



Fighting For Freedom

A Prayerful Response to 'Gay' Love Ones



BY ANDREW COMISKEY

My mother's gentle tearful response to my declaration of homosexuality stopped me in my tracks: 'I have known a lot of people in the "gay" world. I wanted more for your life.' She did not have to leave the family Bible at me. She just wanted more for her son.

As the woman who bore me, my mom had authority to respond in that way. She helped create me and thus knew me unlike any other. You could say that she had a stake in my becoming a fruitful man, free from sowing my sexuality into lifeless outlets.

Perhaps you are a concerned friend or family member of someone who has declared to you his or her homosexuality. I hope these suggestions provoke holy freedom for all concerned. Though none of my four [now] adult kids have ever struggled with same-sex attraction, they have faced disintegration like everyone, with resulting identity

confusion. What I recommend to you is what I have sought to apply in my parenting and in my friendships with gay-identified persons.

Listen and Release

Begin by listening and being grateful that this one would share with you something intimate and painful. Thank the beloved for his or her trust. Once alone, let the tears flow. Let tears bring you to Jesus, to the foot of His Cross. Let that Cross become the goal of your prayers for the beloved. Let that Cross also be the boundary that reminds you that in the end, however close you may be to

him or her, God is nearer still. He is the hope: both for you and the beloved. (S)he must ultimately answer to God, not you.

Guilt and Humility

If you are a parent, your first response might be guilt. What have I done to create this condition in my child? One must face this question squarely in order to be free to love this person. Don't dodge the facts: of course parents play a role in the gender identity formation of their children. Yes, you did the best you could as a parent, and yes you helped create some gaps that may have contributed to his or her same-sex inclination.

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"For three years now I've come to this tree expecting apples and not one apple have I found. Chop it down! Why waste good ground with it any longer?" The gardener said, 'Let's give it another year. I'll dig around it and fertilize, and maybe it will produce next year..."

LUKE 13:7-9 (MSG)





Let tears
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Let that
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Jn. 15:4

*"Abide in me,
and I in you. As the
branch cannot bear fruit
by itself, unless it abides
in the vine, neither
can you, unless you
abide in me."*

**Fighting for a
Fruitful Church**

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But a contribution is not a cause, and must be weighed alongside of: your child's innate personality and temperament, secondary influences outside the home, cues and counsel from the culture, and finally, your child's own moral decision-making, e.g. how (s)he has encouraged or restrained the same-sex attraction.

Assess this as objectively as you can and where necessary ask God to forgive you for ways you could have done things differently. Receive grace so you can give grace to your child. Humble yourself and arise like all forgiven parents. The complex dance of becoming a person is subject to fits and starts for us all. That should sensitize us but not condemn us. In parenting, sometimes 2+2=4, but usually it equals 5.

Inviolability

Authentic guilt must be matched by recognizing the other's inviolability. By that I mean that (s)he possesses a core reality that is not available to you. You may know something about this person, even a lot. However, you have no inspired access to the beloved's deepest thoughts,

feelings or motivations. Each of us is sacred, made in God's image, which grants us an inner sanctum reserved for the Creator.

In our care and concern, we must always suspend ultimate knowing of the other. We can know this person only in part. That truth creates space for God to be God, and for you to be an imperfect conduit of His love. Remember, Jesus made that one in His image, not yours. How He acts, and how the other responds, is a dance in which you are a secondary partner, at best.

Clear Seeing

One thing we can ask for from the Lord is true sight as to who this person is: a man or woman God created to become a good fruitful gift to others. That has deep implications for his or her sexuality. We cannot agree that the 'gay self' is an inspired destiny for him or her. Rather, we cry out to God and ask for

authentic sight, that we might see this one in the light of God's fruitful intentions for him or her. (By that I do not mean having children per se but pure and secure sexual identity.)

Of course we do not have complete sight, but we can know the biblical parameters and Church teaching that help us know God's direction for the sexual wholeness of His human creatures. We see the track and we cry out for the mercy that frees the beloved to see how (s)he is getting off track. We see this clearly, and we weep for our loved ones.

