

BROKENNESS
(Overcoming Life Essay)
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"Brokenness" is a term used to refer to the condition of a person who has totally put aside himself "so that the Spirit of God that dwells in his spirit might come forth in all the fullness of God."

The Path of the Cross

Brokenness is often referred to as "the path of the cross," since the cross is a symbol of death--death to the self, or the breaking of the "carnal man." In order for the spirit to dominate a person's life, it must "break" through the outer shell, which is his carnal man. A person who is broken is divinely illuminated with the nature of God that was in Jesus. However, like Jesus, we must be willing to "drink the cup," which includes suffering, in order to be perfected into Christ's image. Some of the sufferings that we must go through include: enduring personal trials, suffering on behalf of others, and sharing in Christ's sufferings. After we go through a period of suffering, we will eventually come to our promised land. As a result, we will walk in the fullness of the spirit and joy as we continue to abide in Jesus.

The Endurance of Personal Trials

The process of brokenness will include various testings and trials that will purge us and purify us. These trials will produce character and endurance in us. The trials will also teach us to trust in God and not in ourselves, which is the key to releasing the spirit from within us. As we endure these temporary trials, we will receive the crown of life and have the life of Jesus manifested in our mortal flesh, and thus attain a certain degree of brokenness.

Suffering on Behalf of Others

Furthermore, as we suffer on behalf of others, we come closer to the path of brokenness. A mature individual in the Christian faith is exhorted to help bear the burdens of his weaker brother. Not only can we suffer for our fellow brothers and sisters, but we can also suffer for the sake of the lost souls. Jeremiah would weep continuously over the sins of the people in his midst. Jesus felt compassion for the sinful people and also wept over their sins. Paul also suffered on behalf of others, and we should also mourn over the sins of the sinners as we sense how they have displeased the Lord Almighty.

Sharing in the Suffering of Christ

To attain brokenness, we will have to go through periods of suffering for Christ's sake. Just as Jesus was hated and persecuted and mocked and ostracized, so will we if we follow in His paths. As we suffer and attain the character of brokenness, people will sense the Spirit of Christ in us and

actually attack us because of it. Just as Christ was perfected through His sufferings, so will we. When Jesus was persecuted, He did not even revile in return, nor did he try to defend Himself. If we ever feel discouraged as we go through these trials, we should remind ourselves that Christ went through worse trials and even shed his blood for us. We should also realize that God is disciplining us for our own good, since we are his children. Let us endure the sufferings for Christ, for the result of brokenness will be worth while.

God's Purpose in Trials and the Spiritual Promise Land

God has a great plan to use each of us, but the time between now and this promised "land" is called the wilderness period. Within this period of time, God will test us and have us go through trials to humble us and to know what is in our hearts'. As Deuteronomy 8:1-6 states, God wants to make us understand that we need Him and we need to walk in His ways and fear Him and keep His commandments. During these times of trial, we must stand firm in our faith with our God-given vision of the promised land burning in our hearts. Because of the wilderness's testing and purging, we will become a vessel that is useable by God. Once we have been approved by God, we shall depart from the wilderness and enter into our promised land. Just as Israel took the promised land little by little, so shall we. If God was to allow us to experience all the blessings that He has stored for us immediately, then our hearts' might become proud and we might forget the Lord thy God, as it says in Deuteronomy 8:10-14. God takes us out of bondage, gives us a vision of the promised land, cuts us away from our old life, allows us to be purified and "broken" by having us go through a wilderness, after which we shall inherit the promised land step by step.

Living in the Spirit; Walking in the Resurrection Life

To live in the spirit, we must walk in the resurrection life of Christ by faith. Because we have been "born again" spiritually, the Bible says that we are new creatures and that old things have passed away and new things have come. We have become children of the living God by virtue of the blood of Jesus, and as children, we are to separate ourselves from what is unclean and not have friendship with the world. By faith, we were united with Christ in His death and resurrection, and thus we are in the likeness of His resurrection. We walk in the resurrection life by abiding in Christ and His Word, and thus we are walking in the Spirit. If we do not abide in Christ, then we cannot do things that are fully pleasing to God. We cannot bear fruit by striving, being anxious, or by self-effort, but only by abiding in Christ. When we abide in Christ, the vine, we enter into God's rest and peace and cease doing vain works. To walk in the Spirit, we must have our mind and heart dwelling on God's thoughts, which are: true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, and of good repute. As we walk in the Spirit, we will experience joy; however, "if we cease to experience joy, this is a sign that we are walking in the flesh, walking by our own effort and power." God's plan for his children is for them to be conformed to the image of His Son, Jesus Christ. To help us in God's plan for our life and for the perfection of the body of Christ, God has given us Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers. As we all abide Christ and His Word abides in us, together we will become a "church without spot or wrinkle, holy and blameless."