

Lesson 9 / January 31, 2010

Dealing with Rejection

for use as

STEP 1 

Lesson 9

Focus:

As His disciples, we share in Jesus' rejection.

Lesson 9


Bible Basis:


Matthew 13:54-58

Students will talk about people rejecting others and their own experience with rejection.

OPENING ACTIVITY: *Rejection Confessions*

As your class gathers, ask them to discuss two questions.

A  When you look back over your life, in what ways have you been rejected? For example, were you cut from the basketball team because you were too short, were you denied a college scholarship because of your ACT or SAT scores, or did you get “dumped” by a boyfriend or girlfriend?

 What were some of the ways you suffered because of your rejection? For example, did you gain weight, or did you give up on college, or did you settle for a different career?

People reject other people for many reasons, one of which is physical appearance, as this week's story tells us.

OPENING STORY [read it aloud to your class, or make copies and pass it around]:

'BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE' WEB SITE REJECTS OVERWEIGHT MEMBERS

Did you put on a few pounds eating all that good food over the holidays? Well, if you did, you are not alone—and you are also at risk of being rejected by the so-called “beautiful people” of the world.

There is a world-wide Internet dating site that only wants to connect “beautiful” people with other “beautiful” people. Those they determine to be “ugly” are banned from the site. The site has been in the news this month for axing about 5,000 of its members because those people packed on a few extra pounds over the holidays.

According to CNN, the international Website BeautifulPeople.com threw out members after they posted photos “revealing that they have let themselves go,” according to a company statement.

Lesson 9
Memory Verse

And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith.

—Matthew 13:58

“As a business, we mourn the loss of any member, but the fact remains that our members demand the high standard of beauty be upheld,” said Robert Hintze, founder of BeautifulPeople.com. “Letting fatties roam the site is a direct threat to our business model and the very concept for which BeautifulPeople.com was founded.”

The site describes itself as an “elite online club, where every member works the door”—that is, users can join only after enough members vote them “beautiful” during the 48 hours after their profile is uploaded. And apparently, enough beautiful people were angry that some members had enjoyed a bit too many treats during the holiday season.

So BeautifulPeople.com sent those flagged members e-mails, according to the company statement, telling them they could register again for the site when their extra pounds were gone.

“We responded to complaints by moving the newly chubby members back to the rating stage. This is the same as having them re-apply,” Greg Hodge, managing director of BeautifulPeople.com, said in a statement.

“Their re-applications were reviewed by existing members, and only a few hundred were voted back in. Over 5,000 were rejected,” Hodge added.

On this site, beauty is certainly in the eye of the beholder; only one in five applicants is normally accepted, a company statement said. Maintaining those standards is what the site is about, Hodge said, and that’s why the people were expelled.

“Every year we see that some of our members from Western cultures eat and drink to excess over the holidays, and clearly their looks suffer,” he said in a statement. “The U.S.A. has been grossly over-indulging since Thanksgiving. It’s no wonder that so many members have been expelled from the network. We hope they will be back after shedding the festive pounds.”

Will these no-longer-beautiful people suffer from their rejection? Yes, according to a recent study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. Researchers at the University of California in Los Angeles questioned people about their responses to social rejection, which is a form of emotional stress.

The study showed that the same portion of the brain that is responsible for the response to physical pain became activated as a result of social rejection, suggesting that, to our brains, emotions really can “hurt.”

[Now form small groups and have your class discuss the following questions.]

- ▶ Should people reject other people on the basis of their looks? Why or why not?
- ▶ Can you share a story about yourself or someone you know who faced rejection solely because of his or her physical appearance?
- ▶ Sometimes we are uncomfortable when we are around people who are different from us in some way. What are some other reasons people are rejected, besides their physical appearance?
- ▶ Which do you dread more—physical pain or emotional pain? Why?
- ▶ Can you share a time when you rejected another person because of his or her appearance, actions, or beliefs? Did you do the right thing or not, and why?

[When you are finished with the questions, go on to Step 2 in your *Adult Teacher's Guide*, where you read the Scripture and begin to discuss it. Your Step 4 appears below.]

News Sources:

cnn.com/2010/LIVING/personal/01/04/dating.site.overweight/index.html?iref=allsearch

psychcentral.com/news/2009/12/04/rejection-can-cause-physical-pain/9947.html

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Dealing with Rejection

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STEP 4

Lesson 9
Focus:

As His disciples, we share in Jesus' rejection.

Lesson 9
Bible Basis:

Matthew 13:54-58

WHAT TO DO WITH REJECTION

Jesus tells us that we will face rejection from many people in society if we follow Him, because society also rejected Him (John 15:18-19). From the cross, He forgave those who rejected and crucified Him (Luke 23:34). However, Jesus also told His disciples to shake the dust off their feet from towns that rejected the Gospel message (10:10-12).

These examples show us that as Christians, rejection is always going to be part of our lives. Sometimes we need to stand firm in a situation even as we are rejected—but at other times we need to flee the source of the rejection. Having a personal relationship with Jesus and praying about what we should do is the best way to know what our response to these difficult situations should be.

Regardless, as Christians we should not reject those trying to find or follow Jesus just because they are “different” from us, for example, in their dress, language, or social position. That is not what Jesus did. Our conduct and words need to match His.

[Activity]

Return to the groups you had in Step 1 and discuss these questions.

- ▶ Have you been in a situation where you were rejected because you were a follower of Jesus? How did you react, and why?
- ▶ What are some situations that you can think of that would require you to “stand firm” in the face of rejection? [One example would be standing firm on biblical values, such as telling people not to have sex outside of marriage, even though some people may reject you for believing that.]
- ▶ What are some situations that you can think of that you should “flee” from? [For example, if a person you are talking to about your faith is hateful or abusive toward you, it may be better to leave the situation and not continue the conversation with that person.]

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- ▶ In this coming week, how could you be an encourager to someone who is experiencing rejection? Could your class help someone feel accepted who does not think he or she is “good enough” to be a part of your fellowship?

End the class in prayer. Ask God to help those in your class to be encouragers to one another in the face of rejection.

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