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Teaching Letter

A Wounded Spirit, Who Can Bear?



Part 1/2

From Rejection To Acceptance
By Derek Prince

> A wounded spirit who can bear? (Proverbs 18:14, kjv)

In this article, I want to examine a particular problem that affects, in my opinion, millions of people in the United States, as well as countless others throughout the rest of the world. As a result of my ministry over many years, I have become convinced that probably one in five persons in the U.S. is affected in one way or another by the problem of rejection. Rejection, simply defined, is the sense of being unwanted, the feeling that although you want people to love you, no one does. Or it is wanting to be part of a group, but feeling excluded—somehow always being on the outside looking in. I believe one reason why so many people suffer this problem today is the make-up of our society and its pressures, particularly the break-up of family life.

If I were to ask you, "What is the opposite of rejection?" you would probably reply, "Acceptance," which is the correct answer. In this article and the next we will concentrate on how to move from rejection to acceptance.

We begin our study with a picture of rejection found in Isaiah 54:6. This is a very poignant picture of a brokenhearted married woman.

> "For the Lord has called you like a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, like a youthful wife, when you were refused," says your God.

The picture here is of a young woman, recently married, who finds that her husband does not love her. Maybe he has no time for her or shows no interest in her. Possibly he is even preparing to divorce her to find another wife. Scripture describes her as "forsaken and grieved in spirit."

There is a type of wound which is very hard to bear. It is described quite accurately in Proverbs 18:14:

> The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear? (kjv)

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This woman was obviously suffering from just such a wound in her spirit.

We can put up with a wounded body, but a wounded spirit is an unbearable affliction.

Deeper Than We Realize

Scripture also says in 1 Corinthians 2:

> For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God (v. 11)

The spirit of a person is deeper than the mental understanding or the faculties of memory and reason, and that spirit is the only thing that knows all about you. Your mind doesn't know all about you. There are things about you that your mind hasn't yet discovered. It is very possible to carry wounds for years that your mind never knows about. This can be borne out, I believe, by the following observation.

Have you ever noticed when some people get the baptism in the Holy Spirit—even strong, self-reliant men—that they seem to crumple and begin to sob? I have seen it happen scores of times. When I see that happening, I say, "Now the Holy Spirit has reached down into that person's spirit, and He is untying all those knots that have been tied inside him for so long. No one else could ever get there to untie the knot but the Holy Spirit."

I was praying with a young man one time and this happened to him. Though he was already baptized in the Holy Spirit, the Lord had just met a deep need in his life. By nature, he was a rather well-controlled and poised young man. But when the Holy Spirit touched this issue at the heart of his life, he began to sob like a little child. I said to him, "Now look, don't turn this off. Don't reassert your self-control. Let it come, because you couldn't buy a moment like this for a thousand dollars. It's precious."

All this is to illustrate that there is an area deep down inside you that your mind doesn't know about. Sometimes your mind even refuses to face up to the facts about that area inside you. Psychologists and psychiatrists acknowledge the fact that there are some wounds so painful that the mind refuses to focus on them. It just turns a blind eye in that particular direction. Nevertheless, the wound is there—deeper than the mind, deeper than reason, deeper than the memory. It is in the spirit.

Rejection, very frequently, is in that deep area in the spirit. And often, because it's so deep, people do not even realize their problem is rejection.

How Rejection Begins

Let's consider some examples of how rejection may arise, bearing in mind that there are many forms of rejection.

I remember the case of one lady in particular who lived in Florida. While I was visiting one evening in this lady's home, I did something I rarely do. I just said point blank to her, "Sister, if I'm correct, you have the spirit of death in you." I rarely make that kind of statement because it can lead to complications. But I took the risk of telling her because it was obvious she was in need of help. This woman had every reason to be happy, but was never happy. She had a good husband and children, but never had any joy. So I said to her, "I'm conducting a deliverance service on Friday night, and if you'll come, I'll pray for you."

On the appointed night, this lady came, and when I began the deliverance part of the service she was sitting in the front row. Again, I did something I don't usually do. At a certain point in the service I walked up to her, and I said, "You spirit of death, in the name of Jesus, I command you to answer me. When did you enter this woman?"

Then the spirit, not the woman, answered very clearly," Oh, when she was two years old."

"How did you get in?" I asked.

It said, "Oh, she felt rejected. She felt unwanted. She felt lonely."

I thought to myself: Isn't that something? The presence of rejection even at the age of two.

This incident really opened my understanding to an area of people's problems because I discovered that rejection can begin even before a child is born. I could give you the names of quite well-known persons who would testify to this being true in their lives. If a woman carries in her womb a child whose coming she resents, that child is frequently born with a spirit of rejection.

Vulnerable Targets

For instance, this type of rejection is especially prevalent among people in one certain age group in the United States —children conceived during the Great Depression. Why? Because many families already had too many mouths to feed, and the thought of another little life coming into the

world produced a feeling of bitterness. “Why do we have to have another child?”

A similar problem may develop in a child conceived out of marriage. In most cases of that type there are tremendous problems involved for the mother, and she may come to resent and even hate this child who is coming into her life and creating problems for her. That child, too, may be born with a spirit of rejection.

