

# Overcoming Rejection

Why this booklet?

I see the reservation in God's people.

We are people who have been blessed with every spiritual blessing, have the same power that raised Jesus from the dead, are the focus of the Father's affection, and are seated with Christ in Heavenly places. Yet, we don't walk in the assurance, peace and authority that are ours in Christ.

Instead, we live in constant doubt of our ability and usefulness in God's kingdom. We say things like, "I don't have anything to offer... I'm so full of sin... God wouldn't use me."

The effects of rejection are many. We live far below God's desires for our lives because we're unsure. We don't enter fully into relationship with other believers for fear of hurt. We have anger that we don't where it came from or what to do with it. Unforgiveness or bitterness have ravaged our lives because of rejection.

I see God's people as an army whose swords and bows lay scattered about the field of war...whose countenance is

downcast...who, like the mighty elephant, are constrained by a small chain.

I'm addressing this because I believe that God is releasing a breakthrough over rejection in your life. The words contained herein aren't just information, but they are impartation of life, truth and liberty. This is a "now" time. God wants to release you from rejection today.

# Chapter 1 - Understanding Rejection

## THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS SUBJECT

- Your character is forged by hardships. This is especially true as it pertains to relational difficulties. If through the pain of those experiences you can see how God is using rejection to make you more like Jesus then you will produce much fruit.
- If you deal with rejection properly, you will learn that your identity and strength lies in Christ not in others. The acceptance of others is important, but it is secondary. The foundational revelation a person must receive is the unconditional love of God.
- By properly handling rejection, you will more likely live out your destiny. It is impossible to fully enter into the “good works, which God prepared in advance for [you] to do” (Eph.2:10) when you are living in rejection.
- Do you wonder why you will not let others get close to you? Do you own another person’s response? Rejection is often the culprit behind these destructive behaviors.
- The Bible says the “Fear of man is a deadly trap” (Prov.29:25). Your view of how you are perceived and received can prove to be a major hurdle in your spiritual maturity.

## REJECTION IS COMMON TO US ALL

As we begin this journey, we need to see that rejection was common to most of the Bible's most famous figures.

Noah was rejected by his society. Joseph was rejected by his brothers. Moses was rejected by his followers. David was rejected by both his brothers and King Saul. Elijah, Elisha, and Jeremiah were rejected by the kings and leaders of their day. The disciples were rejected by the religious establishment. Jesus was rejected by his family, his home town, religious leaders, political leaders, and he is still rejected today.

Personally: For some of you, your parents greatly discouraged you or were extremely critical. You might have been fired, demoted or reassigned. Or, maybe the rejection came from – teachers, coaches, marital partner, employers, someone in authority, friends, and spiritual leaders.

**Bottom line:** You can't keep from being rejected, but you can keep from living in rejection.

### REJECTION CHECKLIST:

1. Do you anticipate or elicit a negative response from

others? A remark, even one that's harmless or intended to help, is received as negative criticism. We may even perceive others as always trying to hurt us.

2. When questioned, do you become agitated or angry? Do you grow very defensive or aggressive when others bring a corrective word. Through the eyes of rejection, a normal give-and-take interaction will easily become interpreted as a personal attack. The other person may be trying to understand us, but our emotions cloud our perceptions and escalate to destroy relationships.

3. Do you need to be considered an expert on almost everything? No one sees the whole picture, yet those of us who have experienced rejection often express a prideful and opinionated view, speaking as though we know it all.

4. Are you known for being argumentative? We believe that we must always be right, because if we allow others to be right, then we would feel invalidated. Therefore, to stave off the feelings of rejection, we fight to be right.

5. Do you believe that you are on a higher spiritual plane and that your opinions should be favored above others' opinions? For many of us, there is a tendency to consider, almost exclusively, our own portion of "the truth."

6. Do you experience marked mood swings? In the course of just a few hours, we can move from anger to giddy bouts of laughter; from quietness and aloofness to periods of being very vocal and "the life of the party."

7. Do you do things to merely gain acceptance and/or attention? Colored by the experience of rejection, we may express ourselves with volatility and aggression just to elicit agreement—or a response—from a spouse or co-worker.

8. Do people often tell you that you are oversensitive? Already wounded, we are easily hurt and protective, so we tend to withdraw and isolate ourselves quickly.

9. Is your mood usually dictated by the moods of those around you? Instead of finding an anchor in God's love, the wounded person often flows with the emotional tenor of others.

10. Do you over-value others' positive evaluation? It is not unusual for a person dealing with rejection to over-value praise. You need the approval of others to feel good about yourself. At the same time, simple criticism can become emotionally withering to you.

11. Do you expect to be overlooked, and do you require

special encouragement to participate in anything? Those of us with revelatory gifts may feel overlooked in our local church and unsure how to exercise our God-given gifts. So, we may require an unusual amount of encouragement. When we carry the baggage of rejection with us, we expect to be rejected.

12. Do leaders consider you inconsistent or unreliable? It's harder to provide a strong, consistent ministry while in "survival" mode rather than "conquering" mode. Leadership requires the ability to accept criticism with an objective viewpoint, as well as taking responsibility when things go wrong.

13. Do you seldom attend a Bible study, social event, party, or blend in with others, because you see yourself as different? When dealing with rejection, we can become self-absorbed and inwardly directed. If we lack people skills, we may find it extremely difficult to reach beyond ourselves to minister to, or even be with others.

14. Do you automatically assume someone is angry or upset at you if they don't talk with you or acknowledge you?

15. Do you get easily offended when someone brings something to your attention?

16. Do you believe you have little to offer to others? You downplay your abilities and contribution because you seriously believe you don't have much to offer.

17. Are you scared to express your opinion or beliefs because someone might not like you? You don't speak up and let others know how you feel.

18. Do you have difficulty being yourself because you fear others might not like you? You're confused about your own identity because you've worn "masks" for so long.

19. Do you not take risks (creatively, relationally, spiritually, financially, educationally, job) for fear of failure? You're concerned about other's perception of you if you fail.

20. Do you have a self-censoring attitude that inhibits creativity & productivity? You spend time second guessing your ideas. You get a great idea and then you pick it a part or believe that it's too great a risk. You're always halting.

21. Do you mimic the ways of others – actions, dress, talk, values, opinion – because you want to be accepted by that person/group? You succumb to peer pressure. In fact, you find yourself in situations that you don't like, but because

you fear expressing your viewpoint you follow the person/group.

