

True Confessions of an Ex-Homosexual

I attended my 12th and final Exodus Freedom conference earlier this summer in California. After 38 years, Exodus is closing. Recently, I left my full-time job at Sea World in order to pursue ministry full-time. Coincidence? I think not. God is afoot. I am excited for what He plans to do in this new season.

With all the apologies, legislation and myths flying about, the good works Exodus has done were swept under the rug faster than Honey Boo Boo can wolf down a chili dog.

So, I decided to take a trip down memory lane and “come out of my own closet.” Yes, my friends. I must confess that I ... I ... am ... a ... person who was helped by Exodus. *What?!* Yes, I know, shocking in light of news reports. “Apparently” there weren’t many of us. Most are afraid to express it openly for fear of being ridiculed by those who consider Exodus to be worse than an M. Night Shyamalan movie. I can’t hide forever. I have ended my silence and share my story.

I heard a lot of conflicting messages at this past conference. One couple testified they now know “gay” and “Christian” can coexist. They shared that God had created their gay son just the way he was meant to be. Wow! These were definitely not the messages of past Exodus conferences or the Bible. I listened and took it all with a grain of salt.

I began walking away from homosexuality in 1998. A few years prior, I called myself a gay Christian. The Holy Spirit challenged my twisted view of spirituality. “I see a lot of gay in your life, but not a lot of Christian,” He said. He was right. I called myself a gay Christian because I believed the lie that I was born gay and because I knew my relationship

with Jesus wasn't an option.

I focused my attention on my Christian walk instead of my gay Christian charade. My life began to change. Trying to live a hybrid life of gay and Christian brought this Scripture in 1 Corinthians 6 to mind: "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, 'The two will become one flesh.' But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit. Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body" (vv. 15-18, NIV).

I always had doubts about my same-sex attractions. My gay friends said it was the church that coerced me into believing being gay was wrong. I know it was the conviction of the Holy Spirit that fostered my doubts. Romans 14:12 nourished those doubts: "So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God."

The truth of God's Word haunted me. One day I would stand before God, and the anger and attitude with which I staunchly defended my homosexuality would be silenced as God reviewed everything. The masses wouldn't protect me then. My best friend Scott couldn't vouch for me. In the end, it's just you and God.

The last message I heard from the stage at Exodus was that one speaker had not experienced much change at all in their attractions over the 10 years they had been attending Exodus conferences. I wondered why they kept coming back. Then, with a grateful, humbled, softer heart, I thought, "I experienced change. I have. I continuously do."

The message I was hearing was not one of change and freedom, but instead one of doubt and a lesser gospel than the one I

had experienced. Jesus said in Mark 10:27, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God." To me, that included healing from homosexual attractions.

The story from the stage was not my story. I felt ashamed at first. I felt like I was judging or even prideful about my victories over my attractions. With the messages of failure coming from the stage, I felt my success story wasn't welcome.

And that, my friends, is when I went back into the closet.

I didn't stay in there long. I have changed. I have experienced freedom, but was my story welcome amongst the apologies and doubt?

To be completely honest, I still have attractions to guys on occasion. But after 12 years of attending Exodus Freedom conferences, I have experienced dramatic changes in those attractions. They are way less sexually focused and more situationally focused and considerably less life-altering. Guys who are tall, muscular, have great hair and great self-esteem and self-confidence still draw my attention. That doesn't mean my attractions haven't changed; it means that I fall victim to the act of comparing myself to others like everyone else in the world. It's stifling at times. My attractions to women have dramatically increased over the years as I have learned healthy ways to relate to straight guys.

After years of sexual intimacy with guys, God gifted me with true intimacy. I shared one of the most intimate moments of my life with a straight guy friend. He invited me to listen to music and brainstorm ideas for a script he wanted me to write. He shared his vision and his heart and welcomed me into his creative world. He showed interest and gave value to my abilities and me. It was the most intimate act any guy has ever done for me.

Sexual intimacy between men forces one to secede his masculinity to the other, thereby rejecting God's design for his sexuality. Sin enters in, and both men are shamed. Healthy intimacy between two guys allows for mutual encouragement and edification as both men grow into the design God has created for them. There is no guilt, shame or sin in that, only meaningful relationships and trust.

So there you have it. Man, do I feel better. Confession is good for the soul. I hope my bravery will convince others to come out of hiding and share their triumphs as well.

I have done a fair amount of growth on my own through the years, but Exodus Freedom conferences helped me establish a little more of exactly that—freedom—from the life that kept me in bondage. There was a fair amount of work I had to do on my own. I know what my life looked like when I had the consumer mentality and showed up at my local Exodus ministry expecting a contact “healing.” Jesus ensured that salvation is free, but the rest of the Christian life takes work. We have to willingly change sinful habits, study Scripture, pray and deny ourselves daily.

I have met people who blame Exodus, but the truth is they made excuses not commitments. They simply gave up because a life of denial and following after Christ is difficult. Sure, there were rogue ministries out there, but when you add the human element to anything, things are bound to get ugly.

When I first began my walk out of homosexuality, I was that guy who told God that I wouldn't be gay but I wasn't going to date women. Later, God revealed how I was a Christian with stipulations and not a surrendered Christian. I changed my phrasing and began to tell people that whatever God wanted for me, singleness or marriage, was fine with me—all the while knowing I wasn't looking or praying for a wife. In fact, I would get mad if I found out people were praying for my future wife.

Where am I today? Well, a few weeks ago I gave my pastor the name of a young lady. He asked her name so he could pray for her. That answer to prayer scares me a little, but not for the same reason it scared the gay kid I was way back when. Ultimately, it is a good feeling. Surrender. I believe it is what stands between God's plan for our lives and our plan for our lives.

Most of us stand just beyond God's reach and blame everyone and everything for our failures. At the end of it all, though, when you breathe your last, the truth will be revealed. I guess you just have to ask yourself one question regarding the truth: Will it define your life now or determine your eternity later?

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