

REJECTION, CAUSES AND CURE

Rejection can be defined as a kind of inner experience and feeling of being:

- 'unwanted',
- 'excluded',
- 'worthless',
- 'not really belonging',
- 'somehow on the outside looking in but never knowing how to get on the inside'

And rejection is the most common and the deepest wound that human heart can experience and there are uncouncted *millions* of people who have this problem of rejection.

But God created the human being with an insatiable desire to be loved and to feel loved and in this study you will learn about the causes of rejection and how to overcome it to experience freedom and lasting joy in your life.

(this is an MP3 audio study by Bible teacher Derek Prince and this text study was compiled by Albert Chipps)

PART ONE: THE NATURE AND CAUSES OF REJECTION



Probably I'd better begin with some kind of a definition. What do I mean by 'rejection?'

I'm talking about some kind of thing in the emotions and in the heart, an 'attitude', a kind of 'relationship' or perhaps a failure to relate. One of the best ways to understand the meaning of a word is to consider what its opposites are. Rejection has one obvious, specific opposite and that's 'acceptance'. So you could define rejection that way, as the opposite of acceptance. Or you could choose a number of synonyms, a number different words or phrases with similar meaning and perhaps some of the commonest and obvious would be these,

The feeling of being:

- 'unwanted',
- 'excluded',
- 'worthless',
- 'not really belonging',
- 'somehow on the outside looking in but never knowing how to get on the inside'

That's the kind of attitude, the kind of inner experience and feeling that I have in mind. And in my years of experience in the ministry, I've discovered that this is probably the most common and the deepest wound that human hearts experience. There are uncounted millions of people who have this problem of rejection. And doubtless, there are many who hear this message who'll begin to identify their problem.

Let me say one thing, the best way to face the problem is to recognize it. If you refuse to face it, you can never solve it. But if you'll face it and accept Gods remedy, you *can solve this problem*.

I've dealt with many, many people who have successfully overcome the problem of rejection and you can be one of those people.

In the prophet Isaiah 54:4-6, there's a very vivid picture of what rejection is really like. The Lord is speaking to His people Israel but He's speaking to them in the terms of being their 'husband' and He addresses them as a wife who's been rejected by her husband, a situation which is distressingly familiar

to millions of women in the world today. This is what the Lord says, ***“Do not be afraid; you will not be put to shame. Do not fear disgrace; you will not be humiliated. You will forget the shame of your youth and remember no more the reproach of your widowhood. For your Maker is your husband—the Lord Almighty is his name—the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth. The Lord will call you back as if you were a wife deserted and distressed in spirit—a wife who married young, only to be rejected,” says your God.*”**

The picture comes to its climax there in that last verse, the picture of a wife deserted, distressed in spirit. A wife who married young only to be rejected. Sometimes it's the other way round, sometimes it's the wife who rejects the husband and though we regard men as being stronger than women, I know from many many cases I've dealt with that a man who feels rejected by his wife can suffer inexpressible agony. I was speaking to such a man and he laid bare his heart to me and I realized the deep inner hurt that he was experiencing. In some ways perhaps it's worse for a man to experience that kind of hurt because being a man he feels ashamed of it. This vivid picture in Isaiah picks out two things that are commonly associated with rejection. The Lord says through Isaiah, *‘you will not suffer shame, you will not be humiliated’*. Those are two things that commonly go especially with marital rejection, shame and humiliation. To have given yourself without reservation to another person, to have poured out your love upon them, to have made yourself available to them and then to discover that they have rejected you very often brings even open shame and humiliation in its train. Those are the external associations but the internal association is what Isaiah calls a *‘crushed spirit’*, other translations use a *‘wounded spirit’* or a *‘broken spirit’*. Now that's something that I've learned to recognize and deal with.

