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REJECTION

Overcoming the Most Painful Emotion

FROM EARLY ON IN LIFE, we are taught that not everyone is going to like us. Some people won't want to be our friends; they'll disagree with us and even stand in opposition to us. All of us have been rejected at one point or another and in various ways.

At times, we may even be disparaged openly and publically. I recall one business meeting when a man came up to the pulpit and hurled terrible accusations at me. It was a contentious time for First Baptist Atlanta, and he did not agree with how I was leading the congregation. So he accused me of stealing the church and running people off. He finished his tirade by threatening, "Stanley, if you don't watch out, you're going to get hurt!" He then forcefully backhanded me in the jaw.

Certainly, that was a moment when I didn't feel particularly loved or accepted. Although I received a great deal of support from the church, family, and friends, it was still unnerving to realize how much this man despised me simply because I did not cater to his point of view.

If you've ever experienced this kind of negative reaction from

another person, you may have felt as humiliated, demoralized, and unsettled as I did—especially if the rebuke was carried out in such a public way. These feelings are, of course, a normal response, even when you are standing for godly values and beliefs. We may not want to admit that those moments of rejection affect us deeply, but they do. They strike at the core of who we are and what we believe about ourselves.

More often than not, however, it isn't the rebuke of strangers but the rejection of those closest to us that causes us the most pain and damage. For example, I once spoke with a woman who struggled terribly with feeling unloved and unwanted. She had three sisters, but she told me that one of her siblings was especially lovely—tall, with beautiful blonde hair—and was obviously her father's favorite. She and the other two sisters were, as she put it, "just girls"—short, brunette, and average looking.

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"What makes you think he preferred your blond sister?" I asked.

"Well, one day, my father brought home this beautiful red dress and gave it to her, but the rest of us got nothing. He never did anything like that for us. We didn't say a word to him about it, but we always knew it was because he loved her best," she responded. That simple act had stayed with those women for decades, wounding them terribly.

"But surely your father loved you, too," I replied gently.

She shook her head with terrible sadness in her eyes. "He never said so. Not once. Not in my entire life."

In fact, this woman told me that when she received word that her father was dying, she went to visit him. She said, "I had to see him. I had to be with him during his last days. I wanted so badly for him to call my name and say he loved me. That's all I'd ever really hoped for. I thought maybe he would finally say it since it would be his last chance to do so."

But he didn't. This woman took care of him. Sat with him. Listened to him. And even begged him to say, "I love you." But he died refusing to express the three simple words that his daughter wanted so desperately to hear.

Consider what kind of profound, heartbreaking damage such rejection can do—never being told one is loved or accepted by a mother, father, or other caregiver. Imagine the devastation of being refused and discarded by someone so essential and central to one's life. Of course that would leave a terrible wound—how could it not?

THE MOST PAINFUL EMOTION

In fact, I believe rejection causes some of the most painful bondage that anyone ever experiences because it influences what you and I believe about ourselves. This is what happens: when a person or group of people—who may have been trying to hurt or control us—deems us unlovable, unfit, or worthless, we unconsciously accept that others must hold the same belief.

We may not perceive its effects. We may not think it bothers us. We may not even realize or remember that we were rejected. But when we are made to feel that we are unwanted, unloved, or unworthy of respect, we are wounded deep within our souls in a manner that acutely affects how we view ourselves, others, and God. Instinctively, we become more self-critical and begin to look for ways others may reinforce the negative thoughts we have about ourselves—at times even provoking people to reject us by acting out.

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This is because rejection strikes at the foundation of our identity, distorting what we think is true about who we are and what we are worth. Why? Because of the sinful nature within us. Remember, “sin reigned in death” (Rom. 5:21), or as the *New Living Translation* phrases it: “Sin ruled over all people and brought them to death.” The end goal of the sin nature is devastation (Rom. 5:12), so it is understandable that the injurious messages we hear find fertile soil in our hearts and take root. This is why it is much easier to believe the hurtful things said about us than comments that encourage or edify us. We embrace the messages that speed us along the path to destruction (Ps. 16:25) and dismiss that which reminds us we are created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26).

