

A Matter of Survival (Part 2)

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by Bob (written for Help 4 Families)

Taking a hot and lengthy shower had become a ritualistic overture to stepping into the world of the feminine. It was a twisted form of baptismal cleansing, an act of purification where the despised evidence of the masculine was removed by the sharp, ceremonial instrument, a Bic razor.

However, this day was decidedly different. As I stood beneath the exhilarating fount, a familiar, gentle voice interrupted my thought processes. It was unexpected, extremely ill-timed, intrusive, tender, but firm. My spirit knew whose voice it was. So did my troubled soul! He said, "You do not have to do this, for I am here to give you the strength to resist."

This was not good news to my ears! I wanted to step out of the shower, dry off and get about the task at hand ASAP! It was something I had planned to do for days. The time was right. Everything was in place for being transformed into my female self, Jennifer, if but just for a few hours. This was not something I had thought I would have to reckon with: the possibility of escaping this bewildering compulsion of cross-dressing by simply obeying the inner urging of God's voice.

The Scripture came to my mind: "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide a way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it." (1 Cor. 10:13)

I butted my head against the wall of the shower as a man within an institution's padded cell, babbling beneath the steady cascade of water, "But, God, I do not want to escape this!!! I have been looking forward to being Jennifer once again. Don't you understand? I AM A WOMAN INSIDE THIS BODY!"

I had tried so hard to convince myself that I was a genetic flaw, which in turn made God the ultimate scapegoat. This is commonplace for us, isn't it? God's encouragement came once more to draw from the inner strength of His indwelling Spirit in order to abort the intentional destruction of the masculine. "But, God!" I protested, "I have already removed my bodily hair, purchased new things and everything is in motion to do it. I have gone this far! I might as well carry it through to completion, for I have already sinned. Besides all that, I am not hurting anyone by cross-dressing."

That did not turn Him away. My response? I put my face directly beneath the flow of cooling water, in the hope that the tender urging would cease, or at least be momentarily quieted.

How many times had I begged God to remove this part of my life from me? I did not want to be the frustrating and shameful person that I was! Two distinct personalities, one markedly masculine, the other a semblance of the feminine. I had written in my journal some six years before these observations:

I am today very, very sad. I see myself as miserably (very possibly, irreversibly) emotionally ill. I am afraid that I can never really be healed of this condition. I am so afraid of the power that I have within myself to destroy all that I have worked so hard to build. I feel tired, exhausted, without any residual energy! I am weary of the incredible masquerade. I am lonely, so very lonely, feeling as though no one could ever understand or care.

I wish that I could put an end to this misery I daily face. The only way that I know to do that is by either killing myself, having my sex gloriously changed, or experiencing some miraculously designed intervention from God. I have little

(or no) hope for any genuine or lasting change.

I am not sure that I really never want to dress as a woman again. It is entirely too pleasurable and fulfilling, either in fantasy or fact. It is only then that I feel I am at peace with myself. The woman I see reflected in the mirror is the person I have always wanted to be . . . perhaps the very person I should have been all along!

We transsexuals think of ourselves as very unique individuals. Both sexes rolled up into one package. We love it and hate it! We enjoy both, but have a sense of disgust for each. We learned at a very early age to easily slip into either role in any given moment, loathing, yet loving each sex role, for there are distinct advantages to both. We have indulged ourselves with the best of both worlds.

But eventually the experimentation with the feminine role dominates and wins control over our wounded soul. We become increasingly passive, unwilling to resist her demands for expression. Many of us grow weary of the conflict and finally turn to the surgeon for more permanent relief.

As an adolescent I spent hours recording my thoughts, feelings and experiences in my diary. One such entry registered my anxiety: I got stuck in Mom's red dress. The zipper got stuck. Dad was asleep but I had to get out of Mom's things before she got home. My brother came in and helped me get out. I didn't want to put the dress away. I loved being in it again. But I don't get it. I want to be a girl. But I want to be a boy, too.

What we transsexuals imagine to be our "true identity" becomes a deplorable admixture of unspeakable elation and pain! Why? It is lust at its core—destructive lust that demands more than we would have ever been at first willing to pay. It is also rage—a silent, furious resentment and protest. Lust and rage when blended together thrust us into the hellish mockery of a human soul that we call transsexualism. As pointed out by one professional, "In sexual terms, lust may be experienced at first as pleasurable and satisfying. Fantasies will almost always move from the private to the relational—from thought to deed. . . devaluing the soul and, in fact, intensifying the emptiness."¹

Most of us adopted a female "secret" identity by the age of puberty, many of us long before. The girls in my neighborhood called me Jennifer Elaine when I played with them, sharing with me their mommy's clothing, lipstick, perfumes, high heels. Each time I crossed over gender lines, the feminine identity became more fixed. I liked my female identity and name much more than my male one. I truly enjoyed both, but held the feminine in a much higher regard, acting out its role whenever possible.

