

RELATIONSHIPS

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PART 1 - THE LOVE WALK - FOUNDATION OF RELATIONSHIPS

Humans were created for relationships. Our most important relationship should be with our Creator. When this relationship is in its proper order, then every other relationship we are in should be in order as well. The problem is, that most Christians do not understand how God has set up relationships. Every relationship is based upon submission and authority. Once we grasp a good understanding of this, we will be on our way to happy homes, productive work places, peace and harmony with our friends and neighbors, and most importantly, a more intimate relationship with our Creator.

I. JUDGES 6:11-12

We are talking about relationships. The foundation of all relationships is LOVE. This love begins with loving yourself. If you don't love yourself, you will never be able to love anyone else. You can tell how much you love yourself by how much value you place on yourself. Notice in this story the difference between how God saw Gideon and how Gideon saw himself.

The first step to loving yourself is to begin to see yourself how God sees you. Believe God's Word--change the picture you have of yourself. We must look at ourselves through the eyes of faith. A wrong, negative picture of ourselves will frustrate everything God wants to do for us.

II. Ephesians 6:10-18

We are talking about relationships. When we are discouraged with ourselves, it affects every relationship we have. We will focus on just two of the pieces of armor in these Scriptures that we can use to defeat discouragement: the breastplate & the shield. In studying the different translations, the first verse might more accurately read this way: 'For our wrestling match is not against persons with bodies.' That is very vivid. In other words, we are not wrestling with human beings. The person that is giving you fits is not really the problem! We are involved in a total, all-out conflict with unseen spiritual persons who have tremendous power,

who are highly organized, and who are totally opposed to us and to everything that stands for God and His people. Their headquarters is in the heavenlies, and they exert every type of spiritual pressure against us that will in any way bring us down. As a logical conclusion of this fact, Paul tells us to put on your armor! Otherwise, you are going to be a casualty!

III. Ephesians 6:13

Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day.

The second you are born again, you are translated out of the kingdom of darkness and into the Kingdom of God. You are in a war--the war of good against evil. You'd better be surrounded by an assembly of disciples that have all their armor on and know how to protect you until you grow up and can wield your own armor. Because, believe me, the devil doesn't play fair. Notice that Paul assumes the evil day is coming. Every Christian is going to go through their own particular evil day. **Matthew 7:24-27**, Jesus tells the parable of the two men who built houses, one on the rock and the other on the sand. He didn't say if the wind and rain come. He said, when the wind and rain come. Each house is subject to the same test. Again in **Matthew 13:21**, He didn't say if; He took it for granted that persecution will come. Every Christian will have to go through the evil day when he has to face affliction and persecution. **Acts 14:22** tells us, 'We must through many tribulations enter the Kingdom of God. So, first, we need to get the when fixed firmly in our minds. It doesn't necessarily mean something is wrong when we find ourselves in the evil day, under tremendous pressure. We must remember that we are at war. We are talking about relationships. The way we see ourselves affects our performance in the battles that come our way. Every battle flows through a relationship. Conflict.

IV. I Thessalonians 5:8

Ephesians 6:14 tells us about the breastplate of righteousness, but here, we see specifically what that righteousness is. It's not the righteousness of self-effort or good works. But the righteousness of faith which works by love. The breastplate protects the heart. Bear in mind that scriptural faith is always in the heart, not the head. **Romans 10:10** says, 'For with the heart one believes unto righteousness.' Real faith is not just intellectual concepts nor theology nor doctrine. It is heart faith which works along one primary line--LOVE. **Galatians 5:6**--For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision

nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love. Only one thing matters to the Christian--faith that works by love. Without faith in the heart, working by love, you've missed it all. The breastplate that protects the heart is faith that works through love. Once the breastplate is removed, our most delicate vital organ, the heart, is exposed. Faith always relates to the invisible, never to the visible. **2 Corinthians 5:7**; we walk by faith not by sight. Walk means to live. Our whole life as Christians is based not on what we see, but on what we believe. Faith and sight are opposed to one another. You can't live by both. It's one or the other. This whole issue was the very first mistake that humanity made. The serpent questioned the Word of God. Eve entertained that question. The pressure that Eve responded to was: 'So when the woman SAW that the tree was good for food...' Eve moved out from the realm of faith in the invisible Word to trusting her sight; the very next moment, she was defeated. This same principle applies to us! When we go by what we see, we are no match for the devil. We must walk by faith, not by sight. The breastplate that protects our heart is faith in the invisible God and His Word, and this faith works by LOVE. The breastplate is lowered the minute you step out of the love walk. This is when you are vulnerable to fiery darts!

Think about it: you're walking in love, your breastplate is in place; then out of no where, someone says something that makes you feel 'less' of who you are. At that moment, you have a choice. You will continue to agree with God's Word about who you really are, or you will agree with the 'feelings' generated by the comment from that person. If you continue in faith, the breastplate protects your heart. If you walk by 'feelings', the breastplate is down and you are exposed to the enemy's fiery darts.

V. The Shield

The breastplate protects the heart, the shield protects the whole body. If you know how to correctly operate the shield, there is no part of you that can be reached by fiery darts. Sometimes we misunderstand faith, thinking that we must be 'doing' something all the time. Faith is active--you must put action to it, but it is more--it is an attitude of trust in God.

Out of this attitude, your actions originate. An example would be a small child nestled in their father's arms. At first they hold tightly to his lapels of his jacket so that they wouldn't fall, but after a while they get sleepy and nod off. Their hands relax, but their father would still be holding them. The

child's holding on to the lapels was really an unnecessary effort. That is like we are with God. We can hold on, but even when we let go, God is still holding on to us.

VI. Fact, Faith, Feeling

The facts are in the Bible. Faith affirms those facts. Your feelings take care of themselves. But, if you begin with your feelings, you will be as unstable as they are. Facts never change; feelings vary from moment to moment. We cannot afford to base our faith on our feelings. Base your faith on the facts in the Word of God, which never change. Smith Wigglesworth said, 'I'm never moved by what I feel, only by what I believe.' The only permanent, unchanging, valid source of facts is the Bible. Faith says, 'The Word of God is true and I believe it. My feelings can take care of themselves. If you have this attitude, your feelings will come into line with the facts. It's an absolute priority that you begin with the facts in the Word of God. In order to do that, you must know the facts--you have to know the Scriptures. We believe facts from the invisible realm of God's Word because we no longer go by our feelings. That shield of faith covers every area of our lives. No fiery dart need ever get past it.

Conclusion:

We are talking about relationships. We were made for them. Until we see ourselves through the eyes of faith--through God's eyes--we will never be able to love ourselves as we should. If you don't love yourself, you will not be able to truly love anyone else. You must renew your mind to God's Word concerning who you are in Christ. This is who you truly are. You are accepted. You are valued. You are loved. Once you see this in the Word--embrace it--believe it. Live your life according to what you believe--not what you see, hear or feel. Don't entertain thoughts that don't agree with the Word. Don't take offense. Keep your breastplate on and your shield up. Stay in LOVE. This is basic submission and authority. Somebody has to be in charge. There has to be a leader. Otherwise it's chaos. God is in charge. He created everything to begin with. He is the highest authority. The buck stops with Him. You see the truth in God's Word; you believe it; you act on it. You are submitting to the authority of God's Word by choosing to conform your behavior so that it is in agreement with God. Where there is agreement, there is harmony and fellowship. There is peace. God knows exactly what will make you happy. Trust Him. Obey

Him. You'll be happy. This makes Him happy. You're happy, He's happy--everybody's happy--this makes for the perfect relationship. All of our relationships should follow this orderly flow of submission and authority. When it does, there are no problems. The problems come when we are out of order. Next week, we will dig a little deeper into submission and authority and how they work in our earthly relationships.