In Proverbs 18:14, the scripture says, ***“The human spirit can endure in sickness, but a crushed spirit who can bear?”*** And in Proverbs 15:13, ***“A happy heart makes the face cheerful, but heartache crushes the spirit.”***

You see, wounds in the spirit are difficult to define, difficult to diagnose. They go to a level deeper than the human mind, or the human memory. Many people carry wounds in their spirit that they're not actually conscious of. They've covered them over. Their mind won't face them. Their memory doesn't recall them. But they're there deep down in the inner most area of man which is called the *‘spirit’*. Often they go back many, many years to childhood or to experiences in early youth and the mind refuses to face them but they remain an objective fact, they're *there!* And I believe the commonest cause of a wounded spirit is rejection.

WHAT CAUSES REJECTION?

Well, we've dealt with one common cause already in Isaiah's picture of the rejected wife and we've pointed out that sometimes rejection is by the wife of the husband. However I believe there's one cause which is even more common and that is lack of love from one or both parents in childhood. See, God has created the human being with an insatiable desire to be loved and to feel loved and my conviction is that every child that's ever been born has been with that longing for love, and love that's *expressed*. You see, unexpressed love doesn't meet that need and particularly (it's my conviction based on experience) that every child particularly longs for the love of a *father*, and that it's the love of a *father* that gives real security. And children that have not grown up knowing the expressed love of a father, grow up insecure and many times with that wound of rejection.

There are perhaps, three situations that can bring this wound about. First of all a child who's unwanted during pregnancy. The mother is carrying the child in her womb that she really doesn't want. She may not express it but the attitude is there. I discovered an amazing thing once in ministering to people that people in a certain age group, belonging to a certain generation seemed to have this problem very commonly and when I traced it back I discovered they were children born during the great depression and I began to understand that the mother had so many mouths to feed she couldn't bear the thought of all that struggle with one more child and her inner attitude produced in that child before it came out of the womb this wound of rejection.

And then I've spoken somewhat about the second case, a child that does not receive manifest love from the parents. Expressed love, warm love, affection. I think there's a bumper sticker we see around that says, *'have you hugged your child today?'* That's a good question. An unhugged child tends to become a rejected child.

And then there is another situation where there's more than one child in a family but one child receives an unfair measure of love and attention and another child, just by comparing himself or herself with that particularly favored child, feels rejected. I remember the story of a mother who had two daughters and without knowing it, she favored one above the other and one day she heard a sound in the room and she thought it was the daughter she particularly loved and she called out, 'are you there darling?' And the voice of the other daughter replied, 'no, it's only me'. Then the mother realized the impact that the favor of the one daughter had had on the other. She repented and sought to make up for what that attitude had brought.

So you see, these wounds can go back a long, long way, right into childhood.

PART TWO: RESULTS OF REJECTION



Today I'm going to speak about the results of rejection. How we may recognize this problem in ourselves and in others. Probably I should begin by briefly going over my definition from yesterday. I said that the opposite of rejection is acceptance. If we don't have acceptance, probably we do have rejection. There are various other words or phrases that would describe what I have in mind, the feeling of being unwanted or excluded or worthless or not really belonging or somehow on the outside looking in. as I give that little list of words or phrases, I wonder whether something in you is saying, *'that's my problem!'*

Now let's look at the results. I believe the primary result is the inability to receive or to communicate love. I believe it's a fact that none of us can communicate love unless we've first received love. This is brought out as a matter of fact, in the New Testament in a statement by John in 1 John 4:18, he says, ***"we love because He [that's God] first loved us"***

I don't believe a person *can* love unless that person has first *been* loved! Consequently a person who's never been loved cannot transmit love. And here's a tragedy that frequently goes from generation to generation: a little girl is born into a family where she doesn't experience love, she has that sense of rejection so she can't communicate love. In due course she marries, she becomes a mother, she has a daughter, she cannot communicate love to that daughter so the daughter develops the same problem as the mother – rejection. She grows up rejected. She in turn marries, has a daughter and that daughter has the same problem. And so this terrible problem is communicated from generation to generation. And I've dealt with people to whom I've said, 'listen, some time or other, this thing has got to be cut off, it's got to be dealt with. Why don't you let it happen in your life so that you don't go on passing on rejection to the next generation?'

