

Struggling With Homosexuality?

Counsel for the Married Man

The Christian married man bound by homosexuality bears a double burden: He lives under the power of a sin which brings self-condemnation and a feeling of alienation from God, and he lives with the knowledge that he is bringing a terrible hurt to another human being—his wife. But for this man, victory over homosexuality can bring a double blessing. He can be restored to full fellowship with God, and he can experience the joy of reconciliation with his wife. The advice given here is offered by a man who has experienced victory over homosexuality, and with it has known the joy of reconciliation with God and with a wife whom he loves deeply. May God so bless each man who reads these words and needs to experience such a victory.

1. Recognize that which you can control and that which you cannot.

You may know by now that you cannot control your sexual inclinations or even your sexual actions once you have given in the least bit to temptation. Often you cannot even control the thoughts that come into your mind. Accept this as a fact of your life today, but then turn to the things you can control. You can control your spiritual life (how and when you pray and read the Word of God). You can control how you behave with your wife in many areas not related to your sexual relationship. Start by concentrating on these parts of your life, and you will begin to see your sense of helplessness start to fade.

2. Realize that love is a decision and a commitment. It is not a feeling.

Feelings come and go for all of us. A love based purely on feelings is a terribly unstable and unsatisfying thing. There will be little peace or joy in a relationship where love is given and received only when both partners

feel loving. But there is peace and joy in a relationship where each partner has made the decision to always (unconditionally) put the other first. This is Christian love. Through its expression, over time, will grow a joy deep in the heart, far deeper than the emotional happiness that we have been seeking in our relationships. The commitment to put the other first (to truly love) applies first to your relationship with God and secondly to your relationship with your wife.

3. Pray that God will enable you to make this decision to love. Jesus is the source of love. Jesus is the example of perfect love—when he went to the cross for you and me. Jesus is love. Many of us who have struggled with homosexuality have come to see that there have been hurts or rejections in our lives which have almost destroyed our ability to love others (and our-selves). Jesus is the great healer of those who have been so damaged. The one prayer that He always seems to answer *now* is the prayer that we be given the ability to love another person.

4. Turn your heart and mind to the hurts and needs of your wife.

This will come out of your decision to love. She may need your help in a couple of areas. First, she has been terribly hurt by the rejection brought by your homosexuality. She lives in constant fear of losing her home (her husband, her support, her place in the world as a married woman) or, if you have already separated, she has endured the constant discouragement of hoping you will return and finding that you won't. She is incomplete because, regardless of her feelings now, she has been made one with a man, but now that oneness is being torn apart.

There may be a second, but related, area where she needs your help. Not

always, but often, women who marry homosexuals do so because of a lack in

themselves. The fact that a man was not sexually aggressive or perhaps the man's having a generally passive nature, may have given her a feeling of safety and comfort with him—a feeling she lacked with other men because of her own shortcomings and fears. Ask God to reveal your wife's need to you. It may be that your both recognizing these shortcomings will enable you to break away from a mutually destructive pattern that has come about—perhaps one in which she is the mother and you are always the bad child. As you recognize that you are both hurt, sinful people needing the Lord's mercy, forgiveness, and healing, you may experience a blessing and growth together that neither of you thought possible.

Your prayers and your entire focus should be on changing you—not your wife!

“Lord, if only she would _____, then I would _____.” Prayer doesn't work that way. God knows what the desires of your heart are before you ask Him. He could grant your wishes before they are ever expressed, but He wants to do more. He wants a relationship with you, and He knows that because of your fallen state (yours and everyone else's), that relationship is most apt to come about as you recognize your need for Him. The recognition of this need will be the opening for Him to come into our lives in a deeper way. If He did our bidding and changed someone else when we asked Him to, that would be the end of it. No, that is why His answer to these prayers is often, “No, *you* must change” (or repent or surrender of whatever). If our need is great enough, the door may have been opened for us to accept His direction. A great step will have to be taken. He wants to work out our problems with us and to see us grow in obedience in the process. Also, He wants the same growth for your wife and the same fellowship with her. Changing her at your request would deny her that.