22. Do you have a hard time getting close to anyone? You're fearful they might reject you, so you exclude yourself and don't enter into relationship with others.

23. Do you try to gain sympathy from others by focusing on the negative experiences of your life? You know most people will accept you if you tell them how hurt you are or bad your life is so you concentrate your attention in those places.

24. Do you feel robbed of energy, focus and creativity because of rejection?

25. Do you participate in self-destructive behavior? In order to cover the pain of the rejection, you get involved in sinful behavior to cover the pain.

26. Are some of your decisions and responses based upon irrational fears? You're scared of what a person might do so you make irrational decisions which result in further isolation and depression.

(Most of these were from Streams Ministries)

## THE EFFECTS OF REJECTION

### *Intellectually*

Rejection can dramatically reduce a person's IQ and their ability to reason analytically, while increasing their aggression, according to new research.

"It's been known for a long time that rejected kids tend to be more violent and aggressive," says Roy Baumeister of the Case Western Reserve University in Ohio, who led the work. "But we've found that randomly assigning students to rejection experiences can lower their IQ scores and make them aggressive."

Baumeister's team used two separate procedures to investigate the effects of rejection. In the first, a group of strangers met, got to know each other, and then separated. Each individual was asked to list which two other people they would like to work with on a task. They were then told they had been chosen by none or all of the others.

In the second, people taking a personality test were given false feedback, telling them they would end up alone in life or surrounded by friends and family.

Aggression scores increased in the rejected groups. But the IQ scores also immediately dropped by about 25 per cent,

and their analytical reasoning scores dropped by 30 per cent.

"These are very big effects – the biggest I've got in 25 years of research," says Baumeister. "This tells us a lot about human nature. People really seem designed to get along with others, and when you're excluded, this has significant effects."

Baumeister thinks rejection interferes with a person's self-control. "To live in society, people have to have an inner mechanism that regulates their behaviour. Rejection defeats the purpose of this, and people become impulsive and self-destructive. You have to use self-control to analyse a problem in an IQ test, for example – and instead, you behave impulsively."

Baumeister presented his results at the annual conference of the British Psychological Society in Blackpool, Lancashire, UK. (New Scientist, March 2002)

### *Physically*

Rejection hurts. According to a Reuters article, that "kicked-in-the-gut" feeling that you get when you're ignored at a party or not chosen for a team generates physical symptoms. According to the article, "Brain-imaging

studies show that a social snub affects the brain precisely the way visceral pain does."

"When someone hurts your feelings, it really hurts you," states Matt Lieberman, a social psychologist at the University of California, Los Angeles, who worked on the study.

In the study, 13 "volunteers were given a task they did not know related to an experiment in social snubbing. Writing in the journal *Science*, Lieberman and Naomi Eisenberger said the brains of the volunteers lit up when they were rejected in virtually the same way as a person experiencing physical pain.

"In the English language we use physical metaphors to describe social pain like 'broken heart' and 'hurt feelings,'" said Eisenberger. "Now we see that there is good reason for this."

"Study Finds Rejection Is Literally a Huge Pain," Chicago Tribune (10-10-03)

Inflammatory Response to Rejection May Damage Health

By Bill Hendrick

WebMD Health News

Aug. 2, 2010 -- Rejection triggers responses in the body that can increase a person's risk for maladies such as

asthma, arthritis, cardiovascular disease, and depression, a new study says.

Scientists at UCLA recruited 124 healthy young adults to participate in a lab-based test aimed at determining whether social stress such as rejection causes inflammation, which can have detrimental effects on mental and physical health.

Participants were put through stressful tests that were designed to make them feel rejected. Measurements of inflammatory markers were performed on samples of oral fluids taken before and after the tests.

First, the young people were told to enter a room, where they faced people wearing white coats to make them look smart and official, researcher George M. Slavich, PhD, a UCLA clinical psychologist, tells WebMD.

Then they were told to prepare and make a 5-minute speech on why they'd make a good administrative assistant, while standing in front of the "raters," who were holding clipboards to look even more official and intimidating.

Then the participants were told to count backward by sevens from 2,935, and that if they goofed, they'd have to start over, counting backward by 13, "while those watching

acted as if they were exasperated, asking them to go more quickly,” Slavich tells WebMD.

Not surprisingly, the inflammatory biological markers in oral fluids increased dramatically after the stressful tests.

Later, 31 of the same participants took part in a computerized ball-tossing game while lying in a functional magnetic resonance imaging machine, programmed to light up brain regions that showed stress.

The volunteers were made to feel as if they were goofing up and that imaginary people they thought were playing with them suddenly stopped without reason.

Brain regions associated with fear, stress, and rejection lit up.

“People who showed the greatest neural responses to being excluded during [the game] also had shown the greatest increase in inflammatory activity during the earlier public speaking task,” he says. “So those individuals who were most sensitive to social rejection, at least neurally speaking, showed the greatest biological responses to that acute stressor of public speaking,” Slavich tells WebMD.

The experiments were meant to help scientists work with people who feel rejected and teach them to respond appropriately, Slavich says.

Not thinking the worst, he suggests, may be best for your health.

### *Emotionally*

People who don't properly respond to rejection have the tendency to be disconnected from others. They will not let people get too close to them. They have insecurities that may manifest in braggadocios or aggressive behavior. These act as a screen.

Some are very defensive when questioned and they eye people suspiciously. They may shut people down when things become too personal. They won't open up or are very guarded. As much as they may want to say something, they can't because they fear rejection.

### *Spiritually*

You do not live in the full kingdom reality of who you are in Christ. You live like a turkey when you were meant to be an eagle.

While working on this topic, I had a mental picture of Christians being like huge warriors living in thatch huts. Their armament was scattered about, and they were feeding

chickens. They had the look of despair and the smell of poverty on them. They were meant to conquer and live in victory. The land was theirs but they wouldn't take it. I believe this is how rejection can cripple us.

## THE ENEMY'S PLAN

Jesus wants you to walk in the reality of who you are in Him. He wants you to know the full expression of the Father's heart for you.

God completely rejected Satan and has nothing but fury and wrath towards him. Satan wants you to experience what his life is like and he doesn't want you to know the full expression of the Father's heart for you.

Satan wants you to know the full expression of the Father's heart for him and he wants you to think God feels the same towards you. Just as Jesus gives us His character through the Holy Spirit, Satan tries to impart his character through evil spirits.