NOW LET'S LOOK AT THE SECONDARY RESULTS OF REJECTION.

I would say that there are three main ways that people commonly react to rejection:

1. The person who gives in
2. The person who holds out
3. The person who fights back

Let's look at the person who gives in. This is the kind of person who says (maybe he never actually verbalizes it), 'I just can't take this! Life is too much for me! There's really nothing I can do!'

I've learnt in my experience with dealing with people that there's a succession of negative emotions that follow on as a consequence from rejection. I'll give you a list, usually in the order in which they usually develop.

- Out of rejection comes loneliness
- Out of loneliness come misery
- Out of misery, self-pity
- Out of self-pity, depression
- Out of depression, despair or hopelessness

And if despair or hopelessness takes its course, then the final end is an attitude of death or suicide. That's two different ways of saying the same thing. Death says, 'I'd rather be dead, I don't want to go on living, I'm going to end it all'. But each of them is commonly at the end of that progression: rejection, loneliness, misery, self-pity, depression, despair or hopelessness and finally the attitude that desires death or contemplates suicide. And remember that apart from the mere negative emotions I've mentioned, very commonly, there's a demonic influence at work. It's more than just a natural reaction, it's something natural that's exploited by evil spirits, tormentors, and destroyers. I've spoken about the first type of reaction to rejection, the person who gives in, who just says, 'it's no good. I can't fight. I'll give up'.

The second type is the person who 'holds out', who apparently doesn't give in, who builds some kind of defense and it's really a façade. Something that covers up the real inner agony and struggle. Probably, one word to describe this attitude would be 'indifference'. Often it's associated with a kind of superficial happiness. The person appears to be outgoing. Probably talkative but there's a kind of metallic ring in the voice. If it's a woman, often she overdoes the makeup, she gesticulates a lot, her voice is a little louder than is pleasant. She's desperately trying to appear happy as though she isn't hurt, as though nothing really matters. What she's really saying inside is, 'I've been hurt once so badly I'm never going to give any person the opportunity to hurt me that badly again. No one will ever come close enough to me again to hurt me.'

So there's this outer defense, this outer façade of indifference. Superficial happiness that really is a sham. And, Oh, you go through American society today, there are uncounted *thousands* of such persons.

The third type of reaction is the person who fights back, who becomes a fighter. The order in which things follow there is something like this, resentment, hatred, rebellion and the scripture says rebellion and witchcraft are twins, so out of rebellion there usually follows some kind of involvement in the occult. Basically there was a generation of young people growing up in the 1960's that went that way, resentment, hatred, rebellion and then the occult. And their resentment was not because of material deprivation but because they'd been denied real love, and usually by their fathers. They were often children of well-to-do parents, they'd had a good education. They had a home with a two-car garage, often a swimming pool but the one thing they hadn't experienced was the thing they longed for most deeply, the expressed love of parents, especially of a father. So they reacted by resentment, hatred, rebellion and ended up in the occult.

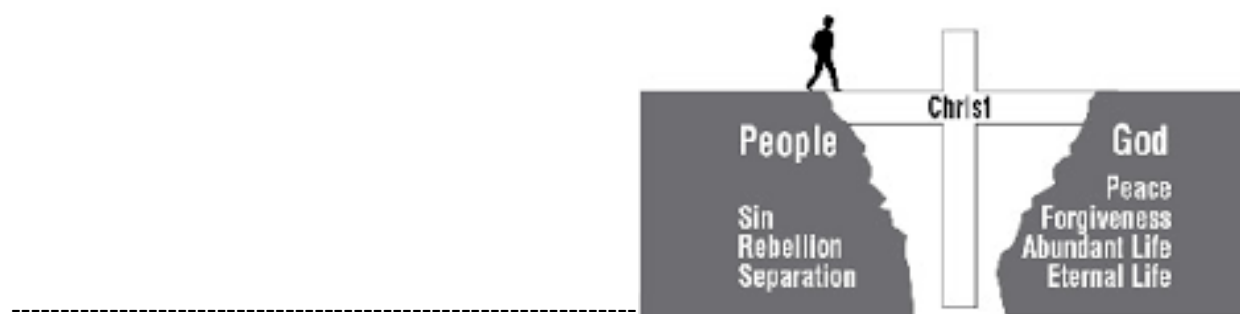
I know one young man when he was twelve years old, a neighbor was talking to his mother in his presence and said that this young man looked like the mother. The mother indicated that she didn't care much for her child. He ran away, threw himself on the bed, sobbed for half an hour then ran back to his mother, looked her in the face and said, 'mother, I hate you!' That was at age twelve, at age eighteen he was a notorious gang leader, a young man of violence and brutality but that was the outworking of rejection by his mother.

