

[INTRODUCTION]¹

LEON #1 (start Leon 1.mp4)²

America, where money grows on trees and the streets are lined with gold. Well, at least that's what I perceived when I came through Ellis Island, New York on October 30, 1964. I quickly realized how wrong I was the first night I stayed at a friend's rundown apartment in the slums of Harlem.

And even more surprising was the day after on October 31st, when little people wearing masks rang doorbells and said, "Trick or Treat!" I thought, "What have I got myself into!"

Angela, my college sweetheart, came a few months later and we married the next year. I assumed that just because we were in love, we would simply live happily ever after. How naïve I was.

We were not Christian then and after years of unresolved issues, our marriage was a disaster. So with the encouragement from both our sons, we began the paperwork for a divorce after 28 years of marriage.

In the same year on May 15, Christopher came home after his first year in dental school and made an announcement. "I am gay."

Christopher's declaration affirmed my belief that we should all go our separate ways. But Angela responded quite differently. (end Leon 1.mp4) [BLANK SLIDE]³

ANGELA #1

You would never think that three simple words "I am gay," could cause so much pain.

I actually thought I could threaten him with an ultimatum to choose the family or choose homosexuality. But Christopher believed he was born gay and his sexuality was the core of who he was. So he said, "If you cannot accept me, I have no other choice but to leave." Without any hesitation, Christopher picked up his bags and left.

Nothing can describe how I felt at that moment. It was worse than receiving news of Christopher's death. He could have cut me with a knife and it would have hurt less.

In my mind, Christopher, who was closest to me and my last ray of hope, had also betrayed me. I was at the end of my rope as my world fell apart around me. My family and marriage were totally broken. I had no more reason to live. So I determined to do the unthinkable. I was going to end my life.

Even though I wasn't a Christian at that time, I felt the need to meet with a minister who gave me a pamphlet on homosexuality.

Then I bought a one-way Amtrak ticket to Louisville where I planned to say goodbye to Christopher for the last time before ending it all.

With only my purse and that pamphlet from the minister, I boarded the train to Louisville thinking that death was the only answer to all my problems.

Never being much of a reader, I began to read the pamphlet which explained the plan of salvation: that all of us are sinners yet God loves us in spite of our sin. God opened the eyes of my heart and I realized that just as God loves me, I could love Christopher, my gay son.

After arriving in Louisville, I called a number and was connected to a Christian lady in Louisville who began to disciple me. For six weeks, I immersed myself into the Bible and felt as if I couldn't soak up enough.

You see, I went to Louisville expecting to end my life and in reality, I did. One of my favorite verses is **Galatians 2:20**⁴, **"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."**

LEON #2 (start Leon 2.mp4)⁵

After six weeks, I got a call from the lady who was discipling Angela. She was excited to tell me that Angela had surrendered her life to Christ. I was not pleased and said, "This is not good news. This is my worst nightmare! Now, she has God on her side!"

But what I realized was that her transformation was not a Sunday only change but it affected every aspect of her life. What Angela had was not religion, but an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ.

Little did I know, but God was also working on me. It was while studying the Bible in Bible Study Fellowship that I surrendered my life to Jesus Christ. This was God's way of preparing us for the difficult years ahead as Christopher walked further and further away from God. **(end Leon 2.mp4) [BLANK SLIDE]**⁶

CHRISTOPHER #1

From my **childhood years**⁷, I did what most Chinese-American kids did: obey your parents, do well in school, and of course, "practice piano!" I never fit in with the other American boys because I looked different, acted different and had different interests.

God had given me the gifts of music and sensitivity. But Satan who can't take away these God-given gifts, twisted the perception of them and I was viewed and ridiculed as effeminate.

The first time I remember having same-sex attractions was when I was nine after I came across pornography at a friend's house. But, I kept my feelings hidden through high school, college and even the **Marine Corps Reserves**⁸.

