoming a priority.

In the past few years, there has been a major push towards anti-hazing, anti-alcohol abuse, and so on. Values-based recruitment, alcohol-free Greek Houses, learning-based communities, and a greater emphasis on serving all point to the workings of God who is in the business of restoring Greek Life in America.

The restoration process doesn't have to take dozens of years. When I was a member of my fraternity, within three short years our average chapter GPA increased from a 2.67 to a 3.33. In addition, all physical hazing was eliminated before I graduated. These are two small examples of God reforming the culture of our local fraternity in a short period of time.

Many people are still skeptical of Greeks across the board - parents, administrators, and anyone who has ever watched Animal House.

But that can all change within a matter of a few years.

The image can once again regain the honor and dignity that it had in the beginning. And not only do we have the opportunity to restore the image, but we have the ability to be creative in adding additional positive things to the image that weren't there in the beginning!

Since you are not only a fraternity or sorority member, but a human being, this restoration analogy can and will apply to the rest of your life.

Let's find out why.

Jesus came to make all things right, to bring order to chaos, to bring heaven to earth.

And this is now our responsibility - to bring heaven to every person, place, and thing on the earth.

This really messes with our heads.

You see, in a half-story type of Christianity, the heroes are the "professional" Christians who are really good at telling the story and inviting others to participate in the story.

But, in a full-story type of Christianity, where the goal is to invite people into the story and bring heaven to earth, then anyone can be a hero.

Ever feel worthless because you aren't a professional fraternity or sorority member? Perhaps you can't get a position on the exec board or you can't recruit as well as other brothers or sisters. You don't see yourself as a professional, doing the really important work, so you check out and become a background character.

This is why you'll find a lot of Christians limiting their spiritual life to going to church on Sunday, because they feel that they aren't spiritual professionals, able to do the really important work. And because they check out, the church isn't as it should be.

GREEK THINGS DIALOGUE: WEEK 4

If you look at a really healthy Greek House, you'll notice that there is not only a push for recruitment, but a push for everyone to be a hero, for everyone to come together and do what they were created to do. The recruitment process is only the beginning of the restoration.

Every Christian can be a hero.

Michelangelo was a hero because he brought the beauty of heaven to the earth through his artwork. Teachers become heroes by bringing order and stability and character to kids in chaos. Lawyers become heroes by bringing justice to the places of injustice. Blue-collar workers become heroes for in-directly affecting millions by their service - building roads for us to drive on, building skyscrapers for us to marvel at, and bringing order to our homes when walls need beautifying or when the plumbing goes out.

These can all be examples of restoration, things becoming as they are supposed to be - if they are done to restore God's image, to bring heaven to earth.

Another characteristic of the half-story Christianity is that the rescue operation of Jesus has become the only operation.

That is why there are so many End Times books. The focus is on getting us out of here as quickly as possible before the end comes. They tell us to get rescued or get saved.

While the rescue operation is the climax of the story and needs to have a sense of urgency, if we spend 100% of our time talking about rescue, then we'll spend 0% of the time talking about restoration. This will result in the overall story being watered down. And when the story gets watered down, the image of God gets watered down.

Which sadly has already happened.

Without starting in the beginning of the story we miss out on the importance and significance of who we were created to be. And without hearing the end of the story, we will miss out on what we were created to do all along.

When we hear the half story (the middle of the story only), it sounds really confusing - "You are a sinner and you need to get saved. In lighter words, you are not as you are supposed to be and you need to be rescued."

The media has observed Christians practicing this half story and have made movies such as "Saved" as a result. Christians are viewed primarily as (and sometimes wrongly so) as condemners trying to get people on the right team.

Greek Life has fallen siege to the half story approach as well. Instead of looking at the beginning and the end of the story, critics have zoomed in on the middle. They see Greek Houses as places of sin that need to be dealt with harshly and with condemnation. What they don't see is the beginning of the story - when Greek Houses once had a clean image and a hopeful future. They also can't seem to picture a good ending for us - an ending that involves a resurgent attempt to restore the Greek image back to what it used to be.

Jesus came not only to rescue, but to restore. The rescue was the climax, the restoration is the resolution.

PART 9 OF 10 FAIRY TALE ENDING

Everyone wants to live in a fairy tale though they might not admit it.

GREEK THINGS DIALOGUE: WEEK 4

The bible says, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him."

Girls, that means that the emotions you experienced when watching *The Notebook* or any other romantic drama will be felt in heaven to the infinite degree.

Guys, that means that the passion and adrenaline rush you experienced when watching *Braveheart* or *Gladiator* will be felt in heaven to the infinite degree.

We watch these movies over and over again - longing for the day that these emotions will never run dry, will never leave us.

Some people might argue that this is just wishful thinking. But, we do know that we can't imagine or create anything outside of God. He is infinitely greater than us. Anything that we can dream up is only a fraction of what God could dream up.