There's a happy end to that story. That man met the Lord and today he's a servant of the Lord. But it's such a typical example of that reaction. The one who fights back, resentment, hatred, rebellion and then, involvement in the occult.

So those are the three main ways of reacting:

1. The one who gives in
2. The one who holds out
3. The one who fights back

PART THREE: GODS REMEDY THROUGH THE CROSS



Every one of the three ways of reacting to rejection has one thing in common, they are essentially defensive, a way to cover up the hurt. None of them is a positive solution - but God has a positive solution.

In Isaiah 61:1 there is a promise that was to be fulfilled through the coming of Jesus the Messiah. This is the promise, ***“The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners.”*** Notice that phrase particularly, ‘to bind up the brokenhearted.’ In fulfillment of this promise God has provided a remedy for rejection. It comes to us through Jesus and the cross.

I’m going to turn now to that famous 53rd chapter of Isaiah which is a preview of the cross. The picture of the unnamed suffering sinless servant of the Lord. Although no person is actually mentioned by name in this chapter, all the writers of the New Testament unanimously identify this unnamed servant as Jesus of Nazareth. I’m going to read verses 4 – 6 of Isaiah 53, ***“Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”***

I want to make one simple comprehensive statement. At the cross, in fulfillment of that prophesy, there was a divinely ordained exchange, Jesus took upon Himself, all the evil that was due to us that we might receive in turn all the good that was due to Him.

Here are some aspects of the exchange:

- Jesus was punished for our sin that we might receive forgiveness
- He was wounded for our sickness that we might receive healing
- He was made sin that we might be made righteous
- He was made a curse that we might receive the blessing
- He died our death that we might share His life

But beyond all that, Jesus also bore our rejection on the cross. He was rejected by men and finally by God. Here’s the picture of His rejection by men given by Isaiah in that 53rd chapter verse 3, ***“He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.”***

What a vivid picture of rejection and the suffering that goes with it. Bear in mind that Jesus bore all that in our place. He was rejected by His fellow men. They turned away from Him and he became familiar with our suffering of rejection and yet that was not all, the worst was yet to come. So Jesus, on the cross, was rejected by His fellow man but, the ultimate was His rejection by God. This is so vividly portrayed in Matthew 27:45-51, ***“From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” (Which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”). When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “He’s calling Elijah.” Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. The rest said, “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to save him.” And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.”***

You see, for the first time Jesus prayed and God Father did not answer His prayer. God averted His eyes from His Son. God stopped His ears from His cry. Why? Because Jesus at that time was identified with our sin and the attitude of God the Father toward Jesus was the attitude of Gods righteousness toward our sin. The refusal of fellowship. The complete and absolute rejection. Jesus did not endure that for His own sake but because His soul had become the sin offering for us. Therefore the righteous attitude of God toward sin found expression in the attitude toward Jesus.

It means a lot to me that at that moment on the cross Jesus spoke Aramaic. Do you know what I have observed in visiting hospital rooms and so on? That when people are under real pressure, desperately sick, maybe at deaths door, normally their mind goes back to the language they first learnt in childhood. I’ve experienced this many times. To me that gives such a vivid picture of the humanity of Jesus that His mind went back to the language He’d spoken in His home. He cried out in Aramaic.

