



the fellowship message

"Proclaiming freedom for the captives." ISAIAH 61

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"The Road to Freedom" by Willis Ward

The movie, *MATRIX*, has a scene where Neo is offered the choice of taking the blue pill or the red pill. The blue pill returns Neo to a state of slavery and invisible bondage. The red pill brings Neo into frightening reality. Morpheus says, "You take the blue pill and the story ends. You wake in your bed and believe whatever you want to believe. You take the red pill and ... I show you how deep the rabbit-hole goes..."

Facing the sexual sin and frustration in my life was similar to Neo taking the red pill. Homosexual lust, shame, and fear were a wall around my heart. God broke through this matrix to establish His will –to complete His desire for my life. Psalm 37: 6 says, "He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday". God is walking me through the process of change. My story describes my personal struggle and how God has brought healing to bear in my life.

I asked Jesus Christ into my heart at the age of four. I didn't want to go to hell. I knew I was a sinner and needed His blood to cover my sins. I believed John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes on Him should not perish but have everlasting life". This relationship was real. I grew up going to Sunday school, Vacation Bible School, prayer meetings, and Bible camps. My mom loved the Lord and did all she could to pour God's Word into me. She demonstrated a reverent fear of God through her humble, simple way of life. I can't thank her enough for bringing me to Jesus.

My father died in an airplane crash when I was two years old. I have only dim snapshot memories of him. My mom never re-married and raised seven children on her own. We lived on three acres in an old farm house near Port Townsend, Washington. I was the youngest.

I was a shy, sensitive guy and was labeled "Faggot" and "Gay-Bob" by my peers in junior high school. During football practice I was injured in my testicles and had to miss a few days of school. When I came back a new nickname, "Ruptured!", was added. I quit football and withdrew from my peers. I made a vow not to trust guys. The more I withdrew, the more I seemed to invite teasing and rejection.

When I was thirteen, a college friend of one of my older siblings spent the summer at my home. He brought hard core pornography magazines in one of his suitcases. I secretly snuck some of these magazines and exposed my mind to their toxic contents. Soon I began a habit of masturbating. Along with the sexual sin came shame. I was alone with this struggle. I was a good church boy and got most of my attention by being "good". I felt very self-conscious in Physical Education. Other guys seemed to be developing into adult men before me. I compared myself to them and grew envious. I felt I was some kind of mistake walking around. I was locked in a hopeless cycle of self-doubt and compulsive masturbation. I was too ashamed and fearful to seek help.

I experimented with homosexual activity in the 9th grade. This destroyed a friendship and left me feeling even more frustrated and alone. Were the teasing mocking guys at school right? Was I a homosexual? I acted out sexually with men again the summer after my senior year in high school. Full of panic I ran away from home and drove to Sacramento, California. I ended up at the office of the Bible School I was registered to attend. I planned to tell them what I had done and get help. A window of hope opened up as my pastor and



Willis Ward participated in the 2001-02 Upper Room Program. After graduating, God has led him to continue learning His Word through formal study at Mulnomah Biblical Seminary this fall.

others reached out to me with the love of Christ. Sadly, I held onto my secrets. I gave only a partial confession of my struggle. Self preservation took precedence over honest disclosure.

I acted out sexually toward another guy while in Bible school. I was horrified by my out-of-control behavior and hypocrisy. I asked forgiveness from my friend and went forward in church to rededicate my life to Christ. However, I didn't reveal my homosexual struggle. I told myself I could manage it, so it was to be just between the Lord and me.

On May 16, 1986 I married Felicia. We were planning to go into the ministry together. I didn't tell Felicia about my sexual falls or my struggles. God began to take us through a process. We both felt betrayed and victimized for the next three years. Selfishness and self-righteousness were deeply rooted in my heart and had to be ripped away. God used my marriage to humble me. Eventually I responded to the Lord in partial obedience and our relationship began to grow. We drew close. I began to enjoy this woman who had once seemed to be my enemy. We started going to a church that worshipped God freely and felt our relationships with God surge. I convinced myself I was doing well because twelve years had elapsed since my last homosexual "acting out."

I decided to finish my bachelor's degree at the University of Washington in 1997. I bought an "internet ready" computer to access the libraries, professors, and fellow students. The internet proved to be a powerful tool and a powerful link to my sexual insecurities. Like a dog returning to his vomit, soon I was looking at homosexual porn and masturbating. Dear God! What am I doing?!

My Deliverance

God brought an array of resources into my life to effect healing. He used a godly counselor, a forgiving wife, sincere friends, Christian books, and gave me opportunities to minister to others. He fathered me through my insecurities and promised to lead me out.

God brought a mature godly counselor into my life. Following one of my degrading sessions of internet porn I decided to search for "ministry and homosexuality". I found www.firststone.org

I contacted the director, Steve Black, and told him my situation over the telephone. Steve has been living in freedom over homosexuality since February of 1983. Steve reminded me emphatically that God loved me and that it was God who had led me to seek help. He encouraged me as I took the steps to disclose my struggle to my wife, to my pastor and to trusted friends.

