



EXPLORE

Your Journey Here

“I remember the first time I looked up homosexuality in the Bible”

I remember the first time I looked up homosexuality in the Bible like it was yesterday. Or, at least I think I do. I can never know whether it really went down like I remember, but no matter what, my understanding of it is real. And that's what counts.

I pulled my Bible off the bookshelf in my room and flipped open to the index. When the first page I turned to was an unqualified condemnation of homosexuality I settled in for the long-haul. When all the passages I found proved unhelpful, I took my Bible and climbed into bed with it and went back to the index and started re-examining the references. I must have gone through the same six pages in my Teen Study Bible ten times that day.

Even though I'd heard my whole life that being gay was wrong, I still couldn't believe that it was there, written on the page, black and white ink staring me in the face.

That memory has stuck with me to this day. When I think about being gay and what that means for my life, my understanding of myself and the world around me is wound up in that experience—even years later, even though I no longer believe that homosexuality is a sin.

What is your earliest memory of how the world around you felt about LGBTQ people?

Did that apply to you? Did you realize it at the time?

“I can’t shake the feeling that I’m not seeing the whole story. That even though it seems so black and white on the page, there must be some shades of grey that I’m not seeing. There must be some explanation. There must be.”

Today, I understand my gender and sexuality to be both inherent and chosen: there is something deeply natural about my attractions; they’re wound up in who I am, whom I love, and how I form relationships. I find my eye catching or my heart skipping a beat before I even realize it sometimes. And at the same time I chose to acknowledge and honor those feelings. I choose to tap into that which leads me toward beauty, truth, and love and to use that as a source of good in my life and in the world around me.

I realize that, well-intentioned though they may have been, the authors of my Teen Study Bible were wrong.

That realization didn’t come quickly or easily though. Even years after “coming out,” I would [lay in bed doubting God’s plan for my life and my sexuality](#). No, scratch that. If I’m honest, I *still* wonder those things sometimes.

Along the way, I’ve met hundreds of LGBTQ people in all sorts of places. A closeted graduate student at a Baptist seminary, a kinky polyamorous lesbian, a transgender priest, a genderqueer vegan atheist, two married men and their beautiful daughter, and countless more. Growing up, I didn’t see—let alone meet—many LGBTQ people. Their stories were foreign to me even though their stories are in many ways my own story.

I am thankful for each and every person I encounter, the story that they share with me, and the ways in which those stories enrich my life.

Where are you on that journey? How do you feel about your gender and your sexuality?

What encounters have impacted your life?