

CHRONICLES OF

# HOPE

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*Bent*

BUT NOT *Broken*

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# Table of Content

INTRODUCTION

BENT BUT NOT BROKEN

THE MASTER CARPENTAR

BUILDING TECHNIQUES

NAIL IN THE COFFIN

THE FINAL SAY

BONE MARROW


THE PERFECT SACRIFICE

# Introduction

## Bent But Not Broken

When I was in grade school my girlfriend "broke up" with me - a few times. I wasn't the best boyfriend in the world but back then a break up was almost the equivalent of saying that your life is over. Needless to say, it wasn't the end of the world.

Sometimes, when you're in the moment, things can seem devastating but they may just be bent out of shape.



Right now, due to the current Coronavirus pandemic, many of our lives seem to be "bent out of shape" in the most extreme sense of the phrase.


Close friends and family have slipped into eternity but we're not allowed to give them a proper burial or celebration of life.

Finances and resources are being challenged. Social distancing guidelines make it difficult to break the everyday monotony of being quarantined. Everything seems to be bending...



BUT WE DON'T HAVE TO BREAK.


For example, there's a difference between breaking a nail and bending a nail. I've had the pleasure of doing both so I can tell you from experience that both are frustrating. But once you break a nail it basically becomes useless. However, some carpenters will actually hammer a nail in half way and then bend the nail on purpose to prevent the nail from coming out. It almost makes the nail impossible to remove. In other words, it's better to bend than to break.



Now that I think about it, my grade school girlfriend and I actually became stronger from all those times that we were bent out of shape. The relationship only came to a screeching halt when there was a final break.

In this life, we will all bend but it's never beneficial for any of us to walk around in a broken state.

I find it fascinating that none of Jesus' bones were broken on the cross - even though the breaking of bones is customary during Roman crucifixion. He didn't break.



There is so many symbolism in that fact (which we will talk about in this book) to help us see the power of being unbreakable no matter how far we may bend.

We are living in a critical hour where we can no longer fake a fixed position. A broken nail simply has no use and I believe that we are dealing with a "Master Carpenter" that has no problem revealing that to us. In fact, I don't believe that God wants any of us to break in half. He's simply allowing us to bend for the better.




# The Master Carpenter

I once knew a real "Master Carpenter" named Mike. Before he passed away he tried to teach me some carpentry tricks. Mike was my buddy but he just couldn't fit years of experience into my finite brain. So he settled for months of me failing at things that he could do with his eyes closed.


The funny thing about Mike is that he would always encourage me to keep trying even though I knew that my performance was "garbage." He knew how to build - in more ways than one.






I found out that people aren't considered Master Carpenters just because they can build things well - they're considered Master's in their field because they can also build people well. Even the meanest Master Carpenter knows how to get a group of workers motivated to finish a project effectively. You may not see or understand it but there's always a method to their madness.

Let's just assume that God specializes in carpentry. What building technique do you think He's using on us right now?



I remember when Mike would teach me a dangerous new technique and then just walk away - which always made me feel like I was on my own. But now that I look back, Mike was always nearby - he just wanted to see if I had a level of expectation that I could do it.


Sometimes God does that with us. His Word says He'll never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5) so there should be some level of expectation that we can do what He trained us to do - even when we don't feel His presence. Even if we fail, He's never too far away.



In other words, God gives us test to disciple us - not to destroy us.

Deuteronomy 8 tells us the story of how God led His people through the wilderness and tested them so that He could "**know what was in their hearts.**" He allowed them to bend but it was never to break them in half. He wanted to know if they would follow His commands and trust that He had their best interest in mind. He used adversity to advance them. That's a powerful building technique.

God only allows test to make us more triumphant.



If we were to be honest, as painful as these life lessons are, none of our bones are truly broken. In other words, we haven't been utterly destroyed.

Kind David seems to know a little something about that. In Psalm 34:20 he describes how God preserves His servant from broken bones. This is also a prophetic typecast of what Jesus would one day experience... none of His bones were broken.


