

Rejection Stronghold

"Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God."

Romans 15:7

"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him."

John 3:1

A rejection stronghold is not the same as feeling hurt or pain. That is a normal part of life amidst imperfect relationships. However, when the hurt becomes ingrained in our character and identities and shapes our lives, then it moves into being a destructive thought pattern.

We also belong to a society that values winning and worships winners. We live under a world system that chooses favorites and rejects seconds. We learn, pretty much from birth, that the most popular, the most attractive and the most talented are 'in'. Those who don't fit that description (most of us) are 'out'. And so, before even a specific action or attitude is leveled against us, the stage is set for each of us to live life battling rejection.

Rejection is foundational to many strongholds, sins and dysfunctions. This is because rejection affects a person's entire personality. It not only comes against an individual, but it works against all of a person's relationships: marriage, family, ministry, work and social life. The stage is already set by the world system, which we know to be under the direction of Satan himself, the 'accuser' (Revelation 12:10), when each of us begin to make our way in life. We yearn for love and acceptance, but we receive rejection along the way instead. We learn to believe the lies fed to us about our own value, our own significance and the love of God, our Heavenly Father.

However, if we are in Christ, we do not need to agree with this world system. We are not of this world! (Ephesians 2:12-13; Philippians 3:20; Hebrews 11:13-16; 1 Peter 2:11). We have not been rejected; we have been ACCEPTED (Romans 15:7). There is NOTHING that can separate us from the love of our Father (Romans 8:38-39), and we must not buy into the lies that tell us otherwise. Instead, we must face those lies squarely, identify what they are and where they come from, and destroy them utterly with the sword of the Spirit – which is the Word of God. '

Fruits of Rejection

These are some of the things which Rejection builds into

- ❑ Causes people to rely on their own coping mechanisms (false comforts), instead of on the truth, power and strength of God's Holy Spirit.
- ❑ Breeds rebellion (rejection results in rebellion) including aggressive attitudes, foul language, stubbornness, defiance, fighting and abusive actions.
- ❑ Fosters pride, egotism and arrogance.
- ❑ Feeds control, manipulation and possessiveness.
- ❑ Compels people to reject others.
- ❑ Causes people to refuse comfort from others.
- ❑ Promotes harshness, skepticism and unbelief.
- ❑ Leads to self-rejection (low self-image, inferiority, insecurity, inadequacy, sorrow, grief).
- ❑ Causes self-accusation and self-condemnation.
- ❑ Energizes an inability or refusal to communicate (it is difficult to talk through issues with a person who is suffering from deep rejection).
- ❑ Stirs up and feeds fears, anxieties, worries, negativity and pessimism.
- ❑ Spawns depression, hopelessness and despair.
- ❑ Triggers self-destructive thoughts and actions.
- ❑ Fuels performance-based life, relationships and ministry.
- ❑ Energizes over-achievement, striving, competition and perfectionism.
- ❑ Drives people into withdrawal, isolation or independence.
- ❑ Nurtures self-protection, self-centeredness, selfishness, self-justification, self-idolatry and self-pity (note that it's all about SELF!).
- ❑ Feeds a critical spirit, judgmental attitudes, envy, jealousy and covetousness.
- ❑ Keeps people locked in emotional immaturity.

Recognizing Rejection

Read through this list and see if you recognize any of these thoughts or behaviors.

- ❑ I usually interpret things concerning me that could be either positive or negative as negative.
- ❑ I receive what others say to me through a lens of rejection.
- ❑ I'm assaulted with paralyzing thoughts such as, 'I can't do that!'; 'How would that appear to (person)?'; 'What will (person) think?'.
- ❑ I second-guess what I have said or done, and I have negative thoughts about what others must think about me as a result.
- ❑ I find it difficult to freely reach out and connect with people.
- ❑ I often try to 'do too much' or go from thing to thing, job to job, ministry to ministry, striving to earn favour and acceptance from God and/or others.
- ❑ I find it difficult to accept freely from others

- ❑ I find it difficult to demonstrate love and affection.
- ❑ I don't believe people when they pay me a compliment.
- ❑ I have a tendency to doubt, to question or to mistrust authority.
- ❑ I tend to be skeptical and unbelieving.
- ❑ People could describe me as spikey and quickly offended.
- ❑ When confronted about something, my immediate reaction is defensive or even defiant.
- ❑ I do not freely share my testimony, or the Gospel with people.
- ❑ I need to control my family in order for them to be safe, to succeed and so they will love and appreciate me.
- ❑ I am possessive in relationships.
- ❑ I have a low estimation of my own appearance, my abilities and my adequacy to succeed in life and ministry.
- ❑ I am prone to feeling despairing and hopeless.
- ❑ I quickly feel unwanted and misunderstood by others.
- ❑ I withdraw to be alone and don't want to share my struggles.
- ❑ When people misunderstand me, or 'don't get me' I feel rejected.
- ❑ I am often fearful and anxious about things such as: how people will regard me or my children; how my efforts will turn out; how I will be provided for or protected.
- ❑ I need to be needed, so I continually place myself in situations where I feel others cannot get along without my help, my presence, my abilities, my ministry etc.
- ❑ I am inhibited in honestly sharing my deepest feelings with others, even with those who are close to me;
- ❑ I am afraid that if I am vulnerable with my wife, my husband, my friend..., I will appear weak and feel stupid or ashamed.
- ❑ I am both critical and envious at the same time toward others who are more confident, who are able to express themselves freely, or who have more friendships and opportunities than I think I do.
- ❑ I am competitive and ambitious. I think that if people won't love me, at least they will admire me.
- ❑ I find comfort in isolation; others might consider me a 'loner'.
- ❑ I hide myself from others and try to appear together.
- ❑ I take criticism, even constructive criticism as personal rejection.

