

199560 ministeringeffectivelytothehomosexual patallen

Try really hard to make it as comfortable as can be when we're talking about homosexuality and sex. My name is Pat Allen. I am the president of Exodus International.

Now, how many of you have heard about Exodus? Okay, how many of you have heard about New Direction? Okay. New Direction is a referral ministry of Exodus and it works directly with people in homosexuality and it is located in Toronto. It's a Canadian-based ministry.

It's been going for 10 years. Now, Exodus is an umbrella organization for ex-gay ministries like New Direction. And its purpose is to equip people to do ministry and work with homosexuals.

And Exodus goes in and teaches leaders and church people how to get alongside and do ministry in this area. Its other purpose is to unify ministries like New Direction so that you will know what's happening throughout the world. And I find Exodus exciting because we have over 200 ministries throughout the world.

Now, some people think homosexuality, we're not doing that much. Well, God has been working in this area for 20 years. And we have Exodus North America, which I have brochures here if you want any, you're welcome to have them.

We have Exodus Europe. We have Exodus Latin America, which just started this past year. And we have Exodus South Pacific Asia.

And what you don't realize is that we have many people coming to us and saying, we want you to come and help us build ministries. We've been invited into Russia and Africa. And that kind of surprises a lot of people because this homosexuality, we think of it as a Western problem more or less.

But it is throughout the whole world. The only difference is you'll find that other countries don't think like we do. You know, Western countries, we tend to have the thinking that homosexuality is okay, that you're born this way.

Whereas other countries don't have that point of view. They see, there's some countries who really believe that it is a destructive lifestyle that hurts the family. We were invited into Singapore because the country, not because it was a Christian country, but because the government saw homosexuality as hurting their country and hurting their family values.

And they were willing to bring in a Christian organization to set up ministry to help deal with this problem. So that's what I find exciting about working with Exodus because sometimes you get boggled down here in North America and Canada and you forget that we're just a small little piece of the pie, that the rest of the world doesn't think like us. You know, and that's great to know.

This is a big subject and Exodus puts on a conference once a year and we have 75 workshops in

this area. So you can see we're just going to kind of touch it a little bit. But what I try to do is break it down into three areas because we have three kinds of groups of people we're really dealing with.

The first is the political issue. You have the political issue. You have also the second being people whose values are not in conflict with their behavior.

They do not believe it's wrong. They're a group of people you have to deal with. And then there's the group of people whose values are in conflict with their behavior and they want out of that lifestyle.

And you're going to deal with all three of them in different ways. Let me talk for one second about the political scene. I don't get too much involved in the political aspect of it because I feel that our call is, well, is to equip you to do things but also to help the homosexual people.

Okay? EFC does an excellent job in the political area and I can't stress our need to support and get behind what they are doing for us as a voice in the government. But I think we have to remember politically that there are a lot of reasons why what is happening is happening. You have a lot of angry people in homosexuality.

And if you look behind the anger, you're going to find a very oppressed group of people. Whether we agree with what they do, they are hurting, they have been oppressed. In fact, you know, they're the only group of people that do not get help outside of their own group.

Okay? Please hear me. I do not agree that this is right. And quite frankly, there are times I get really fed up with the political scene.

But I think we need to understand where they're coming from. And I haven't quite liked the way we as Christians have handled this issue. I remember going to court once and listening to pastors get up and talk about how God hates homosexuality, you know, and how he hates people in homosexuality.

And I wanted to get up there and say, excuse me, that's not the God I know. To the God I know, he loves people, you know? And I think we as Christians need to reevaluate how we have been talking to the gay community. I think we need to repent for our own hatred of them as people and not recognizing that they've been hurt.

Now I'll probably end up talking a little more about that later, especially if you have questions on that. But let me talk to you about the people whose values are in conflict with their behavior. Okay? Who they believe that being homosexuality is not what God wants.

They're probably the people that you're going to have more contact with, because they're going to be in your churches, because their values say that this is wrong. I am a well-brought-up Christian Baptist missionary girl. I think once I was born the second day I was in church.

I came to know the Lord when I was five years old. I am very glad to have missionary parents, because they taught me about the Lordship of Jesus Christ, not just about salvation. If I had been your young person, I would have been the kid that sang solos in your church, taught Sunday school, did youth groups.

