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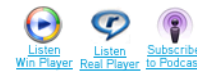
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Help! My Child is a Homosexual

Series Title: Exodus: Coming Out of Homosexuality (Day 3 of 3)

Program: FamilyLife Today

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Summary

Today on the broadcast, Dennis Rainey asks Exodus International President, Alan Chambers, what parents can do if they find out their son or daughter is struggling with homosexuality.

Guests Include: Alan and Leslie Chambers

Items From the Radio Program

- [Exodus: Coming Out of Homosexuality](#) (Audio CD)
- [Exodus: Coming Out of Homosexuality](#) (Special Offer)
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- [Someone I Love Is Gay](#) (Paperback Book)
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- [Exodus International](#) (website)

Transcript

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Bob: This is Bob Lepine from FamilyLife Today. Once again, on our program today we are going to discussing a subject that may not be appropriate for younger listeners. You'll have to make that determination. We're going to be talking about the subject of homosexuality. One of the issues we're going to discuss is how Christian parents ought to handle a situation when a son or a daughter has begun practicing the homosexual lifestyle and has a partner, a boyfriend or a girlfriend, and a holiday is coming up or a special event. Do you invite your child and his partner to come to your house? Here's advice from Alan Chambers. [[Read Full Transcript](#)]

Alan: Oftentimes, we encourage parents whose children have partners to invite the partner into some part of the family as well – not to make it like it's a heterosexual relationship but to picture themselves as people who might be the only ones that can share Christ with that person; to see themselves as the person that might be Jesus with skin on to that person.

Bob: This is FamilyLife Today for Wednesday, February 1st. Our host is the president of FamilyLife, Dennis Rainey, and I'm Bob Lepine. We're going to offer some practical counsel today for families and friends of those who are practicing homosexuality. Stay with us.

And welcome to FamilyLife Today, thanks for joining us. You know, I think there are a lot of things that, as our children grow up, as parents, there are things that we would hope, boy, I would hope I'd never hear my child come and say, "Mom, Dad, I'm not married, but I'm pregnant," "Mom, Dad, I'm addicted to drugs," there are all kinds of things that, as a parent, you could lay awake thinking about at night. But one of those things, for a lot of parents, has been the possibility that a child would come home and say, "Mom, Dad, I've discovered I'm a homosexual." What do you do, as a parent, when your son or your daughter confronts you with something like that?

Dennis: What parent is ready for that question? I mean, you can't possibly begin to evaluate the emotional impact that it has nor measure your words appropriately so that it comes across the way you would really want to respond.

I want to ask our guest, Alan Chambers, along with his wife, Leslie, how Alan's parents dealt with the discovery that their son was a homosexual. Alan, Leslie, welcome back to FamilyLife Today.

Alan: Thanks for having us.

Leslie: Thank you.

Dennis: Alan is the president of Exodus International, and as we talked about earlier this week, Alan shared how he struggled from the time he was a little boy after being molested with feelings of homosexuality through his adolescent years, went to an evangelistic meeting with Dawson McAllister and met Jesus Christ and started on the road toward healing and hope and getting freedom from his homosexuality when he was a college student, 18 years of age; met Leslie; fell in love and committed their lives to one another. Alan, what about it? Bob's talking about a dramatic moment. Do you remember the moment you told your parents?

Alan: I do. I was 21 years old; had attended my first Exodus conference, and came home really to share with my parents what I had been involved in; what I was doing with my life; and what I was doing, really, to overcome it. They knew that I had gone through the counseling process; they knew that I was molested. I told them that a couple of years earlier, but I really wanted to share everything with them. I wanted to sit down with them. They were Christians, they could understand, and I just felt like, for me, in my healing, that was what I needed to do. I needed to deal with some issues of forgiveness towards my dad and sit down and share those things with him. I'll never forget sitting down in the family room that I grew up in; Mom sitting in a reclining chair, and Dad sitting on the couch.

Dennis: Were you scared?

