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I'm Gay ...O.K.?



by Martin Bennett

Some have dived head first into the whole gay scene, apparently without hesitation. Others have been tugged in over a period of time, and then some are still "holding out." Even the church can't deny that many within it are having tremendous struggles with homosexuality. Growing masses of gays are parading down the streets with banners, pursuing a new found freedom to do what they want. But the real things so many seek after—friendship, acceptance, and love—elude them, remaining just outside their reach.

A man who at one time had given himself over to seeking pleasure spoke the truth when he said that *"Even in laughter the heart may be in pain, and the end of joy may be grief."*¹

It's Not Good To Be Alone

The good memories of our lives usually aren't made of the *things we got* or even *what we did*, but it's **who we were with** that makes our memories special to us. Good relationships. Unless we've been deeply wounded, we want to be friends with others and enjoy the company of another person who really cares for us. The problem is, whenever you're in a relationship that can bring good things, hurts and disappointments can come just as easily. We end up relating to those we feel comfortable with and accepted by.

Deep inside of **everyone** (straights included) there is a yearning for something meaningful and **real** in relationships. But, by the admission of those who have been there, the gay lifestyle delivers a drop of pleasure and a gallon of loneliness and pain.

What Is Homosexuality?

Before we go any further, we need to define what homosexuality is, and isn't. It *isn't* just a strong attraction for those of the same sex. Someone who is tempted to steal something isn't a thief until he actually gives in to his desire, and someone who's been hurt by another may feel like hating that person—but it's when he *gives himself over to this desire* that he's stepped over the line. That means giving your mind over in pursuing lustful thoughts (maybe through pornography), or giving your body over to pursue these desires. However, just having some kind of homosexual encounter in your past doesn't necessarily mean that you're "gay."

A homosexual is a person who not only has a strong attraction for the same sex, but has also made the decision to yield to

these desires. The gay mentality or lifestyle aren't things you just "stumble" into—you walk into them step by step.

Where Did It Start?

Maybe you always felt that you were just "different" — you know, you didn't quite seem to fit the image of what most people thought was a "real man" or a "real woman." No, you didn't seem to have much in common with the deep-voiced hero who always saved the day, and playing baseball wasn't any fun to you. Or as a girl you just "couldn't relate to men." Or maybe the first person who ever showed you any attention and kindness made it easy for you to start thinking that you "must be gay."

Maybe you grew up in a place where homosexuality was just a normal part of life. Maybe you were hurt so badly by a certain person that you pulled away from them, and others of the same sex, to keep from being hurt like that again. But in your heart, you know that **anyone** you become close to has the ability to hurt you, gay or straight. Maybe you feel like you were just born the way you now are. However you got to where you're at, if there's any sense that something's "just not right" about how things are right now, the most important thing is "Now what?" Well, let's start at the beginning . . .

Why Did God Make Us?

If you're turned off to God right now, please give Him a chance to explain Himself. Just as you may be misunderstood sometimes, God has *really* been misunderstood. The One who designed you and knows everything about you is the same One who cares about you more than you even care for yourself.

God has given us life. After He made man and woman, He said that what He had done was good. The heart of God is to give to others and make them happy. His hopes were that they would enjoy His world and enjoy His presence. He didn't expect that the people He had loved and given to would want to shut Him out of their lives. Even though He made the whole world and has continued to be good to all of us, for the most part we don't want Him to have anything to do with our lives. Remember this the next time you feel hurt and rejected, because Jesus has been hurt and rejected in a much greater way. Still, His only desire is that perhaps once again people will enjoy His world and His presence in their lives.

The Manufacturer's Manual

So what's wrong with being gay, anyway? It's my *sexual preference*. What difference does it make? Didn't God make us the way we are?" So many have struggled with homosexual desires that there's a growing confusion as to whether or not it's wrong, and whether a person can really be free from it all. There are a lot of "experts" who seem to come up with a new "answer" every day, but in order to get the unchanging truth, we need to look into the Manufacturer's Manual—the Bible. God has made each one of us in a special way, "custom designed" really. In fact, He holds the only patent on the human race. So if anyone knows how we're supposed to work the best . . . **He** does! And to show us the right way to live, He has given us the Bible—the most printed and read book in the world. God wants us to be filled with real happiness, and through the Bible He shows us the way to life, and the way to death.

