

# One Man's Testimony

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**Isaiah 6 :5 – 8** “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.” Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.” Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

## My Testimony

Two days after Christmas in 1991, I sat my wife down and told her about my life long struggle. I explained to her that I cross-dressed in secret ever since I was seven years old. I confessed this to her because it was taking control of my life. To quote Bob Bennett “the thing that was keeping me alive for so long was now killing me.”

I somehow hoped that she could rescue me from my struggle. The opposite was true. In fact, I overwhelmed Beverly with this revelation. I expected her to understand it, and I didn't understand it myself and I had been dealing with this all my life.

My childhood really was not much different from others in my generation of the sixties and seventies. I had a distant, and sometimes, violent relationship with my father. I fought with my two brothers almost everyday. I am the oldest of four siblings; two brothers and a sister. My youngest brother, Bret, attempted suicide when I was sixteen, he was eleven. He shot himself in the stomach with my father's 22 rifle that was witnessed by my brother. Needless to say, this had quite an impact on my life. Bret did survive this attempt only to die a few years later in a car accident. He was sixteen years old.

I joined the Navy right out of high school. Not because I was patriotic, rather I wanted to escape from my family. While in boot camp, I couldn't do anything right. A young strong Christian man from Arizona walked the talk. By his witness I began to see he had something that I needed. Early one morning, I stumbled into a prayer meeting in the shower room of the barracks. It was around two a.m. A bunch of guys were praying in their underwear. It was there that I accepted Jesus Christ as my savior. Now there's a visual for you. I was filled with the Holy Spirit and shared Christ with everyone. A few months later my brother, Bret, accepted the Lord while I was home on leave just a few months before his death.

The Lord called me into the ministry when I was twenty. God wanted my obedience, I wanted to be in the spotlight. Needless to say, there was a conflict. I still entertained thoughts of cross-dressing. My silent struggle with this sin continued.

I met my future wife while I was stationed in Kingsville, Texas. She was a student at Texas A&I. We met through a mutual friend while attending a function of the Baptist Student Union. I fell in love with her and married her without sharing my personal struggle. I somehow thought getting married would solve my problem. It did not! The opposite was true. I fought the temptation to dress in my wife's clothes. I managed to keep this secret from Beverly for the first eleven years of our marriage.

After I told her of my struggle, I became suicidal; I came home from work one day ready to end it all. This scared Beverly and she called a therapist who was counseling us at the time. She told Beverly to get me in her office anyway she could. Beverly gave me permission to dress up as a woman and she drove me to the therapist's office. From there I was admitted to the hospital. This would be my first trip of three to a mental hospital.

Upon release from the hospital, this first trip, I called a crisis hot line in hope of finding a support group. They told me about an organization called Tri-Ess, the society for the second self. They told me about their group. It met

Wednesday nights, and was called Cross Dressers Anonymous. This turned out to be a support group that encouraged cross-dressing. Beverly did not like the fact that I was interested in attending this group. She gave me an ultimatum. If I wanted to pursue this life style then I had to leave the house. I chose the lifestyle over my family.

I immersed myself into cross-dressing and left God behind. I was ready to give up on God and my family.

I quickly put together a new wardrobe that most women would be envious of, and I began to venture out to malls, bars, and gay bars dressed as a woman. I became intoxicated with this life. I was thrilled when men would offer me drinks or hold the door open for me. It was exciting to go to the mall as a woman and not having people give me a second look. Every now and then someone would figure it out, and they would just smile at me. I made friends with other cross-dressers and we would go out together in Montrose, the gay section in Houston, for "girl's night out." The deeper I went into this lifestyle, the more chances I would take. I put myself in some very dangerous situations and came very close to getting beat up. I thought this life would make me happy. Instead I became very depressed. Each time I acted out I would take it a step further to get that extra thrill which would always leave me empty. I entertained the thought, that maybe I was really a woman, that God made had mistake. My life rapidly fell apart.

I tried very hard to divorce Beverly. We were in and out of the divorce court seven times, but she didn't stop praying for me. Through the proceedings my lawyer wanted me to see a psychologist. Her motivation for me seeing this man was not to help me, but to be an advocate to testify in my divorce case. I went to his office, and he immediately sent me back to the hospital. He saw how depressed I was. This was how God lead me to the right path of recovery.

