

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your correspondence to the Al Denson Show and for tuning in every week to our program. My prayer for you is to be encouraged in your daily walk with Christ through the words of this booklet. Our hope is that in turn you will tell others of what God is doing through our ministry to youth and parents on TV. I am convinced you will not find another program on any network anywhere that deals with issues today's youth and their parents are facing, and provides answers from a Godly perspective.

In addition, we would love for you to help us by going to our web site at www.aldenson.com. Here you can write to us, order additional material like this booklet, check out all my music, have a daily bible study, and stay up to date on the ministry. You can also send us a prayer request and questions for the TV show. But more importantly, please continue to be in prayer with us as we work together to help those that are in need.

Thanks for watching and God Bless!

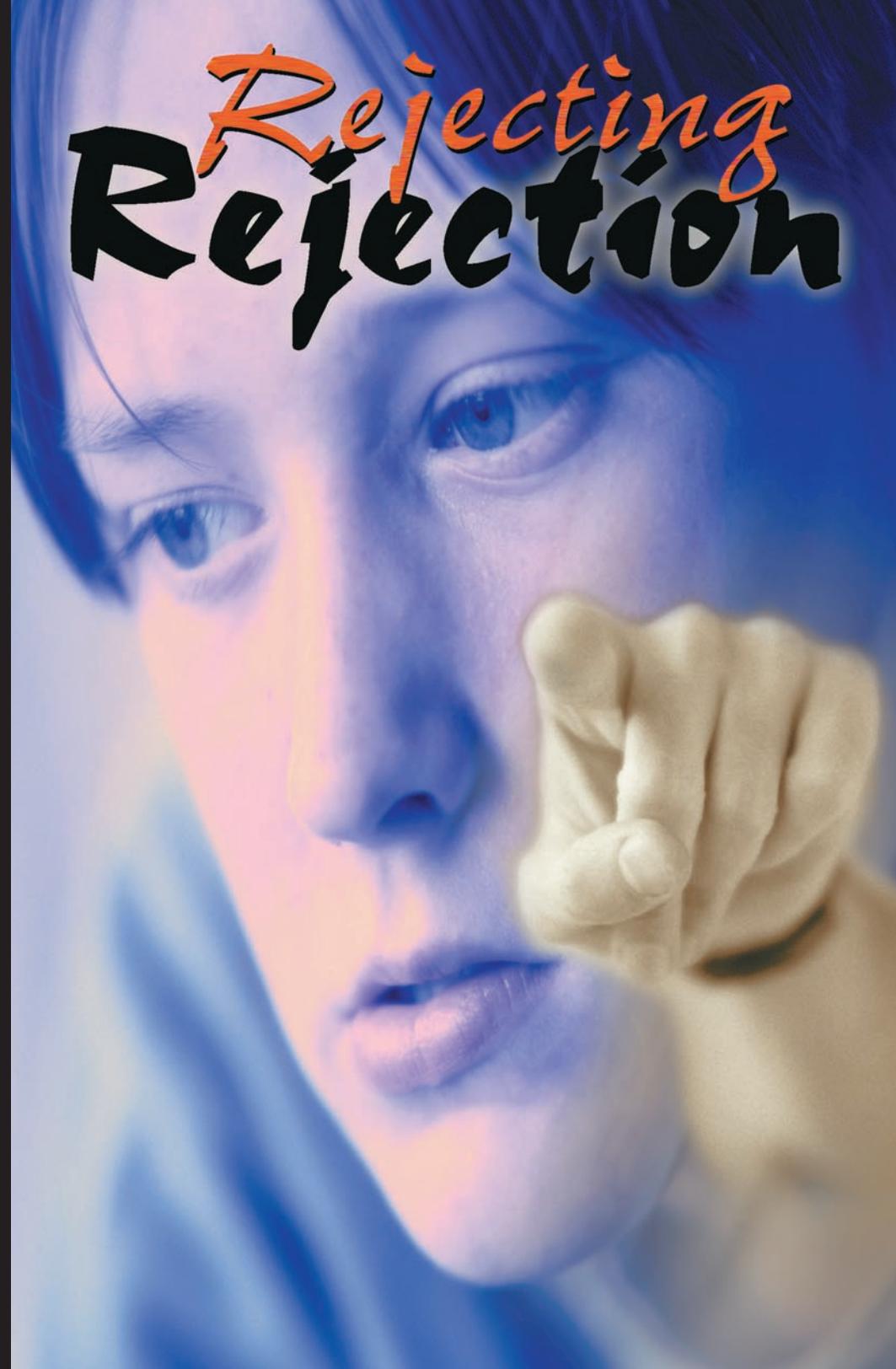
Sincerely,



An Outreach of Celebration Ministries

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Rejecting Rejection





Most artists create for only a brief moment in time. That phenomenon was once known as "15 minutes of fame". Yet even in a fickle world, there still emerge a talented few that transcends time and trends. With nearly 15 years as a major label recording artist and seven hit

albums to his credit, Al Denson is that kind of artist.

But the attention and acclaim his artistry has brought him over the years are anything but the routine rewards of worldly success. Rather, they are the fruits of a life of purpose and passion, and a mission that has always reached far beyond merely making music.

The millions of young people Al has performed for, befriended, counseled, consoled and clowned around with in his career already know that. And thousands more are finding out every day.

This past year has seen Al expand his efforts to a global audience through the reach of his daily syndicated television production, "The Al Denson Show." "You've got to reach out to people where they are with the most powerful means and this form of media allows you to build trust and a rapport," says Al. "This has all been so amazing. I can't imagine what lies in store when the Lord finally calls me home, but I don't have to wait for heaven to receive rewards. I get them every time a kid comes up to me and says, 'I heard what you said, and I accepted Christ.' You can't ask for anything more or better than that."

