

I also pray that when you have feelings of rejection, you will remind yourself of the reality of who you are. You are the chosen child of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. You are not an outcast or misfit. You are not unlovable or defective. You are not alone in this world. You are known completely and loved unconditionally. You belong to God's family permanently and, as such, are an important part of His holy and wonderful presence in the world.

2. Worth Through a Relationship with Christ

A second place where we suffer from the wounds of rejection is in our sense of value—we struggle with feeling worthy of love and respect. We look at our faults, imperfections, and failures and wonder how others could possibly care about us. The Lord answers this need by pointing to the most significant and costly sacrifice made for anyone throughout history: Christ's death on the cross.

In Romans 8:31–34 the apostle Paul testifies,

If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

In other words, the one Person with the authority to judge your value—who owns and rules everything in all Creation—made this

eternal assessment: *You are worth dying for.* You are worth purchasing with His own blood. Therefore, no one else has any right to condemn you or to question your significance. Not even you.

The one Person with the authority to judge your value—who owns and rules everything in all Creation—made this eternal assessment: You are worth dying for.

Of course, that wasn't all the Lord gave you through salvation. As a member of God's family, you are a coheir with Jesus, which means He has given you many wonderful gifts and privileges. In fact, Ephesians 1:3 tells us, "Blessed be the God and Father of

our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with *every spiritual blessing* in the heavenly places *in Christ*" (emphasis added). Not only are you worthy because He died for you, you are also of immeasurable value because you have been placed "in Christ" and everything that is His has been conferred to you (Eph. 1:18–23).

What have you received? What does Scripture say is true about you when you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior? There are more, of course, but here are fifty facts about you that represent how the Father sees you:

1. You are a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17).
2. You are a child of the almighty, sovereign God (Rom. 8:16).
3. You are born again to a living hope (1 Pet. 1:23).
4. You are alive with Christ (Eph. 2:5).

5. You are the Lord's heir and a co-heir with Christ of His great kingdom (Rom. 8:17).
6. You are the righteousness of God in Christ (2 Cor. 5:21).
7. You are indwelt by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16).
8. You are a temple of the living God (2 Cor. 6:16).
9. You are conformed to Christ's matchless likeness (Rom. 8:29).
10. You are unconditionally loved (1 John 3:1).
11. You are permanently forgiven (Eph. 1:7).
12. You are eternally redeemed (Gal. 3:13).
13. You are liberated from all condemnation (Rom. 8:1).
14. You are holy and blameless (Col. 1:22).
15. You are free (Gal. 5:1).
16. You are safe (John 10:28-29).
17. You are comforted (2 Cor. 1:3-4).
18. You are blessed with every spiritual blessing, which no one can earn on his own (Eph. 1:3).
19. You are a saint (1 Cor. 1:2).
20. You are called, justified, and glorified (Rom. 8:30).
21. You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and God's own possession (1 Pet. 2:9).
22. You are a minister of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:19).
23. You are an ambassador for Christ (2 Cor. 5:20).
24. You are the salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13).
25. You are the light of the world (Matt. 5:14).
26. You are a fisher of men (Matt. 4:19).
27. You are the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27).

28. You are God's handiwork created for good works (Eph. 2:10).
29. You are equipped and instructed (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
30. You are empowered (Phil. 4:13).
31. You are perfected, confirmed, strengthened, and established (1 Pet. 5:10).
32. You are a partaker of His divine nature (2 Peter 1:4).
33. You have peace with God (Rom. 5:1).
34. You have eternal life (John 3:16).
35. You have access to the throne of grace (Heb. 4:16).
36. You have an attentive and loving Father (Matt. 7:11).
37. You have a firm foundation (Luke 6:47-48).
38. You have provision for all your needs (Phil. 4:19).
39. You have purpose (Matt. 5:16).
40. You have a mission (Matt. 28:19-20).
41. You have a support system (Heb. 10:24-25).
42. You have the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16).
43. You have the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22-23).
44. You have spiritual gifts (1 Tim. 4:14).
45. You have a hope that does not disappoint (Rom. 5:5).
46. You have victory (1 Cor. 15:57).
47. You have a home in heaven (John 14:2).
48. You have an imperishable promise (1 Cor. 15:50-54).
49. You have an unshakable kingdom (Heb. 12:8).
50. You have a secure future—your name written permanently in His book of life (Rev. 3:5).

Of course, there is a great deal more you can learn about your identity as a believer in Scripture. But the point is, you have immeasurable worth through your relationship with Christ. This is a fact.

Now, I realize that such information may be difficult for you to receive because of the wounds in your heart. If you have never known the unconditional love of a godly father or have always been forced to defend yourself and find your own way, it may be especially difficult. But like the gift of salvation, you must accept all of this truth by faith—with “the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1). You must choose to believe these facts about your personhood.

