

No Longer a Victim

Pastor Donnie McClurkin was raped at the age of 8 and spent years wrestling with homosexuality. Today he's telling the world that true freedom can be found in Christ.

At the age of 8, a child's mind should be on school and play, on trucks and toys and growing up to be whatever catches his or her fancy for the moment. Preadolescence should be years of innocence, naiveté and blissful ignorance. But when a child is thrust into adult situations that he is not mature enough to handle, that child will fall into a downward spiral of confusion that is not easily reversed.

At the age of 8, I was hurled into a chasm of confusion by a violation of rape. This

Pandora's Box was opened in my prepubescence and introduced me to adult sexualities, issues and perversions far beyond my years and definitely beyond my ability to escape without damage.

On June 6, 1968, a tragedy struck my family that would change our lives. While playing in the yard with my six siblings, I made a neglectful mistake. I was supposed to be watching my 2-year-old brother, Thomas, but I left him in the ungated yard to cross the street to retrieve a ball. Unbeknownst to me at the time, he was following me.

Watching from the living room window, my mother screamed for me to get the baby. I turned around just in time to see my baby brother struck down by a speeding car—killed with my mother helplessly watching from the window. My mother got to him just in time to hear his last word: "Mommy."

My family had never experienced this kind of trauma before, and my mother was devastated. After seeing that tragic event in front of our home, my mother had to get away. After a few nights at my grandmother's house, my parents sent all of us children home to be cared for by our Uncle Clarence. What they had no way of knowing was that this family member was a pedophile.

It is not necessary to recount the horrid details of this invasion, but that night I was sexually abused and raped by this uncle, and it caused great hurt and confusion in my life for many years to follow. I realize now that this happened because he himself was a broken man. He was unhealed with no one to help him. In spite of the damage done to and in my life, I understand and forgive him wholeheartedly.

But a seed had been planted—a seed of homosexuality that I would struggle with for many years to come. I was not born with these sexual tendencies. It wasn't chromosomal and had nothing to do with my DNA. These tendencies surfaced because a broken man thrust an 8-year-old boy into this whirlwind. Thus my first sexual relationship was with a man. Before I could ever know the purpose or pleasure of a woman, have my first date or even my first kiss, the wound was inflicted, and the seed was planted.

I received Jesus a year after the rape at the age of 9, but the struggle was just starting. I had feelings and thoughts that I knew weren't right. I had compelling desires that made it difficult to interact with my male best friends or any males at all. Attractions started to develop that were seemingly beyond my control.

There was a war going on to determine my purpose, and I didn't

even know it. And the war zone was in my mind. My mind was in daily turmoil—in school, in church, at home, at play, alone or with a crowd. Watching television was tempting and lust-provoking, and the sexual innuendo in music only made things worse.

My only relief from this turmoil was church. There I could escape the thoughts and feelings, and hear stories of how the power of God changed others' lives. It was another world—my world, where I felt at peace, like I belonged. In the daily scheme of things, I was a total misfit. My taboo, secret homosexual desires made me shy and reclusive. I was raised in a sea of women and didn't know how to adequately interact with men. And because of what was done to me by men, I couldn't relate to men without some type of sexual thoughts and feelings.

My escape was music. I had just started playing the piano at age 11, and I was consumed with gospel music. I didn't sing that well, but loved to sing all the same. I would listen for hours to Andraé Crouch and the Disciples and fantasize about singing in the group. Church and music allowed me to escape my "issues." Somehow those perversions couldn't bother me there. Church was a safe haven that seemed to remove me from the grasp of the temptation—but only temporarily.

A Deceptive Underworld

I was 13 when I was sexually molested again. This time it was by my uncle's son, Clarence Jr. If the seed of homosexual lust and desire was planted with my uncle, it was surely fertilized and deeply rooted with his son's sexual violation of me. I was devastated and told that I couldn't tell or he would do much worse. I believed him and remained silent for years.

The only place for me to express myself without total fear was in church. But it wasn't long before I discovered that there were many more in the church with these problems who wanted to be free but had to remain silent because this was a taboo issue. They came to church week after week, looking and yearning for deliverance from this desire. They, like myself, were thrust into this before they had a choice in the matter by someone who took advantage of them.

I wonder how it would have been if there were someone—anyone—who I could have confided in before this seed took root. But instead of finding a mentor, I discovered that there were vultures also in the church—predatory men who would soon attempt to take advantage of a broken boy and his confusion. My world of security was invaded when other broken men, in need of healing, revealed their secret lifestyles and introduced me to a deceptive underworld in the church.

Singing on Sundays after weekend rendezvous was commonplace. Seeing other “Christians” in compromising places, yet faithfully, hypocritically and deceptively at their posts in church as though nothing was wrong was typical. Those involved became bilingual because this lifestyle had its own “language.” They would converse one way with people in general and a completely different way with the members of their secret inner circle.