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Rejecting Rejection

If you are old enough to read this booklet, chances are you have already experienced rejection of some kind in your life. A friend may have betrayed you, a boyfriend or girlfriend may have broken your heart, or perhaps you have been fired from a job. Feeling rejected may be the most awful feeling a person can have in this life. But the most hurtful form of rejection anyone can experience is rejection from their parents. Most of us value the acceptance of our parents more than the acceptance of anyone else. There are professional men and women in their 40s, 50s, and 60s who are still seeking their parents' acceptance and approval even though their parents are dead, and here is why: Every person comes into this world with three basic emotional needs: the need to be unconditionally loved and accepted; the need to feel valuable and capable; and the need to feel that they are not alone.

These are needs that our parents are to first meet in our lives. When these needs are met, you "feel" loved. Rejection occurs when you don't "feel" loved, when love is withheld knowingly or unknowingly. If you are feeling the effects of rejection, you are not alone. The number of teenagers today who are suffering

from severe rejection is at an epidemic level. The profile of these teens does not always depend on the background or home from which they come. The rejection that comes from the feeling of abandonment that occurs when one parent leaves the home through death or divorce is easy to understand. But rejection can just as easily take root when a parent simply doesn't take the time to make a child feel valued.

Too often a parent rejects a child by making their love conditional based on the child's performance. When the child's performance is not

up to the expected standard, love is withdrawn, or when the child finally attains the standard, the standard is raised so he never quite measures up. Acceptance is just out of reach. If the child ever does manage to measure up, he is accepted for what he does — not for who he is; this means his performance is accepted but he, as a person, is rejected.

The consequences of rejection in your life are very serious and always lead to rebellion in one form or the other in your life. Sometimes the rebellion will be loud and ugly, and sometimes it may be passive, as you quietly reject the values of your parents, and become disinterested in your grades, your goals or life in general.

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Remember, rejection is anything that conveys to you that you are unloved or unwanted.

