



VineLife

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From the Director

The theme for this issue is "brokenness". What does brokenness have to do with us as believers in Jesus Christ? Do we experience brokenness because we have disobeyed God and are being punished? Is it because others accuse or abuse us? Is it to bring us to total dependence on God? How does our Heavenly Father bless us in our brokenness? These are good questions that we have tried to answer in this newsletter.

First, let me introduce you to Joan Depew who has shared her journey through brokenness and how God has been faithful to her and her family. Joan and her husband, Roger, are faithful members of our church, and are both in the Worship Ministry. I've grown to love Joan and respect her greatly for her faithful witness.

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through our brokenness.*

Many of you already know Karen Cockerham. She and her husband serve as missionaries in Haiti. She will tell how God led them to this ministry, directing them to sell all to follow Him.

You will also be blessed by a dear friend of mine, Gail George. Gail and her husband Dave serve in Grace Resources Ministry in Nashville. You will be encouraged by her tips for abundant living through brokenness.

Finally, I have written the focus article about my own experience with brokenness. As you will see in the life of Jacob, God desires to bless us through our brokenness and to use us to bless others.

The next few weeks are full of opportunities for women in our church and community to worship, serve, fellowship and grow. You won't want to miss them. The spring Bible study, *Covenant* by Kay Arthur, is underway; but it isn't too late for you to join us on Tuesdays at 9:00 a.m. or 6:00 p.m.

We are excited as we make preparations for the 2012



Yvonne Ward
Director of Women's Ministries

Hospitality Dinner scheduled for April 21. The theme this year will be "Café Connection". I hope you are making plans now to host a table or attend. We are also accepting applications for anyone who wants to be mentored by an older

woman in the faith, as well as those who wish to take the training to become mentors, fulfilling the Titus 2 mandate.

I encourage you to ask the question, "Where does God want me to plug in to the women's ministry?" It is an honor and privilege to serve you. May God bless you today as you seek Him.

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Meet This SSBC Woman: ~ Joan DePew

Removing My Church Face

God can't use us when we are wearing our church face. God uses brokenness. And, broken is what I felt a year ago when we learned that our son had jumped off a bridge. I came to the end of Joan where God could use me.

I grew up in an alcoholic home, one of pretense. Though there was no physical abuse, there was molestation of the soul. We covered up everything. We all have things we don't want our church friends to know.

The last four years, my husband Roger and I both lost our mothers and my brother in death. It has been very difficult for us, but especially so for our son, who has dealt with depression since college. He had been on medication, but none of the family knew that he had missed several doses and was afraid to start taking it again for fear he would have a bad reaction. By

*God can't use us
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the time he realized he was in danger, he was unable to quickly see a doctor who was familiar with treating depression. Instead, he received treatment that

caused him to spiral deeper.

When his wife called to tell us he had jumped off a bridge, I couldn't breathe, I fell to my knees in my closet where I had gone to pack clothes and prayed two things: "God help me breathe," and "God save my son's life." We called our church family to ask them to pray. There was no longer any need for pretense, we had nothing else to hide – we were at the end of the line. God told me, "Joan, this is it – this time, you will be real."

There is something about coming to the end of yourself and realizing that God is real. It still hurts, but He truly never leaves or forsakes us (Hebrews 13:5).

There were so many ways that He revealed His presence. First, there was my impulse to pray for our son a few hours before we learned of the bad news. Then the maid in our



hotel room told us that she was praying for our son. We had not told her anything. Paramedics had just completed a rescue drill a few minutes earlier on the bridge where he jumped. They were able to pull him out of the water within 10 minutes. The 911 dispatcher who made the call to send him to a trauma unit was a Christian and called us back several times to check on his progress.

*My heart's desire is to
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Our son is doing well now. He has a new daughter, a new job and is back in church. To the amazement of his doctors, he only has a few scars. God truly knows the plans He has for us,

plans for welfare and not for calamity to give us a future and a hope (Jeremiah 29:11 NASB).

He was with us all the way. And now, my heart's desire is that I can be real, so that He can use the messes of my life to help others see His life.

Missionary Message:

“Send us, Lord. Use us, Lord” ~ Karen Cockerham, Haiti

As my husband, Ron and I prayed and talked about our first and “last” mission trip to Haiti, God was working in our hearts and answering prayers that we had prayed together so many times since we gave our lives to Christ.

The first prayer that Jesus answered was one I prayed while watching the devastation of the earthquake that hit Haiti in January of 2010. My heart was filled with sorrow and compassion as I watched the people suffer such a catastrophe.

“Lord, I’m not medically trained,” I prayed. “I don’t know what I could offer, but if You can use me, please send me.” Six weeks later, I found myself on an airplane going to a country I knew nothing about and a city I had never heard of before. I was going to serve in a home with more than 100 children in the city of Port-de-Paix, which means “Port of Peace”.