I say this to you because I have been where you are right now. Again, as I said in Chapter 4, for years I struggled to embrace the reality that God really cared about me because I simply could not feel His love. Intellectually I knew He loved me, but emotionally He felt distant and detached. I wanted to experience His caring presence, but the more I tried to sense it, the more separated from Him I felt.

During those days when my four friends helped me discover the source of my disconnection from God, one of the men counseled me in a way that changed my life. He encouraged me to say aloud every night, “Thank You, heavenly Father, for loving me.”

At first, I felt like doing so was a little disingenuous. I asked, “Am I lying when I say that? God knows I struggle with feeling His love.”

He replied, “No, you are simply stating what is true. God does

Speak truth into your heart in order to help your soul receive what the Father has for you.

love you. You are merely speaking truth to your own heart and mind and developing a way for your soul to receive what the Father has for you.”

It took about six months of saying, “Thank You, heavenly Father, for loving me,” before I could feel His love really take root in the core of my being. But when it did, what a glorious freedom I felt. What I had been saying became reality in my emotions, and I had a new sense of confidence and self-worth.

Of course, you may be thinking, *Well, I’ve tried repeating the truth to myself. It does not work.* Yes it does—I have seen the effectiveness of it myself. But here is the problem: The rejection you’ve experienced is entrenched deep within you with untold tentacles of woundedness and strongholds of defense surrounding it. These forces do not let go easily. In fact, it may even be quite painful for you as those destructive messages are dislodged from your heart because of how deeply intertwined they have become with your identity. There is no quick fix. It takes time and the Spirit of God working in you to heal the wounds you bear. You must give yourself a chance to form a new pattern of thinking—and that will require that you exhibit endurance, discipline, and determination as the Father teaches you how to be freed from your bondage.

So as you read God’s Word, make note of what you have been given “in Christ” (2 Cor. 1:20, NLT) and accept all the Father has created you to be and enjoy. You do not have to prove your worth and you certainly do not have to accept others’ assessments of your value. You are a coheir with Christ, and your inheritance

is the kingdom of the living God. Be patient with yourself. Forgive your failures as He does. And continue embracing His unassailable truth that you are worthy and have great value.

3. *Competence Through the Holy Spirit*

So far, we have addressed two of the core questions of rejection. The first is, *Who has a right to reject us?* The answer, of course, is that no one does because God—the only One with the authority to judge us—has accepted us for all of eternity. We *belong* to the Father. He has adopted us as His own children and made us a permanent part of His family.

The second question is, *On what basis could another person reject us?* Again, any reason for you to be spurned was destroyed at the cross. Christ Himself has declared you *worthy* and has given you every spiritual blessing.

But there is a third question that is likely to plague us even when the first two are answered, and that is the issue of ability: *What if another rejects me because I am incapable of performing as he or she expects?*

This is often where the enemy attacks us with the greatest ferocity because it is so easy for him to make our trials and burdens appear insurmountable and our abilities seem insignificant. If he can discourage us, he can paralyze us from moving forward. And if he can stop us—reinforcing our feelings of inadequacy and failure—he knows he's defeated us. You know the messages that play in your mind when he attacks:

How am I going to handle such a terribly immense challenge?

There is absolutely no way! I feel so inadequate and inferior. I have nothing. I'm stupid. I'm useless. I'm weak and worthless. No wonder people forget I exist. It should come as no surprise that I have no one I can count on. After all, no one really loves me or possibly ever could.

In fact, most of the time I feel like everyone hates me—even God. No one will help me. I have no one I can trust. No one ever stands up for me. I guess I'm just not strong, smart, or attractive enough for anyone to care about me. Even my parents didn't want me. They made it clear that I was a mistake. Well, I guess I can't really blame anyone for rejecting me—I even despise myself. I'm such a failure. I deserve to be alone.

Does any of that sound familiar? Friend, you must recognize that these destructive messages are from the enemy. They are not true. They are not your reality.

Rather, the truth is that the Lord will enable you to do anything He calls you to do. So whenever the thought *What if I am incapable of performing as so-and-so expects?* crosses your mind, you can say with confidence, “There is only one I really have to please, and that is my heavenly Father.” And like the apostle Paul, you can testify, “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me” (Phil. 4:13). The Lord has promised that He will never let you down and you can count on it—He never will (Josh. 1:9; 21:45).

*The Lord will enable
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Therefore, as a child of the living God who has the Holy Spirit living within you, recognize that you are supremely equipped, empowered, and able to do all He has planned for you. He will be

with you to handle whatever circumstances may come into your life. In fact, the Lord placed you in this specific environment at this unique time in history so you could fulfill a very special role in His unfolding plan for the ages (Acts 17:26–28). He has great things to accomplish through you and has every confidence that you are the right person for the job.