I would have been the kid that you would have said, hey, Pat Allen, she's the rock of Gibraltar, nothing will ever happen to her. However, there were things that were happening to me. And even though I was brought up in a church that taught Christianity, even though I was brought up in a family that loved God and loved their children, I still had things happening to me, and I struggled with homosexuality.

Now, if you had come to me and you had said to me, you know, Pat, do you think that you might be gay? I would not have been able to answer that question for you, because I didn't know what homosexual was, I didn't know what a lesbian was, I didn't have terms like that. We were growing up, we never talked about things like that. So I wouldn't have been able to say to you, well, yes, this is my struggle.

What I would have said to you is, I feel different, I don't know what's wrong with me, somehow I'm just not like the other girls. You know, I used to listen to people from the pulpit, you know when you have a social in church and they say, okay, the women are going to bring the food and do all this, or the women, this and that. Every time I heard that, I would think, but that's not me.

I'm not like that. I don't want to do that. I'm the other side.

Give me a fishing pole, or let me get under a car and fix it. I don't want to be cooking and that kind of stuff. I still don't.

But I used to think to myself, well, what's wrong with me if I'm not like what I assumed was supposed to be what the woman was? So those kinds of messages enforced for me that sense of difference. And then coming from being overseas and things like that, when I came back here to North America, there were things that enforced a difference to me. I didn't understand why I didn't like boys.

I didn't understand why I didn't like playing with dolls. So I grew up thinking that there was something wrong with me, and I grew up believing that God had made a mistake. That he should have created me a guy, but he didn't.

And so he must be having a real big joke, laughing at what he's done. And that was a struggle, and I would have said to you, you know, I don't understand why I'm like this, but I'm different. Now, I know that as I was growing up and feeling all these things, I used to think to myself, why can't anyone just plain love Pat Allen? Why do I have to be what people want? And I learned that.

I learned that very quickly, because you know, on Sunday when we go to church and we say, hi,

how are you? And everyone says fine. But when I was a teenager, a kid, I used to think, why do people say they're fine when really they're not? And I came to the realization that it's because we're worried about whether or not someone will think we're a good enough Christian, or that we might be sinning. So I thought, well, if I let people know what's really going on inside of me, they won't think that I love God.

And the fact is, I do love God. I don't know what to do with what's happening inside of me. And I used to hear messages on repentance, you know, if you're truly sorry, you turn around and you don't do this.

And I used to go to God and I'd say I'm sorry, but the next day I'd be thinking and feeling. And so finally I stopped talking to him, because what do you do with it? We all struggle with those kinds of things. We go to God and then we come back and you know that.

Well, I didn't know what to do with that. And I came to a place of thinking, well, I guess I'm really not repentant because I can't get rid of all that I'm feeling and all that I'm thinking. So you see, when I was 16 years old and walked into my first gay bar, it was like I was ready, because I was confused, I was frustrated, and I was looking to be loved for who I was deep down inside and all the secrets I had.

And I'll never forget when I walked in, I looked around and I said to myself, now I understand. I'm a lesbian, that's what I am. No wonder I've been so confused.

No wonder I've had so many problems. I'm a lesbian. Now I hope you heard how I said that, because I did it very specifically.

I took on an identity. And we need to understand that when we are coming alongside of people in homosexuality, we're dealing with people's identity. Our sexuality is very much a part of us, whether we're heterosexual or homosexual, if we are attacked at that level, we feel like our identity has been hit.

And we need to understand that, because as Christians we have this tendency to say God hates homosexuality. Homosexuality is evil. And what they're hearing us say in their heads is God hates me, because that's who I am.

Now, as Christians we know that God hates sin. He hates any kind of sin. He hates it.

But he has always loved the sinner. And somehow we in the church have not communicated that message very good. We don't even do it for ourselves.

That's why we're all so guilty of everything. But God, we have not communicated the fact that God loves the homosexual person. He died for the homosexual person.

He died for all of us. And we need to begin, see when I try and talk to someone, I talk about, you know, that, now my mind's just gone. Sorry.

It's early in the morning. I try and change my language a little bit. You know, I try instead of calling homosexuality sin, I try to say, hey, you know, it's not something that God wants in our lives.

