

A SECOND CHANCE

Prior to May 1995, I thought I was doing well — good job, food and wine and a lovely female companion. Though I was enjoying life, I was not "free." Often, I was guilty about my relationship, felt cut off from friends and could not get along with my parents.

My ideal relationship with someone is to care and provide for her and to enjoy each other. Instead, I was emotionally dependent on her and so was she on me. We spent excessive and exclusive time together. During work hours, we called and thought of each other. We did many things together — holidays, outings, most meal times. Like leeches, we stuck together. Every minute, we had to know each other's whereabouts. It was actually quite tiring!

Then the inevitable happened in May 1995 — she left me for someone else, another girl. My life almost ended. There was nothing to look forward to, nothing to live for. I lost my appetite, weight and thought of suicide. The pain from the break-up was excruciating! Worst of all, it was betrayal - the third party was our common friend. How could this happen when I cared and loved someone so dearly for 15 years?!

Like the living dead, I walked and breathed but nothing really mattered anymore.

At this time, I was a devout Buddhist, studied Buddhism, and was a qualified Buddhist teacher. Ritual praying round the Bright Hill temple on two Vesak mornings was a norm. I did not know anything about the Bible yet I persecuted Christians.

Then a friend invited a few of us to her baptism. She requested my help with photography. During the service, I did not understand what was really going on — clapping, singing, raising hands or even the message by the pastor — but towards the end, something strange happened. I was shaking and tears were streaming down my cheeks uncontrollably. When I got into my car, I called a friend, "I think the Holy Spirit is touching me." As I drove off along the highway, I said, "Lord, I give you my life," and "everyone should be a Christian."

Two things happened from that night. Firstly, I slept well for the next whole week. Previously, I could hardly sleep because of the

pain and hurtful memories. As I called on the Holy Spirit to be with me, I slept like a log.

Secondly, I developed a hunger for God's Word. I used to throw away a Christian magazine that someone mailed to me but managed to find a copy still lying around, and read it through. I was able to understand and relate to the testimonies.

In January 1996, I officially turned to Christ i.e. I responded to an altar call and said the sinner's prayer sincerely. Subsequently, I joined a cell group in church.

But becoming a Christian and attending cell did not heal my attraction to the same sex. It got worse in fact and soon, I was looking for another partner. At church, I appeared like a normal Christian. On other days, I would be looking for love to fill the void in my life. I argued with a friend that the Bible was outdated and Singaporeans are not well informed of new issues such as gay churches and pastors. But I was afraid to talk with my cell leader in case they rebuked me with Bible verses!

We have a loving Father who knows what is best for His children and His Kairos moment is perfect. On 1 December 1996, an ex-transsexual American pastor preached in COOS. His testimony was impressive and though I thought his case was different from mine, I felt led to call him. He seemed to understand the pain I was going through.

A lady answered and apologized that Sy Rogers was not in. But my pain led me to see her. The first thing I told her was "Do not change me." She said, "I will not change you. Can I pray for you?" That was the start of my counseling sessions and a few months later, I decided to join the ladies support group at Choices Ministry.

Many hurtful memories in my life relating to my parents were dealt with. I had to repent and forgive myself and others.

As a child, I could not relate with my father. I was very mischievous and hyperactive. Dad would cane me often behind locked doors so that no one could help me. After each episode, mum and grandmother dared not say a word and life would go on as if nothing happened. No one explained to me what I had done wrong. I grew up not knowing between right and wrong. I was very confused. Yet, I appeared to be strong and defensive. I had much

issues with male authority figures like bosses. Somehow I would get unhappy around them and, inevitably, became defiant and rebellious. I coped with life by believing in my own strength to defend myself, as men could not be looked up to.

Another issue that confused my identity was labeling by others. I used to wear shorts, t-shirts, and had short hair. To me, these felt comfortable. But I was labeled a "tomboy". In school, to further confuse my gender identity, many schoolmates looked up to me as I excelled in sports and I was teased. By this time, I was lost. Am I a girl or boy? Maybe there is a third sex? Am I of that sex?

Many layers of childhood wounds were peeled away in my healing journey. It was tough. The pain of pulling out roots of bitterness and shame was enough for me to throw in the towel, but the Lord restored me. For the first time, I knew my true identity — a daughter of the Most High King. I even learnt new and healthy habit patterns.

Above all, obedience and perseverance paid off. God knows when we need help. When we seek Him and depend on Him, He comes through for us.

He is the Giver of good gifts and has restored my relationship with my parents before they passed away. We were baptized as a family in July 1998. Now, I am helping others who struggle with sexual brokenness.

God has given me a second chance in life. I am forever grateful for His unfailing love. Through God all things are possible. There is great hope in Him.

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