It was something like a radar. No matter where they were they could detect others with the same lifestyle, as well as be detected. Unhealed ministers, singers and those in leadership—married and unmarried—involved people who looked up to them with respect. Those brothers and sisters were looking for help from these men and women, but found themselves victims of the broken leaders in a vicious cycle.

Yet in spite of all of this, my love for Christ continued to grow. And in that growth God sent people to my rescue to help with my deliverance. Ironically, it wasn't the men of the church who helped mold my masculinity. There really weren't enough of them there. It was the sisters and mothers of the church who became active in breaking this curse. Although these older mothers did not know exactly what I struggled with, the Holy Spirit revealed to them that there was a struggle.

They would pray with me, talk with me, and a few of them—Sister Kitty Braizley in particular—would even teach me how to carry myself like a man. When I wanted to sing soprano, they'd say things like, "Get some bass in your voice!" or, "Men don't sing soprano!" Sister Braizley even taught me how to walk. If I held my hand up in a feminine way, she'd hit it and say: "Put your hands at your side. Men don't hold their hands like that!"

These small things played a part in molding and making me, but none of these things could have helped me without my desire and determination to be completely whole. I personally do not believe that there is any such thing as an "unwanted" change. There has to be a sincere desire for change in order for it to be real and complete. If a person is changing solely for others, the change will not be genuine and lasting.

A Time to Hate

The seed that was planted had to be first destroyed from the root and plucked up. I had to become tired of the torment and seek a genuine exit from the desire. I read in Ecclesiastes 3 that there is a time to love and a time to hate. That struck

me as odd because I had never heard anyone preach about the time to hate.

Any sermons dealing with emotions only addressed love, peace, patience, forgiveness, compassion, sadness and so on, but they never dealt with why to, what to, who to and how to hate. I had to learn how to actually hate the thing that was abhorrent to God—even if it's in me.

God started to deal with me through that Scripture and show me what He meant:

1. Why to hate. Because He hates the things that are purposed to destroy the ones He loves and are against His nature and design. He created me to be a man and to love one woman. Anything else is perversion of the male purpose.

2. What to hate. Whatever has been sent to confuse, delay and deny me of my purpose has to become my enemy. Mind you, I said whatever, not whoever.

3. Who to hate. We must be very careful with this. The church has a tendency to misdirect their emotions toward what they deem "sin." We condemn the person and hurtfully wield our spiritual hammer, pounding the person instead of the deed. We've damaged and lost so many with our pious and sanctimonious attitudes.

The Bible says in Ephesians 6:12, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (KJV). So our battle is never with a person. We are to look past the individual and

hate the spirit that caused these things to happen through the person.

I don't hate the men who sexually abused me in my childhood, nor do I hate the predators who tried to prey on me in my weakness. I hate what caused these men to do this. I hate the thing that infected their minds and brought them to the point of damaging a child's life.

4. How to hate. You have to make yourself develop a "dislike" for the things that have interrupted your happiness. You have to see wrong as being wrong and convince yourself that no matter how you feel, this can never be right. The appetite that has been molded and developed through years of abuse for things that are harmful must change, regardless of how comfortable you've become in these situations.

I began to pray daily, especially when the lust would stir up: "Lord, teach me how to hate. Give me a hatred for what You hate." I would constantly recite—and still do to this day—"Every enemy of God is an enemy of mine."

Even though the struggle continued, I found that the more I immersed myself in the study of the Scriptures and used those verses during my temptation, I began to win the battle. Psalm 119:9-11 says: "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."

I found that you can know the Scriptures and fail in your struggle because you never used them. But when you use them in

the midst of your temptation, they give you the strength to overcome.

I don't want you to think that it is just that simple. There are many more things that need to be done to break the curse of homosexuality. These are just some of the things that brought me to total deliverance. The seed was killed from its root, plucked up, and now there is a seed of righteousness that's incorruptible.

Luke 8:11 states that the Word of God is a seed. It is of the utmost importance that the seed (sperma) of His Word be planted in your heart (mind) in order for you to maintain deliverance. I use this analogy: When a woman is impregnated, a seed is planted in her womb, and when that seed takes root in the egg, it stops the natural menstrual cycle, and the baby begins to grow.

It's the same with the Word of God. When the seed is planted into a person's heart, if used correctly it will stop the natural cycle of sin. The Word will multiply and grow and bring forth fruit, and the fruit will remain.

There may be some who will read this and resent some of the statements made about homosexuality. I understand. Some have no desire to change this lifestyle. But there are countless numbers of people who are not happy in this lifestyle and want to be freed from it. They were thrust into homosexuality by neglect, abuse and molestation, and want desperately to live normal lives and one day have a happy home and family.

For them, I write this without apology, knowing that I've been through this and have experienced God's power to change my

lifestyle. I believed that I was meant to be a whole man, made for one woman, and God brought it all about. I am delivered, and I know God can deliver others too.

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