It goes against the things that God has asked us to do, because he cares so much for us. I try to talk, it's still sin. I'm not letting him off the hook, but what I'm trying to do is find ways to say things that people will not close up on me right away, that they will hear what I'm saying.

And if I come along and say, God hates homosexuality, or God, homosexuality is sin, automatically they close down. And all I try to do is keep the door open in the way I say it, without compromising the gospel. So here I was, 16, and I walked into this gay bar, and I took on that identity.

And it was like everything had come home for me, and all of a sudden now I understood. And it was such a relief for that to happen. You know, most people in homosexuality fight it until something like that happens.

And then it's like, oh, finally. It's like letting something down. And that's exactly what I did.

But I learned very quickly, in being in that lifestyle, that it wasn't what I thought it would be. Here I thought people loved me for who I was, but all of a sudden I began to realize that they were just trying to make me into something that they needed to meet their needs. And all of a sudden I realized I was caught in a lifestyle that I hated, except that I didn't know how to get out of it, and I bought into what people say out there, that you're born gay and there's nothing you can do about it.

Now let me just talk to you for one second about that issue. I don't know whether or not you're born gay or not, okay? I don't have the whole answer on that. I wish I did, but it would make my life easier.

What I've read, what I've studied, there is no proof 100% that someone is born gay, okay? But I'm not sure that's the issue for us in the church. See, I think we put, and they did this in the United Church, you know, they put a lot on this whole issue. You see, if you're born gay, then it's okay to be gay.

Well, I read in the Bible we're all born sinners. We all have a sin nature. But God didn't say, okay, you're born that way, there's nothing you can do about it, go ahead and sin.

What God did was he provided a way for us. Now I hear alcoholics are born with the disposition to be alcoholics, right? But we don't say, okay, you're an alcoholic, go ahead, drink, go kill my children. We say, hey, we understand it's an issue, we'll come alongside and help you.

See, I'm not sure that this is the issue for the church. When I read scripture, I see that sin entered into the world and it hurt us spiritually, physically, emotionally, in every sense of the word. So what if they find out someone's born gay? Now I can assure you it's not going to be

100% of the people.

It may be 1-2%, all right? But so what if they find that out? Should that surprise us when we realize that scripture tells us sin has affected our world? You know, does that give us a license to go ahead and do? And as Christians, my understanding and please hear that, I'm talking to Christians, all right, not to the one who doesn't have our value system, but to the one who does. As Christians, it is the word of God that is our standard and that we attempt to live by. And Christ has given us a way to empower us to do that.

So I don't know whether someone's born gay or not, but I'm not sure that's the issue. What I know is that God can make a difference in people's lives. So I was in this lifestyle.

I was hating it. In fact, because I didn't think I could come out of it, I even tried to kill myself. And you can see it didn't work.

But I'll tell you, I was so angry at God. You know, because in my mind, he creates me this way. He tells me it's sin because that wasn't an issue for me, right? And then you won't even let me die.

You won't even give me a way out. And I really struggled with that anger. And over and over, I see people through New Direction, through Exodus, struggling with the issue of God in this.

You know, sometimes as Christians, we come along so glibly, you know, and say things about God and, oh, you shouldn't be angry at God or this or that. Well, let me tell you about life. And what I love about God is he says it's okay to be angry with me.

I'll allow, you know, let's struggle together on these issues. And that's what we need to learn how to do with people in pain. We need to help them learn how to grapple with a God who walks in our chaos.

And that's what he does for the person who's struggling with homosexuality. Now, God, I came to a place when, after I didn't succeed in killing myself, I went to stay with a friend. I had a girlfriend, and I was involved with her for seven years.

And I finally left her and went and stayed with a friend of mine who wasn't a Christian. She wasn't gay. And I was with her.

And she said to me one day, she said, Pat, why don't you just see what God can do for you? I mean, he used to talk to me about how he makes a difference and he does this and that. Why don't you just throw it out and see what he can do? And I thought, I hadn't talked to him for 14 years. And I thought, okay.

And I said to God, this was my prayer. I said, you know, God, I said, I happen to love, and I named off all the things Baptists don't do, dancing, drinking, you know. I said, I love doing those things.

And I said, God, and I love my girlfriend. You know, just again on the side, I am tired of hearing Christians say that the homosexual person doesn't know how to love. You know, they have feelings and they hurt.

