

## ***When My Mother and Father Forsake Me... – Dan Hitz***

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***For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb.  
I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And  
that my soul knows very well. – Psalm 139:13-14***



Those verses were intended to give us comfort as we realize the great attention to detail that Lord used to lovingly put us together in our mother's womb. For those of us who grew up in a dysfunctional family, those verses may bring up different emotions altogether. We may wonder why the Lord "chose to put us in that specific womb". Far from feeling good about ourselves as the Lord's creation, our negative upbringing can make us feel like damaged goods.

Erik Erikson is a developmental psychologist famous for identifying the stages of psychosocial development. His theory basically describes God's intent for the role that parents and other significant people play in our emotional and social development. **Unfortunately in this fallen world, not all of us have grown up with a healthy mother and father. Not all of us have gone through childhood and adolescence with a healthy connection to our peers. If that is the case in your life, the Lord can heal the emotional wounds inflicted through the things you have experienced.** He can also heal the wounds you've endured because the nurturing and care that you were supposed to receive didn't happen. Psalm 27:10 reads, "When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take care of me." God can heal the hurts in your heart and fill the emotional voids.

A brief exploration of God's intended role for our parents and peers will help you understand where you need the Holy Spirit to touch your heart. **Our relationship with our mother is the most important relationship that we have when we are born. Mothers are intended by God to give us a sense of being – a sense that it's okay to be alive and that we have value.** Mom's nurture us. When we are hungry they feed us. When we mess our diapers, they change us. We learn from them that our lives are celebrated and that we will be well cared for.

After we learn to crawl and walk, we look beyond mother to our father. **Fathers are intended by God to help us learn to explore the world and take the initiative to try new things. They are also designed by God to encourage us to grow into the identity and purpose that He created us to have.** Dads empower us to become established in this world and succeed. Little girls learn what it means to be female through their mothers, while little boys learn what it means to be male from their fathers.

**As we enter school, the next important relationships we have are with our same-gender peers.** At this stage boys usually think girls have "cooties" and girls may think boys are a bit nasty. This is a normal stage of development. Little boys learn how to relate to other little boys as they interact and play together. It works the same for girls. We learn that we are a good and acceptable little boy or girl as we fit in well with other little boys or girls.

**As we gain confidence in our own gender peer group, we then begin to reach out to the other gender and learn how to relate to them.** Boys notice that the girls lose their cooties and are becoming attractive. Girls notice that the boys aren't so nasty after all. Confidence in who we are as a person continues to grow as we establish healthy relationships with the opposite sex.

God intends our emotional and relational development to continue throughout our lives as we enter into committed relationships, begin our families, and relate to others in our community. Many of us have not had the ideal development and growth described in this article. **A problem at any stage of development will create challenges in the future stages. Fortunately, the Lord has taken that into account and has made provision for our emotional healing on the cross.** We can take comfort in the verse that was referenced earlier in this article which reads, “When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take care of me.” When Jesus began His ministry, He read out of the book of Isaiah where it says, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted...” (Luke 4:18-19). In the original language, the phrase “brokenhearted” refers to shards of glass like when you break a mirror. Jesus was saying that He was sent by the Father to heal the “shards of glass” – the fragments of our heart – from emotional trauma and neglect. We find in Jesus a loving Savior who is willing to hear our prayers, heal our emotional wounds, and fill the voids in our hearts with His presence.



If you’ve grown up without the kind of nurturing that God designed you to have, spend time in prayer and share your hurts with Him. **Recognizing our areas of deep need is a first step in overcoming our mother and father wounds.** Be honest about your pain. Ask Him to teach you to recognize His healing presence and to heal your heart. As you work through the various areas of need in your heart, you may recognize pockets of hidden anger. **It is important for your own personal growth to learn to forgive those who have wounded you. Forgiveness is more for your sake, than for the sake of those who have offended you.** Your offender may be totally unaware that he or she has wounded you, or he or she may actually be glad that you were wounded. We live in a very fallen world. Harboring anger and resentment will only serve to hinder you, keep you bound to your wounds, and give your offender the victory. Forgiveness sets you free. Ask the Lord to help you release your anger and resentment to Him and allow Him to deal with those who have hurt you. Your offender and your wounds will lose their power as you experience the healing power of Christ.

**Sometimes when we are sinned against, we respond with sinful reactions.** Ask the Lord to show you the areas in your own life where you have responded to your pain in sinful ways. When He does, repent and seek to make amends where appropriate. In walking away from our sin we find a deeper capacity to receive God’s love and walk in deeper relationships with others in the Body of Christ. **In addition to friends, we all need others who are more mature than us and have journeyed successfully through some of life’s difficult pathways.** Ask the Lord to send you a



safe, Christian mentor to walk with you and help you in your journey. Your pastor, a recovery group, or the pastoral care department at your church may be a good place to start. No pastor or mentor can become the long lost mother or father that you never had, but he or she can share his or her experience with you as you both walk towards Jesus together.

**As you follow these steps in your journey, you will begin to experience the fulfillment of the verse, “When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take care of me.”** You will grow into a beautiful relationship with God the Father where He truly will fill the voids in your heart. He longs to become the safe, loving, nurturing parent that you have always wanted.