

# HEALING THE WOUNDS OF REJECTION

Moving Forward with Strength,  
Confidence, and the Ability to Trust Again

JOYCE MEYER  
& GINGER STACHE



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## INTRODUCTION

### Joyce

The world is full of people who feel invisible, dismissed, or rejected to the core. More and more people find themselves betrayed and disposed of by spouses, misused by people meant to protect them, canceled by the crowd, or experiencing countless other painful dismissals. Perhaps you are one of them, and you know firsthand that rejection is a powerful force.

I have a particularly heavy burden right now to fight back against the damage rejection is wreaking in people's lives. God has put an urgency in my heart to help people heal from the pain, isolation, and devastation of rejection. This is an extraordinarily timely subject, and I believe God has many important lessons to teach us about how to find freedom from rejection and emerge from it stronger, more confident, and able to trust again.

Rejection is painful and can cause severe long-term damage in the soul (mind, will, and emotions). But thankfully, Jesus is our Healer and can heal us anywhere we hurt. God's Word tells us that He heals our wounds and broken hearts (Psalm 147:3). Even though people in our lives may reject us, God accepts us and loves us unconditionally. He accepts us the way we are, and helps us become the best we can be.

I think more people may be facing rejection today than ever before. The world is filled with angry people who are insensitive to the ways they may affect others. Children are often neglected because their parents are too busy and are dealing with problems of their own. At the same time, some young people have decided

to have no contact with their parents. They simply act as though they don't even know their parents for a variety of reasons. Often, these reasons are based on differences of opinion. But even when opinions are strong, it is sad—even tragic—to see families fall apart. Today, people speak of being tolerant, yet they will cut off relationships with the people who raised them. In years past, I can remember a lot of families that held and expressed strong opinions, and sometimes voices were raised in family settings, but when all was said and done, people valued family enough to remain in relationship. They didn't simply walk away from one another.

In addition, the divorce rate is high; divorces of people age fifty and over have increased. Many men involved in these marriages have left their spouses for younger women, which usually makes the wives feel tossed aside and unlovable. Domestic abuse is at an all-time high: The Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network reports that “one in 9 girls and 1 in 20 boys under the age of 18 experience sexual abuse or assault.”<sup>1</sup> Young people may also deal with cyberbullying, something unheard of until recent years. Peer pressure is overwhelming for young people. Not only that, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures, “Each year, an estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults experience homelessness in the United States, 700,000 of which are unaccompanied minors.”<sup>2</sup> Another 443,000 children are in foster care. The most frequent form of child abuse is simply neglect, which is just another way of saying “You are unimportant, and you are not worth my time.” All of these situations are absorbed as profound rejection.

When we consider these statistics, it is easy to see why rejection seems to be an epidemic. It touches all of us, so the question is: What is the antidote? Unless we can firmly take hold of a deep security in who we are, feelings of rejection—and therefore

worthlessness—will continue to plague us. However, knowing how much God loves and accepts us—and how valuable we are—will give us the confidence to be like the apostle Paul, who wasn't bothered by what people thought of him because he knew that only God could be his judge (1 Corinthians 4:3–4).

The fear of rejection can lead to people-pleasing, and constantly trying to please others is a miserable way to live. If people are rooted in rejection, that root has many little offshoots that affect their lives and especially their behavior in relationships.

If people are secure and confident, rejection may not affect them much. However, for someone who is insecure and looking for acceptance and approval, being rejected leads to stronger feelings of worthlessness and makes them feel more flawed than they did previously. My husband, Dave, is so secure that I doubt he would even know if someone were rejecting him—and if he did, he wouldn't care. On the other hand, I come from a background of sexual abuse, abandonment, criticism, and divorce due to infidelity, so I have experienced a great deal of rejection that left me insecure, in addition to posing other challenges in my soul. Because of this, I believe I can help other people who are suffering from the wounds of rejection to be healed and made whole.

Healing from rejection isn't easy by any means, but God has healed me, and He will heal you also if you are willing to work with Him.

