

## Broken Pieces

*“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.” Psalm 51:17 (NIV)*

One of my greatest weaknesses is my eating habits. I love everything that is unhealthy, so when my assistant recently suggested that we have soup and salad for lunch, I hid in front of my computer and made an ugly face. *Yuck*, I thought. *Who wants to have salad when you can have a burger and fries?* While I dearly love my assistant, I am not nearly as fond of salad. As a matter of fact, salad on a plate reminds me of what I see when I empty my lawnmower bag: a lot of grass with some “weedy looking” things thrown in. I reluctantly agreed to go to the local bistro for lunch after remembering they also serve pizza.

After placing our order at the counter, we headed to the back of the restaurant to find a table. An attractive blonde caught my attention from the corner of the restaurant. She was wearing really cute clothes, so I glanced to get a closer look at what she had on. Her face was strangely familiar. *All of a sudden, my heart rose in my chest.* This familiar face had made a VERY significant impact in my life and though she had no idea who I was, I CERTAINLY recognized her. It was well-known author and speaker, Beth Moore. Like an excited little girl at Disney World, I leaned across the table, grabbed my assistant by the arm and whispered, *“Laurie, is that Beth Moore?”* Laurie took one look and said, “Yep, sure is.” I could hardly contain myself. Beth’s books had taken me through some of the darkest days of my life and now I was having lunch in the same restaurant with her! I was so glad “I” had chosen this restaurant and that salad was on the menu for the day.

After we finished eating Laurie and I prepared to leave. As we headed toward the door, we passed Beth’s table. She was leaning over having a very intimate conversation with the young lady she was with, so I hated to interrupt her, but I did it anyway! I could not miss the chance to tell her what an impact she had made in my

life. If it were not for some of the things I learned through her writing, I might not be singing, speaking or even writing this book.

I slipped into the booth beside Beth, apologized for my interruption and began to tell her what an influence she had been in my life. She was extremely gracious as she hugged me and introduced me to her lunch date. It was her daughter Amanda. I introduced Laurie, and we all had a beautiful time talking. Beth hugged me several times, and even said how proud she was of me for the work I was doing. *Wow*, I thought to myself. *Beth Moore is proud of me?* I had never been so happy to be at a restaurant that served salad!

As we got ready to leave, Beth noticed the purse I was carrying and complimented it. *I wanted to crawl under the table.* Here I was face to face with Beth Moore and little did she know I had BROKEN the strap to my purse just before we came into the restaurant. I tried to tuck the broken strap inside the purse and hide it but the bulge protruding from the side gave it away. Neither Beth nor Amanda seemed to notice as they continued with their compliments. Then it happened. Beth began touching the purse. *No!* I thought. Beth Moore was touching MY purse and I needed to have it all together. If she continued touching it, she would feel the broken strap. *I couldn't hide it anymore.* I broke down and told them about the broken piece and how I was carrying the purse by one good strap so no one would know it was broken. *I will never forget Beth's response.* "Well Shannon, I think it is adorable just the way it is and I would carry it just like that." Imagine, Beth Moore loved me AND my broken purse! This woman was just like Jesus.

I modeled the various ways one could carry the broken purse and we all got a good laugh. I thanked Beth and Amanda for their time, we hugged once more, and left the restaurant. I thanked Laurie all the way back to the office for her wonderful choice of lunch that day.

I thought about my encounter later that evening and realized how BLESSED I had been to feel so loved by someone despite my broken pieces. Beth had been a living example of Jesus as she embraced me when I shared some of the struggles I had experienced and then found ways to make the "broken pieces" become a positive in

my life. *Isn't this just like Jesus?* He embraces us when we come to Him as we are and He finds ways to do great things with our broken pieces.

The Bible gives several examples of beauty coming from broken things. Take Jacob, for example? It was not until Jacob's natural strength was broken and his "*hip was wrenched*" at Peniel in Genesis 32:25 that he came to the point where God anointed him with spiritual strength. In Luke 9:16, the miracle of feeding five thousand with two loaves of bread and five fish did not occur until Jesus took "the five loaves...*and broke them.*" It was through the very process of the loaves being broken that the miracle occurred. Once Mary *broke* her beautiful "alabaster jar of very expensive perfume" in Matthew 26:7, the true value was revealed.

God uses BROKEN things. Today, humbly allow Him to take every broken piece of your life. Don't try to fake it or hide it. Release your brokenness to Him and watch what happens. If God can use a broken strap on my purse to bring such a precious encounter as He did with Beth, think of all the wonderful things He can do when you *allow Him to invade your broken spaces.*

Although I didn't want to eat at the bistro, God allowed me to have a beautiful experience once I was there. If God is calling you to go to a place you don't really want to go in your spiritual life, GO! You never know what surprise He has in store.

# Reflection

1. What are some broken pieces of your life that you have attempted to “hide?”
2. Recall a time that you released all your brokenness to God. How did He turn the broken pieces into something beautiful?
3. Today, turn all your broken pieces over to God in prayer. Allow Him to invade every broken area.