And the truth of the matter is, if we fail to recognize the presence of rejection in our lives and deal with it, it will continue to cause us pain and corrupt every relationship we have. Therefore,

we must root out every false message of being unloved, unwanted, and unworthy that has been implanted in our lives and replace it with the truth of Scripture (Ps. 107:20).

THE CONSEQUENCES OF REJECTION

So, what are the telltale signs that you are living with rejection? Remember, just because you do not recall a specific incident does not mean it is necessarily gone. Your emotional wounds may have been formed in early childhood through events that you have no conscious memory of. And long-buried feelings of being undesirable or unwelcome may persist in affecting you because of what you continue to tell yourself. This is why it is so important to determine if any of the evidence of rejection is present in your life.

Therefore, as you did for fear, please consider the following consequences of rejection to determine if you have blind spots in your emotional life. Ask the Holy Spirit to uncover any hidden wounds you may have and be open to what He has to say to you. And, as always, write down whatever He reveals so you can unearth the thought patterns that hold you captive and replace them with the biblical truth that sets you free.

1. A Critical Focus on Yourself

Perhaps the most obvious symptom of being wounded by rejection is that you continually criticize yourself. To discern if this is a problem, listen to what you think about when frustrations or prob-

lems occur. Do you tell yourself you are stupid, ugly, or a failure? Do you doubt people will accept you or wonder if you are a burden to them? Do you compare yourself to others in the hope of feeling better about yourself? Are you constantly complaining about your appearance, weight, job performance, income, or other aspects of your life? Do you fret because you do not receive recognition from certain friends or authority figures? Are you concerned with devising ways of capturing their attention—both positive through good deeds and negative through complaining and such? If so, then you most likely feel you must reach a certain standard to be adequate, loveable, or worthy of respect, and those sentiments are driving your thought patterns.

You may even think to yourself, *If I would just measure up, the problems I am experiencing would not exist. But I am never going to be good enough—so this problem will never go away. I will never achieve my goals, and no one will ever really accept me.* If this is how you see yourself, my friend, then you are most certainly bound by the emotional wounds of rejection.

You may think, *But you don't understand. That's just who I am. I've failed in these areas of my life and there's no hope for me to be any different. Ask anyone who knows me—they agree that's who I am, and there's no changing me.*

If this is what you believe, we have identified a source of your problems; you are measuring yourself by faulty standards—the defective opinions of fallen humanity rather than the holy, well-informed, and wise view of your Creator—and doing so is

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destroying you. As we will discuss later in the chapter, God sees you very differently, and He knows you far better than anyone else ever could. You can be free of the bondage to rejection if you will let go of these critical thought patterns about yourself and accept His truth.

2. *A Faultfinding View of Others*

A second way rejection is noticeable in a person's life is when he is hard-hearted and derogatory toward others. If someone you know is easily angered and constantly criticizing people, it may very well be that a deep sense of inferiority is driving his unsympathetic attitude. You see, by condemning others, a person in bondage to rejection somehow feels better about himself—perhaps believing he looks good by comparison or that he is taking the attention off himself and diverting it to the person he is criticizing.

This very problem is why Jesus said in Matthew 7:3, “Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?” It is so much easier to point out the faults of others than to look at our own failings. Yet this strategy never works to satisfy the deep longing each of us has in our hearts for true forgiveness, acceptance, and worthiness—at least, not in the long run.

I saw this firsthand in the life of my stepfather. For years I could not figure out why he acted as cruelly as he did. He would come home after work and angrily blast whoever crossed his path. It was almost as if he could not stop himself—he seemed compelled

to be condemning, critical, and at times even physically violent.

Many days he would continue provoking me until we got into heated arguments. When our rough scuffles were over, I would feel terrible—guilty that I hadn't controlled my anger. He, to my surprise, would always appear just fine—as if nothing had happened. It was only much later in life, after he died, that I realized he was acting out of the rejection he had faced as a child. By putting down others, he felt better about himself. It alleviated some of the pressure he felt internally.

So ask yourself if you feel the need to be critical or negative. Do you judge others harshly in order to vindicate yourself? Is your first instinct to pick apart people when meeting them or experiencing conflicts with them?

