



# the fellowship message

"Proclaiming freedom for the captives." ISAIAH 61

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## Truly a Miracle *by Chuck Walker*

**"Everything I felt about my dad began to change, and my wounds began to heal." A *Taking Back Ground* participant writes of a long-sought breakthrough...**

Hi Jason, I thought it would be good to fill you in on what God has been doing in my life since I started the program at PF, one year ago. Please keep in mind that my Dad and I have been estranged for the past two years. We have been estranged many times before by my choice, but the past two years have been by Dad's choice. Mom has been open with me and said many times, "Dad will never change his mind." Until last winter, I can't say that I minded.

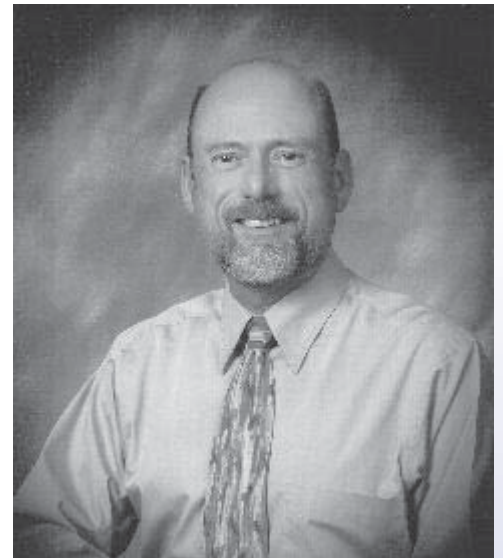
While at PF, the Lord has revealed many things to me about myself and why I see men the way I do. I believe it was by last spring that I began to realize I had been a huge part of the problem with my Dad. I had hated my Dad and been angry with him since I was 5 or 6 years old. I hated everything about him—the way he walked, his hands, his movements, the way he talked, etc. Over the years, I have tolerated him but I rejected all the attempts he has made at bonding with me, partly out of my anger and partly out of the fear of once more being rejected. I just wasn't going to let him hurt me again. I had made a vow without realizing it.

Last December, I began to realize that I had been rejecting all male relationships outside the gay lifestyle. I had no healthy male relationships. As I became more aware of this, I decided I must break the cycle. I found myself at a holiday family reunion making efforts to speak with the men in my family rather than the women as I usually had. It was great. God seemed to be honoring my obedience. The men in my family responded well to me. In particular, I chatted with my Dad's younger brother Dave, a man I'd only just known the basics about all these years. But I did know he was a godly man.

In our conversation, Dave seemed to take interest in me. I felt something I'd not felt before, something fresh and healthy. Dave talked about his studio where he taught woodcarving classes. He had headed the five-year project to carve by hand all the horses for the carousel at a local park. All this fascinated me, and he took advantage of this by inviting me to give him a call.

Well, I procrastinated for several weeks. But I told my small group at PF about the encounter and asked them to hold me accountable to follow through with it. I knew deep down inside that this was important, but I was focusing more on the artistic exposure that I'd be getting which was also something that I had been praying about.

In February, one of Dad's sisters died. We held a family gathering in her honor at the Carousel Park. I never had to worry about running into Dad, since he never went to family gatherings. But there I was, once again, getting to chat with my uncle. He was as warm as ever and strongly encouraged me to come visit him at his studio. I was moved by his interest in me. It was so sincere and felt so healthy.



*Chuck will complete his second year of Taking Back Ground this Spring.*

A couple of weeks later I called my Uncle Dave and set a date to come by his studio. (Need I even mention all the doubts and lies that entered my mind to keep me from going.) But I knew this was God's doing, so I went for a visit.

When I walked into that studio my heart skipped a few beats. What an inspiring place to be with all the carousel horses in all shapes and sizes in various stages of completion! I listened to him chat with some other visitors. He was so patient with them. Certainly not like my Dad would be. Dad tended to shoo away visitors.

After the visitors had left, Dave spent a lot of time with me, showing me around this wonderful place. I was so inspired. I must have spent hours there with him and my aunt that afternoon. After touring the studio, we went into their home and there we had conversation about God and our relationships with Him. I mean we really had fellowship with one another! Dave commented, after a couple of hours, that he never really fellowshiped with anyone like that in our family and expressed how much he enjoyed it. So had I. I left there exhilarated. I decided that I would be taking classes from him by May. And I did.

