

"When I said, "My foot is slipping," your love,  
O LORD, supported me. When anxiety was great  
within me, your consolation brought joy to my soul."  
~Psalm 94:18-19



## Crucifying Chronic Uniqueness

by Josh Glaser

I have a confession to make. Over the past decade, I've listened to hundreds of homosexually attracted men and women share about their unique struggles, and how different—even ostracized—they feel from others because of this unique problem. Although I initially came to Regeneration to receive help in overcoming heterosexual sexual addiction, I've decided it's time I bring an area of my life that may surprise you out of the closet and into the light: I struggle with chronic uniqueness, too.

In this article, I want to help dispel the myth that men and women who struggle with same-sex attractions

**You are not the only one,  
who feels like the only one.**

**David Crowder, *Come Awake***

(SSA) have a unique problem that divides them from other men and women—in other words, c h r o n i c

uniqueness. I'll discuss specific areas that men and women face in hopes that if you have a case of chronic uniqueness, you'll forsake it and join your Christian brothers and sisters in the broader church.

### CHICKENS AND EGGS

I frequently hear SSA men and women say, "If only I could get rid of my homosexuality, my life would be so much better." They believe if they no longer had homosexual attractions they would feel better about themselves, would feel more comfortable around others, and could enter into quality friendships with others unhindered. This makes sense and to an extent is true. But I believe for the most part, they have it backwards.

Low self-esteem is more likely one of the contributing factors putting a person at risk of homosexuality than a *fruit* resulting from it. For many it likely played a part in the disruption of early peer relationships with others, which is a common risk factor in the development of

homosexuality. For instance, in his book *Homosexual No More*, Dr. Bill Consiglio suggests low self-esteem is a primary part of what brings about homosexuality in men. If this is true, then it would be more helpful to begin by bringing one's low self-esteem into Christ's healing love than it would be to try to deal head on with unwanted homosexuality.

It's true that for many with SSA, having these attractions is disconcerting as they try to relate with others in same-gender friendships: "What will they think? Will I be accepted? Will they always feel funny around me? What if I become attracted to them?" But for those who press through and develop authentic, healthy, and upright man-to-man or woman-to-woman friendships—including with some who know of their SSA—the anxious, disconcerting feelings go away.

What's more, these healthy same-gender friendships play a significant role in meeting needs for healthy same-sex relating, building self-esteem and strengthening an inner sense of masculine or feminine identity. Consequently, for some this also may play a role in diminishing same-sex attractions and temptations. Foundational to this in every case is the discovery that other men and women also wrestle with low self-esteem, feelings of inadequacy, shame, fear of rejection, jealousies, and competition. Meanwhile, the man or woman who waits for the same-sex attractions to go away *before* pressing into same-gender friendships finds him or herself continuing to wait.

### YOUR STRUGGLES ARE COMMON TO ALL

In 1 Corinthians 10:13, Paul makes this assertion: "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man." The Greek word used here for 'temptation' is the same word translated elsewhere as 'test,' and so *The Message* paraphrases this passage as "No test or temptation that comes your way is beyond the course of what others have had to face." Do you believe this? I

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know many men and women who don't. They take their personal perspective and give it more credence in their relationships than trusting in the Word of God. But Paul penned these words for a reason. When we believe our sin struggles are unique to us, we're more prone to shame, isolation, and walking in darkness instead of bringing our temptations, sins, and selves into the light of Christ. Paul knew this and was exposing the lie of uniqueness. And we should find it comforting that he wrote this to the infamous church of Corinth, who struggled with perhaps more sexual sin (including homosexuality) than any other church of its time.

In what ways are your struggles common to other men and women? In what ways are the tests, temptations and trials you face experienced by your brothers and sisters around you? I'm sure there are more, but let me offer three I've observed.

### ATTRACTION TO ATTRACTIVE PEOPLE

So frequently in our ministry people confuse attraction with sin. Noticing an attractive person's body is not a sin. Lust is using another's body for selfish sexual gratification; it takes from the other without regard for his or her welfare. Lust is a sin, looking is not. One can look upon an attractive person with admiration, with love, with compassion. The reason this distinction is so important is because people are more easily enticed to *continue* to sin than they are to *start* sinning. This is true for two reasons. First, feelings that frequently follow sin (shame, anxiety, frustration, sadness, etc.) are painful and a common response to pain is to medicate with something that feels good—like lust. Second, a person who feels badly about him or herself is more likely to behave badly. It's sad but true.

