

Reacting To Rejection

I heard about a man who wanted to be an elder of the church. He campaigned vigorously for the position. When the congregation declined to select him, he quit the church - thus validating the wise judgment of his brethren!

Nothing so reveals our true motives and character as does how we react to rejection! This is so, even if the rejection exposes the shallowness of those who refuse to let us have our own way. If we are offended enough to take up our marbles and go home, we demonstrate a weakness more serious than the stupidity of those who fail to recognize our genius.

I don't know how James and John responded to the Lord's refusal to grant their selfish request. I can imagine that their feelings were hurt. But what I do know is that they didn't quit! Peter's presumptuousness was a frequent source of humiliation to him. What impresses me, though, is there was something in him more important than his arrogance, something of greater value to him than his ego. He could accept rebuke. I don't suppose he liked it. But something finer in him would not permit him to quit.

All of us will experience disappointment. We will be stung by rejection. Sometimes we may be sure that our ideas represent the key to the advancement of God's cause on earth, at least as it applies to our local fellowship. In such cases, it's so tempting to "shake the dust from our feet." **But this is a test!** We must be careful not to upstage their poor insight by disclosing that we are a poor loser!

Jesus "came to His own, and His own received Him not." He wanted to take His people "under His wings, but they would not." Thank God that such painful rejection did not cause Him to turn His back on us! We, also, must "play the hand dealt to us." We must be constant "in season and out of season" - faithfully using our gifts in ministry, when our efforts are appreciated and when they are ridiculed. Only then will we display the motives and the character of the One whose name we wear!

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