



Rejection - Part II

The Fear of Rejection

His word declares His deep concern, care and love for us.

Psalm 139:13-17

For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb.

14 I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well.

15 My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth;

16 Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Your book were all written The days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them.

17 How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How vast is the sum of them!

God always sees us as special. He has always intended for us to believe this truth and learn to embrace it, believing His incredible good will for us.

But we strive none the less, and one of the reasons for our striving is fear.

One of the great fears we face is the fear of not belonging, not fitting in, whether it be in our families, with friends, neighborhoods, schools or our community. We all have a need to be special, to be loved and valued, and to be a part of “the group.” When we don’t belong we feel and are rejected.

Fear of Rejection

When we are not sure of whom we are in Christ, we empower this fear and as a result, we struggle and do whatever is necessary to fit in, to be a part of the “inner circle”. This fear is the driving force behind the striving to belong. It impacts every aspect of our life, robbing us of rest and peace.

In the beginning...

Very early in life we quickly learn that doing “the right thing” earns us the love and acceptance we desperately need and hunger for.

Eventually, “doing the right thing” may become so entwined with love and acceptance that we cannot conceive of being loved unless we have done that “right thing.”

Or worse still, we may come to believe, through experience, that “not doing the right thing” will earn us the rejection we fear and all the pain that goes with it. As a consequence the fear of rejection soon becomes our great motivator, often pushing us to do that which we may not want to do, just to gain the security of acceptance and delight of those around us. We soon learn to equate love with doing well and not with who we are as a person.

When operating from this belief, our actions become a commodity, something we use as an exchange for love and acceptance. When this belief is not addressed and dismantled, we quickly become ensnared in a trap: the fear of rejection.

The Other Side of the Coin

However, the scripture contradicts this notion to its very core.

We were created by God to live in the secure knowledge that we are loved because of who we are, and not for what we do or how well we do it.

Romans 8:35-39

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 *Just as it is written, "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED."*

37 *But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.*

38 *For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,*

39 *nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹*

The scriptures are clear that the love of God is free and that nothing will keep God from loving us. Nevertheless, for most of us, the experience has been the opposite; as children, one of the first lessons most of us learned was that love is a reward for success or good behavior. And that love must be earned and is easily lost.

¹ All Scripture is New American Standard unless otherwise noted.

When this becomes ingrained in us, it will open the door to fear, insecurity and striving.

As soon as this mindset is in place, others become a threat, since their good works will now compete with ours, and we begin to see others and ourselves through a demonic distortion. Now, rather than preferring one another, we judge and create strife and division.

Proverbs 10:12

Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all transgressions.

1 Peter 4:8

Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.

We forget that it was His love for us that initiated the grace to save us.

John 3:16-17

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

17 "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him."

God loved us before we knew Him. He made provision for us before we knew that we had a need. He paid the price for us before we knew we needed to be redeemed. There was nothing we did or could do to earn His love or pay for His gift of redemption for us.

Everything we needed was paid for in full at the Cross and we did not have to earn or ask for any of it; it was given by grace, the unmerited mercy of God. The confrontation between Jesus and Satan was already preordained; it was just a matter of time before God put His redemptive plan into action. We were never part of the plan; but we were the only reason for it.

Genesis 3:15

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He will bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel. MJKV

Romans 16:20

And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen. MJKV

It has always been God's initiative towards man that started the process of reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:18-21

Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation,

19 namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Yet, it seems that we have discounted the finished work of Jesus on the Cross, and now, by our own "good deeds" try to earn credit with God.

The frustration of the Apostle Paul becomes evident in his letter to the Galatians. They had received God's grace and gift of eternal life through faith. However, they reverted back to their old ways and were now trying to earn that which so freely came from the heart of the Father. Their doubt and fear of rejection caused them to strive for what was already theirs as a free gift.

Galatians 3:1-3

"You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?" NIV

When we accept salvation, we do so by faith in the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who is the only one who has power and the ability to forgive our sins, and we accept the fact that we are totally unable to do it ourselves. However, once saved, it does not seem to take long before we slip back into doing the "right thing," trying to earn from God once more.

We cannot earn from God! But we seem to be blinded to this truth, because we constantly try to "do the right thing" to get what is so freely available.

The lessons we have learned in early life are hard to discard. The strong expectation that love must be earned, otherwise we will be rejected, is now transferred onto God.

This still seems to be the tendency among most Christians: to fall back into striving, trying to earn acceptance, love and approval of God by human effort. In so doing we become trapped by the need to prove to God, through works and religious exercises, that His call and acceptance of us are justified. Our fear of being rejected now traps us into performing for God, believing that this is what pleases Him.

His love is beyond measure and it not negotiable. He will never reject us, because He accepted us when we were still covered in sin and unaware of His great love for us.

Romans 5:8

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Ephesians 2:4-10

“But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,

5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”

Rejection is never in the heart of God for us, since we have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus. When we believe that God will turn us away, we question His very nature and His word.

Prayer:

Father, through the sacrifice of Jesus, you made a way for me to receive your love and acceptance, to live with you for eternity. I thank with my whole being.

I now ask you Father to forgive me for doubting your faithfulness to me; forgive me for embracing the fear of rejection and trying to earn from you that which Jesus already paid for so dearly.

Lord, forgive me for believing that I had no value in your sight unless I earned your approval and pleasure.

I confess that I have attributed to you the character of those who have hurt me and rejected me.

Lord, I repent for that and ask you to cleanse my mind from the belief that I am only acceptable or lovable to you if I do “good works.”

Lord, I choose to believe that you are for me all the days of my life, and that you will never leave me or forsake me. I thank you for your great mercy and abundant grace in my life. Amen.