



# *Restoring* Sexual Identity

**Hope for Women  
Who Struggle with  
Same-Sex Attraction**

**ANNE  
PAULK**

Coauthor of  
*Love Won Out*



“An invaluable book for anyone who seeks to be introduced to the causes of female homosexuality. The candid stories of the multitude of women interviewed by Anne will offer encouragement and hope to the many other women in our midst who struggle with same-sex attractions.”

—Janelle M. Hallman, MA  
Licensed professional counselor and  
international speaker on female homosexuality

“Finally, a contemporary book on lesbianism! I very highly recommend Anne Paulk's insightful and captivating book, which not only recounts Anne's own experiences but offers a window into the lives of many other strugglers. An absolute ‘must read’ for counselors, religious leaders and every woman who doesn't want to be gay!”

—Joseph Nicolosi, Ph.D.  
President, National Association of Research and Therapy of  
Homosexuality; author of *Reparative Therapy of Male Homosexuality*

“A great handbook for those struggling with their sexual identity and for anyone who would like to understand the sin of homosexuality in women....I would urge pastors and women's ministry leaders to read this book so they can deal intelligently with women in the church as well as young women confused by our culture.”

—Kim Hill  
Recording artist, worship leader

“Never has there been a more excellently written and comprehensive *book* on the issues surrounding female homosexuality. I believe this is the most important resource for anyone affected by lesbianism.”

—Alan Chambers  
Executive Director  
Exodus International, NA

“Filled with well-documented research...but the documentation doesn't leave the reader dry, rather it's complemented by real stories that give the human touch....I was reading and hoping that this was a book I could recommend to parents along with women struggling with same sex attractions. I am pleased to say I found that to be true.”

—Anita Worthen  
Former Exodus Board Member, international speaker,  
and author of *Someone I Love Is Gay*

“With all of the confusion today concerning the homosexual lifestyle and its supposed unchangeability, Anne Paulk's new book will be a hopeful eye-opener to many.”

—Dr. D. James Kennedy  
Senior pastor, Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church  
president and founder of Coral Ridge Ministries,  
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

“A masterful work about our sexual identity as women. Clear...comprehensive...scriptural...solidly affirming. This book offers more than hope—it offers healing!”

—Jan Frank  
Therapist, speaker, and coauthor of *Unclaimed Baggage:  
Dealing with the Past on Your Way to a Stronger Marriage.*

*Restoring*  
Sexual Identity

ANNE  
PAULK



HARVEST HOUSE™ PUBLISHERS

EUGENE, OREGON

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible: New International Version®. NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by the International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. The “NIV” and “New International Version” trademarks are registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by International Bible Society.

Verses marked NASB are taken from the New American Standard Bible®, © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

Verses marked KJV are taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

*Cover by Koechel Peterson & Associates, Inc., Minneapolis, Minnesota*

## **RESTORING SEXUAL IDENTITY**

Copyright © 2003 by Anne Paulk  
Published by Harvest House Publishers  
Eugene, Oregon 97402

### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Paulk, Anne, 1963-  
Restoring sexual identity / Anne Paulk.  
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 0-7369-1179-0 (pbk.)

1. Homosexuality—Religious aspects—Christianity. I. Title.

BR115.H6P38 2003

261.8'357663—dc21

2003001994

**All rights reserved.** No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, digital, photocopy, recording, or any other—except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior permission of the publisher.

**Printed in the United States of America.**

03 04 05 06 07 08 09 10 11 / DP-KB / 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

*This book is lovingly dedicated to four precious men  
in my life—my husband, John, and sons,  
Timothy, Alexander, and Jordan.  
I love you very much.*

*And to the hundreds of women who entrusted me  
with their personal stories of struggles with homosexuality.  
Thank you for your honesty and vulnerability.*

# Acknowledgments

During the four years I took to complete this project, I have relied on the love and generosity of these wonderful individuals:

Don and Diana Schmierer: Your generosity has overwhelmed me and enabled me to see this book become a reality. Many thanks. Bob Davies and Lela Gilbert: Thank you for the endless hours you both spent poring over my manuscript and enhancing my writing with your skill, advice, and experience.