Think of that awful darkness. Think of the loneliness. The sense of being absolutely abandoned. First by man and then by God. You and I may have experienced rejection in some measure but never in that measure. And then, look at the consequences. So dramatic, so immediate. At that moment, the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. What does that mean? The barrier between God and man had been removed. The way was opened for man to come to God without shame, without guilt, without fear. Jesus bore our rejection that we might experience His acceptance. That is the meaning of the rent curtain. Jesus died of a broken heart. The rejection of His Father was more than He could stand. But thank God the result was that torn curtain representing our access to God.

Let’s look, in closing, at the outworking of our acceptance by God. In Ephesians 1:3-6 Paul says this, ***“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.”***

What was God’s eternal purpose even before creation? That we might become His children, His sons and His daughters. The only way that could be achieved was through the substitutory death of Jesus on the cross. When Jesus bore our sin and suffered our rejection, He opened the way for our acceptance. For just that period He lost His status as Gods Son that we might gain that status as Gods sons and daughters. I love that 6th verse, ***“to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.”*** That word translated ‘freely given us’ is a very powerful word. It’s the word that the

angel used in saluting the Virgin Mary, ***“thou that are highly favored”*** It means we become the object of Gods special favor. The King James Version says, *‘God has made us accepted in the Beloved.’*

That’s the solution to rejection. To realize that Jesus bore *your* rejection that you might have *His* acceptance.

PART FOUR – APPLYING GODS REMEDY



Today I'm going to explain the practical steps by which we can enter into that acceptance which Jesus has already purchased for us. Now I have dealt with many, many people over this problem. God has given me the ability to diagnose it and to prescribe His remedy. I want you to listen carefully, I'm going to speak simply. I'm not going to give a lot of fancy explanations or theology I'm going to be very practical and down to earth.

THERE ARE FOUR MAIN THINGS THAT YOU NEED TO DO TO EXPERIENCE ACCEPTANCE WITH GOD.

1. You have to forgive every person who has rejected you or harmed you in any way (and probably there are more than one such person otherwise you wouldn't be rejected)

Listen to what Jesus says in Mark 11:25 ***"And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."***

That's absolutely all inclusive. If you hold *anything* against *anyone*, forgive and then God will forgive you. But if you don't forgive others, God won't forgive you. This applies especially in our attitude toward our parents and most commonly it's our parents that have caused our problem of rejection. But in Ephesians 6:2-3, Paul says this, ***"Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise— "so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."*** The preceding commandments carried no promise with them, they were absent but with this commandment of God there is a promise and the promise is that if you obey the commandment it will go well with you and you will enjoy long life on the earth. But if you do not honor father and mother, let me tell you, it will never go well with you. There'll always be something missing in your life. Again I speak on the basis of experience. I've dealt with dozens of cases where lives have been changed when a person, a man or a woman realized that he had a scriptural obligation to honor his parents. That doesn't mean you don't see their faults, you don't see that they have been the cause of your rejection but you forgive them and you determine as far as lies in your power you will honor them. That's the first essential step. And remember particularly your relationship to your parents. I have never known a person with a wrong relationship to parents who really was blessed and prospered in life.

2. You have to lay down the things that rejection has brought in its train. Bitterness, resentment, hatred, rebellion.

These things are poisonous. If you nourish them in your heart they'll poison your whole life. They'll probably cause you deep emotional problems and quite likely also physical problems. You cannot entertain these things. By a resolute decision of your will push them from you. Say, with a decision of your will, 'I lay down, bitterness, resentment, hatred and rebellion.' They say to cured alcoholics,

‘resentment is a luxury you can no longer afford.’ That’s true, *none* of us can afford resentment. It’s too expensive.

3. You have to believe what God says in the Bible. You have to accept that you are accepted in Christ.

ACCEPT THAT YOU ARE ACCEPTED IN CHRIST.