I'm very happy to be collaborating with Ginger Stache on this book. I invited her to write with me for several reasons. Ginger brings her own unique experiences with rejection, and together, I believe we can help even more people. She shares my urgency to see others overcome the wounds of rejection, and she has a beautiful heart for God and for people. She has worked with Joyce Meyer Ministries for more than twenty years, currently as chief creative officer, and she regularly appears with me on my

television program, *Enjoying Everyday Life*. Ginger is an excellent writer and storyteller who draws people in. She is a good friend, and I know you will love her as I do.

Not everyone feels rejected for the same reasons, but it all hurts. There is power in sharing our stories—power that can help to defeat the enemy’s plan to use rejection to derail God’s good plan for us. In this book, you will read stories of people who have dealt with severe rejection for different reasons, and you may see yourself in these pages. I know the stories you will read in this book—including mine and Ginger’s—will help and encourage you. And we will teach you how to handle rejection differently from how you may have handled it before.

I find it interesting that no person has ever been as rejected as Jesus was, but there is no biblical evidence that these experiences distracted Him. They may have hurt Him, but not enough to take His attention away from what His Father sent Him to earth to do. He certainly didn’t allow His feelings to control Him. He understood human nature and did not entrust Himself to the people around Him (John 2:24–25 AMP). This means He didn’t put more confidence in people than would have been wise. He knew who He was, where He came from, and what He was here to do—and that did not change based on people’s acceptance or rejection of Him.

I have discovered in my life that each time God was ready to promote me to the next level of ministry, I was also hit with major rejection from people I loved and trusted. I think rejection is one of the devil’s favorite tools, and he uses it to torment people and hinder them from fulfilling their destiny. But he does not need to succeed.

In this book, Ginger and I desire to help you receive healing for the wounds of rejection and grow to a place where you can deal with rejection in a healthy way and be secure enough to know

that God loves and accepts you completely. If you put your trust in Him, He will always take care of you and give you people who love and accept you. You can be confident and secure and not let what other people do or say affect you in negative ways.

To help you apply the lessons this book teaches, we've included a section titled "Lean in Closer" at the end of each chapter. These questions are designed to prompt you to think about your life and lean into God and His Word in ways that will help you process your experiences with rejection and move toward strength, confidence, and wholeness.

It's time for you to enjoy freedom and healing.

# PART 1

## Tossed Aside



*He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.*

Isaiah 53:3

CHAPTER 1

# Created for Acceptance

Joyce and Ginger



*By faith we have been made acceptable to God. And now,  
thanks to our Lord Jesus Christ, we have peace with God.*

Romans 5:1 CEV

Rejection hurts, and one reason it is so painful is that we are created by God to be loved and accepted. The Bible says that God created us in His own image (Genesis 1:27), and He designed us for love (John 3:16), belonging (1 Corinthians 3:23), and His glory (Isaiah 43:7). He also designed us for companionship (Genesis 2:18). We were created for acceptance. So, when we are rejected, it violates an inherent need that is built into our hearts—a part of who we are.

Reading some of the definitions of the word *reject* reveals the deep-rooted pain it carries: “to refuse to accept,”<sup>3</sup> “to cast out or off,”<sup>4</sup> “to throw out as useless.”<sup>5</sup> Let’s keep it simple; in the children’s version of their dictionary, Merriam-Webster defines *reject* like this: “to throw away as useless or unsatisfactory.”<sup>6</sup> These words alone can do more damage than most physical blows. These wounds cut deep.

Traumatic rejection goes far beyond hurt feelings. We may not even realize how rejection has shaped us and still influences us.

*You may not realize how rejection shapes you.*

It’s insidious. It digs in its roots and its poison spreads throughout our system. But truth can set us free (John 8:32).

When we have received Christ as our Lord and Savior, we are God’s children (John 1:12; Galatians 3:26). Because we are His children, He loves and accepts us and will never reject us, but we don’t have this same guarantee from people. God does, however, give us the tools we need to stand on our *true* value rather than on the acceptance of others. He also gives us everything we need to deal with the real hurt that comes when they do reject us.

Do you ever feel that everyone needs you, but no one really

wants you? Rejection comes in many forms. A friend betrays you. A spouse is unfaithful or walks away. You're passed over for the promotion you worked hard for. A child refuses your love. You're mistreated because of your gender, skin color, or ethnicity. A parent doesn't protect you as they should. You may even be rejected for Christ's sake, simply because you are a Christian. The list of ways and reasons you can be rejected is seemingly endless, and the hurt can be excruciating.

