

TODAY'S BIBLE READING
1 SAMUEL 8:1–22

RECOMMENDED READING
DEUTERONOMY 17:14–20; 2 SAMUEL 15:1–12; PSALM 69:24

HANDLING REJECTION

You've been through performance reviews before, but you're still nervous. Will you be able to think on your feet? Will your thoughts make sense?

When you walk into your boss's office, the knot in your stomach tightens even more. You notice that your boss looks as nervous as you feel. As you sit down, you realize that he's not looking you in the eye. After a few slow-motion moments of silence, he finally clears his throat. "I have some bad news. The company has decided to let you go."

He picks up your personnel file and shuffles through it to avoid meeting your shocked gaze. "Of course, you've been a good employee. But the company has decided to head in a different direction in your department, and they want to bring in a new leader." The hard blow delivered, your boss hurries to relieve his own tension. "Naturally, we'll give you a generous severance package and an excellent recommendation."

Finally he looks at you with a weird "Do you have any questions—I hope not" expression on his face and says, "Well, I guess that's it. We'll get a packet with all the details into your hands by the end of the day." He busies himself gathering papers, and then—as if surprised that you're still sitting there—mumbles, "I'm sorry."

All the while, you're still trying to absorb the impact of his words: "The company has decided to let you go."

Imagine Samuel's shock when the people of Israel asked him to step aside and appoint a king to lead them. His two sons had already disappointed him, and now the people were rejecting his leadership. They no longer wanted a judge who represented God. They wanted a flesh-and-blood leader whom they could display with pride—a king, like all the other nations had. Samuel felt as if the people were saying, "We've decided to let you go."

We all face and are hurt by rejection. How should we respond? When the people told Samuel they wanted a king, he didn't argue with them. He didn't spit out the first answer that came to mind. Instead, he prayed. He poured out his disappointment to God. And then he obeyed.

TO TAKE AWAY

- :: WHAT KINDS OF REJECTION HAVE YOU FACED IN YOUR LIFE? HOW DID BEING REJECTED MAKE YOU FEEL?
- :: CAN YOU RECALL TIMES WHEN YOU HANDLED REJECTION INAPPROPRIATELY? HOW MIGHT YOU HAVE RESPONDED INSTEAD?
- :: HOW HAVE YOU SENSED GOD WORKING IN YOU TO HANDLE REJECTION?