While in the hospital, this psychologist wasn't so interested in my cross-dressing. He focused on my depression and I attended several group sessions. I recall one young man who was eighteen at the time. He shared how his father committed suicide when he was seven years old. I was thinking about suicide myself. At this time it was the only way to escape this war I was fighting with myself. This point I knew that there had to be a change in my life. I began to pray that God would deliver me from this life I was leading. Once I got out of the hospital after a two-week stay, I told Beverly that I no longer wanted a divorce and I was going to work to make some changes in my life. I was able to get a part time job at a Christian radio station in Houston. It quickly became my church; the music began speaking to my heart as I listened to the songs, "When God Ran" by Benny Hester. This is a song about the Prodigal son who realized that his father still loved him. God still loved me no matter what I was struggling with.

God lead me back to church, I began to attend The Vineyard in Humble, Texas. They allowed me to play on the worship team, but I never shared with anyone my struggle with cross-dressing. It was a slow process of recovery for me; God had bigger issues to take care of in my life. I needed to learn how to be a father to my children and a husband to my wife. At that point, I left Tri-Ess, and I said goodbye to my friends in the group. When I told one of my closest friends, Chris, that I was leaving the group and throwing away all of my make up wigs and clothes away for good, he told me that I would be back within a month. I explained to him what God was doing in my life and that I needed to be a father to my children that I dearly loved. He began to cry and he told me about a daughter that he hadn't seen since she was a year old. She was five at the time living in California. I hugged him and told him goodbye. I knew that I was not strong enough at that time to be with him and not cross-dress. I still pray for Chris I haven't seen him since that day. I never went back to Tri-Ess. It was time to put "Renee" to death. God began teaching me what it's really like to be a man. I would like to tell you that God healed me right away, but God's time was different from mine. He still had a lot of work for me to accomplish. God showed me how much faith I really have in Him.

Beverly and I reunited and began working on our marriage. We moved to Bastrop, Texas where we spent the next three years. I rarely spoke to Beverly about my struggle, and I never would dare share with anyone at church. I struggled with the temptation to return to the lifestyle, but God would not let me go. Of course His plan was to move my family to New Hampshire, of all places. Beverly and I did not know a soul there, all of our families and friends were in Texas and Colorado. New Hampshire is where God was going to teach me how to be free in Him.

I was working at the airport for one of the major airlines. Like all airports there is a food court that had a restaurant.

There was a young man who worked there who would come to work as a woman. I had plenty of opportunities to speak to him, but I never did. In fact I went out of my way to avoid him. I was afraid that my secret with Satan would be revealed to the world. I was ashamed of my past, and I refused to share the gospel with this young man. I was one of “those who walked on the other side of the road to avoid the wounded man.” I was playing church at the time, not walking the talk. This went on for about two months. One day when I came to work, I discovered that this young man had committed suicide. My heart sank. I never said a word to this young man who struggled as I had. God had gotten my attention.

I was scheduled to go on a short-term mission trip just a few weeks later and my co-workers had helped me raise the funds to go on this trip. One of the first missionaries I met in Brazil was Michael. He and I instantly became friends. He was from Grand Junction, Colorado. I was hurting so bad over the young man who killed himself that I could stand it no longer, and I shared with Michael my struggle. He didn't laugh at me or judge me. He prayed with me and told me that God could use me for His Kingdom. It was in Brazil where I finally shared my testimony with others. God had begun to set me free.

When I returned to New Hampshire, I shared with the leader of the men's group at my church what God was doing in my life. I told him I needed to share it with the other men of the group. God was faithful. He gave me the courage to be open and real with this small group of men. In return, they did not reject me, but instead embraced me with encouragement and support. To this day, they remain faithful to me through friendship and prayers.

The Lord has brought Beverly and me down this long path. I look back and not a day went by that God wasn't there. Everyday I was loved by Him. Today Beverly and I are leading a small group in our church praying and helping those who are sexually broken. God had called me into the ministry when I was twenty. At forty-eight I am really beginning to understand that He wants my total obedience. This is where I have found my freedom.