

IDENTITY, FAITH & *Ministry*

A PERSONAL REFLECTION
on a Season Few People Fully Saw

1 INTRODUCTION

There is a period of my life that many people saw from the outside but very few people understood from the inside.

In 2020, I began transitioning and living publicly as a woman. The decision did not appear suddenly, Transition was something I had considered periodically for years, and by 2020 I had reached the conclusion that I could transition while continuing to love and serve the Lord.

What many people may not know is that my spiritual life did not disappear during those years. Although I was not attending church regularly, I continued praying, worshiping, listening to Scripture, and seeking God. In many ways, prayer and worship became more important to me because much of the support system I had previously known was disappearing around me.

I was also celibate throughout that period. I mention that not to establish my righteousness or make assumptions about anyone else's life, but because people may have formed an image of what my life looked like during those years that was very different from the life I was actually living.

“ *The reality was much quieter,
lonelier, and more complicated.* ”

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A JOURNEY
OF STRUGGLE,
GRACE, AND
PURPOSE

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WHAT PEOPLE SAW — AND WHAT THEY DID NOT

People saw a change in my appearance. They saw a different name, makeup, wigs, women's clothing, and a different gender presentation. I began hormone therapy. I legally changed my name and changed the gender designation on identifying documents. Those were the visible changes.

What people could not see was the enormous internal struggle occurring behind them. I experienced ridicule and rejection in ways I had never experienced before. People sometimes laughed at me as I walked past them or discussed me loudly enough for me to hear. In professional settings, there were occasions when people deliberately addressed me differently from what I had requested, sometimes in ways that felt intentionally humiliating.

Even something as ordinary as using a public restroom became stressful. I did not feel comfortable entering a men's restroom while presenting as a woman, yet I also felt uncomfortable entering a women's restroom as a transgender person. Whenever possible, I searched for a family or single-user restroom. Sometimes I simply avoided using a public restroom altogether.

Relationships changed as well. For significant portions of those years, I had little contact with much of my family. Some relationships became strained because of my transition. Others were affected by conflict and emotional volatility during the early period of hormone treatment and an already difficult season of my life. Friendships changed too. People I had expected to remain close to me disappeared.

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THE STRUGGLE BENEATH THE TRANSITION

There is another part of this story that I did not fully understand at the time. I entered transition carrying grief and depression that had existed long before 2020. The death of my infant son, Aidan, had profoundly affected me. I returned to military responsibilities shortly after his death and learned to survive by continuing to move forward. For years, that became a pattern: whatever happened, keep moving. Looking back, I do not believe I had fully processed how much grief and depression I was still carrying. Transition did not erase those things.

My self-esteem became extremely low. The ridicule hurt. The rejection hurt. After COVID restrictions eased, I continued wearing a mask for a long time. Facial hair remained something I struggled with despite hormone treatment, and makeup did not always conceal it the way I wanted. Eventually, the mask became more than protection from illness. At times, it became a way of hiding.

I began wanting to stop much earlier than I actually stopped. By approximately 2021 or 2022, thoughts of ending my transition were already occurring. But another fear had developed: What will everybody say? I imagined the laughter. I imagined hearing, "I told you so." I imagined people calling me foolish or treating everything I had experienced as a joke. Eventually, continuing began to feel easier than facing the humiliation I believed would come with changing direction. So I kept going.

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PAIN,
HEALING,
AND A DEEPER
DEPENDENCE
ON GOD

4 PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL IMPACT

Hormone treatment affected me physically in ways that were difficult to live through. There were periods of hot flashes, excessive sweating, significant mood changes, weight gain, and other physical changes as my body adjusted to hormone therapy. My treatment moved between patches, pills, and injections. I also became increasingly frustrated because some of the physical changes I expected after years of treatment were not occurring as I had anticipated.

More significantly, my overall health was declining. During those years, I underwent repeated medical testing and made numerous trips to emergency rooms and urgent care facilities as different health concerns developed or worsened. At one point, I experienced a flare that lasted approximately eight months. My weight increased dramatically—approximately 60 to 80 pounds during the transition period, eventually reaching around 265 pounds at my highest.

All of this was occurring while my emotional health was deteriorating as well. I had entered transition already carrying unresolved grief and depression, and now I was dealing simultaneously with isolation, public ridicule, changes in my body, significant weight gain, declining health, and growing uncertainty about whether I wanted to continue transitioning at all.

“I was becoming deeply unhappy.”

5 GOD WAS NOT ABSENT

This may be the part of my testimony that surprises people most: I became extraordinarily dependent upon prayer during my transition. There were periods when I prayed almost daily. Worship became one of the things that could lift me when depression and isolation became overwhelming. I listened to Scripture. I talked to God. I questioned God. Sometimes I even argued my case before Him.

Throughout that period, I continued experiencing what I understood as the Holy Spirit dealing with me—not merely condemning me, but dealing with me. I experienced reminders that I was loved, that grace had not disappeared, and that I could still pray, that I could still seek God, and eventually, that I was allowed to change my mind.

Ironically, during a period when some people may have assumed that I had walked completely away from God, I found myself leaning on Him more intensely because so many other things had fallen away.

*“Lord, I am not out here sleeping around. I am not trying to hurt anybody.
I am presenting differently. I am living differently. I am trying to figure this out.
Why is this such an issue?”*

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RELATIONSHIPS,
LESSONS,
AND A WAY
FORWARD

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RELATIONSHIPS, WORDS, AND THINGS I COULD NOT TAKE BACK

My transition affected relationships in ways that I could not fully appreciate while I was living through them. One of the most painful examples involves my father. During a heated conversation about my transition, he told me that my grandmother would “roll over in her grave.” I became angry and responded to my father disrespectfully, including using profanity toward him.