Men, if you notice an attractive, shirtless jogger running by, this is no cause to assume guilt or take on shame. Everyone is attracted to attractive people. Non-SSA men also notice and are sometimes attracted to attractive male bodies. This

isn't a sexual thing. Though other men may not say it plainly, it comes out in comments like, "Wow, that guy is built," "That guy is a tank," "He's got guns," "I used to look like that," or "I've got to get back to the gym!"

Women, if you find yourself taking special note of an attractive woman (whether attractive to you physically or for other reasons), this is no reason to assume you're doing something wrong. Other women notice attractive women also. A woman's confidence, strength, inner beauty, or other features may simply be gifts from God, an expression of His image in her that others notice and admire, too.

Again, if you notice an attractive person and believe noticing is sinful, you will wrongly conclude that what you're doing is yet another piece of evidence that you're not like other men or women. This is a set-up to give in to doing what men or women "like you" do. But in reality, men and women "like you" are all men and women because everyone notices attractive people to varying degrees.

I know that for some, particularly men, looking at an attractive person has become so sexualized that it's nearly impossible to look without it turning lustful. If that's you, then for now, by all means look away (I've had to deal with this as well). Over time, Jesus can de-sexualize these attractions, turning "opportunities" to lust into opportunities with Christ to celebrate the goodness of His creation. In the meantime, accept that others notice and find attractive people attractive too and remember that noticing is not a sin—it is not unique to you because of your SSA.

### CONNECTING WITH OTHERS

It is not your SSA that is the primary obstacle to your ability to connect in healthy relationships with others. It may feel that way, but I'm convinced it's not. Many, many, men and women have difficulty connecting in healthy and meaningful ways with the same gender and the other gender. I know I do. And I know others who are in the same boat. I take a step forward and three back, sometimes enjoy sweet fellowship and then run scared under the guise of busyness. And I believe there are entire churches of men and some women who struggle in this way. Why is this so?

First, they don't know how. It's never been modeled for them. They grew up in families where people didn't talk, didn't share, didn't need friendships, and so as adults, they're still living under these faulty beliefs. Or they grew up in environments where one gender or the other wasn't safe—either overbearing (perhaps even abusive) or too distant

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### WILLA MEDINGER'S HEALTH UPDATE

Willa Medinger suffered a massive stroke on June 15, 2009. Currently, she is residing in a rehabilitation center near her home. She has regained some movement in her left leg and her speech is becoming increasingly more intelligible. Please pray that the Lord will continue to help her regain strength and that she will be able to return home to her family soon. To register to post messages and view updates about Willa's health, please visit [www.carepages.com](http://www.carepages.com).

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emotionally or physically. And so for the child, that became the perceived norm for anyone of that gender.

Melissa Coffey, past chair of the board of directors for Exodus International, relates this, “Many heterosexual women have difficulty trusting men because they’ve been wounded by them. This is an opportunity to encourage one another to honor the men in their lives, not to have a male-bashing session.” I think the same could be said of heterosexual men.

Also, relationships are risky. Opening up to each other is a risk for anyone. It means being vulnerable and that could mean rejection. Physiologically, when men feel distress, endorphins are released in their bodies that make it difficult to sit still. This is why it can be easier for men to “go deep” in conversation while doing something else—hiking, working on a house, playing ball, driving somewhere.

And lastly, as one of the members of the *Ransomed Heart Ministries* team put it, healthy relationships among men (and I’d add women) are “fiercely opposed.” The enemy of our souls does not want men and women to be living life together. He wants them isolated from one another—married men leaving the relational thing to their wives, single men feeling ostracized from churches because they’re not married, professional men (including those in ministry) pouring their lives out in their work, and those struggling with same-sex attractions isolated from the rest of the church.

**SEXUAL STRUGGLES**

So many who come to Regeneration for help dealing with SSA feel so isolated and alone in their struggles, never realizing that the many others with non-SSA struggles feel the same way and are struggling sexually, too. I’ve heard those struggling with SSA say, “It’s not fair, people can struggle with all sorts of sins in the church, but this one is viewed differently.” Guess what? I’ve heard the exact thing from men and women struggling with heterosexual sexual sins. And if Regeneration helped those dealing with drugs, depression, overeating, or gambling, I bet I’d hear it from them, too.

