God has made us as we are, and we must not tell God that He has made a mistake in forming us. Certainly, if we have neglected the body God has given us, we are obligated to restore it, such as losing extra weight, or overcoming substance abuse. Coming to grips with our attractions based on envy will do much to bring victory.

Other Attractions

What about our attractions to those around us, particularly the Christians we fellowship with? How are we to respond? Do we stand or do we flee? We are clearly told to flee youthful lusts (2 Timothy 2:22), but does this apply? Many feel an additional weight of guilt when the person to whom they are attracted is a Christian. They feel that in some way, they have dishonored one of God's saints. They feel dirty and imagine that God despises them for their lust.

Again, let's separate the sexual from the non-sexual. Satan loves to badger the overcomer with the message, "You've just blown it; you haven't changed. You're still gay. God is not working in your life."

Often, we have not had a sexual element to our attraction, but because of Satanic suggestion, a sexual interest develops. Always go to the Lord for the truth. *God, what do I really feel? Is it sexual? Is it just envy and a desire to possess what another has?* Let us not condemn ourselves without a trial. God just might give us an acquittal!

Sexual Temptations

What if we feel a sexual desire, a strong urge for sexual interaction? Again, confess and receive the forgiveness that God freely extends to you. It is very helpful also to confess to another person and become accountable to him or her. We all need supportive prayer partners. The tendency may be to flee, to suddenly cut off all contacts with the individual to whom we are attracted. Is this the right thing to do?

You may encounter different answers, but I will share my views. If we are attracted to a Christian, I do not believe that we can simply shut this person out of our lives. I think we owe it to them and to the Body of Christ to work through this relationship.

If there has been no seduction on the part of the other person and all the sexual temptation is in your own mind, then it is not right to walk away and reject another person for seemingly no reason.

It is also not helpful to tell this person what you are feeling, as they would be at a loss to help you in this area. I think we should only flee when there is a sexual intent on the part of the other person.

Avoiding Escape

I used the term "working it through," and you may wonder just what I mean. This common expression sometimes refers to a grief situation where there has been a loss: a loss of a person, a job, or some form of security. "Working it through" implies avoiding escape and coming to grips with the situation in a realistic manner.

If we don't face our attractions head-on, we will have to deal with them again and again. One thing in our favor is that our attractions seldom are long-term, but fade away and often are replaced by new attractions.

While we should not have to bring every friendship under the microscope, we may have to do a bit of soul-searching. Consuming attractions can be a form of idolatry, worshiping the creature more than our Creator. If we know this to be true, if someone is more important to us than God, then we must confess our idolatry and ask God to clean up this situation.

Breaking Infatuation

Are you right now caught up in a consuming infatuation and don't know what to do? As a temporary measure, if possible, cut down the number of times you are seeing the person. Using the telephone rather than visiting the person helps to break the physical attraction.

Even though you may not want to, you must encourage other relationships, both for yourself and for your friend. In seeking new friendships, we must give up and throw away all measurements from the old lifestyle.

We will find that the physically unattractive can become attractive to us in other, non-sexual, ways. We can have beautiful fellowship with others who do not wear all their gifts on the outside. We must beware of withdrawal and isolation. Opening up our lives to others brings healthy rewards; narrowing down our friendships leads to distorted relationships.

Our Needs

It seems that most people, whether homosexual or not, are on a constant search for approval. We all have deep insecurities and need the input of others in our lives. Our approval, however, must first come from God or we will never be satisfied and will always be on an endless search.

Also, everyone needs warmth and acceptance. God has created the Church, the Body of Christ, to affirm us, to supply our needs in this way. When the deep needs are filled, when we feel secure and have a sense of belonging, we do not want what others have, and the attractions lose their power.

So don't just beat yourself on the head every time you feel attracted to another. Set about to fill the voids and deficits in your life in a healthy, wholesome way. Rebuke the enemy and do not fall for his lies. Separate the truth from the lies and confess to God what is true. Then walk in the forgiveness He intends for you to have.

