

... ✨ ... SEASHELLS BY THE SEASHORE ... ✨ ...

My whole family loves spending time at the beach and soaking in the beauty of God’s creation. Lilly (my niece) and I especially enjoy wading through the surf looking for seashells. Being the type-A perfectionist that I am, I always look for shells with no chips, cracks, or flaws.

One particular year, we had an abundance of shells from which to choose. Despite the abundance of pristine, undamaged shells. Lilly, however, kept choosing broken ones. At first, I thought she was choosing shells at random, but then I realized she was choosing them especially for their flaws. As she held a chipped and broken shell in her hands, she declared, “Isn’t it beautiful?” I looked at her treasure, and realized that the broken areas created unique swirls, spirals, and shapes. Examined through a different lens, the seashell truly was beautiful.

Admiring the broken seashell prompted me to meditate on my own flaws. Although I am an imperfect creature, my Father calls me a “masterpiece” (Ephesians 2:10). Further, Paul teaches that our weaknesses, in God’s hands, become strengths. When the apostle begged God to take away his infirmity, “[God] said, ‘My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.’ So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. That’s why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong,” (2 Corinthians 12:9–10).

God sometimes allows brokenness in our lives. Of course, the process of being broken isn’t something we enjoy, but the result creates something more beautiful than before. As trials chip away at our pride, selfishness, and self-sufficiency, we learn to rely on our Father and sustain ourselves on his strength.

As a matter of fact, the ultimate act of brokenness brought the ultimate healing to our world. When Jesus died on the cross, he suffered horribly, but through his death and resurrection he made it possible for us to be healed from every trial, illness, and distress. Just like the broken seashells, God is creating something beautiful and unique through your weakness or struggle. Let’s let those fractured parts of our life become something beautiful.

*Father, thank you for making me strong even when I am weak. Help me see the beauty in the broken parts of my life and character. I repent of doubting you and becoming angry when my life doesn’t go as planned. As I submit my flaws to you, I ask you to transform them for your glory. Give me a greater measure of persistence and resilience so that I’m not tempted to give up as I’m being continually molded into your masterpiece. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

#### Personal Reflection

Think of a time in your past when God transformed one of your weaknesses into something beautiful. Then prayerfully meditate on how he might use your current struggle for your benefit and his glory. If you aren’t sure, pray for him to grow your faith enough to trust him through the trial.

