



I can't believe she "unfriended" me on Facebook!

This friend, who had been a Christian mentor to me, in my eyes, didn't like me anymore. The "unfriending" went further than social media; she removed herself from my life. This was the friend I had listened to with rapt attention during Bible studies we had attended together. I was always captivated by her wisdom and her knowledge of the Bible. I loved how she interacted with people and I wanted to be like her. And now, I was spurned by the one I had looked up to and trusted. She found a new church home and I felt deserted and cast off. It wasn't the first time someone I had considered a friend had walked away but this time was especially painful and the rejection was palpable. How could she do that to me? Was I that lousy of a person that I didn't deserve her friendship?

Have you ever been "unfriended"? Have you ever felt the rejection and disappointment of lost friendship or one that has morphed beyond recognition?

I think we all feel rejection at one time or the other. But when it comes from a Christian friend, it is especially disheartening. We feel the hurt more deeply and may even feel a sense of disillusionment with our faith. We may hear ourselves thinking "Christians aren't supposed to act that way. They're always loving and accepting and gracious", Right? Or we may choose to not open ourselves up to another friendship thinking there would only be more pain and disappointment. None of us want to experience the pain, but alas, my sweet friend, the rejection, the pain, and the disappointment can lead us to a fresh vision of God's love and care for us.

As I recall the feelings of pain and rejection that I experienced, I remember that Jesus too, experienced pain and rejection from His closest friends, the disciples, when they abandoned him as he made his way to the cross. They had been with Jesus and loved him yet they couldn't stay with him when He needed them most. One closest to him, Peter, even denied he knew Jesus! Rejection and disappointment can happen to all of us for a variety of reasons but Scripture reminds us that there is One who will never reject, abandon, or disappoint us.

Psalm 27:10 says "Even if my father and mother abandon me, the LORD will hold me close."

The Psalmist knew that even if those closest to him were to leave him, God never would. God's love is perfect and changeless. The Psalmist was able to cast his sight on God who would hold him close, even closer than a parent. His confidence was in God, not his friends and he knew God's love for him was stronger than any parent's love could ever be, or the love of his nearest and dearest friends.



The "Unfriending"

The pain I felt as I realized the relationship with my friend changed forever directed my eyes to the One I knew would never reject me or leave me. Friendships change but God never does. As we face the pain of rejection from our friends or even our family, we can, like the Psalmist, turn our eyes to the LORD and find perfect love and acceptance. We can remember God's promise to never leave or forsake us. We can remember He holds us close to His heart.

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"Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!"
Isaiah 49:15

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."

Deuteronomy 31:6

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