A motivational quote is displayed in white text against a background of a sunset sky. The sky is a mix of deep blue and orange, with large, dark, silhouetted clouds. A single tree stands in the center of the lower half of the image, its silhouette dark against the lighter sky. The quote reads: "Always have confidence and grow with each experienced whether good or bad, don't be held back by fear of rejection or failure, strive for your goals, believing in yourself is the key to your success in life." In the bottom right corner of the image, there is a small, faint watermark that says "Search Quotes.Com".

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OVERCOMING REJECTION

Compiled by Dr. Harold Bollinger

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Forward

Israel wanted a king for several reasons:

- (1) Samuel's sons were not fit to lead Israel.
- (2) The 12 tribes of Israel continually had problems working together because each tribe had its own leader and territory. It was hoped that a king would unite the tribes into one nation and one army.
- (3) The people wanted to be like the neighboring nations. This is exactly what God didn't want. Having a king would make it easy to forget that God was their real leader.

It was not wrong for Israel to want a king; God had mentioned the possibility in Deut. 17:14-20.

Yet, in reality, the people were rejecting God as their leader.

The Israelites wanted laws, an army, and a human monarch in the place of God.

They wanted to run the nation through human strength, even though only God's strength could make them flourish in the hostile land of Canaan.

Rejection of God's leadership is the sure way to our own rejection and defeat.

Chapter 1



God feels rejected when we rebel.

Judges 10:11-16

The Lord replied, "Did I not rescue you from the Egyptians, the Amorites, the Ammonites, the Philistines, the Sidonians, the Amalekites, and the Maonites? When they oppressed you, you cried out to me, and I rescued you. Yet you have abandoned me and served other gods. So I will not rescue you anymore.

Go and cry out to the gods you have chosen! Let them rescue you in your hour of distress!"

But the Israelites pleaded with the Lord and said, "We have sinned. Punish us as you see fit, only rescue us today from our enemies."

Then the Israelites put aside their foreign gods and served the Lord. And he was grieved by their misery.

The Israelites always seemed to forget God when all was well. But despite being rejected by his own people, God never failed to rescue them when they called out to him in repentance.

God never fails to rescue us either. We act just like the Israelites when we put God outside our daily events instead of at the center of them.

Just as a loving parent feels rejected when a child rebels, so God feels great rejection when we ignore or neglect him (1 Samuel 8:4-9; 1 Samuel 10:17-19; John 12:44-50).

We should strive to stay close to God rather than see how far we can go before judgment comes.

Why God may have rejected Cain's offering.

Genesis 4:3-5

At harvest time Cain brought to the Lord a gift of his farm produce, while Abel brought several choice lambs from the best of his flock. The Lord accepted Abel and his offering, but he did not accept Cain and his offering. This made Cain very angry and dejected.

The Bible does not say why God rejected Cain's sacrifice. Perhaps Cain's attitude was improper, or perhaps his offering was not up to God's standards. Proverbs 21:27 says, "The sacrifice of the wicked is detestable—how much more so when brought with evil intent!"

God evaluates both our motives and the quality of what we offer him. When we give to God and others, we should have a joyful heart because of what we are able to give.

We should not worry about how much we are giving up, for all things are God's in the first place. Instead, we should joyfully give to God our best in time, money, possessions, and talents.

When you're suffering from unfair rejection

Judges 11:1-2

Now Jephthah of Gilead was a great warrior. He was the son of Gilead, but his mother was a prostitute. Gilead's wife also had several sons, and when these half brothers grew up, they chased Jephthah off the land. "You will not get any of our father's inheritance," they said, "for you are the son of a prostitute."

Jephthah, an illegitimate son of Gilead, was chased out of the country by his half brothers.

He suffered as a result of another's decision and not for any wrong he had done. Yet in spite of his brothers' rejection, God used him.

If you are suffering from unfair rejection, don't blame others and become discouraged.

