

# Natalia Osipenko

## *Ex-Lesbian*

Kovdor, Murmansk , Russia

### ***My Testimony:***

My mother was a domineering woman. She would control me all my life, even as I became an adult. I experienced no affection, no manifestations of love, no hugs, no praise in my family. I have a brother. He is 4 years younger than me. Naturally, when I was the only child in the family, I got all the attention of my parents. But when my brother was born, I felt that my parents became more focused on his needs. My dad was an absent, depressed man who was not free from alcohol. I never told my mother about my same sex attraction, because she wouldn't understand. Moreover, I was born in the Soviet Union, where this topic was not raised at all. We lived and still live in a very small town with a population of 12,000. Needless to say, it's like a big village where everyone knows each other. In the absence of love and affection in my family, from the age of ten I began to fall in love with women, looking for maternal love and attention from them. I studied well at school, and my mother was proud of me. But with all the things I did, I tried to earn her favour, praise and attention.



*Natalia Osipenko*

After finishing school I entered college. But after a year of study I left because I could not live without my mother. It was a co-dependent relationship. I realised this much later when I was already in the process of healing. I needed to be near her. Strange, isn't it? Isn't it strange to feel affection for your mother at 18? At a very early age, about a year old, I saw my mother only in the mornings and evenings. She worked hard and had to leave me with another woman to look after me, but she did not really care.

My cousin used me sexually when I was a teenager. It was incest. After this incident I dropped out of college and my mother abandoned me as a daughter. My father also held this sin against me until the end of his life. He was burned in the garage when I was 30. It was an accident.

I had my first homosexual experience at the age of 18. I sometimes think that if it were not for the physical experience, perhaps my life would have been different. By the age of 26, I fully realised that I had no attraction to men at all, I could not get married and have children. Life had lost its meaning. I tried to commit suicide three times. I drank heavily and there was a period when I used drugs. At the age of 21, I was raped in a perverted way and nearly died of a drug overdose.

I came to God at the age of 26. It was during the 90s, when the Iron Curtain fell down in Russia, and believers from other countries started to arrive in Russia. I couldn't find help for 10 years. No pastor could answer my questions, and some women, having learned about my past, just avoided me in church. I could not find any literature that could shed light for me in these dark times. It was terrible. I just suffered in church. Everyone was happy, while I cried.

I asked God to help me, to send someone who can help. But nothing was happening. I learned from my mistakes. It was an experience of failure. I had enormous unmet needs. I had been constantly attaching to those women with whom I was friends. I could not build normal relationships. Every relationship slipped into emotional dependence, control, and even sexual relations. It hurt me a lot because I understood that it was wrong, but I could not get out of it and break free. Besides, there was no sound teaching in the church. Due to the lack of sound teaching, I did not work on my inner problems, I did not look for their roots. I believed that if I do not sin - that is, if I do not sleep with women, then there is no problem with me.

I was convinced that it is enough not to sin, and you are an example of a positive Christian. But after 3 years and then after another 10 years of my Christianity, I crashed. In the latter case, I lived a double life for 5 years. I kind of lived with God, but also in periodic sin. The first failure occurred 3 years after I was saved.

I could not see any hints of changes in me as a person, the old ways of thinking and old habits led to the failure. I was disgraced by the whole town as well as in my workplace. The woman I molested had a mental breakdown and had to undergo treatment in a psychiatric hospital. Everyone in the town knew who I was. They wrote "lesbo" on the door of my apartment. Passers-by poked their fingers at me and mocked me on the street. I wanted to die because of guilt, shame and hopelessness.

For a whole year I struggled with guilt. And since I did not have any mentor or sound leader, this was accompanied by depression, smoking and alcohol abuse. Looking back, I understand that this was a period of work on my will. I used to be engaged in extreme types of tourism - mountain climbing, river rafting. And I have a stubborn nature. I will die, but still crawl to the top...



*In the van with [Inessa Adler](#)*

In 2004 I entered the institute at the theological academy. And from that time something began to clear up in my mind. I began to work on my thoughts, emotions and feelings. I began to deal with my life and family. My relationship with my mother was destroyed. Because of the psychological abuse in my family, I built a wall in my relationship with my mother. And even when I lived in the Lord for 20 years, the wall was still there. God broke down the wall when I was already 48 years old, and my mother was confined to bed after a stroke. Today we have a great relationship. I couldn't have a better mother. Thank God. Mom has been in Christ for 22 years, dad was also saved. He repented before his death.

There were times when I was desperate to find help and be healed. In 2003 my church went through a split. Having this situation in the background, and having no one to help me, I lost the desire to fight one more time. In 2007, 13 years after I was saved, I failed again. I have learned many lessons from this failure. God taught me all these lessons himself. I didn't go through any programs, I had no special literature or a sensible mentor who would understand at least something about homosexuality. I had only God.

Sometimes I felt upset that the Lord led me in such a painful way, without the help of people. But then I realised that the most precious experience is a personal one, the experience of falling and reflecting on one's life. Of course I would not wish anyone to go this way, because only a few can withstand it. A union of reason and will is needed here. The willpower is of the utmost importance.

Now I help people who are looking for a way out of the problem of homosexuality. I am a counsellor for same sex attracted (SSA) people and a counsellor for addictions.

## *Natalia*

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*I am third from the left in this group of mountain tourists.  
The picture was taken before my salvation.*