

Donnie McClurkin

Source:

Compiled in March 2010 by Thomas Coy mostly from the 2004 documentary *The Donnie McClurkin Story – From Darkness to Light*.

Born:

1959

Family Status:

Single with one child.



General Information as of 2010:

Donnie McClurkin websites: <http://donniemcclurkin.ning.com>, <http://www.perfectingfaith.org>, and <http://donnieradio.com>.

Donnie McClurkin is the pastor of Perfecting Faith Church in Freeport, New York, a singer, a musician, songwriter, choir director, author, actor, and a radio host. Donnie has won Grammy, Dove, and Stellar Awards in gospel music. He has sung at both Republican and Democratic National Conventions, been given BET awards, and was honored with an NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Gospel Artist.

His albums and single releases are many and he travels the world singing and preaching the gospel of Jesus. Some of his most popular gospel songs are *Stand*; *Speak to My Heart*; and *We Fall Down*. His biographical book is titled *Eternal Victim, Eternal Victor*.

Personal Testimony:

Donnie McClurkin was one of ten children in a relatively poor family from Amityville, New York. Donnie's mother sang in the church choir and Donnie sang his first solo in church at the age of 3. Despite their meager economic status the family was full of love and happiness until the 6th of June in 1968. That was the day Donnie's world went from the best of times to the worst of times.

Donnie was eight years old at the time and playing with his two year old brother in the front yard. A ball he was playing with went into the street and he instinctively went after it. What he didn't realize was that his two year old brother followed after him. When Donnie picked up the ball and turned around he saw a car traveling at a high rate of speed heading toward his brother, who was now in the road. He and his mother, screaming through the window, watched the toddler bounce under the car as it went over him.

The funeral was held two days after the accident. After the funeral the McClurkin children were sent home with their mother's uncle, while the parents stayed with family. Unbeknownst to the

parents, the uncle was a pedophile. In the evening the uncle raped Donnie and a couple of his sisters. Scared and confused Donnie and the sisters did not tell their parents what their uncle had done to them.

Looking back at that night Donnie said in the documentary, “The seed of perversion was planted through that molestation. It was a thing that made my life a living hell. An eight year old can’t handle it, and it sparks something in an eight year old that’s not supposed to spark until puberty. ... Things start popping in an eight year old mind that doesn’t happen in normal eight year old minds, because the Pandora’s Box was opened, and you can’t close it after that.”

Donnie’s mother went into deep depression. Sometimes she would tell Donnie, “You killed my baby. You killed my baby.” The family environment turned volatile. Physical violence between husband and wife became the norm with the police intervening on several occasions. His older sisters began using drugs and arguing with their mother.

There were other compounding factors in Donnie’s life. He was shy, reclusive, and athletically inept. He couldn’t dribble, hit, or catch a ball. He was also born with the physical deformity of web hands and feet and his peers would make fun of it. He felt like he didn’t fit in anywhere.

The following summer, July of 1969, Donnie received Jesus as his Lord and Savior at Amityville Gospel Tabernacle. For Donnie “the church became more therapeutic than anything else, because it was a place of escape.” Whenever hell was breaking loose at home he would go to the church. Because he didn’t fit in any peer group, he threw himself into music and playing the piano. Donnie recalled feeling that “when I played piano, everybody liked me.”

At age eleven Donnie was able to meet the gospel singer whose music was stirring a new passion in him for gospel music. Andrae Crouch prayed with Donnie and laid hands on him seeking God’s blessings for the young man; to give Donnie what God had given Andrae. Donnie says that his ear was opened in a new way that day so that he was able to pick out notes and music clearer.

At thirteen Donnie was molested again. This time the perpetrator was an older teenager; the son of his uncle who had raped him five years earlier. For years Donnie would keep these secrets to himself. This was a time in Donnie’s life that he was, as he describes it, “surrounded by a sea of women.” That was all he knew. Donnie’s quest for sexual identity was a sea of confusion.

One woman in the church took a mentoring interest in the young Donnie and helped him break some of the feminine tendencies that he had acquired. She taught him how to hold a microphone in a more masculine way, to put bass in his voice, and sing praises to his God in a manly way. The men his church did not step up and fill that need. As Donnie explained it, “She dared to do what others wouldn’t do, and she helped save my life. ... it took somebody to be strong enough to say, “I don’t care how people take it. I’m going to help that boy.””

In high school Donnie's peers referred to him as "the preacher," because he preached to everyone. He organized a gospel group with his sisters and friends, and refined their sound meticulously. He got a break when he was selected to sing a solo at a music shop hosted by the Winan family, and he made a lasting impression. Donnie's solo was so moving that they ended the final service prematurely after he sang. As Marvin Winan recalled, "We literally stopped everything and ended it, because there was nothing else we could do." As sure as Donnie was about his Savior, he was still confused about his sexual identity and homosexuality was his inclination.

A few years later another act of providence placed him in a Broadway production with the Winans called "Don't Get God Started," the first gospel show on Broadway. Donnie was the understudy for the male lead vocalist, Marvin Winan. The Winans became Donnie's second family and at the age of 29 he followed Marvin Winan to Detroit to be part of a new church they were starting.

