

# Rejection

by Sharon Anne Ulloa

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## Acknowledgments

All glory, thanks, and praise to God for allowing me to write down this message for perhaps others to read and be helped in their challenges with many types of Rejection, or for loved ones to help them to better cope.

I would also like to thank my husband, Rev. Alvaro Ulloa, Jr., for his valuable insight into this dilemma throughout the years, and for being such an encouragement as this was being written.

I would also like to thank my family members, friends, acquaintances, pastors, ministers, brothers and sisters in Christ, and many others whose input into my life has been so invaluable to the information contained herein.

If there is something I learned from another source, I will do my best to quote that source and reference it at the end with numbered parentheses. If the information is something I learned from experience or from the Lord Himself, I will do my best to indicate it in that paragraph.

## Foreword

Although I did not know it then, this message began from my childhood. As I dealt with Rejection throughout life, the Lord continued to add chapters to it, as He had me study people and their (and my) reactions to Rejection, and the scars that remain as a result of it. Then, after I became a believer in Christ, I began to view Rejection through the lens of Scripture, and saw how it differed from conventional psychological approaches, but it didn't make it any easier for me to accept. It wasn't until I saw two short videos that I watched in late 2020 that, to my relief, my true road to healing from Rejection finally began in earnest.

A big disclaimer: Although I am an ordained minister, I am not a certified therapist. This book is not a substitute for qualified psychological help, as needed. However, if it is not an emergency situation, and if you would permit me, I would like to spend our time together sharing what the Lord has showed me about Rejection, and what I have learned from it. I pray that it will help you, as it has helped me, through the Scriptures, and through observations of Spiritual truths in action. Not that I am completely recovered from the effects of Rejection, but as the Lord permits me time on this earth, I hope to be a blessing through what He has taught me. So without further ado, let's begin!

## My Testimony – Part 1

As a young child, I always felt very different, and I was also very sensitive. The combination of those two attributes proved to be a volatile combination, at least for me. Quite a few members of my family, as well as my peers, received different levels of abuse and rejection, and they passed that Rejection on to me. Now, as an adult, I have learned to believe that they never meant any real harm, but at the time it was happening, this wasn't the case. I felt like I was being attacked for no good reason, except for the simple fact that I was different. When these people I loved and trusted treated me that way, which included jeers, criticisms (many of which, I now know were meant constructively), and outright insults, I didn't receive it well. Because I didn't take it well, I wound up crying a lot. Because I cried a lot, the lighthearted jokes that continued at my expense went on, and the cycle just went around and around, over and over again. Due to my inability to cope with what I was going through (or to even put it into words) I became a very angry and sad child, and at around 11, it escalated into hatred and deep depression. Sadly, although many people tried, nobody could do anything to help me, nor to make me “feel better”.

When I came to know the Lord at the age of 17, I first learned about Forgiveness (incidentally the title of the first book the Lord gave me to write), and it was a revolutionary and very beautiful concept to me. Over time, I came to forgive the people that had hurt me, but I still struggled with the Rejection I felt in a major way. To this day, it has been one of the most difficult challenges to overcome, and it still tries to rear its ugly head from time to time, making interactions with others very uncomfortable, and entering into healthy relationships extremely difficult. And I know this is the way it is for many other people out there as well.

## **Statistics**

I believe that many issues, such as:

- Eating disorders, like:
  - Anorexia Nervosa
  - Bulimia,
  - Body Dysmorphia
  - Compulsive Eating, etc.
- Drug and Alcohol Abuse
- Child Abuse (Physical, Sexual, and Emotional)
- Sexual Promiscuity
- Emotional problems like:
  - Anger
  - Violent Aggression
  - Insecurities (which may lead to becoming painfully shy, extremely reclusive, etc.)
  - Selective Mutism
  - Codependency
  - Low Self-Esteem (explored more in a later chapter) and in the worst cases,
  - Self-Abuse and Suicidal Thoughts and/or Actions, and

If I may even boldly venture to say that, many types of (what are called) severe mental illness, such as:

- Paranoid Schizophrenia
- Bipolar Disorder
- Psychosis or Psychotic Episodes
- Multiple-Personality Disorder
- Reactive-Attachment Disorder
- and others...

...Like the leaves of a plant that you can see, are not the problem in themselves. They are only symptoms of a much deeper issue that is troubling them.

In my humble experience, I believe that in most cases I have witnessed, the root cause of many, if not all, of these issues, are the person's inability to cope successfully with some sort of Rejection they have suffered in their lives. They may have felt rejected by their parents, their children, a spouse or other loved one, a career path, society (because of their looks, social status, etc.) or they may even feel rejected by God Himself. Furthermore, loved ones and others may tell the person to "get over it", which is sort of like telling a bent telephone pole to straighten itself up again, or for a weed to pull itself out of the ground. As we all know, this is not physically possible. But the injured person is continually told this by well-meaning individuals, who inadvertently are causing this person more Rejection, because if he or she could stop the pain and fix themselves, I believe they most certainly would. They simply need help. But the right kind of help is not easy to give. These are strategies I hope we can learn here together.

## **The Power of Words**

Most of us have heard the verse "Death and life are in the power of the tongue..." (Proverbs 18:21)

To illustrate the damage words can potentially do, a story (that may be true or only a myth) is as follows:

"...In the Solomon Islands of the Pacific, the islanders practice a special form of curse magic. If a tree needs to be cut down and it is too big to be chopped down, it is brought down by the combined efforts of the Islanders cursing negatively and yelling at the tree. This negative energy somehow damages the tree's life energy the result being after about 30 days of getting cursed the tree dies off and falls to the ground! This is not an act of simple yelling, the villagers curse the tree for 30 days and that is a lot of negative energy for anything to bear, so the tree eventually can't withstand it and dies off." (1)

Even if this story about the Solomon Islands isn't true, most of us have seen microscopic imagery of what happens at a molecular level when water, plants, and other objects are in the vicinity of the negative energy created by harsh, hateful, critical words, rock music, and others. If this is what happens to non-human elements found in nature, imagine what happens in the heart and mind of a small child, or really any person?

## **My Testimony – Part 2**

Words (or the lack thereof, A.K.A. the "silent treatment") to me, have the potential to be the worst form of torture. The phrase "sticks and stones may break my bones.." was never true for me. On the contrary! Beat me, and I will recover quickly. But say an unkind word to me, or punish me with silence, and it stays with me forever. I still remember unkind words said to me from some of my earliest recollections!

