



“Let him who is without sin cast the First Stone”

And Jesus also said, “Go and sin no more.” John 8

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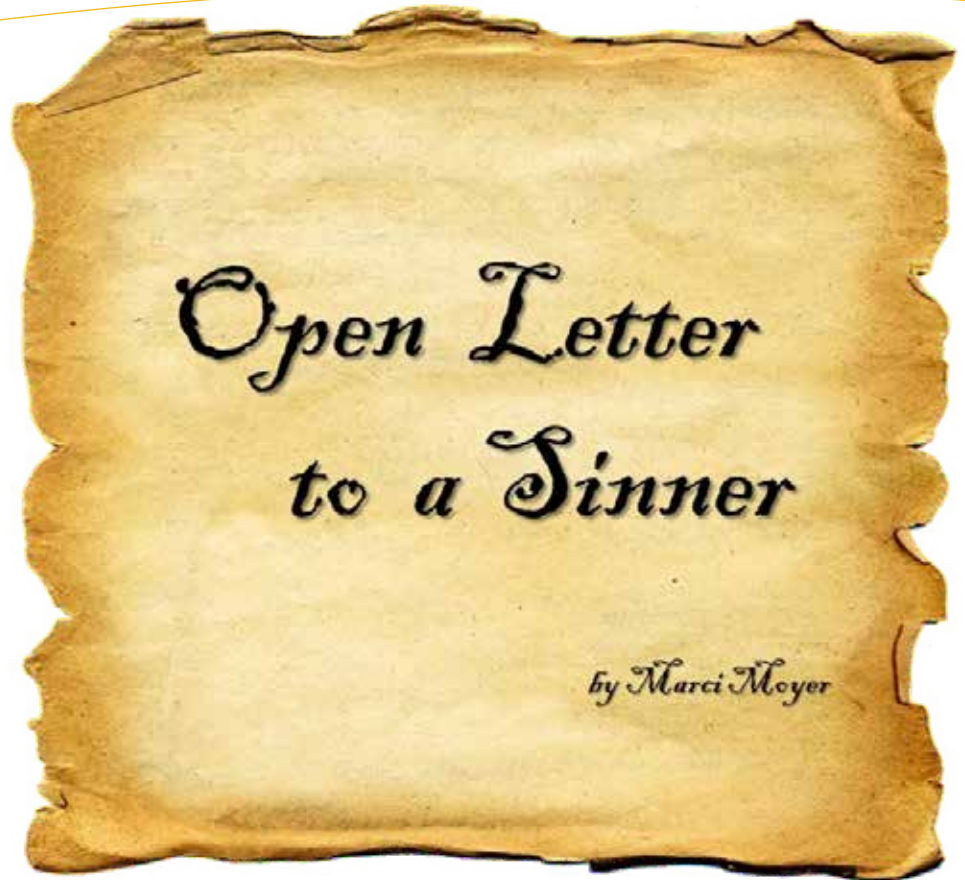
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“Whoa! You have tons of resources on your website!”



You’ve gotten a new best friend and she is beautiful, exciting – all you’ve dreamed of. Her name is Sin, although she goes by another, more beautiful name – for who would want to be best friends with sin? As she pulls you close, you don’t notice her talons digging deep into your heart. It feels like intimacy. It feels, period.

After a long time of denying your heart its deepest desire for intimacy, the feeling is ecstatic. Why did you wait so long? Why didn’t you give in sooner? Fighting her is just so tiring. This feels so good. Until it doesn’t. You wake up one morning and it doesn’t feel as good...as exciting. You grasp at your new friend, but she seems distant – not nearly as attractive as you remember. She has lured you in to her well disguised trap. It isn’t so comfortable.

Where is the love and intimacy she promised –the good feelings? Where is this freedom you were promised? It has become a prison

of hopelessness and despair. You realize too late that you’ve been enticed into the enemy’s camp. You thought you could wander in and out as you willed, taste its pleasure for a moment, then go back home to your First Love, but now you are captive. The sweet taste has turned bitter in your mouth and you can’t get rid of it. Nothing you try can wash it away.

