

Ex-Gay – How “Ex” is it?

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Reconciliation Ministries newsletter and is part of our

Vintage newsletter series – a series of newsletter articles that were published in the early days of Reconciliation Ministries which are still relevant for today. It was written by the founder, Jack Hickey, who continues to celebrate over 30 years of walking in sexual and relational wholeness.

...holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and avoid such men as these. For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighted down with sins, led on by various impulses, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

2 Timothy 3:5-7



**Restored Hope
Network**

“And such were some of you...”

“I am an ex-gay.” We have heard this term many times over the past 15 years or so. [Now over 30 years.] Several books giving testimonies of “ex-gays” have been published. Ministries like Reconciliation Ministries and other agencies known as “ex-gay” ministries are forming nation wide. There are also groups like

Evangelicals Concerned who speak of “ex-ex-gays”. They are being covered by the media, secular and religious. Which are we to believe? Both cannot be right. Someone is not telling the truth.

There seems to be much confusion surrounding the term “ex-gay”. What does it mean? Does it mean that one has stopped homosexual behavior but is left to deal with the feelings? Does it mean that homosexual lust has passed and heterosexual lust has replaced it? Or does it mean anything at all?

Jesus told us in John 8:34-36, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sins is the slave to sin. And the slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.”* He did not say He would make us partly free. He did not say He would only free us from sinful behavior. But as the Amplified Bible puts it, *“So if the Son liberates you – makes you free men – then you are really and unquestionably free.”* Now don’t misuse this Scripture. He is not talking about making us free from the Law here, or free to do as we wish. We are free from the slavery of sin.

Second Corinthians 5:17 goes even deeper into this truth. *“Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”* The literal meaning of “new creature” is “never been used”. Think of it, we are made as if we had never been used by sin. How that re-creative miracle happens, I don’t know. God is God and is able to do anything. I just know it’s true. The Bible teaches it, and I have seen the reality of it in my life and the lives of many others.



I know some of you may say, “But some of the old feelings are still there. What about those?” Where the new creaturehood happens at the time of conversion, the changing of thought patterns and habits, which aren’t sinful behavior, may take time. We become new creatures but we are also becoming new creatures. (See 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 John 3:2; Galatians 6:15.) Romans 12:2 tells us *“Do not be conformed to this world – this age, fashioned after and adapted to its external superficial customs. But be transformed (changed) by the (entire) renewal of your mind – by its new ideals and its new attitudes – so that you may prove (for yourselves) what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”* (Amplified Bible)

If the “ex-gay” movement has received criticism for anything, it’s because those who call themselves “ex-gay” still deal with temptations. I was once told by a gay minister that I was just denying my true self. In a way, that is true. My old nature is capable of all kinds of sin, so I deny it (Matthew 16:24). Temptation with our past is not something for just the “ex-gay”. We all go through temptations. Jesus never promised to take temptations away; He said He would deliver us out of it. We need to understand temptation, *not* give into it.

Is this true for just the “ex-gay”? No, not at all. God does not expect any more of less from the “ex-gay” than He does from anyone else. You will not see a separate set of rules in the Bible for homosexual. God’s standard for holiness and waking upright before Him is for all people. His standard for sexuality is the same for both the homosexual and heterosexual. Sexual activity outside of marriage between one man and one woman is sin.

One of the big questions that arise is, “Why do some ‘ex-gays’ fall back into sin? Is this because they really do not change and can only fake it for so long?” Many people who come to Christ from many walks of life fall away. I hate to admit this, but it is true. This is not a phenomenon that happens only to “ex-gay” Christians. Jesus spoke of these in the parable of the sower. *“And those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the Word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away”* (Luke 8:13).



Salvation is a free gift, but following Christ will cost everything. If we are unwilling to give all, we will in time fall away. Jesus offers true and full victory to all who follow Him, but we must follow all the way to Calvary. It was not uncommon for Jesus to speak of the cost of following him, only to have disciples depart. This is still true today. In counseling, I always tell the person that there is a cost to victory. I want them to understand that it will be work, but that victory is complete.

Becoming religious is not the answer. God does not want religious talk and philosophies. He is not interested in how good you have been to others, if you are disobedient to Him. You cannot serve God *your* way, it must be *His* way. He did not call you to be religious but obedient. *“Has the Lord as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams”* (1 Samuel 15:22). Don’t be deceived by those who tell you that the way to God is broad and for all. Jesus said the way was narrow and few will find it (Matthew 7:14).

Let us not get falling away confused with struggling with sin. There are those who, due to lack of support and teaching or other reasons, may fall in their walk. These do not lose their love for God or their desire for freedom. They need help and loving support. We must remember Galatians 6:1, and restore those who fall. There are also those who feel it is alright to be gay and a Christian too. I am not the one to pass judgment, but I am able and commanded to say what the Word of God says (1 Timothy 3:16-4:2).

God’s truth never changes just because some so called “ex-ex-gay” says that it didn’t work for him or her. The Bible has a better title for “ex-ex-gay” – backslider (Jeremiah 3:12-25). I pray that they will once again turn to Jesus and allow Him to overcome those passions that rule their lives.

Ultimately, is there really an “ex-gay”? Not really. No more than there is an “ex-adulterer” or an “ex-liar” and so on. There are only new creatures. Those homosexuals who come to Jesus become Christians, equal to *all* other Christians. The term “ex-gay” is only a name to clarify the type of sin a person has come out of; it is not an identity. We are no longer slaves to sin (Romans 6). Yes, at times we battle with temptations and with our flesh. Yet, we are not given our identity by our temptations. Reading Romans six through eight will show that Paul, too, fought those inner battles but found that his identity was in Christ. We serve a supernatural God who can change the inner man which will, in turn, change the outer man. Victory is in Jesus and nothing less than full victory will He ever offer.



If you or someone you know wants freedom from homosexuality or other sexual sin, help is available. Call Reconciliation Ministries at 586.739.5114 for more information.