PART II: FROM REJECTION TO ACCEPTANCE

Review: Last week we learned that love is the foundation to all successful relationships. That love begins with a personal relationship with our creator and as we get to know him, he shows us who we are. In other words, we begin to see ourselves through his eyes. Only then can we truly love ourselves. Only then can we truly love others. Now, we are ready for relationships.

Introduction: This week we are going to examine a particular problem that affects, in my opinion, millions of people around the world. That problem is 'rejection'. Rejection, simply defined, is the SENSE of being unwanted, the FEELING that although you want people to love you, no one does. It is that wanting to be a part of a group, but FEELING excluded--somehow being on the outside looking in. Rejection will have a negative effect on all your relationships.

I. Isaiah 54:6

This is a picture of rejection. A poignant picture of a brokenhearted married woman. Here is a young woman, recently married, who finds that her husband does not love her. Maybe he has no time for her. Maybe he shows her no respect or no interest in her. Maybe he is even considering divorce. Scripture describes her as 'forsaken and grieved in spirit'.

There is a type of wound that is very hard to bear. **Proverbs 18:14**--The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit, who can bear? This woman was obviously suffering from just such a wound in her spirit. We can put up with a wounded body, but a wounded spirit is an unbearable affliction.

II. 1 Corinthians 2:11

The spirit of a person is deeper than the mental understanding or the faculties of memory and reason. It's your spirit that knows all about you. Your mind doesn't know all about you. There are things about you that your mind hasn't discovered yet.

It is very possible to carry wounds for years that your mind never knows about. Have you ever noticed when some people get the baptism of the Holy Spirit or when a person falls under the power of Holy Spirit--even strong, self-reliant people--that they seem to crumple and begin to sob? That's Holy Spirit reaching down into that person's spirit, and He is untying all those knots that have been tied inside them for so long. No one else could ever get there to untie the knot but Holy Spirit.

There is an area deep down inside you that your mind doesn't know about. Sometimes your mind even refuses to face up to the facts about that area inside you. Psychologists and psychiatrists acknowledge the fact that there are some wounds so painful that the mind refuses to focus on them. It just turns a blind eye in that particular direction. Nevertheless, the wound is still there--deeper than the mind, deeper than reason, deeper than the memory. It is in the spirit. Rejection, very frequently, is in that deep area in the spirit. Because it is so deep, people do not even realize their problem is rejection.

III. How Rejection Begins

Rejection can begin even before a child is born. If a woman carries in her womb a child whose coming she resents, that child is frequently born with a spirit of rejection. A similar problem may develop in a child conceived out of wedlock. Then again, a child may be born and not receive love and thus suffer rejection.

Every child is born into this world looking for the love of a father and a mother. They are created that way--God established the family. Many times, the child is loved, but the parents don't know how to express their love correctly. As a result of this, the child gets this FEELING of being unwanted.

Rejection may also come later in life, like the woman in Isaiah 54:6. A wife may love her husband and have a picture in her mind of what married life should be. She imagines how her husband is going to love her, and how she'll be blessed with children. But somehow it turns out differently. Maybe

the husband loves her for a little while, but then gets interested in other women. Maybe he is one of those men who just don't know how to show love correctly.

After a while, this woman begins to feel rejected. He doesn't want me. He doesn't care for me. He doesn't devote time to me.

IV. Reactions to Rejection

Rejection can simply be an inner attitude we carry around with us.

Behind every negative emotion, reaction, and attitude there is a corresponding spirit. Behind fear--is a spirit of fear. Behind envy--is a spirit of envy. Behind hate--is a spirit of hate.

Very often, yielding to a certain emotion will open the way for the spirit of that emotion to enter.