Without knowing it, I believe part of the sensitivity the Lord has given me has been a sort of spiritual ability to see the power that words hold over people. He allows me to see (in the spiritual realm) the life force getting drained out of a person when they are the recipient of unkind words. I have also been given the ability to see the emotional wounds and scars that unkind words produce in a person. And the worst part is, I feel like I am receiving the injuries myself!

Before we attempt to work on strategies for recovering from Rejection, I would like to discuss where it originates from.

## **Strongholds**

Most Believers, especially those who believe in Spiritual Warfare, quickly gravitate to the verse in the Bible that speaks about the "pulling down of strongholds" This is the verse:

For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ...

2 Corinthians 10:4-5

In our modern-day Christianity, many times we are not informed that there is a vast spiritual world that is all around us. In the ancient world, however, it was common knowledge. That is why Paul spoke about it so nonchalantly and as a matter-of-fact, not like it was something strange. Now, according to Dr. Tony Evans (in a message I heard years ago that I cannot find to quote directly, so I pray I can do it justice) (\*), the key word in that verse is the Greek word “ἐπαίρω”, pronounced “ep-ahee-ro” which has been translated as our English word “exalts”. Any time something exalts itself throughout Scripture, it is in rebellion against God, and thereby creates a division between itself and God, because “[He] resists the proud but gives grace to the humble” (James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:5). As a result, the thoughts that come into our heads (by way of what we hear as children, or thoughts that just “pop in there”), must come into perfect alignment with what the word of God says. If it is not, that thought has exalted itself against God, and it must be cast down.

Most psychiatrists, psychologists counselors, therapists, even lay people agree that the most severe emotional wounds a person can receive happen in childhood. I believe that the reason this happens (as the Lord revealed it to me) is that children are not capable of taking thoughts captive yet (unless they are taught how). Like little sponges, children take in everything being said all around them, and hold them in. Sponges can take in not only clean water, but dirty water as well. Without the strength to squeeze the dirty water from the sponge, the child may hold in this “dirty water”, in many cases until adulthood, when (spiritually) the sponge may begin to stagnate, perhaps growing mold and bacteria that can severely damage and may ultimately ruin the sponge. Without the tools to thoroughly purge the bad water and cleanse the sponge (through learning healthy ways of adjusting to the reality of Rejection), the child may be unable to function as a healthy adult, suffering from many emotional issues and finding it difficult to cope with life.

## **Low Self-Esteem**

As I was writing this, the Lord gave me an answer to a series of questions I had throughout my life about the topic of “Low Self Esteem”. I have heard the phrase all of my life, even to this day, but something about the term didn't ever sit well with me. In theory, (although I have never really studied it in depth) it would appear that every person has good or a high level “Self-Esteem” when they are born (like they have a full tank of it). Over time, as their "Self Esteem" is damaged (through abuse, neglect, rejection, etc.), their Self Esteem “tank” gets emptied. That being said, then, theoretically, the way to fix Low Self-Esteem is to fill the person with positive words, and that should fix the problem, right?

According to my own personal research, the problem with that theory is that, in the real world, it doesn't work! I am living proof that theory of filling the empty tank of “Self-Esteem” with positive words alone does not bring about satisfactory results.

The Lord revealed to me that the term “Low Self-Esteem” is actually a misnomer. What it is, instead of a person with Low Self Esteem having an empty gas tank that needs to be filled, is that the tank is filled already, but with dirty gasoline! Because of negative, hurtful, insulting words gained throughout a person's formative years, the person's “tank” has toxins and impurities, which are then retained in the person's fuel system, which in turn control the person's thoughts and actions. If you have ever attempted to drive a car with a dirty fuel system, you know what I'm talking about! Those impurities in the tank are equivalent to the thoughts that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God! These thoughts take refuge in our minds, sort of “setting up shop” or “camping out”. As we keep those thoughts in our minds and they influence our beliefs and actions, the thoughts then become “squatters”, or spiritual entities which refuse to leave. The longer they remain in us, they reproduce and become entrenched. It takes an act of God to remove them.

Returning again to the gas tank illustration, if you try to put clean gas into a dirty gas tank, the clean gas gets

dirty too, and only makes the problem worse. The solution? The whole gas system needs to be thoroughly cleaned of the impurities before attempting to put new, clean gasoline into it.

I praise the Lord for this revelation! I pray that by continually washing with the water of the Word (Ephesians 5:26), you will be cleansed from all of the impure thoughts and words you have accumulated throughout your life, and that your “tank” will be ready to receive the true and loving words that will help you ultimately realize the immense value and worth you have as a child of God!

### **My Testimony – Part 3**

There was a time in my life where I was completely paralyzed by the fear that accompanied the Rejection I had been experiencing. A wonderfully kind and precious sister in Christ, whom I did not know very well, for a few months took time out of her busy schedule to meet with me once a week and go over the lies that I had allowed to become strongholds in my heart and mind. I am eternally grateful for her sacrifice, because it did so much to help me begin on the path toward recovery.

Now, it is reasonable to presume that, although I would like to, I cannot be physically with you to help you (like that sister was for me), through your time of crisis. But in the same fashion as she did, I would like to propose an activity for you to complete. Every day, I would like for you to take a notebook or journal, and on one side of the paper, write any fear, negative thought, or emotion you are feeling. On the other side of the paper, I would like you to write a thought or feeling that will counter that emotion (because, remember that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual). Every time a negative thought or emotion enters your head, write it down and then cross it out, thereby fighting that evil thought with an opposite, positive, godly thought. If you can find (or look up) a Scripture verse to go with it, by all means list that on the page as well! Spend some time meditating on those thoughts and Scriptures, and you will begin to feel the Lord's power at work in your life. As time goes on, this activity will be easier to complete, and you may not even need to write them down anymore. It will just become a reflex action. The goal here is to empty our gas tank from these destructive thoughts and feelings, and to replace them with the pure, clean gasoline of the Word of God that will fuel our lives with His joy and purpose!

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

Philippians 4:8

The more weapons we have in our arsenal to fight against those thoughts and emotions that undermine God's authority in our lives, the easier it will be to win each battle for the mind and heart that we come up against.

