

Lord, Break Me

By William MacDonald

INTRODUCTION

“The brokenness of spirit which makes no resistance to the Father’s hand is a main element of fertility in souls wherein He works. It is not power He seeks from us, but weakness; not resistant force, but ‘yieldingness’ to Him. All power is His: His strength is perfected in weakness.” —Selected

Foreword

Thirty years after Andrew Murray wrote *Abide in Christ*, he said:

I would like you to know that a minister or Christian author may often be led to say more than he has experienced. I had not then [when he wrote *Abide in Christ*] experienced all that I wrote of. I cannot say that I have experienced it all perfectly now.

Was it not in this same spirit that the Apostle Paul wrote:

Now that I have already obtained this or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own (Philippians 3:12).

I share the same sentiment with regard to the following article, *Lord, Break Me!* The burden of the Lord is on me to write these things. The truth is too sublime and too urgent to be withheld simply because I have failed to experience it in full. To whatever extent I have failed, I make the things I have written the aspiration of my heart.

William MacDonald

GOD VALUES BROKEN THINGS

Usually when something is broken, its value declines or disappears altogether. Broken dishes, broken bottles, broken mirrors are generally scrapped. Even a crack in furniture or a tear in cloth greatly reduces its resale value.

But it isn't that way in the spiritual realm. God puts a premium on broken things—especially on broken people. That is why we read such verses as:

The Lord is near to the brokenhearted, and saves the crushed in spirit (Psalm 34:18).

The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise (Psalm 51:17).

God knows how to resist the proud and haughty, but He cannot resist a person who is humble and contrite.

God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6). There is something in our brokenness that appeals to His compassion and power.

And so part of His wonderful purpose for our lives is that we should be broken—broken in heart, broken in spirit, and broken even in body (II Corinthians 4:6–18).

CONVERSION A FORM OF BROKENNESS

We are introduced to the breaking process prior to our conversion when the Holy Spirit begins His work of convicting us of sin. He must get us to the place where we are willing to confess we are lost, unworthy, deserving only of hell. We fight every step of the way. But He continues to wrestle with us until our pride is shattered, our boasting tongue is silenced and all resistance gone. Lying at the foot of the Cross, we finally whisper, "Lord Jesus, save me!" The shrew has been tamed, the sinner has been mastered, the colt has been broken.

Yes, the colt has been broken. By nature the colt is a wild, lawless creature. At the merest suggestion of a bridle or a saddle, it will rear, bolt, leap and kick. It may be a beautiful, well-proportioned animal, but as long as it is unbroken, it is useless as far as service is concerned. But then comes the painful, prolonged process of bending the colt's will so that it will submit to the harness. Once the colt's will has been conquered by a higher will, the animal finds the real reason for its existence.

In this connection, it is good for us to remember that the Lord Jesus was a Carpenter in Nazareth, and as such He may have made wooden yokes. Someone has beautifully suggested that if there had been a sign over the door of His shop, it probably would have read, "My yokes fit well." But the point for us is that our divine Lord is still a yoke maker. He says,

Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light (Matthew 11:29, 30).

However, yokes are only for those who are broken and submissive. Our wills must be subdued and yielded before we can learn of Him. He was gentle and lowly in heart. We must become like Him, and only in so doing will we find rest for our hearts.

ELEMENTS OF BROKENNESS

But that brings us to the basic question, "What is meant by true brokenness? How does it manifest itself in a believer's life? What are some of its basic elements?"

1. Repentance, Confession, Apology

Perhaps one of the first things we think of is a readiness to confess sin to God and to those we have wronged. The broken man is quick to repent. He does not try to sweep sin under the carpet. He does not try to forget it with the excuse, "Time heals all things." He rushes into the presence of God and cries, "I have sinned." Then he goes to whoever has been hurt by his actions and says, "I was wrong. I am sorry. I want you to forgive me." If on the one hand he knows the scalding shame of having to apologize, on the other he knows the great release of having a clear conscience and of walking in the light.

True confession does not gloss over sin or blunt its reality. It is not like the unbroken matron who said with hauteur, "If I have done anything wrong, I am willing to be forgiven." Genuine repentance says, "I have done wrong and I'm here to say that I'm sorry."

David's life was clouded by sin and failure, but the thing that endeared him to God's heart was his deep penitence. In Psalms 32 and 51 we retrace with him his transgressions, sin and iniquity. We watch him during the time when he refused to repent; life then was physical, mental and spiritual misery. Nothing went right. It seemed that everything was out of joint. Finally he broke. He confessed and God forgave. Then the bells began to ring again and David recovered his song.

