

Acceptance by God's People



Rejection - Cause and Cure (Part 5)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as we draw near to the close of another week. In my previous talks this week, I've explained that God's remedy for rejection was provided by the death of Jesus on the cross on our behalf. At the cross a divinely ordained exchange took place. Jesus took upon Himself all the evil that was due to us that we in turn might receive, by faith, all the good that was due to Him. In particular, Jesus endured our rejection, both by man and by God that we might experience His acceptance.

Yesterday I explained the practical steps by which we can enter into acceptance. I outlined four steps. First forgive every person who has rejected you or harmed you in any way, and especially forgive your parents because your attitude to your parents can be decisive for the course of your life. God requires us to honor father and mother that it may bel well with us and that we may live long on the earth.

The second step is to lay down bitterness, resentment, hatred and rebellion. All these evil, negative forces that would destroy us.

Thirdly, accept that you are accepted in Christ. Accept it by faith, because the Scripture declares it.

Fourthly, accept yourself. And sometimes that's the hardest thing to do.

Today I'm going to explain one more important state in achieving acceptance, and that is acceptance by God's 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 our fellow believers. And that relationship is one of the ways that 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 a member of that body. Listen to what Paul says in various passages of the New Testament. Romans 12 verses 4 and 5:

> "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 who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." (NIV)

So you see, we're members of 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 chapter 12 verses 14 through 16:

> "Now the body is not made up of one part but many. If the foot should say, 'Because I am 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, 'Because 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." (NIV)

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, 1 Corinthians 12 verses 21 through 23:

> "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you!' And the head cannot say to the feel, 'I don't 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." (NIV)

So none of us can say to our fellow believers, "I don't need you." We all need one another. God 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. That 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," it tells us we're members of a family and there are a lot of other children in that family. And it's only when we get related in the family that our acceptance becomes effective horizontally. So there's vertical acceptance with God, horizontal acceptance in God's family. This is what Paul says in Ephesians 2:19 along this line:

> "Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household [or members of God's family]." (NIV)

The alternative is to be foreigners and aliens. We don't like those words, "foreigners and 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 that every year, the first month of the year generally, 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. There's another line.

So there are distinctions. There are differences. You're not really part of the whole thing as long as you're an alien. And what God is saying is, "You are 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 ways in Psalm 68:6:

> "God makes a home for the lonely. [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.] He leads out the prisoners into prosperity, only the rebellious dwell in a parched land." (NASB)

So God's 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, into well-being, into happiness, into abundance. There's only one possible barrier, that's rebelliousness. The barrier is not outside. It's not in God, but 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, that's one thing you have to do is 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.

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 a 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 question. 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 a 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?

If the answer to all of most of these questions is "yes," you are "getting warm." Continue to seek God, however, until you receive definite direction from Him.

Remember that you probably will not find "the perfect group." Furthermore, even if you did, you could not join it because after you did, it would no longer be perfect!

Now that's a quotation from my book, The Marriage Covenant. I'm trying to give you direction on 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, The Marriage Covenant, I've got a prayer that I suggest such a person could pray. I'm going to read this prayer out of the book and it it is your prayer, if this is how you feel today and this is what you would like God to do for you, when I've finished reading the prayer, will you say "Amen"? 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 prayed that prayer, if you say "Amen" to that prayer, something is going to start happening in your life. I promise you. God is going to start to move. He is going to give you new direction. He is going to bring you into new associations. He is going to open new doors for you. He is 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!

Well our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again next week at this same time, Monday through Friday. I believe that you'll find next week's theme as helpful as this week's.

If you would like to study this whole theme of rejection more fully in a time and a place of your own choosing, with opportunity to go back over passages of special interest to you, all my five talks this week on rejection are available on a single, carefully edited sixty minute cassette. Also this week, I'm making a special offer of my book, The Marriage Covenant. This is the book from which I read those extracts a few moments ago. The announcement that follow will tell you how to obtain both the cassette and the book, The Marriage Covenant.

Radio Program

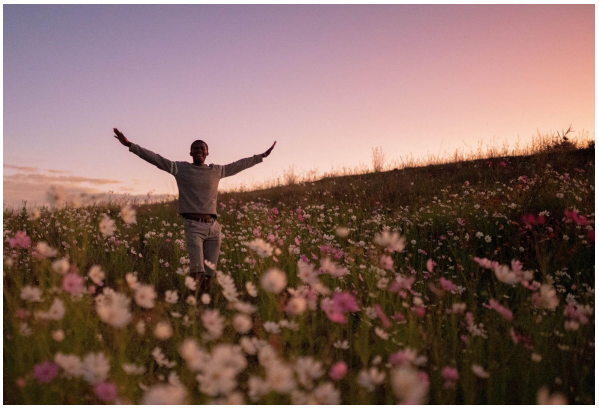
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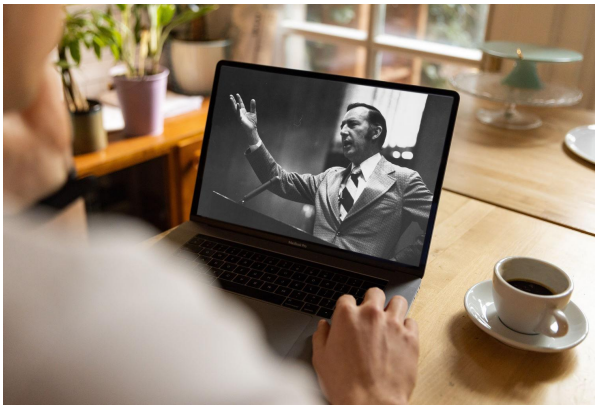
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