Alan: I was petrified. And before I ever started to share with them, I was already crying, and I sat them down, and I said, "I just want to share with you what I've been through, and I don't want you to feel hurt by what I'm saying; I don't want you to feel like I'm accusing you of anything; I don't want you to feel like you are at fault for what I'm going to tell you, but I've been involved in homosexuality. It started very early. These are some of the reasons why I think I struggled with it," and a lot of those pointed to my relationship with my dad.

And I just remember my dad really started that night, probably two or three weeks' worth of really crying every single day, because he knew that he hadn't measured up as a dad in some areas that I needed him in, and that really changed our relationship. I'm the youngest of six, and my dad, I think, became a dad for the first time in many, many years to all of his children because I sat down and shared the truth with him.

Dennis: As you were sharing with your parents for one hour, you had to be reading their faces. What was taking place there emotionally as you were sharing, but what were you seeing in their eyes?

Alan: It's hard to talk about it and not get emotional, but I saw brokenness in my dad's face; I saw relief. You know, for me to sit there and tell them, "I've struggled with these issues, but I'm doing what you really taught me to do and dealing with them biblically and correctly," and I saw relief. I saw that they were proud of me. I saw that they loved me, and they were concerned, and then they spoke. And, you know, my dad did apologize, but the first thing he said was, "I would have loved you no matter what. If you'd come home and told me that you were getting involved in homosexuality, I would have loved you. But I'm so proud that you're doing what you're doing."

Dennis: How important was that? I mean, here you were, three years in the process of healing and being restored as a man.

Alan: It was life-altering. My relationship with my dad was so critical and so pivotal in my developmental process, and it was just equally as key in my healing process.

Dennis: And I want the dads who are listening to hear the message. We not only help birth our children by giving them life, we also imprint them emotionally, spiritually, relationally, and how we relate to our sons and our daughters affirms masculinity and femininity in them, because we have a unique assignment that is only given to a dad. A mom has another assignment. It's equally as important but a dad – there's nobody that can replace a father in the soul of a boy.

Bob: We get letters and e-mails here at FamilyLife from moms and dads with questions about their children. You'll get an e-mail from somebody who will say, "We've got a six- or seven-year-old son. He prefers to play with girls rather than boys. He plays with dolls rather than trucks. Should we be concerned about that?" How would you coach a mom and a dad in that situation?

Alan: Well, I would look at the situation very closely, and I'd monitor it. For instance, my older brother, who is six years older than me, when he was five, six years old, he wanted a set of dishes, and my mom thought, "Well, I'm not going to shame him. I'm going to buy him a set of dishes." Well, he did what typical little boys do, and he broke all those dishes and smashed them. You know, that was for the girls. For me, I asked for a doll when I was in second grade, and my mom, thinking "he's going to be just like his older brother and get rid of that doll." Well, for me, that doll was everything to me. And I think my mom, over a period of time, could see that it was a different

set of circumstances with me than it was with my older brother.

The critical thing was, my mom was trying to teach me to be a man. My mom wasn't created to teach me to be a man, my dad was. And so that was something that, at that point in my life, I needed a dad, and that's what I counsel parents on is if you see your son or daughter struggling in certain areas, it needs to be the same-sex parent that steps up to the plate and helps that child become all that they can be in their gender.

Dennis: In the illustrations you are using, you are again talking about the importance of a father with a son or a mother and a daughter truly bonding and keeping that emotional relationship intact. And there are a lot of dads who don't feel comfortable starting to peel that emotional onion. They don't even understand their own emotions. But you know what? It may mean that you both go do some discovery together, father and son together. The point is, march off into the swamp even if you are afraid of sinking.

Let's move forward into the adolescent years, and let's say you are observing behavior with your son or, for that matter, with your daughter. What would you say to parents who are observing teenagers who may be experimenting, and they are wondering, because they're not dating the opposite sex, they're not going out and parents aren't having to worry about that relationship. They are worrying about something else.