Port-de-Paix is one of the poorest cities in Haiti. I was almost speechless as I rode to the children’s home. I remember thinking, “Why Lord? Why am I here?” The next day God reminded me of scripture I had read the night before leaving.

We are the only family that most of the children here know.

Colossians 3:2 says “Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.” As I clung to that verse I grew to know and care for the children. Ron joined me in Haiti after three weeks, and we worked together for another three weeks loving on the children and working on projects in the home.

When we left Haiti to return to America we thought in our hearts that we would not return. But God in all His sovereignty answered another prayer that we had prayed for so long. “Send us, Lord. Use us, Lord.”

In the past two years we have made four trips to Haiti and are now serving as missionary interns through Globe International. The ministry has a home for boys, a home for girls and toddlers, Grace Chapel and Grace Christian School. Presently we have 41 children in the homes and the school has 110 students. Grace Chapel has more than 300 people on Sunday



Ron and Karen Cockerham

mornings.

Ron and I serve closely with Pastor Ciloes Andy, the national director of the ministry, and his wife Emmanuela. Our desire is for each of the children to have the best possible care and a loving, stable, Christian family environment. We are the only family that most of them have.

As we look to the future, we are praying to purchase land and build a new home where the children will have grass to play in and garden space to grow food. God has already shown us the land. Will you pray with us for this to become a reality?

We depend on donations to sustain us. New partnerships are forming and we would love for you to be a part of the work that God is doing here. If you would like to partner with us, to visit Haiti or would just like information, go to www.globeintl.org and view the Globe Hope Sponsorship page.

We at Hope Vision Ministry welcome teams as well as individuals and families to visit. Thank you for your prayers and support.

In His Service, *Karen.*



Focus on Trials: The Blessing of Brokenness

~Yvonne Ward

Our encounters with God should change us permanently. We should never be the same after meeting God.

Brokenness is not a topic people naturally want to discuss or hear in a sermon. The idea of something being broken brings all kinds of negative thoughts. According to Webster's Dictionary the word "broken" means, "violently separated into parts, damaged or altered by breaking, made weak or infirmed." It can also mean, "to subdue completely, crush, make sorrowful." This is the meaning I am using today.

God's Word has much to say on the subject of brokenness, both in principle and in literal illustration. For instance, it says, "The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit" (Psalm 34:18 NAS). When confessing the sin of adultery, David prayed to God:

"You do not desire a sacrifice or I would offer one. You do not want a burnt offering. The sacrifice You desire is a broken spirit. You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God," (Psalm 51:16-17 NLT).

We read in Genesis 32 about Jacob, "the deceiver," who came face to face with God after a life of dissatisfaction and scheming. He wrestled with an Angel, who was later identified as God, and refused to let go until he received a blessing. The result was physical brokenness, but he received spiritual healing and blessing. Jacob received a new name – Israel – which means, "you have struggled with God and men and prevailed." He had to be broken before God could bless him.

An early 20th century protestant minister

Martyn Lloyd-Jones said of Jacob's experience:

*"I say the mark of the genuine experience is its permanence. Jacob after Penuel was never the same again... As you read the story from this point onward you will find that he behaved in an entirely different manner. Jacob – the old Jacob – was no more. Now he is a cripple, in a sense, but a new man and living a different life."*¹

Our encounters with God should change us permanently – we should never be the same "from that point onward" after meeting with God.

At first, I thought my own experience with brokenness was more of a curse and one I could not endure. I wondered why I was suffering. Had I committed some sin and He was punishing me? Did God not care what I was going through? I came to realize that God loved me so much that He wanted to rid my life of impurities so I would bear the reflection of Him.

A year or so before this process of brokenness began I had a Romans 12:1-2 experience with the Lord – to be holy, acceptable to God and not be conformed to this world. As a Christian of fourteen years, I had come to a point in my life that I wanted to KNOW Him in the abundant life he had promised. I made a total commitment to His

¹ D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Old Testament Evangelistic Sermons.



lordship. One of my prayers was from Philippians 3:7-10. I had a God-given passion to “count every-thing loss” and to know God – at any cost.

It was through a time of illness that I found my Healer – my Jehovah Rapha. Indeed He was my spiritual Healer as well as physical. I was imprisoned by the circumstances and rejections of my childhood. My heart needed the sweet Balm of Gilead to soothe my anguished soul. Isaiah 61:1 became a reality to me as He bound up my wounds, opened the prison doors and set me free.

Precious to me is Isaiah 45:3, “I will give you treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places” (NKJ). During this period of darkness I found many treasures and became rich in the secret place of my brokenness. May I share some of the treasures with you?

