

Is Alan Chambers Changing His Tune?

In a special upcoming episode of *Our America With Lisa Ling* on the Oprah Winfrey Network (OWN), investigative journalist Lisa Ling is joined by a group of “survivors” who claim they have been damaged by reparative therapy—therapy designed to help individuals overcome unwanted same-sex attraction. The program will apparently feature these so-called “victims” confronting Alan Chambers, president of Exodus International, a ministry that has based its 37-year existence on the truth that individuals can—and should—leave homosexuality.

Chambers recently asked Ling to help orchestrate an opportunity for him to formally apologize to those who feel they have been deceived and defrauded by Exodus’ practices—and reportedly to announce that the organization will cease to focus its efforts on helping men and women leave homosexuality. (*Our America with Lisa Ling Special Report: God and Gays* will air Thursday at 10 p.m. EST on OWN.)

If this is what really happens on the upcoming show, it will lead many to wonder what will happen to Exodus International, which, since its founding in 1976, has helped countless thousands of individuals come out of homosexuality and find wholeness and freedom in Christ.

In 2010, I was asked to take part in another documentary produced by *Our America With Lisa Ling*. On that show, which also included Alan Chambers, we were able to share how our behavior had changed and how we were no longer living the homosexual lifestyle. But just three years later, here we are again, and the message Alan Chambers has for those struggling with same-sex attraction is very different.

My reason for speaking out—something I have done boldly for

the past eight years—is to let those who are struggling with same-sex attraction know there is freedom. Many voices say otherwise, but my answer is to go to the Word of God for the definitive answer. The apostle Paul is emphatic that “if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, the new is here!” (2 Cor. 5:17, NIV).

I know many men and women who, with the help of different ministries, have walked away from homosexuality, and their freedom has always come through the truth of God’s Word.

For me, coming out of homosexuality did not happen overnight. It was a long process, during which I increasingly chose to let go of everything that had the slightest power to drag me back into a lesbian lifestyle. It took the work of a dedicated team that included God (the most important one), the many wonderful people He put in my life, and me as a willing participant. You see, each of us is given a free will, and it is ultimately up to us to decide how we will live our lives.

Today we are hearing from some Christians who once were saved but who have chosen to live out their homosexual desires and continue on the same path of committing homosexual acts. They wrongly believe that God no longer sees their sin—that God sees them only through the blood of Jesus. But if God does not see our sin, how is it possible to grieve the Holy Spirit? In Ephesians 4:30, Paul warns us not to “grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” This verse is speaking to the already-saved believer who has the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Accepting Christ into your life is not the end of the story but the beginning of a lifelong journey. When you accept Christ, you sign the lease. However, you must still walk out the terms. The term of your agreement is to live a Christian life, which means to become conformed to the image and Person of Christ. This is the process of sanctification, which is so crucial to every believer.

The Bible does not promise us that upon accepting Christ, we will no longer be subject to sinful thoughts or desires. Even Christ was tempted. Those who have accepted Christ may still struggle with desires that attacked them before they were saved—including, for some, feelings of same-sex attraction. Feelings and temptation aren't sin. But acting on those temptations is sin, and each of us has to face those daily attacks through the power of the Holy Spirit. When we fail, the Bible is clear that if we confess our sins, God is faithful to forgive us of them and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). That's right—we can repent, push delete on sin and move on under God's mercy and power. It is up to each one of us to decide whether we will live under Christ's perfect provision or give in to the enemy's attacks.

Will we allow our flesh and desires to lead us, or will we fight the good fight of faith and follow God's Word? We have to renew our minds daily. As God's children, we must choose to obey God and what He says regarding all sin, including homosexuality. Scripture is clear about God's plan for human sexuality and marriage in both the Old Testament and New Testament. Jesus said that He came not to abolish the Law but to fulfill it (Matt. 5:17).

There are thousands of individuals like me who have found freedom from same-sex attraction, and no one can take that away from us. Change is possible through Jesus, and for me it's been worth it all!

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.