In your heart you know you’ve betrayed your First Love for something infinitely less valuable. The pleasure is gone and you feel dirty, used, trapped and hopeless. Perhaps your True Love would take you back? Maybe if you cleaned up a bit? Deep down you know the filth and stench of Sin clings to you like grave clothes and you can never wash it off. You can’t hide it anymore. It offends all around you, particularly your First Love, for He cannot endure the presence of Sin.

You remember Him. Didn’t He have some way of washing you clean? Do you think

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THIS PUBLICATION

This publication is produced by First Stone Ministries (FSM). Since its founding in 1976, FSM has been an independent nondenominational, Christ-centered, para-church organization. We are a full-time ministry with ordained ministers and discipleship staff and are governed by a Board of Directors to ensure financial and ethical accountability.

We are a Restored Hope Network member ministry.



Our primary purpose is to lead the sexually and relationally broken into a liberating relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Discipleship and restoration in every area of one's life is stressed; however, there is detailed emphasis on overcoming all forms of sexual brokenness including homosexuality, sexual abuse and addiction to pornography.

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He might cleanse you again, even after you've so offended Him by your allegiance to Sin? You know it is His nature to forgive. You have observed it in times past. You are so miserable...maybe you will call Him.

You know He won't let you wear these filthy garments. You are so ashamed. You know He will ask you to strip naked and bare everything before Him so He can wash clean every part of you. You have had Pride as your constant companion. Are you willing to exchange your companion Pride for Humility? Are you ready to remove the filthy garments and exchange them for First Love's robe of righteousness?

You've got to be ruthless with Sin. You can't allow her any place in your life. If you open the door to Sin in one room of your life, she moves into that room, then takes over the house. It begins with accepting her little lies then turns to full blown deception. She refuses to be managed. She is in control. She has a ripple effect on all your relationships.

James 1:13-15 (NIV)

13 "When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; 14 but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. 15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death."

Sin is shiny, gaudy, enticing and sensual, but what she offers isn't real. It is a cheap but costly fake you never stop paying for. The debt cannot be settled by you – ever. You are her slave and she is your master. There is only an illusion of freedom- a well disguised trap. Jesus came to do what you cannot do for yourself. He paid the debt, ransomed you from the slavery of Sin, and has become your new master if you will make the exchange.

Galatians 5:1 NIV "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."

Just as Jesus called Lazarus from the grave in John 11, He has called you from death to life. He calls you to remove the grave clothes with their stench of sin and to put on His robe of righteousness. He has called the other members of His family (the Body of Christ) to assist in taking off the grave clothes.

John 11:43-45 (NIV)

43 "When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" 44 The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

Ephesians 4:22-24 (NIV)

22 "You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."

What will you choose -the deceitfulness of Sin or the Lover of your soul?

Isaiah 53:36 (NIV) "We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Romans 3:23 "...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God..."

Signed,

One Saved by Grace



Freedom Found

Kerri Young

The story goes that Ernest Hemingway won a bet by writing a novel in just six words: *For sale, baby shoes, never worn*. I was pondering that one day when God gave me my story: *Homosexual sinner, healing Savior, freedom found*. It's not the story I would have chosen, but it's the story I find myself in – praise God!

When I share my story, God always takes my heart to a point of beginning in the middle of my life where He intervened – He is so good – through the one opening left in my walled-off heart: my kids. On this particular Wednesday, my 14-year old son phoned me at work to say, “Mom, a girl on the bus asked me if I could go to church with her tonight.” I remember thinking, “Some people need that, you know,” so I answered “yes.” The rest is history. My son was soon saved and has been serving in the church ever since. A year later my daughter, who esteemed the leadership of her older brother, was saved, too. My kids, children of a mom who was descending to “the bottom,” began actively loving me with the love of Jesus. I'd divorced their dad and dismissed my family years before. And I'd pushed away all friends in favor of an exclusive relationship with a lesbian lover who'd now moved on. My kid's mom was a mess, but they loved me well with the love of Christ, and I noticed.

All alone - really alone at this point in my life - I found myself in the balcony of my kid's church one Sunday evening waiting impatiently for the service to be over. I was picking up my son who was now working the lighting and sound equipment, and the service was running long. Suddenly, I became aware of the pastor saying something about how God had taken down the walls at a place called Jericho. “Maybe He could take down the walls in my life,” I thought. “Where did that come from?” I wondered.