So discover the Father's attitude about you and claim it. Repeat it to yourself. Get it into your heart and mind. Because it is only when you are able to replace the enemy's lie with His truth that you will be able to cast off your bondage to rejection, experience life at its very best, and be His vessel of triumph in the world.

THE ENEMY'S LIE	GOD'S TRUTH— OUR DEFENSE
<i>There is absolutely no way for me to handle such a terribly immense challenge.</i>	I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. —PHILIPPIANS 4:13
<i>I feel so inadequate and inferior.</i>	Our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. —2 CORINTHIANS 3:5–6

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THE ENEMY'S LIE	GOD'S TRUTH— OUR DEFENSE
<i>I have nothing.</i>	My God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. —PHILIPPIANS 4:19
<i>I am so stupid.</i>	Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, for wisdom and power belong to Him. . . . He gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding. It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things. —DANIEL 2:20–22
<i>I am useless.</i>	To each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. —1 CORINTHIANS 12:7

THE ENEMY'S LIE	GOD'S TRUTH— OUR DEFENSE
<p><i>I am weak and worthless.</i></p>	<p>He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficul- ties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong. —2 CORINTHIANS 12:9–10</p>

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THE ENEMY'S LIE	GOD'S TRUTH— OUR DEFENSE
<p><i>No wonder people forget I exist.</i></p>	<p>Can a woman forget her nursing child and have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you. Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands.</p> <p>—ISAIAH 49:15–16</p>
<p><i>I have no one I can count on.</i></p>	<p>I know the LORD is always with me. I will not be shaken, for he is right beside me. No wonder my heart is glad, and I rejoice. My body rests in safety.</p> <p>—PSALM 16:8–9, NLT</p>
<p><i>No one really loves me or possibly ever could.</i></p>	<p>The LORD appeared . . . saying, “I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have drawn you with loving-kindness.”</p> <p>—JEREMIAH 31:3</p>

THE ENEMY'S LIE	GOD'S TRUTH— OUR DEFENSE
<p><i>I feel like everyone hates me— even God.</i></p>	<p>Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other cre- ated thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. —ROMANS 8:38–39</p>
<p><i>No one will help me.</i></p>	<p>God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. So we will not fear. —PSALM 46:1–2, NLT</p>

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THE ENEMY'S LIE	GOD'S TRUTH— OUR DEFENSE
<p><i>I have no one I can trust.</i></p>	<p>The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and I am helped; therefore my heart exults, and with my song I shall thank Him.</p> <p>—PSALM 28:7</p>
<p><i>No one ever stands up for me.</i></p>	<p>If God is for us, who is against us? . . . in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.</p> <p>—ROMANS 8:31, 37</p>
<p><i>I'm just not strong, smart, or attractive enough for anyone to care about me.</i></p>	<p>"Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit," says the LORD of hosts.</p> <p>—ZECHARIAH 4:6</p>

THE ENEMY'S LIE	GOD'S TRUTH— OUR DEFENSE
<p><i>Even my parents didn't want me.</i></p>	<p>You have always been my helper . . . O God of my salvation! Even if my father and mother abandon me, the LORD will hold me close.</p> <p>—PSALM 27: 9–10, NLT</p>
<p><i>It is clear that I was a mistake.</i></p>	<p>For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb. . . . Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Your book were all written the days that were ordained <i>for me</i>, when as yet there was not one of them.</p> <p>—PSALM 139:13, 16</p>

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THE ENEMY'S LIE	GOD'S TRUTH— OUR DEFENSE
<p><i>I can't really blame anyone for rejecting me—I even despise myself.</i></p>	<p>I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well. —PSALM 139:14</p>
<p><i>I'm such a failure.</i></p>	<p>Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. —1 CORINTHIANS 15:57</p>
<p><i>I deserve to be alone.</i></p>	<p>The LORD is the one who goes ahead of you; He will be with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed. —DEUTERONOMY 31:8</p>

TURNING REJECTION AROUND: THE HEALING POWER OF LOVE

Just one more thing needs to be said as we conclude this important topic. Rejection is a difficult wound to heal, to be sure, but it is often made much worse if you insist on winning the approval of the people who don't care about you. First, this is because the people who've made you feel unwanted might not know how to express the acceptance you desire. Often people wound us out of their own feelings of unworthiness and alienation and do not recognize how to respond to us in a way that would build us up.

But the second reason you should beware of seeking their love is this: you are looking in the wrong direction. As long as you continue to focus on those who have rejected you to fill your needs, you will be intensely conscious of your own lack of love and the pain it causes. The Bible, however, teaches you to fix your attention in a different direction. In Luke 6:35–38, Jesus instructs,

“Love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned. Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.”

