

# Managing My Rejection

What to do when you don't feel accepted

Disclaimer: The following are Dr. Jeff Stott's sermon notes and manuscript. They have not been carefully proofed for spelling or grammar. All Scripture quotes are from the New International Version unless noted.

Take your Bible and turn to Genesis 37:3.

Nothing ravages your heart like rejection. The most painful wound you can experience is rejection by someone you love. For many, even death, does not pierce as deeply as knowing you have been abandoned, forsaken, and rejected.

Rejection chips away your self-image, chisels your confidence, and challenges your hope. Rejection causes you to have those whispering shouts in your mind that say, "You are not wanted. You are not welcome. You are not worthy."

Favoritism can be extremely painful for those who are not favored. One common example of favoritism is that shown by parents to a specific child. Children catch on quickly when there is a "favorite" in the family.

The favored child often comes late in life – as in the case of young Joseph in the Bible. Jacob favored Joseph over his ten older brothers... and flaunted his favoritism by giving Joseph the infamous coat of many colors – a robe Jacob made himself!

The older brothers seethed with anger at the sight of the ornate robe, which became a symbol of their father's special treatment. Little did Jacob know that his favoritism had become a breeding ground for jealousy. He had provided the spark that would create a climate of hurt, hostility, and burning hatred. **Genesis 37:3** describes the scene: "Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made a richly ornamented robe for him. (4) When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him." The older brothers felt rejected, set aside, less approved of and shunned because of their father's favoritism toward Joseph.

## Definitions of Rejection

This brings us to the definitions of rejection. To understand rejection let's look at three aspects of rejection.

*To be rejected* is to be cast aside, cast off, cast away – to be thrown away as having no value. This form of rejection (atheteo) means “to do away with, to set aside, to cast or throw away as useless or unsatisfactory.” When you are rejected, you can feel useless, abandoned, and worthless. This can be applied to people or things. For example, the Pharisees were rejecting God's Word by casting it aside. Jesus said to them in **Mark 7:9**, “You have a fine way of setting aside [rejecting] the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!”

Another form of *rejection* is the refusal to accept a person, consider an idea, or approve of something. When you experience this kind of rejection, you feel unloved, unwanted, or unacceptable. This form of rejection [apodokimazo] means “to reject as the result of examination and disapproval.” Jesus felt this pain of rejection. The Bible refers to Jesus as the cornerstone – the most essential stone of a major structure – yet He was the cornerstone the builders rejected. **Matthew 21:42** says, “The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone.” **Mark 9:12** says of Jesus, “the Son of Man must suffer much and be rejected.” Jesus knows what it's like to not be accepted, considered, or approved of by others.

Another aspect of *rejection* [maas] means to refuse, shun, despise, or turn away from. If you experience this rejection you are being condemned by someone with a despising and judgmental attitude. This is not only applied to people, but also to God. There are some who will reject God and His Word with a despising attitude. This is seen in **Jeremiah 8:9** when it says, “The wise will be put to shame; they will be dismayed and trapped. Since they have rejected [despised] the word of the Lord.”

Rejection can take many forms and have many expressions. Rejection can mean being thrown away as having no value, the refusal to accept a person, or to turn away from.

## Demonstration of Rejection

Now that we have a better understanding of rejection, how does it affect people and how does it show up in families? Let's take Jane for example. She has a question and she says, "My father always showed partiality toward my brother, and treated the females in the family – my mother, my sister, and me – like second-class citizens, despite our many accomplishments. How can I stop being so controlled by my anger toward him?"

Based on what we have learned, through this series of messages, what's an answer. Remember, anger has four sources: *hurt*, *fear*, *frustration*, and *injustice*. The anger she described toward her father comes from at least three of the four:

- Being rejected by her father *hurt* her deeply.
- Being disfavored simply because she was a female was an *injustice*.
- Failing to receive well-earned recognition is extremely *frustrating*.

Here's is what we might could say to Jane: "Realize your father's neglect of you has nothing to do with you, but everything to do with him. Something has been severely "broken" in your father, keeping him from being a reflection of the heavenly Father to you. Therefore turn loose of your expectations regarding him. Just as you would not expect a broken watch to keep time correctly, likewise don't expect your "broken" father to treat you correctly. Choose to forgive him for his rejection toward you so that your anger won't build bitterness in your heart." **Hebrews 12:15** says, "See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many."

## Defense Against Rejection

How do we respond to being rejected? How do we defend ourselves and protect ourselves against the pain of rejection? Every truth we are about to look at is under the umbrella of you being A-C-C-E-P-T-E-D.