Remember how God used Jephthah despite his unjust circumstances, and realize that he is able to use you even if you feel rejected by some.

Recognize when you're rejecting God.

1 Samuel 10:19

But though I have done so much for you, you have rejected me and said, 'We want a king instead!' Now, therefore, present yourselves before the Lord by tribes and clans."

Israel's true king was God, but the nation demanded another. Imagine wanting a human being instead of God as guide and leader! Throughout history, men and women have rejected God, and they continue to do it today.

Are you rejecting God by pushing him aside and acknowledging someone or something else as your "king" or top priority? Learn from these stories of Israel's kings, and don't push God aside.

Chapter 2



God's "no" to a prayer is not a rejection.

2 Samuel 7:8-16

"Now go and say to my servant David, This is what the Lord Almighty says: I chose you to lead my people Israel when you were just a shepherd boy, tending your sheep out in the pasture.'

I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have destroyed all your enemies. Now I will make your name famous throughout the earth!

And I have provided a permanent homeland for my people Israel, a secure place where they will never be disturbed. It will be their own land where wicked nations won't oppress them as they did in the past, from the time I appointed judges to rule my people. And I will keep you safe from all your enemies.

And now the Lord declares that he will build a house for you—a dynasty of kings!

For when you die, I will raise up one of your descendants, and I will make his kingdom strong. He is the one who will build a house—a temple—for my name. And I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

I will be his father, and he will be my son. If he sins, I will use other nations to punish him.

But my unfailing love will not be taken from him as I took it from Saul, whom I removed before you. Your dynasty and your kingdom will continue for all time before me, and your throne will be secure forever.' "

David's request was good, but God said no. This does not mean that God rejected David. In fact, God was planning to do something even greater in David's life than allowing him the prestige of building the temple.

Although God turned down David's request, he promised to continue the house (or dynasty) of David forever. David's earthly dynasty ended four centuries later, but Jesus Christ, a direct descendant of David, was the ultimate fulfillment of this promise (Acts 2:22-36).

Christ will reign for eternity—now in his spiritual kingdom and in heaven, and later, on earth, in the New Jerusalem (Luke 1:30-33; Rev. 21).

Have you prayed with good intentions, only to have God say no?

This is God's way of directing you to a greater purpose in your life. Accepting God's no requires as great a faith as carrying out his yes.

Why did Rehoboam abandon God?

2 Chron. 12:1-2

But when Rehoboam was firmly established and strong, he abandoned the law of the Lord, and all Israel followed him in this sin.

Because they were unfaithful to the Lord, King Shishak of Egypt attached Jerusalem in the fifth year of King Rehoboam's reign.

Here "Israel" refers to Judah, the southern kingdom. During his first three years on the throne, Rehoboam made an attempt to obey God, and as a result Judah prospered. But then, at his peak of popularity and power, he abandoned God.

The result was destruction because God allowed Judah to be conquered by Egypt. How could this happen? Often it is more difficult to be a believer in good times than in bad.

Tough times push us toward God; but easy times can make us feel self-sufficient and self-satisfied. When everything is going right, guard your faith closely.

A record of this invasion has been found on an Egyptian stone that says Shishak's army penetrated as far north as the Sea of Galilee, in the northern kingdom.

Egypt was not the world power it had once been, and Shishak wanted to restore his nation to its former greatness.

He was not strong enough to conquer both Israel and Judah, but he managed to destroy key cities in Judah in an effort to regain control of the trade routes and create dissension among the people.

A Fool Rejects God.

Psalm 14:1-3

For the choir director: A psalm of David.

Only fools say in their hearts,
"There is no God."
They are corrupt, and their actions are evil;
No one does good!

The Lord looks down from heaven
On the entire human race;

He looks to see if there is even one with real understanding,
One who seeks for God.

But no, all have turned away from God;
All have become corrupt.
No one does good, not even one!

The atheist is either foolish or wicked—foolish because he ignores the evidence that God exists or wicked because he refuses to live by God's truths. We become atheists in practice when we rely more on ourselves than on God.

