

Being Mormon, Lesbian, and In Love...

by Laura Root | Dec 30, 2016 | Featured, Homosexuality, LGBTQ, Marriage, Sexuality | 12 comments



As I sit in Fast and Testimony meeting this morning I hear one man speak of families. He expresses the immense joy he feels in his life because he has a wife and family. He says he has recently been wondering why families are so important to our Heavenly Father that all of His spirit children are born into and raised in families. He then answers his own question by stating, "it is because within marriage and families we learn to love like God". "Exactly", I thought, "that is exactly why I proposed to my girlfriend two weeks ago". I want to become like my Heavenly Father and learn to love others unconditionally, and I want the opportunity to be married to help me refine that process.

Having been born and raised in the LDS church I always wanted and planned on getting married and someday having a family. But as time passed I realized that I didn't feel the same way about boys that my friends did. In my 20's I became aware that I was gay after a year-long romantic relationship with a roommate at BYU. For the first time in my life I fell in love. It felt amazing. It felt normal. It felt natural and easy. It was by far the best feeling I had ever had. It was also really perplexing to me. My church taught that those kinds of relationships were not of God, so how could it feel so amazing? Being gay did not fit the plan I had for myself as a

Latter Day Saint. I wanted to marry in the temple. I wanted to fit in. I wanted to do what I thought Heavenly Father wanted me to do. So I said an excruciating and heart wrenching no to that love and I buried and denied that part of me. Then I set out to find a man with whom I could feel the same feelings I felt with my roommate. I thought it would be easier because now I knew what love felt like. I just needed to find it again, only this time with a man.

For 20 years I denied a core part of my identity and remained a good, active, and faithful member of the church. And I dated. I dated a lot, always yearning to feel the same feelings of emotional connection and being in love that I felt with my roommate. In nearly three decades of dating (if you count from the age of 16 when I began dating) I never even came close. At first I thought there was something wrong with me. People told me I was too picky. Other people told me I'm too intimidating because I had a successful career. Other people just told me someday the right one would come along. After a while I pretty much gave up on dating and resigned to live my life alone. I had a mostly happy life but something big was missing, and I knew it.

Then, about 2 ½ years ago, at the age of 44, I began to finally deal honestly with being gay. The moment that all the pieces came together hit me hard and forced me to confront my sexuality. It was one of the most awful moments of my life. Thoughts of my future in this life and into the eternities suddenly fell down hard on me, the heaviest burden I have ever felt. Like so many gay Mormons I experienced severe depression for several months and even some suicidal thinking. I couldn't bear the thought of never experiencing love again in this life and of never even hoping for it. In addition, of course, were the questions of my eternal happiness. The church taught I would need to be sealed to a man at some point in order to receive eternal happiness. And yet, the thought of being with a man for eternity did not feel like happiness to me. I also could not imagine ever leaving the church I loved, with all my friends and family and which I believed contained the gospel of Jesus Christ. The agony and despair I felt at that time was over whelming. I barely ate. I barely slept. I knew I needed something to keep me going so I read the Book of Mormon daily. It was like an IV drip of spiritual nourishment and I depended on it. Still, I had questions. Did Heavenly Father give me the ability to bond with and fall in love with another human being and then require me to not use it as a condition of my salvation? I had been taught that gay relationships were sinful. But I knew that the relationship I had earlier with my roommate felt beautiful and freeing and wonderful. How could I possibly ever find happiness within a religion that would not allow me the companionship, romance, love, and spiritual and emotional connection with another person that comes naturally to me? I wrestled with these questions. Eventually I began to ask myself a different question: Could it be possible to live the faith that I love AND also live in a way that is true to who I am?