A lovely actress turned Benedictine nun, Dolores Hart, wrote: 'Sin is a refusal to become who we really are.' The person seeking shelter in the gay self and world resists the path to his or her own becoming. We ask God for clear sight here so we can pray and love truthfully. Quoting



Each of us is sacred,
made in God's image,
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Dostoevsky: 'To love a person means to see him or her as God intended him or her to be.' Keep in mind that we are not imposing 'our will be done' in the beloved's life. We are not asking him or her to become something for us but rather to discover the main and plain of God's truth for his or her life, beginning with a return to Jesus.

Clarity & Compassion

Jesus' demonstrated the link between seeing and feeling when He saw the deceived multitudes and felt an aching compassion for their 'harassed and helpless' state (Matt. 9: 35). Similarly, Jesus' heart 'went out'—it ached with compassion—for the widow of Nain who had just lost her son. He acted on that ache and raised him from the dead (Luke 7: 11-17). Similarly, we can open our eyes to the destruction of deception in the beloved and cry out for Jesus' compassion. Prayerfully, we can intersect with His ache, and implore our Savior: 'Jesus, make Your mercy known to him or her!'

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'Jesus, make Your mercy known to him or her!'

compassion

We can learn how to pray with inspired compassion and Jesus will deepen His compassion in us. Our best tool is prayer: prayer is how we all get converted, regardless of one's sexual inclinations. Think about it: God is converting us through this person's same-sex attraction. He is teaching us to pray.

Bold Prayer

My son Sam stumbled in the dark for a long time. I learned how to pray for him in the spirit of Luke 13: 6-8. These verses describe a gardener who advocates for a fruitless fig tree before the landowner who wants to cut it down. The man boldly commits to doing everything in his power to make the tree fruitful. I knew my son had the raw material to be a focused, life-giving man—he just needed radical conversion!

I intersected with Jesus' ache for him and broke ground around his deceived heart, imploring the Father to encounter him with any means necessary to bring him to his knees.

Real Presence

God heard my many prayers. And He determined to use both Annette and I to be among those who embodied good counsel. We envisioned him by calling him into the good that he could become, and suggested some ways forward if and when he wanted to pursue them. Months before, we had asked him to move out if he wanted to squander his life. We would not pay for his idolatry. We invited him back when we saw his will for good, and his heart open to God.

Sam's was a slow repentance, marked by fits and starts. At times Annette and I were the good guys, other times, the heavies. We loved him generously and set hard boundaries. We prayed much and became imperfect answers to our own prayers. We loved Sam the best we could, seeking to direct our boy to the path and the goal, Christ Jesus. I am pleased to say that he has become that fruitful fig tree. He now abides actively, evidently, in the Vine (John 15: 1-4). 🙏



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Rather, we cry out to God and ask for authentic sight, that we might see this one in the light of God's fruitful intentions...

When **Your Child** Discloses **Their Homosexuality**

1

Listen. Painful as this moment is, (s)he is disclosing something deeply personal and painful. Keep in mind that (s)he has probably wrestled with these desires for years and is just summoning the courage to tell you about them. That is a gift. It means (s)he perceives you as trustworthy. Resist the temptation to make this about you—your future, your expectations, your shame. This is about a loved one who will need all the love you can give.

2

Affirm Your Love for Him or Her. Express gratitude that (s)he would entrust such a weighty disclosure to you, and a risky one, in light of deeply held family beliefs. Expressing your love does not negate these beliefs. It simply means that you are standing in the truth that this one has not ceased to be your beloved son or daughter because of same-sex attraction (SSA).

3

See a Beloved Son or Daughter, Not a Homosexual. Naming oneself 'gay' or 'lesbian' is a decision people make to identify with their attractions or with a newfound relationship. Your family member may want to identify this way but you need not agree with him or her. Loving someone does not mean agreeing with every decision (s)he makes. Having said that, you need not make this distinction between a tendency/relationship and an identity a big issue. It is simply important for you to know that (s)he is not intrinsically 'gay' even if (s)he wants to be.

