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The Heart of Female Same-Sex Attraction: A Comprehensive Counseling Resource

Janelle Hallman

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The Heart of Female Same-Sex Attraction: A Comprehensive Counseling Resource Janelle Hallman The fruit of years of training, research and counseling experience, Janelle Hallman has drawn together a comprehensive resource for those who are interested in understanding and counseling women in conflict with same sex attraction. In this ground-breaking work, Hallman sets forth the unique dimensions of struggle that women experience through the presentation of research, interviews and clinical experience. This is an indispensable guide for understanding and a manual for counseling adult women seeking to "mature in giving and receiving love in all of [their] relationships, and no longer be restricted by destructive relational patterns." **From the Author** Why did you decide to write *The Heart of Female Same-Sex Attraction*? Janelle Hallman: Because I found myself deeply involved in the lives of many Christian friends who had same-sex attraction, during the late eighties and early nineties I devoured just about every book out there on homosexuality and gender. However, almost everything I could find was for and about men. I could see that much of the material didn't apply to women. Neither was there a clinical book that was understandable for the average counselor who hadn't been trained in psychoanalytic literature. We (my friends and I) wanted to gain a deeper psychological and theological understanding related to people’s diverse experience of sexual attractions and sexual and gender identities. I knew that when I started my counseling practice in the mid-nineties, which was primarily focused on women with same-sex attraction, I would basically have to "learn as I went," or in other words, invite my clients to teach me. There simply was no published framework from which to practice. Even back then I thought that it might be a possibility that I would be the one to write a book. I knew I loved research and certainly teaching and was therefore able to condense complicated material and organize it in a way that people could understand. But I set this thought aside so that I could focus on simply learning how to counsel women with same-sex attraction. After contacting all of the other female therapists and a few male therapists specializing in this field, it was determined that no one else wanted to undertake the ultimate task of developing a manuscript, but many said they would support my efforts. So in 2004, I began the process by interviewing over fifty sexual minority women, 10 or so mothers of lesbian daughters, and several somewhat seasoned professionals who also regularly worked with faith-based sexual minority individuals. I then started mapping out an outline for the book. *The Heart of Female Same-Sex Attraction* is especially important not only because nothing else exists for clinicians or for pastoral counselors in helping Christian women with same-sex attraction, but also because these women struggle with trust. Many have been wounded and retraumatized by insensitive or ill-informed counselors and pastors. I have a great passion to protect these women by educating their helpers. Hopefully, the misunderstandings and presumptions on the part of helpers and caretakers will begin to be eliminated due to this publication.

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