And I'm not sure if the heterosexual person knows how to love any better. Especially when I look at the divorces and the people having affairs. I have a feeling that we're all in this together as far as brokenness and learning how to love.

Well I told God I love my girlfriend. And it hurt. And I told him that I didn't love him.

See, I hadn't known him for 14 years. I hadn't been walking with him. And I said, and I don't love you.

So, you know, if you want me, you can have me. But you have to take me knowing this. And you have to make sure that you accept me the way I am.

And that you don't let me become a Christian that's content to come to church on Sunday and just warm up a pew. See, either Christ makes a difference in our life, or who wants to play at religion. And sometimes I think, you know, on issues like homosexuality, and we have lots of issues out there that we're dealing with.

I don't know about you, but I'm so sick of them. I'd like to have a break from them, you know. But we have these issues and I think sometimes we think that God doesn't make a difference in it.

Well, he's God. And if our lives can touch these issues, then why are we playing at Christianity? And that's what I told God. Now, God was good to me.

He gave me a picture. He gave me a picture of being at the bottom of a pit. And I was in chains and I was all gucked up and covered up.

And he showed me, first of all, what he did not do. See, he didn't stand on top of the pit saying, hey, Pat, get up here and clean up your act, and then I'll help you. Now, God knew I had Christian people in my life who were doing just that.

They were saying, hey, Pat, you get rid of your girlfriend, and you do this, and I'll help you. And God knew there was nothing in me that wanted to. He also showed me he wasn't just putting his hand down in the pit and saying, hey, I'll grab a hold and pull you up.

Because, you see, God knew I couldn't put my hand out there. I didn't want to. After God showed me what he didn't do, he showed me what he did do, which was come down into that pit, run over to me and throw his arms around me and say, hey, all I've ever wanted was you.

I love you just the way you are. Now, I know that God gave me that picture for two good reasons. One for me.

You see, there isn't a doubt in my mind that it doesn't matter what I'm in, God loves me. But the other reason is that's the message of grace that we in the church need to get a handle of, because we're missing it. I think we're missing it in our own lives, but we're missing that message with the homosexual people.

See, for some reason, we want them to stay out or to change or to get fixed before we want them in the midst of us. Now, that picture that God gave me, he gave it to me, it's been 15 years. I've been out of the gay lifestyle for 15 years, and it's not been an easy walk at all.

You know, people say to me, okay, Pat, so do you struggle with homosexuality anymore? Do you still struggle with it? No, I don't. It's not an issue for me, not at all. For some reason, God has given me freedom in that area.

But I'm not sure that's what we should be pushing for where this issue is concerned. I think it puts a lot of pressure on people. And I don't know if God heals everybody in the same way that he heals me.

You know, people want, again, we want nice little clean answers and boxes. And what I've learned is that God doesn't always heal all cancer people. Sometimes he heals some, sometimes he doesn't.

I don't know why. I have really good friends that have come out of the homosexual lifestyle that love God and have chosen to be celibate, but they struggle with this issue and the feelings in their lives every day of their life. I don't know why they do and I don't, except for the grace of God.

What I know is this, that anyone in our society today that is choosing to walk out of homosexuality is nuts. Okay? It's like salmon swimming upstream. They don't have to.

They don't have to. They don't have to. We live in a society that says it's okay.

We live in a society that has communities that you don't even have to walk out of the gay lifestyle if you don't want to. You can go to doctors that are gay. All right? So when someone says, I do not agree with this lifestyle and I'm choosing to walk out of it, man, we need to get alongside of them.

We need to recognize that they are very courageous people in this world because the gay community rejects them. They hate them. That's why ex-gay ministry is not popular.

They don't want to know that people can come out of this lifestyle because of the fact that then that means that they may be able to do it. And quite frankly, the church doesn't like people like this because they don't really know what to do with them in the midst. And I think part of that's because we don't know what to do with our own sexuality and we don't have our own answers.

And what I love about ex-gay ministry is it pushes buttons. It calls us back to where God has

called us to be holy and pure people. It calls us to look at ourselves and to say, hey, I fall real short, so I need to come along.

I am here today because of people, individual women that have come alongside of me, have walked with me. I'm here today because of a family who loved me and supported me. I went for counseling for seven years.

