



Rocks of Rejection/Gems of Grace

I'm sure we've all experienced the pain of rejection, whether in school, dating, among friends, applying for a job. These can be like little rocks people throw at you. Some things – divorce for instance – can be like a huge boulder.

All of this can be hard to deal with and can scar us forever. One thing we know is that the old saying, "Sticks and stones can break my bones, but names can never hurt me" just isn't true. Names and words can and do hurt – a lot!

The Sting of Rejection

The Bible says a lot about rejection. You could say in the Garden of Eden our first parents rejected God Himself. I've been doing a study through the Old Testament and I'm amazed at how often Israel rejected God and time and time again he came to their aid. Once they turned aside for 18 years before they finally turned to him for mercy. Amazing it would take that long to turn and ask for help but there it is. The New Testament has a lot to say about it as well.

The woman Jesus met at the well in John 4 had had five husbands – she came to draw water at noon because everybody in town knew about her and her jaded past. Yet here was Jesus engaging her in conversation. Later many people came to hear Jesus because of her testimony.

The lady who had a blood disorder had suffered many things for 12 years – she couldn't even go out in public because she was considered unclean. Jesus healed her and even then she was afraid because she had been so used to rejection (Luke 8:47). No worries – her faith saved her.

The Phoenician woman with a demon-possessed daughter was turned down by Jesus at first. But she humbly persisted and she received her request (Mark 7:24-30).

The woman taken in the act of adultery was about to be killed by stoning – real rocks of rejection. Jesus intervened to save her life (John 8).

The little children around Jesus were driven away by the brusque disciples at first but Jesus once again embraced those the adults wanted to reject. "Let them come to me," he said, "The kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matthew 19:13-15).

"Accepted in the Beloved"

The pattern is clear. Those the world rejects, Jesus steps in to help and heal. Ephesians 1:4-6 puts it well, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ [who has] chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace by which he has made us accepted in the Beloved."

The Beloved is the Beloved Son, Jesus Christ. *He takes our rocks of rejection and turns them into gems of grace.* God sees us as his own, now accepted in the Beloved Son. Jesus wants to include us in the love of the Father through the Spirit. "This is eternal life," it says in John 17:3, "that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."

Spreading Grace

God wants us to include the people we meet in that love, grace and acceptance as well – starting with our children. The grace, love and acceptance shine out in God wanting to adopt us. His grace never runs out. We don't have to worry: There'll always be more gems of grace to give away.

Now there are three things I'd like us all to do when we get home:

First, write down the rocks of rejection we've received in our lives.

Secondly, imagine placing them at the foot of the cross.

Third, imagine turning them into sparkling gems we can pass out to others.

Now we know what it means to live by grace...and to spread it.

By Tammy Tkach
