

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.

Joyce L. Rodgers is an evangelist and sought-after speaker. She is the author of *Fatal Distractions* (Charisma House), and the founder of Primary Purpose Ministries in Dallas. Rodgers also serves at an international level with the Church of God in Christ.