

## Sexual Issues

# GAY DOESN'T MEAN HAPPY

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*\*The term 'mate' is an Australian colloquialism, meaning 'companion' or 'close friend' - usually of the same sex. In this context it has no sexual connotations.*

***My mind was going around in circles spiralling downwards with depression... I could not cope any longer and attempted suicide. I think an angel saved me that night...***

I never thought I was gay; that type of lifestyle was too risky, dangerous and socially distasteful.

My only problem was that I felt this attraction to other boys from the time I started puberty at 10 years of age. I had grown up with my younger sister in a good stable home and never aware that something might be missing from my childhood that would effect me later on in life.

As a boy I was very shy, insecure, and managed to fill all my time playing games happily alone.

I can remember being at Kinda, playing

intensely with blocks, so that I would not have to relate to the other kids. At primary school I feared recess and lunchtime. I had no friends and would walk around and around the school yard looking busy but feeling lonely. I longed to play footy or cricket with the other boys, but had no idea of the rules or the confidence to play.

My father was a quiet, reserved man who worked very hard to support his family by being away at work from 7am until 6pm, and some weekend work to help pay the bills. He had a difficult childhood combined with a poor father figure from my grandfather. I think like most men he was unsure of how to raise his son. All I every wanted was for him to hug me, share his thoughts and feelings on life with me, and to play footy with me. Somewhere along the way I had become distant from my father. My mother's personality was the opposite to Dad's. My mother was more dominate with her emotional expressions, possibly overcompensating for my father, with her love of talking and her affection through hugging and kissing us kids.

After the age of 10 I felt a hunger for the missing males in my life. I had a desire to be close to other boys but had no idea of how, which made me feel alienated. My thoughts turned into sexual fantasies for other attractive boys. I did not act upon my homosexual feelings and hoped that they would eventually go away.

My life changed at 16 as I found myself for the first time surrounded by a group of close mates\*.

I thought I had been cured from homosexual feelings as I enjoyed my first girl friend, hanging out with my mates, and noticed my sexual attraction for guys begin to subside. At 19 I started my first job and felt very happy with having money to spend and a growing circle of friends. At the same time I had this growing sense that there was more to life, why was I here, what was the meaning to life? Even though I had a girl friend, mates, a car, and money to spend, I felt there was more to life. I started praying that God would help me find what I was looking for - the meaning to life! The distant God I did not know personally responded in full force as I was bombarded with Christian messages through music and through a church youth group I had just joined. Over the next few months I had this growing sense that God wanted me to hand my life over to Him.

The happiest moment in my life came just after my 20th birthday as I gave in to God chasing me and said "Well, here's my life, its all yours". Immediately I felt this burning sensation in my heart along with this overwhelming love. My life began a new journey as God slowly moulded me to be more like Jesus. Nothing could have prepared me for the intense pain ahead.

Two months later I was counselling a

friend, Jason, after his father's death. I spent a lot of time with him and enjoyed having someone who was not afraid to express their feelings by hugging and touching me. Ever so gradually Jason pushed closer to me and I had no reason to stop him, particularly while my thirst for male friendship was blurring what was actually happening. Sometime later I realised I was in a sexual relationship with Jason and discovered that he was gay. Part of me was in shock thinking how did this happen, and the other half was addicted to the fact that another man loved me as I lived out a childhood fantasy.

In the meantime God had called me to Bible College, so after resigning from my job, I tried to break off this relationship with Jason before my course commenced. We had both become emotionally dependant on each other and talking was not enough to stop the homosexual behaviour.

One night I looked up into the sky with tears in my eyes and poured out my heart to the Lord to help me escape from this friendship. I heard the words "Flee from the youth group." Straight away I left the youth group where Jason attended, moved to another church, and moved away to live on campus at Bible College. My next problem was dealing with the shame, the frustration, the anger and the homosexual feelings that I had suppressed so well for the past 4 years, and having them resur-

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## Homosexuality

face now that I was a Christian.

I wanted to talk to someone who understood my problem. I could not open up to my Christian mates for fear of rejection, and the only other person I knew who understood my problem was Jason.

My mind was going around in circles spiralling downwards with depression. I was thinking this surely has never happened to another Christian guy, and why does it have to be me? I was not willing to share my burden with anyone for fear that my whole life would cave in around me, so my inner turmoil led me to other options of escape. Occasionally I slipped backwards and met with Jason which only pushed my depression down further. I could not cope any longer and attempted suicide.