This can be communicated in many different ways, both overt and covert:

- When your parents say things like “I wish you had never been born,” “I wanted a girl/boy,” “you were a mistake,” “you’ll never amount to anything,” “why can’t you be like ...”
- When your parents show no affection toward you, or interest in you.
- When your parents physically, verbally or emotionally abuse you.
- When your parents love conditionally or offer acceptance that is performance based.
- When your parents continually express disapproval or disappointment to you.
- When your parents place unrealistic expectations on you because they see you as an extension of their own identity.
- When your parents are permissive. This is neglect, and a lack of discipline comes across as a lack of love and concern.
- When your parents are overprotective. You get the message “you cannot do life without my help; you are not a capable person.”
- When your parents do not give you their undivided time and attention.

- When your parents do not listen to you with their ears, eyes and heart.
- When your parent abandons you through death, divorce or suicide.
- When your father abdicates his leadership role in the family. A father who doesn’t provide strength, protection, discipline and values in the home, makes you feel that you are not a priority in his life.
- You may be a person who can identify with one or more of these common forms of parental rejection. Regardless of the form rejection takes, it always causes feelings of:
 - low self-esteem
 - being unloved
 - being unacceptable
 - being unworthy
 - being inferior
 - guilt for even living.

If you choose not to deal with the rejection you have suffered it will or may have already turned into:

- anger
- bitterness
- refusal to communicate
- ambivalence
- distrust
- rebellion against all authority.



Your parents can love you and mean well, but they may reject you without realizing what they are doing, especially if that is the way their parents treated them. Parents can also reject you when they:

- don’t allow you to think for yourself.
- don’t let you speak your mind.
- regard your feelings as unimportant.
- avoid spending time with you.
- disrespect your individuality.
- speak harshly to you.
- tell you or act like your opinions don’t matter.
- take you for granted.
- are rude to you in front of others.
- dismiss your needs as unimportant.
- don’t admit when they are wrong.
- don’t say they are sorry and ask for forgiveness.

If you are a teenager who doesn’t feel loved, chances are you have already or will begin to:

- develop an argumentative attitude.
- seek friends your parents disapprove of.
- use disrespectful or bad language.
- have facial expressions that constantly reflect anger or avoidance.
- have repeated absences from church or school.
- have lower academic achievement.
- be resistant to discussing or agreeing on almost anything.
- be cold and unresponsive to your parents’ touch.
- avoid your parents.
- often turn away in their presence.

- show a lack of respect for your parents’ advice.
- be highly critical of your parents.
- begin to indulge in sex, alcohol or drugs.

Here are some of the consequences of rejection that can follow you into adulthood:

- drug and alcohol abuse.
- chronic lying.
- procrastination.
- extreme pride and self-centeredness (narcissism).
- workaholic and the need to achieve more and more.
- vicious emotional ups and downs.
- extreme submission.
- unhealthy legalism.
- severe withdrawal from society.
- feelings of loss of control (anxiety attacks).
- stress-related heart problems.
- homosexuality.
- deep feelings of loneliness.
- suicidal thoughts or attempts.
- poor mate selection.
- clinical depression.
- sexual dysfunction in marriage.
- poor decision making.
- lowered career achievement.
- outbursts of anger.
- low energy in accomplishing work tasks.
- extreme self-criticism.
- gravitation toward cults and fringe religious groups.
- unrealistic expectations of self and others.
- eating disorders.

If you have suffered from rejection you probably have a discrepancy between what you KNOW to be true and what you FEEL is true.

If you have experienced rejection from your parents, you may have gotten the feeling that you are unwanted. With this feeling of being unwanted always comes feelings of worthlessness, inferiority, and guilt. You see, home is like a mirror in which you see yourself. Your self-esteem will largely depend upon the worth or worthlessness you see reflected in the people who mean the most to you.

If your parents have rejected you, you find yourself unacceptable, and will reject yourself. You will find nothing good about your appearance, intelligence, or behavior. You will find fault with yourself and will constantly be condemning yourself. When you are wronged by others, you won't express anger because you fear you will lose what little acceptance in life that you have. When you grow up in an atmosphere of rejection, you are programmed for rejection. If you find yourself in a situation where you are not rejected, you somehow set it up (usually with anti-social behavior) so you will be rejected.

