



Changing Lives, Minds, and
Communities through Jesus Christ

How I Climbed Out of The Gay Lifestyle

by Kathleen Trissel

There is hope. If the reader gains nothing else except this realization, my purpose for this article will be accomplished. I have never been in prison, though I know what it is like to be in the prison of sexual sin.

It is so easy for us to fall into sexual sin due to loneliness, a desire for comfort, or simply what we believe to be a physical need. I can remember well how it happened for me. I was sexually abused as a child, and later raped by my best friend's brother. At that point, I felt like I deserved to be abused.

In order to regain some sense of control, I actually began to put myself into vulnerable positions where I continued to be taken advantage of sexually. I tried to have a relationship with a man, but that didn't happen. I also believed being gay was simply part of my makeup. I thought I was born that way, so when a friend of mine told me she was gay, I was "ripe" and felt that I had finally discovered my identity. I further remember vividly rejecting my femaleness at a young age. Being female meant that I was weak and vulnerable.

More than anything else I desired affection and an emotional connection with another woman. Even as a believer and follower of Jesus Christ, I struggled with this. The relationships that I had with women were not healthy. Though not sexual at this time, the relationships were extremely emotionally dependent. I had an obsessive need to cling to someone—someone who I hoped would be there for me at all times. This, of course, was impossible.

I went through a season in which the Lord broke off the unhealthy relationships, and I felt crushed by excruciating loneliness.

It was easy to put up a wall and refuse to allow other people to come into my life. My heart grew cold, and I even thanked God that I didn't have to worry about the pain and complications of relationships.

Out of all that pain and brokenness, I began to cry out for intimacy with Christ. I would like to say the answer to that cry was instant, but it was not. It has been a painful journey, but intimacy came in time from out of the pain—something more precious than I ever could have imagined. The pain caused me to draw near to Him, but not without a lot of bumps in the road.

Since I walked in a homosexual lifestyle, all of my friends were a part of the gay community. I even went to a gay church, trying to reconcile a faithful and committed relationship with another woman with the Word of God. Instead, I went from a false peace to turmoil.

I believed so many lies, including this one: Suppose God intended everyone to speak Hebrew, but because of the Tower of Babel (see Genesis 11), God confused the language of the people so they could not glorify themselves by building a tower to heaven. I could agree that in God's perfect plan, He did not want me to have homosexual desires, but because of living in a fallen world, I was born that way. *So, I thought, why would God reject my homosexual lifestyle if I was born that way anymore than He would reject someone who spoke a language other than Hebrew?*

What I have since learned is that God's truth was always in his Word regarding the sin of homosexuality, but I was not really seeking truth. I was only looking for the answer that I wanted to hear. The Devil was only too

happy to provide me with the necessary "revelation."

There are many contributing factors that affect a person's vulnerability to homosexuality. In Jeffrey Satinover's book, *Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth*, many of these factors are addressed. Some of those influences may be genetics, personality, abuse as a child, relationships with adults when we were children, to name just a few. On one occasion when I was talking with a pastor, I told him it didn't matter why I had become homosexual. It was my identity. I didn't believe I could be free of it, and therefore had no hope.

So what happened? I was going through one of those times when my "peace" was disrupted. I went back to the Word of God trying to reconcile my homosexuality with the Bible, but I couldn't do it this time. Previously, I had been able to take passages out of context and feel OK, but this time was different. I found myself reading 1 Corinthians 6:9-11:

Don't you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Don't fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, or who worship idols, or commit adultery, or are male prostitutes, or practice homosexuality, or are thieves, or greedy people, or drunkards, or are abusive, or cheat people—none of these will inherit the Kingdom of God. Some of you *were* once like that. But you *were* cleansed; you *were* made holy; you *were* made right with God by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God" (*New Living Translation*, emphasis added).

The word *were* jumped off the page. It told me that others had gone before me who

engaged in homosexual activity, but they were now free. This is when hope was planted in my heart. I now believed that by God's grace, He could restore natural desires in my life and open the prison door that enslaved me.

Was it easy? Absolutely not.

I struggled with letting go of my identity as a homosexual and the pride that I felt in being different. I struggled with the sexual feelings and the desire to act upon them, and I even stumbled and fell. I asked for God's forgiveness and healing, and told Him I did not understand why He was so merciful to me. I heard these words in my mind without knowing that it was from Scripture at the time: "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy" (Romans 9:15).

At this point I first began to appreciate, even in a small way, the graciousness of God. He wasn't angry with me, but desired even more than I did that I be set free.

It has been many years now, and God did indeed restore natural desire and attraction within me—although I remain single to this day. Singleness in fact, has proven to be a great blessing because it has allowed me to grow in deeper intimacy with Jesus Christ

than if I had a husband whose needs I had to attend to.

In the process (and I must emphasize the word *process*), I realized that I could not just focus on the problem of my sexuality, but that I must set my affections on things above. Colossians 3:1-2 says, "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things." These became my theme verses.

As long as I only focused on the problem, it only seemed to intensify, but as I gradually began to learn to get caught up with Jesus, my feelings slowly changed. The greatest difficulty for me was dealing with the intense pain of the healing process.

Another important aspect to my healing was in allowing the Lord to expose all the lies I had believed regarding myself and the homosexual lifestyle. Exposing the lies, however, was not enough. It also took a willingness on my part to receive God's truth. It was very much a process of being broken and then being put back together by the Lord.

As to why God does not often change our feelings and desires right away, I believe He

wants us to learn to stand on the truth alone. Because I am an emotional, feelings-oriented person, this was very difficult. But I believe Romans 5:3-5, which tells us, "We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love" (NLT).

What's the whole message then? There is hope, forgiveness, healing, and freedom in Jesus Christ alone. Do you long for that eternal hope and freedom? The process will undoubtedly be painful, but the reward of true intimacy with Jesus Christ is more than worth the trouble.

If this is your heart's desire, then begin by asking, seeking, knocking, and praying to Jesus. He will hear and answer, and He will meet you right where you are.

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