



THE PRAYER CLOSET

*Transforming Lives Through Intercessory
Prayer And Fasting*

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BROKENNESS BEFORE GOD

The title of this newsletter may surprise you. You may even be a little put off by this subject. You may be wondering, "What does he mean by 'brokenness'?" These are not unusual reactions. The flesh wants nothing to do with brokenness. It is our natural tendency to be self-righteous. We have a huge streak of self-sufficiency ingrained in us.

Yet, brokenness is the forgotten factor of our walk with God. Too many times it is the blessing that no one wants to claim, the gift that no one wants to receive. Brokenness is crucial in your relationship to God. In His mercy, God does bless you and use you. Yet, if you want to see the glory of God, if you desire to know the power of God, if you long for the rivers of mercy to flow into your life, you must be broken by His gracious and powerful hands.

Brokenness also plays a necessary role in your prayer life. It is essential to a maturing prayer life. It is vital to be used of God in prayer. It is preeminent for your intimacy with God. The path to blessedness and power in prayer runs right through the valley of brokenness.

This newsletter is about brokenness before God. This is not a "Brokenness In Three Easy Steps" guide. Being broken by God is a process. It is not easy and it takes time. As I write this, I am still in the process of being broken. I am not an expert about the subject. I simply want to share with you what God is showing me on this journey.

For many years, I prayed, "Lord, use me." I prayed this one night, the Holy Spirit

impressed me to change that request. Instead of praying "Lord, use me," He led me to pray, "Lord, break me." When I did this, life was never the same again for me. It has been painful, but it has taken me places with the Lord that I could never have dreamed of or imagined. The purpose of this newsletter is to lead you to pray that simple but life altering prayer, "Lord, break me."

In order to seek God for this valuable blessing, we need to begin by examining what brokenness is.

What Is Brokenness?

The opposite of brokenness is pride. Brokenness is emptying yourself of pride so that God's glory and will are preeminent in your life. It is the ability to sacrifice yourself, your will, your desires, and your goals in order to accept and do what God wills. Walking with God means yielding your will for His, changing your attitudes, your words, and your behavior so that it conforms to what God desires. It requires surrendering your plans so that you might do what God has purposed.

The difficulty for us is that pride is ingrained in us. Yielding our wills and lives to God is not natural to us. We want to run our lives the way that we desire without anyone telling us how. We want our way. We want things to work out as we have planned them. We desire the path of convenience and comfort.

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It is true that, when a person comes to Christ, pride is broken. One must turn from self and sin to the Lord Jesus Christ in true faith. This involves surrender to and dependence on God. You do surrender your will and your life to God through Christ. However, this is just the beginning of brokenness. This is the start of dealing with your pride. Coming to Christ begins the process of breaking and destroying pride from your life. Pride still exists in our lives after coming to Christ. Its dominating power has been broken. Yet, it can still manifest itself in your life. It can still plague you and hinder you in your relationship to God.

The Bible reveals that the lost person does not regard God or His will, "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God'" (**Psalm 14:1**). The lost person does not acknowledge any authority other than his or her own, "May the LORD cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaks proud things, who have said, 'With our tongue we will prevail, our lips are our own; **who is lord over us**'" (**Psalm 12:4, emphasis mine**). The lost person does not consider God's commands and refuses to obey them, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can it be" (**Romans 8:7**).

As a believer, you have been delivered from this lifestyle of disregarding God and His will. You have been set free from exalting yourself and your will above God and His will. Through your new nature and the work of the Spirit, you are now willing to love and obey God's Word.

Yet, pride can still manifest itself in your life. You can be self-willed. You can respond to God with a spirit of self-sufficiency. You can act self-righteous before God and toward others. Pride can rear its ugly head in your life. It can even become a stronghold in your life if you do not confront it and fight against it.

Pride basically consists of these three aspects: self-will, self-sufficiency, and self-righteousness. When you are the process of being broken by God, He deals with each of these aspects. He labors to remove these roots of pride from your life so that you can live in a spirit of surrender and dependence.

When you are in the process of being broken, you move from self-will to surrender. Pride leads you to say, "I want my way. I want to do things the way that I choose." God wants to remove

pride from you to walk in a spirit of surrender. He desires your willingness to obey Him in all circumstances. He wants you to cultivate the ability to say "no" to your will and "yes" to His will.