4

Ask Helpful Questions (not unhelpful ones like 'Why are you gay?' or 'What have we done?') such as: Have you had these feelings a long time? Have you had a same-gender relationship? Who else knows and supports you in this? Are you at peace with your homosexuality or is it a conflict for you? Where is God for you in this struggle? Most importantly, what do you need from us at this point? (Probably a break from so many questions!)

5

Taking a Break Might be Helpful. Having listened, it can be good to gather your faculties before you say something regrettable. You will find your relationship will require a lot of space and time for both parties. It is a challenge to negotiate what may become some differences in how you understand the nature of homosexuality itself

6

Learn. Different factors influence SSA, including what the culture deems the right way to resolve these feelings. Let him or her know that a variety of options exist for working out one's SSA; it depends significantly on who one chooses to be supported by. However, the chances are likely that this young adult may not want parents to guide his or her sexual process. For obvious reasons: she is seeking to individuate from you and possibly also from your faith tradition. Keep your head. Part of growing up into one's own moral decision-making involves exploration. In the meantime, check out **Courage** (couragec.org), **Restored Hope Network** (restoredhopenetwork.org), and **NARTH** (narth.org) for further resources. Ask your child if you can give them input on the opportunities that do exist for aligning one's sexuality with Scripture and Church teaching. They may balk and you may need to back off but remind them that in spite of all their silent prayers, they have probably not enlisted the help of a caring, truthful community. These communities do exist, and your child needs to know that. They simply may not be ready to enlist such help.

7

Cool Off. It probably took you a lot of time to deal with the destructive habits you faced as a young adult. Your parents did not make your decision to go to AA or to give up porn or to go to therapy. You will drive your child away if your goal for his or her life pervades every conversation. Remember, (s)he is an adult. You treat a 14-year-old very differently from a 24-year-old.

8

Pray for His or Her Chastity and Fruitfulness. Every parent wants his or her child to become fruitful. You have authority to hold fast to such fruitfulness and the chastity that undergirds it. Pray more for such fruitfulness and talk less to them about it. Learn how to release your young adult to God, even if (s)he is making bad choices. All you can do is choose to not pay for those choices. Set boundaries in love if you have become 'codependent' with a child's sexual immorality. It is OK to not want sexual immorality of any type in your household. Just make sure you are consistent with all types of sexual sin, including your favorites.

9

Grieve Unto Life. Your child is caught in the crossfire of a spiritual and moral battle. Wail, mourn, repent unto the Lord's kindness (James 4:7-10). As you consider whatever role you played in your child's confusion, confess your faults to the Lord and His friends; drink in the mercy you need. God is converting you in this process. More than ever, you need to know that One is in charge of your life and your child's, and that He alone is able to make this desert a garden for those called according to His purpose (Rom. 8: 28). You can choose to look to God in a way that you have never looked before. See how God is using this moral crisis to bring you to your knees? You are right where He wants you, entrusting the child you love most to the One who loves him or her best.

Digging For Mercy



BY ANNETTE COMISKEY

My life has been greatly impacted by the effects of sexual brokenness. I have known both the ravages of sin (I was sexually abused at the age of 4) and God's transforming love in my wounding. I was also greatly impacted by my brother's broken sexuality. When I was 7 he was discharged from the Air Force because of homosexuality. From that time until his death in February of 2014, I witnessed the distressing effects of his brokenness on himself and his loved ones.

My brother and I shared a long relationship that taught me much about God's mercy.

We were similar in many ways: he was smart, funny, loved sports, movies and cooking. I was raised in Northern California yet was an ardent Dodgers fan because of my brother. We would watch old films on TV which became a rich part of my life. There are many good things about being his sister that I will always cherish.

For my mom, having a proud & active 'gay' son was, in a small way, like losing a child but having to grieve alone, without consolation.

