

“Restoration and Refurbishment of My Heart”

While on a brisk walk this morning, I was giving thanks to God and reflecting on the three years since my adult child had disclosed that they identified as transgender. I asked God to send the Holy Spirit to impart wisdom I could live out and share. The phrase *“Restoration and refurbishment of my heart”* immediately entered my mind. This puzzled me as I have zero personal experience with restoration and refurbishment. Three miles later, still perplexed but determined to solve the caper, I remembered that my second eldest sister, Renae, has decades of experience restoring dilapidated pieces of furniture. I telephoned her, and she obliged me by walking me through her furniture restoration process - “Oh yes, that involves restoring beauty! The first thing I look for is the bones – what needs to be done to make the original good bones of the furniture come back to life. Next, I locate the supplies and determine the project's timing. Then, I dive in and shed all the hideous add-on pieces and layers of paint that have been added over the years. Much sanding is necessary, beginning with the heavier grit sandpaper and then moving to the finer grit to see the original wood grain. Lastly, I apply Tung oil; repeat three times to achieve perfection.”

The Eastern Oregon farm of our youth was replete with many things: W-D 40, baling twine, duct tape, John Deere tractors, etc., *but Tung oil it was not*. I educated myself after the call: Tung oil is a drying oil that comes from the seeds of the tung tree, native to China. It is non-toxic, environmentally friendly, and resistant to water, disease, and insects. The most fascinating aspect to me was Tung oil's history...it's been used for thousands of years. Coincidental or not?

As I replayed my telephone call to Renae, I drew copious parallels between furniture restoration and God's restoration of my life. God's many promises of restoration pertain to both my spirit and my physical body:

- *“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit”* (NIV, 2011, Ps. 34:18).

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- *“He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds”* (NIV, 2011, Ps. 147:3).
- *“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh”* (NIV, 2011, Ezek. 36:26).

Parents, may you all be refreshed, renewed, restored, and refurbished!

By Remi Smith, founder and CEO of Compassionate Caring Ministries, whose mission is “To bring compassion, love, and support to parents whose adult child identifies as transgender.”