For example, at the time this sister began to help me, I was so discouraged that I found no reason for living. She asked me to make a list of 10 things I could be thankful for. Disheveled and laden with tears, I could only list one thing, which was that I could be thankful for the birds singing in the trees. It was not much, but it was a start. When you do this activity, you may not be able to list 10 things, either. But listing even just one is great progress! Because it took time to fill that tank full of negative words, thoughts, and emotions, although a miracle may happen and it will be fixed instantaneously, chances are that it may take a good deal of time for the toxins in your tank to be emptied out. You may feel like there is not much hope for recovery, but please just take it one step at a time, and do not rush the process. I believe you will have complete victory, because due to the finished work of our Lord on the cross, by His wounds we are healed (Isaiah 53:5, 1 Peter 2:24)!

### **Forgiveness**

Before we continue, there is one crucial component of coping with Rejection that must be dealt with. If you have people in your life that have hurt and/or rejected you, and you are having difficulties forgiving them, I would like to recommend the other book the Lord gave me to write about 10 years before writing this one,

which is called *Forgiveness*. I pray it is a help to you.

The *Forgiveness* book is available on the homepage our website (2). If you do not read our book, any other books about Biblical forgiveness (especially the Bible) are useful tools for preventing “Unforgiveness” from becoming another stronghold in your life. Since the (self-) publication of that book, the Lord has given me a few other observations about Forgiveness which I would like to share here:

### **Becoming the Person You Don't Forgive**

I have noticed a strange and immutable phenomenon that happens when people don't forgive. Initially, the person who has been hurt rejects the person who has hurt them, swearing that they do not ever want to do the same thing or be like that person. However, when bitterness remains, it is inevitable that the person who has been hurt slowly becomes the person who hurt them. The reason for this is that, God is not mocked; for whatever we sow, that will we also reap. (Galatians 6:7). When we have sowed a seed of unforgiveness in our heart, that seed will eventually bear fruit. The fruit that is borne will always resemble the seed that is planted. Unforgiveness, as most of us know, is not pretty. Actually, it is quite monstrous. So, the monster which then appears is the monster that we didn't forgive! Many times I have witnessed it firsthand, where a few months to a few years or decades later, the person who was hurt will come to the realization that he or she has done the same (or a similar thing) or become the same type of person that simply couldn't be forgiven before.

The next thing the Lord showed me about Forgiveness was regarding the “seventy times seven” passages from Scripture (Matthew 18:22). As I mentioned in *Forgiveness*, the person who hurt me had (in the personal ledger book I kept in my mind) already reached the limit of what the Lord requires for us to have to forgive. But a few years ago, the Lord showed me that, when we have a heart of true forgiveness, the person who is hurting us never has the opportunity to reach four hundred and ninety times of hurting us, because the moment we have forgiven them once, the ledger book gets totally wiped out, and it starts out back at zero again!

It may seem very simplistic, and perhaps may make you feel like I am belittling any pain you may be feeling from what happened to you. But I would like to encourage you to ask the Lord to help you have a childlike sense of Forgiveness - similar to the case of two children who are fighting like cats and dogs one minute, and five minutes later didn't even remember what happened and are back to being best friends again. Forgiveness is one of the most powerful tools the Lord has given us to be able to heal and recover from the effects of Rejection. Because as we forgive, so we will be forgiven (Luke 6:37). If you cannot forgive, then it will be almost impossible for you to heal properly from Rejection.

### **Healing from the Effects of Rejection - Introduction**

I know it may sound cliché, but if you ask the Lord to heal you from the effects of Rejection, and really mean it, I wholeheartedly believe He will do it for you. He will bring people, circumstances, and Scriptures to your life that will help you heal, and in turn you will be able to help others in the same way. That is what has happened to me. I remember asking the Lord many years ago to heal me. Although it didn't happen instantly, through the years I have been on a journey with Him that is unique to me, and it will be a unique journey for you as well.

### **Preventing Rejection**

If you are a person who has been rejected, and want to prevent it from happening to yourself again, or to someone else who is currently unable to cope with it (like a child or a sensitive person), I am afraid that this is where it gets difficult to give a good answer based on Scripture that fits everyone. Yes, the Lord wants us to defend the helpless. However, Jesus was rejected (Isaiah 53:3), and although it was mainly due to spiritual reasons, in that way we can identify with Him when we, too, are rejected. He endured Rejection for joy,

because He loved us. If we come down to the core issue, although He was rejected, it had a purpose, which was to redeem us and show us how to do the same for others.

Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.  
John 5:13

Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and as sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.  
Hebrews 12:2

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.  
John 13:34, 15:12

## **My Testimony - Part 4**

After living through Rejection, and attempting to shelter myself or certain loved ones in my life from the same fate, I realized that, not only were my attempts futile, but I was dismayed to discover that it always backfired on me, for two reasons:

1. When I tried to prevent myself from being rejected ever again, I put up a wall between myself and others, thereby hindering my own recovery process; because in a bubble or behind closed doors I would not be able learn the tools I needed to function properly in healthy relationships.
2. When I attempted to shield my loved ones from Rejection (especially my children), I rendered them incapable of learning to cope with rejection in a healthy way when it happened to them.

I have since learned that the best way to help ourselves and our loved ones to prevent rejection, especially in children, is to give them the tools they need to combat its negative effects, by teaching them healthy and appropriate way to deal with Rejection when it comes. Because, no doubt about it, until Jesus returns to rid the world of everything evil, Rejection will come.

## **Strategies to Cope with Rejection**

### **Video #1**

Now we come to the point in this story where I share the two videos that have really helped me in my recovery from the effects of Rejection. The first is a video, first published on YouTube on November 25<sup>th</sup> 2019, which I saw about a year later in the year 2020. It was a TEDx Talk by Darryll Stinson, who is described as “A vision-driven change agent with a career-long record of community outreach, leadership development, marketing, and communications success for leading organizations. Mr. Darryll Stinson seeks to use rejection as a powerful tool with which we can discover our true and complete identity based on a variety of healthy and holistic influences. Darryll’s theory is that by understanding who we are and what we are uniquely gifted and created to do, we can more healthily process the sting of rejection and turn the initial pain into strength to become a better version of ourselves.”