But his life was also a source of grief and pain for me. I saw how destructive his choices were as he was unable to sustain a relationship for any length of time. He ended up alone and boasted of how much he played and partied. His life testified of the futility of trying to find happiness in a person instead of God.

The biggest difference between my brother and I was one of worship. By God's mercy, I found a group of Christians with whom I learned to worship God and to submit to His will as best I could. My brother sub-

mitted to his own desires, perhaps assuming that God would bless him no matter what.

This was hardest on my parents. My parents were good Christians who lived their lives trying to pass on biblical values to their children. In spite of our choices (and we all made some bad ones!), they never withheld love from any of us.

My parents spent many years trying to understand my

brother. They felt guilt over having "caused" his homosexuality. They felt the shame of unanswered questions from friends and relatives. They also lived with unmet hopes that most of us have for our kids. Never once did my mother complain about my brother or disrespect him. For my mom, having a proud and active 'gay' son was, in a small way, like losing a child but having to grieve alone, without consolation.

A grief I carry to this day also motivates me to continue to equip churches to do Living

Waters. Our church growing up offered little to my brother. A precocious teenager, he graduated from high school two years early. He wanted to be a part of the high school youth group but our head pastor refused to let him participate because by then he was in college. My brother felt the rejection deeply and left there believing that there was no place for him in the church.

After my brother came home from the Air Force, he received no welcome in our church. What beckoned him was a nearby San Francisco neighborhood called The Castro. After WWII many soldiers who had been discharged from the army due to homosexuality settled this area. My brother sought refuge and found community there. Instead of an identity founded on Jesus his became one founded on addictive homosexuality.

He grew angry at anything or anyone that didn't affirm his choices; he targeted the faith of our family in particular. My brother became increasingly defensive as he aged, so our times together were more tense than not.

I struggled to know how to love my brother. He defined love by my blessing his gay

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I struggled to know how to love my brother I was reduced to pray & to cry out for the merciful way only God could make to my brother.

Change My Heart, O' Lord



BY LOU FRANKLIN

Andrew excelled musically and academically. He was a National Merit Scholar, earning a full scholarship to a major university, including expenses. He majored in musical theater, performed in school productions, local productions, and in summer productions outside the state. God had blessed him with talent, and he worked hard to develop it. Theater was what he wanted; he had earned it.

His dad and I were concerned with the inherent dangers of this kind of work and we discussed it frankly with him. He claimed he understood and it wouldn't be a problem. His faith was strong. We trusted him to the Lord, knowing that He had created him and blessed him with this talent.

Then came the changes in behavior, in attitudes, in dress. His grades were fine and he was naturally a hard worker. My doubts and fears started to take root. We spent time with his new friends; of course they were different than his high school friends. Wouldn't you expect that? Eventually, the truth broke through. Doubts and fears can only be suppressed and avoided so long. Reality, stark and painful, must be faced. Time had given me the chance to begin processing what was going on in Andrew's life, but it is still painful and frightening to hear the words coming from your loved one's mouth.

He told us briefly, but honestly and unemotionally, what we'd dreaded and feared. He stated that he knew exactly what we thought about it, because he'd lived in our house 18 years. He found it hard to believe that God could create him to live with the struggles he faced, and still love him. He had

walked through the door marked SSA, and the lifestyle of freedom that went along with it. It was his decision to make and he'd made it. He knew our beliefs would never be changed, so it was what it was, no more discussion was necessary.

He certainly wasn't participating in counseling. We assured him of our undying love for him, and we knew God's love was the same. We would always trust God's Word to be truth. He knew full well what those words were. We would never believe the lie that many had accepted. We believed he had been created with God's love, for God's purposes, with God's gifts, for God's glory. There was no anger or accusations on either side of this conversation. We had all had time to prepare our thoughts and God's grace was present.

What came next were the most painful words of all to my ears. He thanked us for still loving him; he hadn't thought that would be a possibility. He assured us of his love and desire for a continued relationship with us.

