

# Breaking Through Barriers Of Spiritual Growth



## Intro:

To the Greek literature, Cyrus of Persia was the prince pre-eminent, - set as the model for education in childhood, for self-restraint in youth, and for just and powerful government in manhood. The classical writers used his life and reign as King as a mirror to flash great ideals down the ages.

The secret truth behind this man's strength to break through every barrier, to strike down every opponent is recorded in **Isaiah 45...**

### **Isaiah 45:1-3 ESV**

**1 Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations before him and to loose the belts of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed:**

**2 "I will go before you and level the exalted places, I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron,**

**3 I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hoards in secret places, that you may know that it is I, the Lord, the God of Israel, who call you by your name.**

***Point!*** King Cyrus had help.

We can come to avoid prayer because we are scared about what God may say back. We learn to keep God at a distance while busying ourselves with His Church, His people, His objectives.

***Key Point!*** Obedience that does not have faith in that to which it is being obedient will mouth the words, but it will never walk the road.

# Humbling Yourself Before... *Yourself*.

Merriam Websters Dictionary defines the quality or state of being “Humble” thusly,

- **Humility** = freedom from pride or arrogance

The Word of God thinks differently on the matter...

- **Humble** = humiliation of mind, i.e. the modesty (*Strong's NT:5011-5012*)

**Big Idea!** True humility requires more than just the *absence* of pride or arrogance, but the *presence* of modesty.

**Main Problem!** Modesty is not a natural talent of we humans. We must intentionally abdicate the throne of pride.

1 Peter 5:5-7 KJV

5 “...all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

**Note:** The Humble heart is ever yearning to hear God’s voice in its daily life.

As we have read above, God “resists” the proud. That is, **sometimes God himself erects barriers to our growth.** Just as the farmer who wants a healthy apple tree will prune it, the Parent(s) who wants well-behaved children will at times tell them “No”, God will put limits on us until we are mature enough to move forward.

He will happily take them down and beckon us onward once we have learned the necessary skill or lesson.

**Key Understanding!** When God does this he is saying, “The real barrier to your growth – *Is you.*”

**It has been observed,** “*Ignorance is not bliss. Rather, ignorance is blistering.*”

God knows our need to be reminded we are not his gift to the world. The three hardest tasks in the world are neither physical feats nor intellectual achievements, but moral acts: to return love for hate, to include the excluded, and to say, "I was wrong."

**Key Point!** When God has to peel something away from us, often the reason why is because had we not lost it, we would have lost ourselves.

There is no greater barrier to our spiritual growth than our flesh! The Good news is, we have hope!

Galatians 2:20 ESV I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

*Praise GOD!*

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Taking Full Advantage of Affliction

There is a refining process whereby our crude oil of humble faith is transformed into the jet fuel of Apostolic demonstration. Heaven calls this refining process, “*Affliction*”.

**Psalm 34:18-19 KJV**

**18 The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.**

**19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.**

***Point!*** After receiving the Holy Ghost, the greatest gift the Lord could ever trust you with is *uneasiness*. The result of a broken heart is to receive front-row tickets to God demonstrating His delivering power.

**Proverbs 27:5-7 KJV**

**5 Open rebuke is better than secret love.**

**6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.**

**7 The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.**

***Point!*** Craving a fresh move of God in one’s spirit is necessary to overcome one’s bitter past & present.

To carry the example further, jet aircraft pilots experience several G’s as they maneuver in the sky. The G-Force’s they experience would cause average humans to pass out. The difference is they have trained themselves to *understand* and *compensate* for the stresses they endure.

**If you desire to be wise, please listen:** Build up an allergy against ‘*spiritual stagnation*’ – or better yet, a phobia of it. The self-discovery of it, should cause a violet allergic reaction in our spirits, the end of which is travailing prayer.

Often, we have no idea the blessing that will begin to flow through our lives, once we reject *idleness*.

As Jesus was entering into His earthly ministry, the Bible records in Luke that he was led out into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. One by one, Jesus won against Satan’s efforts of temptation with the Word. Then a curious thing happens...