Perhaps you are thinking, *Well, that's just my personality. I'm an analytical person. Or, Doesn't the Bible tell us to discern between good and evil, wise and foolish, godly and carnal? Doesn't Scripture tell us to turn a critical eye toward certain issues?*

Yes it does. But the vital difference between valid spiritual discernment and an attitude of rejection is your *mind-set* toward the object of your criticism.

As we said, the rejected person finds fault in order to feel better about himself or herself. The person censured doesn't necessarily matter to him or her. But whenever Jesus corrected people or even became angry at their actions, He did so out of love.

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For example, when Jesus healed a man with a withered hand in the synagogue, many onlookers accused Him of doing work on the Sabbath—a practice forbidden by Jewish Law (Ex. 20:8–10). Mark 3:5 reports that Christ looked at them “with anger, *grieved at their hardness of heart*” (emphasis added). This is because as religious rulers and teachers, those men should have understood and expressed the mercy and compassion of the gracious God they served. But they didn’t—a fact that caused Jesus great pain and sorrow because it showed how truly far their hearts were from the Father.

The Savior’s criticism of the religious leaders wasn’t out of hatred or to prove His superiority. Rather, it was out of His love for them—because they were missing the great joy of being rightly related to the Lord, and even worse, they were leading others astray as well. You can see the deep grief this caused Him when He said, “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling” (Matt. 23:37).

Christ’s attitude is very different from the faultfinding that comes from the person exhibiting the bondage of rejection. This is why it is always important to evaluate your motives when making judgments about others. Your rebuke may show that you are struggling with your own feelings of being unwanted and unworthy.

3. An Avoidance of Intimacy

Another way people reveal their struggle with this painful emotion is that they find it very difficult to be open and caring toward others. Why is this?

First, because of ever-present feelings of shame and low self-esteem, the person struggling with rejection may be afraid that the people she really cares about will get close enough to discover the truth—that there are thoughts and feelings deep within her that make her unlovable. In other words, she simply doesn't feel worthy of another person's love. So when this individual begins to feel people becoming too familiar or dependent, she pushes them away—sabotaging the relationship.

She may distance herself by retreating emotionally or by attempting to repel her loved ones with negative behavior. But when her friends or family members finally give up trying to break through her relational barriers, she feels vindicated in her belief that she was right to protect herself. Thus she perpetuates the cycle of rejection repeatedly, reinforcing her notion that she does not deserve another's acceptance.

Second, because of feelings of unworthiness, the person struggling with rejection may be suspicious of anyone who claims to care about him. Remember, when a person is in bondage to this painful emotion, he has trouble accepting the edifying messages spoken about him because they contradict what he believes about himself. Therefore, he may not only discard the encouragement

he receives as unreliable information but he may likewise question the motives of those trying to build him up.

Consequently, he cannot receive a compliment or affection without asking, *What does this person really want from me?* Unfortunately, it is impossible to achieve intimacy with such a distrustful attitude toward others.

Third, because of hypersensitivity to cues that reinforce her negative beliefs about herself, a person struggling with rejection finds it difficult to love others because she is always looking for verification of her own lack of worth. This means that not only will she be very easily hurt but she will also be focused inward—more interested in preserving herself than being a blessing to her loved ones.

Yet we know from 1 Corinthians 13:5–7 that real, sacrificial, godly love “is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” Or as the *Living Bible* paraphrases it, “Love does

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not demand its own way. It is not irritable or touchy. It does not hold grudges and will hardly even notice when others do it wrong” (v. 5).

In other words, true unconditional love is sacrificial—it is not easily offended, self-focused, or afraid of rejection. It seeks only the good of the other person. We see this best in Christ’s example. As the Roman soldiers beat Him,

taunted Him unmercifully, and even as they drove the nails into His hands and feet, He said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). Rather than dwelling on how they were hurting *Him*, Jesus remained focused on His loving purpose for *them*—to provide forgiveness as their Savior (Rom. 5:8).

It is not possible to be inwardly focused and easily offended and truly care for others with the unconditional love Jesus teaches us to have. The tendency to protect oneself will always thwart the true openness and intimacy needed. As Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). If you cannot even lay down your inadequacies and defenses for your loved ones, laying down your life is most likely not an option.