I've had to work through a lot of issues. Now, one of the questions you may ask is, okay, why do they struggle with homosexuality? Well, again, I can't give you a one, two, three answer. I wish I could.

But there are some factors that I've seen and I think play a really big part in people's lives. One of them is Elizabeth Moberly has written a book. She's a psychotherapist.

She's written a book, Homosexuality, A New Christian Ethic. And she talks about same-sex parent detachment. And what she says is that us kids were born, all of us, when we're children, we're born with legitimate needs in our lives.

We need love by our same-sex parent. We need to identify with our same-sex parent. We need to depend on them.

We have these legitimate God-given needs. But something happens in the relationship that the child begins to feel they are not loved by that parent. And so every time they move towards that parent, they feel like they get smacked.

And then they start to build a wall to protect themselves. And there becomes an ambivalence. I want that love, but I don't want that love.

And so they start to build this wall. And now those needs can't be met. And when they get a little older, they start looking for it in the wrong places.

Half, when I went and my parents had to go for training, and my mom took me to my grandmother's house. And she had to leave me there for a month. And she thought that it would be easier on me if she didn't say goodbye to me.

So she just snuck out the door. And a month later she came back. And I wouldn't talk.

I wouldn't have anything to do with my mother. Now, I was in counseling, and I remember, because you're probably thinking a year and a half, how do you remember this? Well, I had, through counseling, I had this picture come back. So I went to my mom.

I said, you know, did I see this on TV? Am I making this up? Or is this real? And she said, yes. She said it is. She said, in fact, you wouldn't let me hold you or hug you for three weeks.

So I had already started my detachment from my mother at that age. Now, you need to hear this. If that had been the only thing in my life, I wouldn't have become gay.

Okay? That's not what made it. But it was the little start, the little hurt, and my personality. I don't think my sisters would have reacted the same way.

Now, to give you an example of this detachment in somebody else's life, who didn't come from a parent that loves them, I had a transsexual that came into our office many, many years ago. And he shared with me his story. And he said when he was four years old, his father used to force him to watch his father rape his five-year-old sister.

And then he was forced to have sex with his mother. Now, I think you can understand why this boy would say, my father doesn't love me. I think you can understand why he started to build up walls to protect himself.

And he went even a step further. He disidentified with his father. He said, if this is what a man is, I do not want to be a man.

I want to be a woman. And his extreme was to go to a place of starting to live like a woman and move into having the operation. There's two extremes there.

But what I see over and over, 99% of the people have something like that in their life. Now, and hear this, it's not necessarily the parent's fault. This isn't a blaming theory.

This is just saying, hey, this is how this child has perceived it. Sometimes the perception is accurate, and sometimes it's not. But whatever reason, they have detached from that parent, and they have started to disidentify, and they move towards having those needs met, and those needs get mixed sexually.

Another factor we see over and over is abuse. I was raped when I was 14 years old. I was sexually abused when I was six.

Now, not my family, but it happened to me. And that was another puzzle in the piece for me where homosexuality is concerned. We see over and over, women, 85% of the women in our office have been abused or incest.

About 75% to 80% of the men. And that plays a part. You know, little things.

It's amazing how, I love that song, I love it. Sticks and stones will break my bones, but names will never hurt me. That's not true.

Names hurt. I'd rather have sticks and stones any day. And I have talked with people who when they were in school as a young child, they were teased and called faggot and queer, and they took on that label then.

I remember speaking in a church, and a 10-year-old boy came up to me and he said, what are homosexual people like? And I said, well, they're just people. I said, do you know anybody? And he said, I don't know anybody, but they tell me I'm a faggot. I said to him, well, what do you think? This is 10 years old.

He said, well, I don't know. I said, well, why do you think they call you that? He said, well, my name is, and it was a French name, and it was a girl kind of name in the wrong area. Let's put it that way, okay? And I said, and he said, I think that's why they say it.

And we started talking a little bit about the fact that his name wasn't a girl name, and we talked about whether or not he was feeling that way. I don't know if it made a difference at that point. I hope so.

I hope it did some preventive stuff. But what I'm saying is the seeds get, they start very young. And that's why we need, as a church, we need to be dealing with this issue with our children at a very young age.