Alan: Again, confront what you see.

Dennis: You use the word "confront." Do you really mean confront?

Alan: Yeah, I do, and I don't mean it in the sense of a hostile confrontation but being very assertive and going to your son or daughter, not being ambiguous about what you're talking about. "Hey, Johnny, I see that you aren't involved with other boys, and you're only hanging out with the girls. What is that? Tell me what that stems from. Are there not any guys that you can relate to?" Things like that, and so I think that it's really important for parents not to skirt around what they're trying to ask but just to go for the jugular. I believe kids are out for the truth. They want someone who will speak their language, who will speak the truth, who will call them on things. That's what kids are looking for.

In the situations that I've been involved in with teenagers who are struggling with these issues, that's really what I do with them and what I encourage parents to do with them is to really call them out and say, "Hey, tell me about these issues. Tell me what you're struggling with in this regard." And usually it will go deeper with some prodding and some questions.

Bob: If a mom has a 14-year-old son who comes home one day and says, "You know, I'm" – and I don't know if – I'm trying to imagine whether a 14-year-old would be this honest with his mom, but maybe he's processed it with some friends, he thinks he can, "Mom, I'm wondering if maybe I'm gay. I'm wondering if maybe I'm bisexual, because I have feelings for both sexes."

Dennis: There are so many signals today, Bob, being sent to young people through the media and through the educational system ...

Bob: And it could be that the teacher at school just said, you know, "You may be feeling these things, and you ought to explore them." What should a mom do if she gets a question like that from her son?

Alan: And, chances are, moms all over the country are getting those questions, because kids today are being encouraged to come out to not only question their sexuality but declare their sexuality. And so for a mom whose son – and that's probably who a boy struggling with this would go to – would go to their mom and say, "I'm dealing with these issues," whatever they might say, "I'm gay," or "I'm struggling with my feelings." And a mom, very calmly, should certainly ask him some questions, talk through these issues but immediately involve Dad on these talks. Hopefully, Dad is someone that can be involved without going ballistic on the issues, but to sit down and talk about those things and then for Mom to step back and for Dad to take over.

Bob: What if Dad's not there, or what if Dad won't enter in; he's either passive and withdraws or he does go ballistic. What does a mom do in that situation?

Alan: Which is very common, and that's where moms need to seek help. Moms need to get the help of a pastor or the help of an uncle or a trusted male who can speak into the life of this young man. You know, we hear from hundreds of – and thousands of moms each year whose sons have come to them and said, "I'm dealing with the issues of homosexuality, what do I do?" Counseling is one of the best places to find that help – a professional confessional.

Dennis: I want to move forward to adulthood because it seems to me one of the hot issues is how parents can continue to relate to an adult son or daughter who has confessed and professed to live a lifestyle embracing homosexual behavior.

Bob: You're talking about somebody who is not repentant for it but who says, "This is who I am, and this is my partner. We're living together. I want to be a part of the family, and I want to know if I can bring him to the rehearsal dinner when my brother gets married in two months." You know,

those kinds of issues?

Alan: Sure, and that's the majority, I would say, over the course of the life of Exodus, that we've gotten – the parents who are trying to live their everyday life with a gay son or a lesbian daughter. And for the parent who is out there whose child is involved in homosexuality, has a partner or is pursuing homosexuality with all they have, it's important for them to keep that relationship; to be in dialog with their kids about that. Oftentimes, they want to go out and say, "Okay, let's talk about this. I don't agree with it. I don't want your partner to come home." What do I, as a parent, do? And we encourage parents to keep the relationship at all costs.

Dennis: Don't burn the bridge.

Alan: Don't burn the bridge. Don't send your son or daughter away, because that's not what God would do. God doesn't do that with His kids that are struggling with things, and oftentimes we encourage parents whose children have partners to invite the partner into some part of the family as well – not to make it like it's a heterosexual relationship or a heterosexual marriage, but to picture themselves as people who might be the only ones that can share Christ with that person; to see themselves as the person that might be Jesus with skin on to that person.

