

Caring for your Soul - Part 3

9 November 2017



Dealing with Rejection

When we speak about experiencing 'rejection', we may not be referring to out-right rejection, but to the more subtle ways in which we are made to feel insignificant or unimportant, or treated as if we have little or no value. When we experience this, whether it be from biological or spiritual family (or even an unbeliever), it can cause irreparable damage.

We can experience this kind of rejection in the following ways:

- A relationship that is consistently characterised by anger
- A barrage of unjust criticism
- When we experience unhealthy comparison with others
- Falling victim to favouritism
- Inconsistency in a person's emotions or affections
- Jealousy, selfishness or envy

Sometimes this harmful behaviour is a consequence of a communication style which is performance-based. The antagonist seeks to intimidate a person by revealing their weaknesses and failures, thereby producing shame in their victim's heart. This gives the one inflicting the shame a false sense of importance and security.

By this harsh, condescending behaviour, our identity is belittled as well as our true purpose in God. In fact, the same could be said of the person responsible for the cruel behaviour! If we let it, this kind of abuse can affect our intimacy with God and potentially break relationships with all parties affected by the toxic behaviour.

Identifying Rejection

These are just a few of the **fruits of rejection**:

- Lying, performance through work or people-pleasing
- Emotional instability, procrastination, impulsive lying

- Substance abuse of one or another kind
- Excessive submissiveness, legalism, low self-esteem
- Depression, heart problems because of stress, reclusiveness, bad eating habits
- Sexual challenges within marriage, academic under-achievement, sexual promiscuity
- Extreme loneliness, suicidal thoughts, indecisiveness and bad decision-making
- Explosions of anger, lack of energy, drawn towards unstable religious figures

The Bible speaks often about the power of words; words spoken in love and words said with evil intent (Proverbs 16:24, 13:3, 12:18, Psalm 141:3). Let us strive to be doers of these verses and repairers of relational bridges. It is up to us break the cycles of destruction by practicing forgiveness and refusing to let the evil go on.

Take some time now to prayerfully consider which of the fruits of rejection mentioned above occasionally surface in you when you are under pressure.

How to Forgive

I'm sure many would agree that to forgive is not such an easy feat. When we consider the pain caused by family wounds, marital wounds and church wounds, it is tempting to despair and wonder if it is truly possible to forgive in heart and soul.

Satan knows that if he can ensnare us in bitterness and unforgiveness then he has won the battle.

Firstly we need to remind ourselves that our battle against offence is not so much offence against another person but against demons trying to provoke us into un-forgiveness. (Ephesians 6:12). There is a battle being waged, and your soul is the battleground. Satan knows that if he can ensnare us in bitterness and unforgiveness then he has won the battle. For us to leave unforgiveness unchecked is to give the enemy a landing strip (a "foothold") into our souls. Peace will no longer protect and fill us. Instead, anger and resentment will take their place. (Ephesians 4:26-27)

In Matthew 18:34-35 it speaks about the servant whose debt the master forgave, but the servant refused to forgive another man's debt towards him. The result was that the servant was severely punished and rejected by God. In verse 35 we are instructed to forgive from the heart. Even though forgiveness starts off with a decision, it has to eventually filter through to bring about true forgiveness in the heart.

To help us to forgive, we need to ask the Lord to show us our offender's pain

To help us to forgive, we need to ask the Lord to show us our offender's pain which most likely feeds their offensive behaviour. This will help to place our feet in their shoes. When you experience and have insight into the heart of the offender, forgiveness is easier and we may even begin to feel empathy for our 'enemy'.

When we are filled with the love of God and know that we are completely forgiven, this will also help us to forgive from the heart. Lack of exposure to godly love and the experience of God's love makes it very hard to forgive from the heart. His love needs to first melt our hearts so we can see

others with love and grace.

Nothing ever done to us (sinful people) is ever worse than what we have done through our sin to a perfect, love-personified, all-embracing and forgiving Father. We too have hurt others. It may be that the extent to which we have hurt others is far less than the injury we have had to endure. Nevertheless, you forgive because He forgives you and you will need to hand the perpetrator over to God for his/her soul to be saved.

The Holy Spirit is an ever-present help in time of need to help us begin the process of forgiveness.

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Offence is not given but taken. Although Scripture clearly warns those through whom offence comes (Luke 17:1-2), in Matthew 18:21-22 we are challenged to forgive seven times seventy times a day, without an apology being given. Christ interceded for His murderers to be forgiven by the Father without them even realising their fault and apologising for it. This is the epitome of meekness.

As ambassadors of Christ and as an extension of His love and forgiveness toward others, we are called to love our enemies, and even bless them materially or help them physically. This is what Christ does for all of mankind. So, at the end of the day, our forgiving of others is not only for our benefit but even more so for the extension of God's kingdom, His love and His presence. We are tools for His pleasure and for His purpose.

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