After that, I began sneaking into the balcony on Sundays to hear what these pastors were saying. A month later I felt the Holy Spirit draw me to the front of that church to receive Jesus as my Savior. I still believed I'd been born gay, but I now possessed an overwhelming sense of hope. Just two months later, in a divine act of grace, a devoted disciple took me on to mentor. God had told her she was going to mentor me after I'd signed up for a church ministry called “Women Mentoring Women.” She taught me how to pray, how to worship, and how to read God's word. We never talked about my “secret”; we just talked about Jesus. Twice in those first few months together, I heard a testimony

about someone walking out of homosexuality – Dennis Jernigan and then a woman at a retreat. “You can do that?” I mused. A couple of weeks after the retreat, while in prayer, Jesus spoke to me, and I knew in that moment I'd not been born gay. Like the bent over woman in Luke 13:10-17, Jesus touched me, and I stood up straight. Like her, He released me from bondage.

I've walked in freedom for well over a decade now, but since that day on which Jesus healed me – delivered me from the belief I'd been born gay, He has healed me even more, and I expect He'll continue to heal me (2 Cor 1:10). He has revealed and redeemed many experiences in my past that led me to seek love and completion in the arms of another woman such as my relationship with Mom, my relationship with Dad, and gender confusion.

My mom was talented, beautiful, and very smart, but she had been badly abused as a child. Exposed to violence, sexual and emotional abuse, and alcoholism, she protected herself by walling off. As a consequence, I found Mom to be sad and despairing and emotionally unavailable. I was the first child to a mom who didn't know how to hold me close; she'd never experienced that herself. She couldn't have done more to clothe and feed me and help me with schoolwork. She never allowed alcohol in our home, the catalyst for many of her experiences with abuse, but to hug me or hold me or tell me she loved me beyond signing it in a birthday card was just something she couldn't do. As a girl who loved the outdoors and excelled in math and science, I especially needed Mom to help me with the journey into femininity, but she was unable to draw close to me and fulfill that need.

Dad was the all-American guy. He was everyone's friend to the day he died. He knew how to encourage friends and strangers through hard times. Dad inherited these great qualities from two special grandparents, but his immediate family was unaffectionate and rigid. I don't recall my grandparents, Dad's parents, ever hugging me or telling me they loved me. Dad's folks left him feeling alone and like he couldn't do anything



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right, so while he shined in the public eye, at home Dad was very emotionally and verbally abusive as he wrestled with the void left in his heart by his upbringing. No matter how hard I tried, I could not figure out how to please him or why he was so angry at me all the time. I felt rejected, and I learned through Dad's abuse that men were not safe.