Because we need to do some preventive stuff for them so that they don't fall into the trap of believing that maybe this is an issue for them. Because once you start, that's a nagger. That's a hard thing to get rid of at times.

And I talk to teenagers all the time who are dealing with this issue. I just want to, I want to talk to you for a few minutes about the people whose values are not in conflict. Okay? I have an aunt, and she's been with her girlfriend for almost 25 years.

And she doesn't believe that it's wrong, her values. She's a very she's not a Christian. Her values are not like my values.

And I don't think God really cares whether or not she changes at this moment. I went to see her. She lives in California.

And I use, I'm very close to her. And I hadn't seen her since I left my girlfriend and left the lifestyle. It was eight years afterwards.

And I went down to see her. And I was going to spend a week with her. And I was praying and going, oh, you know, God, I don't want to get into this issue.

I just want to have fun. You know, all this kind of stuff. I walk in and she says to me, she says, okay, Pat, get your Bible out, quote scripture, let's get this over with.

Right? I said, are you nuts? I can't afford a hotel. I have to stay here for the week. And I, and I didn't, I didn't do what she expected me to.

That week I ended up going on gay beaches. I ended up going to gay bars. I would not recommend this.

But I was in her world, if I can put it that way. I was surrounded by her gay friends. And quite frankly, I didn't like it.

I didn't enjoy it. I felt oppressed. I felt heavy.

I even couldn't keep food down because I was constantly, it was just, it was just a hard situation to be in. But at the end of that week, my aunt said to me, we had three hours, we were driving together, just her and me. And she said, all right, Pat, you've come into my world.

You've treated my friends with respect. I'm now ready to hear what you have to say. For three hours, we talked and she wanted to know whether I thought she was born this way and whether I thought this or that, right? And I told her, I kept reminding her, she asked me, so please don't kick me out of the car, but I just told her.

And halfway through she said to me, well, I know you're going to laugh at my feelings, but let me tell you what I feel. And she started telling me about New Age and about the God within her and all this kind of stuff. And I said, when she was finished, I said, you know Barb, I'm sorry you thought that I would laugh at your feelings.

See, I might not agree with you, but how you feel is very important to me. So I didn't even bother to argue with her. You know, I wanted to go and touch her heart because what I knew is that God would give more opportunities.

He did. I went to visit her a few years later and we went out for breakfast and she said to me, she said, Pat, I know that you're so embarrassed that I am not heterosexual, that I'm a lesbian. And she said, if I could change, I would, because I want you to be proud of me.

And I just want you to know that. And I said to her, you know Barb, I don't care whether or not you do change. See, what I care about is that you know my Jesus.

Because it is Jesus that can heal the brokenness and the hurt and the anger that's inside of you. Whether you change or not is not my issue. See, and it's not that I'm not, it's not up to us to change people.

And we can't go into a world out there who has a value system that is not like us and demand that they be like us. God didn't do that. See what I learned from my aunt is one we have to learn to be uncomfortable.

To be comfortable being uncomfortable. Because it is a lot easier to pull out the four spiritual laws and tell people what they're supposed to be doing than to have to grapple with people because they don't live a lifestyle you like or you feel comfortable with. And I learned we have to learn how to be uncomfortable in this world.

I also learned we have to earn the right to be heard. We can't walk in, would you like me to come and tell you what you're doing wrong in your life? You tell me where to go. We can't walk into people's lives and tell them what to do when we haven't invested ourselves in their lives.

See, she was willing to listen to me because I've been investing myself, because I was willing to walk alongside in some awful places. And that's what we need to learn to do. You want to make a difference to them.

And let me tell you, those homosexual people are touched, touched when they realize that the church doesn't hate them. You know, they are so ready for God because they're so broken and so angry. I love angry, broken people.

Maybe because I'm one. But they are so touched when we walk into their lives and are willing to accept them the way they are. Not approve, difference.

And our world has a confusing thing about this. See, approving is saying, it's making an evaluation. It's saying, you know, it's okay.

Acceptance is acknowledging the fact that this is the way it is. There's a difference. You can accept, I can accept that you're living this type of lifestyle.

My approval is what kind of evaluation I put on it, whether I think it's good or whether I think it's bad. And to me it's no different than a parent with children. They may make decisions you don't like.

