

# Brokenness: The Heart God Revives - Nancy DeMoss

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## Sermon Summary: What Kind of Heart Does God Revive?

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Preached on: May 2002

### Introduction: The Need for God's Visitation

The sermon begins with gratitude for the ministry of Campus Crusade (now Cru) and its impact on the pastor's life from childhood. The pastor transitions from this personal testimony to the collective theme of the conference: a deep longing for a fresh and continuing visitation of the Spirit of God. To experience this, we must ask a crucial question: What kind of heart does God revive, and what does it take to experience ongoing revival?

### The Heart God Revives: Broken, Contrite, and Humble

The answer is found woven throughout Scripture. God seeks a specific heart posture to pour out His revival spirit.

- **Who God Is & How He Responds:** Scripture reveals that God, who is high and holy, chooses to dwell with those who are humble and contrite. He is drawn near to the brokenhearted and saves them. He values a broken spirit over religious ritual. God looks upon and revives the person who is poor in spirit and mourns over their sin. Brokenness is the very condition that invites God's reviving presence and power. He draws near to the broken in order to "revive" their hearts.
- **Scripture Foundation:**
  - **Isaiah 57:15:** *For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."*
  - **Psalms 34:18:** *The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.*

- **Psalm 51:16-17:** *You do not take delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.*
- **Isaiah 66:2:** *...to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.*
- **Matthew 5:3-4:** *Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.*
- **Application:** We often desire a “painless” or “laughing” revival filled with immediate joy and excitement. However, God’s way is that the “way up is down.” Revival does not begin with a party; it begins with a broken and contrite heart. We will never meet God in the fullness of revival until we have first met Him in brokenness.

## The Process of Drawing Near to God

The path to experiencing God’s presence involves a specific sequence of humility and purification.

- **Scripture: James 4:7-10**
  - **Context:** James instructs believers on how to approach God.
  - **Application:** The process is clear:
    - a. *Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.*
    - b. *Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double minded.*
    - c. *Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.*
    - d. *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.*
  - First comes the humbling, mourning, and weeping over our sin. Only then does God lift us up.

## What Brokenness Is (and Is Not)

There are common misconceptions about what it means to be broken before God.

- **Brokenness is NOT:**
  - Being perpetually sad, gloomy, or downcast.
  - Morbid introspection, always trying to find a new sin.
  - A false humility that involves constantly putting oneself down.

- Simply an emotional experience with many tears (though tears can be present).
- The result of experiencing hurtful circumstances (one can be hurt without being broken).
- **Brokenness IS:**
  - **A Choice:** It is an act of the will, not merely a feeling.
  - **A Lifestyle:** It is a continuous, ongoing posture before God, not just a one-time crisis experience.
  - **Agreeing with God:** It is a lifestyle of agreeing with God about the true condition of our heart as He sees it.
  - **Unconditional Surrender:** It is the absolute surrender of my will to God, like a broken horse is sensitive to its rider. It is saying, "Yes, Lord. Not my will, but yours be done."
  - **The Shattering of Self-Will:** This allows the life, fragrance, and Spirit of Jesus to be released through us.
  - **Responding to Conviction:** It is a lifestyle of responding with humility and obedience to the conviction of God's Spirit and His Word.
  - **A Two-Directional Lifestyle:**
    - a. **Vertically (Toward God):** Living with the "roof off," in transparent honesty and humility.
    - b. **Horizontally (Toward Others):** Living with the "walls down," in authentic relationship.

## **Biblical Illustrations: The Broken vs. The Proud**

The pastor contrasts a proud, unbroken spirit with a humble, broken one, showing that both groups had sin, but the defining difference was their response. God is more offended by the "arched back, the stiff neck, the haughty eyes and the unteachable spirit" of the self-righteous than by the overt sins of the flesh, because the outwardly sinful often know they need a savior, while the proud are blinded to the true condition of their hearts.

### **1. King Saul vs. King David**

- **Who God Tells Me I Am & How I Should Live:** This example shows that God is less concerned with the magnitude of our sin than with the attitude of our heart when confronted with it.

- **Saul (The Unbroken Heart):** His sin was incomplete obedience. When confronted, he made excuses, blamed others, rationalized his actions, and was primarily concerned with his public reputation (“Please don’t tell the people”).
- **David (The Broken Heart):** He committed adultery and murder. When confronted, he fell on his face before God. He took full responsibility, as evidenced in his psalms of contrition (**Psalms 51**). A broken person doesn’t care who knows about their sin; their only concern is being right with God.

## 2. The Pharisee vs. The Tax Collector

- **Scripture: Luke 18:9-14**
- **Context:** Jesus tells a parable to those who were “confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else.”
- **The Pharisee (The Unbroken Heart):** Prayed “to himself,” comparing himself favorably to others. He justified himself and proclaimed his own righteousness. Proud people compare themselves to others.
- **The Tax Collector (The Broken Heart):** Stood at a distance, couldn’t even look up to heaven, and beat his chest, praying, “God, have mercy on me, a sinner.” He refused to justify himself; instead, he justified God.

