

Same Sex Attraction

I think this is my fifth time starting over on this letter. Every time I read what I have previously written, I cringe, losing hope that I'm going to be able to put into words what I want you to hear. I keep putting myself into your shoes, with one fear hanging over me: would I keep reading? When I needed this letter the most, would I have finished the letter or would I have lost hope and quit before making it to the end? This all sounds dramatic, but I know that there are those of you out there who are struggling to find any scrap of God's love, and I want to be incredibly mindful of that. So please bear with me as I write this. I care deeply about you, whoever you are. I don't know your background, your history or your struggles, but I know you have a deep desire for love. You may be depressed, on top of the world, or just coasting. You might know well your salvation; you might have come to the conclusion that God must hate you either because you don't deserve Him or because He seems unnecessarily cruel. Wherever you're at, whatever brings you here, I'm so glad I get a second of your time. Please stay with me till the end.

When I found out I was attracted to the same sex, not much changed. It was about ninth grade when everything suddenly clicked, but I can trace the attraction back to early middle school. This realization was quickly followed by a decision: that I would live two lives. At home and in my thoughts, I would indulge and search further into this feeling. But at school, and in my social life - who would want to be the gay kid in a Christian school? So, I divided my mind. This worked pretty well for me. I'm pretty confident no one in high school could have guessed my orientation. However, at some point I had to leave the comfort of my home town, my friends, and my ready-made decisions, morality, and religion.

Calling my freshman year a dumpster fire is generous. Lonely and incredibly angry, I was faced with my reality and I had to decide what to make of Christianity. I definitely didn't choose to be attracted to my sex and not to the other. And, I didn't see myself changing anytime soon. I was left with a deep, intimate longing for love that is off-limits, forever. There was no expiration date on this commandment. It wasn't "Wait for marriage, then dive into every intimacy, sexual and more!". It was a hard, firm "never". The thing is, I had been told all my life that money, fame and other vain pursuits were a fool's game, while "true love" was the ultimate treasure (watch any Disney movie and tell me otherwise). So, if love is ultimate, and my love is forbidden, what kind of nonsense is the Lord serving up? That was the question I faced.

I don't intend to answer that here. Not directly. I know that's frustrating, but hear me out. This question is weighty and complicated. A direct, neatly package 10-step guide for the struggling Christian sounds really nice. Receiving one would be helpful, there's no denying that, but it is not guaranteed. Not for any struggle. And it's definitely not the answer you need. Let me instead provide a more generic answer.

God loves you. Believe it, don't believe it: it doesn't matter. Your feelings towards God don't change His feelings towards you. He created the entire universe from a clean slate. With no effort, He brought forth roaring stars, and quiet streams. From his imagination came the idea of reflections, of warmth, of breath, of our love. And, He looks down on you and loves you. God loves you. In fact, God is love. That is not to say that God's love is 100 or 1000 times stronger than ours. That would be too limiting of a description. God is love. He is the manifestation of love. Any love you have ever felt from anyone is a grain of sand compared to the shore of the love God has for you.

You don't deserve that love. You really don't. I really don't. No one is deserving of God's love. Personally, I'm a very entitled person, so this was a hard fact to me to come to terms with. We are told daily that we are unique, amazing individuals intrinsically deserving of love. We're not that bad. Truth is, we are. Every day we offend, reject, and betray our Creator. He offers us a life better than we could imagine. A hard, sacrificial life full of purpose and identity. From birth we reject all of that, we reject Him. This is sin. In your sin you deserve nothing but immediate death. You reject Life and throw yourself into the arms of

death, into the pits of Hell. If you can't believe this, if it sounds too extreme, that's fine. However, I plead with you to pray that God show you how big He is. I can't convince you of your sin, but get the right view of our huge, holy, loving God and you'll have the right view of yourself. It's a dark truth but it brings forth a brighter redemption. Stay with me.

Jesus died for you. As He walked the Earth 2000 years ago, Jesus felt every temptation you've felt. Jesus resisted all these temptations and went onto the cross a spotless lamb. There He bore every one of your sins and every ounce of your shame. His friends deserted Him. His mother cried at His feet. His bleeding back scraped the splinters of the cross as his lungs struggled for each breath. He died naked on that cross as His father turned His back on Him. All for us, His rebellious creation.

Jesus rose. This is where my understanding of the Gospel lacked heavily growing up. Jesus broke the chains of sin and death as He rose from the dead. I knew that much. But that was about all I knew. I had Christianity as fire insurance. Jesus was there to keep me from Hell and now I just had to live a good life till I keeled over and died. Jesus had saved me from death, that was His role, and now maybe I'll feel good during a worship song or retreat. Besides that, there wasn't much more He had to offer. That was so far from the point. Jesus is alive now! He is ready to guide you along a path of new life found in miraculous growth. He will sit with you at your lowest. His shoulder is always there. And the Holy Spirit is equally real and alive and moving in the lives of believers! There is rest, peace, love, joy and so much more in our God. He is a relational God. I missed that. Look into that.

So, why in the homosexuality letter have I dedicated so much of my time to the Gospel, which I'm sure you've already heard today? Because, at the end of the day, you'll have your community that walks with you through all of life, you'll have guardrails that help you strive for purity, you'll have a lot of amazing things to help you in your walk, but none of that will matter if you don't daily remember the Gospel. Why would you want to forfeit such a deep, intimate love with another human, unless you had a greater love to replace it? I would never ask a non-Christian to resist their gay desires. They would have no reason to. They only have Earthly love to respond to. All of our lives we will be responding to something. Christ invites us to respond to the Gospel.

Christ didn't tailor His ministry specifically to every single person He came across. He offered the same thing to the tax collector and to the prostitute. He offered salvation. And from that salvation He offered a life abundant in Him. Life is complicated, but there's a core solution to all of our problems. Look to the cross. Don't think your struggle can't be reconciled by this simple Gospel.

I pray that you have made it this far in the letter. If you have, let me make a final plea. Don't do this life alone. But also choose wisely who you do this life with. I spent my first year of college alone. I sat in my sorrow and fell into a cycle of self-pity. I have friends who spent their freshman year far from alone but also far from God because of who they chose to do life with. There is an incredible community ready to embrace you. Even further, if you struggle with this or you know someone who does, if you just want to talk, I would love to meet you. I KNOW HOW SCARY THIS CAN BE. It took me 6 years, until the end of my freshman year, to talk with anyone about my sexuality. Praise the Lord I did. Please, please, please reach out. I am begging you. If you're a camper or a counselor, it does not matter. True life is only in the light. Step into the victory Christ paid such a heavy price for you to have. Don't let this love go to waste.

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