

## Testimony of Walter Wessels

My name is Walter Wessels. I was a normal gay teenager. Always dreaming about the boys on the rugby team or the swimming team. I knew I was different to other guys and as I was taught, being gay was a sin. It never really bothered me much because I thought that no one would ever know. I was part of a Christian group at school but it was never real for me, it was just something that we all did.

I was sixteen when I was invited to a Louis Brits concert in secunda. A Few of us went by bus to see the concert. There God touched my life and I gave my heart to God. I went home and one morning I told my mother that I was gay but God saved me. She was shocked but very relieved that I wasn't gay anymore. I joined our church's youth group, and became the leader at my Christian group at school. Everyone who knew me, knew that God came first in my life. I was on fire for Jesus.

The next year I was on an outreach to Zambia. It was great. We reached out to so many schools and many children we reached with the love of God. There was another group of Christians with us, they were great. One day we visited a school and the kids didn't want us to leave. They surrounded the bus and we battled to get through them to the bus. One of the other guys was on the bus he reached out to grab my hand and I reached for his. At that moment I realized I was in love with him. I was so disappointed in myself; I couldn't believe I fell again. I repented and stayed away from the guy. I couldn't understand why God would let me fall in love with a man, but it was my cross to bear and I fought it with all my being.

After I graduated God called me to serve full time as a missionary. I joined a group that trained missionaries. It was great. Daily I walked with God and I loved Him with all my heart. I never thought about another man in that way again. I could see myself marrying a woman and being happy for the rest of my life. The next year while I was raising financial support to go to my mission field, the new trainees arrived for the next years training. I had to welcome the new trainees. They were all wonderful and excited to be here in South Africa. There was one Belgium guy who I didn't like very much, but I didn't know why.

Later while I was working at the head office of the mission centre, the same guy had to come and stay in the same house as I did. He fixed all the cars at the office. I didn't mind but the more time I spent with him the less time I spent listening to God. This Guy and I spent more time together and the more time we spent together, the more time I wanted to spend with him. We went everywhere together. I knew I was falling in love with him, but I couldn't stop myself. At the same time I hated myself for not being strong enough to resist this temptation, and I thought God was angry with me. It went on for months and later I couldn't live without this man, but I didn't want to disappoint God and I didn't want to live without God. I looked after a friend of mines house and I planned to take my own life. It was very dramatic, but at that age everything normally is.

I went and bought the pills and went to the house of my friend. She was away and I waited till it was evening. I swallowed the pills and went to lie down on the bed. I asked God to forgive me and was ready to go. Suddenly I got very scared; I picked up the phone and phoned a friend to take me to the hospital. I almost died, but afterwards I wished I had. My mother came to fetch me and I left the missionaries behind and I left God behind. I didn't want anything to do with Him. I couldn't believe He would let me be gay, He knew it was wrong. I was lost, and I didn't know what to do. I felt dead inside and started building walls around my heart.

I went to see psychiatrists and took pills to make me numb, but nothing worked. I missed God and I missed the guy I fell in love with, but I couldn't have them. Now I was gay and I thought God didn't love me or want me anymore.

The next year my mother sent me to Bloemfontein to study. I was ready to take on the world. I met a friend and told her I was gay, she moved in with me and we partied every night. Life was great, but I missed God. I was so lonely and my heart longed for God, but the more I missed Him the harder I would party. One day I couldn't take it anymore, I told God that I need Him. I still loved Him and I asked Him to forgive me, but I told Him I am gay. I didn't know if He could love me, because I was gay. If He still wanted me, He would have to show me.

One evening my friend and I went to a gay bar. It was great to meet people that was gay and that wanted the same things I wanted, and they were not ashamed to be gay. It felt so right. I was scared out of my mind, but at the same time I was so excited. I had sex with a guy and I wanted more. That was the main thing when you went out, to meet a guy and take him home. The problem I had was that I thought that once you had sex, the guy would love you forever. I had to realise quickly that it wasn't the way things worked.

One evening I pleaded with God to give me someone who would love only me, and would never leave me. He had to be blond with blue eyes. I learnt that if you want something from God you had to ask specifically. I pleaded with God to show me in a dream who he is. I was so disappointed when I couldn't remember what I dreamt. It was only after a few years I remembered that dream, and it was after I met the man I would spend the rest of my life with.

I met him later that year. We fell in love, moved in together and planned our future. It wasn't easy, it never is easy to put two individuals together and make it work, but I was on top of the world. My family wasn't too happy when I told them, but I didn't care. Finally I was living the life I wanted. They came around later, and today they love me and my family.

I had a few weaknesses, but the one that almost ruined my life was that I wasn't faithful. I wasn't faithful to the man in my life and I wasn't faithful to God. My relationship with God consisted of on and of prayers and mostly when I needed Him. I know that after a while I had a reputation and the guys knew after a few drinks, I was single again. My life was going nowhere fast and I felt that I as a gay man I had no hope and no future. I couldn't overcome my own weaknesses and I felt desperate.

I took a little vacation and went to visit my sister in the south coast. The weather was lovely but I couldn't rest. God had touched her life and she was so on fire for God. I wished I could have the same relationship with God I once had. I missed walking and talking with God and knowing that he loved me. He was my best friend and now I didn't even know if He still wanted me. My sister pleaded with me to go to church with her, but I didn't want to. I went home still yearning for God. One month later I went to visit her again and I had an urgency in me to go with her to church.

That day God called me. Before I knew it tears were flowing from my eyes and I surrendered my life to God again. The preacher's message were that of the son who took his inheritance and went to spend it and the father waited for him to return to him and finally when the money dried up and the son was dirty and had no food or place to stay, he returned home. His father welcomed him with open arms and threw a banquet in his honour even though he didn't deserve it. I knew God was waiting for me with open arms, welcoming me back. He is so great!!

I still have a long way to go, but all we have to do is just spend that time everyday with the God of our hearts and He will teach us all we need to know. Later that year I married the man God gave me a dream about, but first I had to confess my unfaithfulness to him. I was so scared I would lose him, but when we are obedient to God he does great miracles. My husband forgave me and so did God. Now we stand together with God and nothing can separate us from the love of Christ.

God still does wonderful things in our lives and is still busy changing us into the people he wants us to be. He has just moved us from Bloemfontein to a small town in the Eastern Cape, where I know He has wonderful plans for us. For He knows the plans He has for us, plans to prosper us and not to harm us. Plans to give us a hope and a future. As Isaiah 29:11 says.

God gave me a heart for all gay people. I know as gay people we have soft hearts, but because of many things we harden our hearts. We do this to protect ourselves from the outside world, a world that can be harsh and cruel to us. There is still hope for us in Christ Jesus. He didn't come to earth to die for the good people, He came to pay for the sin of the sinful people. It is so that we could be set free, free to serve God with all our hearts. Know that God loves you, He has great plans for you. He knows you inside out, and He knows your heart.

**I love you and know that whatever we do in the name of Jesus Christ , will succeed!**

**Walter Wessels**