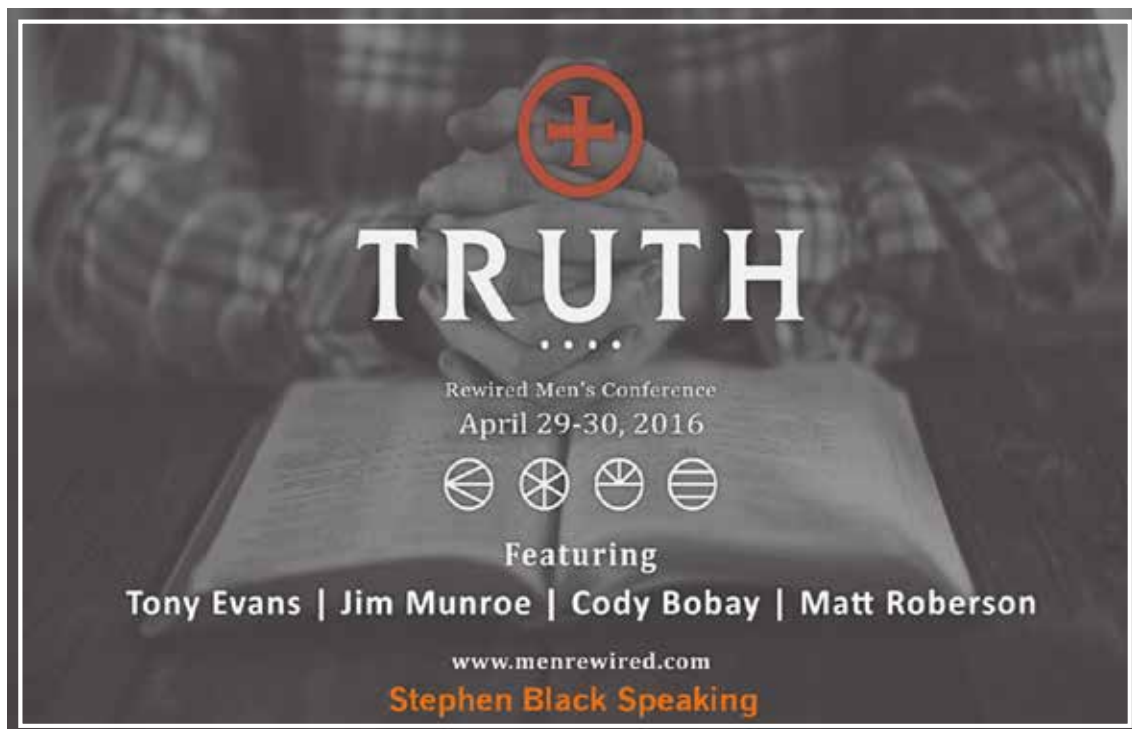
So Mom longed for security and safety and Dad for affection, but neither could provide what the other needed. They were always at odds with each other. Dad's lifelong use of pornography, his painkiller-of-choice for the ache in his soul, also spawned behaviors that were hurtful and rendered him unable to honor the feminine in me. This coupled with Mom's confusing reaction to my confession of an instance of childhood sex play, confusion which I'm sure stemmed from the abuse she'd experienced, are examples of what our enemy used to stir up gender confusion in my developing frame. To sum it up, I arrived at my teen years never being hugged, held, patted on the head, kissed, or affirmed and feeling sure that I was not feminine. Thus, I found myself drawn to members of my same sex to find the femininity I lacked, the nurture I craved, and the safety I was sure couldn't be found in men.

How has Jesus redeemed all this? One story at a time. Like when God went before me the first time I saw my parents after years of absence, and they gently received me back. Or when He orchestrated a conversation in my Dad's last days that revealed to me that Dad had actually wanted me, not hated me all my life, but that Mom had kept us apart - for fear he'd abuse me as her father had abused her. Or when I told Jesus about the childhood sex play, and He gave me the answer my little seven-year-old heart desperately needed to hear. Or when I poured out my heart to Father God, Papa, about the night Dad severely punished me for an innocent mistake, and Papa told me I was His treasure and I pictured Him carrying me around in His pocket, held close for safekeeping. Or when the Holy Spirit,

who makes all these life-giving conversations possible, held my heart in a mother's embrace and absorbed the sadness planted there by Mom.

I tried unsuccessfully for 30 years to make the unwanted same-sex attraction go away. I experienced deep depression trying to stuff down and exert my will over the same-sex desires. I got married and had kids and tried to lead the "normal" heterosexual life, but nothing worked. The schemes, the wounds and the lies which the enemy had used to harm me went back so far, that I felt I'd been born that way - gay, but they didn't go so far back that Jesus couldn't reach them. One by one, at the foot of His cross, no longer in isolation and before the Christ in others, in His word, and in hours of journaling and listening to His voice, these lies have been revealed and absorbed into the One by whose wounds we are healed (Is 53:5). Jesus has the power to rescue me from an enemy who wanted to rob me of my life, an enemy who truly does seek to steal and kill and destroy (Jn 10:10). Jesus is uniquely qualified; no one else can claim to bear my griefs, to carry my sorrows, or to have been crushed for my sins and those committed against me (Is 53:4-5).

Today, I experience in progressively increasing amounts the love and affection of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and their love continues to transform the scared, insecure, and lonely little girl inside of me into a woman with the capacity to love others well. I got to walk out the last days of my parents' lives with love. I get to live whole and healthy relationships with my kids, their forgiving dad, and my grandson. I have wonderful friendships in which others know my story and love me anyway. I get to walk with others as Jesus helps them take hold of what wounded them and exchange it for freedom at His cross, so why would I praise God for finding myself in this story? Because it led me to Jesus. Because it's the story I have to offer others about His goodness. *Homosexual sinner, healing Savior, freedom found.*



