

October 2006



**NEWS**  
**Regeneration**  
www.RegenerationMinistries.org

*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ~ Romans 8:28*

## A Dose of Reality

by Alan Medinger

*We are happy to share this article with our readers again, reprinted from our October 2002 issue.*

### WIVES:

*Can I ever trust him again?  
I feel like such a fool!  
Is there any hope?*

If you find yourself struggling with issues like these because of marital infidelity, we invite you to join other women in a safe setting where you'll be heard, understood, and loved.

We'll be working through a study which addresses topics such as:

- \* Understanding Sexual Addiction
- \* Establishing Healthy Boundaries
- \* Prayer Moves Mountains
- \* What About My Children?
- \* Healing the Wounds

We will begin our fall class on **October 2, 2006** in Towson and will meet on the **1st and 3rd Monday** of each month.

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*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11*

Since the earliest days of Exodus, we have seen that overcoming homosexuality requires getting at the roots of the problem. One of the first books available to help Christians in the overcoming process was Ed Hurst's *Homosexuality: Laying the Axe to the Roots*. It is still a helpful book.

Most of the roots that Ed Hurst describes involve sins—envy, bitterness, self-pity and so forth. Although dealing with these sins was perhaps not quite as quick and easy a process as we would have liked, most of us found that it was a fairly straightforward matter. Once we recognized our sin and repented of it, the cleansing blood of Jesus and our relationship with Him would start to change us.

In contrast, roots that don't involve a clear and obvious sin are much more difficult to address. Paul tells us that sin only "dwells in" us, but some of these other root problems seem to be a significant *part* of us. One that is certainly of this type is low self-esteem, which has long been recognized as a root of homosexuality—especially in men. (In fact, in his book, *Homosexual No More*, Dr. William Consiglio goes so far as to describe low self-esteem as *the* root of male homosexuality.)

Out of the many people I have known who struggle with same-sex attractions, the great majority of men

and many of the women have had very low self-esteem, and it seems to cling to them year after year. In addition, many ministries like Regeneration have focused very little on ways to break the grip of this affliction. We tell people that they are loved by God and that Jesus values them so much that He would have gone to the cross for only them even if there were no one else in the world. These words are true, but they don't seem to chip away very deeply at the low view these people have of themselves. We all recognize that to acknowledge a truth is one thing, but to have it penetrate the heart in a life-changing way is quite another.

Messages of God's truth vie with our own deepest perceptions, and often God's truth comes out second. However, our perceptions can change, and when they do, the barrier that they provided against God's truth can be torn down. Sometimes we do this by taking a harder and more realistic look at our perceptions, which is what I want to help you do. To this end, I offer you three Biblically supportable truths with respect to who you really are:

1. You are perfect.
2. You are flawed.
3. You are not a good person.

If this combination doesn't challenge you to read on, I don't know what will. Let's look at each.

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### You Are Perfect

I am perfect. I just recently found this out.

In June I attended the Convocation for the Eastern Province of my denomination. On Thursday evening, June 20, the speaker, our archbishop, made a point using the following illustration. He and a number of others had ridden in a van from Northern Virginia to Emmitsburg, Maryland, the site of the Convocation. The archbishop described the van as having some years on it, its paint was chipped, and it needed a couple of new tires. Then he said, “But the van was perfect.” It was perfect because it did the job that was required of it, getting his group from Northern Virginia to Maryland. Then he explained that the word *perfect* in Jesus’ statement, “You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:48), is a translation of the Greek word *telios*, which means *complete*, or able to do the job for which it was intended. *It does not mean flawless.*

I went home and looked this up in Strong’s lexicon and in several other resources. Nowhere did I find that *telios* in any of its forms means flawless. Strong refers to it as “complete (in various applications of growth, labor, mental and moral character, etc.)” What a huge difference this makes.

### Please Pray With Us . . .

**Thanksgiving** – God is moving in our midst as a ministry, and we are truly thankful for the refining work He is doing. Please join us in thanking God for **Jay Wilson** and his family. Jay is the newest member of our staff, joining us from the Virginia Beach area, where he ministered with Hope Community Church and the Exodus referral ministry Sought Out.