Finally, because he sees people as objects to be used for pleasure and never fully engages emotionally, he may feel so devalued in himself that he forgoes true intimacy for the immediate and destructive gratification of sex outside of marriage. Sadly, there are terrible consequences associated with such a practice. The feelings of shame and disconnection that arise from engaging in immoral acts cause the individual to detach from God and others even further. Because of this, he will sink deeper into a prison of isolation and rejection.

So consider: Are you ever afraid that the people you care about will get too close and find you unlovable? Are you suspicious of those who claim to care about you? Are you overly sensitive to

what people say or how they act toward you? Are you more comfortable engaging with others physically than emotionally? Do you find it difficult to be open and caring toward others because you don't really feel worthy of love? If so, then this is evidence that roots of rejection are present in your life.

4. An Inclination Toward Isolation

Psychologically, rejection and loneliness are very similar because they both involve the feelings of being emotionally disconnected and the fear of being unwanted. Whereas rejection stems from another's refusal to be involved with us, loneliness often arises from our inability—because of social skill, circumstances, time, or distance—to reach out and connect with others. As you can imagine, these two emotions are closely related—once one takes root, the other frequently follows.

This is because a person who struggles with rejection often experiences difficulty in establishing genuine give-and-take friendships with others and may feel as if no one truly wants or understands her. To avoid the pain of feeling unwelcome, she may either intentionally or unconsciously separate herself from others—spending a great deal of time alone or participating in activities that do not require her to engage in meaningful ways with other people. Such isolation eventually causes the individual even deeper loneliness and bondage.

Conversely, a person who spends a great deal of time alone—and thereby does not have opportunities to practice interacting with others—may be misunderstood as aloof, awkward, or de-

tached in social situations, which then elicits undesirable and adverse reactions from her peers. When such negative interactions occur, feelings of inadequacy and rejection can develop and more wounding can occur.

However, regardless of whether the rejection or loneliness comes first, the result is increasing alienation and isolation—and that is never a good thing.

This is a difficulty that hits especially close to home for me because I have faced profound loneliness in my life. In fact, one of my earliest memories is from a very painful experience. I was a small boy—only two or three years old. I recall that I had a terrible earache, but there was no one to take care of me because Mother had to work. So I sat alone on the bed in our little wooden house, crying—with only a dim kerosene lamp to keep me company. I felt like no one would ever come help me.

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Another early memory is of coming home to an empty house after school. I was in the first grade, and I can still remember the long black key that we hid under a brick outside. Only Mother and I knew where it was. As I would turn that key in the lock and open the door, I would often think to myself, *I'm going to be all alone.*

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Although I knew my mother was doing her best to provide for me, I still remember feeling terribly insecure in that house all by myself.

Likewise, I vividly recall one Saturday afternoon long ago

when two of my friends—Rob and Jimmy—came to spend some time with me. We were laughing and playing games when suddenly one of the boys' father came to pick them up in his car. As I stood in the yard and watched the three of them drive away without me, a sinking feeling hit me in the pit of my stomach. I clearly

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remember thinking, *I have no one*. In that moment, I had the feeling of utter, devastating loneliness. I felt rejected, as if there was no one in the world I could count on as a friend.

Have you ever felt this way—as if you were alone in the world with no one to help you? As if you would always be alone? As if you had absolutely no one? It's a horrible thing to face. Maybe, like me, you felt isolated as a young child. Or perhaps your feelings of alienation came later in life. You may even be struggling right now with how to find friends and develop meaningful, supportive relationships.

Loneliness is a very painful emotion that all of us experience at one point or another. However, if we don't deal with our feelings of alienation, the wounds of rejection will deepen, and more destructive attitudes will eventually develop.

In fact, because such isolation is so devastating, the enemy will do all he can to intensify it—even using shame and fear to drive you deeper into hiding. Therefore, if you struggle with loneliness and rejection, you may face an overwhelming temptation to camouflage your sadness and disconnectedness from others and distance yourself from them further. Don't do it. No Christian has ever been called to “go it alone” in his or her walk of faith. The

Father created you for relationship and calls you to live in meaningful fellowship with other believers (Heb. 10:24–25). Therefore, acknowledge your loneliness to God and trust Him to help you overcome it.