Upcoming Events

Men's Rewired
Falls Creek, OK
Apr 29, 30

Summer Group
begins
Jul 7 - Sep 1

Living Waters OKC
Sep 29

Celebrating 40
Years!
Look for event in Oct.

the Two Loves Conf
Escondido, CA
Oct 7-9

2015 Year-In-Review



RHN Annual Board Meeting



Documentary Screening and Seminar - Council Grove, KS



FSM Volunteer Leadership Retreat

Southern Baptist Leaders Conference - Lawton, OK

Philosophy & Religion Classes - Christian Heritage Academy - Del City, OK



Gospel, Sexuality & the Church, Oklahoma Southern Baptist event - Oklahoma City, OK

SALLTED Leadership Conference - Oklahoma City, OK

Men's Rewired - Falls Creek, OK



OU Medical Baptist Collegiate Meeting - Oklahoma City, OK

Event Calendar
firststone.org/events

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2015 Year-In-Review (cont.)



HAZAK Men's Retreat - Chandler, OK
Radio Interview of Stephen Black on Hamilton Strategies



RHN Conference - Lancaster, PA
International Ministerial Fellowship Leadership Conference - Minneapolis, MN
Reclaim America for Christ Conference - Moore, OK
Spoke to Sky Ranch camp staff - Oklahoma



Prayer at RHN following SCOTUS decision on Gay Marriage.



Caddo County Baptist Assn - Anadarko, OK
LW Team training - Oklahoma City, OK



Attended OK District Assemblies of God Women's Retreat - Dry Gulch, OK
Clarity Conference - Oklahoma City, OK



Stephen received Courage Award at PFOX' Safe Exit Conference - Washington DC
Clarity Conference at Cherokee Hills Baptist Church
Shared about FSM at The Bridge - Mustang, OK
Seminar at Wards Chapel Baptist Church - Atoka, OK
First Amendment Seminar with Oklahoma Family Policy Council



Spoke at Valid World View college group at UCO - Edmond, OK
Annual Christmas Party - Oklahoma City, OK





How do I explain to someone that being gay is a choice?

First, it is important that “feelings” or “attractions” in themselves are not necessarily a choice.¹ Temptation is not sin. The causalities of homosexuality and being labeled “gay” are different from the much greater problem of embracing a gay identity. Embracing a gay identity is very different from having homosexual feelings (same-sex attractions) or temptations. This distinction helps the Christian to understand how to help and serve others by distinguishing between temptation and sinful activity. If a person is struggling with attractions or temptation, it is usually not a choice and is not necessarily a sin. However, when a person acts out in any behavior

that God calls sinful, then his behavior is a choice, and it is sin. It is important to serve hurting people with compassionate grace and truth, calling them to surrender to Jesus Christ as Lord. The presentation of the gospel is more important than trying to argue about the construct of “being gay.” When a person has their legitimate needs met through Christ, the word of God, and the community of believers, those temptations become less as they mature and put away worldly and fleshly ways of relating. The goal of instruction should always be to free people to walk in obedience to Christ and His call to holiness. St. Paul told us that the goal of instruction is love from a pure heart. Therefore, our ministry should provide grace (power) in compassion. 1 Cor. 10:13 makes it clear that all are tempted, and when we are tempted, God makes a way to escape from embracing sin. Behavior (sin) is a choice; temptation is common to us all and is not a choice. Therefore, having “gay” feelings is not necessarily a choice, but embracing a gay identity is in fact sin.

¹ – James 1:12-15, Matt. 15:19-20



Support Groups

First Stone’s **Summer Group** promotes Christian Maturity and Sexual Purity. This group begins July 7 and runs through September 1. Content and cost to be announced at a later date.



Summer Group

Our **Parents, Family & Friends** group meets each month on the 1st and 3rd Friday from 7-9:30pm, except for holidays and any conflicting FSM events. If you have someone in your family or friendship circle and need support from other biblically-grounded people, we encourage you to apply for admission to this group.



Parents, Family & Friends

New material will be used beginning in May.

Living Waters will begin on September 29th. Please visit our website for all the details and to apply.

For information and application on any of our groups, please visit <http://www.firststone.org/support-groups>

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*Those who hope in the Lord will renew
their strength. They will soar on wings
like eagles; they will run and not grow
weary, they will walk and not be faint.*

~ ISAIAH 40:31