We also thank God this month for **Melissa Coffey** and her tremendous contribution to the ministry during her time with us. She has moved out of the area and is engaged to be married!

**Petitions** – Please pray for our new participants this month. Four new group sessions are beginning: Two Living Waters programs, New Beginnings, and *Avenue: An Untinted Journey* (for wives), which means that many new men and women are just beginning their journey out of sexual sin and brokenness. Also, please pray for a financial outpouring (see *Financial News*, page 4). Thank you!

For more information or in-depth monthly prayer requests,  
E-mail [josh@RegenerationMinistries.org](mailto:josh@RegenerationMinistries.org).

When Jesus told us we had to be perfect, He didn’t mean flawless, but rather that we were to be able to accomplish the purposes for which He created us and to which He called us.

And He does make this possible, not just in theory, but in the practical life of every Christian. I am able to function as a husband, father, grandfather, citizen of the United States, neighbor, friend, disciple of Jesus Christ, member of my parish, writer, and in every other important role to which He has called me. I don’t do any of these things flawlessly, but He hasn’t said He expects me to.

Since my early Christian days I have acknowledged God’s grace in response to my shortcomings, but I always felt that these shortcomings were so great that I must be a real disappointment to God. I wanted to make God happy with who I was, but I felt that I always fell short.

The realization that I am perfect suddenly helped me to understand how I could be a dwelling place for the Holy Spirit, how Jesus could live in me. It is not my flawlessness that makes this possible, but the fundamental transformation that Jesus has wrought in me. “For by a single offering He has *perfected* for all time those who are being sanctified” (Hebrews 10:14). That He sees me as perfect doesn’t mean that He doesn’t see my flaws or that he doesn’t want me to grow and change. I can relate to this as I remember how I was when my children were growing up. At every age, I saw their faults, I knew that they needed to grow physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually, but to me they were perfect—complete. They were perfect as 10 year olds, 12 year olds, 18 year olds, whatever age they were created to be at the time.

### You Are Flawed

You are perfect, but you are not flawless. You are flawed. What is the difference between viewing yourself as perfect and flawed, and the way you viewed yourself before? If you suffer from very low self-esteem, there is a big difference. It is comparable to one person viewing a beautiful car driving down the street and another person viewing the same car from underneath when it is in the repair shop up on a lift. One sees an attractive and valuable means of transportation, and the other sees dirt and grime and the corrosion starting to eat away at the exhaust system. Both see the same car, but from an entirely different perspective.

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Every other Christian in the world is also flawed, and almost certainly you will be flawed until the day you die, but as one who has been made perfect (complete) by Jesus Christ, your salvation is not dependent on you eliminating your flaws, and God is not angry at you because of these flaws.

It might help to take a look at what these flaws are. Flaws are not sins. Rather, they are weaknesses or areas of brokenness that give us a tendency towards sin. Do you get the difference here? You don't have to confess the flaws because they are not sins.

Now, some of them lead very directly into sin. If you have allowed bitterness to build up in your heart, you will react harshly and sinfully to other people. If you don't have a grateful heart, you will often envy other people and be prone to self-pity. In such situations God can use the sins to show us the flaws that he wants us to work on.

Then there are flaws that only indirectly lead to sin. Perhaps you never experienced a man's affirmation, and in response to this you have developed a tendency towards making idols of other men, or you have become a people-pleaser rather than an honest person. Maybe you were sexually abused, and so you seal yourself off from ever loving anyone.

Likewise, homosexuality itself is a flaw that makes us inclined towards certain sins. We don't repent of the homosexuality; we seek to correct the flaw. Many of the Christians who come to Regeneration for help in overcoming homosexuality do so because their same-sex attraction flaw has them bent towards certain sinful behaviors that they want to be able to stop.

Overcoming our flaws and dealing with our sins are inextricably linked. We overcome our flaws through healing and growth, but sins block both processes. As we acknowledge our sins and repent of them, God is able to move in our lives in ways that enable us to overcome our flaws. But remember, until the Lord comes again, none of us will have dealt successfully with all of our flaws. Meanwhile, we can still be perfect.