Consider this passage from Ezekial 28 to get a sense of Satan's rejection. Though this is about the King of Tyre most scholars believe it has a double meaning and is referring to Satan too.

<sup>12</sup> “Son of man, sing this funeral song for the king of Tyre.  
Give him this message from the Sovereign LORD:

“You were the model of perfection,  
full of wisdom and exquisite in beauty.

<sup>13</sup> You were in Eden,  
the garden of God.

Your clothing was adorned with every precious stone<sup>[a]</sup>—  
red carnelian, pale-green peridot, white moonstone,  
blue-green beryl, onyx, green jasper,  
blue lapis lazuli, turquoise, and emerald—  
all beautifully crafted for you  
and set in the finest gold.

They were given to you  
on the day you were created.

<sup>14</sup> I ordained and anointed you  
as the mighty angelic guardian.<sup>[b]</sup>

You had access to the holy mountain of God  
and walked among the stones of fire.

<sup>15</sup> “You were blameless in all you did  
from the day you were created  
until the day evil was found in you.

<sup>16</sup> Your rich commerce led you to violence,  
and you sinned.

So I banished you in disgrace  
from the mountain of God.

I expelled you, O mighty guardian,

from your place among the stones of fire.  
17 Your heart was filled with pride  
because of all your beauty.  
Your wisdom was corrupted  
by your love of splendor.  
So I threw you to the ground  
and exposed you to the curious gaze of kings.  
18 You defiled your sanctuaries  
with your many sins and your dishonest trade.  
So I brought fire out from within you,  
and it consumed you.  
I reduced you to ashes on the ground  
in the sight of all who were watching.  
19 All who knew you are appalled at your fate.  
You have come to a terrible end,  
and you will exist no more.”

For a created being he had one of the highest places in heaven and he was cast from it...rejected by His creator...He lives in the constant knowledge that God is opposed to him and his judgment is sure. Rejection is his motivator to destroy the people of God.

Satan wants you to experience his pain and hurt just like Jesus wants you to experience His joy and hope.

## Chapter 2 - The Fear of Man

*“Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe.” (Prov. 29:25)*

There is a definite connection between rejection and the fear of man. We don't want to be rejected by others, so we fear or overly concerned about their view of us. We want others to like us, so we do whatever is necessary to keep peace or we live under the constant concern of what others think.

We need to be kind, considerate, gentle and loving towards others, but that doesn't exclude living a life, that due to our allegiance to Jesus, may be offensive to others. Fear of man means that I do or don't do certain things, because I fear the opinion of others.

### **Consequences of fearing others:**

1. The discipline of God – *Then Saul admitted to Samuel, “Yes, I have sinned. I have disobeyed your instructions and the LORD's command, for I was afraid of the people and did what they demanded. (1 Sam.15:24)*

King Saul lost his kingdom because he didn't obey God's word. He thought he could get away with just a little disobedience since the motive seemed right. He

lost his kingdom because he couldn't tell the people "no".

When you knowingly disobey God because you're more fearful of how your parents, spouse, children, boss, friends, co-workers, teachers will respond then you will experience His discipline.

2. You cannot be fully devoted to Jesus – *Obviously, I'm not trying to win the approval of people, but of God. If pleasing people were my goal, I would not be Christ's servant.* (Gal.1:10)

Paul understood that following Jesus meant taking some unpopular stands. Jesus made it extremely clear that following him meant rejection. (John 15:18–21)

As followers of Christ, we must walk with the understanding that we are marked by God and set apart for him. Therefore, our values, beliefs and actions are different than the worlds and we will be the "fragrance of life to some and the fragrance of death" to others (2 Cor. 2:16).

We try to make the smell of death appealing but the message of Jesus offends. We should live lives that are

attractive, but you can't shortcut the call Jesus places on you. It's not appealing to the world.

3. Not living in the full bounty of God's blessings – *Many people did believe in him, however, including some of the Jewish leaders. But they wouldn't admit it for fear that the Pharisees would expel them from the synagogue. <sup>43</sup> For they loved human praise more than the praise of God. (John 12:42–43)*

Will come out or stay behind closed doors? God never intended for you to sit quietly behind closed doors. You may want God to use you in a great way, but you say, "That will hurt my relationships...people will back away from me...I'll have to give up some things I like".

Have you ever made a decision, and then changed your mind and later found out that your first decision was the best? Remember your decision to make Jesus first in everything? Don't back off. It's still the best decision.

4. It reduces the size of God and increases the size of man – *"Dear friends, don't be afraid of those who want to kill your body; they cannot do any more to you after that. <sup>5</sup> But I'll tell you whom to fear. Fear God, who has*

*the power to kill you and then throw you into hell.<sup>[a]</sup> Yes, he's the one to fear."* (Luke 12:4–5)

How many of us would honestly say the reason we're not as aggressive in our devotion to Christ is because of one or two people who stand in the way. You may not like the person and they may even be dead, but something they did or said has forever impaled your desire to serve Christ.

Think about that person who causes you to fear.

Who are they to God?

The fear of man leads you to do some stupid things because you want certain people to think highly of you, or you don't want to offend them. For instance, Paul had to dress down Peter, because he acquiesced to so-called Jewish Christians who were demanding everyone return to the Old Testament practices. (Gal.2:11–14)

5. It decreases your ability to hear from God: *The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy. <sup>21</sup> But since they don't have deep roots, they don't last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God's word.* (Matt.13:20–21)

Jesus will not entrust you with true riches if you don't plan to do anything with them. Every time you know what to do, but you don't do it because you're concerned about the response of others you're restricting the flow of God's voice. As Jesus said, "You're ever hearing, but never understanding." You limit how much God can use you.

### **Fear Factors – Things that contribute to the fear of man**

1. Spirit of fear/timidity – *For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline. (2 Tim. 1:7 )*

You may not be timid, or bashful about sharing your opinion, but when it comes to standing for God and doing what's right you hesitate and waver. You look for the approval of others. One common attribute of the Holy Spirit activity in the early believer's lives was boldness (Acts 4:29–31; 9:28; 13:46; 14:3).

If you have the Holy Spirit, there will be boldness. You may not like what you have to do, but there is this overriding conviction that you can't do anything else. I used to walk under the spirit of fear, but God dealt a death blow with it in my life and he can do the same with you.

## 2. Not having my need for acceptance met in my home.

God created us with certain needs that can only be met by others – Gen. 2:18f. One of those needs is acceptance. God is relational (there are Three who are One) and he put us in relationships because that is one way that we reflect the image of God.