Here are some other statements we hear: *How can I ever give this up? It feels so much a part of me. Something is wrong with me. If anyone ever does find out, I’ll be rejected. I’ve tried everything I know and I keep falling. Maybe I’m not really a Christian. God must have given up on me by now.* Sin is addictive, produces shame, and does all sorts of damage; It’s why God commands us not to

sin! It also feels good and is difficult to give up. We all need a rescuer. You are not unique.

**MISSING: YOU**

There is one other vital reason for you to crucify your chronic uniqueness: other men and women need you. Have you ever considered the possibility that the men and women around you in your church are not all God wants them to become because you are not as much a part of their lives as they need you to be? If you are not connected in ongoing, real-to-life relationships with other men and women in your church, then this is true. Read what Paul writes in Ephesians 4:15 and 16:

“We are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what *every joint supplies*, according to the proper working of *each individual part*, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love” (*italics mine*).

You need them, yes. And they need you. Or as Alan Chambers put it at this year’s Exodus Freedom Conference: The body is not all it needs to be because you are missing.

Quit looking for your brothers and sisters to be your dad or your mom. God may move through them in a fatherly or motherly way, but if you see a need, it may just mean Christ is calling you to be the one to move. Are you frustrated

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**Please Pray With Us . . .**

**PRAY FOR:**

- The health of **Alan and Willa Medinger**.
- Financial stability as we approach the fall months.
- The start-up of the 2009-2010 Living Waters program for Baltimore and Virginia.
- The new sessions of Rescue and Crosscurrent beginning in October.
- Spiritual growth and guidance for those attending the Baltimore and Virginia Leadership Retreats.

**WE THANK GOD FOR:**

- Providing opportunities to speak and teach in the community, outside of Regeneration’s regular programs.
- Financial provision during the summer months.
- An inspiring Exodus Freedom Conference in Wheaton, Illinois.

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

MINISTRY NEWS

RESCUE

The next session of *Rescue* (men’s sexual purity program) will meet in Baltimore, Tuesday evenings 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. from **October 6, 2009 to December 22, 2009**. New, current, and past participants are invited to enroll. Please call the Baltimore office at 410-661-0284 to obtain the enrollment application.

CROSSCURRENT

*Crosscurrent*, a Christ-centered support group for men who struggle with same-sex attraction, will meet in Northern Virginia Monday evenings 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. from **October 19 to December 7, 2009**. If you would like more information, please e-mail or call Peter at the Northern Virginia office at **Peter@RegenerationMinistries.org** or 703-591-4673.

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with how unavailable men seem to be? Perhaps they need to be invited. Do you wish people in your small group would confess honestly? Maybe God is calling you to go first. Does it seem married men and women never have time because of the demands of their families? Perhaps they could use the help of a brother or sister who is single who, as Paul pointed out, can be completely devoted to the building of God’s Kingdom (see 1 Corinthians 7:32). Are you yearning for someone to share a real prayer request or disclose something real from the heart? Then perhaps Christ is inviting you to ask or to lead through example.

Men, other men need you. Women, other women need you. The church needs you—to press forward, to pursue Christ with abandon, to persevere into purity (including continuing to get help and support as you need it), to grow in godly manhood and womanhood, and yes, to relentlessly pursue godly relationships with other men and women in the church.

As I said at the outset, this is my struggle, too. So together, let’s crucify chronic uniqueness. ■

LIVING WATERS

Registration is still available for the *2009-2010 Living Waters* program. Please don’t miss this incredible opportunity to learn how to overcome relational or sexual issues, such as pornography, promiscuity, sexual addiction, homosexuality, codependency, and past sexual abuse.

**LW of Northern Virginia begins October 1, 2009**

Applications must be received by **September 18, 2009**.

Please contact the Northern Virginia office at 703-591-4673 or visit Regeneration’s website to obtain an application.

**www.RegenerationMinistries.org**

**LW of Baltimore begins October 8, 2009**

Please contact the Baltimore office at 410-661-0284 for more information or to apply.

WIVES GROUP

Baltimore’s *Just for Wives* is for women whose husbands struggle with sexual sin. Meetings take place on the first and third Mondays of each month at 7:00 p.m. Please call the office at 410-661-0284 for more details and to register.

Regeneration Is . . .

**Staff Team**

**Joshua Glaser**  
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**Alan Medinger**  
Founder

**Groups and Programs**

**Baltimore, MD**

- Living Waters
- Rescue (Sexual Purity Group)
- New Directions
- Just for Wives

**Northern, VA**

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