As I spent time with Dave, I noticed his amazing abilities to encourage and inspire his students. I also realized how much he was like my Dad. I mean *just* like my Dad! He walked like Dad and talked like Dad. He used the same expressions and bent over to pet a dog just like Dad. But *he* was nice. Now my perceptions were being questioned. If I could like my uncle so much when he was so like my Dad – and all the things I hated about my Dad – then possibly I had believed many lies.

Over the weeks that followed, Dave and I continued to have the sweetest fellowship. A bond was taking place, one that was initiated and blessed by God. My mind began to clear as the uncanny resemblance between Dad and Dave became more intense. Many times I would be in the middle of carving on a project, and Dave would come to my workbench to give me some guidance and show me some helpful techniques. I would find myself looking down a Dave's hands as he guided the tools into the wood. But it wasn't Dave's hands; it was Dad's hands. It wasn't Dave standing there; it was Dad. And I began to experience an amazing journey in God's healing process. Everything I'd felt about my Dad was being challenged. And the wounds began to heal. And I began to love my Dad and miss him.

So what do I do now? My Dad's anger now kept me from him. I began to pray and to ask for prayer, for my Dad and the healing of our relationship. I've prayed for Dad everyday. Someone once told me that God would answer the prayers of those who are persistent.

Then my Mom called me. I was just getting ready to go to Dave's to work with him. She said that Dad had tried to call me a couple of

times the past week. My heart stopped as Mom continued, "Dad wants you to come to visit."

I waited until I was on my way to Dave's before I let all the emotions come out. I felt God had touched me with one of the most beautiful blessings a man could ever desire. When I got the studio and shared this with Dave, he gave me a huge hug and we both got very misty-eyed. He was touched as well. I certainly feel like I have two dads now.

I had to wait until Sunday to visit Dad and Mom. Dad likes some notice and I respect that very much now. We had a very nice time. What I thought might be a 90-minute visit turned into 4 hours. There were times that he talked a lot about many things, but I prayed God would give me patience and an opportunity to tell Dad I was sorry for so many things. It finally got to the point where it didn't look like this would be the opportunity I'd prayed for.

But just before I left, I was able to tell Dad how much I appreciated him having me over and how much it meant to me. He said he really enjoyed our visit as well. Then he said that he knew his anger had caused many problems over the years. He admitted his problems with alcohol and his selfishness all his life. Then I told Dad how sorry I'd been too, for how angry I'd been and I told him how much I appreciated him and Mom for all the things they'd done in my life- wonderful things.

This was truly a miracle. I told my sister about it an hour later. I happened to be driving down the road and she turned in front of me in her little ice cream truck. We couldn't believe the odds that we would run into each other while she was working. But I told her about how long I stayed at Dad and Mom's and what he said to me. Her mouth dropped open and stayed that way for a while. She was speechless.

Thanks, Jason, for keeping this ministry alive and fighting the fight. It's so worth it! I pray others will experience God's healing power in their lives as I have.

God is setting me *free*. And I am strongly walking with God as a *man*. My name, Charles, means "strong, manly, man of God." My mother's maiden name is Freeman, and my last name is Walker. I love that. He is giving me an amazing song to sing.

Love in Christ,

Chuck



*Chuck and his uncle working together on a carousel horse*

# REDEEMING the Sexual Generation

A Sy Roger's Seminar

## sy rogers returns to portland

Internationally known communicator Sy Rogers has been invited to return to Portland for an all day conference on Saturday, April 2nd, hosted at Mt. Scott Church of God. (10603 SE Henderson Street in Portland.)

It is embarrassing for most Christians to talk about sex, but God has gifted some people to address the issue with wisdom, sensitivity, confidence and even humor. Sy Rogers is one of those people. Sy shares from his own inspiring experience of overcoming abuse and sexual brokenness.

Sy is an acclaimed speaker as well an award-winning talk show host, teacher, recording artist and pastor. He shares a powerful message of hope and life-changing insights for the church today. Using personal testimony and a clear, practical biblical message, Sy challenges listeners to experience the freedom that can be found only in Jesus Christ.