*Love those whom God
gives you to care for—
whether they return
your affection or not.*

In other words, not only is it important that you focus on God, who accepts you freely, but it is also crucial to turn your attention outward from *your* desires to the needs of *others*. You are to love those whom God gives you to care for—whether they return your affection or not.

The words “I love you” are powerful—both for those who hear them and for those who express them. I have seen God work through them in a powerful way to change people’s lives. They certainly did for my favorite uncle, Jack.

Jack was a wonderful man. When my mother, Rebecca, got older and needed assistance, he moved to Atlanta and took care of her. I was very grateful for him and always told him so. Unfortunately, he didn’t think much of himself growing up and had a difficult time accepting that people truly appreciated and respected him. He always kept his distance. When his wife died, he retreated further, feeling as if even God were rejecting him.

I would often say, “Jack, I just love you.”

But he would always respond, “Now Charles, no you don’t. You don’t really love me.”

I’d counter, “Oh, yes, I really do love you, Uncle Jack. And I’m thankful for the many ways you take such good care of Mother.”

He’d just walk away, shaking his head. No matter what I said, he could not believe I genuinely cared for him. It was as if he thought, *Why would you love me? What about me could be worth*

loving? I'm a nobody. I don't have anything. I don't deserve for anyone to care about me.

But I wasn't going to give up. I just kept thinking, *I'm going to keep praying, and one of these days I'm going to get through to him.*

I can still recall exactly where I was standing when it finally happened. It was about three years after Uncle Jack came to Atlanta, and as always, I said, "Jack, I just love you."

And he replied, "Charles, I love you, too."

To this day it brings tears to my eyes to remember it, because once he was able to overcome his feelings of rejection, everything about him changed. He even started hugging me! As soon as he stopped depriving himself of the love, admiration, and respect people wanted to show him, he became a totally different person—one who experienced true acceptance and joy.

God worked through the love I expressed to my uncle to heal his woundedness. But the Lord also blessed me immeasurably in the process. He grew my affection for Jack in amazing ways and taught me a great deal about the awesome power of His divine, sacrificial love. Specifically, He showed me that the more lavishly we care for others without expecting anything from them in return, the more the Father pours His own love into our hearts. Truly, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

The Lord will teach you this awesome principle, too. So stop analyzing whether or not people are rejecting you, and make it your goal to show the love of God to whosoever you meet. Not only will this help you heal from your bondage to rejection, but the Father will work through you to bring freedom to others as

well. Go to Him in prayer, thanking Him for the work He is doing in you and asking Him to use you in the lives of others.

Father, how grateful I am for Your Holy Spirit and precious Word, which You use to set me free from my pain and suffering. Thank You for always loving me and never giving up on me. It is a great comfort to know You will never leave or forsake me.

Lord, You know the wounds of rejection that have marred my heart. You know how useless, helpless, and worthless I feel when yet another person casts me away. Many of these feelings originated long ago and have deep roots. But I am so grateful for how You set me free from these feelings. Thank You for giving me a sense of belonging in Your eternal, heavenly family as Your own beloved child. Thank You for blessing me with a sense of worthiness through Your death on the cross and resurrection. And thank You for filling me with the sense of competence and adequacy—empowering me to accomplish all You call me to through Your indwelling Holy Spirit.

Father, I must make a decision: Either I will believe what others have spoken about me or I will trust what You say about my character and future. I know You are real and that what You say counts in eternity, Lord—so I will choose to listen to You. Thank You for Your unfailing love and for creating me as You chose to—with a good plan and purpose.

Help me to keep my eyes on You and to love whosoever You send to me to care for. May everyone I come in contact with feel Your love and praise Your holy name.

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION AND GROUP STUDY

1. How have memories of condemnation and criticism from your childhood continued to affect your relationships now as an adult?
2. Do you recognize any of the symptoms of rejection in your life? How have they manifested themselves in your relationships and daily interactions with others?
3. In what ways have you tried to release damaging ideas about yourself in order to escape the bondage of rejection? Has it worked? Why or why not?
4. Have you recognized God's desire to know you as His adopted child? What does it mean to you to be chosen by Him? Does it help you feel accepted? Why or why not?
5. Besides giving you the gift of salvation, how else does your heavenly Father let you know you are highly valued by Him?
6. What statements of truth and verses of Scripture do

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you need to repeat to your heart in order to be more open to receiving God's blessings? How can you make them a permanent part of your life?

7. Are there additional Bible verses you can claim in order to triumph over the enemy's lies and destructive thought patterns? What are they? Are you willing to share them with others?