The Law: For Us Or Against Us?

To keep us from destroying ourselves and each other, the Lord set up certain laws. It's because He really cares about us that He did this. Have you ever been at someone's house where the

1) Proverbs 14:13.



kids are running all over the place, yelling, fighting, covered in dirt—and the parents just stare at the T.V.? That's not love, is it? Besides making everyone else miserable, the children themselves are suffering. We have laws about speeding and drunk driving, too, to protect us, and we know they're for our own good.

So God isn't some kind of kill-joy trying to prevent anyone from having any fun, rather, His laws are to *enable* us to get the *maximum* out of life. His rules aren't a bunch of arbitrary "dos and don'ts" either—they all make total sense when you stand back and take a look at the whole picture.

Just about everyone recognizes the fact that murder is wrong. We don't think it's wrong because there's a law against it, rather, we made laws *because* it was wrong. If you said, "Hey, I don't like this law of gravity. It's too confining. I want to be free . . ." and proceeded to step out of a 10th floor window—you'd end up destroying yourself (and maybe someone else too!).

The law of gravity only recognizes reality. In the same way, the laws or principles that God has given us in the Bible only show us the way things really are.

We've been carefully designed, body, mind, and soul, for a specific purpose, and have a responsibility to use our lives in a right way. You know what happens to the tip of a pocket knife when you try to use it for a screwdriver or a pry bar . . . the tip breaks off. That's because it wasn't designed for that purpose. It's the same way with our lives.

It's when we misuse our lives for *selfish reasons* that everything is knocked out of kilter. God loves each person, but **hates** selfishness because He sees how it destroys us, our relationships, and others. So God won't allow selfishness to spread easily. Why? Because He loves us enough to keep us from destroying ourselves.

Don't Be Fooled

The Lord makes it clear that He never intended men and women to be gay, and He also makes it clear that those who practice these things cannot be at peace with Him or even at peace with themselves. He told us a long time ago, "*Don't fool yourselves. Those who live immoral lives, who are idol worshippers, adulterers, or homosexuals—will have no share in His kingdom.*" (1 Cor. 6:9-10 LB) And again He warns us, "*The penalty for homosexual acts is death to both parties.*" (Lev. 20:13 LB) Because of God's heart towards us, He has given us these warnings for our **own** good.

Jesus said that He came to bring us **life**. Remember, He's the One who designed you. He promises us that if we walk with Him, following His good directions and commands, we'll have real happiness and there will be peace in our hearts. But He also promises that if we think we know better, and push away from Him to follow our selfishness, the exact opposite will happen to us. The tremendous spread of disease among gays and immoral straights would not exist if we

listened to the instructions of God, which are for our own protection, good, and happiness.

Turning From God

Here's how the Scriptures say people end up far away from God—"*Yes, they knew about Him all right, but they wouldn't admit it or worship Him or even thank Him for all His daily care. And after awhile they began to think up silly ideas of what God was like and what He wanted them to do. The result was that their foolish minds became dark and confused.*" (Rom. 1:21 LB)

This is what happens: **1)** At some point in our life we know about God and know He's real. **2)** We don't agree with Him and so we're ungrateful. Instead of thanks, we complain about this and that. **3)** We start looking for excuses and false reasons; we speculate, hoping to justify our selfish desires. **4)** Wandering away from the truth that we once knew, we walk into darkness and error.

Then God says that "*They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator.*" (Rom. 1:25) Of course, this applies to all people that have turned from God, but if you've been around the gay scene in any way, you know that men and women end up worshipping and serving their bodies. A cruising homosexual in the Tenderloin of San Francisco said, "*The trading of bodies in a gay bar is the most insensitive thing on earth. It is degrading and repulsive, because most gay bars are now just information whorehouses, dispensing gossip, pamphlets, and raising money for political causes.*"²

God Gives Up

What would you do if you were in the Lord's position? He wants the best for us, but we just won't listen. When people get to the point that they don't care at all about what's right or true anymore because they've traded the truth for a lie, God throws His hands up in the air and says, "O.K., go ahead and do what you want." "*For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions.*" (Rom. 1:26) We crave and desire and pull so hard, like a dog on a leash wanting to run in the street, that although it breaks His heart to do so, the Lord finally cuts the leash and lets us go where we want.

