Bob: When Christopher Yuan moved away from home and went to dental school, he entered a world his parents knew nothing about—a world that included drugs and homosexuality. Eventually, Christopher was dealing drugs.

Christopher: It was so enticing. There’s power behind having something that other people want. Not only do you want people to like you, as a person—but if you had a commodity that people wanted and they flocked to you—that gave me power. That gave me fame / that gave me control. The more I did that, the more I felt like I was invincible.

Bob: This is FamilyLife Today for Monday, December 28th. Our host is the President of FamilyLife®, Dennis Rainey, and I’m Bob Lepine. Christopher Yuan and his mother Angela join us today to share about Christopher’s descent into a very dark place. Stay tuned.

And welcome to FamilyLife Today. Thanks for joining us on the Monday edition. Somebody earlier today asked me about favorite interviews that we’ve featured on FamilyLife Today. I said, “You know, we’ve done so many; it’s hard to pick a favorite.” But the category of programs that I’ve always been most encouraged by have been the changed life stories—

Dennis: Redemption stories—me, too, Bob.

Bob: —talking to people whose lives have been dramatically impacted by the power of the gospel. We’re going to hear one of those stories today as we talk to Christopher Yuan and his mother Angela. Before we do that though, this is a pretty important week for us, here at FamilyLife.

Dennis: It really is. I got a letter from a listener. It’s quite a story—like Christopher’s is going to be, Bob. This listener said he was raised by his mom / didn’t have a dad in his life—no model of what a Christian father did. Really, he said he never came in touch with a Christian family. As a result, he developed a sexual addiction, as a young man—met his wife in the midst of that—but didn’t know how to do family / was having all kinds of problems—but became a believer and then started listening to FamilyLife Today. I just have to read this to you. Bob, it is back to what you said earlier—I love these stories of when people’s lives are redeemed and you hear the rest of the story.
He said: “By God’s grace, in the fall of 2007, I recommitted my life to Christ and was introduced to FamilyLife’s radio broadcast on the internet. As I began to listen to *FamilyLife Today*, my understanding of Christ and real manhood reached new levels. I heard for the first time about the real Christian life, real family life, and a biblical perspective of manhood.” He said he went online and listened—and as a result, was mentored—and it made all the difference in the world in his life.

If you’re a Legacy Partner / if you’ve given financially to FamilyLife, you made that ministry possible. What we’re asking you to do, here, as we conclude our year, is help make this possible, not only today, but moving forward into 2016. We need folks to stand with us financially, who say: “You know what? I agree with how you guys are proponents of the biblical view of gender—male and female—and how you teach people to train their kids to understand what real masculinity / real femininity is all about.”

**Bob:** We’re hoping everyone, who is a regular listener, would consider making a yearend contribution in support of the ministry of FamilyLife. We depend on those contributions for this ministry to happen. Between now and the end of the year—thanks to the generosity of some friends—every donation you make is going to be matched with double funds from friends of the ministry, who have agreed to match, two for one, every donation we receive up to a total now of $5 million.

But again, to take advantage of this matching gift, we need folks this week—we need you to go online before the 31st is over and make a donation at FamilyLifeToday.com or call us to make a donation at 1-800-FL-TODAY. Or if you’re going to mail a donation to us, just make sure it’s postmarked by December 31st. That enables us to take advantage of the matching-gift funds and enables you to take advantage of a tax deduction.

**Dennis:** Just to finish the rest of the story about the young man, who has got his own redemption story—he goes on to conclude—he said: “My wife and I have been married now for more than a decade. Our third child will be born this fall. *FamilyLife Today* is helping me defeat a generational pattern of destruction and establish a godly legacy for my children in a world where too few know Jesus Christ.”

If that’s what you’re all about—if you’d like to be a part of this ministry and keep on making that happen—pick up the phone / go online and say: “I stand with you guys. I want you to continue on with this broadcast.”

**Bob:** Again, the website is FamilyLifeToday.com; and the toll-free number is 1-800-FL-TODAY. We hope to hear from you before the new year so that your funds are matched and we can take advantage of this matching-gift opportunity.

Has it ever bothered you that you’ve got kind of a boring testimony?—[Laughter]—yours is kind of a boring testimony.
**Dennis:** Well, I never had it quite put like that, honestly; but it is a pretty simple testimony of how I came to faith in Christ. When I hear a story like the one we’re about to hear today, I can’t say that I wish I had a testimony like that, necessarily, because of the pain that it represents in a lot of different directions. Bob, I’m just glad I have a testimony. I’m glad that I know Jesus Christ; and He tracked down me, as a prodigal, and brought me to Himself.

