

**Bro-ken** (brÿ ken) adj.

1. Splintered, fractured, burst.
2. Violated: as, a broken promise.

# The Broken Women

***“I am forgotten...I have become  
like broken pottery.”***

Psalm 31:12  
NIV



It was one of the most painful nights of my life. I was sitting by the bed of a close friend who had been brought to the hospital by paramedics who found her unconscious after ingesting a handful of sleeping pills.

As Emma began to regain consciousness, she turned her head in my direction and whispered, “I wish somebody really loved me.”

I will never forget those words because I believe they echo a universal longing, the desire we all have to be loved. Not the fantasy love we read about in a fairy tale or the make-believe type of love we see in a movie. Not a romantic flowers and candy love, but an abiding love that lasts forever.

Recently, my eighteen-year-old niece and I were watching the movie *Ever After* for the fifth time. As the handsome prince rescued his cherished damsel, Bethanie looked at me and sighed, “I wish love happened like this in real life, Effie. But everything doesn’t always turn out happily ever after.”

I looked at her innocent eyes and beautiful golden hair and thought to myself, *she could have been Cinderella*. Yet even at her young age, she understood the road to lasting love can be bumpy, with potholes and detours along the way.

## When A Woman Meets Jesus

I know my own pursuit to find the love I dreamed about was not easy. There were times of disappointment and times when my heart ached. In your search for love you may have run into some of the same rocky terrain and been jolted by the rough patches along your way.

One thing I began to realize was that the state of nirvana-like bliss I hungered for always seemed to hinge on finding the right person—the person I thought would be my “true” love. I willingly ignored my own emptiness, hoping someone would come along who would make me feel complete. But just when I thought I had found the perfect person—the one who would unlock the vault to eternal happiness—he would slip away like an elusive butterfly. And I would be left alone, heartbroken and disillusioned.

Often I asked myself, would I ever find what I was searching for? Would the love I longed for be found in the arms of another person? Or would I discover healing for my broken heart in the self-help section of the local bookstore? Sometimes I wondered whether my journey would lead me inside some sacred edifice. Or would my quest finally end with a moment of illumination on a mountaintop?

This book is born out of my personal desire to find a lasting love, a love that would bring me total fulfillment.

I’m talking about the type of love that is there when you go to bed at night and has not left when you get up in the morning. A love that climbs with you to the mountaintop and does

***“The character of Jesus has not only been the highest pattern of virtue, but the strongest incentive to its practice, and has exerted so deep an influence, that it may be truly said, that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and to soften mankind, than all the disquisitions of philosophers and than all the exhortations of moralists.”***

W. E. H. Lecky  
*A History of European Morals  
from Augustus to Charlemagne*

## Chapter One

not take off when you hit a valley. A love that does not waver when the wind blows in a different direction. A love that turns heaven and earth to find you, then wraps its arms around you and never lets you go. Don't you want to find this kind of love? Doesn't everyone?

If you are searching for a love that fulfills your heart's yearning, I have news for you. You are not alone. You have company; other women who, just like you and me, wanted to be loved, not for who they were or what they were, but simply *as they were*.

These women came from a variety of backgrounds. They were young and old. Wealthy and poor. Married and single. An unwed teenager and a wealthy socialite. An adulterer and a mother-in-law. An ambitious working woman and a destitute widow. A woman with severe physical disabilities and a

***“Women wish to be loved without a why or wherefore; not because they are pretty, or good, or well-bred, or graceful, or intelligent, but because they are themselves.”***

Henri Frederic Amiel  
Journal  
March 17, 1868

woman who could climb any mountain. These women wanted to be accepted, encouraged, and loved, yet all too often they were abused, used, or ignored.

Something in these women's lives was not working, and even though they could not put their finger on the problem, they felt broken. They wanted to get their lives fixed and put back together in working order. As each woman searched—relentlessly—to find what she longed for, her pursuit led to one Man. An ordinary Jewish laborer with a common name—Jesus.

He wasn't a candidate for the current issue of *People Magazine's* Sexiest Man Alive. He didn't make the Society Register's list of Most Eligible Bachelors. He was not a Harvard graduate. He wasn't handsome or rich. He did not drive a fast car or own a multi-million dollar home. The establishment detested Him. And His job prospects were poor at best.

## When A Woman Meets Jesus

Yet in spite of a less than promising résumé and a plain appearance, Jesus drew women to His side like a magnet. From His birth to His death they followed Him. Long after other people took off in disappointment, disgust, or frustration, the women stayed by Jesus' side, hooked like Super Glue. And I asked myself, "Why?"

I found my answer by examining the way Jesus treated every woman He met.

Instead of pigeonholing women the way society had, He looked at each woman as unique. No one ever heard Jesus trivialize one of their problems by calling it a "woman-thing." He didn't smooth-talk women, or flatter them to get their attention. And He didn't tell them what they wanted to hear—He told them what they needed to know. What's more, He did not believe what many of the women thought about themselves, because so often their own view had been grossly distorted by others. What Jesus did was to focus His attention on each woman's greatest need, and then He met that need—in ways they never expected.

