

UPDATE

Freedom from
Homosexuality
Through the
Power of
Jesus Christ

EXODUS INTERNATIONAL NORTH AMERICA

January 1999

Just A “Good Christian Boy” *By Jeff Johnston*

Outwardly I did all the right things, but inside a secret conflict with homosexuality was tearing me apart.



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Every August, from the time I was eight years old through high school, I would pack a suitcase, get on a bus loaded with 20 or 30 other kids, and drive from San Diego through the California high desert to the San Bernardino Mountains.

Our church camp was near a lake surrounded by tall pines and oaks, and we would go up for a week of swimming, hiking, volleyball, crafts, archery and fishing. Each year I invited Jesus into my heart again—just to make sure. I had already accepted Him as my Savior when I was five years old. But you never knew, maybe I hadn't really meant it the first time. So I prayed the prayer of salvation again, just to ease the nagging doubts.

At camp, I heard dramatic stories about recent conversions from sins like drinking, smoking, cussing, shoplifting or listening to bad music. I remember feeling a bit cheated, wishing that I had a testimony of a huge turnaround from sin to Jesus. Growing up in a fundamentalist church hadn't given me too many opportunities to indulge in illicit behaviors.

As I grew up, I worked hard at being good. Life revolved mostly around church and school, and I kept busy at both. My family spent hours each week in church-related activities: worship service, Sunday school, the evening Gospel service, midweek prayer meetings, conferences, and Bible studies. Our church emphasized obedience and the Word, so I worked to master both. I knew little about experiencing God or knowing His grace.

In elementary school I was shy and withdrawn, and I escaped through the world of reading. I devoured books, reading whenever I could. In junior high and high school I began to come out of my shell, holding offices in student government and competing with the speech and debate teams. While I managed to look pretty good on the outside, I began struggling on the inside with some heavy issues. Despite the circle of people around me at church and school, I had always felt lonely and isolated. I was sick a lot as a child, and always small for my age, so I felt inept at sports and separate from a lot of other boys.

In junior high I discovered pornography and masturbation, and became compulsive about both. I felt shame and guilt, afraid that someone would find out what I was doing. I became even more disturbed when my fascination with pornography began to shift from women to men.

I kept up the outer image of the good Christian boy for years, even as the struggle with sexual addiction and homosexual attraction increased. I graduated from high school and went to college, working as a camp counselor at our church camp during the summer and helping to lead our college-age Bible study. In my early 20s, I worked with a high school youth group at a church for a year, and then went to a missionary training school for a year of preparation before going to Melbourne, Australia, for two years with a mission team.

By this time I had begun developing deeper relationships with a few people, and had even shared my struggle with a man and a woman. They really didn't know how to advise me about my same-sex attractions. I figured if I kept praying real