Since we have a need for acceptance, God puts us in a family structure where we should experience it. If we don't, we go searching for it through other means (other relationships, competitiveness, extreme behavior). Marriage and the family of God are the next extensions God uses to feel the need of acceptance. If I don't experience there, then I become driven to find it somewhere.

No one wants to be an outcast. God made us so that we must have other human relationships for our lives to be complete. We're like a body and all the body parts are necessary. If a body part is put into a body, but it is rejected then that part dies.

Likewise, if you aren't accepted, you become deeply wounded and either live for the approval of others or

you reject others (meaning you won't get close to others or let others get close to you).

If you live in an environment where you are accepted, it gives you assurance so that when you have to make a decision or express your beliefs that are contrary to others you don't worry about being excluded or separated from them.

3. The climate in which you live – *There was a lot of grumbling about him among the crowds. Some argued, "He's a good man," but others said, "He's nothing but a fraud who deceives the people."* <sup>13</sup> *But no one had the courage to speak favorably about him in public, for they were afraid of getting in trouble with the Jewish leaders.* (John 7:12–13)

You live in an environment that is hostile and you fear the consequences of standing for the truth. "If I take that kind of stand, then I might not ever..." is your concern. "If I don't go along with the crowd, parents, group, etc. then I might be cut off, left out, etc."

Some are in your 30 – 60's still won't disagree with your parents, because they'll cut you off.

Think about the person (s) whose opinion concerns you the most. Are you free to see things differently from them without being ostracized?

#### 4. Personality

You may have a sanguine personality. You enjoy being with people and expressing your thoughts. But, you fear how people perceive you and you work hard at making people like you. You need to feel their approval.

On the other hand, you may be shy. You don't want to draw attention to yourself. You're always pleasant and accommodating because you don't want to be at odds with people.

What is contributing to your fear of others?

## **Chapter 3 - Jesus and Rejection**

Jesus was and is the most rejected person in all human history. Isaiah 53:3 says, "He was despised and rejected by men...Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised and we esteemed him not." More people have

personally rejected Jesus than anyone else who ever walked this earth.

Jesus warned us that if we followed Him we would also be rejected.

*If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first. <sup>19</sup> The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you. <sup>20</sup> Do you remember what I told you? 'A slave is not greater than the master.' Since they persecuted me, naturally they will persecute you. And if they had listened to me, they would listen to you. <sup>21</sup> They will do all this to you because of me, for they have rejected the One who sent me. (John 15: 18–21)*

How did Jesus deal with rejection?

### **Jesus' View of Man**

*"Because of the miraculous signs Jesus did in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration, many began to trust in him. <sup>24</sup> But Jesus didn't trust them, because he knew human nature. <sup>25</sup> No one needed to tell him what mankind is really like."*  
(John 2:23–25)

He didn't put his trust in man's opinions of him because he knew what was inside man. How much of your identity, security, and happiness is wrapped up in what others think of you? How do you feel about yourself when you know that you aren't particularly liked by someone of significance?

As a pastor, I am in the people business. Often church leaders gain their self esteem by how others perceive them. It can be a deadly trap. In order to win the approval of others, you bend to their desires rather than being shaped by the Lord's.

Jesus knew human nature. Deceitfulness, hypocrisy, and lack of commitment are the touchstones of unredeemed humanity. If you're always looking for the approval of others you will be sorely disappointed because they will fail you.

The praise of man is always based upon whether or not the person giving it approves of your activity. What happens when you choose a different road based on preference, or when you do something that God wants you to do and it's not what other's approve?

Jesus understood this (John 6:53 - 66). He knew he would do and say things that would isolate others and cause them to reject him, so he didn't entrust himself to them.

*“Your approval means nothing to me, <sup>42</sup> because I know you don’t have God’s love within you. <sup>43</sup> For I have come to you in my Father’s name, and you have rejected me. Yet if others come in their own name, you gladly welcome them. <sup>44</sup> No wonder you can’t believe! For you gladly honor each other, but you don’t care about the honor that comes from the one who alone is God.” (John 5:41–44)*

Jesus did not accept the praise of others because he knew people’s opinions change and their hearts weren’t pure. We set ourselves up for great disappointment and rejection when we look to others for praise.

Does this mean we shouldn’t praise one another? Absolutely not. We should encourage one another and build each other up – 1 Thes.5:11; Ro.12:10. Life is tough and the Christian walk is hazardous and we need to give and receive encouragement.

How should we give praise? We should thank God for what we see Him doing in another’s life or how God is using them.

How should we accept praise from others? With a recognition that the only good in me is there because of Jesus. When someone praises me for a message I remember

that: I didn't write the Bible, the inspiration I received came from the Holy Spirit, God gave me the ability to speak and teach, He is the one who makes the application to each heart. I'm just a water pitcher and He's the water.

### **Jesus and His Father's Acceptance**

*One day when the crowds were being baptized, Jesus himself was baptized. As he was praying, the heavens opened, <sup>22</sup> and the Holy Spirit, in bodily form, descended on him like a dove. And a voice from heaven said, "You are my dearly loved Son, and you bring me great joy." (Luke 3:21–22)*

Why did the praise and rejection of man have so little affect upon Jesus? How many of us could stand up against the religious and political establishments of our day and not have fear? Be verbally attacked by these establishments and say very little in return? Be accused of being filled with the Devil and not retaliate? Be rejected by towns and not call down some type of judgment? Stand back when you had the power to perform a miracle to prove yourself?

How could He stand amidst such rejection?

He knew He was completely accepted by His Father. Since He was secure in His Father's acceptance, the praise or rejection of others held no grip on him. He knew that

regardless of how people would respond to his teaching or actions it wouldn't hold any pull over him. He didn't have to prove or defend anything.

He lived in perfect love. *“Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love.”* (1 John 4:18) If there is any level of fear in your life, perfect love can cast it out. Perfect love can only come from God. A spouse, parents or child can't provide it that type of love consistently.

Jesus wants us to experience the same type of love he experiences from the Father. *“I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me... I have revealed you to them, and I will continue to do so. Then your love for me will be in them, and I will be in them.”* (John 17:23, 26)

When we come to understand and experience the Father's complete love for us, rejection and fear will have negligible effect upon our lives. Rejection may sting, but it won't wound. Praise may bolster our spirits, but we won't depend on it.