You have to *believe* what God says in the Bible. You have to *accept that you are accepted in Christ*. This is what the scripture says in Ephesians 1:4-6, ***“For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.”***

So Gods purpose from eternity was to make us His children and He accomplished it, He made it possible through the death of Jesus on our behalf on the cross. So you have to believe that God *wants* you to be His child. You have to accept that when you come to God through Jesus *God accepts you*. He will not turn you away. He will receive you. I love that alternative translation of Ephesians 1:6 in the King James Version, ***“God has made us accepted in the Beloved”*** (that’s in Jesus). When we come to God in Jesus we are the objects of His special favor. That’s the real meaning of that word. Let me tell you this, ‘God has no second-class children!’ We are not tolerated, we are not held at a distance. God doesn’t ‘try our case’ and see whether we qualify. When we come to Him through Jesus, He welcomes us with open arms, we are from then on His children. The objects of His special favor and love protection and provision.

4. Accept yourself.

Many times the hardest thing for us to do is to accept ourselves. We look back over a record of failures and false starts, maybe the way we’ve failed others. We may look back over a failed marriage, over children who went wrong over financial disaster and we may label ourselves ‘failure!’ But God labels you, “My son, My daughter” And you’ve got to accept yourself because God has accepted you! You see, when you come to God in Jesus you’re a new creation, ***“if any man be in Christ, he’s a new creation. Old things have passed away all things have become new and all things are of God”*** That’s the *new* creation! Don’t think of yourself in terms of *before* you came to Christ because since you came to Christ you’ve become a new creation. Ephesians 2:10 says, ***“We, who are in Christ are Gods workmanship”*** That word in the original language means an artistic masterpiece. The Greek word is ‘poema’ from which we get the English word ‘poem.’ We are Gods masterpiece. If you criticize yourself, you’re criticizing Gods handiwork! So don’t do that. Accept yourself because *God* has accepted you.

LET ME LIST THE FOUR STEPS:

1. Forgive every other person
2. Lay down bitterness, resentment, hatred, rebellion
3. Accept that you are accepted in Christ
4. Accept yourself

PART FIVE: ACCEPTANCE BY GODS PEOPLE



Today I'm going to explain one more important way in achieving acceptance and that is, acceptance by Gods people. This means finding your place in the body of Christ.

You see, as Christians we're never isolated individuals. We're brought into a relationship with other believers and that relationship is one of the ways in which our acceptance is worked out in our day to day living. It's not sufficient that we're accepted by our Father in heaven, that's the first step and the most important but after that acceptance has to find expression also in our relationship with our fellow believers. You see, collectively, Christians constitute one body with each Christian who's a member of that body.

Listen to what Paul says in various passages in the New Testament:

Romans 12:4-5, ***"For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others."*** So you see, we are one body and each of us belongs to all the others. We cannot ever find full satisfaction or peace or acceptance apart from the other members.

And then in 1 Corinthians 12, ***"now the body is not made up of one part but many. If the foot should say, 'I'm not a hand, I do not belong to the body, it would not, for that reason, cease to be part of the body. And if the ear should say, 'I'm not an eye, I do not belong to the body, it would not, for that reason, cease to be part of the body.'"***

You see, you're a part of the body. You may be a foot, you may be a hand, you may be an ear, you may be an eye but you're incomplete without the rest of the body. You have to find your place in the body. Again Paul says, a little further on in that chapter, ***"the eye cannot say to the hand, 'I do not need you. and the head cannot say to the feet, 'I do not need you' on the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor."***

So none of us can say to our fellow believers, 'I don't need you.' We *all* need one another. God has created the body so that the members are interdependent. None of them can function effectively on its own. That applies to each one of us, it applies to you. You have to find your place in the body. You need the other members and they need you. Finding your place in the body makes your acceptance a real day to day experience.