Why did I prefer living in the role of the female? Why do you? Good question! In my case, a concrete decision was made in my third year of life. What other kind of decision can be made by a three year old? You do not reason out all of the explanations, facts and events. They serve as the mortar for forming self-perceptions. You simply experience them and make decisions based upon your very limited world-view, forming conclusions that are forever solidified in the soul.

I vividly recall the hot summer afternoon that Carol and I were playing house on the front porch. Both Carol and I were in play dresses, enjoying being like mommy, fixing something to eat for her baby. She reached for her doll and then gave it to me. With that exchange, the mantle of the feminine was warmly received, and the masculine was forsaken as a viable option for me. I was like her, and both of us were like our mommies. That was good! So very good!

I cannot explain the formidable wall of separation between my father and myself. It was just there. For whatever reason, I did not want to be like him, or like any other man I had met. His life was not appealing to me, perhaps even threatening, or offensive. I did not want to do "men's things". I did them, but not with a sense of enjoyment or satisfaction. It just seemed that it could never compare to the wonderful world I engaged when crossing over proscribed gender lines into Jennifer's role, using my Mom's things to momentarily escape the daily anguish of being male.

What was it that created this monster within my soul? For years I cast the entire blame upon my father, thinking that

he could have changed the course of my history had he been more attuned to my needs. In my childish thinking he simply was not there when I needed him.

I now realize that he was doing all that he knew to do for his son. He was making sure that his family would never go without the material things in life. He worked hard, long hours on the night shift at a job that he hated. Dad was very much in love with his beautiful wife, devoted to his two sons and our happiness.

An excerpt from a letter my Dad wrote prior to his death expressed his desires for his first son: "Words cannot express what your coming into this world meant to me and mommy. You were and always will be a good boy. I always think of you when mommy was working and you helped take care of little brother. I don't know what I would have done without you."

The remarkable thing is that I do not remember a time when he actually told me he loved me, or initiated a hug. I can fully identify with the man who said, "I have never felt loved or affirmed as a son or as a man by my father. I don't remember him holding me, telling me he loves me, that I am good, or that he is proud of me."²

As a youngster, the only thing that registered within me was that he wasn't there when I needed him. Nor was he very interested in what interested me. Reality insists that these perceptions of him were inaccurate and therefore absolves him from responsibility for my emotional malady. But then, reality and I had never been close companions!

No matter how many wonderful traits Dad had (and he had plenty), the fact was that I felt insignificant to and rejected by him. My defensive stance resulted in rejecting him and the masculinity he represented. This is what Dr. Elizabeth Moberly refers to as a same sex deficit and detachment.³

It is more serious, however, in that I renounced my link with the masculine and opted for the only sex left. I did not try to find my completion in other men. That was not possible, I thought, because I was supposed to have been a girl, and felt that I could only be acceptable to Dad (or any other male) in that role.

Transsexualism is in truth an extreme form of unconscious, repressed homosexuality, for I truly wanted Dad's love and affirmation, but thought it only attainable if I were a female. Most trans-gender males will be repulsed by the notion they are basically operating from the same defensive detachment coping mechanism of the overt homosexual. We believe ourselves to be afflicted in a totally different way. Give it some more thought!

Therefore, intimacy with a man was acceptable to me only if I were a woman. I know men who have attained the highest ideal of a transsexual's dream through "corrective" surgery, and daily attest to their sense of well being. But in fleeting moments of gut-level honesty, express their lingering emotional pain, instinctively (perhaps not consciously) knowing that the deepest longing has always been for Daddy's love.

So we draw life from mother, identifying as best we can with her, dressing up like her (or sister) whenever the occasion permits. We prefer being with her, and we grow extremely envious of the ease with which girls can fully emulate their mothers, receiving compliments and obvious demonstrations of affection from their dads.

I do not believe that I ever became detached from Mom. It wasn't that she was a 'smothering' kind of influence at all. She was simply the most available, affirming and desirable of the two. As Dr. Nicolosi expressed it, "The father has to be a strong and attractive enough parent to induce the son to leave the comfortable relationship and original identification with mother."⁴

My Mother was a very attractive and warmly affectionate lady. She seemed to always find time for me, even though she worked long, hard hours as a hairdresser. She deeply loved me, included me into her life and affirmed my feminine qualities. Often I would hear her say to her customers how she had always longed for and had expected me to have been her little girl. It could not have pleased me more for her dream to come true in me!