When you are in the process of being broken, you move from self-sufficiency to dependence on God. Pride moves you to say, "I can handle my life. I am sufficient to guide my life and deal with whatever comes my way." God longs for you to forsake any sense of self-sufficiency. He desires that you cultivate the ability to walk in dependence on Him. He does not want you to strive to live your life according to your wisdom and your power. He wants you to yield your life, your choices, and your circumstances to Him.

When you are in the process of being broken, you move from self-righteousness to repentance. Pride moves you to look at the sins and failures of others. It motivates you to exalt yourself and your righteousness above others. You do not consider your condition before God. Yet, God desires that your life be characterized by repentance. He wants you to focus on your sins and your failures. He longs for you to be quick to acknowledge and deal with your own sin.

Brokenness is the process of destroying pride in your life. It is the work of God to move you from self-will to surrender, from self-sufficiency to dependence, and from self-righteousness to repentance. God longs to remove your pride and replace it with a broken and contrite spirit. Brokenness is God's work. Yet, you must yield yourself to Him. You must seek Him for the destruction of your pride. You must cry out to Him for this work in your life.

Why Should I Seek Brokenness?

Brokenness is a painful and costly process. It requires that you die to yourself and your will and live in dependence on God and His grace. It means surrendering the pride that is common and ingrained in your life. Why then should you want to seek God for this blessing?

First, brokenness is God's will for your life. The Word of God declares, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart; these, O God, You will not despise" (**Psalm 51:17**). The Word of God also says, "For all those things

My hand has made, and all those things exist, says the LORD. But on this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word" (**Isaiah 66:2**).

God longs for you to have a broken and contrite heart. That is the sacrifice He desires from You. God delights in your brokenness before Him. He honors, blesses, and uses the man or woman that is dependent and repentant. He desires that you have a willingness to accept and do His will without any reservation or hesitation in any circumstance of your life.

It is not God's will for you to live life your way, striving in your own sufficiency and righteousness. Most believers are amazed and shocked by atheists. They feel that it is utterly foolish not to believe in God. However, most believers are plagued by a "practical atheism". They believe in God and profess faith in Him. Yet, they live their lives as if there is no God. They do not depend on Him in their daily decisions and circumstances. They live life according to their own wisdom and power. They fail to see the radical nature of their personal sin before a holy God. They make plans without ever thinking of God and His will. This is not God's will for the believer. He desires that you have a broken and contrite spirit, a spirit of dependence and repentance before Him, the holy and wise God.

Second, God hates your pride. He despises your self-sufficiency. He abhors your self-righteousness. He detests your self-willed attitude. Pride is an insult to God. It is exalting yourself—your power, your will, your wisdom, and your righteousness—above that of the eternal and holy God. In effect, it is saying that I am as powerful, as wise, and as righteous as God is. You might never say this. But when pride manifests itself in your life, this is exactly what you are saying. Your attitudes and actions speak louder than your words.

God has made it plain how He feels about your pride. God says, "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate" (**Proverbs 8:13**). The Word of God also declares, "Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD; though they join forces, none will go unpunished" (**Proverbs 16:5**). God's attitude toward your pride is summed up in these words, "These six things the LORD hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him . . . a proud look" (**Proverbs 6:16-17**).

How can you be content with something in your life that God despises? How can you be complacent about the pride that God says is an abomination to Him? God's hatred of your pride should lead you to seek brokenness. It should motivate you to cry out to Him for the destruction of the pride in your life. It should challenge you to confront your pride.

Next, God resists your pride. Not only does God have a hatred of your pride, He also resists it. The Word of God declares, "But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (**James 4:6**). This is an astonishing verse. The Bible states that God resists the proud. He will not pour out His blessing on the proud person. The proud person will not move into greater intimacy or power with God. All that the proud believer can expect is God's chastisement. Yet, the one who seeks for brokenness has the promise of abounding grace. The broken person will receive the blessings and power of God. The broken person can experience God's presence and joy in unique and powerful ways.

Think about it. What has caused you the greatest pain in your life? When have you faced your most difficult circumstances? If we were honest, we would have to admit that it was in times when pride manifested itself in our lives. Maybe we went our own way rather than surrendering to God. Maybe we trusted in our wisdom above that of God's. Maybe we rested in our righteousness and thought ourselves better than others. Maybe we have to have our way in a relationship.