In the New Testament, Paul gives us an illustration of brokenness. It was at the time he appeared before the chief priests and Sanhedrin in Jerusalem. When he prefaced his remarks with a statement that he had always lived in good conscience, the high priest was infuriated and ordered that the prisoner be slapped on the mouth. The apostle snapped back, “God shall strike you, you whitewashed wall! Are you sitting to judge me according to the law, and yet contrary to the law you order me to be struck?” (Acts 23:3). The attendants were shocked by Paul’s scathing rebuke. Didn’t he know that he was speaking to the high priest? Actually the apostle did not know. Maybe Ananias was not wearing his official robes or occupying his usual seat. Or perhaps it was Paul’s weak eyesight again. Whatever the reason, he had not intentionally spoken evil of the duly constituted ruler. So he quickly apologized for his words, quoting Exodus 22:28, “You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.” The apostle had a low breaking point. He demonstrated his spiritual maturity by his readiness to say, “I was wrong. I am sorry.”

2. Restitution

Closely connected with this first aspect of brokenness is prompt restitution, wherever it is called for. If I have stolen, damaged or injured something, or if someone else has suffered loss because of my misbehavior, it is not enough to apologize. Justice demands that the loss be repaid. This applies to what happened before my conversion as well as to what happens afterwards.

After Zacchaeus had received the Lord Jesus, he remembered some of the crooked deals he had pulled as a tax-collector. It was a divine instinct that taught him immediately that these wrongs must be made right. So he said to the Lord, “...if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.” Here the “if” does not express any doubt or indecision. The idea is “in every case where I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.” His determination to make restitution was a fruit of his conversion. The “fourfold” was a gauge of the vitality of his new life.

There are cases where it is impossible to make restitution. Perhaps records have been destroyed, or exacts amounts have been forgotten with the passing of time. God knows all about this. All He wants is that we pay back what we owe in every case where we can.

And this should always be done in the Name of the Lord Jesus. There is no glory for God in it if I just say, “I stole this. I am sorry. Now I want to pay you back.” The action should be linked with a testimony for Christ, such as, “I have recently become a Christian through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord has been speaking to me about some tools I stole from you five years ago. I have come to apologize and to return the tools.” Every act of

righteousness or kindness which a Christian does should be combined with a witness for the Savior so that He and not self gets the glory.

3. A Forgiving Spirit

A third element of brokenness is the willingness to forgive when we have been wronged. In many cases this takes as much grace as apologizing or making restitution.

Actually the New Testament is surprisingly explicit in laying down instructions for us in this manner of forgiving others.

First of all, whenever we have been wronged, we should immediately forgive the person in our hearts (Ephesians 4:32). We do not go to him yet and tell him he is forgiven, but in our hearts we have actually forgiven him.

The moment a man wrongs me, I must forgive him. Then my soul is free. If I hold the wrong against him, I sin against God, and against him and jeopardize my forgiveness with God. Whether the man repents, makes amends, asks my pardon or not, makes no difference. I have instantly forgiven him. He must face God with the wrong he has done, but that is his affair and God's and not mine, save that I should help him according to Matthew 18:15, etc. But whether this succeeds or not and before this even begins, I must forgive him (Lenski).

There are multitudes of little wrongs that can be forgiven and forgotten immediately. It is real victory when we can do it. "Love...does not keep account of evil or gloat over the wickedness of other people" (I Corinthians 13:7, J. B. Phillips). A Christian lady was once asked, "Don't you remember the mean thing that that catty woman said to you?" Her reply was, "I not only don't remember; I distinctly remember forgetting."

If the wrong is of a more serious nature and you do not feel it would be righteous to let it pass, then the next step is to go to the offender and speak to him about it (Matthew 18:15). If he repents, then you must forgive him. "And if he sins against you seven times in the day and turns to you seven times, and says, 'I repent,' you must forgive him" (Luke 17:4). It is only right that we should be willing to forgive indefinitely. After all, we have been and are forgiven times without number.

Notice that you are not to go and tell everyone else about the offender's fault (that is what we almost invariably do). "Go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone." The obvious strategy is to keep these differences as confined as possible.

As soon as the offending brother confesses his sin, you tell him that he is forgiven. You have already forgiven him in your heart, but now you can administer forgiveness to him.

