

Transgender Testimony

From my earliest memory I wanted to be a boy instead of a girl. Somehow I just knew that if I had male genitalia, my life would be complete. I prayed repeatedly for God to make me into a boy and became obsessed with my pursuit. For instance, when playing with one of the neighborhood boys, I would regularly ask him to drop his pants and “show me the goods,” so to speak. He readily complied, and I stared in fascination of the male genitalia, jealously longing for what I didn’t have. Whenever playing “house” with friends, I always chose the male role and would stuff my pants to simulate my dream of having male genitalia. It was all I could think about as a child.

In the fourth grade, I learned about sex reassignment surgeries and vowed I would have the operation as soon as I was old enough and had the money. About the same time, I was exposed to pornography, which developed into sexual addictions that would span the next twenty-two years. During much of my childhood, I would spend hours alone in my room feeding my sexual fantasies, always envisioning myself as the male counterpart rather than the female. I was especially mesmerized by urinals and would frequently take “sneak peek” trips in men’s public restrooms and pretend I was using a urinal. No one else noticed because I looked so much like a boy, which made my day. The very sight of a urinal became arousing and eventually developed into a sexual fetish as an adult.

In junior high, when all the other girls were interested in makeup and boys, I found myself attracted to women—especially older teachers who were strong yet nurturing. I desperately wanted to be held and comforted by a woman, which then developed into sexual fantasies. I was horrified by my attractions, but I dared not tell anyone.

Around seventh grade, I started to consider the logistical difficulties of having sex reassignment surgery. Where would I get the money? How would I tell my family? You can’t just be Linda one day and David the next. I considered running away as soon as I reached adulthood to have the surgery without ever telling my family, but I loved my family, and I knew that would devastate them. Even though I wasn’t a Christian at the time, I started to have a sense that sex reassignment would not be God’s will for me. I made a conscious decision at that point to try and conform to society’s expectation of me to look more like a girl in order to fit in. But inside, I still longed deeply to be a man, and the attractions to women became increasingly difficult to resist.

When my body began menstruation, I could have sworn my life was over. I envied the boys around me whose voices were beginning to change, and I mourned the fact that mine would never change like that. Instead, I had to submit to wearing training bras and being inconvenienced by monthly periods. Being female was a curse, not a blessing.

I got saved during my junior year in high school, but within days, I began doubting my salvation experience because my struggles didn’t go away like I thought they would. Yet, I knew God had done something in my heart, and I wanted to follow Him. I got involved with my church youth group and, for the first time in my life, felt like I had friends who loved me. But the closer I got to Christian females, the more I struggled with my attractions and sexual addictions. I was miserable but couldn’t tell anyone. I tried growing my hair out and even dating guys—thinking that being physical with a boy would “cure” me—but it just made me want to be male all the more. I tried to conform and even wore dresses on special occasions, but inside it always felt like I was wearing a costume, like dressing in drag.

In college, I got involved with a campus ministry and developed a deeper relationship with God, praying and reading my Bible regularly, even sharing Christ with the lost. I eventually became a student leader despite the fact that I was deeply attracted to every woman who mentored me and was enslaved to sexual addictions behind closed doors. I prayed privately for God to please take my transgender desires away, hoping no one would ever know.

My senior year in college, I attended a campus ministry conference elective on overcoming habitual sin. The speaker quoted James 5:16, “Confess your sins one to another and pray for each other so that you may be healed,” stressing how important it is to get your sin in the light in order to be free. I was deeply convicted and knew I had to confess my secret to my campus pastor if I was ever to experience freedom.

It took all the courage in the world to finally tell my campus pastor my lifelong secret. In fact, I seriously considered suicide as a way out, but I knew that would devastate my family. When I finally confided in my campus pastor, I expected him to react with shock, horror, or condemnation because I was a leader in the ministry living a double life. But instead, he responded to me in love, assuring me that he was committed to finding me the help I needed. I couldn’t believe it. I walked away from that conversation with a fresh revelation of God’s grace. I had always felt God hated me and condemned me for my sin. My campus pastor’s reaction was a living illustration of the Father’s heart towards me. For the first time, I discovered that being completely transparent with another person was very healing. That day in 1994 was my first step in what would be an eleven-year journey towards freedom.