The message has themes and topics that may be unsuitable for young or impressionable individuals, so discretion is advised. The following is a transcript of the approximately 13-minute video, titled “Overcoming Rejection, When People Hurt You & Life Isn't Fair” (3):

*“Rejection. Do you remember the last time you felt rejected? Was it a guy that never returned a phone call? Or a father that never came around? Was it a boss who overlooked you for a promotion? Or maybe it was someone in your life who never thought you were good enough, no matter what you did to try to impress them?”*

*We all know rejection hurts. It stings. It makes us feel like we're not good enough. It causes us to question ourselves and doubt our future. I submit to you that rejection isn't something we should be afraid of. And it sure isn't something that should make us get discouraged, depressed, or work unhealthy amounts of hours just to prove to the world that we are somebody worth loving and paying attention to. Rather, rejection is our friend and not our enemy. I'm going to share two ways that we can see rejection in order to leverage those moments of pain to be the greatest catalyst to our success, and proof of our value and uniqueness.*

*The first way that we can view rejection is by seeing it as **projection**. A psychological projection. A psychological projection is when someone subconsciously employs undesirable feelings or emotions onto someone else rather than admitting to or dealing with their own unwanted feelings. When we can see how the rejections we face may have more to do with another person's inward turmoil and not our own value, our lives will change. Rather than shrink back, get discouraged, or play it safe, we'll move forward in life with confidence and high esteem. One of my most painful moments of rejection happened when I was in the third grade. I wanted to be popular, to be liked, to be loved, and to be respected. And thankfully, I was. I was in an advanced learning class which meant that I was one of two Black students in an all-white class. And this wasn't a bad thing. I was known as the cool, big, Black kid. They called me Goon. (laughter) I was one of the smartest kids in class - people cheated off my tests, they laughed at my jokes, life was great. Until one day, as I was returning back to class from a bathroom break, I noticed a group of Black students circled together laughing hysterically. Me, being the confident, charismatic, outgoing guy that I was, I decided I was going to go over to them and get in on the jokes. So I walked over to these students, and I said, "Hey y'all, what's so funny?" No one answered. I spoke up. "Now, what y'all over there laughing about?" And just as I was finishing my sentence, one of the guys in the group turned towards me and said, "You're what's funny, white boy." The crowd erupted in laughter, and I, feeling embarrassed, ashamed, and rejected, returned to my class to soon learn that I was known in our school as the Black kid that talks and acts white. I allowed that moment of rejection to diminish my confidence and my self-esteem. Rather than celebrate my own uniqueness, I began a long journey of changing who I was to fit in with this Black community. I mean, I changed the way that I dressed, the way that I talked, the music I listened to. I even changed the way that I laughed. I started skipping school, selling drugs, and making poor decisions - all because I wanted to gain their approval and their acceptance. And you know what? It worked. They accepted me. They embraced me. I got street cred. But deep down inside, I knew it wasn't me who they accepted. It was who I was pretending to be. And the more they adored this false version of me, the more rejected the real me felt the entire time. You see, I didn't understand that sometimes rejection is projection. A projection of someone's own fears and insecurities onto another person. Those students who made fun of me were deeply insecure. They were unsure of themselves. They were afraid to do anything outside of what their peers thought was acceptable. And because they didn't know how to be their unique selves, they projected their fears and insecurities onto me in the form of mockery and jokes. Because sometimes, talking bad about others makes people feel better about themselves. If I would've been able to see their rejection as projection, I would've never taken their jokes personally. I wouldn't have wasted years of my life trying to earn their approval and their acceptance. I would've stayed true to who I was, and I probably would've felt more sorry for them than I was for myself. And I believe that properly handling rejection is a crucial component to ending the rising anxiety, depression, and suicide rates in our nation and world. In fact, one study from the "Oxford Handbook of Social Exclusions" stated that rejection is both a cause and a consequence of depression. I mean think about it. Have you ever felt down after you got rejected? Maybe it was a group of co-workers who invited everyone out for drinks after work except for you. Or what about people who won't invest their money into your vision and dream? Those are situations that cause people to dislike themselves, give up, gain a ton of weight from emotional eating, and binge-watch Netflix. But I've learned that we don't have to allow rejection to make us do that crazy stuff. We can leverage our moments of rejections to produce confidence and success. I did. Once I discovered that the rejection I faced in the third grade was actually a projection of those students' own issues, I was able to see the beauty in my own difference. Honestly, they had something right about me. I was the Black kid that talked and acted white. And I still am. Being the Black kid that talks and acts white has enabled me to be versatile as a speaker and work with people from all different walks of life. I can speak to gang members in the street, and I can speak to executives in the board room. I can help addicts live free from addiction, and I can coach elite athletes to discover their purpose beyond sports. The very thing that made them reject me has become a crucial component to my success. It has*



made me effective at helping others, and it's all because I learned to see rejection as projection, and figured out how to use it for my good.

The second way that we can see rejection is by viewing it as **protection**. Protection from something, or someone, that isn't meant to be in our lives anymore. I learned this lesson after life rejected my dreams of playing in the NFL. I went to Central Michigan University on a full-ride scholarship to play Division I football. Sports was the way that I was going to become rich and famous, so that I could buy my parents a house and get all of my family out of poverty. I had so many coaches and players who told me that, because of my height, my speed, and my athleticism, that there was no doubt that I would one day play in the NFL. Unfortunately, I ruptured a disc in my back my freshman year, and this injury ended my college career. Life had rejected all that hard work I put in. Rather than view my sports injury as protection from a career path that wasn't the best for me, I took it personal. I felt like life hated me and spit in my face. I felt like the universe despised me, and that my value was pretty much nothing without the sport that I loved, or the recognition that I got from being an athlete. Rather than let sports go, I did something terrible in an attempt to keep my athlete dreams alive. I signed a liability waiver, and rehabilitated my body to once again play Division I football. I put my body through two years of drug addiction, pain, and sleepless nights, because I couldn't face life on life's terms. No matter how many painkillers I took, or how many epidural shots I got in my back, I couldn't avoid the reality that my career was finished. Nothing I did to avoid that rejection was working. I was so afraid to face rejection because I felt like it meant that I had no value and no future. I figured that since life completely rejected me and all the hard work that I put in to become a professional athlete, that I didn't just fail, but rather, that I was a failure. This belief that I was a failure drove me into one of the darkest depressions of my life. I became suicidal because I thought it would be better to end my life than to deal with another painful moment of rejection. And so I would swallow whole bottles of pills in hopes that I wouldn't wake up the next day. I would get drunk and take a bunch of drugs and get in the car and drive hoping that a car accident would end it all. It got so bad that I tried to starve myself, and I went from 275 pounds to 219 pounds in four weeks. That's all because I didn't understand how to handle rejection. All these attempts at suicide landed me in the psychiatric unit in Detroit, Michigan. And it was there that I had a life-changing experience that gave me hope, and purpose, and helped me to believe that maybe the rejection I was experiencing was protection from a future that wasn't the best for me. And that maybe there was a career and a life out there for me that was far better than what I had envisioned. So I spent the next few years researching everything I could find on purpose and meaning. I read books. I took online courses. I interviewed people. I prayed. I meditated. I even watched a bunch of TEDx talks. (Laughter) I started to develop new skills and explore new interests. You know what? Over time, I built a life that I loved and even enjoyed more than my life as an athlete. And I would've never been able to do that if it wasn't for life completely rejecting, or should I say, protecting me, from becoming a professional athlete. And I believe that the world needs to have the same perspective shift that I had when I was in the psychiatric unit. Rather than internalize rejection to mean that we're less valuable or that our future is unsure, we should view it as protection from something or someone that isn't meant to be in our lives anymore. Imagine what would happen if we stopped viewing rejection as a negative, humiliating force, and we started viewing rejection as a necessary development tool and a catalyst for massive success. When I look at people who I admire that have been highly successful in life, I can't help but to notice how they've overcome rejections they face. It causes me to wonder if they would've ever become who they were if it wasn't for how they leveraged their moments of rejection. I mean, I wonder if Martin Luther King Jr. would've ever become a great leader if it wasn't for the rejection he experienced from his message and his mission. I wonder if Michael Jordan would've ever developed the drive to become one of the greatest basketball players of all time, if it wasn't for being rejected by his coach in high school. I wonder if Apple would be one of the largest tech companies in the world if it wasn't for Steve Jobs being rejected by his own company. More importantly though, I wonder what your life would look like if you went back to your moments of rejection, and rather than cry, get angry, or bitter, you analyze those moments, and re-frame them as protection or projection. I wonder if buried beneath your pain and unfortunate circumstances is treasure that you could cash in. I wonder if you'd find keys that would unlock new paths in life that are far beyond what you can think or imagine. I wonder if the next level of your success is locked beneath your most painful moment of rejection. I started by asking you when was the last time you felt rejected? Was it a boss? An ex-spouse? A parent? A friend? Or just bad luck? And I'll end by asking you, "What are you going to do with it?"

