

# Rescued From Rejection

God doesn't want to heal only me. His deliverance is available to all.

☒ "Come here, Joyce. I have to give you a ticket for a free lunch," my teacher said. I approached her desk feeling self-conscious and humiliated.

"Your parents have enrolled you in the Title 21 Lunch Program. That means you get free lunches, and they don't have to pay for it."

I nodded and took the ticket, wishing the floor would open up and swallow me. I started to turn away and go back to my seat, but she continued to talk about me.

"You'll never amount to anything. You'll never get out of the projects. You'll always be one of those people with your hand out, looking for a free ride."

Unfortunately, I had come face to face with the ugly reality many believers struggle with. It's called rejection.

Today, as a confident woman and evangelist, I do not allow people to label me, dictate my future or make me feel unworthy of God's love and acceptance. My relationship with Christ is the foundation of my identity.

Rejection is what I call a "fatal distraction" because it is emotionally debilitating and if left unchecked, it can mentally paralyze you. Scripture reveals that "death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Prov. 18:21, NKJV).

Maybe a trusted friend, parent or spouse has rejected you and stripped you of your self-worth. People can be brutal when you don't measure up to their expectations. My teacher rejected me

because my family was poor, and in her mind, I was lazy, worthless and a waste of her time.

I believe also that rejection becomes fatal when you take ownership of it. You tend to make life choices based on what you have been told about yourself rather than what God has to say about you.

My teacher told me I would never get out of the projects, and I believed her. I accepted her comments as valid, and from that moment on I began to look at myself through her eyes instead of God's.

What the Bible says is true: "As he thinks in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7). It is imperative that you replace rejection with the life-giving, life-changing Word of God. It will assure you of His unconditional love.

Yes, the words and attitudes of other people can deeply wound you, but please don't allow them to destroy you.

I am grateful to God that His grace did not permit me to live under a cloud of rejection. My life began to change when I moved in with "Big Mama," my maternal grandmother.

She didn't have any better sense than to believe that, regardless of our economic and social status, my family and I were the people God said we were.

Big Mama affirmed me, and pumped me full of God's Word. She constantly told me I was a child of the King, had royal blood flowing through my veins and was going to grow up to be "a mighty woman in the Lord!"

Slowly but surely, through her love and by the sheer power of Scripture, she eradicated those feelings of rejection from my life.

I went on to become a cheerleader and the homecoming queen of my high school. I was even voted "most popular" in my senior

class! I eventually graduated college and became a teacher.

Today, I travel the world proclaiming the gospel of Jesus at conferences, churches and in other settings. I am enjoying a life enhanced by the blessings, favor and anointing of God.

If you struggle with rejection and want to be restored, run to the Father. He doesn't want to heal only me—His deliverance is available to all who will turn to Him.

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## **Covered By His Peace**

It wasn't until my sister's death that I fully understood God's peace.

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## **How Not to Lose Your Focus**

While it's easy to list the many external diversions, our most fatal distraction lives within.

A frustrated New York attorney sits across from the "other woman," pleading for peace. He attempts to make restitution, to justify his one-night stand, to say something—anything—that will get this obsessed woman to leave him, his possessions and

his family alone. But with cool deliberation, she simply replies, "I will not be ignored."

Though secular, this scene from a 1987 film contains spiritual significance. The woman, obsessed in the pursuit of someone else's husband, is completely focused on her immoral mission.

How much more focused should we be in pursuing our divine destinies? For this character, only death was able to stop her. What is stopping you? While this woman had a fatal attraction, many Christians today suffer from fatal distractions.

Fatal distractions detour us from growing spiritually and fulfilling our purpose in life. And while it is easy to list the many external diversions that cause us to lose focus—busy schedules, difficult church people, lack of money, anthrax and bioterrorism—the disturbing reality is simply this: Our most fatal distraction lives within.

It's the person you see as you brush your teeth, the one who stares at you in the mirrored glass of corporate America, and the one who goes with you to pick the kids up after school. It's even the person who accompanies you to the office to prepare weekly sermons, and the one who intercedes in times of intense warfare.

As the 1950s political cartoon character Pogo stated: "We have met the enemy, and it is us."

The apostle Paul expressed the same sentiment as he closed Romans 7, lamenting: "I love to do God's will so far as my new nature is concerned; but there is something else deep within me, in my lower nature, that is at war with my mind and wins the fight and makes me a slave to the sin that is still within will free me from my slavery to this deadly lower nature? Thank God! It has been done by Jesus Christ our Lord. He has set me free" ( vv. 22-25, The Living Bible, emphasis added).

Often our fatal distractions are rooted in our minds. What else would explain King Saul's fatal distraction, the jealousy of his armor bearer, David? When the two returned from battling Goliath, women praised the war effort in song, saying, "'Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands'" (1 Sam. 18:7, NKJV).

It was at that moment that Saul allowed the seed of distraction to awaken in his mind. "Then Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him; and he said, 'They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed only thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom? So Saul [jealously] eyed David from that day forward" (1 Sam. 18:8-9).

Like so many of us, Saul's fatal distraction did not come from external forces. It wasn't the women, David or even the lyrics of the song. Saul's jealousy was his fatal distraction, and it caused him to disqualify himself from serving as king.

Saul is the only one who could have changed this negative thought process, and the same is true of us. If we do not truly believe what God has said about us, fatal distractions will come to weed out our faith.

What is distracting you from seeing yourself in the reflection and image of Christ? Is it doubt, a poor self-concept or lack of intimacy with Christ?

What do you really believe about yourself? What do you believe about your potential? Beyond your scripted, pat, religious response to friends or family, what do you truly believe about your service? As Proverbs 23:7 declares, "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he."

If you've been fatally distracted, there is hope. God wants you to regain your focus and pursue His original plan for your life. To do that, you must stay faithful to the things of God and obey His Word. Stay committed to the call of God on your

life, be unshaken in your faith and remain steadfast in your Christian walk.

Like the woman with the fatal attraction, doggedly pursue your destiny. Instead of being fatally distracted, stay eternally focused on fulfilling His will.

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## No Time to Listen

☒ Returning from yet another speaking engagement, I promised myself: “I’ll do it tomorrow. I really mean it this time.” Despite my exhaustion, I rested comfortably that night. As daylight broke, I rose to pray and then began my morning routine. My mind was racing as I rehearsed my to-do list. How can I get all of this done in one day? I thought. With so much to do and another trip scheduled, I’ve got to start these errands, or I’ll run out of time.

At that moment the decision was made: “I’ll run my errands now, and then I’ll check on my ailing neighbor later today.”

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## The Brink of Breakthrough