I am grateful for the expertise, counsel, and friendship of each of my survey reviewers: Bob Davies, Anita Worthen, Jane Boyer, Mary Heathman, Penny Dalton, Brad Sargent, and professional therapists Dr. Joseph Nicolosi, Joe Dallas, Janelle Hallman, and Jan Frank.

My thanks to Focus on the Family president, Dr. James C. Dobson. Your support of my husband and me and your dedication to the truth that men and women can indeed be set free from homosexuality have kept us going through tumultuous times.

The support of my friends at Focus on the Family has helped this become a more significant project: the Love Won Out team, Janet Parrshall, Carrie Earll, Suzie Reiple, Sherri Newell, Julie Neils, John McKeever, and Katy Vorce, who provided invaluable assistance in editing and improving my survey—thank you. Paul Pope also provided his expertise in the area of statistical analysis and built the program to evaluate the results of my survey.

Thanks also to my friends and family who encouraged, listened, and were as enthused as I was about this four-year project: Lori Leander, Steve Donaldson, Julie Cole, Jakii Edwards, Dawn Killion, Sandy Hooten, Chuck and Ione Bohler, Robin Stone, Victoria Dillon, Jane Boyer, Amy Tracy, Ann Phillips, Christine Sneeringer, Gloria Zwinggi, Jason Thompson, the staff from Regeneration Books, DeeDee Pitzer, Wendy, Al, and Amy Newill, Eileen Marx, Diane and Sarah Ingolia, and Jim and Jean Daly. Jim, thanks for constantly sharing your enthusiasm with potential publishers as well.

From the first, Nick Harrison at Harvest House Publishers was wonderfully interested in publishing this manuscript. My thanks also to Carolyn McCready and the publisher's committee for your vote of confidence.

When the actual writing portion of this project began in 2002, my husband, John, and my sons, Timmy and Alex, spent dozens of weekends alone as I spent time at a local hotel typing away. Your sacrifice and stress during those long days without me is truly appreciated. I completed the last chapter of this book two weeks before delivering my third son, Jordan Oglesby Paulk, on November 5, 2002. I was a pregnant lady on a mission!

Finally, I remember praying years ago to be of service to my Lord's kingdom in a custom-designed way. Thank you, my God, for taking this vessel of clay and counting me not only your servant but also your daughter and friend. May You be pleased with this book.

# Contents

Hope for the Journey . . . . .	9
1. Three Stories . . . . .	13
2. Where Does Same-Sex Attraction Come From? . . . . .	29
3. Classic Development of Lesbian Attraction . . . . .	49
4. Healthy Female Gender Development . . . . .	73
5. Establishing a Support System . . . . .	99
6. Healing from Abuse . . . . .	125
7. Overcoming Temptation. . . . .	143
8. Healthy Female Friendships . . . . .	169
9. Men: Friendships, Singleness, and Marriage . . . . .	193
10. Parenthood and the Ex-Gay Woman . . . . .	213
As We Part . . . . .	229
Appendix A: Frequently Asked Questions . . . . .	233
Appendix B: Survey Results . . . . .	237
Suggested Reading and Resources. . . . .	259
Notes . . . . .	260





## Hope for the Journey

In 1982, I embarked on a journey that would shape the rest of my life. Like most journeys, it included a few unexpected curves and valleys along the way. Yet little did I know—nor could I envision—where the adventure would lead me just two decades later. I could not have guessed that I would marry and have a family, be surrounded by many quality women friends, and be so fulfilled as a stay-at-home mom.

With each passing year, I marvel at the work God has done and is still doing in my life. The rewards of this journey—peace, joy, security, contentment, friendships, and rich family relationships—have far outweighed the challenges. My former life seems like a barren wilderness when compared to the lush landscape of my life now.

Very early in my life, I felt the tug of sexual attraction toward some women. I remember being both confused and excited by these feelings and also very unsure of what to do with them. In college, after many years of attraction to other women, I embraced a lesbian identity and lifestyle. A short time later, after an encounter with God, I began my journey out of homosexuality.

