

# *Redeeming Love*

*When homosexuality threatened their marriage,  
Sue and Roger found restoration in Christ.*

By Tanya L. Green

Roger, Sue, their son and daughter were the picture of an idyllic family to friends and neighbors in their small Midwestern community. Roger worked at the local papermaking mill, while Sue worked as an assistant with learning-disabled children. Both served as youth leaders in their church, and Roger periodically served as a deacon and in the music ministry.

However, no one knew about Roger's inner struggle: A homosexual addiction had plagued him for 32 years.

"I hid my inner turmoil, but it came out periodically in rage and frustration, isolation or inconsistency in my relationships with my wife and children," he told *Family Voice*.

### **Bitter Roots**

Homosexuality had its roots in Roger's childhood. Since then, he had suffered from feelings of worthlessness, fear and inadequacy. He felt different. He did not fit in with the rest of the boys. Instead of being athletic, he was "sensitive."

"Without a doubt, my parents loved me," he recalled, "but my mother was overprotective. I had a father who was very dominant; his voice was strong, and I felt insignificant."

Roger had his first homosexual experience at 11, when he discovered pornography "in a ditch" and chose to act out with two other boys. The experience left him feeling even more different. In addition to the temperaments of his parents, the teasing of other boys who called him derogatory homosexual names contributed to his behavior.

"I chose to believe the lies that

they were telling me," he said.

Although he received Jesus Christ as his Savior at age 12, Roger continued to have homosexual encounters—which included an addiction to masturbation.

"I felt unworthy of Christ's love, so my Christian walk was very much a roller coaster," he said.

Despite his inner turmoil at the time, Roger described himself in his teen years as popular and "happy-go-lucky." He formed friendships with other boys and dated girls.

"I kind of appeared to be a perfect child, a good friend, but inside I was very torn," he said. Then, he met and married Sue.

### **Two Become One**

Roger and Sue attended the same high school and youth group. They married in 1979. But problems beset their union from the start.

"On our honeymoon, I didn't feel desired by him," Sue said, "and our intimate times were few and far between. I knew there was something desperately wrong, but I couldn't put my finger on it."

When Roger failed to meet Sue's needs, after nine years of marriage, she entered into a short-term affair with another man—even though she knew it violated God's Word.

"I was feeling lonely, rejected, undesirable and unattractive, and here was a man filling those needs," she said.

In July 1993—after 14 years of marriage—their pastor confronted Roger. Someone had seen him leaving a single-toilet public restroom with another man. The incident raised

**Photo at left: Roger's secret struggle with homosexuality nearly cost him his wife and children. He is shown here with daughter Cassidy.**



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suspicion and the individual called the pastor to report it. No longer could Roger keep the secret. Sue knew the pastor was meeting with him about something. Then Roger went home and told Sue, who'd been nervously pacing the floor.

"I said to myself, 'Now what's the worst thing it could be?' So when Roger confessed his sin to me, I believe God prepared me with the thought of homosexuality," she said. She then revealed her past affair.

With Roger's confession, she had an answer to their struggles, but afterward helplessness besieged her.

"Hearing that my husband was committing adultery with another man was confusing to me," she said. "Had it been a woman, I would have felt great rejection and inadequacy, because being a woman I couldn't measure up. But with a man, I couldn't make sense of it."

Sue's biggest concern was their children, Derek and Cassidy, who were approaching their teen years. To protect them, Roger and Sue decided not to tell them. However, the children sensed the tension between their

parents.

"I told them that Daddy had done some bad things that hurt their mother, and if they ever heard anything about their father they could come back and ask me," Roger said. He did not specify his behavior.

The couple sought counsel from their pastor, and friends who served as accountability partners. But several months later, Roger fell. First, he masturbated, which started the spiraling effect downward.

"I was afraid to say I failed," Roger said. "That would make me look imperfect, unacceptable and unworthy." Roger began to re-live the lie, while Sue continued to believe her husband had overcome his homosexual behavior.

### **Downward Spiral**

But six years later, Roger was "outed" again. A man with whom he had numerous sexual encounters began talking about them, and rumors spread throughout their community. The stakes were higher this time, because Roger had become even more ensnared by his sin. His homosexual feelings intensified, and he became suicidal.

"I was very miserable," he explained. "I was having a harder time keeping things undercover because I was angry more. I was unable to focus on being a husband or a friend. I was isolated from my family. Our friends were able to see that there was something very wrong in our relationship."