Then again, a child may be born and not receive love and thus suffer rejection. I believe every child is born into the world looking for the love of a father and mother. Every child is created that way. But in many cases, particularly in modern America, every child is not loved. Or, even if the child is loved, the parents may not know how to express their love. A number of people have told me, “I suppose my father loved me, but he never knew how to show it. All his life he never took me on his knee or did anything to show me that he loved me.” The same may be true of the mother. As a result, the child gets this feeling of being unwanted.

Rejection may also come later in life. Like the woman we read about in Isaiah, a wife may love her husband and have a picture in her mind of what married life should be. She imagines how her husband is going to love her, and how she’ll be blessed with children. But somehow it turns out otherwise. Maybe the husband loves her for a little while, but then gets interested in another woman. Or he may be one of those men who just doesn’t know how to show love. After a while this young woman feels, “My husband doesn’t want me. He doesn’t care for me. He doesn’t devote time to me.”

Reactions to Rejection

Rejection can simply be an inner attitude we carry around with us. However, I have learned by experience that behind every negative emotion, reaction, and attitude there is a corresponding spirit. Behind fear, there’s a spirit of fear. Behind envy, there’s a spirit of envy. Behind hate, there’s a spirit of hate.

Very often, yielding to a certain emotion will open the way for the spirit of that emotion to enter. And once the spirit comes in, that person is no longer in full control. For instance, a girl who hates her father because he was cruel, critical, and unloving may get married and have children of her own. Then without reason, against her own desire, she begins to unreasonably and viciously hate one of her own children, transferring that hatred for her father to her child. That’s the spirit of hate. When the father isn’t there, it’s directed against somebody else.

Often, parents who have particular faults will come to hate the child who is most like them. They really are hating the fault in themselves, but instead of turning that hate toward themselves, they turn it toward the child who reproduces those traits or weaknesses which have been inherited from them.

Just as there is a spirit of hate, there is also a spirit of rejection. I know this firsthand because in past years I’ve dealt with several hundred people who needed and received deliverance from the spirit of rejection.

Rejection is a problem that brings others in its train. There are two different lines of reaction that proceed from rejection. Neither of these, of course, is an absolute law, but they are situations that occur consistently enough to indicate a definite pattern.

The First Track

In the first line that proceeds from rejection, the next reaction down the line is loneliness. Loneliness is a terrible thing. This modern world of ours is filled with lonely people. Some even sit in church every Sunday and yet never cease to be lonely.

Loneliness leads to misery, and all of us know people who always seem to be miserable.

Then misery and loneliness frequently lead to self-pity. You’re always feeling sorry for yourself: “Nobody understands me. Others can, but I can’t. Why did God make me like I am?”

The step following self-pity is often depression—moods of gloominess that settle down over you. I can describe these moods in detail because I often had them myself. So I know what I’m talking about.

Depression will then likely lead to something even more serious, which is despair, hopelessness: “It’s no good. I might as well give up.” And then despair will almost inevitably lead to one of two results which are final: one is death, the other is suicide.

There is a difference between death and suicide. Death is the desire to die. If you’ve ever said, “I wish I were dead,” that is very dangerous. You don’t have to say that many times before a spirit of death comes in.

Suicide is more radical. “I might as well end it. What’s the good of living? Take the whole bottle of pills. Swallow them now.” Or, “Go ahead—jump in front of that train and end it all.”

The Second Track

Well, that's one line of reaction stemming from rejection. But there is another possible line which leads in a different direction. The first step in this progression from rejection is hardness. "Well, if they don't love me, so what? Who needs them anyhow? I can do without them."

Then hardness leads to something I've had occasion to analyze: indifference. "I don't care! I've been wounded enough. Nobody's ever going to hurt me that much again. I'll put up a barrier that nobody will ever get inside." Outwardly you're friendly. You talk to people, you joke, but there's something inside you they can never get through.

After indifference comes rebellion. "Well, they're against me, so I'll be against them. I hate them. I hate their religion. I hate their church. I hate their God." You'd be amazed at the number of people who have told me that at some time in their life they have actually said, "God, I hate You!" That's a terrible thing to say. Scores of people I know have said, "God, why did you make me this way? Why did you bring me into the world at all?"

Then rebellion quite often leads to witchcraft which isn't such an obvious connection, but is closely associated to rebellion in Scripture. First Samuel 15:23 says, "Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft." When I say witchcraft, I mean the whole occult realm—seeking false spiritual experiences through the Ouija board, the fortune-teller, the seance, and similar pursuits. Many fail to realize that this is really the expression of rebellion—turning from the true God to a false god. It is the breaking of the first commandment: "You shall have no other gods before Me" (Exodus 20:3). Using Saul as an example, we see that witchcraft also leads ultimately to spiritual and physical death (1 Chronicles 10:13–14).

So we see from both of these lines of reaction that the consequences of rejection's presence in a person's spirit can be devastating.