## Video #2

The second video I saw which helped me comes from a slightly different angle, another TEDx Talk, which has different tips and techniques for coping with rejection. This is what is said about the speaker:

“Magna Gopal is a leading instructor and performer in the international Salsa dance industry and is renowned for her pedagogy, her creativity, and her philosophy. She uses the richness of partner dance to provide a deeper understanding into ourselves, our relationships with others, and the dynamics of communication. “

Titled, “The Benefits of Rejection”, and originally uploaded in October of 2017, the following message only has two words in it that, because of my beliefs, are omitted and shown as a dash in parenthesis (-) , but otherwise, I feel it contains nothing majorly offensive. Here is the transcript to Magna's nearly 18-minute video: (4)

*“Before I start, I'd like to ask all of you two simple questions, with a show of hands: How many of you have wanted something and tried to get it by asking for it? Great! That's all of us! Now keep your hands up if you have gotten everything that you asked for. Yeah, that's what I thought - none of us! So we're at least on the same page. We have all had some of our requests refused, or to put it in terms of my talk today, we have all experienced rejection. Rejection is pervasive throughout our lives. I remember as a child I was always refused second servings of dessert. I've had school applications and job applications rejected, I've asked to go out on dates and been turned down, and I've even asked for help from friends and sometimes been ignored. Rejection exists everywhere, including in my industry. My career involves traveling the globe, teaching people how to connect through salsa dancing. Not sure how many of you are familiar with the dance, but for most of us the image that comes to mind is one of fun, passion, and lots of smiles. It's also a great environment to experience a lot of rejection. And it's actually where I learned the most about it. When I first started dancing, I used to get asked to dance a lot. Could have been because I was always bubbly and smiling, or maybe just because I was a new face on the block. Either way, I was always on the dance floor with very little effort on my part. Eventually however, people realized that I was an absolute beginner with zero technique, and dancing with me was a little bit more pain than pleasure. So naturally, the requests to ask me to dance declined, and if I wanted to dance, I had to be the one asking. Now it's nerve-racking, especially as a beginner, not knowing anyone, to work up the courage and ask someone to dance. It was even harder if that person happened to be surrounded by all of their cool friends. And then the hardest part was finally asking, and hearing, “no”. Now maybe you're thinking, “So what, Magna? You said it yourself, we've all experienced rejection. We've all heard the word “no”. What makes dance so different?” And you're partially right! But let's take the example of getting rejected from a job, or a date. The chances of us asking again within seconds are pretty slim. Most likely a few days, weeks, or even months will pass before we make another attempt. Partner dancing, on the other hand, takes rejection to a whole new level. Nowhere have I experienced as much rejection as I have in dancing. Let me take you through a typical night out, to try and explain:*

*I would usually go out dancing for about three or four hours. The average song lasts five minutes, so that's about 12 songs in an hour. I, of course, wanted to dance to all of them, but initially I was getting rejected at least half the time, which meant six rejections in just one hour. And sometimes, if I really want us to dance to a particular song, I would ask until I got on the dance floor, which sometimes meant three or four rejections within the first 30 seconds of a song. Those numbers are ridiculous. I can't think of any other aspect of life where you have that many rejections in that short of a time - well maybe telemarketing - I don't know. But even then, now the problem with rejection is not so much in the word “no”, it's the way it makes us feel. Think about the last time you were rejected from something. How did you feel? Were you tense? Did your heart sink into your stomach? Did you feel defeated and worthless? Now take that feeling, and multiply it by the numbers in the frequency of rejections I was receiving, and you might have an idea of how low I felt. Of course my initial reaction to this experience was, “This (-)! I'm gonna pretend it never happened.” But dance doesn't afford that luxury, because if you wanted to improve, which I clearly did, you had to keep on dancing. And in order to dance, you had to keep on asking, which basically meant every five minutes you had to set yourself up for another potential rejection. And it took me some time to realize that rejection was like any other experience in life. There were lessons to be learned, and opportunities for growth, I just had to find them. But I couldn't do*