Along this road, I've had the company of pastors, friends, and family. Some of them may not have known quite what to do with me, but all were good companions nonetheless. Fortunately for me, I eventually found other women on the same road, walked alongside them, and gained courage and understanding from their companionship. I then realized I wasn't alone. Together we wondered what this new life held for us and asked ourselves if the results would be worth the price we were paying. You may be wondering the same thing.

Or you may be a friend, family member, or support person (such as a pastor, a lay, or professional counselor) of a woman who is struggling with her sexual identity. You may be considering how you can best help her as she makes her way through the maze of sometimes contradictory advice.

Be assured, your support is important. Those of us making the unpopular decision to leave the homosexual life often find a great deal of opposition and very little encouragement. Some women must leave behind a way of life that has seemed inescapable and a community of like-minded women who represented their entire support system.

On the following pages you will read stories from many women making this same journey out of lesbianism. Because of the intimate nature of this topic, most of the stories are compilations and do not represent any particular individual. You may find some of the experiences are remarkably like your own, others less so. You may also identify with some of the results of a survey I conducted of 265 women who had left the lesbian lifestyle. These are women who have made that all-important decision to take the journey toward wholeness.

Years ago I was looking for help as I left lesbianism but found almost no resources. Fortunately, I was referred to a wonderful Christian counselor willing to help me work toward my goal. A few years later, I found out about Exodus International, a Christian organization helping individuals

leave homosexuality behind. At Exodus, I found others who had felt the tug of same-sex attraction but were experiencing real change. The hope I've found has motivated me to share in this book what I have learned and experienced.

Finally, I don't know how this book has come into your hands at this particular time. But if it has come as a gift from a friend or relative who loves you, my prayer is that you will be open to the potential for change in your life.

If you're reading the book because you have a friend or relative struggling with lesbianism, my goal is to help you understand more fully the daily struggle your loved one faces.

For those of you reading this because you're already on the road to restoration as a woman, my hope is that through these pages you will find great encouragement.

*You are not alone in the journey.*





## Three Stories

A few years ago Focus on the Family, the large ministry with whom my husband, John, and I are associated, designed a one-day conference on homosexuality they hoped to take to several large cities around the country. John, who was heading up this new program called Love Won Out, began calling pastors in one large northwestern metropolitan area, looking for a church to host the first conference.

Much to everyone's dismay (and surprise), John placed 25 phone calls before he found a pastor willing to sponsor the event.

Now, only a few years later, Love Won Out has a waiting list of churches nationwide who want to host a conference. Interest in homosexual issues has exploded in Christian circles in a short time. Perhaps this newfound attention is a result of the increased visibility of homosexual activists. Perhaps it's caused by the outspokenness of ex-gays who have talked publicly about their own struggles with same-sex attractions in hopes of helping other strugglers. Or it might be due in part to men and women who have secretly wrestled with their sexual identity, hoping for the possibility of change. Also, concerned friends and relatives want to learn how to cope with the news

that someone they love is a homosexual. As a result, wherever John or I speak, we meet people with questions about their own sexuality or that of someone they care for. Because of my own personal history, women often confide in me. Typical of those I've met are the three women whose stories follow: Megan, Taylor, and Christina.

### **Megan's Affairs of the Heart**

I met Megan, a young 28-year-old Christian woman, through a mutual friend. After discovering my ministry to women struggling with same-sex attraction, she pulled me aside and asked if we could talk. With great emotion, Megan told me she had been pleading with God, *Please, Lord, remove these overwhelming feelings I have toward other women. I don't understand why I have to go through this agony! Why won't my sexual temptations toward women just go away?*

Megan had felt attracted to other females off and on since she was 14 years old. To her credit she had not acted on those feelings even though she was heavily tempted twice. Instead she “white-knuckled it” until her feelings passed or the tempting friendship came to a close. At times the struggle was so difficult she wondered if she would make it without expressing her feelings some way or another.