Your lack of worthiness will make you feel unacceptable to God, and you frequently see God as a rejecting father. You may accept Jesus as Savior, and then spend the rest of your life trying to get Jesus to accept you. You find it difficult to believe God could love and accept you unconditionally, and you feel

unworthy and unsaved, even though you know the Bible assures you of your salvation.

If you have suffered from rejection you probably have a discrepancy between what you KNOW to be true and what you FEEL is true. Your feelings always seem to be more real, so you conduct your life on the basis of feelings rather than truth. This will cause you to always distort reality so it will agree with your emotions.

When this is the case, relationships with others become a problem because one person relates to a situation as it is in reality and you relate as you FEEL that it is. There can be no real communication on a rational basis. A person who argues a point with you based on logic may become very frustrated because their point of view is based on facts, where yours is based strictly on feelings.

In his book, *Emotions: Can You Trust Them?*, Dr. James Dobson said: "...we are living in a day when people are being encouraged to release their emotions, to grant them even greater power in ruling their destinies... We live and breathe by the vicissitudes (irregular changes) of our feelings... Reason is now dominated by feelings, rather than the reverse (feelings being controlled by facts) as God intended."

You see, society says if you feel a certain way, then it must be true. About 20 years ago a song called *You Light Up My Life* was very popular. Even though it is a very sweet

song, it contains a phrase that is a very dangerous lie. It says, "it can't be wrong, when it feels so right." What that song is trying to sell us is that if something "feels" good, then it must be good. We have used that same faulty reasoning to determine that if something "feels" bad, then it must be bad. Or in this case, "I feel unacceptable, therefore I am unacceptable." We judge how accepted we are by how acceptable we feel.

Feelings are often a lousy barometer of reality. In any given week, and sometimes even on any given day you will experience a wide variety of emotions. When things are going well you can experience great happiness and contentment. But when things take a turn for the worse, your emotions can plunge you into doubt, frustration, fear and anger.

As your feelings change, the way you feel about your relationship with God often changes, too. This is no way to determine your acceptance before God. Even though the scripture promises if you are saved, God's acceptance of you is not based on what you do, or don't do, but only on His unconditional love for you and the price that Jesus paid on the cross to redeem you, it still seems more natural for you to feel condemned and unworthy, instead of forgiven and loved by God. As a result, you probably live most days feeling guilty, afraid, and condemned.

Sometimes rejection is real and sometimes it is imagined because of the way you feel about yourself. Satan wants you to believe that you are a loser, that you are worthless, that no one likes you, and that no one could possibly love you, including God. If you choose to believe the lies he tells you, you will experience feelings of depression, self-hatred, guilt, shame, despair, worry, doubt, fear, and maybe even contemplate suicide. But the truth is, as a Christian, you are unconditionally loved and accepted by God, you are special and precious to Him, and you are perfect in His sight. The choice is yours. You either build your life based on the truth of the Word of God, or on your highly unreliable feelings.

Feelings are often a lousy barometer of reality.

You can **REJECT REJECTION.**

Before you can do this you may need to examine your belief system. Your belief system is extremely important, because it determines what you think about yourself. This is the way it works:

You have a belief system.

That belief system determines what you think about.

What you think about determines how you feel.

How you feel determines how you act and the choices you make.

Putting it simply, your actions are belated announcements of your thoughts. The way you act and the choices you make are a picture of how you really feel about yourself. Your belief system is the most important thing about you, because it will determine everything in your life. Where does this belief system come from?

Before you were really old enough to think for yourself, your thought processes were dictated by those around you. Other people taught you what they believed to be true. Eventually, these "truths" became convictions about yourself, other people and the world in general. These basic convictions then became your patterns of thinking about yourself and responding to others and the world around you. As you were growing up, the people

around you taught you some important things about life:

- who you are
- who to trust
- what is good and bad
- what you are worth

This information became the basis for your belief system through which you evaluate everything in life. You see, truth then for you is whatever you have been taught truth to be, whether it really is true or not. For example: Suppose your mother grew up being told that the earth is flat. She accepted that as "truth" so she passed what she believed to be "truth" on to you. From the time you were a baby you have been taught that the earth is flat, so this becomes "truth" to you and is incorporated into your belief system. As you grew older you did hear information that contradicted what your mother had taught you, but our parents are usually the ones who influence us the most in our formative years, and the impressions made on us at an early age are the hardest to undo.

