

**Intro:**

It's good to be back, and it's good to be talking about our subject for today- sex and rejection. How many of you have ever been rejected before? Yea, all of us had better raise our hands! Rejection is not fun to go through. In fact, it can be outright devastating. Whether it be with our parents, or with a romantic relationship, or with marriage- rejection can be devastating, it can leave us permanently damaged. Especially in this area of sex. If you've ever had or are in a sexual relationship now, whether with your spouse or someone else, you know how devastating a "no" in the area of sex can be.

I remember when Ethnos first started, and someone who was checking out our church asked to grab coffee with me. She was a very attractive woman, one that any guy would die to be with, at least appearance wise. We sat down at Starbucks, and her opening line was- I need you tell me all the reasons why I shouldn't get a divorce right now. Yikes, what an opening line! As I got to know the situation, it was pretty shocking, I thought, what was going on. Turns out her husband was turning her down for sex, and she was feeling devastated! Rejection can permanently ruin us.

Our passage today is a great passage because it's going to tackle this issue head on. If you're here with us for the first time, we've been going through the Bible book called Song of Songs, a story told in poetry of two lovers who move from courtship to marriage. Today we land on the passage where one rejects the other in the area of intimacy and sex. But it doesn't ruin their relationship. In fact, they are able to move from rejection to restoration, from rejection back into relationship. And so we're going to take a look at this passage and ask how they do it, with the hopes that we can do it as well.

Now, again, I realize that not all of us are in a relationship like this right now, in fact some of us will never be in one. Please do track with us still, because you may be in one in the future, or you'll be with friend and family who will go through what we're talking about here, and you can help them out. Sound good? So let's take a look at our text, and think about how to move from rejection to relationship.

Read Text: Song of Songs 5:2-6:3.

**Rejection**

We see the rejection- it's pretty straightforward. The man comes home, after a long night. He wants to be close, he wants intimacy. But the woman hesitates, and for reasons we're probably familiar with. She feels it's a little inconvenient. And so she doesn't do anything at first. But then she changes her mind, but it's too late. He's been hurt, and he goes away. Rejection creates separation.

Now, before we get into how things get restored, let's spend a moment talking about rejection. You know, there are sometimes when rejection is a good thing, especially in the realm of sex.

If you're single and trying to follow Jesus' ways of saving sex for marriage, but you're dating a guy or girl who is constantly pressing for sex, in fact, manipulating the relationship for sex- rejection is completely appropriate. In fact, I would say you probably want to get out of that relationship. We can talk about that more afterwards, but that's simply not a healthy relationship to be in if your boyfriend or girlfriend is manipulating you to get in your pants.

If you're married, there are some good reasons for rejecting sex as well. If your spouse is physically abusive in the sex act, or if they're sleeping around and coming home expecting to still have sex with you, or if they're a sex addict- you have every right to say no to sex, and tell your spouse to get help before you're going to have sex with him or her. If you're there in that situation, come up for prayer and pastor Chuck and I will take care of things.

So there are good reasons to reject sex, but there are also really bad reasons to reject sex. And who I want to talk with now if all of those who are married and simply are not having sex because of issues related to inconvenience. Sure, there are some great reasons for the inconvenience. In fact, it may be complicated- you may have some other issues in the past that you are personally dealing with that make you real hesitant in having sex with your spouse. But here's the deal- those are, when all and said and done, driven by selfishness and not selflessness. If you have some deep issues, go find help, work through it. If you're dealing with issues of scheduling and inconvenience and tiredness- get help, work through it. Your rejection of sex will be detrimental to the relationship- if it isn't already- creating separation and distance. People can think "divorce" because of this very issue! This is serious! So work it out, get help, talk with the leadership here- my wife, pastor Chuck, etc.

So, there are good reasons to reject sex. And there are bad reasons.

But here's the question for today: how do we overcome rejection? How do we move from rejection to relationship again? How can intimacy be restored? Our text here continues, and gives some great insight. Four points. And these are for both the rejector and the one rejected.

### **Restoration toward Relationship involves:**

#### **1. Relentless pursuit.**

Note how the woman, after knowing her mistake, goes all out to try and make things right. She goes through the city, goes through a beating- the guards may have thought she was a prostitute and so abused her. And yet she is looking, searching, yearning for him.

