

and the loss (whether real or perceived) of our earthly father's love. We realized that our painful childhood experiences were not God's desire for us and our attempts to meet those unmet needs only made the situation worse and started us in a cycle of sexual confusion and bondage.

We sought God's help for victory over our compulsive desires while examining and admitting our part in our sinful past. We began to reconnect with other men in a safe and healthy environment as God revealed our shortcomings and underdeveloped character to us. We did our part to make amends for our past wrongs and to forgive those who hurt us. By accepting God as our perfect, heavenly Father and His unending love for us, we made peace with our past and came to rest in our new found identity as Men of God, new creations in Christ Jesus.

### **Small Group Guidelines**

1. Keep your sharing focused on your own thoughts and feelings. Limit your sharing to three to five minutes.
2. There will be NO cross talk. Cross talk is when two individuals engage in conversation, excluding all others. Each person is free to express his or her feelings without interruptions.
3. We are here to support one another, not "fix" one another.
4. Anonymity and confidentiality are basic requirements. What is shared in the group stays in the group. The only exception is when someone threatens to injure themselves or others.
5. Offensive language has no place in a Christ-centered recovery group.

### **Accountability Team Phone Numbers**

Sponsor: \_\_\_\_\_

Accountability Partners:

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## SAME SEX ATTRACTION

### The Problem and Solution for Men

## Same Sex Attraction

- Has trouble making, forming, and maintaining close healthy relationships with other men
- Has more opposite-sex friendships than same-sex friendships
- Feels uncomfortable and awkward around other men
- Feels inadequate compared to other men
- Secretly longs or desperately desires to fit in and be part of a group of men (band of brothers)
- Feels ostracized by other men
- Doesn't see himself as a full and complete man
- Can be easily intimidated or persuaded by other men
- Doesn't understand the give and take of healthy male friendships
- Is overly sensitive to criticisms
- Cannot take good-natured joking or kidding from other men
- Can only guess at what it means to be a "man"
- Feels more comfortable around women than men (may have chosen a female dominated profession)
- Has trouble starting or initiating romantic or sexual relationships with women
- May have fantasized about being like other men, admiring their qualities, looks, characteristics and these fantasies may have become sexual
- May have acted out sexually with other men
- May be overly focused on his appearance and that of other men
- Secretly craves healthy, affirming affection from other men but feels awkward accepting or expressing such affection
- Feels unsure of himself
- Plagued by self-doubt and regrets
- Can be indecisive (has trouble making decisions, second guesses himself, fearful of doing or saying the wrong thing)
- Doesn't trust his own judgment
- Seeks the advice and approval of other men
- Often overcompensates for his perceived inadequacies by overachieving in school, career, profession, hobby, or wife's interests
- Feels that no one understands him
- May often be very religious or have a highly developed sense of moral/ social consciousness
- Is very sensitive
- Has troubled or non-existent relationships with their fathers

- As a child experienced a significant betrayal (either real or perceived) by their father
- Has rejected the hurtful models of manhood in addition to the appropriate, healthy model
- Felt misunderstood as a child and as a man (especially by other boys or men)
- Looks to external factors (career, accomplishments, material possessions, physical beauty) to make him feel like a man

## The Problem

As children, many of us did not experience the secure love of our father or another male role model. Many of us were abandoned, abused, or ignored by our father or an older man. We were disconnected from other boys and were often called upon to provide emotional support to our mothers. We desperately wanted to fit in with other boys and longed for the attention of a loving father.

During puberty these legitimate unmet needs became sexualized. This was a confusing time, as we felt alone and unsure of ourselves with no one to show us the way to manhood. We may have experienced additional trauma or abuse during this awkward time. We became more aware of how different we felt and we did not develop emotionally as other boys did. We may have retreated into the world of women or girls, or developed specialized talents, or used drugs or alcohol as a desperate cry for our father's attention. We began to fantasize about other boys or men in a futile attempt to steal their manhood for ourselves. As we developed, our unmet needs for a father's love and guidance took over and hijacked our sexual desires. Some of us acted out our desires with pornography, sex with ourselves, and high-risk sex with other men in a desperate attempt to escape from the inner pain, emptiness, and insecurity we felt.

Our misdirected sexual thoughts and actions kept us locked in a world of unreality and kept us from developing emotionally and spiritually as men. For some of us this sexual behavior became an addiction, but we felt inadequate, unworthy, alone, and powerless to change our thinking and behavior. Many of us lived in shame and secrecy always fearful that others would discover our pain. We were trapped in a seemingly hopeless state.

## The Solution

We admitted that, in our own strength, we were unable to change our thinking or behavior. Acknowledging God's design and desire for our sexuality, we began to face the root causes of our same sex attractions. We realized that our sexual thinking and behavior was an attempt to cope with the pain of our past