This is the rest of the Scripture, "*For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire towards one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.*" (Rom. 1:26-27) Please don't let anyone tell you that the "natural function" of a homosexual is for members of the same sex, and that it would be "unnatural" for them to be heterosexual. (This is a common argument among some groups.) There is **no** Scripture upholding gay sex, and the Lord calls gayness itself **error**.

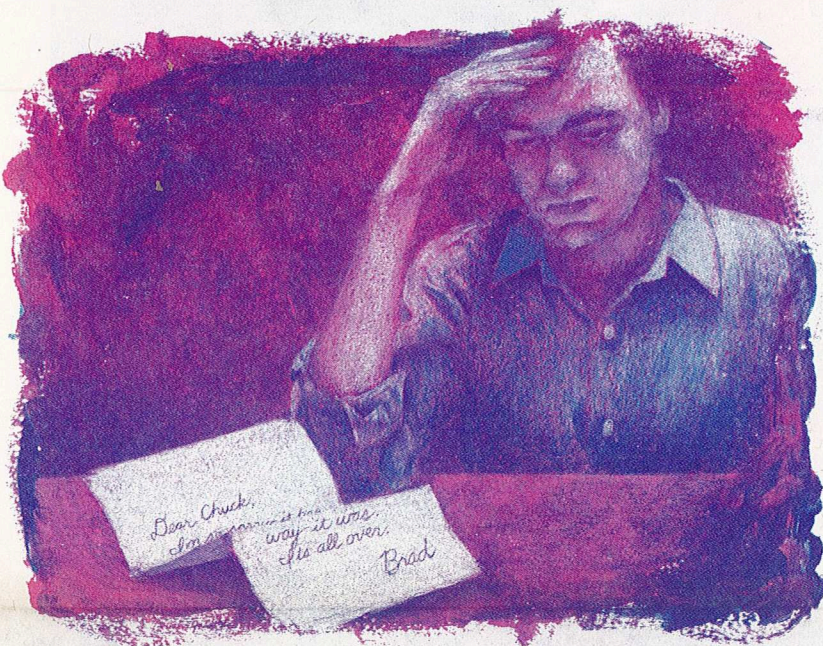
The Real Problem

The real problem here is nothing new, and it's not unique to people faced with homosexual desires. The problem is trying to **do** what's right when you **feel** like doing something else. **Everyone** struggles with desires and temptations for things that aren't good. Even Jesus struggled with similar temptations. You see, for the most part, desires by themselves aren't good or bad. Even having strong temptations every day isn't evil (but it *is* hard).

A person with a weight problem may *love* hot fudge sundaes. They may have loved them as far back as they can remember. Can they just decide to hate hot fudge sundaes? Could you? Of course not. But they *can* decide to yield to God and seek His help to **do** what is right, despite the desires in the opposite direction.

²⁾ *Two of Me*, by David Wilkerson, p. 7.





On the other hand, somebody else might have a tremendous desire to love and serve God with all of his heart—but he never really gets around to doing anything pleasing to the Lord. Do you think that God will say, “Oh well, at least he *wished* he was doing right”? Can you imagine standing in front of a judge in traffic court saying, “But your honor, I really *wanted* to stop at that red light”? He’s not going to care at all what you *wanted* to do, what he wants to know is **what did you end up doing?**

The Battleground

The battle is not over your desires, but over your **will**. The people that the Lord gives up to their selfish desires are not people who *couldn’t* do what was right, but people who *wouldn’t* do what was right. Jesus said, “And this is the judgement, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil.” (John 3:19) It’s not just a matter of liking the darkness. No, loving the darkness is an intense clinging with no letting go.

When we give in to the temptations of the enemy (yes, the devil is very real), we can’t blame God for making us that way. The One who sees to the core of our hearts says that, “Each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his **own** lust.” (James 1:14) We’re not dragged into rebellion by the way we grew up either, although many times our childhood experiences make it easier to rebel. But in the end, we make our own choices. **We decide** to give in. We are enticed by our **own** lust.

