

## **STANDING TALL AGAINST THE FEAR OF REJECTION AND BETRAYAL**

Paul wanted to persecute Christian. After he became a Christian, his former comrades were out to persecute him. Later, Paul encountered some church leaders in Jerusalem, but they were afraid of him. This was a critical moment in Paul's new life, but along came Barnabas. Barnabas stuck out his neck on behalf of this former persecutor. He stood tall in the face of the fear and skepticism, and removed the barriers that stood between Paul and the other Christians.

Rejection for us may sound or happen like this: "Sorry, but we chose someone else for the job." "I just don't want to date you anymore, but we will always be friends." "The truth is, you're not the son or daughter I hoped for." Maybe you were picked last to be on a team, made fun of because you are different, or your marriage ended in divorce. How do we react to this? Some will try to drown their sorrows in alcohol, drugs, or immoral sex. Others continue to abuse like they've been abused in the past. Others try to prove their sense of self-worth through accomplishments and higher achievements. Others simply give up.

Barnabas decided that he did not fear Saul, nor did he fear the rejection of his fellow disciples. The fear of rejection is often the basis of other fears. Now, how do we overcome these fears? It has been said that we need to do two things. First, we need to focus on God's love and acceptance for us. We need to read about His love for us in Scripture. We need to spend time in His presence. If we don't do that, then we end up focusing on trying to fit in and be accepted by others. The second thing we need to do is be a "Barnabas" to others. Remember this. One person can make a great difference! Look around your church, workplace, or neighborhood for someone who may need the encouragement of a Barnabas. Think about times in your own life when you needed extra support. Perhaps your experience will give you compassion for someone in a similar situation now. Make someone feel like an insider. Show them that you think they're important by making a phone call, sending a card, offering to pray for them, and so on. As you take the risk to encourage others, you'll not only show them acceptance, you'll be facing down your own fears of rejection.

*Roy Goodlet is a retired minister and a member of Murphy Church of Christ. Email him @ royfcc@yahoo.com.*