

Out of the Closet

Hope for Homosexuals

I grew up with the struggle of being different. As a female, I was attracted to other girls.

In the strong Christian home of my youth, such things were never spoken of. When I began to learn about homosexuality, I recognized the symptoms in myself and realized I was headed directly toward that lifestyle. Obviously, the church wouldn't approve of my "difference," and that meant I'd struggle even more.

The truth is, it didn't really matter what the church thought. What mattered was how God felt about my homosexuality. I had convinced myself that He approved, but in time I learned that homosexuality is *not* a godly lifestyle and that God does not condone it. I also came to see that God loved



me then just as He does now, though He did not love my choices.

God did not design anyone to live in the delusion of homosexuality. He has a good plan of promise and not demise — of prosperity in spirit, soul, and body, a plan that requires us to turn from the selfish desires of our flesh.

Are you struggling with an attraction for others of your gender? Are you held captive by thoughts and emotions you don't know how to deal with? Perhaps you recognize some of the thoughts I had:

- No one cares about me.
- I'm imprisoned by my choices.
- I was born this way.
- I'm consumed with sexual thoughts.
- I feel trapped.

You might think these tendencies are normal, but conscience tells you that they're wrong. If so, there is hope to help you sort out your feelings, to know that you are loved and can love, that you can be a whole person. You can begin your journey of hope and wholeness by examining three important questions:

- Where do I stand with God?
- What does the Bible say about homosexuality?
- What do I do with my homosexual feelings and behaviors?

Where do I stand with God?

The good news is that God values you. He loves you now, just the way you are. He loves you so much that He sent His only Son, Jesus, to die for you so that you might receive forgiveness and healing from sin and live with Him forever.

Though you, like all human beings, were born in a fallen state, God did not create you to be a homosexual. Rather, He gave you a heart that seeks personal healing through a relationship with Him.

God knows what is best for you and wants to lead you into the lifestyle He chooses — not to make it hard for you but to bless you. As He promised the ancient Israelites, “I know the plans I have for you . . . plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11).

What does the Bible say about homosexuality?

Some people mistakenly think that the relationships between certain Bible characters were homosexual in nature. Jonathan and David, for example (1 Samuel 18:1-4; 19:1; 20:1ff; 2 Samuel 1:26), had a deep friendship, fought side by side in battle, and defended each other to the death. Being this tightly knit is certainly a deep love, but it need not be viewed as sexual. David’s moral downfall, in fact, stemmed from adultery with another man’s wife.

When the Bible refers to sexual acts between persons of the same gender, it always does so in a negative way (Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Romans 1:26, 27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11). This may seem like bad news to a practicing homosexual, but it is actually good news over the long haul.

The last of these four texts, for instance, groups homosexuals with those who commit other serious sins: “Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves . . . will inherit the kingdom of God.

And that is what some of you were.” But this is immediately followed by a wonderful declaration of hope for those who turn and go God’s way: “But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (6:11).

Your choice to end a lifestyle of immoral sexual activity can give you things you never thought possible — in a personal relationship with Jesus.

What do I do with my homosexual feelings and behaviors?

The same question could be asked about any type of sinful feeling or desire: greed, lust, anger, jealousy. Temptations are not just sexual in nature. Sin is always looking for an opportunity to seize the moment and gain the victory.

Sexual feelings and attractions are natural and normal. God did not create us to be unfeeling, unemotional robots but to be human beings full of love for each other. We can properly express this in many ways, but in His wisdom God has limited sexual relations to the state of marriage between one man and one woman.

When you express sexual love toward someone of the same sex or someone to whom you are not married, you are outside God’s plan for your life. You sin — that is, you “miss the mark” — and need God’s forgiveness. God gave Jesus Christ to pay for your pardon with His blood and make forgiveness available. Once you confess your sin to God, He will forgive you and draw you into a relationship with Him — one of wholeness and hope.

Receiving God’s forgiveness doesn’t instantly remove your homosexual feelings, however. You

don't get over being gay in a hurry. You must be committed to change, to take responsibility over your flesh. This requires God's supernatural power — the same power that raised Jesus from the dead (Ephesians 1:19, 20). With your commitment to change and dependence on His power, God will help you conquer temptation and be who He wants you to be.

What about you?

Over the last several years, I've watched myself move from walking in the gay lifestyle to walking closely with Jesus. I have come to know the magnitude of God's love for me. It is far greater to be where I am now than where I was, filled with the darkness of wrong desires.

If you're experiencing what I went through, do not despair: God is *for* you, and He will be *with* you if you will invite Him into your life through trusting His Son Jesus. Do it now; He is waiting for you. Your life can bloom and grow in ways you never thought possible.

But be patient with the blooming and growing. As you learn to focus on the love of God and on His teaching, your old nature will gradually lose its grip, and God's strength will increase. A teacher or counselor can encourage and advise you, especially as you begin this commitment.

As time passes, the struggle will be less difficult, and victory will become more a way of life. Then you'll realize that your mind has changed its focus from the temptations of sin to the things of God and the Bible. And that's the best place to be.

— Name Withheld

Resources

The Father Heart of God, by Floyd McClung, Jr. (Harvest House)

False Intimacy: Understanding the Struggle of Sexual Addiction, by Dr. Harry W. Schaumburg (NavPress)

Homosexuality: A New Christian Ethic, by Elizabeth Moberly (James Clarke Company)

Exodus International (www.exodus.to/; 888-264-0877)

Focus on the Family (www.family.org/)

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