One particularly difficult relationship took place in high school. Megan had gotten to know Vanessa, a confident, beautiful girl and a strong Christian. By contrast, Megan said, “I sat next to Vanessa quietly in class, afraid I might push her away somehow. Soon I began to express only the parts of me that I knew Vanessa liked—my sense of humor, for example—and I stopped doing things that didn't interest Vanessa. I became one-dimensional.”

Megan recounted watching as boys vied for Vanessa's attention but hardly seemed to notice her. During visits to Vanessa's home, Megan felt warmly welcomed and included in Vanessa's inner circle of friends. All day long Megan

thought about Vanessa, fantasizing about an exclusive relationship and physical touch between them. She looked forward to spending time with Vanessa just to get the hugs at the beginning and end of each visit. Eventually Megan's personality had disappeared so much that Vanessa lost interest in her. Megan's unique qualities and independent identity had been traded for closeness with Vanessa. Vanessa had become more than an object of admiration—she had become like an idol.

When Megan attended a Christian college, her endurance was tested all the more. During her sophomore year, she became “best friends” with Amy, a fellow nursing student. The two young women did everything together, but a physical temptation didn't surface until one day when Amy made a romantic gesture toward Megan. In that moment, Megan remembered a Bible verse she had learned warning against such activity.

Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders... will inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

Instantly Megan felt the guilt of her attraction toward Amy. *How could I do this to You, my God?* Megan thought to herself. As a result, she rejected Amy's overture and the two resumed their nonsexual friendship. For the time being Megan felt safe.

Megan didn't know what caused or fueled her attraction to other women. She was tortured by the fact that they were even there. She felt as if she couldn't talk to anyone about it—especially Amy.

If only Megan had known that she wasn't alone, that there were others who had successfully faced and overcome

feelings just like hers. If only she had felt comfortable bringing to her pastor the struggles that caused her such turmoil. Instead she had received the message that personal weakness, especially in the area of homosexual attraction, would likely be met by an inability to help at best and by labeling and further isolation at worst.

When I asked Megan why she didn't confide in her pastor, she told me she had overheard him telling a condescending joke about homosexuals at a church picnic. How sad that she felt a lack of understanding from a Christian leader who was meant to shepherd her.

Megan said, "I can't go to my pastor. On the other hand, I feel like I can't go to just any counselor either. I have read for years in newspapers and magazines that homosexuality is inborn and that people can't change. So what's the use?"

Interestingly, Megan's friend Amy began attending an ex-gay support group and invited Megan to go with her to a regional Exodus North America conference for individuals seeking freedom from homosexuality. I met Megan at that conference. During several talks we had during the conference, Megan broke out of her silence and isolation for the first time. As we parted when the week was over, I encouraged her to share her concerns with Amy and to think about joining a local support group when she returned home.

Megan knew that change would be difficult, but she was excited about it. She responded to the possibility and began to gain hope, confidence, and freedom as she walked through the next six months alongside brothers and sisters in Christ who knew and understood her struggle.

When we met at another conference less than a year later, Megan shared that she had finally talked with her pastor about her struggles. I asked her what had motivated her to do so.

"I'm so excited about what God is doing in me that I wanted to let him know...just in case others were struggling with same-sex attraction."

"So how did he respond?" I asked.

"Well, his jaw almost dropped," she said, "but he thanked me for my candor. He told me he didn't know a lot about how to help someone with this struggle but was willing to walk alongside me. He said he would read up on the topic and asked me for some good books. So he asked *me* for help!" she exclaimed with a grin.

"That's great!" I said. And then I asked what other discoveries she'd made since I'd seen her.

"Well, let's see..." she began. "This past year I've learned what true accountability is—it's being honest in my small group in the face of attraction, but *not* to the individual to whom I'm attracted. I've also learned that my sexual attraction toward other women is not simply sexual. It's really a measure of emotional insecurity in my life."

"Can you give me an example?" I asked.

"Two months ago," Megan began, "I felt very attracted to a woman at work. I mentioned it to my small group leader, and she asked me what at first seemed to be irrelevant questions. She asked, 'What stresses are you going through right now? What other feelings are you experiencing?'"