One day someone offers you an all-expenses paid vacation. You are to sail first-class on a cruise around the world. But your belief system says, "the world is flat." Your belief system determines your thoughts so you think to yourself, "If I try to sail around the world, I'll fall off and die." Your thoughts determine your feelings, so you begin to feel fearful about going on such a cruise.

Your feelings determine your choices and actions, so you decide not to accept the offer. As a result, you miss out on the experience of a lifetime, all because of a faulty belief system. Recognizing that you have a distorted view of yourself, others, right and wrong, or of the world in general because of a belief system that is flawed, is where you

begin. Being an adult means determining what is really true, facing that reality, and making the changes that are necessary in your thoughts, attitudes and actions. Remember, your present is more influenced by how you see your future, than by what has happened in your past.

Perhaps you are not quite sure whether your belief system is faulty. Don't forget, your actions are always belated announcements of your thoughts. If you are aware of this principle, then you can begin to recognize how your actions may be revealing the effects of rejection that are present in your life. You can always tell what you believe not by what you say, but by how you respond to life.

This all would sound very grim and hopeless if it were not for the good news. You can **REJECT REJECTION**. You can reject the negative feelings (this doesn't mean you deny they exist) and be healed of all of the devastating effects that rejection has had on your life. There are two things that you must do in order for this to happen:

First, Forgive Your Parents...

The emotional wounds that parents inflict, whether intentional or unintentional, are the deepest and most long-lasting of any that we can ever receive in life. Many teenagers carry those wounds for the rest of their lives. The first step in dealing with all of your hurt is to be honest about it.



You Can Decide not to allow the actions of another person to control or destroy your life.

Talk to someone who can help--a pastor, counselor, or any Christian adult who is mature and wise enough to help you work through your feelings.

You need to understand that solid, stable, functioning families in this world are the exception and not the rule. Family time for most people will always be the best of times and the worst of times. Life is a mixed bag of hurts and helps, and the only way to deal with all of this and get on with your life is to forgive.

Hurt will happen; that is a fact of life, and the only way those hurts can be healed is through forgiveness. This is the key to dealing with your pain and anger in a healthy, constructive way. Unfortunately, not even many Christian teens know much about real, scriptural forgiveness. Here are some facts about forgiveness that you need to know:

1. Forgiveness is not a feeling. It is a decision you make with an act of your will. It has nothing to do with the person who has offended you. It is first done for your own good. It is an emotional release that must happen before there can be healing in your life.

2. Forgiveness is undeserved pardon and an undeserved release. If you think forgiveness is only for those who ask for your forgiveness, or deserve your forgiveness, then you don't understand forgiveness at all.

3. Forgiveness is not denying, or excusing, or minimizing what happened. It is being honest and objective about the offense, the pain and the consequences caused by the offender.

Maybe you have a hard time with forgiveness because you believe that if you forgive you are excusing the behavior, or letting the other person off the hook. Nothing could be further from the truth. Forgiveness is acknowledging that what was done is wrong and inexcusable, but choosing to show someone else the same kind of forgiveness God has shown you. Colossians 3:13 says, "Bear with each other and FORGIVE whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as God forgave you." The forgiveness that Jesus offers is unconditional and complete. You don't deserve it, and He provided it before you ever asked for it or even knew you needed it.

Forgiving is not a suggestion, it is a command, and God gives it to you for your own well-being. When you have been offended, you experience the pain of the offense when it happens. But the initial pain of the wrong done to you is usually quite small compared to the pain of reliving the offense over and over again in your mind. Unforgiveness is like a tape recorder on automatic rewind that plays the hurtful experience again and again.

