

Recognize the “Bruised Reed”

A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he leads justice to victory. —Matthew 12:20

If I were to recount how often I have failed at this point, I fear that the number of times would almost overwhelm me with embarrassment. And yet there was a time in my life when I would not have even thought about this. But one day something happened that caused me to see and realize how insensitive I was to sensitive feelings around me. I am one who has been at home in the fast lane. I seldom suffered fools gladly and often thought, That should not bother this person. It was no small breakthrough that forced me to notice a bruised reed before my eyes. Learning to do so changed my life. I discovered that this verse means that God will not hurt the person already hurting—and I must not do so, either.

It's hard for me to think about how many times I caused the Dove to fly away by not being sensitive to the bruised reed. The bruised reed is a person who has been severely damaged—let down, deeply offended, deprived of love, misunderstood, neglected, criticized, or abused. These persons may have carried the bruise for many years, or it may only have been there for a short time. But as a result, they are crying out for love—desperate just to be accepted for once.

However, from a fear of not being accepted, they manifest behavior that turns others off. But that is just their way of revealing their bruise. Perhaps they are hypersensitive and not pleasant to be around. The list is endless of ways they may manifest their bruise. There are bruised reeds all around us. The chances are, you can find one when you look in the mirror.

We can become insensitive to the Spirit by not recognizing the

bruised reed that God puts in our path. We are all bruised reeds, and when we begin to treat people as such, we will become just a little bit more like Jesus.

Excerpted from *The Sensitivity of the Spirit* (Charisma House, 2002).