God gave my wife a desire to demonstrate grace. Felicia began to read books on the subject of grace months before I confessed to her. We read *"What's So Amazing about Grace"* by

Philip Yancey, and *"The Discipline of Grace"* by Jerry Bridges. The day came when the longing to be intimate and "known" by my wife overcame the fear in my heart. After a couple warnings of needing to tell her something bad about my past I sat down and told her my story. Tears fell from her eyes as I revealed to her my pornography use, and the sins I committed before we were married. She asked for a few days to think, looked directly into my eyes, and told me "I forgive you." This was a giant step forward in my healing.

God gave me healthy male friendships. Secrecy fuels sexual sin. My steps out included telling my close brothers in the Lord what my trespasses were. Thank God they also extended God's grace and acceptance to me. Healthy male friendships helped me feel like one of the guys. I felt useful and real. Some of them confessed to me their own struggle with internet porn. A mutual accountability and respect boosted my confidence. I saw God beginning to use my brokenness for good in others lives.

God led me to a good book on the subject of Homosexuality. *"Sexual Healing"* by David Kyle Foster helped me to see the invisible baggage I was carrying around. My favorite quote from this book is on page 19: *"It is important as you begin your quest for sexual healing not to forget who does the healing (God does), and where the ability to achieve results comes from (it comes from God)."* I gained understanding of some of the decisions I made growing up and how they may have set me up for struggling with homosexual attractions.

God gave me an opportunity to extend His hope to others who struggle. This last year I have had the privilege of being an intern at Portland Fellowship. I've worked with the Taking Back Ground program helping men and women who want to walk in freedom from homosexuality. Getting the focus off of "ME" and forward to the work God has for me has been another key milestone in my deliverance.



Willis & Felicia with 2 1/2 year old daughter Kate

The Process Continues...

I have struggled with homosexuality. My life bears the marks of one who spent years in insecurity, defensive detachment, masturbation, isolation and fear. I thank God for the marks Jesus took upon Himself for me. He saw me in my brokenness and sent deliverance. He sent a trusted counselor, a faithful wife, sincere male friends, and even good books to restore me. I am still a work-in-process, but thank God for the hope I have of being conformed into the image of His Son! My heart goes out to those who are in bondage to sexual sin and are fighting to maintain an image that is not real.

If you are one of these people, please reach out for help. God will not forsake you. He knows you and loves you just as you are. He has the power and resources to help you.

farewell dinner celebration



Catherine, Kermit, Willis, Jason, Phil
Katie, Drew, Ellen, Rebecca

On June 6, the first group of interns gathered for a final celebration to commence their graduation from the Upper Room Leadership Development Program. It was a very personal evening with a wonderful meal, a time of personal reflection on the past year, and talk of what each of the five interns will be doing in the coming year.

After dinner, Phil Hobizal handed the official graduation certificate, then the Portland Fellowship Staff prayed and blessed each one of them. We have grown together over the past year and will certainly miss them all.

We still have space open for new interns this coming year. If you are ready to learn about becoming an effective leader, we

encourage you to check out the website and fill out an application.

sy rogers speaks again

Internationally acclaimed speaker, Sy Rogers, returns to Exodus this summer for a command performance and to build upon this year's conference theme, "Enduring Freedom". Sy's powerfully practical message will be a valuable addition to an already impressive lineup of workshop speakers, which include, Mario Bergner and June Hunt.

Sy will also be giving special focus to the youth who will attend the 27th Annual Exodus conference. Jason Thompson, director of Exodus Youth says, "It is an honor and privilege for Exodus Youth to have Sy Rogers be a part of the Exodus conference again this year! At last year's conference the young people were amazed and blessed to have his time, wisdom, and passion during an evening of Q&A. This year Sy has graciously agreed to another Q&A session along with some workshops! It was my favorite part of last year's conference, so I am very much looking forward to another year with Sy." If you haven't done so already, register soon for this exciting conference.



God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble



"On a Queer Day" - reads the sign
on this day of pride.

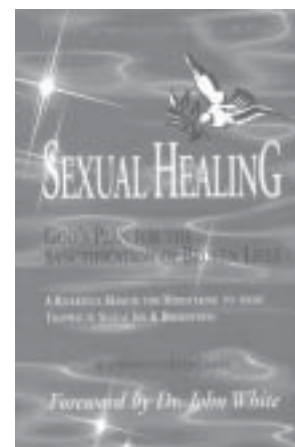
Paul writes that we all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory and are in need of the message of the cross. *Sadly, many not only continue to do the very things that oppose God, but they also approve of those who practice them (Romans 1).* Every Father's Day a very ironic, yet sad event takes place in Portland; the annual Gay Pride Parade. The day in which Fathers are to be celebrated, is the day when many men and women with wounds from their own fathers find comfort and peace with one another.

