

BATTLE PRIMER



Hard and Soft Landings

By Joe Smith, Broken Strength Founder and current Board Chair

If you have traveled by air much, you most certainly can identify with hard and soft landings. Most of the landings I have experienced have been of the jarring kind . . . a landing where there is no question that the wheels have touched the ground. But, on a few rare occasions I have also experienced a landing that was like a feather . . . barely discernible when the wheels hit pavement. Airplanes and their landings are not what I am referring to here, however.

Several years ago I read a passage in 1st Peter that when I read it I thought: "Impossible; there is no way this can be accomplished." I felt like the people quoted

in John 6:60 – “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?” The people were responding to Jesus saying that his disciples needed to “feed on my flesh and drink my blood.”

The passage 1 Peter 1:15-16 had a truly hard landing on my heart – it was, in my mind, an impossible directive, and therefore I dismissed it. “But as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written: ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’” Although I professed to be utterly committed to God’s Word, I discounted these two verses, not because they were untrue, but because I had a secret sin of lust that I did not want to give up. For several years my hard heart refused to let these verses land on a soft and yielding, obedient heart.

Over time, however, as the Spirit softened my heart and helped me understand that with God, all things are possible, these same verses have had a much softer landing. I began to embrace them rather than reject them. For sure, on my own, it was impossible to be holy, but when I rely on God’s power, when I submit to His Lordship, I am able to battle all manner of sin more effectively and increasingly grow in holiness. Not there yet, but drawing closer to God through Christ day by day, week by week. Seeking the pleasures of God rather than the pleasures of sin, realizing that His grace will sustain and empower me as I ponder His great sacrifice on the Cross.

Are there biblical directives that have a hard landing on your heart? Are there areas of your life that you cling to rather than trusting Christ and His promises to “transform you inwardly by the renewing of your mind”? All Christians are works in progress, trophies of God’s grace, which not only saves, but also transforms as we look to the Cross daily.

You are from God, and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. -1 John 4:4

This month's updates

We thank God for . . .

- His ongoing grace and mercy in talking about a subject that is close to His heart, yet has many challenges as we move forward.
- A successful visit to AZ for Paul as he is further developing relationships with churches and seminaries there.
- A great summer of connecting for Paul since he started (July 1). Summer has proven an effective time to meet with pastors and educators as they are reflecting and strategizing for the upcoming year.
- A great Board of Directors who have experienced life transformation in the name of Jesus and are very active in making sure these conversations are happening in the context of the local church and with truth and grace.

We ask God for. . .

- Guidance, protection, and life-change for the 7 Scheduled Purity Events:
 - September 15, 2023 | Jubilee Community Church, Minneapolis, MN
 - September 23, 2023 | Delano Evangelical Free Church, Delano, MN
 - October 7, 2023 | GracePoint Church, New Brighton, MN
 - October 14, 2023 | Northwest Bible Church, St Michael, MN
 - October 21, 2023 | River of Life Church, Hastings, MN
 - January 12, 2024 | Alexandria Covenant Church, Alexandria, MN
 - January, 2024 | Milaca E Free Church, Milaca, MN (rescheduled)
- Wisdom and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit as the Broken Strength Board meets for an extended prayer and planning time on Saturday, Sep. 9.
- Our ability to truly give away this ministry to passionate, God-honoring, individuals in churches, schools, and mission agencies all over the world. Pray for “sexual integrity champions” in each of these contexts.

We invite you . . .

- *Do you know a church or individual who would like to be informed or added to our prayer team?* Send an email to pklassen@apathtopurity.org
- *Would you like to help us continue to offer our events without charge and any materials at our cost?* You may donate to the ministry at www.apathtopurity.org