**You Are Not a Good Person**

Before I became a Christian, and for a short time after-

wards, I put a tremendous amount of energy into trying to be a good person. I was a pillar of the church, my wife and I took in foster children, I was involved in community activities, I did all sorts of things because I thought that these would make me a good person. Having others see me as a good person was extremely important to me, and even more importantly, I wanted to feel like I was a good person.

I think that this desire accounts for why a lot of same-sex attracted men are very active in church, particularly as children. A boy who is not good in athletics, who is not a leader at school, and who doesn't have a personality that will make him popular with peers, craves having something that will make him feel good about himself. Being a "good person" looks like something he can pull off. It is interesting how many parents of same-sex attracted sons have told us how this particular child was the one who gave them the least trouble, who was always such a good boy.

But trying to be good simply never works. One reason it doesn't work is that being good is totally subjective. It requires that we make a judgment that we can't make. How good is good enough? For a person with low self-esteem, good enough means flawless. Consider the very beautiful woman who is unhappy with the shape of her mouth; when she looks in the mirror, all she sees is her mouth. It is the nature of people with low self-esteem to be intolerant of any flaws in themselves. But we are flawed, and so we are never good enough.

The problem is made worse by the fact that our judgement of ourselves as good or bad is very much subject to our current emotional or psychological state. Typically, people with same-sex attractions, like others with addictive personalities, bounce back and forth between the two attitudes of self-loathing and grandiosity.

Finally, you have it on the authority of Jesus Himself that you are not a good person: "No one is good except God alone" (Mark 10:18).

To see ourselves without knowing our perfection is destructive. It cripples us and tears down our sense of worth. To see our perfection without acknowledging our flaws, and without owning up to the fact that we are not good, is to be

*The reality is that you are perfect, you are flawed and you are not a good person. Recognize this and accept yourself. God accepts you and loves you just this way.*

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## Financial News

As we've stepped back to assess giving for the past fiscal year (ending September 30), we found that donations dropped significantly since this time in 2005. At the writing of this newsletter, we need \$45,000 to press ahead into October unencumbered. This is significant, in particular because **we need to hire a ministry staff member in Northern Virginia**, in the absence of Melissa Coffey, who moved out of the area last month (she's getting married!).

Please ask the Lord how He might lead you to give to Regeneration as we move into the fall. If you have not sent a contribution this year, we would love to hear from you!

As you give, please remember that you are not giving to a ministry as much as you are a *part of* this ministry of Christ—redeeming those caught in sexual bondage. We are privileged to partner with you!

## Dose of Reality

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guilty of pride—and it is to live in a world of fantasy. The best antidote to low self-esteem is reality.

To summarize (and here is a key point in all of this), it is unrealistic to ever expect yourself to be either flawless or a good person; and because these are unrealistic expectations, they actually contribute to and perpetuate low self-esteem.

I hope that I have offered you a dose of reality here. This is not the type of hollow self-esteem exercise that modern schools often put low achieving children through: “I am a good person!” “I count for something!”

No, the reality is that you are perfect, you are flawed and you are not a good person. Recognize this and accept yourself.

God accepts you and loves you just this way. ■

## SAVE the DATE

Regeneration of Northern Virginia  
*presents*

### Connally Gilliam

author of the ground-breaking new book

*Revelations of a  
Single Woman: Loving the Life I Didn't Expect*

Saturday,  
November 18, 2006

“I've never found a book on singleness that I wanted to read (or recommend to other women) - until this one!  
A no-nonsense, tell-it-like-it-is approach...”

**Barbara Armacost**

Professor of Law, University of Virginia School of Law

*Exact time and location will be  
printed in the November Newsletter*

A Regeneration Life Event

## Regeneration Is...

### Baltimore Office

**Joshua Glaser**  
Executive Director

**Alan Medinger**  
Executive Director Emeritus

**Laura Suffecool**  
Accounting Manager

**Jay Wilson**  
Ministry Associate

### Northern Virginia Office

**Bob Ragan**  
Northern Virginia  
Director

### Group Meetings

#### Baltimore, MD

- Living Waters
- New Beginnings (Sexual Addiction Group)
- New Directions
- Growth Into Manhood
- Wives' Group

#### Northern, VA

- Living Waters
- Women's Group
- Wives' Group
- Men's Group
- s.a.l.t. (Sexual Addiction Group)