Jesus was secure of His Father's love and He wants you to have that same assurance.

## **Chapter 4 – God's Magnificent Love (Rom. 8:28-39)**

*And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. <sup>29</sup> For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. <sup>30</sup> And having chosen them, he called them to come to him. And having called them, he gave them right standing with himself. And having given them right standing, he gave them his glory.*

*<sup>31</sup> What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us? <sup>32</sup> Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else? <sup>33</sup> Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one—for God himself has given us right standing with himself. <sup>34</sup> Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God's right hand, pleading for us.*

*<sup>35</sup> Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or*

*threatened with death? <sup>36</sup> (As the Scriptures say, “For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.”) <sup>37</sup> No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.*

*<sup>38</sup> And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons—neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love. <sup>39</sup> No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:28–39)*

*“What shall we say about such wonderful things as these?”*

What are these wonderful things?

Consider all that Paul has just said in Romans 6 – 8: we were foreknown, chosen, predestined, justified and glorified; we have been adopted into God’s family; we are co-heirs with Jesus; We are made right with God; we are at peace with God; we are dearly loved by God; we are friends with God; we have the Holy Spirit as a foretaste of our future glory; we are being conformed into the image of Christ by the Holy Spirit; Christ has not only forgiven my sin, but he’s given me victory over sin; Christ has overcome

death and has provided me a path over it; the Holy Spirit teaches me to pray the Father's will; God is working out everything for our good.

Then Paul says, "with all these wonderful realities in mind, we can agree that if God is for us who can be against us."

All of what I'm about to say is conditional upon having faith in Jesus.

### **God is for Me! (Romans 8:31-34)**

Are you in a challenging place (God is for you!); uncertain what to do (God is for you!) need to make a difficult decision (God is for you!).

What about if I have sin in my life? He's not for your sin, but he is for you. When God sees one of his kids headed to a ditch, He sends the Holy Spirit, angels, people, circumstances and even hardship to get that child up on the straight and narrow path. He will not let you plow into the ditch without trying to save you, because God is for you. The same is true about decision making.

He doesn't have an angry and antagonistic attitude like, "Go on, get out of here, I don't like you, I don't care what you do!"

Paul is communicating in the strongest terms: Since God is for me who can be against me!

In verse 32 he says, *“Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won’t he also give us everything else?”*

He’s arguing from the greater to the lesser. Since the Father gave his best, He’ll provide all the rest.

2 Pet.1:3 says He has given us everything we need for life and godliness. He has given you access into his throne room through the blood of His Son and He’s equipped you with the Holy Spirit to live his purposes for your life with power. If you aren’t walking in victory, it isn’t because God has withheld the tools or the empowerment necessary.

Some Christians say, “I’m just not sure God loves me, cares for me, I just don’t feel God’s love.” They question God’s love.

That’s like the only child, grandchild and great grandchild of a very rich family waking up Christmas morning, going through all her 2 dozen gifts and then with her parents, grandparent and great grandparent in the room she exclaims, “Nobody cares for me!”

What would you say to that child?

I want to shake your cage and say, “Wake up...look at the wonderful things God has given you!” Since he gave you His Son, he’s not going to withhold anything good from you! John 3.16 says it all! God is for you!

*God himself has given us right standing with himself. <sup>34</sup> Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God’s right hand, pleading for us. (Rom.8:33–34)*

Who can accuse you? No one. The basis – God chose you, predestined you and justified you. He will not turn around and accuse you. God isn’t Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Satan is the Accuser and the Holy Spirit is the Encourager.

If what you hear in your head is negativity, criticism, nagging and you think God is mad at you, that isn’t the voice of God. It’s the voice of the enemy. You need to rebuke him in Jesus’ name and close the spiritual door that allowed him in.

We open the door through false beliefs and sinful actions. We don’t believe that God is for us and this gives the enemy

a legal right into our lives. We must repent of those beliefs and close the door. God isn't involved in accusation; that is Satan's work.

Who can accuse you? No one. For God has made you right with himself.

Who can condemn you? No one. The basis – Jesus died for you, has given you a new life and now is your advocate before the Father. He is pleading your case to His Father. The Father will not reject His Son and therefore he will not reject you. We are joint heirs with Jesus!.

God may be leading you to some places that you are unfamiliar with, even places you're scared of, but you need not fear, "If God is for you, who can be against you." The Father is for you; the Son is interceding; and the Holy Spirit is directing. They aren't up in the stands cheering you on; they're on the field making the critical blocks so you can run free of the opposition.

### **Nothing can separate me from God's love (Ro. 8:35-36)**

*<sup>35</sup> Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? <sup>36</sup> (As the Scriptures say, "For your*

*sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.”*

It begins with another question, that has a similar response. Nothing.

These were persecuted believers and the heat was about to increase to the boiling point in Rome. Nero would take Christians and burn them on poles to light up the roads at night.

Don't confuse hardship with divine displeasure. Because of sin and Satan, we suffer in this life. Don't equate trouble with God's discipline. Jesus told his disciples there would be hardships; Paul said all that want to live a godly life will be persecuted..

Verse 36 is quoting Ps.44.22, which is about the persecution and hardships Israel endured. Both God's chosen nation and God's chosen people, Christians, endure difficulty. Hardship isn't always a sign of God's anger.

If hardship meant God's displeasure then Paul really made God mad (2 Cor.11). The same would be true of persecuted believers today.

## **I am convinced (Rom. 8:38-39)**

*<sup>38</sup> And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons—neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. <sup>39</sup> No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

“I am convinced” is a settled and unalterable position. It means, “I am absolutely certain of this.”

Angelic and demonic principalities cannot infringe on God's love. Nothing can separate us from God's love. You can't keep God's love from you anymore than you can keep the rain from descending from the sky.

## **More than conquerors (Rom. 8:37)**

*No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.*

“More than conquerors” (NIV) – literally super conquerors. The hardships of life may press down upon, but they will

not conqueror you, because you are more than a conqueror through Jesus Christ.

What is more than a conqueror? It's a boxer winning against a very tough opponent and giving the prize money to his wife. The boxer was the conqueror, but his wife was more than a conqueror. She received the benefits of the victory without having to endure the hardships of the fight.

Sin, Satan and Death got in the ring to give Jesus a pounding. For a time it looked like they had won, but with one fell punch He knocked all three out of the ring when he came out of the grave. He took the spoils of that hard fought battle and gave them to us. Now we are more than conquerors through Jesus Christ!