The fool mentioned here is someone who is aggressively perverse in his actions. To speak in direct defiance of God is utterly foolish according to the Bible.

No one but God is perfect; all of us stand guilty before him (see Romans 3:23) and need his forgiveness.

No matter how well we perform or how much we achieve compared to others, none of us can boast of his or her goodness when compared to God's standard. God not only expects us to obey his guidelines, but he wants us to love him with all our heart.

No one except Jesus Christ has done that perfectly. Because we all fall short we must turn to Christ to save us (Romans 10:9-11).

Have you asked him to save you?

David applies these observations to his enemies when he says the evildoers "devour my people as men eat bread":

"They have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one." By contrast, David said, "Though you probe my heart, you will find nothing" (Psalm 17:3).

Why Nazareth rejected Jesus.

Matthew 13:55

He's just a carpenter's son, and we know Mary, his mother, and his brothers—James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas.

The residents of Jesus' hometown had known Jesus since he was a young child and were acquainted with his family; they could not bring themselves to believe in his message. They were too close to the situation.

Jesus had come to them as a prophet, one who challenged them to respond to unpopular spiritual truth. They did not listen to the timeless message because they could not see beyond the man.

Jeremiah's hometown rejected him too.

Jesus was not the first prophet to be rejected in his own country. Jeremiah experienced rejection in his hometown, even by members of his own family (Jeremiah 12:5-6).

Jeremiah 12:5-6

If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses?

And if in the land of peace, wherein thou trusts, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?

For even thy brethren, and the house of thy father, even they have dealt treacherously with thee; yea, they have called a multitude after thee: believe them not, though they speak fair words unto thee.

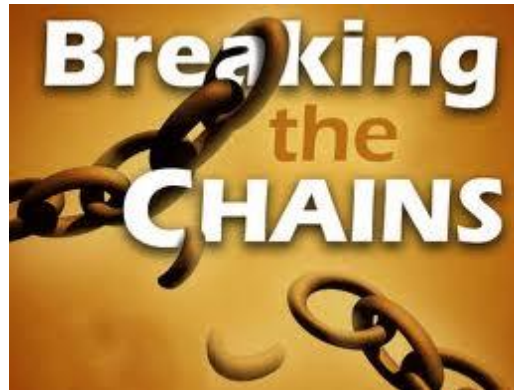
Life was extremely difficult for Jeremiah despite his love for and obedience to God. When he called to God for relief, God's reply in effect was, "If you think this is bad, how will you cope when it gets really tough?"

Not all of God's answers to prayer are nice or easy to handle.

Any Christian who has experienced war, bereavement, or a serious illness knows this.

But we are to be committed to God even when the going gets tough and when his answers to our prayers don't bring immediate relief.

Chapter 3



How we reject God.

Matthew 21:37

"Finally, the owner sent his son, thinking, 'Surely they will respect my son.'

In trying to reach us with his love, God finally sent his own Son. Jesus' perfect life, his words of truth, and his sacrifice of love are meant to cause us to listen to him and to follow him as Lord. If we ignore God's gracious gift of his Son, we reject God himself.

People reject Jesus.

Matthew 21:42

Then Jesus asked them, "Didn't you ever read this in the Scriptures?"

'The stone rejected by the builders has now become the cornerstone. This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous to see. Jesus refers to himself as "the stone the builders rejected." Although Jesus was rejected by many of his people, he will become the capstone, or cornerstone, of his new building, the church (see Acts 4:11; 1 Peter 2:7).

Consequences of rejecting Jesus.

Matthew 21:44

Anyone who stumbles over that stone will be broken to pieces, and it will crush anyone on whom it falls."

Jesus used this metaphor to show that one stone can affect people different ways, depending on how they relate to it (see Isaiah 8:14-15; Isaiah 28:16; Daniel 2:34, 44-45).