Then after moving to Louisville and starting dental school, I no longer kept it a secret and lived openly as a homosexual in the gay **community**⁹. [Leave this up for maybe one short second, then quickly switch to the other slide - do the same with the slides before **BLANK SLIDES**]

Spending¹⁰ most of my free time in the gay clubs, I went from relationship to relationship, seeking intimacy and happiness which I found **temporarily**¹¹, but it only **[BLANK SLIDE]**¹² left me unfulfilled and unsatisfied. So I began experimenting with drugs. Not all gays do drugs but it is part of my story.

Without much money as a dental student, I supported my habit by selling drugs. I sold to **friends**¹³, classmates and even a professor. I thought I could live this double life of being a graduate student by day and a **promiscuous**¹⁴, drug dealer by night. **[BLANK SLIDE]**¹⁵ But four months before I was to receive my doctorate, the administration expelled me.

My parents flew from Chicago to Louisville and I expected them to fight to keep me in school. Besides, my father was a dentist and knew the dean. But to my surprise, my mom told the dean, "It's not important that Christopher becomes a dentist. What's more important is that Christopher becomes a Christ follower."

My mother knew that when it comes to her kids, nothing is more important than her children following Jesus. Even more important than education. Even more important than career. But the sad reality is that many people will go to church on Sundays and worship God, but then return home and worship idols: the idol of education, the idol of career. And we make our children do the same.

Do parents put more emphasis on their children getting their homework done, getting into a better school? Or should Christian parents be putting the most emphasis on their children following Jesus. It's no wonder why many Christian youth go to college and leave their faith behind, because maybe they were never worshipping God in the first place! Nothing is more important than our children follow Jesus.

But let me be honest with you, I was not happy with my mom's decision. So, I moved further from them to the bright lights and big city of Atlanta. And I quickly took over the **drug**¹⁶ scene in the gay community and became a supplier to other dealers in over a dozen states. In addition, it was nothing for me to have **multiple**¹⁷, anonymous sexual encounters **[BLANK SLIDE]**¹⁸ each and every day.

According to the world, I had it all: money, fame, drugs and sex. I had exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator. In my world, I had become god.

ANGELA #2

Leon and I had no idea that Christopher was doing drugs but we knew his biggest need was to know Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. So I sent him Christian cards several times a week and filled them with encouraging words, Scripture and hymns. At the bottom, I signed each card, “Love you forever, Mom.” But little did I know that he never read them and simply tossed them into the trash.

LEON #3 (start Leon 3.mp4)¹⁹

Angela and I knew the only way to see our son was if we flew to Atlanta. So we did. But on the second day, he kicked us out not even allowing us to call our friends to pick us up.

Before leaving, I offered Christopher my very first Bible. Not surprisingly he refused. So I left it on his counter anyway and walked out the door. We found out later that he took my Bible and threw it in the trash.

It was more than obvious that he was totally unreachable and completely hopeless. But Angela and I committed not to focus upon the hopelessness but upon the promises of God. Along with over a hundred prayer warriors, we cried out to God for Christopher. My wife began to pray a bold prayer, “Lord, do **whatever** it takes to bring this Prodigal Son to you.”

In her desperation, Angela fasted every Monday for seven years and once fasted thirty-nine days for our son. She would literally spend hours each morning in her prayer closet reading her Bible and interceding for Christopher. Angela wrote out some her prayers and this is one of those prayers. (end Leon 3.mp4) **[BLANK SLIDE]**²⁰

ANGELA #3

“I’ll stand in the gap for Christopher. I’ll stand until the victory is won, until Christopher’s heart changes. I’ll stand in the gap every day and there I will fervently pray. And Lord, just one favor, don’t let me waver. If things get quite rough, which they may, I’ll never give up on that son nor will You. Though the enemy seeks to destroy, I’ll not quit as I intercede, though it may take years. I give you my fears and tears as I trust every moment I plead.”

I prayed those prayers for eight years and it seemed that God was not answering them. But during those years, God did answer my prayers just not in the way I expected. His answer for me was, “Wait, be still and know that I am God.”

Looking back upon those years when I prayed for change, God did bring change. The change was not yet in Christopher, but the change was in me and my husband. What God intended for that time was that we would be changed, that we would be transformed and that we would be trophies of God's mercy.