"I began to list the changes in my life: a job change, some good friends moving out of state, and my father undergoing surgery the following week. A light bulb went on. I was grasping for some form of security and comfort. My heart told me that if I was in a lesbian relationship with the woman at work, I would feel better—kind of like what I suppose a drink offers an alcoholic."

In just a year, Megan was beginning to understand the triggers that set off her attractions—and how to deal with them appropriately.

## Taylor, a Gen-Y Example

One Thursday evening, a young man who attended our high school ministry motioned to me to come pray for a female friend of his. “She’s kind of confused right now...” he said. I introduced myself to the young woman, who told me her name was Taylor. Her slumped shoulders and obviously sad disposition told me immediately that something was bothering her.

“How can I pray for you?” I asked.

Taylor could hardly bring herself to raise her head and look at me to answer. She was clearly depressed, and yet I wondered how I could help. She was an extremely attractive blonde, dressed nicely, and had nothing about her to suggest a homosexual struggle. But she began sharing her problem by telling me, “I’m afraid I might be gay.”

“Why do you think that?” I asked.

“Well,” Taylor explained, “I’ve been having recurring dreams that I’m gay.”

“Have you ever had an attraction toward another girl or woman when you were awake?” I asked.

“No.”

“Are you attracted to boys?” I asked.

“Yes—I always have been.”

“Other than your dreams, do you have any other reason for thinking that you might be gay?” I asked.

“Well, no,” she answered thoughtfully.

She then explained several influences in her school. The administrators were gay, several of her teachers were openly gay, her textbooks included positive references to homosexuality in many places, the gay and lesbian alliance club had a voice on campus, and, of course, the school provided “tolerance” training. The message Taylor had received was coming through loud and clear—so clear that she began to have dreams that she was gay, even though she had no other basis for questioning her sexuality.

"The teachers can't seem to get enough of it," Taylor concluded. "But if you disagree with them and say that homosexuality isn't right, watch out!"

With that I explained what the Bible had to say about the purpose of sexuality.

"Sex isn't a bad thing, you know. After all, God is the creator of our sexuality and has provided us with boundaries for our emotional, spiritual, and physical protection. He wants what's best for us, and He hates sin because it robs us of the best He has to offer. The marriage relationship between a man and a woman was meant to reflect God's character and His desire to be in fellowship with us."

I waited for Taylor to speak, but she was silent.

"Do you have a personal relationship with this most incredible Person in the universe?" I continued. "You need to know that Jesus is a person who is interested in having a relationship with you. He said: 'Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light'" (Matthew 11:29-30).

"Taylor, I think you need to ask Jesus into your heart. But I also want you to know that this is a serious decision. You shouldn't be pushed into it." By then, our pastor's wife had joined us. Together, we showed Taylor several more Scripture verses having to do with becoming a Christian. Finally I asked, "Taylor, would you like to begin a personal relationship with the One who created you?"

"Yes," she replied with calm certainty.

We led Taylor to Christ with a simple prayer. In one incredible moment, this confused young woman passed from one spiritual destiny to another and became an inheritor of eternal life, a daughter of the Great King. Before, she had lived life by her whims and the pressure from her peer group in high school. Now she would begin to live by the principles and precepts of God's Word, which would give meaning and

form to her life. She would no longer have to be ruled by the sway of unreliable emotions. She was finally standing on solid ground. Despite the messages her school curriculum, peers, and teachers communicated, her heart had told her something else: Her soul would suffer serious costs and consequences if she followed the path of her fearful dreams.

After the prayer, Taylor's face radiated relief, peace, and confidence. She held her head high, and her eyes smiled confidently. She appeared to almost float out of the room. God had met with Taylor in her heart, had reassured her, and had given her peace and confidence.

A month or so later, I met up with Taylor and asked her how things were going.

"Lately, school has been great," she told me. "I feel so much more self-confident. Not everything has been easy though. My friends noticed something different about me and made fun of my commitment to Jesus. That was really awkward, to be honest."