Today, when I look at the building that Mike built. I can see that it didn't break us - it made us better.

## *Nail in The Coffin*

The game of chess is very strategic. Most people don't even know that they've lost until they hear the word "check-mate." In fact, a good chess player knows how to sacrifice a few pieces to get the win. Nothing is more important than the "nail in the coffin." In other words, it's all about getting the final say.


**"None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."**

- 1 Corinthians 2:8




The crucifixion of Jesus was, in a sense, the nail in the coffin. It was as if God had baited His enemies into an eternal chess match and made them feel like they were winning. Then, when it was all said and done, the opposition came to the realization that God had sacrificed the ultimate "chess piece" so that He could win the entire game. *Check-mate!*

There are too many biblical and historical examples of this. God is a Master Strategist. With Him, the way up is down. The way forward is backwards. The way to win - is to lose.



I'm a Star Wars fan and I'll never forget when Obi-Wan-Kinobi told Darth Vader, *"If you strike me down, I shall become more powerful than you can imagine."* Forgive me if you're not a fan of this Motion Picture series but just think about that symbolism.

Darth Vader was sure that if he had eliminated this Jedi Master he would surely defeat the Rebels. Years later, we are still watching new episodes of Star Wars because that was obviously not the case. Darth Vader had no idea that he was being tricked.




In the bible, Joseph's brothers thought that they were winning when they threw him into a pit. But Joseph's response is timeless:

**"As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today."**

- Genesis 50:20 ESV

Joseph told his brothers that their plan for his demise was ultimately God's plan for their success. So, no matter what they thought they did, God had the final say.






When Job experienced extreme testing and almost unbearable trials – satan thought that he was winning the battle – but God won the war. Scripture even tells us to consider Job's trials so that we can better understand how God is winning the war in our own personal lives (James 5:11).

When it was all said and done, God gave Job twice as much as what he had before (Job 42:10). There are just too many biblical examples of this. In essence, God is always playing chess – not checkers. He has "the final say."

## Bone Marrow

A good friend of mine once described to me the process of a bone marrow transplant that he had to save a 52 year old woman's life that he had never met before.


On his way to becoming a Command Master Chief (now retired) in the United States Navy, Leon Walker was successful and really had no reason to go through this painful endeavor but he is quoted in the Lake County Journal as saying, "*I always wanted to save someone's life.*"



It is indeed a noble gesture, but the pain is excruciating - as he described it to me.


I always wondered what was so important about bone marrow. The most we ever talked about bones growing up is when we discussed milk or when we were sharing a funny song. Bones always seemed insignificant to me unless they were in my class room or on a door in celebration of Halloween. They really had no purpose to me.

On the contrary, bones are very significant to God.



Bone Marrow is a crucial part of the bone mass and it can actually contribute to healthy blood cells.

When God instituted the Passover, He commanded that lambs would be sacrificed but they had to be perfect - no broken bones (Exodus 12:46). In like manner, Jesus is "the Lamb of God" - the perfect sacrifice who would ultimately take away the sins of the world (John 1:36). So, to fulfill scripture, none of His bones were broken (John 19:33). This is why God was so serious about Jesus' bones. Jesus is "the perfect sacrifice."




Jesus did the ultimate "bone marrow transplant." For example, when someone turns away from sin to give their life to Christ - they then become "*bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh*" - similar to the Covenant of marriage.

**"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh."**

**This mystery is profound, but I am speaking about Christ and the church"**

Ephesians 5:31-32 ESV

Emphasized



I don't have enough room in this book to talk about the pain that Christ endured so that we could become one with Him. It would be inconceivable to try to break down His agony or even the significance of Him being the perfect sacrifice in such a short array of words.

But in these trying times, I pray that we all get a glimpse of just how much He was bent through His trials and through his suffering - yet God never allowed Him to break. In that same sense, you may be bent right now - but if you possess His Spirit - you are not broken.