sexuality ... and suicide."

Mike began crying.

After their conversation, I entered the room and looked at Mike. "Don't you think it's time you told me?" Those were difficult words. Part of me still wanted to pretend that nothing was wrong.

Mike looked up from our bed. "I'm gay," he said calmly. Those two words ripped through me like bullets.

A few minutes later, the doorbell rang. Two women—one of them an old friend—needed a place to spend the night. I quickly "put on my happy face," acting as if nothing was wrong as we prepared a room for them. Somehow, through a blur of frozen emotions, we made it through the night.

The next morning after Mike left for work, I suddenly realized that I was scheduled to speak at a meeting several hours away. I felt like an open wound, but resolved to carry through on my commitment.

I don't remember much of the trip. I cried as I drove, wondering what I could possibly say to a room full of women. *Maybe,* I thought, *the emotional agony will overpower me and I'll just die.*

I wondered whether Mike would still be there when I returned home. I grieved over my children as I pondered what all of this would do to them. Then, somehow, I was standing before the group, silently pleading with God to send the Holy Spirit to take over completely.

My notes were a blur as I opened my mouth. "God is faithful, reliable, trustworthy, ever true to His promises. We can depend on Him." As I spoke, a powerful anointing fell upon me. My deep pain temporarily vanished as the Holy Spirit pled with people to be cleansed.

"My people shall not be ashamed," God said to us all through my lips. "Give up your secret sins. I love you." His message was a healing balm.

I knew that God was calling me to extend His love to Mike. "Don't desert him," the Lord whispered in my heart. "My grace is sufficient for you."

The trip back to Wichita was both wonderful and awful: Wonderful because Jesus was my close companion, assuring me that He would take care of Mike. Awful because I knew a long, hard struggle lay ahead of us. *How will we survive?* I wondered.

Back in Wichita, I immediately phoned Mike at work and asked him to go out to dinner. That evening at our favorite restaurant, I asked him the question that had been on my mind all day: "Mike, what direction do you want to go?"

His deep brown eyes were sad. "I want my marriage, my family. I don't want homosexuality, but I can't make it on my own. I need a miracle from God."

I remembered what the Lord had shown me earlier in the day, and told Mike that I would never reject him. "I'm ready to stand with you. I'll support you in every way possible."

We were like children groping in the dark. We had no earthly resources; we only knew to hang on to Jesus. I had never heard of anyone being delivered from homosexuality. It seemed a forbidden topic in our Christian circles.

A few weeks later, Mike resigned at work and took a different job 150 miles away in Oklahoma City. He had been deeply attracted to another man at work, and was eager to move far away from Wichita. We put our house up for sale, and I expected to join him as soon as possible.

Little did we know the plans God had for us. Mike lived in Oklahoma City for the next 1½ years, while the children and I lived in Wichita. We saw each other only on weekends.

In Oklahoma City, Mike found The First Stone, a Christian ministry dedicated to helping homosexuals find freedom. He attended regularly and earnestly sought God's healing. In the coming months, his growth was phenomenal. He had been depressed and hopeless, but became happy and full of hope. He regained a genuine desire to read his Bible and attend church, rather than simply "going through the motions" of being a Christian.

When Mike eventually returned to Wichita, God sent him back a changed man, with a dream in his heart to establish a similar ministry to help others.

But there was a problem. Unfortunately, Mike returned to a weary, resentful wife. The enemy had been hacking away at me, and I was too emotionally exhausted to support Mike's new ministry. Rather than celebrating his return, I felt angry and repulsed by his vision to help other homosexuals.

Desperately I turned to Jesus, my faithful friend, for cleansing, for strength, for a desire to understand and love Mike. The Faithful One proved Himself steadfast once again as He began healing my heart.

It was difficult to face the truth: I was not the loving wife I should be. And I had no love or tolerance for needy homosexuals. Daily, I persevered in turning to Jesus for healing and restoration.

That was over six years ago—and the healing process continues in my life. God has brought me farther than I ever believed possible. Recently, I spoke to Mike's ministry group. As I looked at the faces of those precious men, I saw friends whom I now dearly love. Yes, God is doing a miracle in my wounded heart—a heart once full of stony places with no room for hurting homosexuals.

Respect for my husband has returned. God has also given me both a willingness to help Mike in ministry, and the desire to see *my* life continually healed and changed.