But suppose he refuses to repent. Then in accordance with Matthew 18:16, you “take one or two others along with you, that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses.”

If he refuses to listen to the two or three witnesses, then the matter should be taken to the local fellowship of Christians. The purpose in all this is not vindictiveness or punishment, but the restoration of the offending brother.

If this final effort fails, he is to be looked upon as a Gentile and a tax-collector. In other words, you no longer treat him as one who is in fellowship in the local church. Since he is not acting like a Christian, you accept him on his own ground. You count him as an unbeliever. But as soon as he repents, then you forgive him and full fellowship is restored.

God hates an unforgiving spirit, the determination to carry grudges to the grave, the unwillingness to let bygones be bygones. This is brought out forcefully in the parable of the debtor servant (Matthew 18:23–25). When he himself was bankrupt, he had been forgiven by the king a million dollars. But then he was unwilling to forgive a fellow servant a few dollars. The lesson is clear. Since God forgave us when we were in debt over our heads, we should be willing to forgive others who owe us trifles.

4. Enduring Wrong Without Retaliating

But there are other aspects of brokenness. One is the humble spirit that suffers for doing right and does not retaliate. Here, of course, our Lord is the prime Example.

When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered he did not threaten; but he trusted to him who judges justly (I Peter 2:23). We have all been called to this type of life.

For one is approved, if mindful of God, he endures pain while suffering unjustly. For what credit is it, if when you do wrong and are beaten for it you take it patiently? But if when you do right and suffer for it you take it patiently, you have God’s approval (I Peter 2:19, 20).

In his book, *From Grace to Glory*,¹ Murdoch Campbell reminds us that John Wesley had a wife who made his life a trial of fire. For hours she would literally drag him around the room by his hair. And the founder of Methodism never uttered a harsh word to her.

Campbell also tells of “a godly Highland minister who was married to a similar woman. He sat one day in his room reading his Bible. The door opened and his wife entered. Her hand snatched the Book from him and threw it into the fire. He looked into her face and quietly made the remark, ‘I never sat at a warmer fire.’ It was an answer that turned away her wrath and marked the beginning of a new and gracious life. His Jezebel became a Lydia. The thorn became a lily.”

A great saint of God has said, “It is the mark of deepest and truest humility to see ourselves condemned without cause and to be silent under it. To be silent under insult and wrong is a very noble imitation of our Lord. ‘Oh, my Lord, when I remember in how many ways Thou didst suffer, who in no way deserved it, I know not where my senses are when I am in such haste to defend and excuse myself. Is it possible I should desire anyone to speak any good of me or to think it, when so many ill things were thought and spoken of Thee?’” (Living Patiently, J. Allen Blair, pp. 353, 4).

5. Repaying Evil With Good

An additional advance in the life of brokenness is not only to bear wrong patiently but to reward every wrong with a kindness.

Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. “...if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good (Romans 12:17, 20, 21).

Here I am always reminded of the elephant that was being driven down an Indian street by its owner. The man was carrying a sharp-pointed steel goad to keep the lumbering beast moving along. Then the owner lost his grip on the goad and it fell to the ground with a resounding clang. The long-suffering elephant turned around, picked up the goad with its trunk, and held it out to the master. If elephants could be Christians, that elephant certainly was one.

6. Honoring Others Above Self

And then there is the brand of brokenness that esteems others better than one’s self (Philippians 2:3). We see it illustrated in an incident from Abram’s life (Genesis 13:1–13). He and Lot had come up from Egypt to the Negeb and then to Bethel with their families and possessions. Both men had extensive flocks and herds, and soon a quarrel developed between their hired hands over pasture land. It was at this point that Abram stepped in and

said, in effect, “Look, Lot, we are not going to part company over a few bales of hay. You take whatever pasturage you want, and I’ll take my animals somewhere else.” So Lot chose the lush pasture lands in the valley of the Jordan—ominously close to Sodom. Big-hearted Abram moved farther into Canaan. And so an Old Testament saint, living on the other side of Pentecost, gave us a practical demonstration of what Paul meant when he said:

Love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honor (Romans 12:10).

7. Prompt Obedience

But this is not all. God wants us to be broken in accepting and obeying His will. The psalmist puts it concisely:

Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding, which must be curbed with bit and bridle, else it will not keep with you (Psalm 32:9).

The tendency for a spirited horse is to jump the gun, whereas the mule symbolizes stubbornness and intransigence. So we have the two dangers in connection with the will of God. It is possible to move on without clear direction, to run without being sent. And then again it is possible to willfully resist the clear guidance of the Lord.