Do not misunderstand what I am saying. I am not saying that all the suffering and pain in our lives is due to pride. There are a variety of reasons for suffering and pain in our lives. This is bound up in God's own providence. But, our pride does lead us into many hurtful and burdensome situations. This is because our loving Father is resisting our pride. He is laboring to teach us the necessity to forsake pride and seek Him for brokenness.

As I look back on my own life, I see that pride has brought suffering and pain in my life. When God called me to preach, I ran. I wouldn't surrender. I simply did not want to do what God was calling me to do. I had no intention of surrendering. It was nothing more than sinful and stubborn pride. Because I proudly refused God, I

suffered. I wince as I remember the misery, the confusion, and the pain of that time in my life. My heart aches as I think about how I offended God through my pride.

God will resist your pride. He hates prides and is determined to break it. How will God resist your pride? He will not answer your prayers. He will frustrate your plans. He will let you experience your insufficiency. Your loving Father will withhold His blessings and allow you to suffer the consequences of rebellion. His purpose is to teach you that He gives grace to the humble, but resists the proud. He longs for you to see the barrenness of pride and blessedness of brokenness. He wants you to realize how evil pride is and how good humility is. He works to burn this truth into your heart and mind.

God is going to do this in your life. It may vary in degrees. But, be assured, God will resist your pride. He will not let your pride go unchecked. Brokenness is costly and painful; but it is never as painful or costly as your pride and its consequences. Brokenness opens the way for God's power and wisdom to flow into your life. Pride brings God's resistance and chastisement. God's determination to resist your pride ought to move you to seek Him for brokenness.

Brokenness encourages and strengthens your relationships. What causes more problems in relationships than anything else? It is pride. It is the self-will that demands its way. It is the self-righteousness that moves one to think that you are always right. It is the conviction that you must be catered to and exalted by others.

Pride destroys relationships. It can sever the strongest ties between people. When people do not deal with pride, it will bring problems to a relationship. It does not matter what type of relationship—marriage, parent to child, family members, church members. You name the relationship and pride can damage it. The Bible says, "By pride comes nothing but strife, but with the well-advised is wisdom" (**Proverbs 13:10**).

Pride generates strife among people. When a person cannot honestly say, "I am wrong," "I need help," or "I'm ready and willing to listen and change," it is going to create strife, strife that can damage and destroy. When a person has to be right or feels the need to be catered to, conflict will be the inevitable outcome in the relationship. The Bible

reveals that pride hinders a person from having healthy relationships, "For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there" (**James 3:16**).

On the other hand, brokenness empowers you to build healthy relationships. When you are in the process of being broken, you don't always have to be right. You don't always have to have the spotlight or the pat on the back. You can honestly admit your mistakes and deal with them. You are willing to listen to others. You know that you can depend on God to help you and guide you. When brokenness characterize a relationship, love, unity, and growth will flourish. Since it is crucial for building healthy relationships, you should seek God for brokenness.

Brokenness is essential to pursuing God's will and glory. The Christian is to glorify God, "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (**1 Corinthians 10:31**). At the same time, the Christian is to pursue the will of God. Our prayer must be the same as Jesus', "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will" (**Matthew 26:39**). God's glory and God's will must be the priority of your life. Of course, these two things are connected. When you do God's will you glorify Him. And you glorify God by doing His will. They are inexplicably bound together.

Yet, pride stands in the way of these things as the priority of your life. How can you glorify God when you desire to exalt yourself? How can you do God's will when you want your own way? Pride stands in complete opposition to seeking God's glory and God's will. It hinders you from pursuing these things. Your glory and your way must be sacrificed for God's glory and God's will. Brokenness paves the way for this sacrifice. As God breaks and destroys the self-will, self-sufficiency, and self-righteousness in your life, you are more ready and willing to glorify God and do His will. This prepares you to make this sacrifice in the everyday circumstances of your life. This is why it is so crucial to seek God for brokenness.

How Can You Seek God For Brokenness?

Brokenness is God's work in your life. Only God can deal with your pride and lead you to dependence and repentance. Yet, you must yield