I think an angel saved me that night after I had been deliberately speeding on a wet and dark night. On a bend in the road my car spun out of control across the path of an oncoming car and stopped a few centimetres in front of a large tree. My heart was racing and I felt God holding me in his hand encouraging me not to escape but to talk to someone. After a few days I had enough courage to share with a female counsellor on campus. She sat and listened, did not expel me, and to my amazement said that I was certainly not the first person to share this type of struggle. She referred me on to a Christian counsellor who recommended that I strengthen my relationship with my father, my girlfriend and my heterosexual mates.

I thought I was finally cured. Had I won? I met with my father more regularly, spent more time with my Christian mates

playing sport and in ministry, and 22 months later married my girlfriend, Sharon, who had been very supportive knowing my history with Jason, who was one of her friends too.

Six years later I was running my own company with one of my staff, Bruce, a mate from church.

I made the mistake of getting too close to him and shared one day about my past struggle with homosexuality. Bruce was athletic and attractive. Somewhere along the way I had nudged into his personal space which he interpreted as a move on him. He started acting very negatively toward me and eventually resigned. He and his wife went to the extent of leaving our church and have refused any contact with me or my wife ever since. I was devastated by his reaction being a friend and a Christian. Sharon and I sought counselling to work through this painful event.

I felt hurt and angry by Bruce's behaviour. I was thinking I don't want to go through this sort of pain again. I subconsciously distanced myself from all my mates in fear that a similar event might occur.

I compensated and sought self worth by pouring extra time and energy into my business which flourished. Sharon and I had our first baby. The needs of a growing family and a thriving business left little time for me to catch up with my Dad or with my mates. Three years later we had another baby on the way, I had purchased an expensive European car, and we had moved into a larger architecturally designed house.

I thought things were going so well. Gradually I began feeling lonely, my wife

was busy with two children and I was being pushed aside. We had several arguments - one of which resulted in Sharon saying at the heat of the moment "Why don't you find someone else?" My support network of men had fallen away three years earlier and I felt alone. I thought to myself, "my wife is too busy, all men are homophobic (you can't trust them), who will I turn to?" In my loneliness I had no regular contact or affirmation from other men and the homosexual feelings intensified. One night I met with Paul, who was gay, just to have someone to talk with. I met with him several times, and he started to make a move on me. One day I was feeling spiritually weak, tired, and vulnerable and I slipped into a sexual experience with Paul. I had hit rock bottom spiritually. I asked myself, "do I want to follow God, or do I want to head off into the gay subculture?"

At the same time a Christian mate, unaware of my struggle, spent 30 minutes regurgitating the contents of his evening service. I had to stop myself from blushing or breaking out in a cold sweat - the subject was 'homosexuality'. I sat on the edge of my chair as I learnt about Rowland Croucher and his insight into homosexuality. That evening a Christian guy shared his testimony of how he had been healed from a homosexual background. I wanted to hear this for myself. Within two weeks I had discretely obtained a copy on cassette and listened to it in my car. It was one of the most powerful messages I had ever heard as this guy shared how Jesus had healed him. From that moment I was convinced that if he could do it, so could I.

I headed into recovery by seeking counselling through Rowland Croucher and later through *Exodus Ministries* in South Melbourne. I needed to overcome a deep trust other men, and that I could be close without becoming sexual. Building up strong healthy male friendships has helped me open up, trust others, and build up my self-worth and identity as a man.

I have had to tackle my own fear of homosexuality, by becoming more educated on the subject through books and conferences. I have had to recall and relive some of my early childhood to gain a better understanding of my early environment and how it has effected my behaviour.

I am not gay even when I feel vulnerable and begin to envy another man. I know God understands.

I don't have to be ashamed to face these feelings. With God's help I can confront these feelings and choose healthy ways of working through them, like talking to a mate and getting prayer, rather than turning them into sexual fantasies.

Healing has not happened overnight, but has been more of an ongoing process of focusing my eyes on the man Jesus and changing daily to be more like him. God has forgiven me through my stumbling of the past and his love desires that I feel complete as a man, so that I may experience the freedom we have in Christ, not the bondage of sin.

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