Jonah, for example. There was no question as to what God wanted him to do. He was called to go and preach repentance to Nineveh. But he was not broken as yet. So he boarded a ship going in the opposite direction. Only after his nightmarish experience in the whale’s belly was his will bent to obey. Then he went forth to prove that God’s will is, after all, good and acceptable and perfect (Romans 12:2). We get a surprising picture of brokenness in the colt which Jesus rode into Jerusalem (Luke 19:29–35). Up to that time no man had ever ridden on that animal, and it could have been expected to vigorously resist any attempt to mount it. But when the Savior approached, it experienced a miracle of instant brokenness. The will of the colt became completely submissive to the will of its Creator.

It might be mixing metaphors to introduce clay in a discussion on brokenness, but the clay in the hands of a potter is an apt description of what a broken person is in the Lord’s hands—pliable and responsive to the pressure of His fingers. And so the daily prayer of the submissive saint is:

Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!
Thou art the Potter; I am the clay.

Mould me and make me after Thy will,
While I am waiting, yielded and still.

Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!
Search me and try me, Master, today!
Whiter than snow, Lord, wash me just now,
As in Thy presence humbly I bow.

Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!
Wounded and weary, help me, I pray!
Power—all power—surely is Thine!
Touch me and heal me, Savior divine!

Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!
Hold o'er my being absolute sway!
Fill with Thy Spirit till all shall see
Christ only, always, living in me!

8. Death To Public Opinion

There are many other aspects of brokenness. For instance, we need to be brought to the place where we are dead to the world's applause or frowns. After W. P. Nicholson was saved, he came under the tutelage of a Salvation Army officer. One day the officer said to him, "If you mean business for God, wear this sign-board for a few hours in the center of town." On the board were lettered the words "DEAD TO PUBLIC OPINION." This experience had a profound effect on all Nicholson's life of fearless service for Christ.

9. Confessing Others' Sins As Our Own

We need to be so broken that we will confess the sins of God's people as our own. This is what Daniel did (Daniel 9:3-19). He was not personally guilty of most of the sins he catalogued. But he identified himself so closely with the nation of Israel that their sins became his sin. In this he reminds us, of course, of the One who "took our sins and our sorrows and made them His very own." And the lesson for us is that instead of criticizing other believers and pointing the accusing finger, we should confess their sins as if they were our own.

10. Keeping One's Cool In The Crises

A final aspect of brokenness involves poise and equanimity in the crises of life. When an unavoidable delay occurs, the natural reaction is to fuss and fume. Interruptions to the regular routine often provoke annoyance and fretfulness. Mechanical breakdowns and accidents—how easily they upset us and even cause tempers to flare. Schedule changes and disappointments have a way of bringing out the worst that is in us. The frenzy, the ruffled feathers, the anger and the hysteria that all these things arouse are ruinous to the Christian testimony, to say the least. The way of brokenness is to keep one's cool during these crises, knowing that God is overruling all the circumstances of life for His purposes. The flat tire may be a blessing in disguise, saving you from a crash farther down the expressway. The unexpected visitor who interrupts your service for the Lord may actually present a more important ministry than what you are doing. The accident, with all its suffering, inconvenience and expense, may bring you in touch with people who have been prepared by the Holy Spirit to receive the gospel. In all these circumstances, the Lord desires to see us react instantly with calmness instead of impatience, with brokenness instead of rebellion.

These then are a few examples of what is meant by brokenness. The list is suggestive but certainly not exhaustive. As we walk in fellowship with the Lord, He will show us areas in our individual lives where we need to be broken at the foot of the Cross. And with each such revelation He will give the needed grace.

For God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure (Philippians 2:13).

What Brokenness Does Not Mean

Having seen what some of the elements of brokenness are, we should explain briefly what is not meant by the word. It does not mean that the person becomes a Mr. Milquetoast, a bland, spineless sort of jellyfish. It does not mean that he becomes a powerless cipher, exerting little influence on those around him. If anything, the reverse is true. Brokenness is one of the finest elements of a strong character. It doesn't take any discipline to be unbroken. But what self-control is required to be Christ-like when every natural instinct rebels against it!