Beloved, when you walk in these realities of God's magnificent love, no task, relationship, hardship, challenge, mountain, valley or rejection is too difficult!

## **Chapter 5 - Living Above Rejection**

Lee Eclov tells this story:

When I was a kid, there was an older couple who would visit our little country church once in a while. They were

missionaries on a Sioux Indian reservation not far away. I remember him as a saintly, tall, white-haired man who would insist we all stand if he read Scripture. He died when I was young.

His wife was eccentric. She was angry with God over the death of her husband, and she turned into a beggar. Although she had a house, she asked one lady to take her in. I remember her coming into our house as though she owned the place and asking for money. Her house was filled with things she had gotten from begging but had never used. At church socials she would pick up sandwiches and stuff them in her purse. By the end of her life, she was living in just the kitchen of her house, heated with a cook stove.

After she died and people started cleaning out that old house, they found well over \$150,000 in cash, antiques and property. The cash was stuffed in old boxes and bottles.

This story is a double-tragedy. Though she was rich in material things, the woman lived like a beggar. She also lived like a beggar as a Christian fearful, isolated, faithless, and selfish.

Jesus wants you to walk in the reality of who you are in Him. He wants you to know the full expression of the Father's heart for you.

God completely rejected Satan and He has nothing but fury and wrath towards him. Satan wants you to experience what his life is like and he doesn't want you to know the full expression of the Father's heart for you.

Satan wants you to know the full expression of the Father's heart for him and think he feels the same towards you. Remember: Satan is the Father of lies!

Jesus wants you to experience His joy, hope and acceptance, just like Satan wants you to experience His pain, hurt and rejection.

The following are the critical necessities of living above rejection.

**The KEY to overcoming rejection is living in the freedom that you are completely accepted by the Father. It's an acceptance that isn't based upon your performance, IQ, abilities, how much you do for God, and how few sins are in your life. You are accepted because of Jesus.**

As we saw in the last chapter, Jesus wants us to experience the same type of love he experiences from the Father. (John 17:23, 26; Luke 3:21-22)

Since we are in Christ, we are His child; we are loved; we are well pleasing. Some have a hard time believing it, because we're so performance oriented. Consider this – If I'm only well pleasing, when I'm good how do I know when I reach "good." When do I know that I've done enough to be well pleasing?

If being "well pleasing" were based upon performance, then the cross means nothing. It's not because of my performance but my position in Christ.

Consider the story of the Prodigal Son. What great thing did the prodigal do to receive the father's robe, ring, party and blessing? Nothing. He was completely loved and accepted because of his position with the father, not his performance for the father.

When we come to understand and experience the Father's complete love for us, rejection and fear will have negligible effect upon our lives. Rejection may sting, but it won't wound.

*For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ. (2 Cor. 5:21)*

I am as accepted as Jesus, as loved as Jesus, as secure as Jesus. Jesus is well-pleasing in the eyes of the Father and because my life is hidden with Christ in God I am also. (Col.3:3)

There is nothing I can do to make God love me anymore or any less, because it's all based upon the righteousness of Jesus.

We must get away from revolving door Christianity, (in other words, today, I feel accepted because my performance was good; today, I feel bad because my performance was bad) and take our position as joint heirs with God.

### **Experience Genuine Fellowship**

*Now the man and his wife were both naked, but they felt no shame. (Gen. 2:25)*

I can stand before God and others and be completely open and not be rejected by either. All my brokenness and sin is revealed and I am not pushed aside. Why do people go to support groups? The initial draw may be information, but the staying power is genuine fellowship. They are accepted for who they are.

A sad thing is that rejection closes our spirit to intimate relationships. Instead of entering into relationships, we stand off.

There are two sides of fellowship: I am completely accepted by God and I am completely accepted by you.

Why is divorce so devastating, because we've exposed our lives to the person and they turned their backs on us. Why does divorce mar children? They feel rejected.

### **Deal directly with the spirit of fear**

*For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline. (2 Tim.1:7)*

Fear of rejection is not of God. Fear of standing for truth is not of God! Fear of others is not of God! Fear that God is somehow rejecting you and is displeased with you is not of God! God doesn't want you walking at any level of unhealthy fear!

If you aren't experiencing power, love and a calm, well balanced mind then you aren't experiencing what God himself promised.

### **Be continuously filled with the Holy Spirit**

*Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18)*

The early persecuted believers no longer feared others and being rejected by the multitudes. They no longer needed their praise.

The Holy Spirit brings boldness, courage, confidence, faith, and assurance. Despite what the circumstances might be, when the Holy Spirit fills you there is confidence. To uproot fear, the Holy Spirit gives greater measures of faith. Faith is the opposite of fear.

### **You must believe in the sovereignty of God**

*And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. (Romans 8:28)*

Rejection is part of the human experience. We can't avoid it. God uses rejection for good in our lives. He uses the rejection of others as a way to make us dependant on Him. He wants us to be wholly dependent upon him and he uses rejection the way we use negative experiences to train our kids. He wants us to wholly lean on him, not on the praise of others. He uses the rejection of others to deepen our character. You can say to the Lord while experiencing

rejection, “Father, I don’t like this...I’m terribly hurt on the inside...but I thank you that this isn’t wasted, because you will use it for good.”

At the very minimum God wants to use the rejection you experience as a call to prayer!

**Stop reading into comments, body language and other communicative interchanges.**

Sometimes we read into things more than is actually there. We get so upset at a person and there may be nothing there!

## **Chapter 6 - Loving Others (James 2:1-9)**

*<sup>1</sup> My dear brothers and sisters, -how can you claim to have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you favor some people over others?*

*<sup>2</sup> For example, suppose someone comes into your meeting dressed in fancy clothes and expensive jewelry, and another comes in who is poor and dressed in dirty clothes. <sup>3</sup> If you give special attention and a good seat to the rich person,*

*but you say to the poor one, “You can stand over there, or else sit on the floor”—well, <sup>4</sup> doesn’t this discrimination show that your judgments are guided by evil motives?*

*<sup>5</sup> Listen to me, dear brothers and sisters. Hasn’t God chosen the poor in this world to be rich in faith? Aren’t they the ones who will inherit the Kingdom he promised to those who love him? <sup>6</sup> But you dishonor the poor! Isn’t it the rich who oppress you and drag you into court? <sup>7</sup> Aren’t they the ones who slander Jesus Christ, whose noble name you bear?*

*<sup>8</sup> Yes indeed, it is good when you obey the royal law as found in the Scriptures: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” <sup>9</sup> But if you favor some people over others, you are committing a sin. You are guilty of breaking the law. (James 2:1–9)*

There was a problem of exclusion in the early church and this continues even today. John Ortberg provides this insight.

