

3 Ways to Find Freedom From Rejection

Rejection. It happens in many forms. Perhaps a group of people that thought they knew better dismissed your divinely inspired, gee-whiz idea. Maybe your long-built-up courage was instantly deflated by a crush who just wanted to be friends. Or maybe you were passed over at work for a promotion you deserved. Whatever the case, we've all experienced some kind of rejection, and we can all agree that it hurts.

For some, however, rejection is more than an occasional occurrence. It's a theme throughout their lives, deeply rooted and woven into their identities since childhood. These are the people no one wanted to be friends with. They were never good enough for the sports teams. Or as an accident from conception, their families never gave them much attention. With so much rejection, they identify with their feelings to believe *I am a reject*. And this identity is the lens through which they enter everyday life. It's debilitating. They live in fear of people and situations because their past dictates that they'll always be excluded.

My Story

The sharp pain of rejection scarred much of my childhood. I began my elementary years with extreme shyness. I was so timid, in fact, that I was afraid to read aloud in class and didn't apply myself in social or athletic situations. I became a loner and was misunderstood by my peers and dreaded the things most that age live for: recess and P.E. class. I prayed every day that the coach wouldn't allow us to choose teams because I'd have to overhear why I shouldn't be chosen and would often be the last one standing.

With this, I entered my adult life with an expectation of

rejection. I never pursued friendships because I was too afraid to feel the pain of someone who didn't want to be my friend. If I walked into a room and noticed people laughing, I automatically assumed they were laughing at me. It was pitiful. My everyday life was controlled by voices of the past and irrational feelings. (I detail much more of my story in my upcoming book, *Silence Satan: Shutting Down the Enemy's Attacks, Threats, Lies and Accusations*, which will release this fall.)

But God has a habit of taking nobodies and turning them into somebodies. Not long after my salvation at 16 years old, I understood that one day I would be in front of others to preach the gospel. It all seemed impossible then—for a boy once afraid to read aloud to have the confidence to speak to crowds. Still, I pursued this call and knew that if I was to see its fulfillment, I had to find freedom from my fear of rejection. So, I turned to God's Word for help.

Today, I am living the realization of God's call and often speak to crowds via live events, television and Internet broadcasts, and writing. I'm pleased to say that I'm not the fearful person I once was. But my freedom didn't happen overnight; it came through a decade of applying the following principles of God's Word.

1. God Is Your Vindicator

One of the effects of my past is that when I became an adult, I spent much energy trying to prove myself to others. Because I craved acceptance so badly, I fell into a habit of perfectionism, then felt I had to appear the best at things. When I fell short or someone disagreed with me, it was a deep personal hit.

The Scripture affirms, "For the Lord will vindicate his people" (Ps. 135:14, NRSV). To vindicate is to show or prove something to be right or accepted. I discovered that it isn't

my job to get people to like me—it's God's. When I put my acceptance in Him, I freed myself from the constant striving to be all things to all people and from the exhaustion of trying to get people to understand me.

God is my vindicator, and He's yours too! If you struggle with people, give your struggle to Him. Be encouraged: God gives favor with the right people in the right place and at the right time.

2. God's Word Is Your Ultimate Reality

God's Word has some wonderful things to say about who we are in Christ: We are His righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21), accepted in the beloved (Eph. 1:6) and chosen by God for His good purposes (Eph. 1:11).

I learned the voices of my past or current situations are not reality. Instead, what God says about us is more real than any other opinion; His Word is the voice of truth and our ultimate reality. When you absolutely believe this, you can walk into any situation with confidence, regardless of your feelings.

3. Reject False Thoughts and Feelings With God's Word

Paul instructs us to “destroy arguments and every proud obstacle raised up against the knowledge of God, and ... take every thought captive to obey Christ” (2 Cor. 10:4-5).

The negative thoughts and feelings we encounter are simply Satan's arguments and obstacles set up to hold us back from fulfilling God's mission for our life. Some translations refer to these arguments as “imagination,” because as I said above, they aren't real.

The way we are to combat these things is to take them captive and put them into obedience to Christ. That is, when something comes our way that's contrary to what God says, we are to reject it and replace it with truth. The greatest way to do

this is to speak God's truth aloud.

For example, when confronted with fear, I try to quickly respond with a Scripture, like 2 Timothy 1:7: "God has not given me a spirit of fear or shyness. Instead, I have power, love and self-discipline."

Speaking Scripture aloud is the model that Jesus used during His own spiritual warfare (Matt. 4:1-11.), and it's a great way to keep your mind focused on God's truth and not your feelings or circumstances. (Download my free smartphone app, *Shut Up, Devil!* which puts the power of God's Word in your pocket to silence Satan whenever and wherever he attacks.)

Don't Give Up

Paul encourages us, "Be transformed by the renewing of your minds" (Rom. 12:2). Renewing is an active and ongoing process. Only by applying the principles of God's Word consistently over time will you overcome your fears, hurts and wounds to experience the transformation and freedom that is your inheritance in Christ. If you won't give up, I promise you will find that bold, abundant life that Jesus died to give us (John 10:10).

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