



General Topics :: Broken Mirrors

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Picture a mirror (maybe an ordinary hand-held one or a fancy wall mirror with an ornate frame like the one in Snow White). Now imagine that mirror is cracked and broken. Maybe pieces are missing. Maybe the glass is lying on the floor. Maybe it's still in the frame but so damaged it looks more like a spider's web than an instrument of reflection.

I SOUGHT HELP when I realized I had a sexual addiction problem. Throughout my life, fantasy, masturbation, and pornography (sexual "acting out") were my way of existing and escaping reality. So, after finally coming to the end of my rope, I reached out to a local parachurch organization that specializes in helping people come out of sexual dysfunction.

When I arrived at my first meeting to discuss my problems and seek direction, I found myself sitting in a small room being interviewed by a man in his late 30s who had come from a background of homosexuality. I thought to myself, *They obviously have gotten mixed up because I'm dealing with a lustful attraction to women, not men! I hope they don't think I'm gay!* Then I wondered, *What in the world am I supposed to learn from someone struggling with homosexuality? I wasn't getting the connection! Maybe you don't get the connection either. Most people don't. So what do a man struggling with heterosexual sin and a man struggling with homosexual sin have in common? What do a married, straight woman involved in an emotional affair with a coworker and a woman living a lesbian lifestyle share in common? More than you think.*

Roots

Many of us struggle with sexual and relational brokenness. Better put, we're broken in our capacity to love others aright. This fundamental breaking normally occurs early in our lives.

Think of the mirror as a picture of your heart.

We're born whole, in the image of God, so that we reflect him and his character. We're to bear God's image in all we do, especially in our sexuality and relationships. But we're born into a world of sin. And so as we grow we become damaged at a very deep level through the sins of others against us and our own sinful reactions to that pain. So in our relationships and in our sexuality we no longer bear the image of God but rather a distorted, broken, and false image.

Homosexuality, sexual addiction, and broken ways of relating don't just appear out of nowhere. They're usually related to childhood traumas, catalytic environments, and marring events. Abandonment events, such as childhood loss of parents (or other significant relationships), abuse, neglect, and harsh discipline are closely related to deep-seated feelings of rejection.

These events and issues become the seeds that foster broken patterns of relating later in our lives. The seeds become the roots that are basically the same for every one of us.

Fruit

But, the fruit of the tree produced from roots of brokenness in our lives may differ from person to person. There are many expressions of brokenness, from sexual addiction to emotional infatuation to same-sex attraction to involvement in a promiscuous way of living.

For example, the gentlemen I described earlier came from a place where as a child he experienced a stable family life with mother and father both present. But he never really connected to his father and even felt rejected by him (which is a common scenario in many same-sex struggles). Without anyone to call him into manhood, or be the parental guide for him, he felt alienated and confused about his own masculinity. As he grew older his needs for male attention and affirmation grew. Then they became eroticized during puberty, causing a same-sex attraction in him for other men. The sins of others (namely his father), and then his sinful reaction to it (adopting a homosexual lifestyle to gain deep love needs) broke the mirror.

Conversely, I had grown up without a father around. No connection to Dad whatsoever. But for me this disconnection, although it filled me with anxiety and confusion, led me to adopting the world's perspective about manhood and seeing women as sexual objects.

So our roots (sexual brokenness) were the same. But the fruit of the sin (i.e. homosexuality, heterosexual lust) differed. The good news is God's desire is not to just strip the leaves off the tree but to deal with and heal the roots of our deeper issues.

We all are broken to one degree or another. None of us has been raised by perfect people. All have responded imperfectly to the sins against us. Not one of us has a perfect mirror. We all have cracks. Some of us have gaping holes. Those cracks have distorted us in different ways.

Our job as God's people is not to point out the cracks in others or how our cracks are not as ugly as theirs. We need not waste energy trying to make some kinds of brokenness more socially acceptable. Rather we are to love and speak to the deepest places of pain in people's lives regardless of its outward manifestation.

Fortunately for me, the guy who struggled with same-sex issues—with whom I had my first interview—didn't give up on me. He taught me more about myself and God's healing power than I could have ever imagined! In fact, he became to me a priest and friend during some of the hardest parts of my journey out of sexual addiction. I am indebted to him.

Wounded Healers

When you think about powerful saints of God, someone coming from a homosexual background or still struggling with same-sex desires may not rise to the top of your list. But consider Hebrews 11:34. *quenched the raging of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, gained strength after being weak, became mighty in battle, and put foreign armies to flight.* Hebrews 11:34 (HCSB)

This little verse is crammed into the famous chapter that recounts some of the all-time greatest followers of God. As the chapter ends the author builds to a crescendo by layering sentence upon sentence of heroic deeds and types of martyrdom on these powerful people endured.

In the middle of this great closing to this "hall of fame," tucked into the rapid-fire accounts of greatness, you'll notice this little verse describing these great saints of God. It reads, "**gained strength after being weak.**"

You see, God desires to have all the glory in our lives. So he'll probe our weakest, most broken places and shine his light on them so he can start to heal them and receive all the glory. God leaves us with an unusual strength that flows through the very same broken places that once destroyed us. Our weakness becomes our greatest ministry and God gets all the credit. This is the same conclusion the apostle Paul came to in 2 Corinthians 12:9, 10: *"Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses so that Christ's power may rest on me."*

Paul understood that God desires wounded healers, those who've been wounded but allowed him to touch them in that place of greatest need. Then they've taken that broken mirror, restored by the Lord, and used it to reflect the glory of God to those with similar broken places. This is the roster of the kingdom of saints Jesus proclaimed would change the world.

So the big question is, Will you allow God into your own brokenness? Never mind someone else's brokenness over the re; God will deal with that. Will you allow the Holy Spirit the space to show you the cracks in your own mirror, and shine his light on it, transform it, and then use it for God's glory?

Will you become a wounded healer too?

This article was written by a man now serving in the ministry with a Christian church.