You still accept them. You just don't approve of what they're doing. And that's what we need.

And it's basically we need to help and teach people to understand that. I've had my aunt, I've had other people who've said to me, oh, you know, you hate us, all that kind of stuff. And I go, oh, get off of it.

You know, here I am, I'm eating with you. Sometimes you have to remind people, you know. But that takes investment.

And when they know that you care enough to invest in their lives, it'll make a difference. I don't know whether or not my aunt will ever change. That's God's business.

I don't know what I know is this, that God is working in her life. And I want to be there and be a person that makes a difference in her life. And I think that's the way we need to start thinking when we're dealing with the homosexual community that's outside of a value system we have.

They're a person that's a sinner, that needs God's grace in their life. And yeah, sometimes I'm going to be angry at them. Sometimes I'm going to struggle with them.

But I need to come alongside and show them God's grace. Now I have talked for the 40 minutes that I said I would. And what I want to do is just open it up for questions to see maybe some of the things that you'd like to have addressed.

I was really nervous about this and I wasn't sure what I should do. I've never struggled with that in my life. But I decided that if Christ would go out among sinners, then maybe that's something that I could do too.

And I learned really quick that all these girls hurt so much inside. What eventually happened over a period of two years is we went away in a broomball tournament. And I didn't want to go

because I was going to have to share some room with some women.

I wasn't too sure I wanted to. But I went anyway. A lot of people prayed for me while I was gone.

And the coach brought out a game called spruples. I don't know if you've ever played that game. And every time it came around to her turn, she had a blank card for some reason.

And she had a lot of questions that were posed in that room and asked me all kinds of interesting things. And at the end of that tournament, she came to me and she said, if God really, because we talked about loving unconditionally and that I could love her, but not what she practiced. She said, if that's the kind of God that you serve, I want to seek him more.

After all was said and done that week, and she came up and she said, could I give you a hug? And I remember thinking, oh my goodness, I just want to crawl under someplace and die here. But I said, in love, in Christian love, yes, I can hug you and I can love you as a friend, somebody who cares. And nobody that year accepted Christ.

But I want to believe that the love that God gave me for those women have affected their lives to this day. I don't know where any of them are, but God taught me something about myself and about other people is that God loves people and we need to reach out and love people. Thank you.

Pat, do you know any churches that are being re-infected in this area and would you share with us how they are and why and what's happening? That's a hard question to answer as far as do I know churches that are effective. I know people in churches and to the most part I would say churches are not being effective in this area. I don't even think my church is effective, right? I think individuals have been helpful in my life.

For the most part, most people who make it are usually ones who have two or three friends that have come along to invest in their life. Now there are churches I know that know of their background and the pastors haven't kicked them out, but support them, care for them. And that's about where you have it.

Just to do a little more on that for a second because I just had an experience with this and it kind of annoyed me. I've been out of this lifestyle for 15 years. I've been in this type of ministry for 10 years.

And I have not struggled in this area for probably about 8 years. And when I mean with like I haven't been active at all in this lifestyle for 15 years. But the feelings took a long time.

You know you act and you act obediently a lot of times before feelings come into place. And I would say it would have been about 8 years ago that I can honestly say the thinking is just not there. And part of the thinking for me is acknowledging the fact that I really enjoy being a woman because that was part of my rejection.

But I've been going through a really hard time in this past year. Struggling with burnout. Struggling with disappointment in ministry and disappointment with Christians.

And you can tell it's a little close to the heart to say this. Anyhow, in my church I've really worked hard at being accountable to my pastor. And he said to me the other day, he looked at me and he said, so Pat, you know, are you tempted to go back into the lifestyle? Now I want to tell you I wanted to spit in his face.

You know because I thought, man alive, I've been in front of people. I've been as honest as I can with people on the issues, you know. And you're going to ask me that stupid question? And I looked at him and I said, you know, I've been dating a guy for 7 months now.

I happen to be very much in love with him and I'd like to climb into bed with him. I said, I have a harder issue on that right now than anything. And you know what he did? He said, oh well that's good to hear.

And he moved on. Now I like my, please hear me, I'm not knocking my pastor down. I'm just, I had opened a door for him to share what was really happening within me.