Perceived Rejection

The rejection issues noted above have their roots in reality – the offences that created the sense of rejection really did happen. Two forms of rejection that are not based in reality are *perceived* rejection and *feared* rejection. These are lies convincing a person that rejection is present – or pending – when it is not. This can paralyze us in life, strip us of joy, and compel us to be always on guard against what others may be thinking.

Fear of rejection/Perceived rejection:

- ❑ I think people are talking about me.
- ❑ I believe people are scheming against me or without me.
- ❑ I think people will not care for me well.
- ❑ I think people must hate me or dislike me.
- ❑ I am assaulted frequently with paralyzing thoughts such as, 'How does that appear to (person)?', 'What will (person) think if I wear this, do this, say that?', 'They must think I'm stupid'.
- ❑ I do not experience intimacy with God in prayer or personal worship, because I think God will reject me.
- ❑ I am inhibited in corporate worship, because I am concerned about what others may think about me.
- ❑ I expect people to turn away from me.
- ❑ I am scared of deep relationships for fear of being:
 - Let down
 - Abandoned
 - Disliked
 - Ashamed
 - Rejected
- ❑ I often think people are angry with me when it turns out they aren't.
- ❑ I reject others before they can reject me.
- ❑ I keep my emotional distance from:
 - Men
 - Women

When we are faced with fear of rejection, the temptation is to fall back to coping mechanisms we may have employed for most, if not all, of our lives. These can include anything we have learned to use or to do to comfort ourselves in the face of rejection or other hurts. We should recognize our coping mechanisms as 'false comforts', like a placebo, they trick us into thinking we've dealt with the symptoms of our pain, when in truth they do nothing to solve the problem.

It can be helpful to use the 5r's in order to tear down this stronghold.

Remember these are –

Recognize – Using the above.

Repent – Repent of believing the lies and letting the stronghold take root.

Receive – God's forgiveness and fresh filling of the Holy Spirit.

Rebuke – The work of the enemy and send him to the feet of Jesus.

Replace - This will be a daily battle which will require us to be vigilant

If it's helpful, you can use this model prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father,

I recognize and confess that I have accepted and tolerated feelings and thoughts of rejection and allowed them to shape my life.

I repent and break my agreement with them and declare, I will not accept them as truth anymore.

I receive forgiveness for my sin and thank you that their power is broken through the blood of Christ.

In Jesus name, I rebuke the Spirit of Rejection and all its energizing influence and lies. I crush you under my feet and send you under the authority of Christ.

I declare, I am loved, rooted and accepted as a child of God and however any person treats me, I will not allow rejection to control or define me.

Thank you for the joy of being loved and precious in your sight.

Amen.

As you understand the replacing it can be helpful to consider:

God's restoration for rejection

Grant forgiveness and extend blessings to people who have hurt or rejected you (real or perceived).

Do the same toward situations and environments from which hurt and rejection continue to flow. Remember that Satan wants to stimulate bitterness, resentment and anger in you. Our refusal to forgive hurts becomes a toxin or a cancer that defiles not only us but also many around us. This is why the Scriptures repeatedly address the issue of granting forgiveness.

"Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."

Matthew 6:12, 14-15

On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

Romans 12:20-21

Express your emotions and thought patterns openly and fully to God

"Not so, my lord," Hannah replied, "I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the LORD."

1 Samuel 1:15

Dare to be honest with God.

Trust in God's great, unconditional and infinite love for you

Don't allow the emotions to define you but choose to soak your soul in words and images the Spirit gives you about the Father's love for you. God did not make a mistake when He made you! His great love is demonstrated through Jesus' death on the cross and through His continual faithfulness and devotion to you. As you reject and demolish any strongholds and demonic lies of rejection, replace them with the truth of God's great love for you.

"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! "

1 John 3:1

Live in these truths

This means acting on faith, not our feelings! It will mean behaving lovingly and confidently even when we fear people will reject us: parents, friends, children, co-workers, neighbours and church family. It will mean forgiving and going on, even when they do reject us.

*"If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. There is no fear in love. **But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment.** The one who fears is not made perfect in love. "*

1 John 4:15-18