that if I kept on pretending it never happened. So, I revisited some of those experiences, and the first lesson I learned was to **not take rejection personally**. Even if it was personal, against my level of skill at that moment, it said nothing about my ability to improve and be better in the future. The second lesson I learned was to take **each request I made and each rejection I received like a case study**, and analyze it, and refine my technique for asking - how I asked, when I asked, and whom I asked. I ended up learning a lot more about myself and how to read people. And what I found was, when I took rejection personally, I was hurt and I was disappointed. Sure, maybe my first and second rejections were full of enthusiasm, with this big smile and a "Hi, would you like to dance?" But after getting rejected a couple of times, I was dull and resentful. I had a look of misery on my face, and my requests sounded more like (sullenly), "You wanna dance? No? How about you? You wanna dance?" Okay, maybe I didn't turn into grumpy cat, but needless to say, people were rejecting my negative energy well before I had a chance to ask them for anything. When I switched, and stopped making it personal, and focused instead on my goal of getting on the dance floor and having fun, my entire demeanor was much more positive and pleasant. I was confident and accepting of whatever answer I would receive. Add to that the fact that I no longer asked just anyone and everyone to dance, but I focused my efforts on asking people that seemed equally enthusiastic about getting on the dance floor, well you can guess I ended up getting a lot more yeses. And this whole experience helped me redefine success, as not just including the "yes" but also including this learning process. And these two tools that I used learning from it, and not taking it personally, we're invaluable, not only in my dance life, but also my personal and professional life in dealing with rejection. But there's a flip side...

Clearly, if someone is receiving a rejection, someone is dishing it out. And I'm not sure about all of you, but as hard as it is for me to hear the word, "no", it's always been much harder for me to tell someone "no". Because if saying "no" hurts, then I'm responsible for hurting someone. And since hurting someone isn't socially acceptable, I always had this feeling that rejecting someone wasn't, either. Unfortunately, we live in this world where being agreeable is praised over being objectionable. Where sacrificing your wants and desires are held in higher regard than standing up for them. Where when I say "yes" people call me a sweetheart, and when I say "no" people call me a (-). We feel entitled when asking, and obliged when asked. In my dance community, it's no different. In fact, there's this unspoken expectation that, if someone works up the courage and asks you to dance, you'd better honor it and say "yes" no matter what, because rejecting them would have a negative impact on them. Sure, when I was doing all the asking, couldn't agree more! But when I improved and started being asked more often, I realized that saying "yes" could also have a negative impact. So, I had to learn how and when it was important to say "no". Unfortunately, my lesson came in the form of an injury. It's a little bit of background information: My reputation in my dance community is one of this kind and sweet "Energizer Bunny" who dances all night with everyone, and almost never says, "no". But then I got injured - sprained ankle and broke my toe twice on the same foot. And despite the pain, my fear of losing my reputation outweighed any respect I had for my body. It was only after three years of being at sub-optimal health, that I realized, if I didn't learn how to say no and take care of myself, I could cause permanent damage to my body. So, finally, learning how to say no helped me recover, and get back into dance full force. So obviously, this was a case where my rejection was a benefit to me. But there are plenty of occasions in dance where my rejection was also a benefit to someone else:

As I mentioned before, Salsa dancing is a social dance. which involves a lot of asking. And sure, there were times when I was on the fence when asked, but once I said "yes" I ended up having a great time. But there were also times when I really didn't want to dance with the person that asked me. And whatever the reason, when I caved and I said, "yes", I ended up causing more harm than good. Because my heart and my mind were elsewhere! I was distracted. Sometimes I was even annoyed and resentful for feeling like I got sucked into doing something I didn't want to do. I might have been smiling, but it wasn't genuine. And I'm sure my body language revealed that - by avoiding eye contact, easily irritated, dismissive of my partner's enjoyment, and just not participating wholeheartedly - I treated my partner like a chore that I couldn't wait to finish. I know that sounds harsh, but it's the truth, and I'd like to think that I'm a great person once you get to know me. But, if that five minute introduction was all you had, I doubt you'd want to spend another minute in my presence. At least that's how I felt when I danced with someone like that. So these days, if I feel I can't be a hundred percent present, I'd rather say "no", because my partner deserves better than that. Now these are examples in dance, but there are plenty of moments like this in life as well. Think about the time that you weren't feeling well, and

*you didn't want to go out, and your friends begged you to come out, and you said "yes". Were you miserable and complaining, even if it was to yourself? Did you end up feeling worse the next day, because you should have stayed home and rested? I know it's hard to say "no", especially to those people that are close to us, but if we can't be our best, then why are we ruining their day also? Or how about that time you said "yes" to a second date with that person that you had zero interest in, because you didn't want to be mean? Was it nicer to get their hopes up unnecessarily? Did you think that they wanted to spend their valuable time planning a special dinner, only to have you sit there for two hours revealing your lack of interest with your short replies, and your frequent glances at your cellphone? If a five-minute dance can have such an impact on us, what do you think the impact of a two-hour dinner would be? Now, when we look at things this way, meaning when we look at the consequences of our words and our actions, I hope we can start to see where our responsibility lies in all of it, and why it's important to say "no" sometimes. Our definition of rejection makes us think that we're delivering an insult when we say "no", so I understand why there is hesitancy. But we can see that it can also come from a place of respect and consideration. Think of the examples I just mentioned: Would you rather receive an honest two-second, "no", or spend hours or more in the presence of a dishonest, "yes"? Not sure about all of you, but painful as it may be, I would prefer the honesty. And honesty is important. It's crucial. But the actual line between respect and insult, lies in the delivery. And the key to a good delivery is empathy. Whether we are receiving or delivering a rejection, we are dealing with human beings. Treating them with compassion, politeness, and respect, makes it much easier for us to speak openly. And when we don't take or make things personal, and are kind with our words, people are more receptive to what we have to say. We can't necessarily control their reaction to our rejection, but at least we can walk away with a clear conscience when we've taken extra care to be sensitive when delivering it. I know personally, switching from this attitude of entitlement and obligation to one of understanding and respect, has significantly improved, not only my dances, but also my relationships off the dance floor. I'm more present now, because I value other people's time, and I take responsibility for my choices. I'm more generous, because I know that at least I will respect my boundaries and my limits. And I'm kinder because I always engage from a place of empathy. It's empowering to take control of your "yes's" and your "no's", and it's liberating to not feel obliged when asked, and to not feel like a victim of rejection. And this comfort with saying "no" is fantastic, but getting comfortable with saying "no" is not so that we can walk out into the world rejecting new people and new experiences right, left, and center. It's just to enable us to be honest about what we want, and what we can give, at any particular moment. Rejection does not have to be this monster that we're scared to confront, or scared to release. It is just an answer to a question. Unless we define it differently. And compassion, empathy, resilience - these are all skills that we can develop. I've worked on them mainly through dance, but I get plenty of opportunities in life to do that as well. And so do you! So the next time you have to deal with rejection, don't take it personally - try to learn from it! And the next time you have to deliver a rejection, be kind, respectful, empathetic, and know that your honesty in that moment is not an insult. It is the greatest sign of respect that you can show to yourself and to someone else."*