I also wondered if she had any greater insight about why she had the recurring dreams. When I asked her, Taylor responded: "I haven't really thought about my nightmares for a while, but I think they may have had something to do with the constant discussions, training, books, and everything we hear about homosexuality at school."

Like many others in contemporary society, Taylor's attitudes had been formed—or misinformed—not by reality but by her peers and the influential adults around her.

### **Christina—A Classic Story**

When I met Christina at an Exodus conference, she was living with her female lover of three years, but she confessed, "I'm longing for someone else or something else... I've spent the past three years thinking I had it all: a lifelong relationship, friends, and a good job—but something is missing."

Chris didn't grow up in a Christian home. Her parents married young and didn't get along very well. Their constant fighting often turned into a barrage of angry words, leaving damaged hearts. Chris' mom always seemed to end up losing, or rather, giving up.

"Women!" her dad often said in frustration as he stormed out of the house in a furious whirlwind.

Chris' mom would then be left in a puddle of tears with three small children to care for. Chris, though only a kindergartener, was the oldest, and although she hurt for her mother, her little heart was quickly making judgments about all sorts of important things. She remembers deciding after one of the arguments when she was about four, "Daddy is mean to Mommy. I don't want to be weak and get hurt like Mommy." So she separated herself from her mom and began following her dad around. Chris started helping him in the garage, happy to be with him doing anything that had nothing to do with her weak mom. Sometimes she even imagined herself to be a little boy. And so began her tomboy image and her habit of emulating her father.

Because of the difficulty at home, Chris did not get along well with others at school. She was introverted and hard to get to know. She rarely asked questions of her teachers and was awkward with her classmates. "I guess you would have called me a loner," she explained. "I really wanted to laugh and play with the other kids but just felt like I couldn't."

In middle school, at that critical time when puberty hit, Chris felt even lonelier and more isolated. "I just didn't feel like I fit in. Fortunately, I was talented at sports. That gave me an 'in' with certain boys who became my 'buddies.' I liked that, but I felt terrible about being a girl. I also remember despising my mother. She had been such a doormat, never really standing up to my father and stopping his verbal attacks.

“Somehow I always felt as if I was there to comfort, protect, and care for my mother. I was there for her needs, but she wasn’t really there for mine. Sometimes I even felt invisible. Our relationship at that time is kind of hard to explain, but that’s how I felt. Even when my father left us when I was 15, Mom seemed weak and leaned on me.”

In high school, Chris joined the girl’s soccer team and continued to find her identity in sports. Through soccer she became friends with several other girls and felt intrigued by them. For the first time, she really had a female group to “hang out with.”

“We would do sleepovers at their houses,” Chris explained, “but not at mine. I was too embarrassed. One girl, Tammy, was so cool. She really seemed interested in me, and that’s when I had my first attraction to a girl.”

Chris explained that her friendship with Tammy quickly turned into an exclusive relationship and became sexual. Eventually, Tammy’s parents found out and ended the girls’ friendship. Both Chris and Tammy felt humiliated. And Chris was alone again.

That’s when I decided I was gay and started going to gay bars. I was only seventeen, but they let me in anyway. I had finally found a bunch of women who loved and accepted me, and it felt good—really good!

I had fun dancing and connecting with other women. Not long after I started going there I met a 25-year-old woman and started dating her. By my eighteenth birthday, I had moved in with her—but it only lasted a year. I was devastated when it ended. After that I had several relationships with other women, but none of them lasted for more than three months.

Now I’m with Karen. We’ve been together for three years and we’re still going strong. She’s like

me in that she likes hiking, biking, and stuff like that...and we just bought our first house together. But I'm constantly wondering if I'm missing something. I don't know what's wrong with me. I should be happy. Life is finally good.

"So what seems to be the problem?" I asked. Chris shook her head in bewilderment.

Well, a couple of years ago, my mom became a Christian. She started sending me verses from the Bible, booklets, and stuff like that. I was angry with her because she seemed so hypocritical. I didn't call her for a year. Then we got into a fight, and I told her how mad I was because she sent me that Christian stuff. I asked her why she thought she had the right to judge me. "Just leave me alone!" I told her. Ever since then, any time Mom calls, she tells me she's praying for Karen and me.

