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A Referral Ministry of ROCK

THIS MONTH'S MEDITATION SCRIPTURE: Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed (metamorphosed) into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. 2 Cor. 3:17-18

The Absolutists of Change

The following article, which replaces my own piece this month, is shared with the permission of the author, Jeff Buchanan. Jeff is the Executive Vice President of Exodus International, of which Abba's Delight is a member ministry. This article, *The Absolutists of Change*, was published earlier this month, and I am excited to present it to you in its entirety:

Change is an unavoidable and necessary part of life. Sometimes it may involve the smallest adjustment in our day and other times it might involve a radical transformation. Some people like change and others will do everything in their power to avoid it (and often these two types are married to each other). As it relates to sexual orientation, the term "change" has often been a point of confusion. But does it have to be? Is the problem that there are those who insist that change be defined as an absolute and unconditional concept? I believe so. The question we must ask is,

"For change to be authentic, must it be absolute?"

Our current culture has become very ambiguous when it talks about sexual orientation. Is it fixed or fluid? It depends on whom you ask. One cultural icon claims that we are "Born This Way". But another celebrity announces they have left their same-sex partner to enter into a heterosexual marriage. Those who are challenged by this revelation will scurry to clarify that the person was actually bi-sexual all along. Yet, the concept of change is never acknowledged. When it comes to sexual orientation, our culture can

perceive “change” as a betrayal or rejection of who they believe we truly are.

Change is the act of making or becoming different. People change in various ways every day. However, we must know those changes may not be absolute or complete. Does this mean they haven't changed? Of course not. We recognize and applaud the incremental stages of transformation in people's lives and understand that some changes may never be fully realized this side of heaven. I may recognize that I need to change when it comes to pride in my life and that will be a process. However, I know I will never fully eradicate pride in this lifetime. Am I still defined as a prideful man or am I a man who wrestles with pride realizing that I must depend on God's grace each day to walk in humility? After years of allowing the Lord to transform my heart and learn newer levels of humility, am I to discount God's work in my life simply because pride rears it's ugly head from time to time? God forbid.

When we claim that God has done a transformational work in our lives regarding homosexuality, this does not necessarily mean the elimination or even the diminishing of same-sex attractions. If sexual orientation is the dominant direction of sexual attractions, can that “dominant” direction change? For some people, yes. For others, this may not be the case; they may still have varying degrees of same-sex attraction. But does this mean they haven't experienced change? If you answer yes, then I wonder if change is possible in any area of life.

When we truly surrender our lives to Christ, it is impossible for us not to be transformed. But this transformation must be of His design and not based on our desire. God sets the priority in determining where and when He will work in each area of our lives and we must allow Him to work according to His purpose. Transformation encompasses the whole person and not just a component and it will ultimately affect our:

Identity – *Christ renews our minds to embrace His identity and leave behind our gay identity. I am not a gay Christian, a gay celibate Christian, an ex-gay, or a former homosexual. I am a Christian. Solely identified with Christ and nothing else. God has changed my perspective and I now know who I am. I am my Father's son.*

Maturity – God has changed the areas of emotional wounding and false perceptions of others and myself. The toxic lens which I viewed life and relationships has been radically altered and I now have the capacity to see these things in the light of Christ. I am no longer consistently ruled by my emotions or imprisoned in relentless navel-gazing. God has changed me and is continuing to change my mind and emotions so that I can be used for His purpose.

Spiritual Walk – My relationship with Christ is no longer conditional on His meeting my needs and wants. I ultimately made a choice to follow Him and be obedient to His word “even if” He never took away my same-sex desires. My relationship with Christ, which was based on countless years of bargaining with Him about my sexuality, has now changed into a relationship in which I can find contentment and rest. His grace now enables me to walk in obedience to His commands.

There is one other type of absolutism that should be mentioned. There are believers who would say there should not be a “struggle” when it comes to our sexuality. To acknowledge this would seemingly dilute the power of Christ in a person’s life. To that I would simply ask, “How does that philosophy apply in other areas of life?” God is just as concerned about gossip and bearing false witness. How many of us still battle with wanting to share a “prayer concern” about a co-worker with some of our colleagues? Every day presents some temptation with which we must contend.

Is change possible? Yes! Is it perfect? Not on this side of heaven. While various behaviors may change on the surface, this is not the core of change. Change happens when Christ transforms our hearts so that we can become more like him. These other traits are simply reflections of what is transpiring within. Has God changed my sexuality? Yes, but it is not perfect or absolute. I don’t believe any man can claim perfection in this area. But God has changed me and shown me that his change involves every aspect of who I am. And in that sense, His change has been absolute.