When someone you love embraces homosexuality, you immediately begin doing battle with despair. The enemy goes after you. The only force great enough to defeat his efforts is God alone. Standing

in faith, without sight, you watch desperately and pray for victories that never seem to come. Letting God do the fighting for your loved one may take more obedience than you can muster. Temptations will abound to "help" God out. The results will be used to divert you from prayer, and cause you to doubt that the battle is being fought at all.

The first thing I could do for Andrew was to get alone with God. There was a lot of healing to be done in my relationship with God. How else could I glorify Him in this circumstance he had allowed me to be in? By this time, my body, mind and spirit were spent. The Jesus who heals the brokenhearted and sets the captives free was still in control. I was not, and I certainly wasn't in control of my emotions either.

I was face-down before the cross, before the throne, and before every scene from the past that the Spirit brought to mind or I dredged up. It seemed like eternity was passing by. I had to release to God the tensions in every part of me before I was torn apart. Yes, the war with despairing thoughts had to be fought over and over. That's the enemy's strategy. When anyone is down and out, he's there to pile on excessive force.



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It was safe to release my tears, fears, guilt and shame before Him; it had to be done. Words often turned into babble, rants, and raves though, with non-stop carrying on. This was not my style of delivery with Him. I had been more of the Pollyanna type before, and certainly not as long-winded. The questions were really hard for me to air, too. It wasn't that I didn't know it was ok, it just wasn't in my comfort zone with God. I got lots of inspiration from Job, and "though you slay me..." often came popping out. I thought it might be preferable. During this distraught time, I didn't feel God's presence. He was there beside me but I had to get it out and allow myself to be real before Him. He listened silently, and I honestly don't know if I gave Him time to speak.

This was critical for me and for Andrew. I needed to get rid of these things before God, not before man. He was safe, and I was fragile. I had no desire to share

had to lead me. The closer I came to Him, the more He shared with me. I began to feel His love, grace, mercy and forgiveness more than I ever had before. I stayed in the Word and inspirational reading and meditations as much as I could. God led me to so many wonderful sources, good Bible studies, and new Christian friends. It was much easier to be in new surroundings to praise, worship and learn. God provided them. It was easier to stay focus on God, and new approaches and teachers, than revisit the place where our family had always worshiped. God orchestrated that beautifully.

God wanted us to build up Andrew with our love and encouragement on the good things that were going on in his life and ours. We needed our lives to glorify God through our countenance, and the love for the Lord that showed through spending time with Him. Don't think this all happened overnight. We're talking

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them with others. I needed to have my faith and trust renewed with God, I needed to confess to Him for everything I ever did that contributed to what had come about. I realized, whether unintentional or not, I had sinned in ways that rubbed off on all my family. He knew the heart of those things better than I did, but guilt and shame were consuming, and I needed to take them before the cross.

I needed healing just as much as Andrew. The same things that would lead him back to the cross

years, and the positive effects continue on. It all centers on getting your eyes above, not on things below. It's something that we all know, but in good times we forget. When nerves and lives are worn out, watch out! Hibernating is tempting.

I also visited our family doctor, a Christian, and I shared with him what was going on. Then I visited a Christian counselor he recommended for a while. I needed my life as healthy as it could be--soldiers have to have physicals. My husband, daughter,

and I went to a Christian counseling center that ministered through Bible study, lecture, and small group counseling to the transformation that God can bring about in our broken lives.

We were all broken, I always knew I was but sometimes you can just satisfy yourself knowing it. God wants to bring about healing from old wounds that only He can heal, for all our wounds, really. If we don't allow it, He can't help us. It opens us to see others' lives so much more lovingly and gracefully.

As God leads us further down the path, He expects us to glorifying Him by ministering to others. It's too painful at first, but as He heals, get in touch with Living Waters, Desert Stream and like ministries. There are great resources available to study which will not only be encouraging to you, but will help you minister to your loved ones through better understanding them. Parents groups are so helpful, as well as trained professionals who can help in dealing with situations you are having trouble with. You will never be successful in trying to get your loved one to these places when they are not ready to go.