I believe that the most important spiritual lesson we can learn from these two videos is that your worth is not valued by what any human being thinks about you. I would even go on further to explain the ultimate truth, that it is only important what God thinks about you! For some, this truth is hard to accept, and is a very sensitive topic, which in the next section, I hope we can explore more in-depth:

## **Feeling Rejected by God**

### **My Testimony – Part 5**

There was a time in my life that I felt betrayed and rejected by God. I know from experience that feeling rejected by God distorts our rational and spiritually biblical way of thinking. I know other Believers that have also had the same problem, and the pain of feeling rejected by God can easily become something that causes months, years, and even decades of painful backsliding, sometimes with the end result of even abandoning the faith altogether. "If God is all that matters, and He has rejected me," they ask, "then what?" A relative of my

husband, who at one time had been a devout Christian, was so thoroughly convinced that God didn't love him, he spent the last years of his life cursing God, even on his deathbed.

In this next section I hope to explore some of the reasons we may feel rejected by God, and strategies we can employ to counter those feelings.

## **The Role of Fathers & Unconditional Love**

I firmly believe that the reason for the Fifth Commandment, “Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother”, was created by God to help us learn our relationship to Him. The Bible commands fathers:

...Do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.  
Ephesians 6:4

At one time or another, everyone in the world feels this irrepressible need to find someone that will love us unconditionally, and the role of godly fathers are meant to train and admonish us, just like the Lord does, showing us the unconditional love of God. When that doesn't happen, especially when we don't feel unconditionally loved by our earthly father, we may have difficulty relating to God, and understanding His love for us.

## **Redemption**

As it was stated in a special by Ray Vander Laan (again, I can't remember exactly which video in order to quote it directly) (#), the word “Redemption” is not some abstract Greek term, but it is a Hebrew, patriarchal one. The father (or head of household) of a clan in the time of the Bible was fully responsible for every person within it, from the oldest next-of-kin, to the youngest child or great-grandchild - even servants! If there were any needs to be filled, this man would do everything in his power to find the way to fill it, at whatever the cost. If one of the members of his family was kidnapped, he would spare no expense to pay whatever ransom was required to bring that person back home.

Because of the sin in the Garden, we have all been placed in bondage to our enemy, Satan. This enemy is holding a ransom price over our heads, and God our Father, paid the price to bring us back home with Him through the blood of His Son (the Word Made Flesh; A.K.A. His own flesh and blood), Jesus Christ (Yeshua HaMaschiach, which means “The Messiah, Salvation” in Hebrew). In other words, He paid the price to “save” us from sin by offering Himself!

*(As a side note, even from the beginning, I believe God's ultimate aim was to bring us back home to live with Him. The first Hebrew letter in the book of Genesis is a “Bet”, which in pictographic form means, “House”. )*

## **Holiness**

Another reason we may feel rejected by God is because we may not have ever understood the concept of Holiness. When we think of that word, we may mostly think of someone who is perfect, spotless, and sinless. This may be part of what Holiness means, but in the Hebrew sense of the word, it means something quite different. The Hebrew word “Kedushah” means “set apart” or “sanctified”. When the priests were performing their rituals of sanctification, they were, in essence, setting themselves apart for service to God. They were cleansing themselves from the mundane aspects of this world, and becoming consecrated to Him.

The reason people may have rejected you, is that perhaps you are not meant to fit into this world. God may have a special purpose for you, separate from ordinary living, to which He is preparing you and molding you.

The Lord may not want you to get used to “fitting in” to this world, because being friends with the world is enmity with God (James 4:4). There was a saying I heard a while back, “Why are you trying to fit in if God wants you to be set apart?” You may be one of those special individuals that the Lord wants to be ready to say “no” to things that do not please Him, and the best way for this to come about is if you are not accepted by the world. Saying “yes” to God and “no” to the world may not make you popular, but it will be rewarded in the Kingdom to come.

## **Why Am I Not Prospering?**

Another negative thing taking place today, thanks in part to the introduction of the “Prosperity Gospel” to modern Christianity, is that we believe that if we are not living the “Good Life” (living in a nice house, married to the perfect spouse, making good money, etc.), then we believe that we are not being loved and blessed by God, and that perhaps we are doing something wrong. In our current reward system-inspired American lifestyle, we tend to think that if we do good, God will reward us by blessing us. The problem with that line of thought is, many people throughout Scripture, like Job, did the right thing and yet received (what we may describe to be) the opposite of blessing. Most of the prophets like Jeremiah, Daniel, as well as most of the disciples of Jesus, were (and are still being) ill-treated and/or martyred for their faith, meanwhile being totally obedient to God. So unfortunately, there is no “one-size-fits-all” formula for experience God's blessings. Furthermore, if our Love Language is “Receiving Gifts”, or “Acts of Service”, we may spend our lives seeking God's hand (meaning He has to give us things or do things for us in order to feel loved) and not His heart (because the Lord always has better plans for us than what we want). If this happens, we could be prime candidates to feel like God doesn't love us, and we may actually believe that He has totally rejected and abandoned us.

What we, in our human minds, might consider to be “blessings” is not always an accurate indicator of God's love for us. The key to coming against this line of thinking is learning the Hebrew thought process behind the word “blessing”. In Hebrew, the word for “bless” is "בָּרַךְ", pronounced “barak”, which means “to bow”, as in respect and humility to a master. In full pictographic form, the word means “bowing the head with an open hand”. When we “bless the Lord”, we bow before Him and bring our open hands to give Him all of ourselves. That is what the Lord did for us when He sent His Son, and He wants the same from us in return! In other words, because He is our Master, being blessed by God is not getting **from** Him, but giving **to** Him!

## **God's Love vs. Sin**

God's love is eternal. As I like to say, “God's love is so grand, even the universe itself cannot contain it!” And sadly, many of us have spent our whole lives not knowing about His love, or even experiencing it. People who claim to be “Atheists” or “Agnostics”, many times are that way because they have never tangibly felt the Love of God, or understood His purpose. There have been many cases, C.S. Lewis and others, where adamant Atheists and Agnostics have been on quests to prove that God wasn't real. The more they researched to prove God didn't exist, the more undeniable proof they found that His is not only real, but that He sent His Son to die on the cross for us. Then they are unable to withstand, and eventually succumb, to His all-powerful love.