Upcoming Ministry Meetings

Family & Friends Support Group: Tuesday, February 28, 2012; Tuesday, March 13, 2012; Tuesday, March 27, 2013

Overcomers Support Group: Thursday, March 8, 2012; Thursday, March 22, 2012

Ongoing Prayer Requests

Please pray for our Overcomers Support Group, that each one of them will pursue his relationship with Jesus as fiercely as he knows how, that each will continue to become more perfectly conformed to the image of Jesus as he learns obedience to the King, and that lasting changes from the inside out will bear fruit in his life, leading other men to Him.

Please ask the Lord to bring new participants to the Overcomers Support Group, who will be searching for the Lord to bring them wholeness and purity. (Since our last newsletter, we have added one brother to our numbers. Thank You, Father, for answered prayers.) Please keep praying; it's working!

Please pray for our Family & Friends Support Group members to receive wisdom from Father in learning how to share His love with their loved ones whose lives have been impacted by homosexuality. **Please pray for those who would benefit from attending this support group, but who are letting themselves be kept out by pride, shame, and the feeling that their situation is hopeless. These are obstacles that can be overcome with the help of the Lord and others in the group who are receiving their healing from Him.**

Please pray for our search to add new Board Members to Abba's Delight. If you, or anyone you know, would be willing to serve on our Board, please contact me to inquire about serving. Meetings are scheduled once every quarter.

Please pray for the ongoing work of developing our website. Some of it is complete, but we still have a long way to go. Ask the Lord to give me the time, wisdom and speed to write the pieces that still need to be added.

Responses From You

From a parent in response to last month's piece on discipleship: *Thank you for your insights. As a parent working to restore any broken part of my relationship with my two oldest children who state they are either bi-sexual or homosexual, I really appreciate your honesty and compassion. I am starting a women's Bible study group tonight at our church and am so intimidated by it, but this letter really encouraged me and confirmed the vision. I will pray for your ministry, and again thank you, and pray for my family!*

From a fellow Exodus Ministry leader: *Great article. As a disciple to the disciples, we are definitely called to a higher standard. But at the same time, as we step into that place, it seems as if most of the times our weakness gets highlighted more than our strengths. The best part of this is the fact that in Jesus, our weaknesses is the place where He shines out of us.*

From another Exodus Ministry leader out west: *Great article, Daniel. Blessings to you, my brother! I receive those blessings! Thank you.*

Upcoming Conferences

Marriage & Mentors Conference

Thursday, April 12-April 15, 2012

Cross Power Ministries

Stonegate Fellowship, Midland TX

cpm@stonegatefellowship.com

Love Won Out

Saturday, May 12, 2012

West Shore Church

Mechanicsburg, PA (Harrisburg)

Contact Info: 888-264-0877

Exodus International Freedom Conference

Wednesday, June 27- June 30, 2012

Northwestern College (Minneapolis, MN)

Contact Info: 888-264-0877

conference@exodusinternational.org

Hope Gathering 2012 is a one-day seminar designed to give truthful, grace-filled insight on Gender Identity Disorder. Speakers are: Dr. Marc Dillworth who is a licensed Psychotherapist who specializes in the treatment of GID in children and adolescents; Denise Shick, founder of Help 4 Families, and author of *My Daddy's Secret* and *When Hope Seems Lost*; Walt Heyer, author of *Trading My Sorrows, Perfected With Love*, and his newest release *Paper Genders*. This event will include workshops and testimonies. The conference will be held on July 28, 2012 in Marietta, GA. For more details, go to www.help4families.com.

Full Time Ministry Plans Update

There have been no changes over the last month in monthly pledges/giving commitments. We have received some wonderful one-time gifts, which are hugely appreciated, and see these benevolences as answered prayer as well, because they provide the resources to carry on the expenses of the ministry work. Even so, we are still looking for monthly commitments totaling \$2625.00, which will enable me to leave my day job and concentrate my time meeting with church staff, pastors, other ministry leaders, prayer groups, Bible studies, etc., as well as free up time to develop teachings and writing pieces for publishing. Any monthly support you believe the Lord is leading will go towards this end. Thank you for your prayerful consideration.

If you do not wish to receive the Abba's Delight Ministry Newsletter any longer, please let me know. If you do wish to continue to receive it, please be certain to put our email address in your address book, so that this mailing does not go to your spam, and report to your carrier. Thank you.

Now unto Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen. Jude 24, 25