God knows that unforgiveness is also the soil in which bitterness grows. Bitterness is a poisonous plant with deadly fruit: depression, anger, hostility, resentment, rage, physical, mental and emotional disorders, and the inability to love and trust others. Bitterness will make you extremely vulnerable to unwise decisions and destructive patterns of living. It can keep you from being able to love and be loved unconditionally, it can cause you to doubt your salvation, it can keep you from being able to pray effectively, and make it impossible for you to live a consistent Christian life. In short, it is like a cancer of the soul that will go on to destroy you physically, mentally, spiritually and emotionally. This is a highly contagious condition that will spread down through generations if left unchecked.

When you choose to forgive you are simply saying, "I refuse to allow the actions of another person to control and destroy my life. Life is too short and precious to be wasted in anger and bitterness. Someone may have meant this for evil in my life, but I choose to use it for good. Someone may have meant it to destroy me, but I choose to let it grow me instead. Someone may have meant it to tear me down, but I choose to let it help make me stronger, wiser and more mature."

Remember, no matter how horribly you have been treated, it could never compare with how

horrible you were to God. Your sin drove the nails through the hands and feet of His only Son, and yet He forgave you completely while you were still in your sin. Don't let unforgiveness keep you from being in fellowship with God, and from being able to live a consistent, godly life. What choice will you make? You can't control what other people do, but you can decide not to allow the actions of another person to control or destroy your life. God loves you, and wants you to live life full and free. You need to understand that while forgiveness will be hard, it is not an impossibility because God NEVER asks us to do the impossible.

The thought of forgiving your parents may truly seem impossible to you because you have never known real forgiveness yourself, and you can't give what you have never received.

Maybe the place where you need to start is by admitting to your Heavenly Father that you are a sinner and in need of His forgiveness. God wants you to be clean and free of all of your sin. You can become His child by accepting Jesus' death on the cross as payment for your sin, by asking Him to forgive you and to save you. You simply must be willing to open wide your life for Him to come in and take control. The Bible says at the moment you do that, that the "old" you dies and a "new" you is born in your place. The new you is completely and totally forgiven. Once you have received God's forgiveness you will be able to pass that

Jesus understands rejection because He experienced it from His own family.

same brand of forgiveness along to everyone who has hurt or offended you, including your parents.

Secondly, Accept Your Acceptance...

If you have a healthy relationship with your parents and a healthy sense of self-worth, you will spend your young adult years preparing for a career and establishing a family. But, if you are insecure in your personhood, you will find it difficult to do either. During these years, identity and acceptance are frequently based on achievement. When you are achieving, life is good. But until acceptance and identity are based on something more permanent than performance, the "good" life won't bring lasting satisfaction.

The Bible says when God created you He set eternity in your hearts. This is an intense longing that drives you to seek true fulfillment, meaning, and purpose in life. As a Christian, anytime you forget these things are found only in Christ, and start looking for fulfillment in people, places, things, or experiences, you will be defeated, frustrated and empty. Your true identity as a Christian is not based on what you do, but on who you are. Therefore, the only acceptance in life that will bring true fulfillment must be based on who you are, not on what you do.

Jesus understands rejection because He experienced it from His own family. John 1:11 says, "He came to His own and His own received Him not." He understands the hurt that comes with rejection; that's why He went to the cross,

so as it says in Ephesians 1:6 you, as a child of God, could be "accepted in the Beloved." His acceptance is unconditional and unending.

God never says:

- I accept you because
- I accept you since
- I accept you for as much as
or
- I will accept you if
- I will accept you when
- I will accept you after,
- I will accept you provided
- I will accept you presuming

Any of these statements would make God's acceptance of you conditional. God's acceptance does not depend on what you are, or what you do or don't do, but on the finished work of Christ on the cross. You are accepted because you are "in Christ" (the Beloved). Once you are saved, God can NEVER reject you because He can never reject His Son.

