

## Dennis Jernigan

### Source:

Compiled by Thomas Coy from Dennis Jernigan's testimony in *God's Grace and the Homosexual Next Door* by Alan Chambers and the Leadership Team at Exodus International, and Dennis Jernigan's website. Dennis' testimony is used by permission of Harvest House Publishers.

### Born:

### Family Status:

Married Melinda in 1983; nine children. Family picture:

[http://www.dennisjernigan.com/images/stories/promo\\_pack/family-pic-on-rocks-for-web.jpg](http://www.dennisjernigan.com/images/stories/promo_pack/family-pic-on-rocks-for-web.jpg)



### General Information as of 2010:

Dennis Jernigan is a Christian songwriter and recording artist, and resides in Oklahoma. Dennis Jernigan's website is: <http://www.dennisjernigan.com/>. Dennis Jernigan has released over 20 full-length CDs, multiple songbooks and folios, and has authored more than five books including his most recent, *What Every Boy Should Know...What Every Man Wishes His Dad Had Told Him*. His newest full-length CD is titled, *Kingdom Come*.

### Personal Testimony:

Edited from Dennis Jernigan's testimony in *God's Grace and the Homosexual Next Door*.

"From my earliest memories, I felt different from other boys. I was gifted musically, and labeled "sissy" by other boys. ... I learned to play piano from my grandmother. ... Grandma was very patient with me as I practiced daily at her house, and I grew close to her."

"I didn't feel as close to my parents. We were not an affectionate family, and I never remember receiving physical affection from my father. I found it hard to believe that he loved me. I felt worthless."

"When I was nine years old, Jesus began calling me to Himself. On September 8, 1968, I asked my mother how to be saved. She explained that we were all sinners and ... through the death of Jesus on the cross, we could come into a relationship with God. I asked Jesus into my life that afternoon and was baptized that evening."

“But not perceiving love from my earthly father, I couldn’t receive God’s acceptance and forgiveness. So I tried to earn love by being “the best” at whatever I did. ... But what people thought was so good – my outward performance – only hid the deepest hurts of my heart. Rejection permeated every part of my life, including my sexuality. As a boy I needed a role model to show me the way to manhood. I began to yearn for intimacy with other men in perverse ways. Because of this wrong thinking, I came to believe that I was a homosexual.”

... “At church I heard people say, “All homosexuals should be shipped out of the country – they deserve to go to hell!” I felt condemned by their remarks, and I had no idea where to turn for help. So I hid my same-sex desires throughout high school. In college, I discovered other students who were struggling with homosexual desires. We gravitated toward one another, and I became entrenched in the physical and emotional aspects of homosexuality. But the more I believed homosexuality was my “real” identity, the more miserable I became.”

“During my sophomore year, I met the woman who would one day become my wife. ... but even though we dated on and off through college, I still had sexual encounters with other men on the side.”

“By my senior year, I was totally confused and frustrated. ... I broke up with Melinda and told her I never wanted to see her again. That summer after graduation, I fully embraced my homosexuality and plunged into a three-month relationship with another man.”

““This is who I am,” I told myself. “I was born homosexual, and this kind of life is what God intended for me.” But instead of finding happiness, I became more miserable.”

“I abandoned plans for seminary and accepted this friend’s invitation to live with his family in Oklahoma City. ... Then a well-known Christian group called “Second Chapter of Acts” came to our area, and I felt an inner prompting to attend. During their concert I was captivated by their sincerity and love for God. Then, in the middle of one song, they suddenly stopped. “God has put something on my heart,” one member said. “There is somebody here who is hiding something so hurtful, so terrible, that they would be devastated if anyone found out about it. But God wants you to know that He sees it and He loves you anyway.” Then we were encouraged to lift our burdens up to the Lord as we raised our hands to Him.”

... “In that moment, I turned everything in my life over to Jesus: my thoughts, my emotions, my physical body ... and my past. For the first time, I realized that homosexuality was a sin that Jesus died for.”

“That night, many years ago, was the beginning of my incredible journey. For the first time I saw

myself as forgiven and cleansed. The power of homosexuality in my life had been broken.”

... “God began to bring others into my life who were willing to love me unconditionally as I sought complete healing.”

... “Today, my wife and I have nine children. He is bringing His perfect plan for my life to pass. I have a heavenly Father who will never leave me or forsake me (Hebrews 13:5). I want to spend the rest of my life singing praise and worship to Him for all that He has done.”

#### **Factors of Homosexual Causation:**

As a boy Dennis Jernigan needed more affection and affirmation from his father than he received. There were two important elements contributing to this deficiency. The first was that the Jernigan family was not an affectionate family. Family member relationships were more surface than emotionally binding. The second element was that Dennis Jernigan was a sensitive child, more so than his brothers, and his need for affection was probably greater than his brothers. This in turn would have caused his perception of the father/son relationship to be different than his brothers; leading him to believe that he was not loved and that he was a worthless child.

The lack of relationship between Dennis Jernigan and his father created the unfulfilled desire to be loved and wanted by his father. He did not bond emotionally with his brothers either. His musical interests also led to him being called a “sissy” at an early age. All these elements combined to make Dennis Jernigan believe that he was different than other boys, yet he longed to identify with and be accepted into the male world. This is probably the basis of his early same-sex attractions.

#### **Motivations to Change:**

The more Dennis Jernigan ventured into and identified with the gay life the more miserable he became. Those are his words. Dennis Jernigan was looking for affection and affirmation that conveyed the feeling he was of worth and wanted. One facet of the male homosexual world offers sex as a substitute form of affirmation and worth. It is a fleeting form of affirmation and often degrading. This appears to be what Dennis Jernigan experienced and it is not rocket science to understand how his homosexual experiences left him feeling more miserable.

Dennis Jernigan was also a follower of Christ and was taught that homosexual behavior was sin. Yet he did not know how to become a heterosexual man of God. He hid his homosexual feelings and kept his homosexual life secret. He realized his homosexual behavior made him more miserable and at the time in his life when he turned away from homosexuality he was looking for truth about life and sexuality.

**Process of Change:**

Dennis Jernigan's journey out of same-sex desires and into a fulfilling heterosexual marriage began at a Christian concert. Dennis lifted the burden of his homosexuality up to God at that concert. He described that experience this way, "as I lifted my hands, God became more real to me than I had ever imagined! I realized that Jesus had lifted His hands for me – spreading them upon the Cross. I knew that he was right beside me, willing to walk with me. I could be honest with Him."

Several things happened in that life-changing experience. Whether he realized it or not Dennis not only lifted up the burden of his homosexuality to God, he lifted up the rejection and wounds at the basis of his same-sex attractions. When he felt he could be honest with Jesus, it meant he could have the intimate relationship he desired with someone who felt he was so valuable that he willingly died for his sins. This new relationship began to heal the deep wound at the basis of Dennis' homosexuality.

The more a Christian has an intimate relationship with Jesus, the stronger they become in their faith and the more Christ-like they should become in their lives. As Dennis depended on Jesus for intimacy and direction in his life the more he changed. Dennis was also fortunate to have other men come into his life and love him unconditionally as he sought complete healing.