## 3. Simon the Pharisee vs. The Sinful Woman

- **Scripture: Luke 7:36-50**
- **Context:** A woman with a sinful reputation enters the home of Simon the Pharisee, where Jesus is dining.
- **Simon (The Unbroken Heart):** He was prideful and judgmental, looking down on the woman and questioning Jesus. Though outwardly righteous, his heart was blind to his own sin and need for a Savior.
- **The Woman (The Broken Heart):** She approached Jesus in complete humility and repentance.
  - She wept at His feet (repentance).
  - She wiped His feet with her hair (receiving forgiveness).
  - She kissed His feet (worship).
  - She anointed His feet with perfume (selfless love).
- **Jesus’s Teaching:** “He who has been forgiven little loves little.” The issue was not that Simon had less sin, but that in his pride, he couldn’t see his need for forgiveness. The woman knew she was a sinner, and her great love was a response to the great forgiveness she received.

#### 4. The Older Brother vs. The Prodigal Son

- **Scripture: Luke 15:11-32**
- **Context:** Jesus tells this parable to an audience of two groups: “tax collectors and sinners” who were drawing near to listen, and “Pharisees and teachers of the law” who were muttering and criticizing.
- **The Younger Son (The Broken Heart):** After wasting his inheritance, he hit rock bottom. His need led him to brokenness. The Bible says, “he came to his senses.” In his brokenness, he:
  - i. **Became Honest:** Acknowledged his true condition.
  - ii. **Repented:** Decided, “I will set out and go back to my father.”
  - iii. **Prepared to Confess:** “I have sinned against heaven and against you.”
  - iv. **Adopted a Humble Heart:** “I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.”
- **The Elder Brother (The Unbroken Heart):**
  - He is described as the “good boy,” faithful and hardworking, who was out in the field doing his duty (**Luke 15:25**). Despite his outward obedience, his heart reveals a hidden desire for recognition and unfulfilled expectations, which the pastor warns can lead to a “twentieth-century Pharisee” mindset.
  - Upon hearing the celebration for his brother’s return, he becomes angry and resentful. He refuses to join the party and confronts his father, highlighting his own service.
  - The pastor notes that the father had to leave the party to deal with the proud, unbroken elder son. This serves as a metaphor for how pride and resentment can stop the joy and celebration in our churches and ministries today.
- **God’s Response:** The Father’s heart longs for, welcomes, and embraces brokenhearted sinners. He ran to his son, embraced him, and celebrated his return. This is how God responds to us when we come to Him in genuine brokenness.

#### Characteristics of a Proud vs. Broken Spirit

The pastor presents a detailed comparison of the two heart postures.

<b>Proud, Unbroken Spirit</b>	<b>Broken, Humble Spirit</b>
Focuses on the failures of others.	Overwhelmed with a sense of their own spiritual need.

<b>Proud, Unbroken Spirit</b>	<b>Broken, Humble Spirit</b>
Is self-righteous and has a critical, fault-finding spirit.	Is compassionate and forgives much because they know they have been forgiven much.
Has an independent, self-sufficient spirit.	Has a dependent spirit, recognizing their need for God and others.
Has to prove they are right.	Is willing to yield the right to be right.
Claims rights and has a demanding spirit.	Yields their rights and has a meek spirit.
Is self-protective of their time, rights, and reputation.	Is self-denying.
Desires to be served and to be a success.	Is motivated to serve others and make others a success.
Seeks self-advancement, recognition, and appreciation.	Desires to promote others and rejoices when they are lifted up.
Feels confident in how much they know.	Is humbled by how much they have yet to learn.
Keeps others at arm's length.	Is willing to risk getting close to others and loving intimately.
Is quick to blame others.	Accepts personal responsibility.
Is defensive when criticized.	Receives criticism with a humble, open spirit.
Is concerned with being respectable and protecting their image.	Is concerned with being real before God, willing to die to their reputation.
Finds it difficult to share spiritual needs; covers up sin.	Is open and transparent; doesn't care who knows about their failures.
Has a hard time saying, "I was wrong. Will you please forgive me?"	Is quick to admit failure and seek forgiveness.
Confesses sin in generalities; is sorry they got caught.	Is specific in confession; is genuinely repentant and forsakes the sin.
Waits for the other person to apologize in a conflict.	Takes the initiative to be reconciled, racing to the cross.
Compares themselves to others and feels worthy.	Compares themselves to the holiness of God and feels a desperate need for His mercy.
Is blind to their heart condition and doesn't think they need	Walks in the light and continually senses their need for revival and a fresh encounter with

Proud, Unbroken Spirit	Broken, Humble Spirit
revival.	God.