We have a mom and her son—Angela Yuan and her son, Christopher. Welcome to our broadcast.

**Angela:** Thank you.

**Christopher:** Thanks for having us on.

**Dennis:** Together, Christopher and Angela have really forged quite a team. They travel and speak, both nationally and internationally, at churches, conferences, and youth conventions. Angela is a businesswoman and specializes in Chinese-American cultural causes. Christopher teaches at Moody Bible Institute. Together, they have written a book called *Out of a Far Country.* It’s subtitled: *A Gay Son’s Journey to God. A Broken Mother’s Search for Hope.*

I have to say—just back to what you talked about, Bob, earlier—this really is a great story of redemption. I’m going to begin with you, Christopher, because you were a dental student. You were on your way to becoming a dentist at the University of Louisville in Kentucky. There was a trip back home that you made that became a life-altering trip—not only for you—but also for you, Angela. Take us to that trip and explain what happened.

**Christopher:** Well, it was a year after I had moved to Louisville, Kentucky. At that point, you know, I was in my early twenties. I had a secret that I had kept from—a long time ago—from when I was, you know, in grade school. I finally thought, “Well, this is my time to no longer keep it a secret and to truly find who I was.” That is what I was thinking.

In that first year while I was in dental school, I came out of the closet. Those struggles—that I had from a young age—the first time I remember having those feelings—I was about nine years old—came across pornography. This was back in the ’70s. So, it was before there were even computers or internet. That was the first time that I realized that I had these feelings.

**Bob:** When you saw pornography, your attraction was to the men in the pornography?
Christopher: Yes; yes. I wouldn’t say that pornography was what caused this, but I definitely believe that pornography was a catalyst to awaken things in me that should not have been awoken at nine.

Dennis: You were 22 years old at the time; right?

Christopher: Yes, I was 22—just turning 23. I had a few weeks, during the summer, before I had to go back for summer school. It was actually the weekend of Mother’s Day. So, I went home. My mom, actually, kind of had suspicion because she had found, in my bedroom at home, some pornography that I had hidden. She confronted me that trip.

Bob: Angela, let me turn to you. When had you begun to become suspicious about Christopher and his sexuality?

Angela: Actually, that was back when he was 16 years old. He had one incident. He had some kind of relationship with an older man, so we went to counseling. We thought that was taken care of after a couple of sessions of counseling; but in the back of my mind, I was always afraid that this would come back again. So, when he came back, one year after dental school—actually, when I saw that a video tape was hidden behind a crawl space, I was even afraid to look at it.

Bob: So when Christopher came home, you had found this video.

Angela: Yes.

Bob: Did you confront him with it?

Angela: Yes, we did. I was hoping my husband would, but he didn’t. So, I spoke up. Then, after I asked him, “Are you still?—” he said, “Yes, I am gay.” You have to realize, Bob and Dennis, I was not a Christian, at that time. The only thing I could do was threaten. I said, “Either you choose homosexuality or you choose your family.” I cannot even imagine. Christopher just said, “I cannot change. If you cannot accept me, I have to leave.” That was a total shock to me. We thought, “Family—for Chinese—it is family.” That is most important.

Bob: You thought, when you confronted Christopher, he would say, “Okay, I’ll leave all this behind because family is that important to me.”

Angela: Exactly.

Bob: Christopher, that’s not what you said.

Christopher: You know, for Chinese, we view family to be very, very important; and yet, at that age, I thought: “I’m not Chinese. I’m American! American is about being
independent. I don’t need my family.” Besides, this was such a core part of me that, “If you can’t accept me, I have no other choice but to leave.”

Dennis: Christopher, you had said earlier, that during that first year in dental school, you had come out.

Christopher: Yes.

Dennis: As you came home on that Mother’s Day to see your mom and dad, had you planned on talking with them, and coming out with them, and sharing with them what you were experiencing?

Christopher: It wasn’t a plan, but I definitely was ready. I felt like this was the next step in coming out of the closet—in my journey of accepting that this is really who I was. I wanted to tell my parents. I didn’t want there to be any more secrets. I had already heard a lot, from my friends, the horror stories that they received from coming out to their parents—what they received from their parents.