Our fallenness makes us want to be a part of not just any group, but an *exclusive* group. By definition, every society includes people who connect, who belong to one another. Yet every society includes people who feel left out, who don't get chosen at recess, whose invitations to dance get turned down, who get blackballed and cold-shouldered and voted off the island. We exclude others because of pride or fear or ignorance or the desire to feel superior.

I thought of this tendency we have to divide people the last time I was aboard an airplane. The first-class passengers were served gourmet food on china and crystal by their own flight attendants; those of us in coach ate snacks served in paper bags with plastic wrappers. The first-class passengers had room to stretch and sleep; those of us in coach were sitting with a proximity usually reserved for engaged couples in the back row of a movie. The first-class passengers had flight attendants bring them moist Towelettes for comfort and personal hygiene; those of us in coach had to sit and stew in our facial sweat.

On almost every flight, once the plane is under way, a curtain gets drawn to separate the two compartments. It is not to be violated; it is like the Berlin Wall or the veil that separated the Court of the Gentiles from the Holy of Holies in the temple at Jerusalem. The curtain is a reminder throughout the flight that some people are first class and some aren't. Those who aren't first class are not to violate the boundary. They can't even see what's going on behind the other side of the curtain.

On a recent flight, a voice came on the intercom system, telling us that because of new security measures, the attendants were not allowed to fasten the curtain. But the airline wanted all of us in the Court of the Gentiles to know that we were not allowed to use the facilities in the Holy of Holies, even though there was one restroom for eight

people up there and two restrooms for several hundred of us (mostly children under six who had been drinking Jolt Cola the whole flight) on the other side.

Let the curtain stand for a tendency deep inside the fallen human spirit the tendency to *exclude*. In the act of exclusion, we divide the world up into "us" and "them."

What would our families be like if there was unconditional love? Think about all the self-destructive behavior that is due directly or indirectly to rejection – anger, unforgiveness, chemical dependencies, theft, criminal activity, depression, and lack of productivity.

Think about all the time and money spent on self-destructive behavior due to rejection. Take alcoholism, there is: money to purchase it, health complications, loss of productivity, time off work, and abuse. Now think about all the money spent getting them out of the self-destructive behavior: counseling, court costs, lawyer's fees, doctor bills, medications, and rehab.

All from what? Rejection.

#### **4 Key Relationships Where We Need to Experience Acceptance**

A. **Home:** Parents need to show the children unconditional love. We are reflecting the Father's love for these kids.

1 Cor.13:4–7 says, *“Love is patient...kind...not rude...it is not easily angered... keeps no record of wrongs... always trusts... always perseveres.”* We must allow for growth, independence, immaturity, encourage initiative, believe that God has great plans for them, etc. DADS MUST STAY CONNECTED – more than just be in the house, be a part of their daily lives through ongoing interaction.

**B. Marriage:** Our first responsibility is to accept our spouse. Does your love for your spouse reflect 1 Cor. 13:4–7? Don’t cop-out by trying to justify your behavior.

**C. Church:** Among the body of believers. We are a family and a body. All the body parts are important, even if you don’t like them or don’t think they are necessary. They are. We need one another whether we realize it or not. People join a church for lots of reasons, but they stay because of acceptance.

**D. The Father** – review the previous chapters.

## **Practical Steps In Loving Others**

**1. Accept others the way God accepts you or grace, grace, and more grace.**

*“Therefore, accept each other just as Christ has accepted you so that God will be given glory.”*  
(Rom.15:7)

Does God have you straighten up your life before He accepts you? Is there some sort of mark that you must reach before you find yourself in His good grace? He accepts us the way we are. He disciplines us and corrects us, but He DOES NOT reject us.

He accepts us in our sin and brokenness not only at salvation, but every day. He not only loves you, but He likes you.

Think about those you don't necessarily like or enjoy being around. How does Jesus feel towards that person? Where is Jesus? Inside our spirit through the person of the Holy Spirit, so it's possible for you to love them too.

Ask Jesus to give you the same level of grace He has for that person.

This doesn't necessarily mean that you need to change your course of action in a relationship, but it should change your attitude towards them.

Cory was a young guy in his early 20's. He started attending Willow. I had a few conversations with him and I prayed with him on a number of occasions. I hadn't seen him in awhile and I saw in the paper that he committed suicide. I wonder, "Did Cory feel accepted here? Did he experience rejection here?" I'm not trying to produce guilt, but make the point that we must accept others the way God accepts us.

## **2. Submit yourself to one another.**

*And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. (Eph. 5:21)*

We reject others by the force of our wills and strong opinions. We prove our points and state our opinions. They act as crushing blows to those who disagree with us. We can run roughshod over people and destroy them internally. We won't admit we're wrong or that there is another opinion on this matter. We're right and that's just the way it is.

We end up rejecting people because we want to make a point or prove something. How much of your opinion really matters in most of the arguments? Some of you say, "I rather, highly value my opinion."

How many of you know, “You can be all right and all wrong at the same time.” Realize there are moral issues where we need to stand our ground, but most of the time we stand our ground on mole hills.

*And all of you, serve each other in humility, for “God opposes the proud but favors the humble.” So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor. (1 Pet. 5:5–6)*

### **3. Keep short accounts with people – Col. 3:13f.**

*<sup>3</sup> Make allowance for each other’s faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. <sup>14</sup> Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. (Col. 3:13–14)*

If we don’t keep short accounts, then we’ll constantly be rejecting others. We cannot keep a mental ledger of how a person has hurt us.

It becomes like a sack of rocks. Every hurtful word or action that person said we add to the rock pile. It’s weighing you down and some of the physical issues of your life are directly related to that sack. How do you know if you’ve emptied out the sack? When that person

does something that displeases you, you either reach into your bag of rocks and start hurling those past hurts or you're able to toss the stone aside.

We have to cancel that debt in our minds.

#### **4. Think in terms of being a coach**

Think about the best coach or supervisor or teacher you had. What sets them apart?

They applauded success whether it was big or small. They were a constant source of encouragement. They pressed you, not to prove their superiority and your weakness, but to move you to the next level. They didn't deal with all your shortcomings at once. They acknowledged progress.