Remember, our relationship with God comes first. That must be worked out to His satisfaction before our relationships with each other can be put right.

6. Acknowledge that your marriage is a sacred and permanent commitment. When you married, you took a solemn vow before God that this was to be a permanent commitment—for better or for worse. There were no escape clauses or conditions of release in that vow. For you to be unfaithful to that vow through homosexual weakness is serious and calls for repentance. For you to break off the relationship completely through separation and divorce is far more serious. It is a willful breaking of that vow—a defiance of God. Admittedly, this is a difficult area for Christians to come to terms with, but it may help to put it on a personal level. For *you*, wouldn't separation be a continued, unrepentant defiance of God? What can come of your life from this?

7. Recognize that God created marriage and God redeems His creation. When you were married, you and your wife were made one in the eyes of God. A mystical union was created by Him. He can no longer see you and your wife as two completely separate individuals. Apart, physically or spiritually, you are a broken part of His creation. But, He is the redeemer of His creation. Your marriage is a part of His creation, and it is in need of redemption. He will redeem it, the only condition being that you allow Him to do so—you, not your wife. He has placed you in a position of spiritual leadership over your wife and family. As the priest of your family, it is only you who can approach His throne of grace on this matter, and if you do, He is faithful and will restore your marriage. He loves that which He has created.

8. Thank God that you are married. Your homosexual orientation predates your marriage. Even though you have had this problem, you have experienced many of the joys and blessings of married life: establishing a home together, heterosexual sex, perhaps children. Ask God to bring back to your mind and heart the joys, the good experiences from earlier in your marriage. You have the knowledge and experience that many

homosexuals don't have, that much in marriage can be happy and rewarding.

9. Honestly examine the alternatives that are open to you. The first alternative is one that all married homosexuals have experienced—walking the fence. Continue in the comforts and acceptance of family life and seek sexual gratification outside. The best of both worlds? You know it isn't! It's a life of desperation, unfulfilled relationships at home, and futile ones outside. The feeling is one of being torn apart, and it cannot, and does not, last indefinitely. The second alternative is to come down off the fence on the side of homosexuality. Find Mr. Perfect and settle down to an idyllic existence. Only first, look around at those who have chosen this life. How many have found the relationship that you dream about, and how many are out in the bars and parks, the bath houses and rest-rooms, night after night? If you are in a relationship with another man right now, ask God to give you a view of that relationship in the future, and ask Him to give you a view of your relationships with Him so long as your relationship with your lover lasts. Finally, there is the third alternative of giving yourself to your marriage, to your wife, and to God. This will involve giving up your homosexual activities if you have been active, giving up your fantasies and dreams, giving up your refuge in pornography if that was your thing, giving up yourself, dying, being crucified. And all you will get in return is a new life. You will become a new creature, able to enjoy the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, and all of the others. You will gain a wife whom you will truly love in every way—perhaps for the first time. This choice may seem horrendous, terrifying, but go back and consider the other two alternatives and ask yourself which you really prefer. There are no other choices.

10. Recognize that Jesus can change you. Perhaps you have struggled with the problem long enough to acknowledge that you are helpless in dealing with it. Good! That is where you should be, because usually it is only when we recognize the helplessness of our situation that we are ready to turn over the burdens of our homosexuality and of our marriage to

the Lord and to let His way work in our lives. You do have a role to play though—a vital role. You must make the decision to love—to love your wife. Come to Jesus with this decision as your offering to Him. He will accept it and the process will start, the truly miraculous process of change that will bring you a new heart and a new mind, a miraculous process that will make you a new creature.

--Alan Medinger

Glory be to Him whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine; glory be to Him from generation to generation in the Church and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. Amen

Ephesians 3:20-21

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