

Ex-Lesbian Christian Proposes 'Radical Way of Reaching Out' to LGBTs

When I address the controversy regarding homosexuality, I always receive a large amount of emails. Unfortunately, much of it is hate mail. I believe in compassion without compromise; standing for what you believe while maintaining a Christlike attitude.

The Bible says, "Stand up for me against world opinion and I'll stand up for you before my Father in heaven. If you turn tail and run, do you think I'll cover for you?" Matthew 10:33 (MSG).

We have too many Christians living their lives according to the proclamations of the social media. There are many in the media who are using their platform to sway the minds of many to think like they do; they should not dictate how we live our lives. The last I checked, we are in this world but not of the world. Lukewarm Christians are powerless to bring about the societal/spiritual change that we need.

"If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you." John 15:19 (NASB).

We must understand that being in the world, but not of it, is necessary if we are to be a light to those who are in spiritual darkness. We are to live in such a way that those outside the faith see our good deeds and our manner of life and know that there is something "different" about us. Christians, who live, think and act like those who do not know Christ do Him a great disservice. Even the heathen knows that "by their fruits you shall know them;" and as Christians, we

should exhibit the fruit of the Spirit which is within us.

If we are going to be a lukewarm Christian then we will continue to be led astray by the world and their views. "I know all the things you do, that you are neither hot nor cold. I wish that you were one or the other! But since you are like lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth!" Revelation 3:16 (NLT).

An on-fire Christian, then, will stand strong in what they know to be true, but they will also operate in compassion and grace. During the course of Jesus' ministry on earth, He most often ministered to those who were hurting, sick, poor or hungry. He ministered to the spiritual souls of the people, but He also did not neglect their physical needs. Jesus walked in authority both spiritually and morally, but people came to Him because of His ability to meet their physical needs. Dearest Church, we need to follow Christ's example.

What are the specific needs of the homosexual community? How can the Church meet the desires of those struggling with homosexuality and help their hearts experience healing? How can we make an eternal difference in their lives?

My own experience as a former lesbian causes me to believe that many in the homosexual community are searching for love and acceptance. I know my search was driven by the events and abuse in my childhood. I truly felt like I was never able to fit into society's cookie-cutter image of what a young girl or woman should be like. I desperately needed to find love, to feel love and to experience love.

Church, let us open our arms to the hurting. Let us lead the way. Let us take the first step. It starts with how we treat others. It means not looking down on others because they have sinned. We all have sinned. We can and should call sin like it is, but our place is not to judge; our place is to love and to support each other as we all try to become more

Christlike. Let us lift up those who are struggling and point them toward a relationship with Jesus Christ.

We need to do more, however, than merely treating those struggling with homosexuality nicely. I would like to suggest something that some might consider a radical way of reaching out to the homosexual community, but it is an option I believe could bear incredible fruit: Let us open the doors of our churches and homes to those who wish to leave homosexuality.

Very few churches offer any sort of ministry to those who struggle with homosexual feelings or behavior. The Church as a whole hasn't taken the time to educate itself about homosexuality or about how to minister to those caught in that lifestyle. We will never be able to make a difference in the lives of gays and lesbians unless we are able to offer a realistic alternative, a way out. It starts by opening our doors.

I do not wish to suggest that we should go out and force gays and lesbians to become straight. That is the last thing we should do. Rather, we should open our doors and invite them in to experience the real love that a relationship with Jesus Christ offers. If they accept Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior, we then need to be able to help them realize they can be set free from homosexuality. Leaving homosexuality must be a choice the individual makes as they observe the will of God in the Scriptures.

When I first began attending Maple Grove Assembly of God, I quickly became involved in a women's Bible study. For the first time in years, I worked with women in a non-sexual manner, and I was able to learn a great deal from them. I learned about my identity as a woman, how to dress like a woman, how to walk like a woman, and how to put on makeup. God is not merely concerned with outside appearances; He looks first at the heart. Most importantly, I learned through those women about the love of God and how He was calling me to live

a righteous life.

The Bible study I attended wasn't specifically designed for people to come out of homosexuality, but it didn't matter. Those women loved me like a sister and a daughter. They prayed for me and accepted me for who I was, all the while encouraging me to become the person God called me to be. They gave me advice and instruction, but they also helped meet my physical needs. For their actions, instruction and love, I am eternally grateful.

I want to challenge you as a reader: Does your church have any ministries that reach out to those who struggle with homosexuality? If a gay or lesbian were to walk into your church on Sunday, how would they be treated? Would you be able to walk up to them and greet them with a smile? Would you be able to tell them that God loves them, no matter what they've done, no matter where they've been? Some of our generation is uninterested in what the word of God says for these last days regarding homosexuality. Some of us might even prefer popularity over principle. Popularity is not the reason we are here on this earth. We are in the world, but not of it. Some of us, however, are in the world and very much look like the world.

One of the avenues we are utilizing to reach those who are struggling is a conference that is being held in Lake Mary, Florida on August 15-16, 2014. We are partnering with Charisma Media and we're reaching out not only to people from Central Florida, but those around the nation. You can go to my website for more information. At this conference you can hear people talk about how they came out of homosexuality as well as helpful information on how to minister to people who are hurting in this area. Together, we are raising a voice a voice of hope and freedom.

Janet Boynes is the founder of Janet Boynes Ministries, a nondenominational outreach that ministers to individuals questioning their sexuality and those who wish to leave homosexuality. As the author of *Called Out*, Boynes chronicles her story of living as a lesbian for 14 years until God called her out of that lifestyle.