



TRANSFORMED

DEVOTIONS CONNECTING TEENS TO CHRIST

He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

Isaiah 53:3

Abandonment scars

The story she told me sounded like it came right from Doctor Phil. In fact, it hardly seemed real, but I believed every word she said. She was born in a third world country, but her mother couldn't take care of her. Her mom paid a friend to care for her for a little bit, but that didn't last long. Eventually, she was left at an orphanage where she spent the early years of her life. She doesn't know how old she really is because no one has a birth certificate. When she was adopted by an American family, she was malnourished and underdeveloped socially, verbally, even physically. To this day the pain of being abandoned has left a deep scar on her heart and soul. Her story is extreme, but I think we can all understand the depth of her pain to a certain extent.

Abandonment leaves deep and lasting scars on all of us.

Broken families leave us abandoned by a mother, father, and maybe even both. People who you thought were friends scattered when you needed them the most. A girlfriend or boyfriend leaves you with little warning or no explanation. Your parents disown you. Then after the trauma of a break comes the deep pain of silence. The pain of abandonment scars us more than we might even begin to imagine.

Jesus understands. Jesus gets it because he's been there. He's suffered abandonment. He was despised and rejected by mankind. When he needed them most in the Garden of Gethsemane, his own disciples fell asleep on him. Some friends! People from his own nation, his own race, his own religion called out with anger for his crucifixion. And then, when it seemed as if it couldn't get worse, Jesus' own Father abandoned him! Jesus cried out in anguish, *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me"* (cf. Mark 14:23).

Jesus gets you. He understands the pain that you experience when people in your life walk away, abandoning you when you need them most.

But know this: He was abandoned by everyone in his life, even his own Father, so that you would not be. Jesus is your big brother who steps to your side through his suffering and death. He stepped willingly into abandonment by his own Father just to keep you close to him and to your Father forever. By his abandonment he brings us near to God so that these words and promises of God are true: *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). In another place he promises, I will never leave you or forsake you (Hebrews 13:5).*

This is God's promise to you. Though everyone may abandon you, even your father or mother, he will not. He is with you forever.

Prayer: Dear Father, at times during my life I feel so alone. I feel as though everyone has abandoned me. At those times remind me, dear Father, that I am not alone. You will never forsake me. Your Son, my Savior, was forsaken so that I would never be abandoned. Amen.