**First, admit the rejection of the past and acknowledge its pain.** Admit your feelings to God and to yourself. “Lord, I felt so rejected when they said that to me. I acknowledge that is what I’m feeling.” **Lamentations 3:19** reflects this by saying, “I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall [Sometimes that affliction and bitterness is caused by rejection]. I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me. Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”

**Second, claim God’s acceptance and unconditional love.** Confess God’s love for you and the various ways He has shown you His love. “Lord, thank you for showing how much You love me when You sent Your Son Jesus Christ to die on that cross for me. I may not feel loved by others, but I know I’m loved by You” (see John 3:16). This reminds me of what God says in **Isaiah 54:10**, “Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed [even though it seems like your life is falling apart], yet My unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor My covenant of peace be removed,’ says the Lord, who has compassion on you.”

**Third, choose to forgive those who rejected you.** What they said and what they did was wrong, but do not return evil for evil. Rise above the rejection. Rise above the person who hurt you. Count the cost of withholding forgiveness: a bitter spirit building up inside you, which will cause trouble and spread to those around you. Choose to forgive those who rejected you. **Colossians 3:13** says, “Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances [including rejection] you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.” Remember, at one point in your life you were rejecting Christ. He forgave you. Show the same forgiveness to those who reject you.

**Fourth, expect future rejection as part of living in a fallen world.** You will not be accepted by everyone. Because we live in a fallen world there will be people at work, at school, at church, and in your own family that will not accept you. By their words and actions you are going to feel isolated, devalued, unwanted, abandoned or second-rate. Some of this rejection will come because of the sin and selfishness in their own life. Some of this rejection will come because you live for Christ and do what’s right. As a believer, you will experience rejection just as Jesus did. You are not exempt from being rejected. **1**

**Peter 4:12** says, “Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering [that includes rejection], as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the suffering of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when His glory is revealed. If you are insulted [rejection is a form of insult] because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you” (12-14).

**Fifth, plant Scripture in your mind to produce new thoughts.** As a believer you need to begin thinking in the realm of acceptance, not rejection. For some believers this is going to take some work. **Romans 12:2** says, “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will.” You are going to have to renew your mind. Renew the way you think about yourself, about others, and about God. You will need to renew your thinking about rejection. The way you do that is to plant God’s Word into your heart and mind in order to produce new thoughts.

Some of you are too quick to reject. Your mindset is already in the rejection position. When you hear something new or different you reject it immediately without any serious thought or consideration. That’s why it is hard for you to do anything new for God or to learn something new from God because you begin with rejection.

On the other side of this coin are those who receive everything as rejection. If someone disagrees with them they take it as rejection, when in reality it’s not. If someone expresses disappointment in them, they receive it as rejection, even if it’s not. If someone questions what they said or did they receive it as rejection, even when it’s not. If someone forgets to send them a birthday card or didn’t say “hello” to them the other day they receive it as rejection, when it wasn’t.

When you renew your mind on the Word of God you begin to think on things that are pure, holy, true, honest, and praiseworthy. You begin to think through the filters of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control. The way you begin to view yourself, others, and God begins to change and aligns itself up with God’s Word creating healthy thoughts, not damaging thoughts. So plant Scripture in your mind to grow new thoughts.

**Sixth, thank God for what you've learned through rejection.** The psalmist said in **Psalm 119:71**, "It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn Your decrees." There are some things we can only learn in the school of hard knocks. Here is where we come to God and say, "Lord, going through that time of rejection was difficult and humbling, but I thank you for what You taught me through it. Because of the pain, I am more aware of the rejection that others experience and more sensitive in what I say and how I treat people. Thank You for not wasting the pain of my rejection."

**Seventh, encourage others as an expression of Christ's love.** Pay attention to those who are being rejected and accept them. Speak words of acceptance and approval. **Hebrews 3:13** says, "Encourage one another daily." If you know someone who is going through the feelings of rejection due to a divorce, encourage them. If you know someone is feeling left out because of their handicap, find a way to include them. Replace sarcasm and cut downs with words of hope and friendship. Learn to be an encourager, not a rejecter.

**Eight, draw on the power of Christ's life within you.** Once you realize you are completely accepted in Christ by God, other's rejection won't sting as much. There is power, confidence, freedom, and strength in knowing who you are in Christ. **Philippians 4:13** says, "I can do everything through Him who gives me strength." Learn who you are in Christ. Discover the resources that God has given to you as one of His children. Draw on His power. As a child of God, His Spirit is in you to empower you to face any rejection that man or Satan can throw at you.

## **Conclusion**

Jesus was teaching about His coming death and resurrection. In **Mark 8:31** we are told, "He then began to teach them [His disciples] that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that He must be killed and after three days rise again." Before there was a resurrection there had to be a rejection. Jesus was rejected so you could be accepted. He took the punishment of your sin and gave you His righteousness. He died so that you could live. The greatest acceptance you will ever experience is the acceptance offered to you by God. That old hymn, "Just as I am," is really about God accepting you, forgiving you, and bringing you into His family. Would you like to receive God's salvation today? [Explain salvation]