



The teacher instructed the team captains to select their teams. The little girl stood on the rocky dirt of the playground, eyes gazed downward, pretending it didn't matter, as one by one, her classmates were selected. Finally, mercifully, the teacher, giving an impatient yet sympathetic look, directed the little girl to a team.

I often share the memory of my experience with elementary school playground games. I was always one of the smallest in my class and when it came time to play "Red Rover" or other games, I was often the last one to be chosen. Because I was so small, the others knew I would be a detriment to the team. The memory is painted like a portrait in my mind. While I would *never* claim that the experience left me with low self-esteem or psychological scars, I will confess it left an indelible impression on me.

As we grow older, the Red Rover memory fades into the past but it doesn't recede without being replaced. It morphs into the person you thought would always love you but didn't, the one that said they would never leave you but did, the job that lets you go even though you devoted your life to it, the friend that never calls, the party you didn't receive an invitation to, or the committee that rejects your membership. And all of a sudden, you find yourself standing on the playground all alone. Eyes cast downward, trying to act like it doesn't matter. But it does.

Everyone wants to feel wanted. Everyone wants to be chosen. No one wants to stand alone. Our hearts just want to belong. You may not share a memory just like mine but most everyone has experienced the misery of a "Red Rover" moment and the emotions you feel. But from personal experience, I know that unlike Red Rover and other games, we are chosen and wanted by God. We never stand alone.

How comforting to know that God calls those who believe in His Son "his chosen people, holy and dearly loved" (Colossians 3:12). Before time began, God was thinking of us. We were lovingly created because He wants us to be with him. And through His Son Jesus Christ, we belong to God's family. We've been chosen. We are wanted. We are one of God's people! We belong!

While I'm thankful to be one of "his people", belonging to the family demands a response. God commands His people, to clothe themselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. When we clothe ourselves with these virtues, our eyes will be opened to see the unwanted ones, the rejected ones, the lonely ones. The ones who like us, need to belong.

Colossians 3:12 (NIV)



“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.”

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