Once that spirit comes in, that person is no longer in FULL control. For instance, a child may hate their father because he was cruel, critical and unloving. They get married and children of their own. Then without reason, against their own desire, they begin to unreasonably and viciously hate one of their own children, transferring that hatred for their father to their own child. That's the spirit of hate. When the father's not there, it's directed against somebody else. Often, parents who have particular faults will come to hate the child who is most like them. They are really hating the fault in themselves, but instead of turning that hate toward themselves, they turn it toward the child who reproduces those traits or weaknesses which have been inherited from them.

Just as there is a spirit of hate, there is a spirit of rejection. Rejection is a problem that brings others in its train.

There are two different lines of reaction that proceed from rejection. The first line of reaction to rejection is LONELINESS. Loneliness is a terrible thing. The world is filled with lonely people. Loneliness leads to misery. We all know people who seem to be miserable. Loneliness and misery often lead to self-pity. Nobody understands me. Others can, but I can't. Why did God make me like this? The step following self-pity is depression. Moods of gloominess that settle over you. Then comes despair--

hopelessness. Despair will almost inevitably lead to one of two results which are final: death or suicide. There is a difference between death and suicide: Death is the desire to die. If you've ever said, 'I wish I were dead', that is very dangerous. You don't have to say it many times before a spirit of death comes in. Suicide is more radical. 'I might as well go ahead and end it now. Take that bottle of pills, get the gun, hang myself, jump in front of the car. Well, that's one line of reaction, stemming from rejection.

There is another possible line which leads in a different direction. The first step in this progression from rejection is hardness. Well, if they don't love me, so what? I don't need them anyhow. I can do without them. Then hardness leads to indifference. I don't care! I've been wounded enough. Nobody's ever going to hurt me again. I'll put up a barrier that nobody will ever get inside. Outwardly, you're friendly. You talk to people, you joke, but there's something inside you they can never get through. After indifference comes rebellion. Well, they're against me, so I'll be against them. Rebellion quite often leads to witchcraft or manipulation. Witchcraft leads to spiritual and physical death.

So we see from both of these lines of reaction that the consequences of rejection's presence in a person's spirit can be devastating.

V. Getting To The Roots

I want to point out that for such radical problems the Gospel offers radical solutions.

The Gospel itself is very radical. The literal meaning of radical is 'that which goes to the root'. How cool is that? Jesus went to the root of the problem! **Matthew 3:10**. This is a picture of how God intends for us to deal with our problems, which are represented by the tree. It is not enough to chop off a few branches. The tree will continue standing and growing. Even if you chop off the trunk, the life will continue in it. But if you cut the roots, you are finished with the tree.

In God's plan, the ax is laid to the root of the problem. These three parts of the tree correspond to the three parts of people's problems. We start with the branches. They are the sins: lying, swearing, immorality, addiction; the things that drive people and inflame them. Much religious activity is directed toward lopping off a few branches. Good behavior is good, but it is

not the ultimate. If you cut off the branches, eliminating certain sins, the problem you inevitably face is that other branches will take their place because they are all supported and sustained by the trunk. In my understanding of theology, the trunk is called 'sin'. Not 'sins', but 'sin'. There is a very consistent distinction in the Bible between 'sins', 'sinful acts', and 'sin', the thing that causes 'sins'. Sin is an evil, corrupt, spiritual power that works in people and drives them to commit sins. In the atonement Jesus was 'wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities [or sinful acts]. **Isaiah 53:5**. But in **Isaiah 53:10** it says, 'When thou shalt make his soul an offering for 'sin'. That's dealing with the 'trunk'. It's altogether different, and the Bible consistently maintains this distinction. Sin and sins are both above the surface, but under the surface we have something else: roots. The root can be described as 'self' or the 'I', the 'ego'. I want. I think. I like. I don't like. Look at me. I'm important. I matter, you haven't treated me right. The world revolves around me. Poor little me, nobody loves me. This is the ROOT. Even those who have dealt with the 'sin', haven't always dealt with 'self'. Yet, if the root is not dealt with, the problems continue.