1. I came to know God in a way I never would have known Him, if I had not been broken. (Philippians 3:10)
2. I learned to trust Him completely, knowing He knows His plans for me. (Jeremiah 29:11)
3. I recognized Him as Sovereign in my life, past, present and future. (Psalm 139)
4. I realized God causes all things to happen for good that I might be conformed to the image of His Son. (Romans 8:28-29)
5. I learned who I am in Christ and I experienced the reality of grace. (Ephesians 1:6)

6. I learned that NOTHING can separate me from the love of God in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:38-39)

Brokenness became a blessing to me. Did I ever kick against the process? Oh, yes! Did I ever shout at God and tell Him it was too much? Many times! Did I ever try to run away from it? Yes! But, as I bowed my knee before Him and continued to yield to His control I found wholeness and healing through the brokenness.

God uses His broken children in a greater way if we are yielded to His will. He is glorified in our weakness. Elisabeth Elliot writes about a chapel speaker at Wheaton College who once said about Jesus’ feeding of the five thousand:

“If my life is broken when given to Jesus it is because pieces will feed a multitude, while a loaf will satisfy only a little lad.”²

When our lives are broken, Jesus’ life can flow through us and “feed” many people spiritual nourishment. My prayer is that you allow God to heal your brokenness.

²Elliot, Elisabeth, *Passion & Purity*.



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- My
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More on Brokenness:

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.

~Vance Havner~

“We want to avoid suffering, death, sin, ashes. But we live in a world crushed and broken and torn, a world God Himself visited to redeem. We receive His poured-out life, and being allowed the high privilege of suffering with Him, may then pour ourselves out for others.”

~Elisabeth Elliot~

...brokenness is the pathway to blessing! There are no alternative routes; there are no short-cuts. The very thing we dread and are tempted to resist is actually the means to God's greatest blessings in our lives.

~Nancy Leigh DeMoss~

A Christian is not a person who believes in his head the teachings of the Bible. Satan believes in his head the teachings of the Bible! A Christian is a person who has died with Christ, whose stiff neck has been broken, whose brazen forehead has been shattered, whose stony heart has been crushed, whose pride has been slain, and whose life is now mastered by Jesus Christ.

~John Piper~

Tips for Abundant Life:

Living in the “I Am” ~ Gail George



Gail George

Gail George is part of Grace Resources Ministry in Nashville. She has provided the following practical advice for living the abundant life God has for all His children.

1. Live in the “I AM” not the “I should” or “I shouldn’t”.

Sometimes we think we shouldn’t feel or think a certain way as Christians. When that happens, look beneath the surface – ask God to reveal what is really happening in your emotions/thinking. Take it captive by God’s word and be honest...confess where you really are to God. For example, you might say, “God, I am really angry (hurt, depressed, etc.)”

Then confess truth – what God has already done for you through Jesus Christ. Acknowledge what the Bible says is true – that your life and your identity are hidden in Christ. Pray something like, “Thank You, God, that You have made me complete and whole in You. Thank You that I am more than my emotions or thoughts. Thank You that You live in me and I am in union with You.”

Also avoid living in the “I should.” The “I should” view focuses on my duty as a Christian, what are all my responsibilities” to become or be a “good’ Christian. Instead, look to

the deepest desires in you to experience God in all His fullness and goodness. How does He want to express Himself through you as who you are, rather than what do you have to do to serve or please Him. Only Christ living the life of God through you will please God. We cannot live that life on our own by following “I should.”

2. Be willing and able to practice forgiveness of yourself and others on a daily basis.

Forgiveness is a decision, a choice based on an act of my will in which I acknowledge the debt-producing event that was committed against me and I attach all of the emotional impact to it that it has had on me. Then in faith, believing that God will walk me through a journey to set me free, I pay the debt of that sin by releasing the other person from a debt they owe to me. I pay that debt by giving up my right to hold them accountable for the offense they have done against me. I am giving up holding onto the debt and I pay it by setting them free, and by doing so, experience the very freedom I have chosen for them.

3. Practice gratitude daily.

Take time to notice the wonder of all that God has created and done. Take time to enjoy the beauty and thank God for His many gifts daily. Be grateful for even tough experiences because God will work them for good in your life. As

Forgiveness is a decision, a choice based on an act of will.

you increase your gratitude you are allowing the Holy Spirit to express Himself through you. Over time, you will experience freedom, cleansing and hope.

4. Appreciate others and express that appreciation verbally to them.

Look for ways you can be helpful, thoughtful and of service to someone else as often as possible. One of the chief characteristics of abundant living is a growing awareness and practice of other-centeredness.

