

Why We All Need a Shattered Heart

The words “You broke my heart!” cause me to want to do something for the one who cried out. It’s never easy to know what to say next. When we learn of an achy-breaky heart, our flight response mechanism begs to kick in.

The best response to “You broke my heart” might make things a tad worse: “You’re welcome.” Giving thanks to the Lord for His discipline of our heart is an exceedingly excellent response.

Few of us enjoy the idea of discipline. Whether self-inflicted or directed from another, we tend to avoid rather than embrace it. When we’re the ones who discipline someone else, particularly a child, we may hear the caution: “Don’t break their spirit.” But when God disciplines us, He may need to do just that.

Before we can respond to Him appropriately, He must crush our selfish spirit. He must break our heart. Loving discipline breaks the yoke that binds.

Consider David’s heart expressed in Psalm 51 after his grievous sin with Bathsheba and the godly discipline and heart adjustment he endured (read the full story in 2 Sam. 11). David brings his heartfelt prayer to his heavenly Father, asking God once again to clear the books.

Verse 14a: “Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, God of my salvation.” We don’t use the word “blood guiltiness” much anymore, but what better term to describe David’s indulgent sin? He was guilty of the premeditated murder of Bathsheba’s warrior husband, Uriah. Certainly Uriah’s blood stained David’s hands and his spirit.

When David calls upon the Lord as “God of my salvation,” he is

reminding Him of His grace. Grace is not only the power that forgives us, but also the one that evokes our intention to become more like Him. Grace breaks our heart.

Verse 17: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise." Far from avoiding the discipline that would produce it, God instead "delights" in a broken spirit. Tears of repentance carry a commitment to change. This is the goal of discipline with love: "Come up higher."

Jesus taught this lifestyle of heartbreak. In speaking to the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11), He told her to "go and sin no more" (v. 11b). Only the power of a broken heart could move her toward genuine life-change.

David's contrite response reveals his heartbreak: "The Lord is close to those who are of a broken heart and saves such as are crushed with sorrow for sin *and* are humbly *and* thoroughly penitent" (Ps. 34:18, AMPC). All David offered God was a broken heart. That's the best we have to offer. The catalyst for growth in the spirit is a broken vessel.

John Bunyan also understood broken hearts. He asked, "But what necessity is there that the heart must be broken? Cannot a man be saved unless his heart be broken?" Bunyan concluded that a man's heart *must* be broken before he can answer the call of God. In fact, man seems incapable of softening his own hard heart. But God.

What about the heart of the Spirit-led Christian? Paul warned the Ephesians about the condition of a hardened heart: "They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts" (Eph. 4:18, NIV). The New Living Translation puts it this way: "Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against

him.”

We remain spiritually renewed by continual heart surgery from the greatest cardiac surgeon: “Create in me a pure heart, O God” (Ps. 51:10a, NIV). A broken heart is the handiwork of God. As it lies open before Him, the heart is massaged with His Word, and every catacomb of hardness or rebellion is softened. Every heartbeat submits to His touch. He abides with us in our broken heart.

I know my heart is tender when I:

- Seek more prayer time.
- Seek His will and His ways.
- Guard my heart and recognize hardening agents.
- Speak words of life.
- Don’t sit or linger with temptation.
- Don’t give room to seeds of unbelief.
- Grow in my knowledge of Him.

May our hearts embrace the Spirit-led life. We celebrate the discipline of a loving Father. His discipline lets us know we are loved. The next time your heart is broken, give thanks to the Lord.

Dr. Steve Greene is the publisher and executive vice president of the media group at Charisma Media and executive producer of the Charisma Podcast Network. Find his book, *Love Leads: The Spiritual Connection Between Your Relationships and Productivity*, at [www.charismamedia.com](#), or at your local bookstore.

CHARISMA is the only magazine dedicated to reporting on what the Holy Spirit is doing in the lives of believers around the

world. If you are thirsty for more of God's presence and His Holy Spirit, subscribe to CHARISMA and join a family of believers who choose to live life in the Spirit.