Maybe I came to this conference just to find out if I *am* missing something and to see what Christianity is all about. I thought this would help me to just dismiss the whole thing, but I actually find myself drawn to it somehow.

I explained that she wasn't being drawn to the conference but to God. "The Holy Spirit is calling your heart ever so gently. In Jesus Christ you will find the comfort, safety, and peace you're looking for. He's the only One who can meet all your deepest needs," I quietly explained. "Jesus is the Person we're adoring during each evening meeting. God has done so much for us, generously loving us, that we return His love in song and in the way we live. That's our motivation for getting together during this conference week."

Chris nodded. She didn't seem to have anything else to say.

I met with Chris several times that week, just to catch up. God was intently wooing Chris, and as she attended the workshops and evening worship meetings, He gradually melted her heart. She had been given a new Bible by one of the workshop teachers and excitedly told me she was reading the gospel of John late into the night. All her questions were being answered and dismissed. On the final night of the conference, Chris gave her life to Christ. At last she had found Someone whom she could completely trust—Someone who promised to never leave her or forsake her.

The next few months were difficult. Chris went home to face Karen, her lover, with the news that she had become a Christian. That did *not* make Karen excited!

“She felt betrayed and so did all my lesbian friends,” Chris told me. “They just didn’t know what to make of me. Soon they didn’t want anything to do with me. Karen felt really hurt when I told her that I couldn’t sleep with her anymore. Something in me was changing, and I just couldn’t do whatever I felt like anymore.”

“Chris, the changes going on inside of you are from God, who now lives in you through His Holy Spirit,” I reassured her. And then I read to her two verses from the Bible.

Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come (2 Corinthians 1:21-22).

So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want (Galatians 5:16-17).

“Chris, the Holy Spirit took up residence in your heart when you became a Christian,” I said. “And this is an evidence that you really are a Christian. According to Colossians 1:12-14, this now applies to you:

Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

“Chris, you are now a citizen of heaven, an inheritor of the God of all creation, and you naturally want to please the One who gave everything for you. Life will never be the same for you,” I told her with a smile.

Over the past several years I’ve met many women like Chris who make the hard decision to leave their lesbianism behind for the rewards of knowing Christ—and the experience never gets old. Nor does it seem to get any easier. Women who step out of their old life into their new one *will* face some hardship.

## The Process of Growing

Megan, Taylor, Christina—each of these women have dramatically different stories with their own unique challenges along the way. Taylor, who only suffered from dreams of being a lesbian, found resolve quickly. But most women facing same-sex attraction—like Megan and Chris—find the process of change just that—a *process*.

A process similar to growing from childhood into adulthood.

My middle son, Alex, recently told me that he *is* a man and a daddy. Those are good aspirations for him, but at two and a half, he has a long way to go to fill those shoes. We, like Alex, aspire for good things but need patience to grow into

the women God desires us to be. We want to experience all He has for us *now*, but God uses time as He binds up our wounds, matures us emotionally, and nurtures us along the way. He wants us to be women who are gentle and strong with quiet confidence and maturity.

Megan is just beginning to move past the shame of dealing with same-sex attractions to knowing she's loved and accepted by God regardless of her struggle. She will need to understand and embrace the grace that God has extended to her. She may even have a harder time than Chris in understanding and relying on God's unconditional love for her. What Chris learns by necessity, Megan will fight to obtain. Perhaps she will read with new eyes those verses from 1 Corinthians 6:9-11:

Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were *washed*, you were *sanctified*, you were *justified* in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God (*italics mine*).

Chris needs first and foremost to get to know her Savior and then to work through the hard issues of living in a house with someone who is alternatively hostile and seductive. She will face the problem of separating households and will grieve the loss of her relationship with Karen. She will need to find a new support system and community after being rejected by her old ones.

The Body of Christ is designed to be that support system. Chris has been born into a new family, and in time she will