The Roots

I want to point out that for such radical problems the gospel offers radical solutions, because the gospel itself is very radical. Not everyone knows the literal meaning of radical, but it comes from the Latin word radix which means "root." Therefore, something radical is "that which goes to the root."

In that sense, the gospel is radical. It goes to the root of the problem. This is what John the Baptist said in describing the gospel in Matthew 3:10:

> And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down, and thrown into the fire.

This is a picture of how God intends for us to deal with our problems, which are represented by the tree. God says, "It is not enough to chop off a few branches. The tree will go on standing and growing. Even if you chop off the trunk, the life will continue in it and little green shoots will appear. But if you cut the roots, you are finished with the tree." In God's plan, the ax is laid to the root of the problem.

These three parts of the tree correspond to the three parts of people's problems. We start with the branches. They are what I call "sins"—things like lying, swearing, immorality and addiction, the things that drive people and inflame them. Much religious activity is directed toward lopping off a few branches. "I gave up smoking," or "I stopped being immoral," or "I never do anybody any harm, and I'm always in church on Sunday." All of that is good, but it is not the ultimate.

Under the Surface

If you just cut off the branches, eliminating certain sins, the problem you inevitably face is that other branches will take their place because they are all supported and sustained by the trunk. In my understanding of theology, the trunk is called "sin." Not sins, but sin. There's a very consistent distinction in the Bible between sins, sinful acts, and sin, the thing that causes sins.

Sin is hard to define. I call it "an evil, corrupt, spiritual power that works in people and drives them to commit sins." In the atonement Jesus was "wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities [or sinful acts]" (Isaiah 53:5). But in Isaiah 53:10, it says:

> When Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin. (kjv)

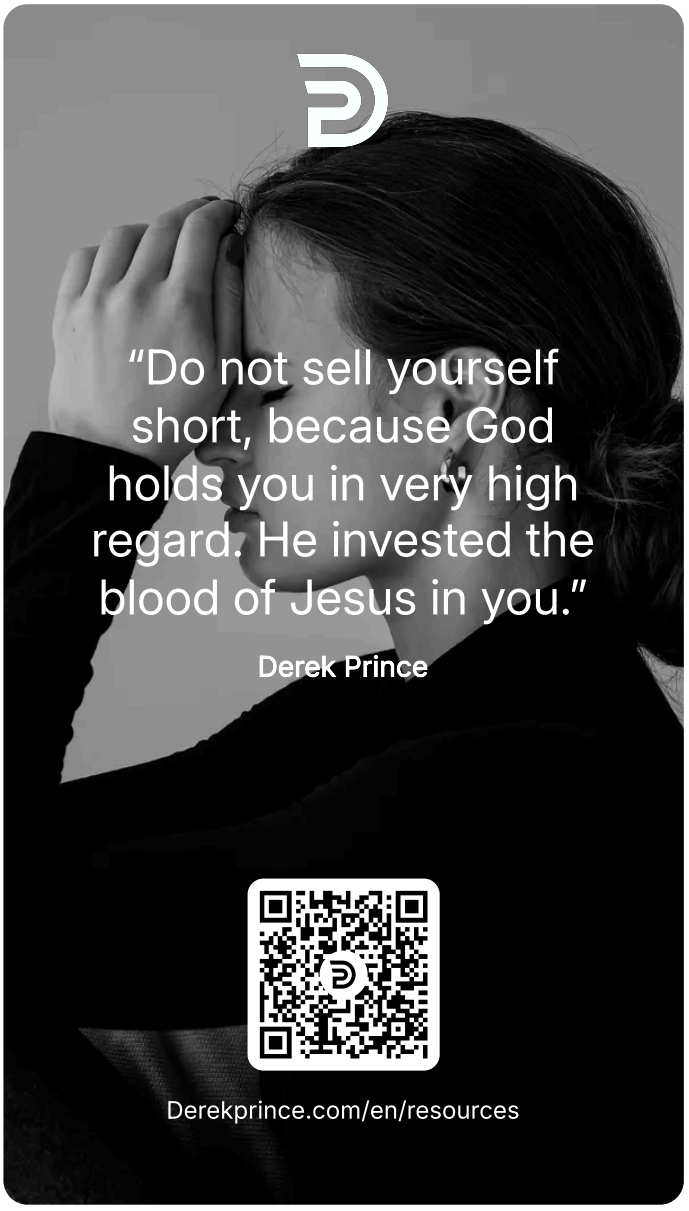
That's dealing with the trunk. It's altogether different, and the Bible consistently maintains this distinction.

Sin and sins are both above the surface, but under the surface we have something else: roots. From my experience and study of Scripture, the root can be described as "self" or the "I," the ego. "I want, I think, I like, I don't like, look at me. I'm important, I matter, you haven't treated me right. The world revolves around me, poor little me, nobody loves me." I believe that is the root. Even those

who have faced the fact of sin haven't always dealt with the problem of self. Yet, if the root is not dealt with, the problems will continue.

In my next letter, we will continue this theme of rejection by exploring its solution.

Teaching Letter
Transcript: TL-L084-100-ENG
Last Updated: 23 Nov 2026
Website: Derekprince.com/en/resources



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