Dennis: Well, let's move it to the practical application that Bob used – a wedding or a family reunion, a family vacation ...

Bob: Coming home for the holidays – do they both stay up in the old bedroom together?

Dennis: There's other children involved that may be younger; there's grandchildren; there's all kinds of issues of modeling here – what's a parent to do in that situation?

Alan: There are special circumstances. If there are other children around, then I think that you have to be very, very careful what message you are sending to those kids. Inviting them home is one thing, but there is no display of affection. We encourage that a parent hold the same boundaries that they would if their daughter brought home her boyfriend. You can't sleep in the same room. We don't believe that sex before marriage is what God intended. You can't sleep in the same room; you can't show any displays of affection; you can't talk about your relationship in a way that would confuse these minor children or offend anyone who is sitting there at the table or in the house. And so there are special boundaries that you put around it, but do you invite them to dinner? Absolutely, invite them to dinner.

Do you invite them to special functions? Sure, invite them to special functions. But there might be a period of time where a parent says, "I just can't do that yet," and that's okay. You know, a parent shouldn't be forced to accept something or to pretend they're okay with something just to get by, and I think it's okay for a mom or a dad to say, "You know what? Let's take this slowly. You're welcome to come home. I don't think you should bring your partner home yet because I'm just not comfortable with that." Tolerance is a two-way street.

Dennis: Alan, I've got a tough assignment for you. I'm looking at the clock. The clock is ticking on us here, but I've got a number of questions I need you to answer in staccato, if you can. So are you willing to take a pass at it here?

Okay, the first one is, are there certain things a parent should do as they relate to their adult child who is practicing homosexuality and some things they shouldn't do?

Alan: Unconditional love, certainly, and not to be afraid to speak the hard word but also not to be afraid to be in just everyday relationship with their child. You can have a relationship with them without talking about homosexuality all the time. Don't spend all of your time debating that subject or telling your child how they should live their life.

Dennis: Okay. What about telling the church? Maybe my son or daughter has called me, shared their practicing the homosexual lifestyle, it's now five years later, they're unrepentant, it has defined our family. I mean, it's a big elephant in the living room.

Alan: I have met countless parents who have told no one of their child's struggle, and I don't believe that that's God's example. I believe that he created us to be in relationship; not to bear these burdens alone. And I believe that we need to go to our community of believers not to broadcast our child's dirt to everyone but to be able to share our burdens with people who can pray for us; who can pray with us; who can walk along this journey that is difficult for many, many parents.

Dennis: What about the ongoing relationship with a partner?

Alan: I think that's ...

Dennis: How am I to relate as a parent to them?

Alan: It's hard, because most parents view the partner as the evil one, the one who has stolen their child away from the Christian faith or away from biblical morality, and I think you have to get past that; realize that there are two people in that relationship, and the most important thing to the

Lord is that people come to know Him, and for a parent who has a son or a daughter involved in homosexuality with a partner, they may be the only person that that partner ever sees that is a Christian. And I think parents – I've seen parents who have gone out of their way to invite in and love their son or daughter's partner, and that partner has come to know Christ, and it's made all the difference in the world for their child.

Dennis: What about any special advice for a brother or a sister whose adult sibling has shared he or she is gay? Got any advice for them?

Alan: Stay in relationship – I think relationship is the key. Only when you are in relationship with someone can you speak the truth into their life; to have a reciprocal relationship where they can speak into your life, and you can speak into their life, and so often I hear from brothers and sisters who say, "We have a broken relationship, and we never talk anymore. He told me once that he was gay, and we've never spoken about it again." Well, don't be afraid to talk about it. Don't be afraid to bring up those hard issues and be willing to share your issues as well. It's so much easier for someone to accept someone else's truth when they are willing to be vulnerable and open and honest about their struggles as well.