Oswald Chambers says, "We are not here to prove God answers prayer; we are here to be living monuments of God's grace." As we lived out those years of waiting, we learned to walk and live as monuments of His grace as God drew us to Himself each and every day.

CHRISTOPHER #2

Often, answer to prayer does not come quickly and this was no exception. But my parents were unwavering in their faithfulness to pray for me. Like the persistent widow, my mother bombarded heaven with her prayers. My mother knew that it would take nothing short of a miracle to bring this prodigal son to the Father. And a miracle is exactly what God did.

The miracle came one day with a bang on my door. I opened the door and on my front doorstep were twelve federal drug enforcement agents, Atlanta police and two big German shepherd dogs.

They confiscated all my money and my drugs and I was charged with the equivalent of 9.1 tons of marijuana. With that amount, I was facing ten years to life in **federal prison**²¹. I had started with a bright future among society's finest in academia but found myself in the ditch among society's despised in the Atlanta City Detention Center. **[BLANK SLIDE]**²²

So I tried calling home. I dreaded making that phone call as I expected an earful on the other line. But my mom's first words were, "Are you OK?" No condemnation, no berating words, just words of unconditional love and grace.

Romans 2:4²³ says that "**God's kindness leads us toward repentance.**" It's not God's anger. It's not God's punishment. It's God's kindness that leads us toward repentance. And even on that miserable day, God was pouring out His irresistible grace drawing me to Himself through the words of my mother.

Actually, my mom was excited to get that phone call, if you can believe it or not. Because I hadn't called home in years. And she knew without a doubt that this was God's answer to prayer. She knew she had to do just as that good old hymn says, "Count your blessings, name them one by one." Even in the midst of her trial she had to count her blessings. On an adding machine tape, she wrote these first blessings. "Christopher is in a safe place [compared to before] and he called home for the very first time." As my years in prison passed, she kept adding and taping to that list. This list of blessings is now longer and taller than she is. **[Wait a moment until after Christopher pulls out and shows the whole list]**²⁴

Three days later, I was walking around the cell block trying to stay away from those criminals (because I didn't think I was a criminal). And I passed by a garbage can and thought, this represents my life. I was on my way to become a doctor and now I found myself among common criminals, trash. I was about to pass by that garbage can when a book on top of the trash caught my eye. I bent over and picked it up. It was a Gideon's New Testament. I took the book to my cell and for the first time, I opened up the Bible and that night, I read through the entire Gospel of Mark.

To be honest, I wasn't thinking *this* is the answer to all my problems! I thought, "I've got a lot of time on my hands so I'd better pass it somehow!" But as many of you know, what we have in our Bibles is not just ink on paper. But what we have is the very breath of God which is living and powerful and sharper than any double-edged sword, able to cut through the hardest of hearts, exposing my sin and my rebellion - and it wasn't a pretty sight. I thought things couldn't get any worse. I was wrong. [BLANK SLIDE]²⁵

A couple weeks later, I was called into the nurse's office, alone. They hand-cuffed me, chained my hands around my waist and shackled my feet together. I shuffled into her office. She sat me down, shut the door behind me. I knew *something* was not right.

She was uncomfortably struggling with her words and couldn't even give me eye contact. So she resigned to writing something on a small piece of paper and slowly slid it across the desk. I looked down and saw three letters and a symbol. It read HIV+.

ANGELA #4

A few days before Christmas, I received Christopher's phone call from jail. The noise in the background could not cover up his sad and hopeless words, "Mom, I'm HIV-positive." His sullen and weak voice trailed off as my body went limp. I felt dizzy and the world around me seemed to stop.

Ever since Christopher told us that he was gay, I had lived with the constant fear that Christopher might one day contract this deadly virus. My worst nightmare was now a reality.

Christopher was sentenced to six years in federal prison but this news of his HIV status, was like a death sentence. A verdict I could not accept.

Hanging up the phone, the pains of grief tore at my broken heart like a knife. Aimlessly, I stumbled up the steps and dragged my heavy body into the prayer closet. Under the cross, I fell to my knees as stinging tears blurred my eyes. This affliction was more than I could bear.

In the silence of my sorrow, a melody began to play in my head. The soft and sweet strains of a hymn filled my ears and repeated over and over: "It is well, it is well with my soul."