## The Blessings of Brokenness

Why would anyone desire to be broken? The pastor teaches that **brokenness brings blessedness**. Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit" (**Matthew 5:3**).

1. **God Draws Near to the Broken:** God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. Just as the father of the prodigal son ran to embrace his broken child, our Heavenly Father draws near to us when our hearts are broken before Him.
2. **New Life is Released:** Jesus taught in **John 12:24** that a grain of wheat must fall to the ground and die (be broken) to produce fruit. Unbrokenness leads to loneliness and spiritual barrenness. When we allow our hard outer shell to be broken, the life of Jesus flows through us, producing fruit in the lives of others.
3. **Increased Capacity for Love and Worship:** The sinner woman in **Luke 7** loved much because she had been forgiven much. Her brokenness led to extravagant worship. The cycle is: Brokenness → Genuine Repentance → Forgiveness → Freedom → Increased capacity for love and worship.
4. **Increased Spiritual Fruitfulness and Power:** God uses broken things and people.
  - **Jacob:** When his natural strength was broken at Peniel, God clothed him with spiritual power.
  - **Gideon's Army:** When they broke their pitchers, the light shone forth, leading to victory.
  - **The Boy's Loaves:** When the five loaves were broken by Jesus, they were multiplied to feed thousands.
  - **Mary's Alabaster Box:** When it was broken, its fragrance filled the entire house.
  - **Jesus' Body:** When it was broken on the cross, it released salvation for the world.
5. **Revival is Released:** Revival is the release of God's Spirit through broken lives. The pastor provides historical examples:
  - **A Missionary in China:** After a night of prayer, a missionary confessed his sins of "spiritual pretense" and "spiritual impotence." This act of brokenness led to a wave of conviction and confession among others, resulting in a powerful movement of God's Spirit.

- **The Lewis Revival (1949-50):** On the Scottish Isle of Lewis, a group of deacons met to pray for 18 months. One night, a young deacon stood and quoted from **Psalm 24:3-5**, challenging the others about their own hearts. This led to confession, and out of their brokenness, a revival was unleashed.
- **Romanian Revival (mid-1970s):** A pastor led his congregation in repenting for seemingly insignificant sins. Through their brokenness, the reviving power of God was released across the nation.
- **The Welsh Revival (1905):** The theme song was “Bend me lower, lower down at Jesus’ feet,” sung from broken and contrite hearts.
- **The Shantung Revival (1920s-30s):** Began after a missionary leader prayed, “Oh God, what is it in me?” allowing God to search and break him.

## Who I Am & How I Am to Live: A Lifestyle of Brokenness

How does one begin to live a life of brokenness? The pastor outlines several practical and spiritual steps.

### 1. See God as He Really Is

The closer we get to God, the more we see our own spiritual need. This is not about self-deprecation but about gaining a true perspective of ourselves in light of God’s holiness.

- **Example of Job:** After defending his own righteousness, Job encounters God directly and declares in **Job 42:5-6**, *“I had heard of you with the hearing of my ear, but now my eye has seen you. And now I abhor myself and I repent in dust and ashes.”*
- **Example of Isaiah:** In **Isaiah 6**, after a vision of the Lord, “high and lifted up,” the prophet’s focus turns inward, and he cries, *“Woe to me!”*
- **Example of the Apostle Paul:** Paul’s self-perception changed as he grew closer to Christ. Early in his faith, he called himself the “least of all saints.” As he matured, he saw himself as “less than the least.” Near the end of his life, he called himself the “chief of sinners.”

### 2. Fall on the Rock

Jesus identified Himself as the Rock. The pastor quotes Jesus, saying, *“If anyone falls on this rock, he will be broken. But anyone on whom the rock falls, it will crush him to powder.”*

- We are called to proactively humble ourselves before Christ—to “fall on the rock”—rather than waiting for God’s judgment or circumstances to break us.

- This means adopting the posture of the publican in the temple, crying out, “God be merciful to me, a sinner,” and echoing David’s prayer in **Psalm 51**, “Have mercy on me, O God.”

### 3. Acknowledge and Verbalize Need

True brokenness cannot coexist with hiding or pretense. It requires honesty before God and others.

- **To God:** We must live “with the roof off,” ceasing to blame others and instead pray, “It’s me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer.” As long as we point the finger of blame, we are not broken. We come to God with empty hands, clinging only to the cross for mercy and grace.
- **To Others:** A broken person is willing to be transparent and vulnerable, saying, “I have a need. Will you pray for me?” There is no true brokenness where there is no openness.
  - **Pastor’s Personal Example:** The pastor shared his personal struggle with exaggerating the truth to make himself look better. Victory did not come in its fullness until he confessed it to two godly men and asked for their prayers. This act of open brokenness brought “unbelievable freedom and deliverance.”

