

# A Freedom Conference Experience

By Will

I am so grateful to have gone to the 2009 Exodus Conference. It was one of the best experiences I have ever had in my life.

My story isn't so different from many who have same-sex attraction. I have experienced many of the same feelings, relationship ills, and life events that are so common to those who develop SSA. However, it's not the dominating factor of my life, though. It's one aspect. For example, I am close friends with a Christian brother who has had blindness from birth. He is so dear to me. His blindness is one part of his life, but he works around it. I help him with it. He thinks about it everyday, and yes, it causes him to feel certain ways that some of us will never feel, yes, everyday of his life. Much like SSA.

I love how we can call it SSA, because much like other acronyms, like ADD, it really is just a condition of the body, maybe a weakness. You can't necessary directly control the attraction. Maybe indirectly, but sometimes, it 'just happens.' Involuntary is a word that comes to mind. It doesn't bother me to call it SSA at all. Homosexuality, for me, is an unclear word. Same-sex attraction is very concrete. It says: Sometimes I feel romantically/physically/sexually/emotionally attracted to members of the same sex. What's the big deal with that? You can't help it. It just happens!

As with my friend's blindness, I just think of it like a condition, a kind of emotional retardation, or weakness that I fight to overcome everyday.

Unlike my friend's blindness, however, this is something that thousands of people are healing from everyday. Exodus proves that. Let's get over it and accept that. My brother may stay blind forever. He can choose to have a surgery if he wants that would cure it. He chooses not to. He says he has been blessed in other ways by God that no one else is blessed like. He says the first face he wants to see is God's face.

How can I argue with that?

I, however, have not and probably cannot have a surgery that will, like an overnight stay in the hospital, cure my same-sex attraction. But I do see healing partly because in the past five years I have been part of a local Exodus community and that has allowed me to experience growth. And yes, my attractions are less frequent and less intense than they were when I was 18 years old.

Did God create my friend to be blind? I don't know. Did God create me to be homosexually attracted? I don't think so. But he did allow this part of me to be weakened, for reasons that I believe give him greater glory and keep me humble and my pride ALWAYS in check! And I've been blessed in other ways by God that no one else is blessed like. Thank you, my blind brother, for showing me this. You see more than I do at times. And I love never worrying about what I look like around you. I wish I could feel that way around all of my Christian brothers. I will get there someday.

With SSA, sometimes I am attracted to the very guys I am friends with. I'll go to a Christian men's bible study, and perhaps my brother looks rather attractive to me. What's the big deal? Let's say I didn't lust after him, but for some reason, I can't help but be emotionally drawn. Is this not the weakness that is SSA. I may not be able to help feeling drawn, but hey, I can choose to talk to him and get to know him better. Wow. After that, my feelings change. I no longer feel emotionally drawn or see him as 'attractive' as a 'normal' straight man may see a woman. I see him as a brother, a loving brother in Christ. And I have that free will. Isn't free will good?

I can name off a number of close male relationships that I feel attracted to in my life. "It is what it

is," as my close brother in a bible study says about things you can't control. But thank God, my feelings don't run my entire life! I mean, isn't that how it should be? If all of us ran around with our feelings telling us what to do, we would be dead! I mean really!

I still 'feel like' I should write down my testimony in a more formal way, so I am going to reserve from sharing it here until I can more concretely and completely share it accurately. Pray for me on this. I don't 'have an answer' ready, as I should. Maybe it's because I don't feel my story is over with. I still feel like there are more pages to be written.