On the other side of the spectrum, if you were a Believer at one time and then rejected God and fallen back into Sin, the reason you may feel rejected by Him is because He may be rebuking you by allowing you to fall into difficult situations, with the ultimate aim of having you return to Him. Even though God may not love everything you do (if you are in sin, or because you have strayed away from Him), He will always love **you**. To put it in other words, He “loves the sinner, but not the sin”. Sin hinders our closeness to Him, but it does not negate His love for us. On the contrary!

For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.  
2 Corinthians 5:14-15

The word for “compels” in that passage is the Greek word “συνέχω”, which is pronounced “sün-e'-kho”. In the King James version it is translated as “constraineth”. When something is constrained, it is squeezed for the purpose of the bad being expelled and the good remaining, sort of in the way an abscess may be drained of infection so that the healthy skin may have a chance to recover.

The great news is that God's goodness leads us to repentance (Romans 2:4), and when taste and see that the Lord is good (Psalm 34:8), we are blessed when we trust in Him, and we desire to love and obey Him all the more!

After the Closing, References, and Dedication, you will find a ministry tool that we discovered years ago, one that we have found to be very helpful in teaching people about the love of God (5). Many verses about the love of God are contained therein, and because we know that the enemy does not want us to believe any of this is true, we must fight to have faith that His every word is the truth, and hold on to it with all we've got! Feel free to print it out, paste it on your mirror, your desk at work, or anywhere you need a reminder of the love of God!

### **Final Thoughts and Closing**

Another valuable skill for coping with Rejection from someone else (including God) is to attempt to believe that the he or she isn't meaning to do it in a cruel way (even if it seems to be). Try to make up your mind that it is meant for the best, and it will help you avoid making their word or deed into something that brings bitterness and ultimately may become a stronghold.

May the Lord be with you in a mighty way throughout your (or your loved one's) journey of healing and recovery from the effects of Rejection. I pray the help the Lord has given to me has been a help to you as well. Above all, remember that God loves you!!!

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Feel free to copy & share this letter with others.
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In Loving Memory of Philip J. Tomasso, Sr., & Rafael “Rafy” Ramirez, Jr.

Date of First Publication - Wednesday, December 23<sup>rd</sup> 2020 - What would have been Rafy's 32<sup>nd</sup> Birthday.

Although they had difficulties believing it, they were so important to us.

They will always be loved and remembered...

...By us, their family and loved ones, but more importantly...

...By God, our Heavenly Father, in whose loving arms they abide now and forever.



## FATHER'S LOVE LETTER

An intimate message from God to you.

### My Child,

*You may not know me, but I know everything about you.* Psalm 139:1  
*I know when you sit down and when you rise up.* Psalm 139:2  
*I am familiar with all your ways.* Psalm 139:3  
*Even the very hairs on your head are numbered.* Matthew 10:29-31  
*For you were made in my image.* Genesis 1:27  
*In me you live and move and have your being.* Acts 17:28  
*For you are my offspring.* Acts 17:28  
*I knew you even before you were conceived.* Jeremiah 1:4-5  
*I chose you when I planned creation.* Ephesians 1:11-12  
*You were not a mistake, for all your days are written in my book.* Psalm 139:15-16  
*I determined the exact time of your birth and where you would live.* Acts 17:26  
*You are fearfully and wonderfully made.* Psalm 139:14  
*I knit you together in your mother's womb.* Psalm 139:13  
*And brought you forth on the day you were born.* Psalm 71:6  
*I have been misrepresented by those who don't know me.* John 8:41-44  
*I am not distant and angry, but am the complete expression of love.* 1 John 4:16  
*And it is my desire to lavish my love on you.* 1 John 3:1  
*Simply because you are my child and I am your Father.* 1 John 3:1  
*I offer you more than your earthly father ever could.* Matthew 7:11  
*For I am the perfect father.* Matthew 5:48  
*Every good gift that you receive comes from my hand.* James 1:17  
*For I am your provider and I meet all your needs.* Matthew 6:31-33  
*My plan for your future has always been filled with hope.* Jeremiah 29:11  
*Because I love you with an everlasting love.* Jeremiah 31:3  
*My thoughts toward you are countless as the sand on the seashore.* Psalm 139:17-18  
*And I rejoice over you with singing.* Zephaniah 3:17  
*I will never stop doing good to you.* Jeremiah 32:40  
*For you are my treasured possession.* Exodus 19:5  
*I desire to establish you with all my heart and all my soul.* Jeremiah 32:41  
*And I want to show you great and marvelous things.* Jeremiah 33:3  
*If you seek me with all your heart, you will find me.* Deuteronomy 4:29  
*Delight in me and I will give you the desires of your heart.* Psalm 37:4  
*For it is I who gave you those desires.* Philippians 2:13  
*I am able to do more for you than you could possibly imagine.* Ephesians 3:20  
*For I am your greatest encourager.* 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17  
*I am also the Father who comforts you in all your troubles.* 2 Corinthians 1:3-4  
*When you are brokenhearted, I am close to you.* Psalm 34:18  
*As a shepherd carries a lamb, I have carried you close to my heart.* Isaiah 40:11  
*One day I will wipe away every tear from your eyes.* Revelation 21:3-4  
*And I'll take away all the pain you have suffered on this earth.* Revelation 21:3-4  
*I am your Father, and I love you even as I love my son, Jesus.* John 17:23  
*For in Jesus, my love for you is revealed.* John 17:26  
*He is the exact representation of my being.* Hebrews 1:3  
*He came to demonstrate that I am for you, not against you.* Romans 8:31  
*And to tell you that I am not counting your sins.* 2 Corinthians 5:18-19  
*Jesus died so that you and I could be reconciled.* 2 Corinthians 5:18-19  
*His death was the ultimate expression of my love for you.* 1 John 4:10  
*I gave up everything I loved that I might gain your love.* Romans 8:31-32  
*If you receive the gift of my son Jesus, you receive me.* 1 John 2:23  
*And nothing will ever separate you from my love again.* Romans 8:38-39  
*Come home and I'll throw the biggest party heaven has ever seen.* Luke 15:7  
*I have always been Father, and will always be Father.* Ephesians 3:14-15  
*My question is... Will you be my child?* John 1:12-13  
*I am waiting for you.* Luke 15:11-32

**Love, Your Dad... Almighty God**