I know with complete confidence that my Heavenly Father will finish the work that He has begun in me. I've seen Him restore my husband and my marriage. There is nothing too hard for Him.

Beth Babb lives with her family in Wichita, Kansas. Her husband, Mike, directs Freedom At Last, a ministry to men and women seeking freedom from homosexuality. The Babbs have three children and attend Faith Community Church in Wichita. © Beth Babb.

Growing through the Pain

By Anita Worthen, as told to Bob Davies

My son, a homosexual? I felt overwhelmed with guilt and shame—and I determined to "fix" him, no matter what it took.

When my 16-year-old son, Tony, began staying out all night, I got really worried. I didn't even know the names of his friends. One day I sneaked into his bedroom to find out what was going on. I found a slip of paper in his wallet, and began scribbling down names and phone numbers. Suddenly, Tony walked in. "Whaddya think you're doing?" he yelled, eyes blazing.

My face flushed with embarrassment, but I kept my voice calm. "Tony, I want to know where you are. When you don't come home, I've got to know who to call."

We argued for several minutes, then he dropped the bombshell. "Well, you know I'm gay, don't you?" My mind froze. Tony began filling the awkward silence with horrifying details. Three months before, he'd been hitchhiking home when a school counselor had picked him up and seduced him. Now he accepted his "new" identity and was getting to know other homosexuals.

"And, Mom," he concluded, "I've found the man of my dreams. Everything's going to be all right now!"

In the days following, I was haunted by every mistake I'd ever made as a mother. I thought back to the beginning, when I'd eloped at age 18 with my boyfriend, Kenny. Actually, we never got around to making our marriage "official"—and soon afterward, I got pregnant.

"How can I know this baby is mine?" Kenny asked me one day. I was devastated! That night, I slit my wrist, though I didn't really want to die. As blood ran down my arm, I pictured myself in a big hospital bed with clean white sheets. Kenny entered and fell down at my side. "Anita," he sobbed, "how could you do this? I believe you now—you *do* love me! This *is* my baby." Instead of my little fantasy, I was admitted to the hospital's psych ward; everyone wandered around in crumpled green gowns. I managed to get out before Kenny came to visit.

I moved home with my parents. Everyone assumed I was now divorced. I hid the fact I was actually an unwed expectant mother. After Tony's birth in the county hospital, I drifted back into the wrong crowd. Soon I was experimenting with drugs like marijuana and LSD. The next few years were terribly lonely.

I maintained my social life by working a deal with my little brother: I gave him drugs; he looked after Tony while I went out and partied. Then my brother became a Christian, and turned into a radical "Jesus freak." My mother was worried sick about him, but his life gave me a secret hope: *If he can change, maybe I can, too.*

One night I went with my brother to a Bible study. It was his birthday, and I attended as a "gift" to him. Surprisingly, I noticed something different in the people there. I didn't know exactly what it was, but I knew that I wanted it.

I went home and started talking to God. "I've been doing it my way, but now I'm willing to try Your way." I told God that I would follow Him for three months. If it didn't work, I would go back to my old ways.

In the following weeks, I sensed a new power in my life to make right choices. I knew right from wrong. I quit drugs and avoided party music on the radio, which reminded me of evenings spent at the cocktail lounges.

Then Tony and I joined Shiloh, a close-knit Christian discipleship ministry—a very supportive environment for a single mother. I prayed every night that God would be a husband to me and a father to my son. I worked with other single mothers in my church. Others held me up as the perfect example of single parenthood.

But after several years of ministry, I began feeling "burned out." My Christian walk turned wishy-washy. I would go to work, come home, sit in front of the TV, and drag myself to church on Sunday mornings.

Then God allowed some difficult circumstances to enter my life, and I felt convicted about my compromised spiritual walk. I started drawing close to the Lord again, praying and reading my Bible. Oh, at first it was dry! But as I started doing these things, I felt a renewed closeness with God, and His power returned to my life. As my spiritual eyes opened again, I saw my relationship with my son was not good. We had grown far apart. Tony had acquired a lot of new friends whom I didn't know. Soon afterward, I was devastated by Tony's confession of homosexual involvement. "I don't understand this," I told him that day, "but I love you and we'll work it out."

That initial response was the only thing I did right for the next two weeks. I had no wisdom at all on how to deal with this situation. I only knew one thing: I would do *anything* to stop that man from putting his arms around my son ever again.

Then I came up with the perfect solution: We'd kidnap Tony! I phoned one of my brothers, who ar-