Here is an illustration of what it means to be "in Christ" and have Christ in you:

Take a cup of boiling water and put a tea bag inside. Instantly the tea becomes one with the water and the water becomes one with the tea. The longer the tea bag stays in the cup the stronger the tea becomes. But, from the first second the bag hits the water, the two are one and can never be separated again. It would be impossible to accept the tea and reject the water, or to accept the water and reject the tea. If you have been saved your life is like that tea bag and Jesus is like the boiling water. You were placed in Him and He is in you for eternity. God can not reject you because He can't reject His Son. You are "accepted in the Beloved!"

There is another verse that explains this truth and it is Colossians 2:14, "having canceled the CERTIFICATE OF DEBT with its regulations that were against us and that stood opposed to us, He took it away, nailing it to the Cross." Today the term "CERTIFICATE OF DEBT" is not one that we are familiar with, but if we had lived in Paul's day this verse would have painted a powerful word picture. Back then, whenever a person was convicted in a Roman Court of Law, the scribe of the court would make a written list of all the crimes for which that person had been convicted. That list was called a "CERTIFICATE OF

DEBT." This certificate would be taken along with the criminal to the place of imprisonment and nailed to the large wooden door of his cell. When the sentence had been completed, the scribe would take down the "CERTIFICATE OF DEBT" and write across it the word that meant "IT IS FINISHED," roll it up, give it to the prisoner, and he could never be convicted of those crimes again.

Do you understand what Paul was saying in this verse? Two thousand years ago a "CERTIFICATE OF DEBT" was prepared for you. A list was made of ALL your sins, and that list was nailed to an old, rugged cross. The words Jesus spoke from the cross were not a cry of defeat, but a shout of victory. IT IS FINISHED! It meant PAID IN FULL! All your sins, past, presence and future, have been paid for, and you can never be found guilty of them again. Because God accepts and approves of Jesus, He COMPLETELY accepts and approves of you, because you are "IN CHRIST." You don't have to perform or meet certain standards to win God's love and acceptance, or to prove that you have value and worth.



It is one thing to get all of these truths into your head but it is another thing to get them into your heart where they can change the way you live. If you will be willing to accept what the Bible says, you can be free of your past. In order to do this there are several things that you will have to accept:

1. Accept that God's Word was written for YOU. When you read all the promises in the Bible you may feel like they are for everyone else, but they are written for you.

2. Instead of always rehearsing the pain your earthly parents have caused you, rehearse on a daily basis the truth of how your perfect, Heavenly Father loves and accepts you. The Bible promises that your Heavenly Father will fill all the emptiness in your life caused by neglectful or absent earthly parents. Psalm 27:10 says, "Though my mother and father forsake me, the Lord will receive me."

3. Accept the fact that your Heavenly Father is nothing like your earthly parents. Your earthly parents may have disappointed you, ignored you, abused you, or even abandoned you. But your Heavenly Father never has and never will. He has a perfect track record!

If you have suffered from rejection for years, feelings of a lifetime won't change overnight. It will take constant reminding and "renewing" to see that the old information is replaced with the truth. You must come to the place of knowing that God accepts you so you can accept yourself even if the whole world rejects you. When you know experientially your acceptance and glorious freedom in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17), you will be set free from trying to please people. When they reject you, you realize that they are the ones with the problem, not you.

G. Campbell Morgan was a very famous preacher many years ago. When he was a young man wanting to enter the ministry, he had to give a trial sermon in front of a panel of men who were to ordain him. To his great surprise and disappointment, they turned him down for his ordination. Knowing that his

father was waiting at home to hear what happened, Mr. Morgan, with a broken heart, wired his father with one word: "REJECTED." Soon after, his father wired him back and said, "REJECTED ON EARTH, BUT ACCEPTED IN HEAVEN. DAD" G. Campbell Morgan went on to become a great preacher, but he never forgot that experience.

It is our prayer that if you know Christ as Savior, you would never forget that you are unconditionally accepted in heaven, and that is the only place where acceptance really matters.