Luke 4:12-13 KJV [*emphasis added*]

12 And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

13 And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him *for a season*.

NKJV ~ “..he departed from Him until an opportune time.”

AMP ~ “..he [*temporarily*] left Him...until another more opportune and favorable time.”

There are Five "*opportune times*" Satan is most likely to strike that we must train ourselves to *understand* and *compensate* for.

- 1) During periods of strength and success (2 Chronicles 26:16).
- 2) When you choose to live by wrong priorities (2 Samuel 11).
- 3) When you decide to go against godly counsel (2 Chronicles 18).
- 4) When you, in your pride, think that you are capable of winning over Satan's "stratagems" (Ephesians 6:11, 13).
- 5) During times of stress and fatigue (1 Kings 18:37-19:4).

**Point!** Jesus was led by the Spirit into an inopportune *place*, and Satan knew that wasn't enough. His best shot, he thought, was to seize Jesus at an inopportune *season*.

God may lead us through a desert place, yet we can still have victory – IF we know the Word!

Afflictions don't stall or stop your growth, *they encourage it*.

*“Education is expensive. Ignorance is more expensive.  
Marriage can be hard. Divorce is harder.  
Forgiveness is painful. Bitterness is more painful.  
Getting to heaven is costly. Eternity in hell is more costly.  
Choose your pain. Choose your cost.”*

- Anonymous

## Breaking Through Into Heavens Ecosystem.

To clearly understand this, let's first analyze the reverse direction...

Oft times people who leave church appear to be living high. This can cause doubt and conflicts within faithful believers who see the backslider's "freedom" or "happiness" and wonder why God permits it.

If we are not cautious, we can even begin to become disgruntled at God for not immediately punishing sin, or the church for not doing more to pull them back.

Some can even use God's patience to draw false conclusions about what He deems to be permissible or pleasing. Peter himself took pen to explain this phenomenon...

**2 Peter 3:9 KJV** The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

**Key Understanding!** Just as there is a long process of *falling away*, there is a long process of *coming in*.

**For example:**

- *You will not be serving on the platform your 1<sup>st</sup> service. We are redeemed in a moment, but credibility takes time to build.*
- *Your finances will shift as God advances you and hell attacks you for paying tithes and giving offerings.*
- *Your lifestyle will gradually shift as your spirit opens up fully to God's ways.*
- *Your family will not be instantly healed of all its dysfunctions, because you made a fresh commitment to the Lord.*

We like dramatic stories, and sudden shifts; Seeing God do an ‘quick work’ delights our souls, and ignites our imaginations. Watching God effortlessly conquer our problems validates our faith, and encourages us to keep going.

**Key Point!** These times give us a greater vision of God’s love and desire to help. Vision is not the *ability* to see. Rather, it is the *willingness* to see. Watching someone else receive a miracle give us a willingness to think, “It could happen to me, too”.

There are several times when we cannot see what God is doing, but we remain willing to follow, whatever may come.

*“Obedience is not a momentary option...it is a die-cast decision made beforehand.” - Nate Saint*

Some folks find fault as if it were buried treasure. Giving people time to grow, and loving them despite flaws will help them *Break Through Barriers of Spiritual Growth*, much faster than ridicule.

**Point!** Each generation has to find out for itself that the stove is hot.

No amount of counseling from Pastor, teaching from Mom or Dad, coaching from school teachers, mentoring from Spiritual Elders – nothing will ever change that fact. They will need to make their own mistakes.

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American steel magnate Charles M. Schwab said in the early 20th century...

*"I have yet to find the man, however exalted his station, who did not do better work and put forth greater effort under a spirit of approval than under a spirit of criticism."*

1 Thessalonians 5:11 NIV "Therefore *encourage one another* and build each other up..."

1 Samuel 30:6a KJV "...but David *encouraged himself* in the LORD his God."

If the world can learn and understand this principle, so must we!

***One Final Thought...*** ETERNITY is quickly approaching; you must ever be...

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