Remember: *God's timing is not the same as your timing!! He doesn't need your help in handling your loved ones. He wants your help in handling you! He does need your cooperation with that!*

Andrew returned to the Lord and entered into a healing process. He recently married Jordyn and now has a new son Will. I am grateful to God of course. He changed my life as I learned how to offer Andrew and my own life to Him. 🙏



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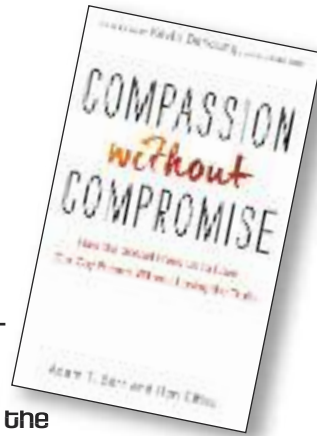
He wants your
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you... He does
need your
cooperation!

Corporate Corner



BY ANNETTE COMISKEY

Ron Cibiau was on staff with us for several years in both Anaheim and Kansas City. Ron left us to become a pastor. He is the



lead pastor at Calvary Church Orland Park (www.calvaryop.org). Ron's first book was released in October, 2014. I recently spoke with Ron about his book, **Compassion without Compromise: How the Gospel Frees Us to Love our Gay Friends without Losing the Truth** (Bethany House Publishers).

Why should I read your book?

Compassion without Compromise is for those of us who know men and women who identify as gay or lesbian and who want to embody both the grace and truth of the gospel. It is thoroughly biblical, pastoral and is simple to read. It's a primer of what you need to know be gospel people to your gay friends.

What's it about?

The goal of **Compassion** is to give real, practical help to Christians who want to navigate the issue of homosexuality well. So it gives theological grounding, pastoral advice and also reason to hope for those of us who have loved ones who are gay.

How will it help me?

Compassion without Compromise will give you the tools you need to be like Jesus to your gay friends and family members.


We get more calls at the DSM/LW office from concerned family members than any other requests for information. The questions range from "What do I say to my son who wants to visit home, bring his male partner and share a bedroom" to "My niece is marrying her same-sex partner, I don't know if I should attend the wedding?" Will your book help with those concerns?

Yes! A significant part of the book is answering questions just like these. We seek to be both pastorally kind and theologically sound.

What's one thing I will take away from reading your book?

The historical Christian worldview around sexuality and marriage is winsome, profound and intelligent, and there is good reason to proclaim it.

Where can I buy the book?

Just about anywhere books are sold and I hear that DSM/LW will be selling it as well! 


Digging for Mercy

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exploits. I had no problem with the feelings he had, but neither would I embrace how he choose to live. That big gap reduced me to prayer and to cry out for the merciful way only God could make to my brother.

My parents died and I proceeded in this prayerful tension

for the rest of my brother's life. He struggled with poor health and he called upon me to help him in his last days. It was good to serve him. Physical distress rendered him child-like and we shared some joy. I found a cross in his closet and I knew then that he called out to God in ways unknown to me. My hope for my brother lies in God's mercy.

I hope also that my life will help make a merciful way for many with same-sex attraction to find a welcoming home in the church. My brother did not find that welcome when he needed it. I wish he had discovered Jesus as the primary object of his devotion. Only He offers us true identity. 

2014 YEAR-END REPORT

Publisher/Editor
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Art Direction
Immanuel Communications

Desert Stream Ministries publishes the following:
 Newsletter (Spring and Fall)
 Mid-Year Report (Summer)
 Year-End Report (Winter)

Mission Statement

Based on the biblical foundations of compassion, integrity, and dependence on God,
Desert Stream Ministries proclaims to the world the transforming power of Jesus Christ.
We equip the body of Christ to minister healing to the sexually and relationally broken, through healing groups and leadership training for the local church.

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