With this in mind, I think it is very real to say that heaven will be a fairy tale beyond anything we could ever imagine. It will be more real to us than our own lives now.

It is coming, but it isn't fully here... yet.

When that day does come, all of humanity along with the cosmos will be fully redeemed and restored. No more tears. No more pain. No more sin.

Things will be as they should be.

God will be with us, his bride, forever. We will walk up to the alter, untarnished, wearing white, ready for the greatest wedding ceremony the world has ever seen.

I'll end with a beautiful analogy from the bible that was highlighted in Rob Bell's book *Sex God*.

The Jews had specific engagement and marriage customs like we do today. One of those customs was to host an engagement party when a young couple was about to be engaged. The families would come together to celebrate. The young couple would be arranged by their parents, but the girl still had a choice.

During the party, the young man would offer a cup of wine to the girl in front of everyone. This was a vulnerable act because he could either be accepted or rejected.

If the girl drank the wine in front of everyone, she was in a sense saying yes. It would be the equivalent of accepting an engagement ring. If she said no, the turntables would screech to a halt and the young man would be humiliated.

If the answer was a yes and she did drink the wine, then the young man would go back to his father's house and add onto it. The Jewish families would live like they did in the *Full-House* TV show, only to a greater degree.

The marriage would then take place when the father told his son that the new addition was complete. When the Father gave the thumbs up, the young man could go to the girl's house and get her for the big wedding.

Jesus says something about this in the bible that we've read a hundred times, but often miss.

He says, "In my Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I am going to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also."

GREEK THINGS DIALOGUE: WEEK 4

At face value, this paragraph seems to simply tell us where we are going to live in the life after this. But, the disciples would have recognized what Jesus said as being in the context of marriage, in the context of relationship.

They would have recognized that the reason Jesus had to leave them was to go and prepare a place for them to live in relationship with him for all of eternity.

And, just like the Jewish tradition, Jesus will return when the Father says that it is time to come back and get the bride. Jesus affirmed this by saying, "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."

Jesus is coming back for you, for us. So what do we do until then? Should we just wait around?

PART 10 OF 10 **YOUR STORY WITHIN THE STORY**

It has been said that 20% of people do 80% of the work.

This is probably true in your fraternity or sorority. And this is also true within Christianity.

Most Greeks live lives without purpose, without direction, and without motivation. And the ones who are motivated are often motivated for the wrong reasons.

Whether you are currently unmotivated or motivated for selfish reasons, I'm writing to tell you that everyone has been given the chance to participate in the story. Everyone has the ability to reflect the image of God in a way that no one else has been able to do since the beginning of time.

In every story there are protagonists, antagonists, and background characters. God has designed you to be a protagonist - a main character with a special, specific, unique role to play in the story. You have the ability to change the world.

But sadly, the world can't be changed when most of the image bearers are sitting on the sidelines or flirting with the antagonist.

Our first ancestors flirted with the antagonist and lost. And so have you.

In ancient times, God's people made idols like golden calves and worshiped them. Today, we are no different. We make televisions and watch them all day long. We even arrange all our furniture in the living room to face this idol!

We have idols, just in a different way.

Some of these idols aren't so easily recognizable. Idols such as ourselves. We spend hours in the mirror, we spend hours getting good grades, we spend hours working for a promotion at work, we spend hours trying to climb the leadership ladder in our Greek Houses, we spend hours trying to impress girls or guys at parties, and so on. We do anything and everything to elevate our status. We become our own idol.

We work really hard at becoming important. And in doing so, we lose our significance.

We become background characters.

When we work at creating an image for ourselves apart from the image of God, we get shoved further and further into insignificance.

Whatever you may call yourself - Christian, atheist, agnostic, spiritual, etc. - I urge you today to leave behind your story to be a part of a bigger, better story.

GREEK THINGS DIALOGUE: WEEK 4

I invite you to leave behind a half-story Christianity, which says that only professional Christians have significance and worth.

I invite you to be a main character in the story of making all things as they are supposed to be - in your heart, in your fraternity or sorority, and in the world.

I invite you to be in relationship with God and committed to him, for without his rescue of you, the restoration of things would not be possible. What good is it for you to change the world by rescuing it from corruption when you yourself are not rescued from corruption?

I invite you to go and invite your fraternity brothers or sorority sisters into the story so that they will be able to leave a legacy with you.

As you recruit and teach others how to bring heaven to earth, to make things straight, to make things as they are supposed to be, the image of God will shine through you, becoming untarnished and radiant for all to see.

You will start to become the person you were designed to be and will find yourself one step closer to experiencing life as it was originally meant to be experienced.

And when the Father says it is time, Jesus will come back to get us, his bride.

DIALOGUE

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