At the age of 29 Donnie had never lived on his own before, so he became quite comfortable sleeping on Marvin and Vicki Winan's couch. When Marvin Winan finally told him he had to get his own place he was angry and scared. He was literally afraid to be a man. Looking back on the tough love Marvin Winan showed him, Donnie said that Marvin Winan's tough love was the best thing he could have done for him at that time in his life, because Marvin knew Donnie had to do something on his own. Donnie found himself in a sea of men in Detroit. They showed him by precept and example what a man does. Homosexuality was now something in his past, not in his present or his future.

After some time in Detroit Donnie felt led by the Holy Spirit to start a choir in New York and with the backing of Savoy Records Donnie gave life to The New York Restoration Choir. From there he recorded solo through Warner Brothers Records and then Verity Records.

1990 was a year of a miracle in Donnie's life. Donnie was having some health problems, passing blood, and a bone marrow test showed that he had acute leukemia. People prayed around the clock on behalf of Donnie, fasted, and laid their pleas before God. When Donnie went back to have the test reconfirmed, they found no evidence of cancer.

After leading Bible studies in New York, Donnie started holding Sunday evening worship services in Hempstead, Long Island. In 2001 the evening worship services became the Perfecting Faith Church in Freeport, New York. This statement by Donnie best sums up his life's journey, "Music can get people to the edge, to the brink, but the gospel, the preaching gets them to change."

Donnie McClurkin continues to tell his story, including his journey out of homosexuality. He has a passion for others who have been molested or who just seek victory over homosexuality. Donnie explains it this way. "The gay community is saying that I'm a homophobe and that what I'm

saying is not real. And I don't have a problem with that, because I'm not looking to convert everybody from homosexuality. Those that are involved in that lifestyle and are happy there – stay there. But there are some of us that were broken, that are in hell, that don't want this life. That for one reason or another it was thrust upon them. There are some that have been broken by pedophilia. There are some people that have been hurt and wounded, and they're sexually confused, and they are in hell. That was me.”

“The reason I continue to tell this testimony, even at the expense of the ridicule and assaults, and the verbal attacks, and the threats of exposure, from people who say, Well he's still involved and I'm going to find him ... he's still doing it and he's still there.” I have to keep telling the testimony, because if I don't, there's no hope for those who want to come out.”

Factors of Homosexual Causation:

The factors that turned young Donnie McClurkin's life from the best of times to the worst of times were major factors in Donnie's same-sex attractions. The rape of the eight year old boy by his uncle opened Pandora's Box. An eight year old does not know what sex is. An eight year old who is raped doesn't even know what happened to him. Not only could the eight year old boy not handle the assault, Donnie has stated it began the destructive imagery in his mind of pornographic sex similar to pornographic magazines and videos.

The young Donnie McClurkin had several other characteristics that often contribute to reinforce homosexual attractions. He was athletically inept and did not feel like he was a part of his boy peer group. His physical abnormality also made him feel different. In addition, his life was lived in a sea of women. Those factors all contributed to making the young Donnie feel like he had more in common with girls than with boys. When puberty develops in the boy who feels different from the other boys, he often becomes attracted to boys, because he perceives they are different from him. That is the way humans are sexually wired. The sexual attraction is to the mystery of the different and the exciting.

Motivations to Change:

Donnie McClurkin has made it public knowledge that his involvement in the gay lifestyle was “hell” on earth for him. It was tied to the brokenness in his life and the brokenness of a child that had been raped. The sexual desire of Donnie's heart was to be “a real man;” a man made for one woman in accordance with the biblical example.

Process of Change:

Donnie McClurkin's involvement in homosexuality started when he was raped at the age of eight and ended at the age of twenty-eight. An important piece in helping him to identify as a male was the early mentoring from the concerned woman at Amityville Gospel Tabernacle. This woman took the time to confront young Donnie on the feminine mannerisms that he had

acquired by living in a sea of women. Although she did not help him resolve any underlying issues, she pointed him in a manly direction and affirmed his manhood.

The Winan family had a great influence on Donnie McClurkin. Marvin Winan became Donnie's best friend, which cannot be underestimated. The influence of a healthy heterosexual friendship can help heal doubts about manhood for a person struggling with same-sex attractions. Being in a sea of men in Detroit helped give Donnie a new sexual identity. He finally became one of the boys, one of the men.

Donnie didn't really question why God allowed Donnie to be raped as a child until he was twenty-eight. He prayed and received this answer, "In order for others to be saved, somebody has got to be crucified." Donnie could live with that answer. He was willing to reach out to others who had been molested as children and give them hope through the gospel of Jesus.

In Donnie's words he overcame the confusion and hell associated with his gay identity "by taking heed to the word, and through fasting and prayer, and people laying hands on me, and me pulling myself away with only those people that had faith. God broke the very thing that people today say is unbreakable."

Donnie's identity is far more than a real heterosexual man. His identity through Jesus Christ is "a strong man, a holy man, a sanctified man, a righteous man."

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