In the LDS faith we believe in the power of personal revelation. I had relied on the guidance of the spirit many times in my life as a missionary, in my personal and professional life, and most importantly, to teach me of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. I sought out and felt the spirit often and felt gratitude for the blessings of the Holy Ghost. I had developed a personal relationship with my Heavenly Father and had a firm testimony of the gospel. I trusted in God's love and concern for me as one of his daughters. Although I had always prayed, in my darkest hour, I turned to Him with more frequency and intent than I ever had before. In the months following my new awareness of being gay my couch became a place I often knelt beside to pray. One evening (and there were many) as I sobbed and pled with the Lord for guidance I felt

an overwhelming calm, peace, and sense of love from Him. In that moment I imagined a host of angels surrounding me ready to shore me up. I knew then that Heavenly Father knew exactly who I was, gay and all, that I have always been this way, and that this fact was precisely what I was meant to learn and live with during my earthly probation.

After countless hours and months of studying, pondering, and praying, and line upon line, I had a number of other spiritual experiences that reaffirmed God's love, kindness and mercy for me. He led me to know that not only does He love me more than I can imagine, He also wants me to enjoy the blessings and challenges and the refining process of committing my life to loving and serving the person that I love, even if that person is another woman. Eventually I began dating again, only this time I looked for the gender that was right for me, the gender that would allow me to truly bond, connect, and find happiness and meaning with another human soul.

Believe me, I am well aware that this makes no sense to most of my family and friends. It leads many to feel angry, sad, and confused. Some of my family members have largely shut me out of their lives. Some have asked me to pretend to be someone other than who I am, "for the sake of the kids". Some do not "condone" my choices and have bluntly and harshly told me so. It is interesting to me that they are so concerned about my eternal happiness that they presently say hurtful and judgmental comments to me about my choices. I can't help but think this is such a wonderful opportunity for them to teach their children about Christ-like love in action. Even if they never agree with gay marriage, to teach their children that just because someone is different, they are every bit as worthy of love and belonging as anyone else, would be a very powerful message. Fortunately for me I also have members of my family who are supportive of me. Additionally, I have some friends and ward members who, likewise, value my friendship and affirm me on a regular basis. I am SO thankful for them. Regardless of how others respond to me, however, my assignment has always been and will always be, to "love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that spitefully use you and persecute you". Love, love, love. It has always been the answer and it will always be the answer.

I am a different person than I was 2 ½ years ago. I have a stronger relationship with my Heavenly Father. I have a more clear understanding of who I am and what my responsibility is in this life. I have felt the power of the atonement in my heart as I have struggled to choose love and patience over anger and resentment. I know what I have felt and experienced as I have searched for answers and have tried to put my trust in the personal promptings I have been given. I am so excited and thrilled to be getting married in two months to the woman I love. I feel the love of my Heavenly Father within this relationship. I am so grateful to Heavenly Father who, in his kindness and mercy, has shown me how I can be my authentic self and still have a meaningful and solid relationship with Him and my Savior. Although it is not as it once was, I look forward to continuing my relationship with the LDS church, the church I love, where thankfully, I have many kind and loving friends.

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Laura Root



Laura lives in Boise Idaho between the Boise River and the foothills with her dog, cat, and chickens where she enjoys kayaking, nordic skiing, and all 4 seasons. She works as a mental health counselor and is excited to be marrying her best friend very soon.

All posts by Laura Root

12 Comments



Dan Wotherspoon on December 30, 2016 at 7:55 am

Thank you, Laura, for this beautiful post and your sharing your heart so openly here. I hope this will receive the attention it deserves.

Congratulations, too, on your engagement! My heart is singing to hear of this. All love and blessings for you both on this journey ahead!

Reply



Walt on December 30, 2016 at 4:10 pm

Dan, thanks for introducing me to Laura on your policy podcast. She's an amazing person.

Reply



Kathy on December 30, 2016 at 8:26 am

Beautiful! Just so beautiful! Thank you so much!

Reply



bob campbell on December 30, 2016 at 9:06 am

I find it hard to understand how members can accept church policy and attitudes that are so opposed to love and acceptance. Then i remember being a missionary in mississippi in the 60's. We we told not to contact negroes or to offer them the gospel because of their race and social status and because of the attitudes of church members. It took me a while to realize how church teachings can be in opposition to love and acceptance. I read of a momma dragon who told how it was not the church who taught her what real love is about, but her gay son.