5. A Preoccupation with Image and Counterfeit Measures of Worth

A final indication that a person is struggling with feeling unworthy is an excessive emphasis on outward factors that will gain him approval or attention. How does this manifest itself in his life?

First, a person may be overly concerned about his appearance. Perhaps he believes that if he dresses better—with more expensive or stylish clothes—he will receive the attention of others and win their admiration and respect. If he can just give the impression of importance and worth outwardly, then perhaps others will believe he is truly significant and worthwhile.

This does not mean that it is wrong for a person to dress well, exercise, eat right, and feel good about his appearance. In fact, I often say, “Look your best, do your best, and be your best, because that is life at its best.” Rather, the problem is when appearance becomes an all-consuming preoccupation. We often see the outliers of this in the media with people who become addicted to plastic surgery, advocate extreme diets, or who pursue unnatural standards of fitness. But a fixation on one’s looks and dress can be evident in subtle ways, too, and it can become a terrible trap.

For example, I recall one morning after a church service I saw a friend, smiled, and said, "You look fantastic today!"

Rather than say, "Thank you," the person responded, "Today? Didn't you like how I looked last Sunday? What? Is this the first time you've ever seen me appearing presentable?" The reaction shocked me. But I came away from that encounter recognizing that preoccupation with image can place a person in bondage. At all times the person's antennae are up, waiting for any sign that his or her self-criticism is warranted.

Second, a person may try to prove her superiority through possessions and achievements. A person in bondage to rejection may believe that if she has a fine car, an expensive house, all the latest gadgets, or a prominent job, people will think she is someone of importance in this world. So she masks how badly she struggles with inferiority by focusing on the surface issues of wealth and social standing.

Sadly, this never works to build a person's sense of worth.

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Earthly goods and power can never fill one's emptiness, give self-esteem, or restore dignity. And the more a person flaunts her belongings and accomplishments to prove she is worthy of being loved, the more she will be perceived by others as superficial and arrogant. Furthermore, such a lifestyle requires a tremendous outflow of money to maintain—sometimes far beyond the person's ability to earn it.

This, of course, exacerbates her feelings of being out of control and living a lie.

Third, a person may become prone to perfectionism—believing he must appear absolutely faultless in order to be accepted. This is a form of enslavement that comes from a person finding his value in his ability to perform. A perfectionist tends to be afraid of admitting any faults—because doing so would devalue him. So he strives to master and control every aspect of his life. Often, this means setting unreasonable standards that are impossible to reach or maintain. To avoid failure, he may refuse to attempt any task he cannot accomplish perfectly. He may also procrastinate in carrying out important assignments if he is fearful that he cannot do them well enough.

Again, if you see any evidence of these factors in your life, it is likely you have deeply ingrained rejection. Friend, you do not have to look a certain way, have a lot of money or success, or be perfect in your performance in order to be loved. In fact, your attempts to prove your worth may actually be turning people away.

ROOTING OUT REJECTION

When we experience rejection, we may do all sorts of things to feel better about ourselves, soothe our pain, or try to prove our worth. But as you can see, our ways don't always bring us the results we hope for. In fact, our strategies for dealing with

our feelings of rejection may be downright destructive and cause us to miss God's best for our lives. What, then, can we do to overcome this terribly painful emotion?

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Friend, there is only one Person who knows your true significance and potential—and that is the One who knit you together in your mother's womb (Ps. 139:13–16). Only He understands what is in your heart and what is possible for your future (1 Sam. 16:7; Jer. 29:11). Only He is worthy of judging your value and can set you free from the false messages that keep you in bondage (Heb. 4:12–13). That one is the triune God, who loves you without measure—the Father who created you, the Lord Jesus who saves you, and the Holy Spirit who indwells you (1 Pet. 1:1–2).