[LYRICS]²⁶⁻²⁸

CHRISTOPHER #3

A few days after I received that devastating news, I was laying in bed and noticed something scribbled on the metal bunk above me, “If you’re bored, read **Jeremiah 29:11²⁹**.” **“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”**

At the most hopeless point in my life, God promised me that regardless of who I was and what I had done, He still had plans for me. I had no idea where this plan was going to take me but God gave me enough faith, enough strength to get through that one day, and then the next, and then the next.

My transformation was gradual and God was convicting me of my dependencies. The most obvious was drugs but within a few months, He completely delivered me from that. But the last thing I was holding onto was my sexuality.

As I was reading the Bible, I couldn’t get around the fact that God loved me unconditionally. But I also came across some passages which seemed to condemn homosexuality. So I asked a prison chaplain for his opinion. To my surprise, he told me that the Bible really doesn’t condemn homosexuality and gave me a book explaining that view.

With much curiosity, I began reading it in the hopes of finding biblical justification for homosexuality. I had that book in one hand and the Bible in the other. From a purely human perspective, I had every reason in the world to accept what the book claimed to justify the way I had been living.

But God’s indwelling Holy Spirit convicted me that those assertions were a clear distortion of God, His Word and His unmistakable condemnations against homosexual behavior. I couldn’t even get through the first chapter and gave the book back to the chaplain.

So I turned to the Bible alone. I went through every verse, every chapter, every page of the Scripture looking for justification for homosexuality. I never found any.

So I was at a turning point and a decision had to be made. Either abandon God to live as a homosexual by **allowing my feelings to dictate who I was**. Or abandon homosexuality **by liberating myself from my feelings** and live as a follower of Jesus Christ. My decision was clear and obvious. I chose God.

As the days and the weeks and the months of abstinence passed, I realized that my sexuality is not an inseparable aspect of who I am. I had always thought that God loves me **just the way I am and doesn’t want me to change**. But unconditional love is not the same thing as unconditional approval of my behavior.

My identity should never be defined by my feelings or my sexuality. My identity is not gay or homosexual or even, get this, heterosexual for that matter. But my identity as a child of the living God must be in Jesus Christ alone.

God says, “**Be holy³⁰, for I am holy.**” I had always thought that the opposite of homosexuality was heterosexuality. But actually the opposite of homosexuality is holiness. So God was telling not to focus upon my sexuality but focus upon living a life of holiness and purity.

Change is not the absence of struggles. But change is the freedom to choose holiness in the midst of struggles. The ultimate issue is not my feelings or sexuality. But the ultimate issue is that I yearn after God in total surrender and complete obedience.

As I lived this life of surrender and obedience, God revealed His plan for my life. He’s called me to full-time ministry and it didn’t matter whether I was in prison or out of prison because my calling on life would remain the same regardless of the location. I no longer counted down the days until my release.

With that change of heart, God miraculously shortened my sentence from 6 years to 3 years - which is almost unheard of in the federal system. With only a year left of my sentence, I knew if I was going to continue on in ministry after prison, I needed to know more about the Bible.

So I called and asked my parents to mail me an application to Moody Bible Institute. They next-day-aired me the application and I quickly filled it out until I came to the point where I needed references from people who knew me as a Christian for more than a year. I was able to persuade a prison chaplain, a prison guard, and another prison inmate to write my references to Moody Bible Institute. Amazingly, I was accepted into Moody.

I was released from prison in July 2001 and began Moody a month later. So you can imagine the surprise of my classmates when I answered their question, “What did you do this summer?”

I graduated from Moody in 2005 and then from Wheaton Graduate School where I **received³¹** a Masters in Biblical Exegesis in 2007. And God has such a sense of humor because I’m back at Moody teaching in the Bible department.

[OUT OF A FAR COUNTRY and HOLY SEXUALITY AND THE GOSPEL SLIDE]³²

[When Christopher mentions his curriculum, put up the slide with holysexuality.com]³³

[SOCIAL MEDIA SLIDE, put this up at as Christopher is wrapping up and giving his final challenge]³⁴