

Spiritual Reflection for May 2019

The Fruit of Brokenness

There it stands, broken, splintered, reaching desperately skyward. It is an apple tree in an open field and once again this spring my husband and I stand in awe of its determination not only to live, but to also produce fruit. Let's consider the fruit of brokenness.

This tree has been a wonder for over 15 years. It stands on a piece of hunting property that we have and when we first found the tree it was covered with apples. As we picked the apples we noticed that the trunk of the tree was split and actually lying on the ground. Small branches grew skyward from this horizontal piece of tree trunk. Year after year this tree has produced apples. As I admired the fortitude of this tree I thought about the symbolism it provides for our brokenness.

Often I sit with an individual whose spirit is broken, struck down by illness or tragedy in search of meaning for their life given their new limitations, their losses. They question their purpose. They question what good they could possibly offer to the world in their brokenness.

Over time something within them grows. Their spirit regains its fire and warms their heart again. They discover they have much to give. They recognize themselves as a survivor of a life changing event with renewed purpose. Support groups are created. New policies are written. Initiatives are started. New fruit is produced.

The fruit produced in human brokenness aligns with the fruit of the spirit found in Galatians 5:22. We read that the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. In brokenness we have to set our roots down in rich soil and to be nurtured from within. I have learned over the years when someone turns their life over to God, they gain unbelievable power.

They demonstrate a deep sense of peace. They find joy like never before. They have patience beyond understanding. They are kind to others, gentle with those who grieve. They speak of profound faith and love more deeply. They find the good in others and model self-control for those around them. You know someone like this. I am sure you do. It is easy to stand in awe of them considering all they have been through and wonder how it is they can be broken yet fruitful. When our roots run deep in the support of others and we reach out toward our God we, too, can produce the fruit of brokenness.

There can still be brokenness, the kind of brokenness that will never heal physically, yet the human spirit shines with power to overcome adversity.

As I stood in that open field marveling at the reality of the physical brokenness of this apple tree and considered the many apples it has provided for us over the years, I just had to pause and remember the many people I have encountered who share with others the fruit of the spirit even in their brokenness. Without a doubt they have found new meaning and purpose for their lives. So contrary to popular belief, broken does not mean unproductive. There is potential to be very productive, in fact, the power to change the lives of others often comes from the fruit of brokenness.

Questions to ponder:

What brokenness have I experienced in my life?

How has my brokenness increased the fruit of the spirit within?

Where is God calling me to share the products of my experiences?

What do I have to offer someone who is broken and searching for meaning?

May God's Peace Be With You,

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