### 4. Take the Next Step of Obedience

Brokenness is demonstrated through active obedience, especially in the areas where our flesh is most resistant.

- The pastor asks: “What is the very thing that you know God wants you to do, but your flesh least wants to do?”
- **Pastor’s Personal Example:** God convicted him that television had become a barrier in his relationship with the Lord. The response of a humble and broken heart was simple obedience: “Yes, Lord, I will obey You.”
- This is the cry of the poverty-stricken heart that acknowledges its need for God’s mercy, a cry that the proud and self-sufficient cannot make.

### Call to Action: Take a Step of Brokenness

The sermon concludes with a direct call to action. The pastor defines obedience as “doing exactly what God tells me to do, when He tells me to do it, with the right heart attitude.” He urges the congregation not to quench the Spirit but to take an immediate step of brokenness, providing specific examples:

- Kneeling to confess your need for God’s mercy.

- Admitting you've tried to live the Christian life in your own power.
- Asking another believer for prayer.
- Making a phone call to honor parents or seek forgiveness.
- Going to a staff member, child, or spouse and saying, "I have wounded you with my spirit. Would you please forgive me?"
- Confessing to a leader a spirit of insubordination.
- For leaders, admitting to subordinates a failure to live up to the standard you project.

The final charge is to identify the hardest thing God is asking and "just do it," trusting that as we take that step, the power and life of the resurrected Jesus will begin to flow through us.

# The **Heart** God Revives

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Psalm 51:17

## **Proud People . . .**

- focus on the failures of others.
- have a critical, fault-finding spirit; look at every one else's faults with a microscope, but their own with a telescope.
- are self-righteous; look down on others.
- have an independent, self-sufficient spirit.
- have to prove that they are right.
- claim rights; have a demanding spirit.
- are self-protective of their time, their rights, and their reputation.
- desire to be served.
- desire to be a success.
- desire self-advancement.
- have a drive to be recognized and appreciated.
- are wounded when others are promoted and they are overlooked.
- have a subconscious feeling, "This ministry/ church is privileged to have me and my gifts"; think of what they can do for God.
- feel confident in how much they know.
- are self-conscious.

## **Broken People . . .**

- are overwhelmed with a sense of their own spiritual need.
- are compassionate; can forgive much because they know how much they have been forgiven.
- esteem all others better than themselves.
- have a dependent spirit; recognize their need for others.
- are willing to yield the right to be right.
- yield their rights; have a meek spirit.
- are self-denying.
- are motivated to serve others.
- are motivated to be faithful and to make others a success.
- desire to promote others.
- have a sense of their own unworthiness; are thrilled that God would use them at all.
- are eager for others to get the credit and rejoice when others are lifted up.
- have a heart attitude that says, "I don't deserve to have a part in any ministry"; know that they have nothing to offer God except the life of Jesus flowing through their broken lives.
- are humbled by how very much they have to learn.
- are not concerned with self at all.

## Proud People . . . (cont.)

- keep others at arms' length.
- are quick to blame others.
- are unapproachable or defensive when criticized.
- are concerned with being respectable, with what others think; work to protect their own image and reputation.
- find it difficult to share their spiritual needs with others.
- want to be sure that no one finds out when they have sinned; their instinct is to cover up.
- have a hard time saying, "I was wrong; will you please forgive me?"
- tend to deal in generalities when confessing sin.
- are concerned about the consequences of their sin.
- are remorseful over their sin, sorry that they got found out or caught.
- wait for the other to come and ask forgiveness when there is a misunderstanding or conflict in a relationship.
- compare themselves with others and feel worthy of honor.
- are blind to their true heart condition.
- don't think they have anything to repent of.
- don't think they need revival, but are sure that everyone else does.

## Broken People . . . (cont.)

- are willing to risk getting close to others and to take risks of loving intimately.
- accept personal responsibility and can see where they are wrong in a situation.
- receive criticism with a humble, open spirit.
- are concerned with being real; what matters to them is not what others think but what God knows; are willing to die to their own reputation.
- are willing to be open and transparent with others as God directs.
- once broken, don't care who knows or who finds out; are willing to be exposed because they have nothing to lose.
- are quick to admit failure and to seek forgiveness when necessary.
- are able to acknowledge specifics when confessing their sin.
- are grieved over the cause, the root of their sin.
- are truly, genuinely repentant over their sin, evidenced in the fact that they forsake that sin.
- take the initiative to be reconciled when there is misunderstanding or conflict in relationships; they race to the cross; they see if they can get there first, no matter how wrong the other may have been.
- compare themselves to the holiness of God and feel a desperate need for His mercy.
- walk in the light.
- realize they have need of a continual heart attitude of repentance.
- continually sense their need for a fresh encounter with God and for a fresh filling of His Holy Spirit.