



# POWER *for* LIVING

May 5, 2024

I Can Do All Things Through Christ



*The Way Out*

# My Path to Peace



BY AMY TRACY

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Several years ago when I became a Christian, my life was consumed by feminist politics and the gay/lesbian community. Professionally, I served as chief of staff to a government official who was a lesbian, and as vice president of the National Organization for Women (NOW) in the state of Washington.

My private life revolved around my committed three-year relationship with another woman.

A few years earlier, during the latter half of college, I had been exposed to the feminist movement and surrounded by lesbian professors who influenced me to question my sexuality. To that

point, I never considered myself a lesbian. But, looking back, I can see influences in my life which eventually led me in that direction.

## Surrounded by Violence

I grew up in a house of chaos and violence. When things got really bad, I would flee to my neighbors' house next door. But their home, too, was

chaotic, and I developed an intensely close relationship with their daughter. We understood each other, and we were both running from similar pain and

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heartache.

During high school, I changed from an awkward unpopular girl to a star runner. Sports gave me a new



sense of belonging, and I gained a relationship with my father that I'd never had before (he, too, had been a runner in his youth). I vividly remember falling into his arms after one race, totally exhausted. I can recall the crisp November air and the feel of his tweed wool coat against my cheek. At that moment, I felt complete peace and safety.

But, during my junior year, I began losing races. I couldn't explain why, and my dad began to pull away emotionally. It caused confusion, then deep pain. My father became obsessed with my performance, barking orders at me and my coaches. The situation got so bad that he began to physically beat me after I lost a race.

### A Major Change

After high school, I enrolled in an all-women's college in Washington, DC. I partied heavily, trying to numb my emotions. When I changed my major to sports medicine, I found myself surrounded by lesbian professors. I was drawn to them. They were strong, they were intelligent, they had their own little community, and I wanted to be a part of it.

Eventually the emotional and spiritual attraction became physical. I had always felt different, and I began to consider that these feelings

might mean I was a lesbian. I confided in a lesbian friend and she said, "I always thought you were a lesbian." And so, in the spring of my senior year, I entered into my first lesbian relationship.

Around that same time, I became energized by my first abortion-rights march and vowed to commit my life to the fight for women's "freedom." I was elected president

of the Alexandria, VA, chapter of NOW, and upon graduation, worked for their national office in Washington, D.C. I rose quickly through the ranks, eventually serving as press secretary for the organization. I seemed to have it all: a challenging job, success, power, friends, and a caring relationship. Most of all, I believed I had ultimate freedom—to act, speak, and believe as I wanted and to choose whom I loved.

### Cornered by Grace

In the fall of 1992, I began to feel myself inexplicably drawn to God. There were times when I would be doing something routine, such as working on my computer, and a powerful hunger for God would overtake me, sometimes followed by an incredible feeling of peace. These experiences, which lasted

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from several hours to several days, were always interrupted as the demands of my job snapped me back into reality. For almost three years, I consciously shoved those promptings and feelings from my mind.

Part of my confusion stemmed from the fact that I couldn't reconcile my heart's yearning with the hostile behavior I encountered in most Christians. Rarely did I see anyone reflecting the heart or nature of the God pursuing me. On one occasion, however, I encountered a Christian activist who chose to engage the "other side" with the Gospel, rather than with hostile stares, violence, or moralizing.

It was a Saturday afternoon, in the midst of a "rescue" outside an abortion clinic in D.C. Another woman and I were following a couple of pro-life men in an attempt to catch them in the act of violating a court injunction. As we moved away from the clinic, the chorus of chaotic chanting and singing faded, and one of the men began talking about Jesus and His love for us. After several tense minutes, I glanced at my friend's face. This man's words had melted her angry countenance.

Uncomfortable with the situation, I pulled her away from the conversation. At the time, I considered his tactics highly manipulative, but now I recognize that the power of the Holy Spirit

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was at work through him. It was the one time I can recall that someone from the pro-life side ever

mentioned Jesus' love for me—and not just for the victims of abortion.

