

Faces of Rejection (Part 3)

The Impact of Rejection

We cannot talk about rejection without unpacking what it means to be accepted by God. **The degree to which we have a revelation of God's love and acceptance determines the degree to which we experience freedom from the fear of rejection from man.**

Ps 27:1-2 The Lord is my light and my salvation — whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life — of whom shall I be afraid? 2 When the wicked advance against me to devour me, it is my enemies and my foes who will stumble and fall.

Romans 8:31 What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

Ps 56:11 In God I trust and am not afraid. What can man do to me?

When we are afraid of someone, we are afraid of specific things. It's useful knowing what these things are. Often we fear their indifference, disregard, disapproval, or their judgement. We are free from the fear of rejection when we make God our light, our salvation, and our stronghold. So, we are not just saying to them, "you don't define me!" but we are also saying, "God defines me." This happens when we hide in God, as shown in verse 6.

Ps 27:6 Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; at his sacred tent I will sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to the Lord.

How has rejection affected you? The difference between a lot of effective salespeople and the average person is the ability to deal with rejection. As mentioned earlier in this study, how we process rejection determines the impact it has on us.

"Memories are complex processes that occur in the brain. Highly emotional experiences, like rejection, get stored in the brain and remain there thanks to the amygdala [a part of the brain] that attaches meaning to experience," Caraballo says. "If you're someone who has struggled with rejection, and that gets reinforced in various scenarios so that it gains meaning and importance — even in small ways — that rejection turns into our pervading emotional story." (From **Why Rejection Hurts** by Ashley Laderer).

The emphasis of this message is to help the rejected person to understand how rejection impacts him or her. Secondly our goal is to also understand how God's acceptance plays a crucial role in the healing process.

The need to belong has been described as one of the most fundamental human needs. Anticipated social exclusion results in anger, sadness and fear. These emotions have a resultant behaviour, including swift retaliation and violence. **We are not just dealing with rejection but the fear of rejection. Fear is the anticipation of pain.** It's amazing just how much people do (vigilance) to prevent social exclusion. Sadly, it means that a lot of behaviour that seems noble is not authentic. *Psychologist Daniel Kahneman received the Nobel Prize for his work in Prospect Theory. Individuals view the pain of losing \$50 as much stronger than the joy of receiving \$50. Thus, we tend to be loss averse and will be motivated to avoid risks that involve losing rather than take risks involved in the potential for gains.*

Reflecting on your own behaviour, what are the things you do in order to avoid social exclusion? When last did you take social risks due to the potential you anticipated for connection? Have you made certain people idols in your life? **Sometimes God will remove someone from your life because they have become an idol.** He is more interested in your character than your comfort. **Sometimes you can think you love someone, but you are just addicted to them.** "I need you to boost my self-esteem." "I need you to validate me and determine my level of happiness today." Your life becomes very externally referenced.

A lot of our behaviour is controlled by our fear of rejection than our desire to risk connection. E.g. our friend at university who would do cards and favours for her friends in order to maintain the relationships.

Social rejection increases anger, anxiety, depression, jealousy and sadness. It reduces performance on difficult intellectual tasks, and can also contribute to aggression and poor impulse control, as DeWall explains in a recent review (Current Directions in Psychological Science, 2011). Physically, too, rejection takes a toll. People who routinely feel excluded have poorer sleep quality, and their immune systems don't function as well as those of people with strong social connections. (From Kirsten Weir in article on The Pain of Social Rejection)

Rejection issues also become complex as they tend to vary. On the one hand there is being *actively rejected* (Spouse telling you your character flaws, being rudely dismissed from a meeting and told why etc) and on the other hand there is being *passively ignored* (Your spouse is indifferent in their response to something you are excited about, strangers engage with others at a function and don't pursue you etc). **Research has found a link between active rejection and tension and anxiety. There is a link between being passively ignored and dejection and sadness.** Fear of or sensitivity to rejection that causes someone to pull away from others can lead to chronic feelings of loneliness and depression. **You reject yourself before you can be further rejected.** This is all on a continuum. For example, you may start off being passively ignored and then if you don't get the message you are then actively rejected. I remember going to boarding school at 11 years of age, and one of the other boys shouting at me for following him around. Some people experience this throughout their lives and as a result it has become part of their identity. Studies have shown that when people are rejected and when they anticipate rejection their heart rate slows down. This means that they react both psychologically and physically to rejection. For this reason we need to do the work of renewing our minds to fully embrace our identity in Christ.

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Chosen = select, by implication favourite. *People/Race* = Genos = family/offspring. *Royal* = Basileuion = King, ruler, emperor. *Holy* = Sacred. *Possession* = Peripoieo = To preserve alive, preservation, acquisition, purchase, to make my own. We are called to Proclaim or Declare the praises/goodness/excellencies. We cannot proclaim what we have not experienced.