And let me tell you, heterosexual sex, like you struggle with that, there's no difference in the struggle. And my understanding of the word of God is that outside of marriage, it's wrong. You know, but I'm a single woman and I have a difficult time.

Right? Now here I've opened the door for that and he's so concerned about this. And what irks me was, what's the difference in the kingdom? You know, I am a Christian who is learning how to walk a very difficult life. You know, I'm making choices, some not good, some good.

You know, but we're in a warfare together. And that's what we need to realize, that we're working together to glorify God. And I think that's, you see, these are the issues I think we in the church need to begin to realize.

The homosexual person, my struggle isn't just out there and all by myself and you guys can't help me. Okay? It's not that you, you know, that's how we look at it. When the fact is, yes, you may not understand everything.

So what? I don't understand everything you're going through. I mean, I don't understand everything this other lesbian's going through. But we're in this together and being supportive and helping each other is part of the process.

And if we can get out of the mindset of setting this way over here, we're not going to have a hard time with grace in people's lives. And that, to me, is what it's all about in being effective. Don't tell my pastor I told you this.

I identify with you a little bit, having been brought up in the church and having been a victim of incest and not having ever come out and told that until I was 50 years old because I felt that I

would be, well, it was just something that you never talked about in the church. I don't know whether it was, no, I know it wasn't. It wasn't totally because of my feelings that I thought you couldn't talk about it.

But it was because I felt that I would upset people too much if I ever really admitted that or told them. And I just had to keep that to myself to be accepted, I felt. But that is partly true.

And I'm sure that you found that too. And I remember one time when I went to speak, I had found a real release when I finally could say what had happened to me. And at least some people would accept that, you know, and not back off from me.

And I was asked to speak in one place, and I made a big mistake. Right at the beginning of my talk, like all I ever did when I gave my testimony was say that I had been a sexual abuse victim. I never went into any details or anything.

But the big mistake I made in this one place was when I got up right near the beginning of my talk, and I mentioned that, and I read a little paragraph from the book by Dan Allender, *The Wounded Heart*, and it said that people had a lot of trouble in the church when, you know, when you sort of, you know, said that, which I'm sure the same in your case. As soon as I said that people had a lot of trouble, I just felt the whole audience go like that from me, and I thought, I will never say that again kind of thing. Yeah, and I said, come and talk to, you know, like if anyone, they avoided me like the plague, you know, like nobody sort of wanted to shake hands with me or anything.

I felt like I was, you know, sort of unclean or something. And so I really thank you for having the courage to minister for the Lord like this and open up yourself. Now, I would like, I'm looking at this and I think that there are two problems that all of us have and the whole church has when we're really hurt.

And we're all victims, folks. We're all victims of the enemy. I don't care what's happened to you.

Whatever. And it's too bad we can't all say that and see that. And when we can see it, first of all, and when we can finally say it, there's a lot of freedom in that.

One thing I know about myself, and I'm sure this is the same in your case, and I think that the church has got to realize this, we don't really know God. I think you touched on that. Because we don't know how much he really loves us as a person.

I, because of who had sexually abused me, it made it very difficult for me to know God. And when I finally, I'm still learning, I'm 57. I'm learning to know who God really is.

I'm learning to know how unconditionally he loves me. And that is so freeing. And I think, what I'm saying to you is not for you to minister to people who have some kind of hurting problem in their life.

I think we all have the responsibility to really get to know who God is, and how he loves. And then we can do that too. You see, if we don't know how much he loves us, we can't minister that to anybody else.

Right, Pat? I just feel that. And then I think another thing we in the church have got to do is stop backing up when we think somebody is saying something a little shocking. Instead of that, go towards the problem.

Just like she said, so what if we feel uncomfortable? You know, there are so many people in the church today, they feel uncomfortable about the music, they feel uncomfortable about this and that and everything. Let's just go towards the problem instead of away from it. Thank you.

I like what you said about, it's not up to us to change, it's up to us to change them. Up at Mishawa this year, at the first week of family camp, Jim Stanley spoke and one of his big things, and it's the same type of thing, it's not up to us to save people. We just do the ministering and it's up to God to save them.

We don't change them. We can't save them, we can't make them change from homosexual or lesbian. But we minister and then God does the work, it's not us.

So we don't have to feel guilty if we don't change them.