### Escape from D.C.

As the fall of 1994 arrived, God continued to work on my heart, and I had trouble operating as if life were normal. I tried to find the cause of these spiritual experiences in order to stop them from disrupting my career. At one point, I sought help from a therapist, explaining that I had a problem of "feeling vulnerable to God and Christianity."

Entertaining the claims of Christianity did not seem a sane or workable option because I was immersed in an environment hostile to Christians. And the repercussions of exploring Christianity seemed ugly. I remembered the turmoil caused by another woman who worked with NOW and became "saved." I knew I needed to leave the heated environment of the nation's capital in search of answers, so my girlfriend and I decided to move to the West Coast.

### Final Surrender

In Seattle my career, relationships, and activism began to suffocate me. I could no longer ignore the absence of right and wrong in the mindset of the gay community. My drive to champion the "issues" waned.



Every fiber within me longed for real truth and purity. In August 1995, I wrote in my journal, “I seem to be on a course I cannot get off. The feelings are as powerful as ever. . . If I choose Jesus, I will lose everything. And what if I’m mistaken? What if this craving for God and this emptiness is not satisfied? Where will it leave me?” Every day for a week, I walked the streets during my lunch hour, hoping to find someone who could answer my questions and give me some direction. I found no one who could help me.

Finally I opened the telephone directory to the “Churches” section, and my eyes were drawn to the largest ad. An hour later, as I walked into the sanctuary, I shook with fear and avoided eye contact with everyone. After several weeks of slipping in and out of this church, I realized that the pastor’s message, the Gospel, was the very one my soul craved. On September 19, 1995, I walked down the aisle and received Christ as my Saviour.

**Behind “Enemy” Lines**

Following my conversion, life became weird and painful as I struggled to live in my old world as a new creation in Christ. Through word of mouth, my friends found out about my conversion, and their distress

and shock, as well as their attempted “rescues” of me, made life almost unbearable at times. Nobody could understand what had happened.

Despite this wave of adversity, I could feel God’s viselike grip around me, keeping me afloat and protecting me. The God who had pursued me so relentlessly now watched over me day and night, providing everything I needed to begin a new life.

Over a period of months, through the power of the Holy Spirit, I was able to break away from my job, its related activities, relationships, and lifestyle. I finally experienced great freedom, like that of an immigrant who has just escaped from a repressive regime.

I found it relatively easy to leave lesbianism behind. I loved my new church, was surrounded by wonderful Christian friends, and I had a deep hunger for God’s Word. Some of my Christian friends

knew about my feminist background, but many other church members had radical pasts, so my story was not terribly unusual. However, I only told a couple of friends about my past involvement in lesbianism.

Then, in the spring of 1997, I was hired to work in the media relations department at Focus on the Family, one of the largest evangelical organizations in the world. The move to Colorado Springs was very exciting,

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and working among 1,300 Christian employees could not have been a more radical contrast to my past.

But I found myself struggling with a new intensity. The weekdays were fun and rewarding, but my weekends became increasingly lonely. I needed to form quality friendships, but I couldn't seem to break through feelings of isolation and depression.

Then a board member of Exodus International—a ministry to recovering homosexuals—was hired by Focus—the Family. He and his wife embraced me with open arms. “You’re part of our family,” they told me, and they really meant it. Instead of having to wait days or even weeks to have an evening with Christian friends, I could phone them anytime and go over to their house to hang out. I discovered the joy of having friends who knew at the deepest level what I had gone through in leaving lesbianism behind. And, through them, I was able to develop a wider network of rewarding friendships.

### The Real Message


We must never tire in praying



for our loved ones caught up in homosexuality. After my conversion, I found out that my sister and brother-in-law—as well as their Bible study group—had been praying for me for many years. When I eventually attended one of their meetings, these men and women kept staring at me all evening, many with tears in their eyes. They could hardly believe that God had answered their prayers in such a dramatic way!

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God puts people in our path every day, just as He put me and my friend in the path of the man at the abortion clinic who spoke of Jesus’ love. We must be ready to share the message of the Cross and reflect the character of

Jesus through our relationships and daily interactions with others—even those whom we deem beyond hope. Who knows? They could be searching for God, and we may be the only reflection of Jesus that they see.