I turned off the shower, dried myself and stepped into the bedroom where all of the articles of my Jekyll and Hyde

identity lay waiting for my use. Fully dressed and once again seeing the feminine side of my personality reflected in my mirror, it was obvious that I was unwilling to collaborate with the Creator's prompting. I had clear rationale for what I was doing. I was Jennifer. As I viewed myself from all angles, I repeated over and over, "I am a woman! I am a woman!"

God-breathed inner strength to resist was there, but not appropriated. It is a fact that God provides all we need to win the battles within our soul, but more often than not, we are seasoned victims, accustomed to being casualties of war. As it was so well stated in Jessie Penn-Lewis' *War on The Saints*: "The chief condition for the working of evil spirits in a human being, apart from sin, is passivity, in exact opposition to the condition which God requires from His children for His working in them."⁵ "You can't expect God to protect you from demonic influences if you don't take an active part in His prepared strategy."⁶

But cross-dressing had become my means of survival! To devour (or be devoured by) womanhood had become a routine. I was living from an inherited problem resulting from the Fall, refusing to allow Jesus be Lord!

I was not wanting to be a humdrum male. In order to escape that horrible fate, I quickly yielded to fantasy, imagining what it would be like to be a woman, transported into that more appealing realm, where fantasies served as "magic carpets . . . to deliver the soul from boredom, anxiety, anger, loneliness, and rage to a 'better' world that offers momentary relief and satisfaction."⁷ Lust is properly defined as "The effort to possess another in order to steal enough passion to be lifted out of our current struggles into a world that feels (for an instant) like the Garden of Eden."⁸

The story line is radically different now, thanks to the steady and unfailing goodness of God in healing my masculine identity and helping me find what one author described as "liberty through Christ to disown the flesh with all its programs, including the desires for sexual expressions contrary to the intention of the Creator."⁹ It has taken a long time for me to be able to genuinely attest to such a thing as lasting change, an authentic inward peace with who I really am—a man.

Embracing the masculine does not occur quickly. It is impossible to unravel all that goes into this kind of personal restoration. That is one of the main reasons for writing this to you, using this platform to transmit hope, encouragement and insights. I do not want others to go through the years of anguish, self-loathing and inevitable loss of God's intended destiny.

One thing is for certain: God is not in a hurry and will help us every step of the way, if we let Him. Many believe that we have to fully understand all of the intricacies of our past before we can effect lasting change in the present. That is helpful, but not required. The truth is that the Lord wants to invade the present with His power to overcome the sensual lusts of our soul, heal the ravaged heart and mind.

This whole "shower episode" happened long before I actively pursued therapy. The Spirit of God was giving me clear instruction on what to do long before I came into contact with the "root causes" of my sexually broken identity. Life is so much different when we cooperate with God, learn to draw upon that inner strength to resist, for it is always there.

Feelings will always be there, too. They are not easily changed. Our twisted passions are motivated by rebellion and self-love. It is God's grace (empowerment!) that enables any of us to be free. We rationalize our persistent identification with the feminine by saying that God expects too much from us. We protest, "I do not have the inner strength (or desire) to stop this never-ending cycle of entering into my imaginary world of the woman within!"

That is just the point! We do not possess that kind of energy. It is from God alone! Paul clarified it plainly, saying, "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you, for you

are . . . under grace.” (Romans 6:12-14)

We have ample opportunity to receive or reject God’s enabling power. If you merely want pain removed, you will not get well. If you desire only to go on enjoying your own selfish, self-centered life, you will not reach your intended destiny in God. If your goal is to escape trouble (the very thing God uses to wake us up) so you can go on serving your selfish god of pleasure, you will not find true fulfillment in life.

But those who relinquish their life to God will find true life. The secret of life is to lose it (Luke 17:33).¹⁰

The choice is ours. It always will be.

Footnotes: 1. Dan Allender, *Bold Love*, (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 1992), 105. 2. Leanne Payne, *Crisis in Masculinity*, (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1985), 71. 3. Elizabeth Moberly, *Homosexuality: A New Christian Ethic*, (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 1989), 38. 4. Joseph Nicolosi, *Reparative Therapy of Male Homosexuality*, (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1991), 33. 5. Neil T. Anderson, *The Bondage Breaker*, (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House, 1990), 78. 6. *Ibid*, 78. 7. Dan Allender, *Bold Love*, (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 1992), 103. 8. *Ibid*, 103. 9. William Backus, *Telling the Truth to Troubled People*, (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 1985), 243. 10. John Sandford, *The Transformation of the Inner Man*, (Tulsa, OK: Victory House, 1982), 119.