Broken people are the ones with the most persuasive characters. They influence quietly by the irresistible force of an other-worldly example. It is a paradox, but there it is: "Thy gentleness hath made me great" (Psalm 18:35, A.V.). And they are capable of anger when occasion demands it. We see this in the life of our Lord. He drove the money changers out of the Temple with a scourge of small cords. But the important thing to see is that His anger flared not because of any wrong that was done to Him personally, but because His Father's

house had been dishonored. As has been said, “He was a lion in God’s cause but a lamb in His own.” Many of the martyrs and reformers were truly broken but one would hardly say that they were weak or uninfluential.

THE GENERATION GAP

One of the most difficult areas in which to exercise brokenness appears to be in the child-parent relationship. By some queer quirk of fallen human nature, we seem to be most unloving to those who are closest to us. Many Christian girls wage a constant battle within themselves because of the hostility they feel toward their mothers. And just as many Christian fellows are scarcely civil to their fathers most of the time. No one denies the existence of a generation gap; actually it is an enormous gulf. The younger people complain that their parents don’t understand them, that they are repressive, that they are out of touch with the times, that they belong to the establishment. But in spite of it all, many youth feel guilt and shame that they cannot seem to rise above these attitudes and act like Christians for a change toward their folks. They realize it is colossal defeat that they can be so kind and personable to their peers and even to other adults and yet so cold and cutting at home. They hate themselves for often wishing their parents were dead, but to break and confess is a hard pill to swallow.

It was no accident that when God gave ten basic laws to the nation of Israel, one of them should deal with this difficult and delicate area of human relations:

“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you” (Exodus 20:12).

Paul repeats the command in the New Testament:

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), “that it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth” (Ephesians 6:1-3).

To honor and obey one’s parents means not only to do what they say, but to respect them, to be kind to them, and to care for them whenever necessary. Paul gives four reasons:

1. It is right
2. It is for the young people’s own good

3. It is Scriptural

4. It promotes a full life.

But many fellows and girls have almost convinced themselves that while it may be possible in other cases, it simply isn't possible in theirs. THEIR parents are too overbearing, too square.

All that is needed, of course, is brokenness. What this will mean will be to go to the father or mother or both and say, "Look, I'm sorry that I've been such a heel in my relationships with you. I've never thanked you for all you have done for me, but I want to do it now. I want you to forgive me for the way I've built up walls of resistance between us. By God's help, I want things to be different in the future."

The timeless illustration of bridging the generation gap is the story of the prodigal son. At first the ingrate couldn't wait for his father to die; he wanted the inheritance right now. Well, he got it and went off to live it up. Then followed the late-night parties, the drinks, the carousing, the sex orgies and all the rest. But finally the money was gone and so were the friends. The wastrel was reduced to bare subsistence. He began to think of the servants at home who were living better than he. What a fool he had been! He had left home full but now he goes back empty. He had left demanding justice but he returns pleading for mercy. He had left with head high but he crawls home broken.

"Dad," he says, "I have sinned. Sinned against God and sinned against you. I don't deserve to be your son..." He had planned to say more, to plead for a job as a servant. But by this time the father was issuing orders to the household. And then before long, the son was dressed in a new suit, had a handsome ring on one finger, had a new pair of shoes on, and was sitting down to a sumptuous dinner of roast veal and all the trimmings. The gap had been bridged by brokenness. But the son would never have known the father's kiss if he had not first broken in repentance and confession.

Nothing will help to straighten out a person's attitude of hostility like the humiliation of having to make such an apology. The next time he is tempted to show any act of unlove toward a parent, he will quickly remember the scalding shame of having to break, and this will act as a powerful deterrent.

THE MARITAL GAP

Perhaps the second most difficult area in which to manifest real brokenness is in the husband–wife relationship. Once again it is a matter of acting unkindly toward those who are closest to us, while showing charm and courtesy to those we scarcely know. Too often we have to confess that we are devils at home and saints abroad.

The Bible is realistic in anticipating the possibility of tension in the marriage relationship. We think especially of Colossians 3:19:

Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.

The bitterness that can develop in a husband toward his wife is often so deep that he despairs of ever rising above it. Too often he simply gives up and seeks release through separation or divorce.

Take the case of Jano and Jinx. The first time they met, they both knew they were meant for each other. During the months that followed they were together at every opportunity. By the end of six months they were engaged, and the wedding was set for six months later. But as things turned out, they were married four months after their engagement.

The wedding went off with everyone playing his part in the little game quite well. And for the first year things went fairly smoothly. Then one day they had a violent quarrel and Jinx released all her suppressed disrespect of Jano for what had happened before their marriage. He repaid her in kind. The walls quivered and the windows bulged. After that it seemed that their marriage was in hopeless ruins. Jano found that the bitterness he felt toward his wife was greater than the love with which he had loved her (II Samuel 13:15).