Effective, Fervent Prayer:

“Pray for Me” ~ Michelle Battilla



Michelle Battilla

Being vulnerable and expressing our need for others can be difficult, especially in times of struggle. Sometimes our pride or embarrassment can keep us from asking others to pray for us. Maybe even the thought that “I should be carrying others burdens, not laying my burdens on someone else” prevents

us from reaching out to other people.

In James 5:13-16 we read:

“Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy?

God made us part of a church family to encourage and carry each another’s burdens.

Let him sing songs of praise. Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith

will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective” (NIV).

God has created us for community. He made us part of a church family to encourage one another, and carry each other’s burdens. God gives greater authority when we are united in prayer: “if two of you on earth agree about anything that they may ask, it will be done for them by my Father who is in heaven” (NASB). In his book, *Intercessory Prayer*, Dutch Sheets recalls a friend’s statement when requesting prayer for his son, “Sometimes the covenant of the Lord is released to you through others coming to your aid.”

Paul has given us an example of asking others to pray for us. In

Romans 15:30 he writes, “I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me” (NIV).

We must go beyond safe and surface prayers. We must go deep and open up about areas of our lives where we need God’s power to create change. If we want to see the power of prayer in our own lives and others, we need to be honest about the broken places where we need God to work. Where are we weak and not able to do it on our own? I believe that asking others to pray for us as we work to mature in our faith and serve God will bring about change and is pleasing to God.

Do you need to put on the fruits of love, compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness or patience? Do you need discipline in reading God’s word and spending time in prayer? Is there sin in your life over which you are not gaining victory? Is there a problem in your home or family that needs urgent prayer? I encourage you to find a praying friend and not let anything keep you from asking for the prayers of those who love Christ and care about you.

When we reach out and ask for prayer for ourselves we show humility, and dependence on God and it will strengthen the bond of love between you and those who pray for you.

Resources for Abundant Living

Try these resources for living the abundant life. Some are available in the SSBC Library Resource Center.

Blessings of Brokenness: Why God Allows Us to Go Through Hard Times, Charles Stanley

Brokenness, Surrender, Holiness Nancy Leigh DeMoss

Brokenness: The Heart God Revives, Nance Leigh DeMoss

Changed into His Likeness, Watchman Nee

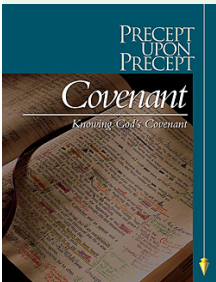
Don’t Waste Your Sorrows, Paul Billheimer

The Indwelling Life of Christ: All of Him in All of Me, Ian Thomas

News and Announcements:

Spring Bible Study *Covenant*

February 21 – April 17: It is not too late to join us for the women's spring Bible study. We meet in Fellowship Hall on Tuesdays at 9 a.m. and at 6 p.m. You can choose either session. We are studying Kay Arthur's *Covenant*, which is a 9-week series on the covenants God has made with His people, from the Israelites of the Old Testament to New Testament Christians today. You won't want to miss learning about God's promises to you.



Café Connection Hospitality Dinner Saturday, April 21

Remember last year's hospitality dinner. This year it will be even better as we celebrate "Café Connection."

Wanda Newby of Sparta, TN will be our guest speaker. She currently shares God's Word through Precepts Bible studies at The Haven ministry, and in her Sunday

School class at Bear Cove Baptist, both in Sparta.



Jessica (Swallows) Lynch of Grace Baptist Knoxville, will lead our music. Together, they will inspire, make us think and challenge us in our walk with the Lord. Members of the men's ministry at

Steven's Street have agreed to serve dinner for us this year, so the hostesses can enjoy fellowship with their guests. Make your plans now to attend.

Is God Calling You To Be a Mentor?

Titus 2 instructs older women to mentor younger women. Each of us, no matter our age, should be mentoring someone younger in the faith. Also, we should each have an older woman who is mentoring us in a higher walk with the Lord. If you would like more information about how to be a mentor, we will soon be training again for Journey: Life-On-Life mentoring for women.

Participation in the training does not commit you to mentor in the Journey program. It will equip you to mentor other women God brings into your life. Applications are available online, or at the Information Desk in the front lobby.

Don't wait to follow God's mandate to invest yourself in the lives of others. For more information, email us at ssbcwomen@stevensstreet.org or ask Yvonne Ward or Beverley Nash.

Do You Want to Be Mentored?

We are accepting protégé applications for women who want to be mentored through the Journey: Life-On-Life mentoring program. Applications are available online, or at the Information Desk in the front lobby. You are never too old or too young or too far along in your walk with Christ to be mentored.

VineLife is a quarterly publication by and for the Women's Ministry of Stevens Street Baptist Church.

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