Ideally they will build on it; many, however, will trip over it. And at the last judgment God's enemies will be crushed by it.

In the end, Christ, the "building block," will become the "crushing stone." He offers mercy and forgiveness *now* and promises judgment later. We should choose him now!

John 8:24

That is why I said that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am who I say I am, you will die in your sins."

People will die in their sins if they reject Christ, because they are rejecting the only way to be rescued from sin. Sadly, many are so taken up with the values of this world that they are blind to the priceless gift Christ offers.

Hebrews 10:26

Dear friends, if we deliberately continue sinning after we have received a full knowledge of the truth, there is no other sacrifice that will cover these sins.

When people deliberately reject Christ's offer of salvation, they reject God's most precious gift. They ignore the leading of the Holy Spirit, the one who communicates to us God's saving love.

This warning was given to Jewish Christians who were tempted to reject Christ for Judaism, but it applies to anyone who rejects Christ for another religion or, having understood Christ's atoning work, deliberately turns away from it (see also Numbers 15:30-31 and Mark 3:28-30).

The point is that there is no other acceptable sacrifice for sin than the death of Christ on the cross.

If someone deliberately rejects the sacrifice of Christ after clearly understanding the gospel teaching about it, then there is no way for that person to be saved, because God has not provided any other name under heaven by which we can be saved (see Acts 4:12).

Chapter 4



People's rejection versus Jesus' acceptance.

Mark 6:4

Then Jesus told them, "A prophet is honored everywhere except in his own hometown and among his relatives and his own family."

Jesus said that a prophet (in other words, a worker for God) is never honored in his hometown. But that doesn't make his work any less important. A person doesn't need to be respected or honored to be useful to God. If friends, neighbors, or family don't respect your Christian work, don't let their rejection keep you from serving God.

Teamwork helps us deal with rejection

Mark 6:7

And he called his twelve disciples together and sent them out two by two, with authority to cast out evil spirits.

The disciples were sent out in pairs. Individually they could have reached more areas of the country, but this was not Christ's plan.

One advantage in going out by twos was that they could strengthen and encourage each other, especially when they faced rejection. Our strength comes from God, but he meets many of our needs through our teamwork with others. As you serve Christ, don't try to go it alone.

Why many reject Jesus

John 6:70

Then Jesus said, "I chose the twelve of you, but one is a devil."

In response to Jesus' message, some people left; others stayed and truly believed; and some, like Judas, stayed but tried to use Jesus for personal gain.

Many people today turn away from Christ. Others pretend to follow, going to church for status, approval of family and friends, or business contacts.

But there are only two real responses to Jesus—you either accept him or reject him. How have you responded to Christ?

Rejecting God makes it impossible to hear him.

1 Cor. 2:14-15

But people who aren't Christians can't understand these truths from God's Spirit.

It all sounds foolish to them because only those who have the Spirit can understand what the Spirit means.

We who have the Spirit understand these things, but others can't understand us at all.

Non-Christians cannot understand God, and they cannot grasp the concept that God's Spirit lives in believers.

Don't expect most people to approve of or understand your decision to follow Christ. It all seems so silly to them. Just as a tone-deaf person cannot appreciate fine music, the person who rejects God cannot understand God's beautiful message.

With the lines of communication broken, he or she won't be able to hear what God is saying to him or her.

No one can comprehend God (Romans 11:34), but through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, believers have insight into some of God's plans, thoughts, and actions—they, in fact, have the “mind of Christ.”

Through the Holy Spirit we can begin to know God's thoughts, talk with him, and expect his answers to our prayers.

Are you spending enough time with Christ to have his very mind in you? An intimate relationship with Christ comes only from spending time consistently in his presence and in his Word. Read Phil. 2:5ff for more on the mind of Christ.

To accept Jesus as your Saviour, please pray this prayer, or another confessing your faith in Jesus Christ.

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and come into my heart right now. I pray in Jesus name. Amen.

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Additional comments and charts are taken from:

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