

Are You Allowing Pride to Block This Blessing in Your Life?

A.W. Tozer was famous for saying, "It is doubtful whether God can bless a man greatly until He has hurt him deeply." Brokenness is painful, but it develops humility and dependence on God that very few experience.

In the same way that olives are crushed for their expensive oil and flowers for their perfume, we too must be humbled before we can be mightily used by God. If He is breaking you, although it may be challenging, rejoice in the refining process. Isaiah 66:2 reminds us that God will look on him "who is poor and of a contrite spirit."

God, When Is this Over?

I'll never forget the day I drove to the corporate office of 24 Hour Fitness and resigned as a district manager. According to the world's standard, I had it all: A custom home on the west side and a six-figure income, all while in my 20s. While I had focused on prosperity, wealth and success, I had starved my soul. I tried everything that the world had to offer, but ultimately, I found that it offered little of lasting value. Through a series of events, God humbled me, and that's an understatement. In short, the prodigal came home, but that was just the beginning of the breaking process. (Hear more here.)

Within six months of leaving my eight-year profession, I had to move back home with my mom, which was embarrassing for a "self-made" man. Was God finally done breaking me? Not yet. I went to work as a laborer, digging up septic tank lids by hand. Each day, I would set out with my digging bar and shovel. While listening to sermons and teachings, I would spend the rest of the day digging. It was my *portable*

seminary. Looking back, it was one of the most productive, relaxing and joy-filled times of my life because I surrendered everything to God.

For months, people would gasp, “Shane, what in the world are you doing? Why did you leave all that?” Although it was hard, the process of breaking my pride was God-sent. Humility is a lifelong struggle for all of us. We must remain teachable and repent when warranted. The more God fills you, the more He can use you. He desires humility and brokenness over ability and gifting. He doesn’t call the qualified; He qualifies the called.

Strength Comes From Weakness

As a person who struggles with dyslexia and reading disabilities (also part of the breaking process), and having graduated high school with a 1.8 GPA, I should not be writing op-eds on the national level or speaking to tens of thousands on the radio and other media outlets. My critics laugh at me, but many others are encouraged. They think, “If God can use Shane Idleman, He can use me, too, if I repent and turn to Him.”

The sooner we realize that we are flawed and broken, and utterly dependent on God, the sooner we will experience true joy. Joy and strength in God comes from weakness and dependence—broken, yet unbreakable (see 2 Cor. 12:9-11). And make no mistake, because pride desperately tries to regain lost ground, the breaking process can be a life-long struggle. I wrote more about that here.

Weep Before You Whip

Leonard Ravenhill coined the short but powerful phrase: “We must weep before we whip.” He was referencing the fact that Jesus first wept over Jerusalem before driving out the money changer. The principle is profound: *True spiritual power and God-given authority must be preceded by brokenness, compassion*

and humility. This is the refiner's fire and the furnace of affliction spoken about throughout the sacred text of Scripture (Ps. 26:2, Matt. 3:3, Rev. 3:18 and more).

Think about the most spiritual Christian you know or have read about (notice I didn't say "the most popular"). I guarantee their anointing came from pain and brokenness rather than pride and arrogance. Remember, before God can use a man greatly, He must hurt him deeply by crushing his pride. Even David, after being anointed king, had to go back and tend to the sheep. He had to be a keeper before a king.

It Will Cost You

It is my firm belief that arrogance in the church is preventing a mighty downpour of God's Spirit. We need the blessing of brokenness like never before. The disciples had to be crushed like olives so the anointing oil could flow. Paul had to be knocked down and blinded before he was humbled enough to ask, "What shall I do, Lord?" (Acts 22:10a).

Make no mistake: *The anointing that comes through brokenness will cost you.* The old saints understood that the only way to prevail was to travail. Deep, heart-searching change is painful and laborious, as well as physically and mentally exhausting. Isaiah even paralleled childbirth with seeking God, "As a woman with child is in pain and cries out in her pangs, when she draws near the time of her delivery, so have we been in Your sight, O Lord" (Isa. 26:17, NKJV). There is always travail before you prevail.

God hears the cries of his children. "When God decides to recover a ruined situation, he finds a praying man and baptizes him in anguish" (David Wilkerson). The flame in the upper room still burns. The choice is yours: Will you lay hold of it and continue to fan the flames with brokenness and humility or quench the Spirit's fire through pride? What a travesty it would be at the end of our journey to find that

pride robbed us of the blessing of brokenness. {eoa}

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