Going downtown on Sunday brought sorrow to my heart. Walking past "Free HIV testing" booths, signs on floats that read, "pervert pride", topless women expressing to the world that they

will **not** be hurt again, and church groups that proclaim that God blesses the homosexual, brought a tremendous sense of sadness and compassion for lost people. As I walked the streets asking God to use me in any way he saw fit, I ran into a couple of guys who use to attend the Portland Fellowship meetings. With beer in hand, and smiles on their faces, they celebrated their pride. This grieved me more. The Enemy, at least for now, has won over their lives.

Many have asked staff members at Portland Fellowship why we have not tried to combat the gay agenda, the promotion of gay clubs in school, the Oregon gay registry, and the ongoing pro-gay propaganda around the city. Although we believe Christians should be involved in protecting our society from the onslaught of immorality, we have been primarily called to minister to those struggling with sexual brokenness and those who desire help.

Our response to the gay pride parade and other pro-gay events is simple: 'Come to Christ and stand *against* sin with us'. Our desire is to be more like Christ and to walk in the true identity that only God can give us. I didn't have to tell them about the choices they were making, all I could do is be there to love and invite them back into God's family. - Jason Thompson



This book is designed as a reference tool for:

- *...those who want to know how to help their friends and loved ones who are trapped in sexual sin.
- *...those who have a calling to lay or professional ministry.
- *...those who silently suffer with their own personal struggle over sexual sin and brokenness.
- *...those who want a biblical approach, from someone who has been there.

David Kyle Foster, is the President of "Mastering Life Ministries" in Nashville, TN. He has a Master of Divinity degree from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. In 1980, Christ rescued David from 20 years of extreme sexual addiction and moral rebellion. He had been pursuing a successful acting career in Hollywood up to that point, which he abandoned for the ministry.

If you would like a copy of Sexual Healing, you can do so by ordering through the web at: masteringlife.org. There you will find other books writing by Foster including video tapes and other printed resources.

For other resources check out the Exodus website at: www.exodusnorthamerica.org

july-august calendar & services

july 1; august 12
Monthly board meeting

july 2,9,16,23, 30;
august 6,13,20, 27

Changes that Heal

Summer video series by Dr. Henry Cloud. The evening consists of viewing a short video and then open discussion.

Tuesday evenings 7 p.m.

july 4
Happy Independence Day!
Office Closed

july 12; august 9
**Family and Friends
Group**

If you have a loved one involved in homosexuality, please join us for encouragement, prayer, and support.

Second Friday of each month. 7 p.m.

july 14
**Rolling Hills
Community Church**
Adult Study Group
Speaker: Jason Thompson

july 20 - august 5
**Exodus North American
Annual Conference**
Wheaton, IL
Jason and Phil will be attending

Special events, speaking opportunities, and monthly updates

Can be viewed on our website:
www.portlandfellowship.com

Counseling, Speaking, and Youth Support

Can be arranged through the office.

furnishing the upper room.

As we complete the first year of the Upper Room Intern Program we are looking at our need to furnish the four bedrooms and living area for the next group of participants coming this fall. This past year was a year of transition. We started out the year with an unfinished space and throughout



the common living room

the year were able to finish the construction and move our very understanding and gracious interns into their bedrooms. The furniture for this last year was loaned, borrowed, or provided by the interns themselves. However, we would like to finish up our project

by furnishing each of the rooms with a single bed, a dresser, a nightstand, and a lamp.

For the main room, we need an entertainment center, stereo system, couches and/or comfortable chairs. In addition to furniture, we would like to develop the space to be a welcoming place to entertain. It would be good to have a few group games onhand, a VCR or DVD player, and television. If you have any of these items and were thinking of upgrading, would you please consider donating them to Portland Fellowship?

Although we know 'beggars shall not be choosers', we do ask for these items to be in good condition. As the interns work with the sexually broken, it is good for them to go home to intact furniture. Of course, those of you who have the resources to help furnish these rooms with new items, we will be more than happy to accept your contribution in that way as well.

special thanks!

The staff of Portland Fellowship, as well as the many individuals who benefit from our services, are extremely thankful to the many supporters who faithfully give each month to this Kingdom work.

We specifically want to thank those who have given to special projects including the purchase of a new computer system for the next group of interns and the money specifically given to continue the very important work with the youth.

prayer for staff member

Catherine Chapman, our project coordinator is taking a much needed summer break from Portland Fellowship. We ask you to pray for strength, health, and encouragement for Catherine and her family these summer months.

As Catherine is away, the responsibilities in the office will fall on Phil, Jason, and Rebecca. Keep the staff in your prayers as they continue to carry out all the tasks before them. Thank you.



PORTLAND

fellowship

The Fellowship Message
is a monthly publication of
The Portland fellowship,
a ministry proclaiming freedom
from homosexuality through
the power of Jesus Christ

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