*Do you feel that others need you, but no one wants you?*

Rejection is not a matter of *if*; it's a matter of *when*. We all face rejection. You are not alone in this struggle. With God's help, you can learn to respond differently and to decide how much power you will allow rejection to have over your life. You may even discover that God can use it for your good.

*Everyone faces rejection.*

Jesus Himself lived the pain of rejection. In Him, we have a safe haven, a high priest who understands and has sympathy for us (Hebrews 4:15). He faced rejection at nearly every turn. Jesus even knew what it was like to feel unwelcome and unloved by those who should have known Him best, the people of His own home, the town of Nazareth. Matthew 13:57–58 says the people there didn't accept Him; He was considered "without honor." This passage goes on to say their rejection had consequences and that Jesus did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith.

Jesus had a mission, and He knew that the very people He came to earth to help, along with the religious leaders of His day, were intent on killing Him. His brothers wanted Him to perform miracles to prove who He was because even they did not believe in Him (John 7:4–5). Peter, one of Jesus' closest disciples, denied Him when he was being questioned prior to His crucifixion (Luke 22:54–62), and another disciple, named Judas, literally sold him out (Matthew

26:14–16). Can you imagine how that must have felt? He loved His disciples and had just washed their feet (John 13:2–5), a gesture of devotion and humility, yet they turned their backs on Him. You can be sure He understands how you feel when you are rejected.

When Jesus sent His disciples out two by two to preach the gospel, heal the sick, and do other miracles, He told them that if they went to any town that rejected them, they should shake the dust of it off their feet and move on to the next (Matthew 10:14). He was saying, basically, “Don’t let their rejection stop you from reaching your goal.”

There is also great comfort in this:

He who hears and heeds you [disciples] hears and heeds Me; and he who slights and rejects you slights and rejects Me; and he who slights and rejects Me slights and rejects Him who sent Me.

Luke 10:16 AMPC

Here, Jesus is saying, essentially, “Don’t take it personally, because the One they are actually rejecting is our Heavenly Father, the One who sent Me.”

Scripture includes many other references to times when Jesus faced rejection, such as:

He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

Isaiah 53:3

He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.

John 1:10–11 ESV

If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.

John 15:18 ESV

The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

Psalm 118:22

Without question, Jesus knows intimately the pain of rejection. God doesn't tell us to "just get over it." His heart breaks with ours. He collects our tears and binds up our wounds (Psalm 56:8 NLT; 147:3). He is our healer.

## There Is One Who Never Rejects You

You truly are created for acceptance. You are chosen by God, and you are His friend. You are so very special to Him. He will *never* reject you. The verses below assure you of this:

*You are chosen by God.*

I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.

John 15:15–16

Even as [in His love] He chose us [actually picked us out for Himself as His own] in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy (consecrated and

set apart for Him) and blameless in His sight, even above reproach, before Him in love.

Ephesians 1:4 AMPC

For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you.

1 Thessalonians 1:4

Take time every morning to think about how much God loves and accepts you. Even just a little time spent this way can make a big difference. He loves us, but we must receive His love to personally experience it. God doesn't love us because we deserve it, but because He wants to. God is love, and everything He does in our lives is done out of love, even if we don't understand how He's moving. He doesn't cause people to hurt us, but if they do and we trust Him, then He will work it out for good (Romans 8:28).

Because we are created to be loved, valued, and accepted, when we are rejected, it hurts. But we can choose not to let it destroy us. When you feel rejected by someone, remember that you are special and chosen by God and that He considers you to be His friend. This is much better than being surrounded by superficial friends. He is a friend who sticks closer than a brother (Proverbs 18:24).

## You Are a Delight

Not only does God love you and consider you a friend, but He also delights in you. This is such a beautiful revelation. We like to say that you make God smile. We might even say you bring a twinkle to His eye. If *to reject* means “to throw away as useless or unsatisfactory,” as defined previously, the opposite word may be *to delight*. Merriam-Webster defines *delight* as “a high degree

of gratification or pleasure: joy” and “extreme satisfaction.”<sup>7</sup> The Bible says that God delights in you.