Whoever or whatever you yield yourself to **is** your god. If what you “**feel**” like doing determines what you do, then your feelings are your god. If what you crave after overcomes your will, then the appetite of your flesh is your god. As a gay man put it, “My desires took over my reasoning.”³

Guilt

Some of us hate that word—“guilt.” But guilt serves a very good purpose. The very presence of guilt proves that we **can** do what is right. If your boss gave you a shovel and told you to fill in the Grand Canyon in one afternoon, you wouldn’t feel guilty for not doing it, would you? Or if your coach asked you to jump a 50 foot wall, you wouldn’t feel bad about not being able to do it, because you *know* you couldn’t.

It’s when we *can* do what’s right and we *don’t* do it that we feel guilty. We feel that way because we know we should be doing something else. God sends guilt to us as an alarm. Just like the pain in a stubbed toe, the message being sent is, “Something is wrong.” When the red lights of your conscience go off telling you “Danger! Danger!” and you keep pushing, slowly you lose your feelings of

guilt. The Bible says that in the last days many people will be “seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron.” (1 Tim. 4:2) Just because you may not feel as guilty as you used to is not a sign that you’re safe—far from it.

Can I Be Free?

If you’re wondering if God will fix up your life, the answer is no, He won’t. He wants to give you a totally *new* life. Face it—you can’t change your desires, and without the power of the Living God in your life, you can’t even change your actions because you’re a slave to your appetites. Jesus said that “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:32) But you can’t be set free from the power of strong desires and wrong actions until you first admit that you’re a slave. You must see that you’ve been wrong for giving in to these desires if you’re guilty of doing that.

When you humble yourself before the Lord, admitting your guilt and shame, giving the reins of your life *completely* over to Him, then Jesus will come to you with loving forgiveness and life-changing power. As you yield your will to Jesus, He will lead you into the life of wholeness and peace that you’ve always really desired. God is what has been missing in your life all this time.

The Lord moves in different ways in each person’s life. Some people are instantly delivered from the power of these desires when they cry out to the Lord. Others are set free as they continue to follow Jesus, making right choices, and allowing His power to release them from years of wrong thought patterns and actions.

If you wonder if it’s *really* possible, even the very first Christians knew the freedom that Jesus brought:

“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked . . . Among them we too **all** formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. But God being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our sins, made us alive together with Christ.” (Eph. 2:1-5)

Did you know that Jesus went through exactly the same temptations as you? He knows just what it’s like, and He has victory for you. “We don’t have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in **all things** as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.” (Heb. 4:15-16)

Jesus really does care for you and always has. He’s not only willing to take away all of your guilt and shame, but if you will turn to Him with your heart, turning away from all you know to be wrong, He will give you a **new** life. That means not just turning from homosexuality, but from anything that holds you back from giving everything to the Lord: drinking, anger, hate, unforgiveness, love of money, lying . . . all those things. It may sound too simple, but the testimony of those who were once bound by homosexuality can confirm that the Lord is telling the truth.

“As I discovered the intense, intimate love of God for ME, I was set free from that consuming drive which had held me a slave to perversion.”⁴

4) The Man In The Mirror, by Sy Rogers.

