

to the Church. We become slaves to helping others. We turn into Eco lovers. We constantly look for ways to make a name for ourselves. Our heart cry is, *"If I do my best, God will notice me and accept me"*. The sad part about that is, it is not 'doing our best', that will bring about acceptance with God, but removal of the sin in our hearts. The Bible says, *"Your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you"* (Isaiah 59:2).

Reconciliation with God, is the only thing that will remove rejection and bring acceptance. But reconciliation is only possible when our sins no longer stand between us and God. Here's where the wonderful message of the Gospel comes into the picture. God out of His marvellous grace and kindness has made it possible for our sins to be removed from His sight. David prophesied of it in Psalm 103. *"Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases; who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion"* (Psalm 103:1-4).

How did God do this? He did it in the person, life and death of His only Son, Jesus Christ (2Corinthians 5:17- 21). Deliverance from sin can be found in Jesus Christ alone. *"He has rescued us from the one who rules in the kingdom of darkness, and he has brought us into the Kingdom of his dear Son. God has purchased our freedom with his [Christ's] blood and has forgiven all our sins"* (Colossians 1:13-14).

Now we can understand why the psychologist Charles Solomon has said, "Although on a human level personal rejection has left untold scars on our lives, the acceptance which brings lasting healing is that which must be experienced on a spiritual level." This is what is presented in Ephesians 1:6 which informs

us that *"by God's marvellous grace He has made us accepted in the Beloved"* [KJV].

When we place our faith in Jesus Christ we are accepted into God's family. We are given a warm welcome with words like, *"If anyone loves me, my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him [forever]"* (John 14:23). We enter the *"family of believers"* (Galatians 6:10) and *"Jesus is not ashamed to call us his brothers"* (Hebrews 2:11). He fills us with his love (1John 3).

Acceptance brings untold gracious blessings, to those who believe in Christ. They are adopted into God's family and blessed with every spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1:3). It is a high honour to be accepted by God. Acceptance is God saying "Welcome to my Family!", where we are given an eternal inheritance through Jesus Christ. When you have everything in Jesus Christ the feelings of rejection subside. We discover we have no need to give in to repression or aggression, but rather relax and bathe in the love poured out on us in the family of God (1John 4).

If you are struggling with rejection and longing for acceptance, you can find eternal love and acceptance, by trusting Jesus Christ today.

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So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. - John 8:36 ASSOCIATION

Accepted by God

Ephesians 1:6



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“Welcome To My Family”

*“To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he has made us **accepted in the beloved.**”*
Ephesians 1:6 (KJV)

I remember an interesting song by my friend Tennessee Ernie Ford - **“Hand Me Down Things”** - only hand me down things!!

When I was young times were hard
Money was hard to get;
The world I knew was my back yard,
My folks were poor and in debt.

Of all us kids I was the youngest one,
And always the last in line.
The toys I got and the clothes I wore
Were theirs before they were mine.

I was born after the great depression and life wasn't that special when I was a kid. Being the second last kid in a line of 10 was not easy. In fact, it could be said that in many ways I felt a lot of rejection.

In his book **“The Ins and Out of Rejection”**, **Charles Solomon**, says: *“Rejection is a family thing, and today it is a psychological disturbance of epidemic proportions.”* Solomon believes that all of us suffer to some extent with emotional disturbances usually caused by a lack of parental acceptance during our early years. He claims, that for various reasons our parents withheld certain expressions of affection and affirmation, which we so desperately needed.

As a result we have grown up with feelings of rejection. We are crying out “No one really loves me! No one truly believes in me! I'm not wanted or needed!” This sense of rejection increases as we grow into adults. And so we try to develop ways to handle it.

We develop habits or ways to express our hurts, either as **Aggression** or **Repression**.

1. Aggression: One way of dealing with it is to become aggressive, macho like, pushing ourselves and our ideas on others so that they will realise how important we are. It is known in children as rebellion. Rules are broken with the hope that someone will take notice of ‘me’. It is a stand of defiance. ‘I must be accepted ...look at what I can do’. Adults do the same thing in a different form. When they feel rejection they may, as we say, ‘spit the dummy’ and verbally raise their voices, yell or scream. They resort to making loud threats and pronouncing ultimatums. “if you don't do this.... then I'm going to ... take this action”. Some become violent and throw things around. They totally lose control and beat people up. They may even cause irreparable damage and their actions may even result in death. A close object in the kitchen becomes a tool of destruction and death.

Many a person, because of rejection, has stormed out of the house, jumped in the car, and driven recklessly down the highway, only to be involved in a fatal crash for themselves and often other innocent parties.

2. Repression: Then on the other hand there are those who have felt rejected by dominant parents, and because of their own timid personality, withdraw in to silence, depression and morbidity. They may turn to alcohol or other drugs in order to try to kill the painful hurt associated with rejection. Sometimes we read about these people in the morning in the newspaper. They are the sad statistics of an OD or some form of suicide.

Both the person who acts out aggressive behaviour and the person who wants to withdraw and escape life, are doing so because they feel rejected, and basically are trying to live with their need to be accepted and loved as persons of value and worth.

Often in dealing with rejection we only work on the symptoms, such as poor relationships, marital conflicts, depression, loneliness, job dissatisfaction, and other behavioural changes.

Rejection itself though stems from the fact that we are sinners, alienated from God. Everyone born into this world has a built in ‘rejection factor’. We are born sinners.

That is, we came into this world with a sinful nature that is already feeling the result of being separated from God. We begin right away to reject God. We naturally do those things that displease God and cause us to feel rejection. Our sinful nature within us does not want to live with a holy God. We want to live life our way, not God's way. This means we reject God and experience the pain of separation from Him. But God is our maker, and our creator as Psalm 100:3 reminds us, *“Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and not we ourselves.”* He made us to live in relationship with Him.

Because of this, we are torn inside with conflict. We innately know that we should do the right thing but we cannot, and so we sense guilt and rejection. Paul expressed this struggle in Romans 7:15-23. Verse 23 says it all. *“There is something else deep within me, in my lower nature, that is at war with my mind and wins the fight and makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. In my mind I want to be God's willing servant, but instead I find myself still enslaved to sin.”*

This is why we feel the pain of guilt and rejection. Therefore, we subconsciously go through life trying to prove that we are ‘A Somebody’, worthy of God's attention.

Feeling this pain of emptiness which comes with rejection, we then try so hard, in every way possible, to get God's approval. We turn