There is no need to go through life handicapped by past experiences. What others say about you doesn't matter. How they treated you is inconsequential. The only accurate, eternal, unassailable measure of your worth comes from almighty God, who will one day judge the living and the dead without exception (1 Pet. 4:4–5). And through Scripture He reveals the three indispensable aspects of your personhood you need in order to escape the bondage of rejection. They are:

- A sense of belonging—of being part of something important.
- A feeling of worthiness—of being valuable.
- A recognition of competence—of being capable.

Thankfully, not only does the Father tell us what we need, He also fulfills all the requirements so that we may feel fully accepted, worthy, and competent. So as you read, embrace the truth of who you really are because of His great provision.

1. Belonging Through God's Adoption

Whenever you are burdened with feelings of rejection, one of the first things you must do is remember your adoption as a child of God (Gal. 4:4–7). As a believer in Jesus Christ, you can be absolutely certain that your loving heavenly Father has chosen you, accepts you as His child, and wants to be part of your life. The apostle Paul testifies, “You have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’ The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ” (Rom.

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8:15–17). You must embrace this as a fact: *The Father loves you and rejoices in calling you His own.*

Does He agree with everything you do? Not necessarily. Is He

disappointed when you sin? Yes. But is there anything in this world that you can do to make Him care for you any less? Absolutely not. The Lord loves you fully, unconditionally, and sacrificially—more than you can possibly imagine. He knows every unfitting thought in your mind and every unpleasant meditation of your heart. He realizes your faults, shortcomings, limitations, physical imperfections, relational weaknesses, and emotional deficiencies. He sees all of it more deeply than anyone else ever could. And He still sacrificed everything so you could spend eternity with Him because He could not bear to be parted from you (Rom. 5:8). Absolutely nothing can separate you from His love (Rom. 8:38–39) or remove you from His sovereign hand (John 10:27–29).

Now, why is it important to understand this first? Because, as we've discussed, at times it is very difficult to pinpoint the source of our emotions of rejection. Sometimes we know exactly what caused our feelings of pain—such as divorce, betrayal, dismissal from a job, failed promotions, broken relationships, or some other easily identifiable incident or group of events. But more often than not, we may have experienced abandonment or losses as children that we do not remember. Likewise, we may not realize that certain events in our lives have affected us in such a devastating manner.

As I said in Chapter 4, I lost my own father at nine months of age, and it had an incredible impact on me. Throughout my life it was very difficult to define why I experienced such profound emptiness and uncertainty. My father had not deserted or rejected me in the literal sense, but his absence through death had the same impact on my young heart as outright rejection would—creating

feelings of being unloved and insecure. Similarly, you do not need to hear negative words to feel unwanted or unloved. You could have developed those feelings by a parent's absence or emotional distance.

Most parents have no idea how easy it is to set their child in the wrong direction very early in life. Any time a caregiver says by their words or actions, "I don't have time for you," the person hearing that message may interpret it, in part, as, "You are not worthy of my time or my love." And it takes only one devastating statement or one terrible event to wound our hearts for life. This acute vulnerability is simply who we are as fallen humanity.

This is why it is so important to embrace how God sees us. We must start building our identities anew from the understanding that *He wants us* and invites us to *belong to His family*. Understanding that He desires a relationship with us and always accepts us is the balm that can heal our wounds no matter where they originate.

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This is why the concept of adoption should be so meaningful to us as believers. Ephesians 1:4–6 tells us, "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved."

It is God's will that our bond to Him be the strongest it can be,

so He bestows on us the most precious relationship possible—He accepts us as His children. He intentionally draws us to Himself—choosing us to know Him, experience His salvation, and spend eternity with Him. He does not save us because He *has* to; He redeems us because He *desires* to have a deep, meaningful relationship with us.

Additionally we should note that adoption was a very serious matter in the Roman Empire. A parent might be able to disown a natural child, but not one he had legally chosen through adoption to bear the full rights of a member of the family. In other words, we will never be abandoned or ignored by our heavenly Father—His commitment to us is authentic and eternally binding (Eph. 1:13–14). In fact, He seals us with His Holy Spirit as a constant reminder that He will make good on His promises to us (2 Cor. 1:21–22). Knowing this and confident that understanding this truth can help free you from the bondage to rejection, I echo the apostle Paul's prayer for you and all believers:

I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:14–19)