A Word To The Church

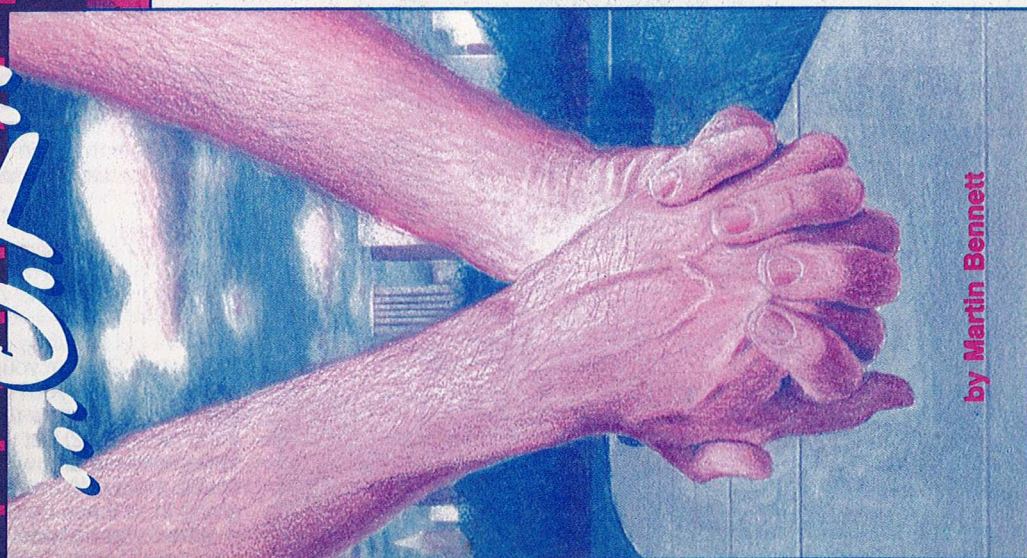
Jesus said that He didn’t come for the healthy, but for the sick. However, it seems that the only people wanted in some churches are those who “have it all together.” Please don’t shy away from those who are struggling with these kinds of desires. They’re sometimes made to feel like social “lepers” because of the pride and aloofness of others in the church, and so are driven away. We **are** our brother’s keepers, and we are to “Restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness.” (Gal. 6:1)

Remember that “Whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all. So speak and so act, as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. For judgement will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgement.” (James 2:10, 12-13) Let’s be grateful that we’re under mercy, and learn to extend it to others.



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Jim
Gay
O.K.?



by Martin Bennett

DO YOU WANT HELP?

There are concerned people who know what you're going through and know how to help. Many of them have been set free from homosexuality themselves and would love to help you in any way that they could. If you or someone you love is struggling with homosexuality, you can receive helpful literature or counseling. Just write one of the groups listed below. We love you!

Exodus International

(A referral organization that can put you in touch with a ministry in your area.)

U.S. and all non-European countries:

P.O. Box 2121
San Rafael, CA 94912

Europe:

c/o Mark Hallett
P.O. Box 3
Wirral, Merseyside
ENGLAND L49 6NY

Outpost

P.O. Box 4222
Minneapolis, MN 55414

Love In Action

P.O. Box 2655
San Rafael, CA 94912

Mount Hope, Inc.

P.O. Box 1511
Hagerstown, MD 21741-1511

We have a few other articles that we feel would be very helpful to you, and we'd love to send you a copy at no charge or obligation. Just write us and ask for "The Man In The Mirror" (LD#59), "The Father Heart Of God" (LD#46), "Hurt And Bitterness" (LD#57), "Do You Feel Like Giving Up?" (LD#9) and "How To Find God" (LD#42).

Also available are two teachings on audio and video cassette—"Misconceptions About Homosexuality" and "How To Minister To The Homosexual." For information on how to order these and other teachings, ask for "Reply T."

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*"I have truly **come out** now. I have come out from the **hell** I was living. I have come out of the gay closet. And that's what it was—a closet . . . a dark, closed-in, cluttered, confusing life-style—from which there is only one exit. That exit is Jesus and He has set me free."* ⁵

Does all this sound too foolish and too simple for such a deep problem? Then you haven't seen the power of God. "For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God . . . the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." (1 Cor. 1:18,25) I'm not saying it's going to be easy. It will probably be a battle all the way, but Jesus came to us and went through **horror**, overcoming the enemy so that we could live life at peace with God once again. Don't try to hide from Him. He can change your heart and your life if you will only yield to Him. He really cares about you, but if you continue to let yourself be dragged around by your desires, you will destroy yourself in this life and, in the end, you will stand before a God from whom you can find no hiding place. There is still time, and still hope. It's not too late for anyone who is really serious. Reach out to Jesus . . . He's waiting for you.

5) How I Came Out, by Mark Pierpont.

Martin Bennett has been with Last Days Ministries since 1978 and, as one of the elders, he is committed to seeing Jesus glorified not only in his own life, but in the Ministry here as a whole. He oversees the Printing and Graphics Departments and is a frequent teacher for our staff and those in the Intensive Christian Training School. He and his wife, Sharon, live here at the ranch, and they have been a continual source of inspiration for all of us.

For more information contact:

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