

Why We Don't Like to Admit Our Sin One to Another

For a couple of years, "finding beauty in brokenness" has been my tagline, my motto. The problem with brokenness is that some people identify with it while others find it offensive.

Much of my writing is about disability, and I can understand how someone unfamiliar with my writing would mistakenly think I am referring to people with disabilities. So let me make something very clear: I am not talking about people with disabilities. I am actually talking about myself. So in order to be more clear, I have now made the sentiment say "finding beauty in *my* brokenness."

I do not think people with disabilities are broken. To say that would imply I think they need healing. If you have read enough of my posts, you know I do not believe that people with disabilities need healing, and one of my greatest passions is to help the church embrace disability and move past the idea of healing.

So why, exactly, do I talk about brokenness? More than a wife, a mother, a disability advocate, a friend and a daughter, I am first of all a child of God. I belong to Him completely. This is my faith, the foundation of my beliefs, of my being, of my actions, of my life. All of it revolves around a personal God that loves me despite the fact that, yes, I am broken. A God who pours out His grace and mercy even when I do not deserve it. A God who saved me from my sins, from a heart that is capable of so much selfishness, jealousy, anger, bitterness and meanness. I am not just imperfect or flawed—I am broken! And I offer all of it to God to use, to mend, to transform. "Take these broken pieces, Lord. They are Yours. Use me any way You want."

“God uses broken things. It takes broken soil to produce a crop, broken clouds to give rain, broken grain to give bread, broken bread to give strength. It is the broken alabaster box that gives forth perfume. It is Peter, weeping bitterly, who returns to greater power than ever.” –Vance Havner

Life is messy. In the middle of the joy, celebration and goodness of life, there are strokes of pain, loss, heartache, foolish choices, unrealized dreams and wrecked relationships. I call this brokenness. And this is life. Broken is real, and there is beauty in brokenness!

“It is the pain we walk through that defines the women we are. ... It hones the difference we make. It isn’t something that we achieve by strength and character and virtue and strength and savvy. It is something we receive with open hands by God’s grace. And that happens most when we feel broken and humbled and empty and totally inadequate—and we make that choice to trust that God will make His difference in us and through us, right in the midst of our brokenness.” –Leslie Parrott, *You Matter More Than You Think: What a Woman Needs to Know about the Difference She Makes* 

I know for some people, it is not easy to embrace the idea of brokenness. It feels so personal, so broken! And thinking of ourselves as broken might seem like a terrible thing to do. But when I look at my reality before God, I find great beauty in my brokenness, because this amazingly loving God sees me as beautiful, and He finds joy in me, and He cherishes me, and He still uses me, despite it all. This is indeed the great beauty that surrounds my life!

Brennan Manning, in his book *Abba’s Child: The Cry of the Heart for Intimate Belonging* 

So, friends, if you ever found my “finding beauty in brokenness” offensive, I apologize. But I cannot apologize for being broken, and I cannot apologize for the incredible work

that God has done in my life because of it. I journey in this life with Christ by my side. In my brokenness, God reminds me He is present, He is near, He's got my back, He loves me unconditionally, and He can handle life for me when I can't.

*Adapted from **Ellen Stumbo's** blog at . Ellen is a pastor's wife, and she writes about finding beauty in brokenness with gritty honesty and openness. She is passionate about sharing the real-sometimes beautiful and sometimes ugly-aspects of faith, parenting, special needs, and adoption. She has been published in Focus on the Family, LifeWay, MomSense, Not Alone, and Mamapedia among others.*