Our lives can be a powerful influence on those involved in homosexuality. Through knowing us—and experiencing the love of Jesus Christ—they can discover what true freedom really is. 

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# THE FATHER'S LOVE NEVER CHANGES

Author Name

*God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. – Romans 5:8 (NKJV)*



I know of no truth in the whole Bible that ought to come home to us with such power and tenderness as that of the love of God. There is no truth in the Bible that Satan would so much like to blot out. For more than six thousand years, he has been trying to persuade men that God does not love them. He succeeded in making our first parents, Adam and Eve, believe this lie. And too often he succeeds with their descendants.

The idea that God does not love us often comes from false teaching. Mothers make a mistake in teaching children that God loves them when

they do right but withholds His love when they do wrong. That is not taught in Scripture. You do not teach your children that when they do wrong you hate them. Their wrongdoing does not change your love into hate—if it did, you would change your love a great many times.

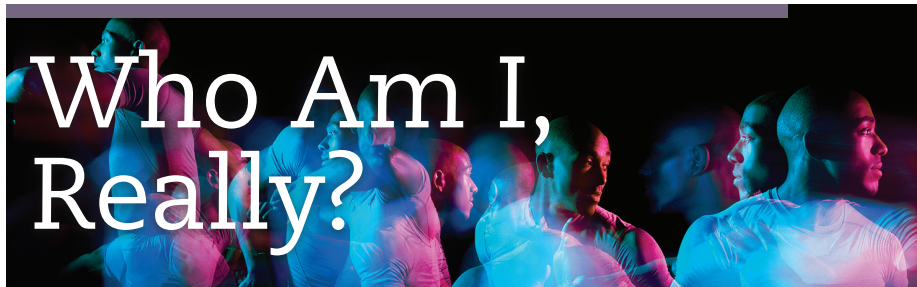
Because your child is fretful, or has committed some act of disobedience, you do not cast him out as though he did not belong to you. No! He is still your child, and you love him. If men have gone astray from God, it does not follow that He hates them. It is the sin He hates—never the person who commits it.

**D.L. Moody (1837 - 1899)**, was one of nineteenth century America's greatest evangelists. His preaching ministry touched the lives of thousands on both sides of the Atlantic. He founded the Moody Bible Institute.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS

SUNDAY	<input type="text"/>	John 7
MONDAY	<input type="text"/>	John 8
TUESDAY	<input type="text"/>	John 9
WEDNESDAY	<input type="text"/>	John 10
THURSDAY	<input type="text"/>	John 11
FRIDAY	<input type="text"/>	John 12
SATURDAY	<input type="text"/>	John 13





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# Who Am I, Really?

*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding.. – Psalm 111:10 (ESV)*

At what point in life does a person discover who he or she is? When does a kid swinging at fast-balls in a coin-operated batting cage realize that he's training for his career in the major leagues? When does the boy in the next cage recognize that in spite of all his dreams of baseball glory, his calling in life is to do medical research?

Everybody wrestles with the question, "Who am I?" You could consult any number of sources for the answer—your parents, your friends, your teachers, your employers, your spouse. You could do a lot of soul-searching as well. But who better to turn to than God?

James 1:5 promises that if you ask the Lord for wisdom, He will graciously give it to you. And God knows you better than anybody does, including yourself. He masterfully formed you in your mother's womb,

endowing you with certain physical attributes and a distinct personality type; and ever since your birth He has continued to skillfully mold you through your upbringing, education, and experiences.

You may already think you know who you are and where you fit into this world. You may have no clue. Or you may be disappointed because you don't seem to be developing into the person you'd hoped to be. If you look to God for wisdom, He will either affirm your sense of identity or reveal to you the person He designed you to be. He may show you His plan for your life immediately or unveil it little by little over time. In any case, remember that the story doesn't end with self-knowledge. It's important to nurture your relationship with your Creator, because He's still creating you, and you're going to need His help to achieve all the purposes He has for you.



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