

## Once Gay, Always Gay? Not Necessarily

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A long journey home: William Dobson, 54, decided to walk away from the gay lifestyle.

People who struggle with gay feelings are usually told they should simply accept their homosexual identity. Many psychologists believe it's wrong to suggest that homosexuality could be or should be treated as a problem. *You're gay. Big deal. We accept you. Have whatever kind of sex you want.*

But what about people who struggle with same-sex attraction and yet genuinely want freedom from homosexuality because they believe it violates Christian morals? These people face a triple dilemma because (1) some Christians are prejudiced against gay people and don't really care; (2) many churches just aren't equipped to offer counseling; and (3) our mainstream culture believes that once you're gay, you're always gay.

But this didn't stop my friend William Dobson from abandoning the gay lifestyle. His story needs to be considered.

William was a sensitive boy. So when kids his age started calling him "sissy" and "queer," he was emotionally scarred. He gave his heart to Jesus at age 12 and found safety and security in a world of bullying. When he was filled with the Holy Spirit as a college student, he admitted to a pastor that he struggled with gay feelings. He found a measure of freedom after being honest about his secret. He began pursuing God.

William became a successful architect in Tampa, Florida, and served as a volunteer worship leader for many years. But he suffered shipwreck in his faith at age 44 after a pastor he trusted experienced a moral failure. William quit church, and his anger grew to the point that he stopped resisting his unwanted sexual impulses. He threw himself headlong into a gay lifestyle.

He went to gay bars, dated men and became fully immersed in Tampa's gay community. He also got hooked on Internet pornography and lived with his gay boyfriend for three years. But he never found true satisfaction, and he always knew deep down in his heart that he was running from God.

"I had no peace at all during my time in the gay lifestyle," William told me last week. "My coping mechanism was alcohol. But even when I would get plastered, I could still hear the still small voice of Jesus calling me back to Himself."

William sought help and ended up at a Methodist church in Tampa. But the pastor who offered counseling told him it was OK to be gay and encouraged him to accept the lifestyle instead of offering an exit strategy.

Says William: "I never bought into that [pro-gay] teaching. First Corinthians 6:9-11 is clear that those who practice adultery, idolatry, drunkenness, stealing or homosexuality will not inherit the kingdom of God. That same scripture also declares that to believe such practice is acceptable is deception."

William struggled for a while. But one day while driving to work he began to sob while listening to the song "You Are Holy" on a Hillsong recording:

*Here in Your courts /*

*where I'm close to Your throne /*

*I've found where I belong.*

"In that moment, I made the decision to break up with my partner," William says. "I decided I would not yield any longer to my sexual passions, and I acknowledged that God had a calling on my life. I had walked away from that calling. I had been living for myself, and that life had left me empty. I begged God to lead me away from my own derailed life of bad choices and back to Him."

William's deliverance didn't come overnight. His journey was slow, but God proved to be patient. A breakthrough came three years later when William worked up the courage to leave his network of friends in Tampa and isolate himself for a while. During that time, he asked God to help him break free from his porn addiction.

"I was addicted to internet porn for years, even for some time prior to me diving into the gay lifestyle," admits William. "Today I am completely free of that addiction. I no longer search the internet for the videos and photos of naked men that at one time gripped and fed me. I have no desire for that any longer. I have been free of that addition for more than a year now."

William did not find his freedom alone. He called a local Tampa ministry, New Hearts Outreach, and spilled his guts to a man who understood his struggle. He joined a support group, enrolled in counseling, and started spending time with God every day. Today he no longer identifies himself as gay. He traded his old life for a new one—in Christ.

"My relationship with Jesus is more intimate than it has ever been," says William. "I've connected with a ministry that has offered real tools to overcome my misplaced sexual identity. I have found leaders who

love Christ. And I have found within myself the very Spirit of the Living God, who calls, leads, teaches, confirms, loves, affirms and accepts me."

William does not fit the stereotype of a narrow-minded Christian who wants to force his beliefs on gay people. He's not "homophobic," and he doesn't stand in the streets holding signs condemning gay marriage. He still loves his gay friends and even stays in contact with his former live-in boyfriend.

But this story raises an interesting question: If our culture demands that we accept homosexuality in the name of freedom, should we not also respect the rights of people like William Dobson if they want to leave the gay lifestyle? The answer to that question might prove whether or not all the talk about "tolerance" in our culture today is actually a smokescreen for intolerance.

*J. Lee Grady is the former editor of Charisma. You can follow him on Twitter at leeegrady. He is the author of 10 Lies Men Believe and other books. If you'd like to talk to someone about a struggle with sexual identity, you can go to [torestoredhopenetwork.com](http://torestoredhopenetwork.com) or [hopeforwholeness.org](http://hopeforwholeness.org). These websites list local ministries that offer counseling and small-group support.*

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