

How to Deal With the Pain of Rejection

This past week, my son Kenny has been attending a day camp sponsored by our city. He loves their program, which includes games, play time and various activities in a group of kids approximately his age.

One day, however, when I arrived to pick Kenny up, his teacher asked to talk with me. She explained that some of the other children had been deliberately excluding Kenny from a game, and it made him cry. She told me what she had done to deal with the problem (I was very pleased with her efforts) and said she would be on the lookout in case anything similar ever happened again.

Naturally, on the way home, I talked to Kenny about it. He admitted he had been sad but said he still wanted to return to camp the next day. The whole incident didn't seem to bother him too much.

But the point isn't just Kenny's amazing attitude. The point is that in the moment when Kenny was crying from the pain of being excluded out of deliberate meanness, Jesus understood. And Jesus understood not only because He's God, but because He was excluded too.

People didn't always like Jesus very much. In fact, some people (mainly the Pharisees) hated Him so vehemently they repeatedly tried to kill Him until they finally succeeded. He was completely excluded from their inner circle, despite the fact that He was the one they should have been worshipping.

Even the disciples excluded Jesus at the time of His arrest and impending crucifixion by abandoning Him. They didn't want any part of Him. And Peter denied three times that he even knew Jesus or was a part of His group.

We know these things about Jesus, but we don't always think

about how Jesus must have felt. Just because He was God doesn't mean He didn't feel the pain that comes from being excluded. In fact, the Bible tells us He was "despised and rejected, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." He knew how it felt in that moment when Kenny cried.

Not only that, precious mom, but He also knows how you feel when *you* are excluded. When your husband or your friends or family or even strangers exclude you, He knows how it feels. When someone doesn't want you to be part of their group, He understands. When people don't want anything to do with you, He feels that pain.

You see, Jesus came to earth not just to take the punishment for our sins, as if that weren't enough. He also came to identify with us so that He would experience what we as human beings go through. He was willing to suffer rejection and exclusion so He could understand what you feel like when it happens to you.

Those memories about times you were rejected or excluded? He knows how you feel. The pain going on in your heart right now because you are currently being excluded? He understands. He's felt it too.

What all this means is that you can take your pain to Him and find in Him someone who truly gets it. He's not just going to tell you to get over it; He'll help you heal. And He'll do it because He wants you to know that you are not alone in your pain. He will never exclude you or reject you. He's on your side.

So run to Him. Let Him take you in His arms and love you. Let Him begin to heal your hurts. Lay your head upon Him as He holds you close, and hear Him whisper, "I understand."

"He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not" (Is. 53:3, ESV).

"He has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you'" (Heb. 13:5).

*Adapted from **Megan Breedlove's** blog, *Manna for Moms*. Megan is the author of *Well Done, Good and Faithful Mommy* and *Manna for Moms: God's Provision for Your Hair-Raising, Miracle-Filled Mothering Adventure* (Regal Books). She is a stay-at-home mom with five children.*