*God delights in you.*

The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing.

Zephaniah 3:17

He brought me out into a spacious place; he rescued me because he delighted in me.

Psalms 18:19

And Micah 7:18 tells us He “delights in steadfast love” (ESV). His exuberant love for you is resolute.

It is also true that when we delight in the Lord—when we enjoy who He is, relax in His loving care, and relish spending time with Him—He promises to give us the desires of our hearts (Psalm 37:4). This isn’t about our frivolous desires; this is His meeting the deepest needs of our soul, including the healing our hearts yearn for.

It is comforting to know that God loves us, but sometimes we need a touch from people. God works through people, and I (Joyce) have learned to take every compliment I receive—every favor, every gift, and every kindness—as though it comes from God.

Recently, Dave tripped over the carpet and fell into a glass coffee table. The glass didn’t break, and he wasn’t hurt at all. He didn’t say, “Boy, am I lucky that I didn’t get hurt.” He said, “God’s angels were all around me protecting me.” Let’s give God credit for what He does instead of calling His work “luck” or “coincidence.” Watch for Him, because He is working in your life.

We also want to encourage you to expect good things to happen in your life. Try to be conscious and aware of God’s love (1 John

4:16). Watch for all the seemingly little things He does in your life, and it will encourage you—an answered prayer, a little favor, finding a parking space right in front of a store when the parking lot is full and it's pouring down rain. Are these coincidences? We don't think so. We think these are winks from God letting you know He is watching over you.

## Don't Be Separated from God's Love

Rejection touches our lives and leaves its mark in many ways. When a person's spouse leaves, the one left behind is being rejected, and it hurts. When children grow up without the love of a parent, they are hurt, and this often affects their personality and relationships in a negative way. They may be insecure, lack confidence, feel angry without knowing why, or become people-pleasers in an effort to be loved instead of rejected. Some rejection may be misperceived, imagined, or rooted in self-protection—a result of the wounds of previous rejections. In this book, we will

*Avoid falling into the trap of rejection.*

try to cover these issues and more, and we will give you the tools you need to avoid falling into the trap the devil has set for you: the trap of rejection.

Together, we will discover a pathway that leads from heartbreak to courage, from betrayal to overcoming, from painful secrets to freedom, and from insecurity to acceptance and courage.

Right here and now, let us begin with this important determination: We will not allow rejection to separate us from our true source of acceptance and love. The first thing to do in every rejection or disappointment with people is to remember how much God loves you and to refuse to let anything separate you from His love. Turn to God and ask Him to comfort you. He is the Comforter and can soothe you in ways no one else can (2 Corinthians 1:3–4).

Read carefully these words from Romans 8:35–39:

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Consider reading this passage a few times, and let its truth soak into your soul. Let it remind you not to allow the hurt you presently feel to separate you from the knowledge that God loves you in Christ Jesus.

As you read this book, take your time and think about the things we share. So often in life, we are in such a hurry to get finished that we miss what the journey was all about. Take time to meditate on the truth that you are accepted by God.

God tells the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah:

Before I formed you in the womb I knew [and] approved of you [as My chosen instrument], and before you were born I separated and set you apart, consecrating you; [and] I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.

Jeremiah 1:5 AMPC

Jeremiah was predestined for a good work, but he could have turned away from it. God told him what His will was, and though

Jeremiah was insecure and felt he was too young (Jeremiah 1:6), he stepped out in faith to fulfill God's word.

The same is true for us. God has predestined and prearranged a good life for us so that we might walk in it. This usually requires stepping out in faith. Ephesians 2:10 (AMPC) says:

For we are God's [own] handiwork (His workmanship), recreated in Christ Jesus, [born anew] that we may do those good works which God predestined (planned beforehand) for us [taking paths which He prepared ahead of time], that we should walk in them [living the good life which He prearranged and made ready for us to live].