Another picture that the New Testament gives of Christians is that of a single family. We're all members of one and the same family. The great prayer which Jesus taught His disciples begins with those two significant words, ***"Our Father..."*** That tells us two things, first, that we have a father who is God. That means our acceptance vertically. But because the word is 'our' and not 'my' tells us we're members of a family and there're a lot of other children in that family. And it's only when we get related in the family that our acceptance become effective horizontally. So there's vertical acceptance with God and horizontal acceptance in God's family. This what Paul says in Ephesians 2:19, ***"Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household"*** Or member of Gods 'family'. The alternative is to be 'foreigners' or 'aliens'. We don't like those words 'foreigners' or 'aliens'. I immigrated to the United States in 1963 and I didn't become a citizen until 1970. So for seven years I was an 'alien' in this country. Probably United States citizens don't realize but every year, the first month of the year in January you have to fill out a form and notify the government where you are and keep them informed. They have to keep tabs on you. And then again, if you go out of the country and come back you have to come back with a little 'green card' which states that you're a 'resident alien'. And you don't line up in the same line with United States citizens to have your passport checked. So there are distinctions. There are differences. You're not really part of the whole thing as long as you're an alien.

What God is saying is, 'you are no longer an alien! You're no longer a foreigner! You belong! You're inside! You're part of the family!' But, for that to be real to you, you really have to find your place in a family.

Listen to what the Psalmist says in Psalm 68:6, ***"God sets the lonely in families..."*** Isn't that beautiful? Are you lonely? Millions of people in the United States are lonely! They haven't realized that *God makes a home for the lonely!* Verse 6 continues, ***"He leads out the prisoners with singing"*** but listen to how verse 6 ends, ***"but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land"***

So Gods purpose is to bring you into a family. To bring you into a home. And in doing that He breaks the chains that bind you and He brings you into prosperity and well-being and into happiness and abundance. There's only one possible barrier. That's rebelliousness. The barrier's not outside, it's not in God it could be in you. If you're going to find your place in the body, if you're going to become a member of the family there's one thing you have to do and that is to *lay down rebellion*. Stop going your own way, doing your own thing. Realize you need the body and seek a place in the body. A place in the family. For your acceptance to be full you need a day to day real experience, not just a doctrinal theory. I've explained that you need to find a place in a body. You need to become a member of a group. You could use different names, 'church' or 'fellowship' or many names, I'm not concerned with the name.

Now it's not always easy to find the kind of group that will make you truly accepted and in my book *'the Marriage Covenant'* I've listed nine questions which anybody seeking such a group should ask before they join. So I'm going to read these nine questions and I want you to listen carefully bearing them in mind if you're in need of such a group:

1. Do they honor and uplift the Lord Jesus Christ?
2. Do they respect the authority of scripture?
3. Do they make room for the moving of the Holy Spirit?
4. Do they exhibit a warm and friendly attitude?
5. Do they seek to work out their faith in practical day to day living?

6. Do they build interpersonal relationships among themselves that go beyond merely attending services?
7. Do they provide pastoral care that embraces all your legitimate needs?
8. Are they open to fellowship with other Christian groups?
9. Do you feel at ease and at home among them?

Now if the answer to all or most of these questions is yes, you are getting warm. Continue to seek God however until you receive definite direction from Him and remember that you probably will not find the perfect group. Furthermore, even if you did, you could not join it because after *you'd* joined it, it could no longer be perfect! That's a quotation from my book '*the Marriage Covenant*'. I'm trying to give you direction of how you can get out of your loneliness and your sense of being on the outside looking in and become part of a living organism, a living body, become a member, find your function and get fulfillment.

Now, if you're still crying out in your heart for this kind of thing, right at the end of my book I've got a prayer that I suggest such a person could pray. If this is how you feel toady and this is what you'd like God to do for you, will you say 'amen' after the prayer? Will you make it *your* prayer that way?

This is the prayer:

Lord, I am lonely and unfulfilled and I acknowledge it. I long to dwell in Your house, to be part of a spiritual family of committed believers. If there are any barriers in me, I ask You to remove them. Guide me to a group where this longing of mine can be fulfilled and help me to make the needed commitment to them in the name of Jesus. Amen.

If you said 'amen' to that prayer somethings going to start happening in your life. I promise you. God's going to start to move. He's going to give you new direction. He's going to bring you into new associations. He's going to open new doors for you. He's going to bring you out of that parched land and make you dwell in a house, be a member of a family, part of a body.

May God bless you.