***"Man is born broken. He lives by mending. The grace of God is the glue."***

Eugene O'Neill

Jesus taught women to look beyond their outward appearance for acceptance. He showed them they were valuable when others said they were worthless. He challenged the rules that bound them and broke down the walls of prejudice that entrapped them. Even when a woman was labeled a "failure," He believed she could be more than her broken past. Most importantly, Jesus gave unconditional love to every woman no matter what her past history, present condition, or future prospects. He was a Man ahead of His time, a Renaissance Man who understood what loving a woman was all about.

This is why the women stayed with Him. And the longer they stayed, the more they grew to love Him and to love themselves. When you are accepted just the way you are, encouraged to

## Chapter One

reach your potential, and empowered to follow your dreams, don't you feel loved?

If you long for a love that restores your self-worth...gives you purpose...fills you to overflowing...and never lets you go, then I invite you to come meet The Man Who Loved Women.



***“He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted...  
to set at liberty those who are bruised.”***

Luke 4:18  
Amplified

## *A Time for Reflection*

***“I went down to the potter’s house,  
and I saw him working at the wheel.  
But the pot he was shaping from the  
clay was marred in his hands; so  
the potter formed it into another pot,  
shaping it as seemed best to him.”***

Jeremiah 18:3,4  
NIV

## *Exploration*

### **My thoughts on feeling broken...**

1.) Is there a part of my life that is broken? \_\_\_\_\_

Emotionally? \_\_\_\_\_

Spiritually? \_\_\_\_\_

Physically? \_\_\_\_\_

2.) How long have I felt broken? \_\_\_\_\_

3.) What have I tried to do to heal my brokenness? \_\_\_\_\_

4.) What do I believe will heal my brokenness? \_\_\_\_\_

5.) Has my search for love healed the brokenness I feel? \_\_\_\_\_

How? \_\_\_\_\_

If not, why not: \_\_\_\_\_

6.) Do I feel loved just as I am—right now? \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter One

# Inspiration

***“Yet, O Lord, you are our father.  
We are the clay, you are the potter;  
we are all the work of your hand.”***

Isaiah 64:8  
NIV

Recently I decided to take a pottery class at our local art school. Not being what you would call a natural “artist,” working at a potter’s wheel and learning to mold clay has been a challenge to say the least. More than once, I have found to my dismay, that the small clay pot I was trying to form became a pile of misshapen wet mud. Simply put, my attempt to make something that looked beautiful often turned into an indescribable mess in the hands of an amateur like myself. One evening I pulled the clay off the wheel and headed toward the closest plastic garbage container only to have the professional potter teaching us ask me, “Dorothy, what are you going to do with that clay?”

***“To love is to  
come to see  
beyond and  
despite...love  
sees us as we  
are, as we  
really are,  
and as we  
can be...love  
sees little but  
good in us  
and forgives  
everything  
that is not.”***

Joan Chittister  
*There Is a Season*

I thought it was obvious and kept walking, “I’m going to throw it away. It’s a lump of wet mud. I can’t do anything with it,” I whined.

The instructor quickly informed me I was completely mistaken. “Place what you have in that bucket,” he said as he pointed to a used can filled with other pieces of clay that looked an awful lot like the unformed lump I was holding. “We’ll use it later.”

Sure enough, the following week, after his experienced hands had worked the clay into a well-shaped ball, my “mess” became the material I needed to make a lovely small bowl.

## When A Woman Meets Jesus

Trained hands formed something beautiful from the debris I wanted to throw away.

If you have ever felt like my mess of clay, believing nothing beautiful can be formed from the broken shards of your life, take encouragement from the words of the psalmist David: “Your hands made me and formed me” (Psalm 119:73, NIV). Compassionate hands. Experienced hands. Hands that love you and formed you to reflect the beauty the potter sees in you.

1.) What does it mean to be formed by God? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2.) Knowing I am formed by God, how does it make me feel?

\_\_\_\_\_

3.) How does this knowledge affect the way I think about myself when I feel broken? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4.) What do these words mean to me: “He who made you, formed you in the womb” (Isaiah 44:2, NIV)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5.) In what ways do I believe God can bring healing to the broken places in my life? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



***“[You] will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.”***

2 Timothy 2:21  
NKJV

## Chapter One

# *Affirmations*

***“He heals the brokenhearted and  
binds up their wounds.”***

Psalm 147:3  
NIV



***“Daughter, how did you put the  
jigsaw map of the world together  
so quickly? Because, Daddy, on the  
other side was the picture of a man,  
and when I put the man together,  
it put the whole world together.”***<sup>1</sup>

Jack W. Hayford  
Pastor and Author  
*Rebuilding The Real You*