Neither of us knew that it would be the last conversation we would ever have. I cannot change that conversation now. Whatever disagreements existed between us, I wish our final words to one another had been different. That experience became another lesson about the power of words spoken in anger.

I also experienced changes in other family relationships. Some relationships became strained, while some remained strong. In professional and church settings, there were people who distanced themselves from me. Others showed kindness, support, and continued to treat me with respect. Each of those experiences taught me something about grace, patience, and the reality that not everyone will understand or agree with our journeys.

Looking back, I can see how some of my words, actions, and reactions may have contributed to conflict or distance in certain relationships. I cannot change the past, but I can acknowledge it, take responsibility where appropriate, and continue to seek opportunities to make things right when possible.

“ *Sometimes there isn't a second chance to say the words we should have said, or to say them in a better way.* ”

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WHAT I LEARNED AND WHERE I AM NOW

Looking back, I can see that this season, though extremely difficult, taught me many important lessons. I learned that my identity is not defined by my gender, my appearance, or the opinions of others, but by my relationship with Jesus Christ. I learned the importance of prayer, Scripture, and worship. I learned that disappointment, rejection, and even well-intentioned criticism can be part of the journey, but they do not have to be the end of the story.

I also learned the importance of self-care—physically, emotionally, and spiritually. I learned to be more honest with myself about my mental health, to seek help when needed, and to recognize when I was trying to cope in unhealthy ways. I learned that healing takes time and that growth often comes through seasons we never expected to face.

Today, I am no longer transitioning. I have returned to living as the man I am, and I am committed to continuing to love and serve the Lord. My past does not disqualify me from ministry. Instead, it has given me a deeper compassion for people who are hurting, struggling with identity, dealing with mental health challenges, or feeling like they do not belong.

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HEALING,
RESTORATION,
AND A RENEWED
COMMITMENT

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HEALING, RESTORATION, AND A RENEWED COMMITMENT

The transition period was one of the most difficult seasons of my life, but it was not the end of my story. It was a season—one that brought pain, confusion, and loss, but also deep personal growth, greater compassion, and a stronger dependence on God.

Healing has been a process. I have had to address the underlying grief and depression that existed long before 2020, including the loss of my infant son, Aidan. I have also had to work through the emotional impact of rejection, strained relationships, and the physical and mental health challenges that developed during the transition.

Through prayer, Scripture, medical treatment, counseling, and support from trusted people, I have experienced real progress. While some days are still difficult, I am in a much healthier and more stable place than I was during those years. I have learned to be honest about my struggles, to seek help when needed, and to take better care of my physical, emotional, and spiritual health.

Today, I am grateful for the people who remained in my life, who showed me kindness, who prayed for me, and who did not give up on me. I am also grateful for the lessons learned through the people and situations that were more difficult. Each experience, even the painful ones, has shaped me and prepared me to have a greater empathy for others.

I do not view this season as wasted time. I believe God used it to teach me, to humble me, and to shape me into a person who can relate to people from many different backgrounds and experiences. It has given me a deeper understanding of loss, mental health, identity struggles, loneliness, and the longing to be accepted. These are realities that many people face, and I hope to use my experience to encourage and support others who are walking through their own difficult seasons.

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LOOKING AHEAD

My testimony is not about perfection. It is about God's grace, His patience, and His faithfulness. It is about a season that many people fully saw from the outside, but few understood from the inside. It is about the reality that people can go through very difficult seasons and still be used by God.

Today, I am committed to living with integrity, continuing to grow in my faith, and using my experience to encourage others. My past does not disqualify me from ministry. Instead, it has given me a deeper compassion for people who are hurting, struggling with identity, dealing with mental health challenges, or feeling like they do not belong. If God could meet me in that season, bring me through it, and restore me, then I truly believe He can use my story to help others as well.

*“My past is not the end of my story;
it is a part of the testimony of God's grace.”*

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GRATITUDE,
PERSPECTIVE,
AND A HEART
FOR OTHERS

10 GRATITUDE AND A CHANGED PERSPECTIVE

When I look back at this season, I see pain, loss, confusion, and many challenges. But I also see God's faithfulness. Even in the moments when I felt alone, misunderstood, or overwhelmed, God was with me. He gave me the strength to keep going, provided for me, and helped me find my way back to a healthier and more stable place.

I am grateful for the people who remained in my life during that time—family, friends, church family, medical providers, and others—who treated me with kindness, respect, and compassion. I am also grateful for those who have returned to my life and for the opportunity to rebuild and strengthen relationships.

This season has given me a deeper perspective on what people may be going through that we cannot see. It has taught me to be more compassionate, less judgmental, and more patient with others. I understand more clearly that people may be struggling with identity, mental health, grief, loneliness, or other challenges that are not visible on the outside.

*“ We never truly know what someone else is carrying.
A little kindness, patience, and understanding
can make a significant difference. ”*

11 CONCLUSION

My journey through transition, the challenges I faced, and my return to living as the man I am today have shaped who I am. This season has given me valuable lessons about faith, perseverance, grief, mental health, relationships, and the importance of walking closely with God.

I do not share my story to gain sympathy or to focus on the past. I share it because I believe it may encourage others who are going through difficult seasons of their own. Many people are dealing with things quietly, and I want them to know that they are not alone, that God still sees them, and that their story is not over.

I am committed to continuing to grow in my faith, to love and serve the Lord, and to use the experiences from this season to help, support, and encourage others. My prayer is that God will allow me to be a source of hope, understanding, and practical support to those who are hurting, struggling, or searching for their place.

*“ God can take even the most difficult seasons
and use them for His purpose. ”*