Col 3:3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

This is who we have become in Christ, but there is an ongoing onslaught from the enemy against this Kingdom reality outlined in scripture. The enemy's strategy against us is to make us feel unaccepted, unloved, unworthy and as a result full of shame and insecurity. The enemy knows what insecure, hurt and shamed people do. The result is that we have many Rejected persons who are not manifesting the fullness of Christ.

Reflecting on society today, how do people behave stemming from rejection issues? Where do they compromise? What do they actively do to find acceptance?

Self-acceptance is the antidote to the spirit of rejection. Jesus said in John 15: 9 "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. This is spiritual object constancy.

It is important for a baby to experience Emotional Object Constancy. This is when the baby internalises the love and nurture of the parents. When trials and tribulation come, their impact bounces off that child and later the adult because they know they are loved and accepted. When there is no Spiritual Object Constancy or Emotional Object Constancy in our lives, we begin to create external value equivalents for acceptance and rejection. If we are not invited to a function, it reinforces the feelings of shame and abandonment that we already have.

We need to closely examine the fleshly or carnal behaviour that is the result of rejection. As we explore this make sure you repent and renounce them because this is the enemy's strategy for those that experience rejection.

What is the anatomy of the rejected person?

1. The rejected person will often transfer past rejection onto current scenarios

This is often because of **learned helplessness** where we give up on our goals because we are so preoccupied with failing.

2. The rejected person will often feel deep emotional pain

MRI studies have shown that the same brain pathways that are activated by physical pain are also activated by social pain, or rejection. Receptor systems in the brain also release natural painkillers (opioids) when an individual experiences social pain, the same as when physical pain is experienced.

We relive and re-experience social pain more vividly than physical pain.

3. The rejected person will perform for others in order to gain their acceptance

- They can study certain subjects so that they feel significant and included.
- This can increase if on FIRO-B profile you have a high need for inclusion.

4. The rejected person will often attack as a form of defence

5. The rejected person will often feel like they are looking from the outside in

6. The rejected person will exhibit nonconformist behaviours and attitudes

7. The rejected person will reject themselves before they can be rejected

8. The rejected person will project their self-hatred onto others through criticism

9. The rejected person either craves attention (Attention Seeking Behaviour) or dreads it

10. The rejected person will often experience a deep sense of shame

a. Shame from unrequited love

E.g. Still-face experiment carried out on babies. It is often observed that when a mother or caregiver is interacting with a baby, the infant becomes increasingly distressed, anxious, and frustrated when the interaction stops. The baby may cry, look away, or try to regain the mother's attention by making exaggerated facial expressions, vocalizations, or gestures. This reaction is taken as evidence that social interaction with caregivers is vital for babies' emotional and social development. This is basic shame and has long-term consequences if it persists.

b. Shame from feeling like an outsider and being consistently ignored

c. Shame from public embarrassment or unwanted exposure

d. Shame from disappointed expectation

- i. Friendship going sour
- ii. Parents not picking you up on time consistently
- iii. Not getting the promotion you desired

e. Shame from moral failure

e.g. Adam in the garden of Eden

To what extent is shame stopping you from living out your life assignment?

11. The rejected person often has a constant fear of judgement

Fear of judgement is a fruit of shame

The result of this is sometimes the need to control people's perception of them

12. The rejected person often has the "orphan spirit"

- They can be very defensive when challenged
- This means they get offended when disciplined or corrected

- They take things too personally
- They run away when challenged

It's important to allow the Rejected person to get in touch with their feelings of defence

13. The rejected person will often catastrophise the negative events around them

Catastrophise is a verb that means to exaggerate the potential negative consequences of a situation or event, often to an extreme or irrational degree. When someone catastrophizes, they may imagine the worst possible outcome and dwell on it, leading to heightened anxiety, fear, or panic. Terman Life-Cycle Study found that catastrophizing predicted mortality and accidental or violent death especially well. It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Individuals who catastrophize and who tend to irrationally fear bad events, consequences, even death, are more likely to die from accidents or violent death. This reminds me of Job who said, "The thing I feared has come upon me."

5 Things we need to know about God's acceptance?

1. God's acceptance of you is not based on your nationality

Acts 10:34-35 Opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him."

2. God's acceptance of you only requires that you keep coming back to Him

John 6:37 All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out

3. God's acceptance of you is covenantal

2 Kings 13:23 But the Lord was gracious to them and had compassion on them and turned to them because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them or cast them from His presence until now.

Heb 13:5 Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

Ps 94:14 For the Lord will not reject his people; he will never forsake his inheritance.

4. God's acceptance of you is not based on your gender or social status

Gal 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

5. God's acceptance of you is full of tenderness

Ps 27:10 Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me.

Is 49:15 Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne?

Though she may forget, I will not forget you!

1 Pet 5:7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you

(anxiety – that which fractures a person's being into parts)

(Cares – object of one's anxiety or apprehension. To be concerned about.)

Is 40:11 He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.

You have a choice!

You can actually spend time with people that accept you for who you are. Don't live in the tyranny of the familiar. Living as the rejected loner is not your portion. Stop punishing yourself with isolation, we all have a need to bond and belong.