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When Someone You Love is Gay

by Sy Rogers

The purpose of this article is to help the friends and families of gays deal with their own reactions to homosexuality, and to help them respond in a positive, Christian way.

Case 1

Susan and Carol had been friends for years. Because of their close relationship, it was no secret that Carol and her husband were having marital problems. One day, while having lunch together, Carol admitted she had something to confess—something important. Susan sensed the apprehension in Carol's voice: *A divorce,* Susan thought, *she's getting a divorce!*

Taking a deep breath, Carol began: "It's so scary for me to tell you this, but I have to. I can't keep on pretending. I just don't want it to affect our friendship—you're like a sister to me!"

Susan reached across the table, taking Carol's hand. "What is it, Carol? Is it your marriage? Whatever it is, you can tell me ..."

Tears began to well up in Carol's eyes. "Susan, it's not the marriage. That would make this easier, I think. It's me. I ... I'm gay. I'm a lesbian."

Case 2

As Joan passed her son's room, she noticed the white piece of paper taped to the middle of the door. A note from Mark. She knew something was wrong. She took the note into the kitchen, sat down, and began to read:

> Dear Mom and Dad, Since you both know about me being gay, I have decided it would be best for all of us if I moved out. I know how you feel, and I don't want to make things worse. I'll be staying with some friends for a while. I guess this means putting college on hold, too, but please try not to worry about me. I'll make it. I'm really sorry I've let you down. I'm sorry for the big fight the other night. I didn't want you to find out that way, but I guess it's just as well you know. Most of all, I'm sorry you don't understand about me. I'll be in touch—Love, Mark

Joan laid the note aside. *Is this really happening?* she thought. *It seems so strange, only a few days ago everything was normal. Then I had to be the one to find his "dirty" magazines ... and those letters! I had to be the one to confront him, and push him into telling me the truth. Why did I ever tell his father ...? And now,* she asked herself, *will anything ever be normal for us again?*

Unprepared

An event most people are totally unprepared for is the discovery that someone close to them is gay. Whether the confession of homosexuality comes from a son or daughter, husband, wife, or close friend, the reaction is often the same: "What do I say to them now?" "How can I help?" And, sometimes, "Could I be partly to blame for this situation?"

The impact of learning someone close to you is gay can be as great as if that person had died. Suddenly, your expectations and hopes for his or her future may never be realized.

Often, various emotions common to the grieving process surface. First come shock, denial, and disbelief, sometimes followed by a rush of shame, anger, and tears. Depression, even physical symptoms of distress, may result. Almost always there are tremendous feelings of guilt ("Where did I go wrong?"), especially true with parents and spouses of gays. Anger and resentment may grow into bitterness ("How could you do this to me!") if unforgiveness is harbored. The grieving process will pass in its intensity, especially as you yield your hurt and struggle to God, trusting Him to help.

There is Hope

First, *there is hope for you!* Apart from the needs of your homosexual loved one, God desires to help you deal with this situation, and He offers many provisions.

God does not want to see you overcome with frustration and despair. He has given us His promises. Seek to apply them to your situation. He promises to give us wisdom if we ask. He promises to comfort and strengthen us in time of need. He promises that His grace will keep us from being overwhelmed by our circumstances. His grace also supplies us with the faith we need to trust our loved ones into His capable care. God tells us that as we humble ourselves and seek to obey Him, regardless of what we face, He will supply us with the power to do what is right.

In relationship to others, God can give us the patience to wait on Him to work in our loved one's life. He can supply us with the ability to forgive and demonstrate love toward those who have hurt and shamed us. God can teach us to see circumstances from His perspective, and then we see that all things are possible with God. "All things" includes freedom from homosexuality! Then we see that there *is* hope!

Second, not only is there hope for you, there is also hope for the homosexual. There *is* a way out of homosexuality for those who want it! Although homosexual behavior is consistently condemned throughout