## **Keep Your Eyes on Jesus**

Even though you may be experiencing rejection in some area of your life right now, God is also doing a lot of good in your life. Keep your eyes on the good things instead of ruminating on the rejection. Confess aloud the good things the Bible says about you—positive, Scripture-based statements such as:

- “I am accepted by God” (see John 6:37).
- “God loves me unconditionally” (see Romans 5:8).
- “I don't have to be afraid because God is always with me” (see Isaiah 41:10).
- “God is currently working in my life and healing all my wounds” (see Psalm 147:3).
- “God gives me favor with the right people” (see Psalm 5:12).

Repeating these truths will increase your faith, and because God's Word has healing power in it, it will aid in your healing. Perhaps you've felt unwanted, overlooked, or recklessly tossed

aside. Maybe you've been brutally betrayed or lost a relationship that meant a lot to you. We are so very sorry. We know it hurts. This journey of healing is a hard one. It takes time and determination. But the fight is worth it. The Word of God is medicine for our wounded souls. It is what God uses to teach us truth and heal us, and He will use it in your life, too. His Word gives you hope when you feel hopeless.

### Lean in Closer

1. Thoughtfully consider why you picked up this book. Fearlessly and honestly reflect on the ways you have experienced rejection.

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2. What does it mean to you to know you were made by God for acceptance? How does it lighten any shame or guilt you may have felt about the pain of rejection?

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3. Respond to the question "Do you ever feel like everyone needs you, but no one really wants you?" What impact does this question have on you?

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4. What does it mean to you that Jesus experienced rejection, just as you have experienced it? With that in mind, why are these verses important to you?

- Isaiah 53:3

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- Matthew 13:57–58

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- John 7:4–5

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- John 1:10–11 ESV

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5. How does the way you see yourself change when you realize that God has chosen you, that He calls you His friend, and that He delights in you?

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6. Rejection tries to separate you from the love of God. Write down a few ways you will keep the truth of God's amazing love in the forefront of your thoughts.

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Joyce Meyer is one of the world's leading practical Bible teachers and a *New York Times* bestselling author. Joyce's books have helped millions of people find hope and restoration through Jesus Christ. Joyce's program, *Enjoying Everyday Life*, is broadcast to millions worldwide in 113 languages.

Through Joyce Meyer Ministries, Joyce teaches internationally on a number of topics with a particular focus on how the Word of God applies to our everyday lives. Her candid communication style allows her to share openly and practically about her experiences so others can apply what she has learned to their lives.

Joyce has authored more than 150 books, which have been translated into more than 164 combined languages, and over 42.5 million of her books have been distributed worldwide. Bestsellers include *Power Thoughts*; *The Confident Woman*; *Look Great, Feel Great*; *Starting Your Day Right*; *Ending Your Day Right*; *Approval Addiction*; *How to Hear from God*; *Beauty for Ashes*; and *Battlefield of the Mind*.

Joyce's passion to help people who are hurting is foundational to the vision of Hand of Hope, the missions arm of Joyce Meyer Ministries. Each year Hand of Hope provides millions of meals for the hungry and malnourished, installs freshwater wells in poor and remote areas, provides critical relief after natural disasters, and offers free medical and dental care to thousands through their hospitals and clinics worldwide. Through Project GRL, women and children are rescued from human trafficking and provided safe places to receive an education, nutritious meals, and the love of God.

**Ginger Stache** is an Emmy Award–winning television producer, author, and the chief creative officer of Joyce Meyer Ministries, leading the ministry’s media areas, including broadcast and print. With a passion to elevate creativity, share God’s love, and inspire others to help the forgotten, Ginger will take every opportunity to encourage people to step out of their routines and embrace the awe and wonder God has for them in all things and the joy in each day.

A firm believer in the power of compassion and relentlessly fighting for justice, she has traveled the world sharing stories of extraordinary individuals who have triumphed over immense challenges and encouraging others that they can do the same. She is especially passionate about empowering women and girls through the ministry’s Project GRL initiatives, inspiring them to recognize their value and the impact they can have in the world.

Ginger can be seen on Joyce’s *Enjoying Everyday Life* program and hosting *Joyce Meyer’s Talk It Out* podcast. She is a wife, mother, and Gigi, roles that she holds dear. She and her husband, Tim, live in Missouri with their scruffy pup, Winston. You can connect with her on Instagram and Facebook @gingerlstache.

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