Simply defined, rejection is the sense of being unwanted, the feeling that although you want people to love you, it seems no one does. Or it is wanting to be a part of a group, but feeling excluded. There are many ways in which rejection can arise and different ways someone may react to them. This week we will discuss what is the answer to the problem of rejection. Specifically, what the Scriptures' answer is to this problem. Lives can be radically changed by employing God's solution to the problem of rejection.

I. Every solution God has for every problem in our life stems from the cross.

The cross is where God provided the solution to all our problems. Jesus dealt with this specific problem of rejection on the cross.

II. The Great Exchange

The basic principle of the cross: it was an exchange. A divinely appointed exchange. On the cross, to satisfy eternal, divine justice, God caused to meet together upon Jesus all the evil that was due by justice to the human race.

He did this so that in return, by faith, the one who repents and believes may receive all the good that is due by justice to Jesus! Jesus took the evil, so that we could receive the good. This is very basic, but once it is understood, it will open up endless avenues of blessing for your soul.

III. God caused to meet together upon Jesus all the evil so that we might receive all the good.

This is the great exchange. Here are some aspects of the great exchange: Jesus was punished for our sin that we might be forgiven. Jesus was wounded for our sicknesses that we might be healed. Jesus was made sickness itself that we might have health. Jesus became poor for our sakes that we might have His wealth. Jesus died our death that we might have His life. Jesus took our rejection so that we might be accepted. I find it interesting that the main focus of good relationships is 'I'. Fix yourself, not the other person and all your relationships will be perfect. Remember, Jesus went to the root of the problem--rejection.

IV. Isaiah 53:3:

'He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.'

For three and a half years, Jesus went about doing good. Forgiving sins, healing people, casting out demons, etc. He did nothing but good. At the end of that period, His people to whom He belonged, the Jewish nation, were given a choice by the Roman government of which one they would prefer to have: Jesus or a criminal--Barabbas.

They rejected Jesus and chose the criminal. How did Jesus respond? He asked Father God to forgive them. He was not concerned about what was happening to Him. He was concerned about what would happen to them. The amazing example that Jesus set was that He was not concerned about Himself, but about those who had rejected Him. What a pattern that is!

V. In examining the great exchange on the cross in terms of the problem of rejection we must realize that although Jesus was rejected by men, the final agony of Jesus on the cross was rejection by His Father.

Matthew 27:46--'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? There was

no answer from heaven. For the first time in the history of the universe, the Father turned a deaf ear to the Son's cry.

It was then that Jesus knew that His Father had rejected Him. Why did His Father reject Him? Scripture says that God is 'of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on wickedness [or iniquity].' ([Habakkuk 1:13](#)) When Jesus was made sin with our sinfulness, God averted His eyes and stopped His ears to the cry of His Son. After that, there was only one more cry that came from Jesus' lips. [Matthew 27:46-50](#); [Mark 15:33-39](#); [Luke 23:44-46](#).

[John 19:28-30](#). It is finished. I place My spirit into Your hands. I believe He literally died of a broken heart.

Rejection broke His heart. For every person here who has experienced the agonies of rejection, Jesus experienced the deepest pangs of rejection and He bore it for you so that you could be accepted! If ever there was good news, this is it!

VI. What is the opposite of rejection? Acceptance! [Ephesians 1:6](#) says that God has 'made us to be accepted in the Beloved.'

Jesus, God's true and only begotten Son, was rejected that we who were unworthy rebels might have His acceptance with the Father. Sometimes there are problems with earthly parents that can never be resolved. But, no matter if nobody wanted you, your parents were not even married--when you come to God through Jesus Christ, you become a member of the best family in the universe! God's family is the best family. There's no family quite equal to it. He has no second-class kids. Even if your own family did not care for you, or your own father rejected you or your mother did not have time for you or your husband never showed you love, God still wants you! You are accepted! You are the object of His special care and affection.