Friends suggested that they see a Christian marriage counselor, and they did. But underneath they were as hard and unyielding as the bars of a castle.

Finally Jano applied for a divorce. But before the case came up in court, a Christian friend challenged him to try the way of brokenness. And the friend's wife reached Jinx at the same time with the same message. Why not break before the Lord and before one another? Why not put the past under the blood of Christ and make a new start?

They did. It was the hardest thing that either had ever done. But they got together and made a complete confession. There was no hedging or self–vindication. It was as forthright a confession as one could wish for. Each one accepted responsibility for his part in their pre–

marital sin. After tearful confession to the Lord, they covenanted never to reproach one another with this sin again. They claimed the promise of God that they had been forgiven (I John 1:9). They gladly forgave each other for everything. And each one decided that he must also forgive himself. When they rose from their knees, an enormous burden had been lifted. They realized that there would still be a period of adjustment, but the nuclear cloud of bitterness and strife had dissipated. And they realized the necessity for continual brokenness whenever future problems would arise in the home.

Months later Jano put down the evening paper and commented how strange it was that people would spend time and money at marriage counselors and psychiatrists, and try any form of expensive "treatment," but they would not try the way of brokenness. And yet without brokenness, the other things were largely ineffective.

GOD WANTS US ALL TO BE BROKEN

But it is not only in the child–parent relationship or in the husband–wife relationship, but in all areas of our life the Lord wants us to be broken. He will wrestle with us as He wrestled with Jacob at Peniel. He will try to break us of pride, of self–will, of an unforgiving spirit, of stubbornness, of gossip, of backbiting, of worldliness, of impurity, of temper, of every work of the flesh. He wants to change our name from Jacob to Israel, from cheat to prince, from powerless schemer to one who has power with God and man. He will wrestle with us till the breaking of the day and put our thigh out of joint. Then we will go through the rest of our life with the limp of a broken man whom God can use.

God wants us to be blameless. None of us is sinless but we can all be blameless. A blameless person is one who, when he does commit some wrong, is quick to make it right. He does not let the sun go down on his wrath. By confession and apology, he keeps the lines of communication open with God and with his fellow men. An elder in a local church must be blameless (I Timothy 3:2), but every Christian should be.

THINK OF THE RESULTS

Think what it would mean in our individual lives, in our homes, in the local church and in the business world if we were all broken as we should be.

In our own lives it would mean greater power, greater happiness and better health. The men who have the greatest spiritual impact on others are those who are yoked with Christ in meekness and humility. They are the ones who find fulfillment and rest in serving Him. And what is good for us spiritually is good for our physical health as well. The British Medical

Journal once reported that “there is not a tissue in the human body wholly removed from the spirit.” Dr. Paul Tournier tells of a patient who had had anemia for months. Then it mysteriously disappeared and her blood was normal again. Investigation revealed that she had had a spiritual crisis, namely, she had forgiven a long-standing grudge. Yes, brokenness is good for the health.

Think of a home where the members keep short accounts with one another. Of course there are differences from time to time, but they are not allowed to build up steam in the boiler. The family has learned the holy art of kissing and making up. That is the kind of home where Jesus loves to be.

In the local assembly, brokenness is the road to revival. It is a fixed law in the spiritual realm that the tears of brokenness are the prelude to showers of blessing. We generally try everything else first—new building, new campaigns, new methods, but God is waiting for repentance and humiliation. When we repent the blessing will flow.

If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land (II Chronicles 7:14).

And think of the impact that Christians would have in the business world by exhibiting brokenness. Men of the world are not broken and they like to pit their strength against others who are like them. But they are nonplussed when they bump into someone who doesn't react with anger, who admits wrong and apologizes, who exhibits the grace of the Lord Jesus. It is this supernatural kind of life that speaks loudest for Christ in the rough and tumble world of commerce today.

LORD, BREAK ME

Some years ago, in a missionary prayer meeting, I heard an earnest young believer pray, “Lord, break me!” The request jarred me. Up to that time in my life, I had never prayed that prayer. And I wasn't sure I was ready to pray it even then. But those words, flowing hissing hot from the heart of that young disciple, awakened me to the tremendous need of brokenness in my own life. They created an awareness that this was a fantastically vital area in the spiritual realm. And now they have become the constant prayer of an aspiring heart:

LORD, BREAK ME!