So, in my mind, that was the story that was going to play out. I probably provoked it a little bit because let’s think about it—if my parents would have said: “Oh, that’s great! Let me come and meet all your friends!”—Well, that meant I still would have to have parents over my back. But if I could cut them off, then that was complete independence; and I could do whatever I wanted.

Dennis: It made it easier.

Christopher: It made it much easier.

Bob: Angela, you said that you were not a Christian, growing up. Had you had any spiritual development, at all, growing up?

Angela: Not at all.

Bob: Did you have any concept of God?

Angela: I heard about the word “God,” but I had no concept.

Bob: So, when Christopher said, “I’m leaving,” you responded from tradition / from the values that your family had held, growing up, but not from any spiritual foundation; right?

Angela: No, not at all. You know, I think I just felt embarrassed/shame—I think shame was more than anything else. Naturally, I felt angry/shame. I felt betrayal.
Dennis: You know, it’s interesting, Christopher, to hear you contrast a Chinese approach to family with an American approach to family. I found that to be very, very fascinating because you talked about how your family, from a Chinese perspective, was everything; but, as you’d learned in America, you needed to be independent. You needed to be able to exist on your own. In essence, breaking from your family represented life.

Christopher: Yes. I think we get that—certainly, being raised not in a Christian home—we’re taught independence, from grade school: “You have to be yourself,” “You have to respect others.” It’s about achieving what you want. That is so much focused upon the person and not focused upon, first, God, and then the family and the church.

Dennis: Right.

Christopher: So, yes, as important as that is, we’re completely missing the God-aspect.

Bob: You didn’t drive back to Louisville, from Chicago, with any sense of loss or shame. You drove back with a sense of empowerment and liberation; right?

Christopher: It was freedom. I felt that the apron strings were cut. This was it! I could now completely be free to do whatever I wanted to do. Besides, I had not only my friends back in Louisville that I was coming back to—that, in my mind, loved me, and accepted me exactly for who I was. They didn’t judge me / they didn’t look at me strange. Also, I had this relationship that I thought I was coming back to.

Dennis: So, you were moving in with another guy, at that point?

Christopher: Yes.

Bob: When you got back to Louisville, with this new-found liberation—that opened up the door for you to fully engage in the gay lifestyle—before, you had kind of been tentative; but now, there was nothing holding you back. You started clubbing, and school really became secondary.

Christopher: Well, you know, I wouldn’t have said it like that; but definitely, when I look back, I thought I could have both. I wanted to have my day life, which was pursuing a doctorate in dentistry. I was a professional student—that all together.

But then, in the evenings, I would be going out. I was a bartender. I would be working at these gay clubs. Certainly, I always want to give the caveat that not all gays and lesbians are promiscuous, and do drugs, and go out to the clubs; but that definitely is part of my story. Unfortunately, I got involved in that. Unfortunately, I also got involved in doing drugs, while I was going to dental school. Because I didn’t have a lot of money, I, then, began to sell drugs. And that—like you said—it just opened the door. Sin always
has a way of finding you. You don’t have to go looking for it. I began selling drugs, while in dental school, thinking that I could have both—the graduate student life and living as an openly-gay man in the gay community.

Well, finally, after some time, the school noticed that my grades were being affected. Also, my attendance had dropped. They had put me on probation. They had actually suspended me. Finally, I was just about three months before receiving my doctorate; and they expelled me.

Dennis: Wow! Meanwhile, Angela, you were watching all this spiral down in your son’s life. This had a different impact on you.

Angela: Yes.

Dennis: This was devastating.

Angela: Yes; because during that time, our marriage was broken also. We were in the process of doing the paperwork for a divorce. I just felt there was no reason for me to continue to live. I decided to end my life.

However, I felt the need to meet with a minister. Again, remember I was not a Christian. I had no religion background. For some reason, I wanted to see a minister. My husband was teaching at Loyola Dental School, and there’s a chaplain. I went to see him. He gave me a book on homosexuality. I took the book and got on the train—I bought a one-way train ticket to see Christopher, for the last time. I wanted to say, “Goodbye,” to him before I ended it all.