I think we know this already, but let me just say it again- good relationships take a lot of hard work. Good relationships, especially marriage, are not for the faint of heart. They cannot be done alone- you'll need all the help you can get. But you cannot give up at the first sign of difficulty. And so, moving from rejection to relationship requires a relentless pursuit.

#### **2. Refocus on the gift of the other.**

After this, the story takes a real eye-opening interlude. I mean, partway through this search, she gets caught up in the beauty and wonder of her lover. It's quite a description- a lot of the descriptions come close to literal idolatry- gold head gold arms, legs like marble- scholars make a note that she is almost describing him like a god! I think it reflects her high view of him, not idolatry. In any case, she's fixed on his goodness right smack in the middle of this conflict, this rejection. And the guy does it too, the one who gets rejected! (6:4)

There's something about marriage that can be really sad, and it's that we take our spouse for granted. We work real hard before marriage to "get" our spouse, but once we have them it is real easy to take them for granted. Especially in the area of sex. A lot of times the one who needs sex less starts looking at the one who needs sex more and thinks what's wrong with you? Why do you need it so much? Get a grip! They start seeing the other not as a gift, but as a nuisance. And that is often the beginning of the end.

If you're in that spot, or you know others in that spot, you need to start seeing your spouse as a gift again. You need to work on that. You need to realize that your spouse is a gift. He or she has committed to you, has made a choice to not go out and sleep with anyone else. That's a gift! Treat him or her like one! Starting refocusing your eyes on the beauty and wonder that they are! Again, you're not going to be able to do this alone- come get some help from the leadership here. But a move from rejection to relationship will require this.

#### **3. Reliance on Jesus' empathy and power.**

Now, this doesn't directly come from the text, but it's from the rest of Scripture. Reality is, going through rejection is hard. Especially if you're the rejected one. More than that, to deal with the issues of why someone is rejection another, to figure out all the issues underneath- that process can take a long time, and it can be excruciatingly painful. You heard when my wife spoke that she went through a three year process to start getting comfortable with sex. Meaning, on my end, rejection happened quite a bit. And it was hard, really hard. There were many a dark nights.

How do you go through it? The answer involves having Jesus come in and walk with us during this time. I say this not because it is the "Christian" thing to say, but because Jesus himself was and is one who knows rejection personally. One of the key descriptions of Jesus is as follows.

*He had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed.*

*Isaiah 53:2-5*

Jesus knows rejection well, and longs for us to let Him come and walk with us in the midst of our rejection. To come and give us comfort and strength and focus on something more. To show us that, like his suffering led to the glory of a resurrection, we too can experience that sort of resurrection power and joy in the midst of bewildering pain and rejection.

Will you open up to Jesus and let him come and help you?

#### **4. Re-entry into the same space.**

We see that, at the end of our passage, she knows where to find her man. And she will go there in the next section, they will both re-enter each other's space. This is obviously needed- coming together, sharing the same space, is a must if relationship is going to happen again. This coming together of course requires forgiveness and trust- that is the challenge of this point.

### **Question and Answer**

#### **Challenge:**

So how are you dealing with rejection? How is God asking you to proceed today?

And for those of you who are checking out faith- how is God talking to you now? You know, many people get their first taste of God when they've been rejected. Is he asking you today to take that step toward Him? To let Jesus in?

#### **Extra Study Notes:**

Please visit [www.sexatchurch.com](http://www.sexatchurch.com) for a list of resources for various sexual issues.

v.10- Radiant and ruddy- seems to describe those with good, healthy, vibrant complexion (1 Sam. 16:12, Lam. 4:7)

v.11- Gold head, along with descriptions in v.14-15, have close parallels with images/materials of idols back then. This points to the woman's exalted view of the man, the appreciation of his glory.

v.12- "mounted like jewels" is more literally "sitting in fullness." It can refer to the doves sitting in the fullness of water. Either case, the imagery is of deep and attractive eyes.

v. 13- Most men had beards back then, so the emphasis here is really on the scent of the man.

v. 15- cedars of Lebanon were known for the beauty, grandeur, and smell. They were also used in the construction of the temple.