Everything He does in the universe revolves around you. When God says that we are accepted, He doesn't mean that we are just tolerated. We don't bother Him. We don't disturb Him. We never take up too much of His time. The only thing that upsets Him is when we stay away too long.

Father God is interested in you. He wants you. You are welcome in His

presence.

VII. Luke 15:11-32

The Father was out on the porch watching for His son's return. He was the first one to know His son was coming home. God's attitude toward us in Christ is like that. We are not rejects. We are not second-class citizens. We are not just servants. The whole household was turned upside down when the prodigal son came home.

VIII. Luke 15:7:

'There is more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just people who need no repentance.'

That is how God welcomes us in Christ!

We must understand these two facts: Christ on the cross bore our rejections--all the agony and the heartache. An exchange has taken place: we are accepted because of His rejection. Sometimes you need not do anything more than lay a hold of those two facts to overcome rejection. When you realize what it means to be accepted in Christ it will destroy rejection in your life and you will be a completely different person.

VIII. There are four simple steps you have to take if you are troubled with rejection.

A. Forgive those who have rejected you. This is essential. Forgiveness is something you do for yourself. It is a 'putting off' of the offense. It frees you from the curses that come with bitterness, resentment and anger. Forgiveness is not an emotion, it is a decision. Pull out any fiery darts and by an act of your will choose to forgive.

B. Cast out bitterness, resentment, hatred and rebellion. These are the four reactions which so frequently accompany deep seated rejection. Remember, behind every emotion is a spirit pushing you to yield to that emotion. Tell it to leave, in Jesus' Name.

C. Accept the fact that you are accepted in Christ, that God accepts you. You are loved. You are more than loved, you are cherished. God desires your company. He's interested in you. When you accept something from

someone, good manners dictates that you tell them ‘thank you’.

D. There is one more thing you have to do, and don't forget this: you have to accept yourself! Sometimes this is the hardest part. Never belittle yourself. Never criticize yourself. You are the handiwork of the God of the Universe. Will the thing formed say to Him who formed it, ‘Why have you made me like this?’ (Rom. 9:20) It is not your business to do this. God knows what He is doing. Just trust Him. As a Christian, it is not humility to criticize yourself, it is rebellion. Never belittle yourself, you are God's workmanship.

Conclusion:

Now that we have looked at the different aspects of rejection, I want to invite you to release yourself from it.

I believe everyone, at some point in their lives has experienced rejection on some level. Let's take a moment to reflect back on those times. Ask Holy Spirit to help you, then we will all speak a declaration dealing with rejection once and for all.

‘Father, I choose, by an act of my will to forgive. Right now I pull out any and all fiery darts that may have penetrated to my spirit or soul. I forgive everyone who has ever rejected me, whether it was real rejection or just perceived by me. I put off the offense in Jesus' Name.

I cast you out bitterness; I cast you out resentment; I cast you out hatred; and I cast you out rebellion, leave me in Jesus' Name. I thank You, Father, that I am accepted in Christ. I am Your child. Heaven is my home. I belong to the best family in the universe. There is royal blood in my veins.

Lord Jesus Christ, I believe You are the Son of God and the only way to Father God. You died on the cross for my sins, and You rose again from the dead. I repent of all my sins, and I forgive every other person, as I would have God forgive me. All those who have rejected me and hurt me and failed to show me love, God, I forgive them all now.

I trust You for Your forgiveness, and I believe, Lord, that You accept me right now as I am in Christ. I am accepted. I am highly favored. I am the object of Your special care. You really love me. You want me. You are my

Father. Lord, I want to thank You.

And I want to tell You one more thing: I accept myself in Christ the way You made me. I am Your workmanship. I thank You for what You have done in me, and I believe You have begun a good work and will perform it until the day of Christ the Lord. I release myself now from any dark, evil pressure. I release my spirit to rejoice in You. In Jesus' Name, Amen!