At first, Sue believed Roger's denials, but then "the details kept getting more distinct." She asked God for help before dealing with it. When she did confront him, he could not

deny the rumors.

"I wasn't capable of making the decision to stay or leave," she said. "God told me to trust Him even when I did not understand. That, I knew I could do!"

When Sue told their children that the rumors were true, they were angry, confused and hurt, but responded very differently. Cassidy pulled away from her father. Derek, who was away at college, "punched the cement wall and wept." For a time he turned to alcohol and drugs to cope with his pain.

Roger was now ready to get the help he needed. He desperately wanted to reclaim his life: "I was tired. My body and mind were tired."

### Road to Wholeness

Roger's pastor and friends started researching Christian-based residential programs that could help him. They learned about Love In Action (LiA) in Memphis, Tennessee, and Roger soon entered the LiA men's residential recovery program.

The strict program required him to hold a full-time job, adhere to a curfew, publicly travel in groups of threes with other men from the program, and answer to house managers who had to know where he was at all times. He attended mandatory "rap" sessions four times a week where group members discussed the root causes of their sexual behavior, identity and family issues, and their relationship with Christ. He had no communication with his family for four months because he needed "to let go and let God" work on him.

Meanwhile, Sue and Cassidy remained at home, where God took Sue on her own journey. Their church



***The road to repentance and healing was long, but, with God's help, Sue and Roger recommitted themselves to their marriage in July 2001.***

offered tremendous support to her and the children. It provided financial assistance, a place to live, friendship, forgiveness and confrontation in a godly manner.

During an LiA "Family Weekend," Roger was re-introduced to his family. He made amends with Sue and their children; he eventually reconciled with his parents. Sue rejoices at the healing and restoration that took place.

"God took care of each member of our family and brought them back to Himself!" she said.

After she and Roger had been separated for nearly a year, Sue moved to Memphis in August 2000 to join Radical Living, a discipleship group for the families and friends of those who struggle with sexual sin. Although she could only see Roger twice a month for seven months, she saw changes in his life that pleased her. "He was becoming a man I didn't know!" she said.

The two signed a marriage contract with LiA and began to rebuild their marriage. Through counseling, Roger and Sue's relationship progressed naturally through friendship, courtship

**Love In Action is one of several ministries that help those struggling with homosexuality and other sexual sin. Contact them to learn more.**

**Love In Action**

(901) 767-6700

<http://www.loveinaction.org/>

**Exodus International North America**

(888) 264-0877

<http://www.exodusnorthamerica.org/>

**Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays and Gays (PFOX)**

(703) 739-8220

<http://www.pfox.org/index.html>

and engagement. In July 2001, with their two children at their sides, they recommitted themselves to their marriage. The next day, Roger graduated from the program.

At last Roger found forgiveness, redemption and wholeness: "God loved me in spite of my sin," he said. "His grace covered it all. Understanding this gave me the strength and freedom to trust Him to turn my life around."

**Love That Endures**

As Roger completed the recovery program, Sue also experienced recovery from the pain of her 23 years of marriage.

"I had to deal with my own issues," she said. "Roger could come home a different person but I would be the same and our marriage wouldn't have worked. We both had to be willing to do whatever it took to become who God wanted us to be."

Roger and Sue credit LiA with helping to restore their marriage and family. The ministry supplies recovery tools such as Bible study,


communication and relationship skills, and acceptance of God's love. They now use their experience to help other couples. Three weeks after their recommitment ceremony, they became house managers at LiA, where Roger can help other men find healing through Christ.

"You are not born a homosexual," Roger tells them. "That's just a lie that falls when we accept the truth of who God says we are."

Sue volunteers at the office and counsels the wives of the men involved in the program. She tells them there is hope for their marriage and encourages them to seek healing for themselves. "You don't live with a man struggling like that and stay healthy," she says.

Even as they continue to work on issues in their marriage, Sue said God has used the suffering to strengthen their relationship and, in the process, to change them.

"I lived in constant fear of rejection from my husband," she said. "I felt unprotected, unheard and unvalued. Now I have a husband who protects, hears and values me."

"There is nothing beyond hope," Roger says simply. 

**HOW YOU CAN HELP**

**PRAY** that God will keep Roger and Sue a strong example for other couples.

**PRAISE** God for His restorative power!

**ACT** Support with your time or money a ministry that helps people struggling with sexual sin to find freedom in Christ.

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