On the train, when I was reading the pamphlet, it helped me to realize God’s unconditional love. That was the Holy Spirit working in my heart. For the first time, I understood the meaning of unconditional love. We are all sinners; but God still loves us, in spite of our sin. So, I could love Christopher, in spite of him living as a gay man. God was changing my life, and I realized that God is the Creator. I was on the train for hours and hours. Then, after I got off the train—from the back of the pamphlet—I contacted a lady, and she began to disciple me. I went to see Christopher too. I was able to say, “I love you.”

Dennis: Wow!

Angela: Yes. Before, I didn’t want him. I felt he was rebellious. I hated him; but I wanted to say, “Goodbye,” to him. But because of that pamphlet, I was able to understand. During that same time, the lady discipled me for five weeks—I rented an extended-stay apartment in Louisville.

After I went back home, my husband realized the difference in me. He started going to church with me. We went to a Bible study called Bible Study Fellowship® together.
Through God’s Word, both of us just began to grow deeper and deeper in the knowledge of God and His Word.

**Dennis:** Christopher, I have to ask you—when your mom got off that train—I mean, the last words you had heard from her was, “Get out of our family!”

**Christopher:** Yes.

**Dennis:** “I’m ashamed of you.”

**Christopher:** Yes.

**Dennis:** Now, you are confronting a born-again follower of Jesus Christ, who has the love of God in her heart.

**Christopher:** Yes.

**Dennis:** How did that impact you?

**Christopher:** [Laughter] Well, she didn’t tell me she was coming. She surprised me at the dental school. I just thought, “What are you doing here?” because I’m thinking: “You are ruining my freedom! You’re really getting in the way of my goals.” But when she said, “I love you,” I knew that there was a difference because—before I left, I sensed that there was anger, and bitterness, and a “How could you do this to me?”-attitude—but now, when I heard, “I love you,” I was really taken aback.

**Dennis:** I think the message is clear regardless of what you’ve done, no matter where you are, no matter what lifestyle you’ve chosen—there is a God who loves you—who gave His Son, Jesus Christ, to make that statement—who died on a cross on behalf of your sins so you could be forgiven and who defeated death and is alive today. Because He’s alive, He can forgive you. He can offer you the free gift of eternal life. It is yours for the taking if you will accept Him, just as Angela did.

**Bob:** Yes. I don’t want to give away the rest of the story—but as our listeners can probably imagine—with Christopher sitting here, as well—eventually, you surrendered your life to Christ. We’re going to hear about that this week.

Let me just point our listeners to our website, FamilyLifeToday.com. If you go to the website, you’ll find a link that says “Two Ways to Live.” If you click on that link, it will lay out for you the two paths that are set before every person. I’d encourage you to take time today to read through that—especially, if you’d like to know more about what Angela’s talking about / how she surrendered her life and decided to follow Jesus as her Savior, her Lord, and her Master. Again, go to FamilyLifeToday.com and click the link that says “Two Ways to Live.”
And while you’re on the website, look for information about the book that Christopher and his mom have written called Out Of a Far County: A Gay Son’s Journey Back to God. A Broken Mother’s Search for Hope. You can order the book from us, online, at FamilyLifeToday.com. Or you can call to request your copy of the book. Our toll-free number is 1-800-FL-TODAY—1-800-358-6329—that’s 1-800-”F” as in family, “L” as in life, and then the word, “TODAY.”

Quickly—Dennis mentioned, at the beginning of today’s program, the matching-gift opportunity that we’re trying to take advantage of this week—here, in the last week of the year. We have just a few more days left where listeners can make a donation, online, at FamilyLifeToday.com or can call 1800-FL-TODAY to make a donation. Your donation is going to be matched with a double donation from our matching-gift fund, which is now at $5 million.

Again, we’re trying to take full advantage of this—we need your help to make that happen. So, if you can make a donation today, go to FamilyLifeToday.com or call 1-800-FL-TODAY and help us with a yearend contribution. We do hope to hear from you; and “Thanks,” in advance, for whatever you’re able to do in support of this program.

We hope you can join us back tomorrow. We’re going to hear more of Christopher Yuan’s story. We’ll hear about how he was a graduate student, a bartender, selling drugs, involved in a gay lifestyle, and how God got his attention. Hope you can tune in for that.

I want to thank our engineer today, Keith Lynch, along with our entire broadcast production team. On behalf of our host, Dennis Rainey, I’m Bob Lepine. See you back tomorrow for another edition of FamilyLife Today.

FamilyLife Today is a production of FamilyLife of Little Rock, Arkansas.
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