Bob: How would you coach someone who – either a child or a brother or sister is involved in some kind of an ongoing theological conversation around the way the gay church is attempting to say, "This is okay." So your brother or your son now says, "I'm gay, I'm a Christian, there is no conflict, and these are all the verses that I can point you to – David and Jonathan and Old Testament is different," and whatever else.

Alan: That's where I believe the Christian community has been very lax in their ability to understand the Scripture. The gay community has done an incredible job of twisting Scripture, researching things to where they can twist it a certain way, manipulate it a certain way, talk about issues, and change them into something that they really aren't. And the Christian community needs to get back to their Bible. They need to understand what the truth is, what is it – what was it with David and Jonathan? What does the original text say? What is it about the word "homosexuality" in our translation today? What did it say back then? How did Paul coin these phrases? How did he use these things? And there are so many great resources where you don't have to be a scholar to understand them. You can just pick up a book that talks about these things; talks about the arguments. In fact, the best one I can think of is called "A Strong Delusion" by Joe Dallas, where it breaks down every single argument.

Bob: But those conversations can go on for months ...

Alan: They can.

Bob: And they usually end with, "Well, that's your view, and this is my view." Do you keep having the debate or do you say, "Okay, we're at an impasse, but I still love you." How do you handle that?

Alan: Both. I think you can agree to disagree, but I think the conversation keeps coming up. I think when you're in relationship with someone, you talk about the things that are important to you.

Dennis: I think when you pick up the Bible, you also need to put on love.

Alan: Yes.

Dennis: Put on a heart of compassion, because truth without love just becomes some kind of spiritual sledgehammer, and that's not the way we're going to invite the homosexual community back into the church to find safety and hope and healing. They're also not going to find that hope and healing if we deny the truth, and we just want to embrace them. We need to call them to a standard and that's why I really appreciate Exodus International and the ministry you lead, Alan, Leslie, and I just appreciate you guys being on our broadcast and sharing your story and trust that God's favor will be upon not only your marriage and your family but also the work of your hands as you give your lives to helping the church bring the Gospel to a group of people who need love and forgiveness. Thanks for being with us.

Alan: Thanks for having us.

Bob: And I want to let our listeners know that we have, in our FamilyLife Resource Center, some of the books that you have recommended to us that are perhaps the best resources we can pass along to others on the subject we've been talking about so far this week. There is a book by Bob Davies and Anita Worthen called "Someone I Love is Gay," that's written for parents, family members, friends of a son or a daughter who is practicing homosexuality. It helps you wrestle through the questions like why or what's next or how do I respond, how I handle my feelings and respond appropriately to a child or to a loved one.

You've also suggested a book for women who are struggling with their sexual identity called "Restoring Sexual Identity," by Ann Paulk, and a book for men by Joe Dallas called "Desires in Conflict," so that if there are folks either who are listening or if you know someone who is wrestling with homosexual desire and feelings and wants to get a better handle on what those feelings are all about and what the Bible has to say about these things, these are books that we can pass on to

you.

Let me encourage you – just go to our website, FamilyLife.com, and click on "Today's Broadcast." There is information about these books available there. You can also order online, if you'd like. Again, our website is FamilyLife.com or you can call us at 1-800-FLTODAY, if that's easier for you. 1-800-F-as-in-family, L-as-in-life, and then the word TODAY, and we've got folks standing by who can take your call and make sure we get these resources out to you.

Well, tomorrow we're going to be back to start getting ready for Valentine's Day and, guys, particularly. We want you to tune in tomorrow as Pastor C.J. Mahaney has some very practical counsel for all of us on how we can do a better job of expressing our love and our romantic desire for our wives. I hope you can be with us for that.

I want to thank our engineer today, Keith Lynch, and our entire broadcast production team. On behalf of our host, Dennis Rainey, I'm Bob Lepine. We'll see you back tomorrow for another edition of FamilyLife Today.

FamilyLife Today is a production of FamilyLife of Little Rock, Arkansas, a ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ.

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