My campus pastor met with me a few times and eventually connected me with a professional counselor. The next decade was full of ups and downs as I sought healing. I read every book I could find on homosexuality, listened to tapes, attended conferences, and met with multiple counselors from both ex-gay ministries and general Christian counseling. It was a slow process, as there were not a multitude of resources at that time to help women struggling with transgender issues. In fact, well-meaning Christian counselors told me they had seen homosexuals and lesbians set free but never anyone transgender, so I should do my best to cope this side of heaven and know that I will be totally free when I die. Despite their discouragement, the Lord gave me supernatural assurance that He would completely heal me and that the transgender issues would be a thing of the past. Nevertheless, I thirsted so deeply for maternal nurture, I seemed to get worse before I got better, falling into sexual immorality with another woman from my church. I eventually repented and broke off that relationship, realizing my fantasy of being a man who slept with women would never fill the deep void in my soul. By God’s grace, I resolved to tug at the hem of His garment and not let go until I experienced the freedom Jesus died to give me.

As I continued to pursue healing, the Lord put a spiritual mother in my life who was only a few years older than I but spiritually much more mature. I was deeply attracted to her, yet she wasn’t phased by my struggles and began to invest in me relationally in a wholesome way. I found myself wanting to be just like her (much like a daughter might want to emulate her mother), so she helped me buy more feminine clothes and gave me advice concerning makeup and mannerisms. My outward appearance began to change, but inwardly, I still believed the lie that it was better to be a man, and I was still battling attractions to women.

In the fall of 2005, the Lord eventually led me to meet with an inner healing prayer counselor. Over the course of a week, we spent hours praying through a lifetime of deep emotional wounds, mostly related to my family. I forgave those who hurt me, let go of bitterness, renounced inner vows, and repented for

my wrong responses towards those who had wounded me. I embraced the cross, and we closed every door I had opened to give the enemy legal ground to influence my life.

One of the deepest wounds had to do with my mother wanting a son named David. Though my mom never verbalized her desire for me to be a boy (and I always felt genuinely loved and cherished by my parents), my spirit picked up rejection even from the womb. Despite being born full-term, I weighed only 3lbs., 14oz because part of the placenta had died. My mom's body was trying to abort me, and I was literally being starved in the womb. Due to my low birth weight, I was immediately whisked away to an examining room instead of lovingly cuddled in my mother's arms. I spent my first sixteen days of life isolated in an incubator. When my parents finally brought me home, doctors advised my mom not to breastfeed, so any chance of maternal bonding was lost. The disconnect with my mom was exacerbated by our distinctly different personalities and other family dynamics that persuaded me to reject my own gender. It was the perfect storm.

As my counselor and I prayed about my experience in the womb, Jesus spoke to my heart, "You don't have to try to fit their mold [to be a boy]; you've already been molded perfectly into who and what I want you to be....They may have wanted a boy, but I have veto power....It's not better to be a man than a woman; nor is it better to be a woman than a man. It's best to be exactly who I created you to be."

The Lord spoke similar healing words to my heart that week which dispelled all the lies I used to believe. I cried and cried as the Lord spoke graciously to me, and for the first time in my life, I saw a tender, compassionate side to the Father that I wasn't aware existed. It's as if I could literally feel His hands holding my heart. My lifelong yearning to be held and comforted by a woman was met in the tender arms of my heavenly Father.

After that powerful encounter with God, I had a newfound contentment in being a woman and was set free from my sexual fetish/addictions, which were essentially a counterfeit to the comfort I could only find in my Father's arms. As I continued to walk out my healing, I eventually started experiencing genuine attractions towards men. It was as if I was going through delayed puberty at age thirty-four, which was both awkward and thrilling to finally experience the mystery of sexuality according to God's design. God had transformed me from the inside out and accomplished the impossible. I still feel like I'm living a dream.

Though I wanted to share my testimony immediately after everything happened in 2005, the Lord had me wait. I see His sovereignty in that now, as I needed time for my healing to be tested and to prepare me for the warfare that lay ahead. I stayed silent for eight years until the Lord gave me the green light to go public upon my eighth-year anniversary of freedom, a "new beginning" of sorts. Now, as a forty-year-old woman, I am finally coming out of the closet in a redemptive way, sharing my story with others to bring hope and restoration. The eleven-year journey towards freedom was totally worth it. The length of the journey itself has given me empathy for those who are currently struggling to break free from similar issues and sometimes feel hopeless. Healing from sexual brokenness is rarely instantaneous—it's more like peeling back layers of an onion one at a time—but if we will hold fast to the truth of God's Word and determine never to give up, we will experience the freedom that Jesus died to give us. God promised: such *were* some of you (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).