

He and He @Stage 2.0 – Lovers? Confidants!

One may have a thousand friends on the social media. In the middle of the night, can one find a confidant with whom to pour out one's heart? Do you believe that there is pure friendship between the two sexes? Can those with same-sex attraction have pure friendship among themselves? Have men ever experienced love that is 'more wonderful than that of women'?

He is 52-year-old Ah Chai.

Ah Chai was pleased to introduce his 'brother': 'For more than 20 years, he is a perfect friend of mine. He is gentle and learned; he loves his parents; he has a strong sense of responsibility. He is resilient and positive. With him as my confidant, what more can I ask for?'

The confidants today were 'lovers' at stage 1.0! 'He and I dated for half a year. It's not that I didn't like to love and be loved as lovers. But once God's will was known and because of a deeper kind of love I have for him, I decided to let our love be transformed... we declared ourselves brothers.'

Similar to many intimate and long-lasting relationships, their relationship needed nurturing. 'We've never argued. He's more introverted and he doesn't speak much. Even for things that upset him, he would expect me to understand. Having known each other long enough, I understand his thoughts and actions thoroughly. For myself, I'm more expressive and I speak what I think and feel. So he understands me very well, too. This deep, mutual friendship is like that between David and Jonathan.'

The transformation of their relationship was a process. They spent three weeks getting used to their new relationship. 'I always felt insecure at the beginning,' shared Ah Chai. 'We met each other twice every week. I would wait patiently for him to get off work in the streets.' Ten years quickly went by and Ah Chai felt much more secure about their healthy relationship. Their transformed friendship also became more colourful. 'Now, we meet each other in a relaxed manner about once a week to care for each other as we enjoy our intimate friendship like a family. I often visit his aged parents and had led his mom to Christ. She also likes to go to church and eat out with us. All this is surely not out of a desire to restrain or possess.'

Intimate friendships such as this may cause concern about crossing physical boundaries. Ah Chai expressed with certainty, 'I honestly don't have any thoughts about crossing our boundaries! I do my utmost to keep and cherish our lifelong, pure friendship. Ever since we considered ourselves brothers, there had been many occasions where physical intimacy was possible. My conclusion is: I

have no sexual interest in him (perhaps this is grace!)! If we have physical intimacy, it almost makes me feel we are committing 'incest'! More importantly, he also keeps me accountable for my personal holiness. I frankly share with him every temptation and challenge.'

Besides post-gay brothers and sisters, many who are single do feel lonely in a culture where marriage is the mainstream. In the area of love and relationship, the church often teaches ethics, do's and don'ts. What possible solutions are there for loneliness? Does hope shine through in Ah Chai's relationship with his confidant? Thanks to the efforts of Ah Chai and many post-gay, we witness the possibility of healthy and intimate relationships. Will friendship and community be a way out for loneliness?