They corrected not criticized. Healthy correction is meant to instruct that will lead to improvement; criticism is meant to harm and strip down a person's worth or ability. Criticism takes something from us, whereas correction adds something to us. We have to move away from criticism for it is an attribute of Satan.

*For the whole law can be summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself" But if you*

*are always biting and devouring one another, watch out! Beware of destroying one another.* (Galatians 5:14–15)

**5. Try not to focus all praise only on performance, but also on character development and being.**

If you only praise a person when they do something good, then it creates a relationship based upon performance. Then when they do something that is different than your desires you tend to be critical or judgmental. It also causes the person either not to take healthy steps of independence or to completely turn their back on you because they know you will not approve of their decision.

I have some different doctrinal and denominational beliefs than my dad. His response to a decision I made that he disagreed with was, “Scott, I trust your walk with the Lord.” There was acceptance amidst disagreement.

Our family and friends need to know they are accepted by us unconditionally not because of performance or agreement.

Remember our relationship with Jesus. Is his love for you based upon on your performance or because we are in complete agreement with him? No. Our performance is less than stellar and our actions, motives and beliefs are less than pure, yet He still loves us.

## **6. Encourage healthy risk taking**

As people of faith in God, we live in tents and not houses. Wherever the Lord directs others, we should be the wind behind people pushing them on, not the wind in their face resisting their every move.

We should applaud the attitude whether or not the outcome is a success. The Lord enjoys it when His children start walking in a new direction. Like a child learning to walk – you don't keep the child in your lap because you're scared of all the harm that could come to him when he starts walking.

When we see growth happening, and people moving with the Lord to a new place, then we must encourage it. It may be painful and fraught with peril, but if it will lead that person to reflect more of the image of Jesus, then encourage it!

## **Chapter 7 - Dealing With An Angry Person**

Rejection runs deep in those who have relationships with angry people. An angry person doesn't know how to properly engage others especially in stressful situations. Their habit is to reject anyone who disagrees with them. This chapter is for you who have ongoing contact with an angry person and for those who fit the profile.

### **Description of a chronically angry person**

- Isn't easily satisfied
- Isn't happy; extremes in moods
- Can't let things go
- Loses their temper a lot
- Constantly blaming others for their emotional state
- Has a problem in his closest relationships – family, partnerships, work. He's the life of the party, but up, close and personal he's a wreck.
- Overbearing, dogmatic, tries to intimidate with words or posturing
- Manipulates people or situations with his anger or withholding something – information, love, approval – from others.
- Sarcasm and critical
- Impatient and irritable

## What the Bible says about angry people

Prov. 22:24 – *Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man, do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn his ways and get yourself ensnared.*

Prov. 14:17 – *“Those who are short tempered do (& say) foolish things.”* One person said, “Speak when you're angry— and you'll make the best speech you'll ever regret.”

Prov. 14:29 – *“Those who control their anger have great understanding; those with a hasty temper will make mistakes.”*

Prov. 15:18 – *“A hothead starts fights.”*

Prov. 16:28 – *“A troublemaker plants seeds of strife.”*

Biblical Examples of anger: Cain (sibling rivalry), Nabal (1 Sam. 25 – so angry he had a stroke) and Satan (Rev. 12:12)

## Dealing with Angry People

You are NOT the problem – if you have a relationship with a chronically angry person, you are not the problem. Is the reason Satan's angry, because of you? Typically, angry people place blame on others. **THEY WANT YOU TO THINK THAT YOU ARE THE PROBLEM.** Now, if you're the only

person he's angry at then maybe you are the problem or contributing to it.

In my former church I had a somewhat contentious relationship with a church leader. I looked around and saw that many were wearing scars he had inflicted on them. You must get perspective on it. If Bob has a problem with you and Paul and Linda and Robin, then Bob is the problem.

But, seriously look at how you might be contributing to the problem. We must examine ourselves - tone of voice, response, body language.

Romans 12:18 says, *“Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.”*

Make the boundaries clear. Don't own his response. Own whatever sin you might be contributing, but not the angry person's response. You must quit the, “What did I do...why did I say that...it's because of me he's so mad.” The Devil will do anything to make you believe it was your fault. Don't give in to his anger. Stand your ground. Don't let his anger control your response.

Don't put up with rude, disrespectful attitudes. This doesn't mean you're going to be rude, disrespectful, but that you

let him know this was wrong. Put distance between you and the person.

Expect his guilt messages, manipulation of your emotions, counter consequences, and a constant push against the fence.

Don't go around fixing his messes. He has to suffer the consequences. No more enabling. The Lord made clear to me that I was hindering His activity in a person's life, because I was cleaning up his messes. It is sin to hinder what the Lord wants to do in the other person's life by keeping them from experiencing the consequences of their sinful choices. Experiencing consequences is often how the Lord matures a person.

This will not be a pretty or easy process. It will be hard and hurtful, because you're relating to him in a healthy way. You've been feeding him candy, now you're changing his diet to a healthy meal. You cannot go back to the old ways for your sake and his sake. It will change the relationship, *but it may be a real mess before it gets better.*

Make sure you have a support system that can stand alongside you in prayer and encouragement. Look for people who walked this road before you. They can both empathize with you and sympathize with the angry person.

If all you have is a bunch of good friends supporting you who don't have a similar experience they're just going to grind their axes against the offensive person. You need someone who can be a coach.

Give that person completely over to the Lord . Consider the story of David with Nabal in 1 Sam.25. Trying to change an adult in your strength is like trying to redirect the wind. Only God can change the direction

Here is how my parent's dealt with my anger: Set the boundaries; dealt with things in a timely manner; let me suffer the consequences; prayed hard.

Forgive the person. Henry Cloud says, "To forgive means to write it off. To let it go. Tear up the account. To forgive means that we will never get from that person what was owed us. This is what makes forgiveness such a challenge."

### **To those with anger problems**

Stop blaming others. You need to get honest feedback from those closest to you or you won't have anyone close to you.

Deal with the root cause. You'll need someone objective who can walk with you on that journey.

Control is the big issue. Submit yourself completely to the Lord and let Him take control. People who are often angry feel that they're losing control or they want to assert control.

### **Conclusion**

Beloved, you are totally accepted by God because of the shed blood of Jesus. Romans 8:38 is absolutely clear that nothing stands between you and God's love. Abound in the hope that your God loves and accepts you as much as He does His own Son!