Topics include: **Reasons why Christians WILL have sexual struggles; Powerful principles for redeeming sexuality; Realistic expectations - What redemption will do and will not do for those who struggle; and Five major categories of sexual problems in the church.** Please mark your calendar to join us on April 2 for the Sy Rogers seminar. The cost for the event is only \$35.00. For more information and to register on-line, go to [www.SySeminar.com](http://www.SySeminar.com)

## additional 'sy'-tings

In addition to the seminar on April 2, Sy will be making several other appearances in the Portland area this Spring. On March 11, Sy will be the special guest speaker for our Friends and Family support group at PF. This will be a evening of encouragement for anyone who has a loved one in the gay lifestyle. Immediately after this event, Sy will be joining TBG participants and alumni at our annual retreat on the Oregon coast where he will serve as our guest speaker. This retreat has limited space available and is open to current participants and alumni only. Call the PF office for details. In addition to the seminar in April, Sy will be speaking at two local churches. Sy will be presenting April 1 at a special Friday evening service at Trinity Fellowship in Portland. On April 3, Sy will be delivering the Sunday morning message at Harvest Community Church in Hillsboro. Call each church for specific details.

## available resources

Here are just a few outstanding resources that can be ordered on the web at [www.syrogers.com](http://www.syrogers.com).



### *one of the boys:*

For those of you who have been wanting to know more about Sy, *One of the Boys*, a one-hour video, talks about his personal experience. He shares his own journey of sexual/emotional abuse and brokenness, the resulting confusion it created, and the dramatic intervention that changed the course of his life. Whether you or your family are facing similar struggles or you want a better understanding of these issues and the character of God, this encouraging and inspiring message is for you.

### *lessons learned:*

A collection of six of Sy's favorite teachings. Four professionally produced VHS tapes cover almost six hours of educational and empowering insights learned in Sy's personal and professional experience around the world. Teachings include: **The Power of Forgiveness** (How to find freedom from bitterness when others have done you wrong) **Realistic Expectations** (Have you been discouraged in your ongoing struggles? Here's what Sy's learned you should - and should NOT- expect out of Christianity - why it takes so long to get over problems and why that's perfectly normal and biblical) **What Works For Me** (What keeps Sy on track with God all these years in spite of his very real weaknesses) **The Power of Community** (Four key relationship systems that God has used in Sy's life - and uses around the world to nourish and heal) **Renewing the Mind** (What it really means - and how biology and the Bible work together in transforming troublesome impulses and behaviours) **Relapse Prevention** (Steps that Sy takes to maintain integrity in a world of risk within and without).



## march - april calendar & services

march 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

### Open Group Meetings

Tuesdays in March are open to all who wish to attend. 7:00-8:30 p.m. Please call the office for directions and details.

march 2

### Crossroads Community

Drew will be speaking to the church youth group.

march 3

### A.W.A.R.E

Jason will be speaking at an abstinence training seminar.

march 8

### Open Mics Open Minds

Drew will be speaking at Portland Community College's Rock Creek Campus. 11 a.m.

march 11, 12, 13

### 2005 Fellowship Retreat

Our annual retreat is held on the Oregon coast. Registration is open to current TBG participants and alumni. Special Guest: Sy Rodgers.

march 11, april 8

### Family & Friends Group

Support for family and friends with loved ones struggling with homosexuality. 7:00 p.m.

april 2

### Sy Rogers Conference

PF will be hosting Sy Rogers this year for our annual conference. (Sy will be speaking Friday, April 1. See page three for details.)

april 5, 12, 19, 26

### Taking Back Ground

Discipleship program for men and women struggling with unwanted same-sex attractions.

### Additional updates:

[www.portlandfellowship.com](http://www.portlandfellowship.com)

### Counseling and youth support

Can be arranged through the office.

## passing the baton

At the end of February, Joanne McBride stepped down from her position as Women's Ministry Coordinator here at Portland Fellowship. *"It's time to move on. Although I will greatly miss working here, I look forward to seeing where God leads me next."* Joanne is currently pursuing her Master's degree in theological studies at Multnomah. Joanne desires to complete her degree while maintaining consistent relationships with family and friends, as she pursues life with more relational and spiritual balance.



Although Joanne has relinquished her staff position, she will continue to help teach and lead a women's group for *Taking Back Ground*. In the meantime, Catherine Chapman has stepped into the women's leadership role. Catherine brings with her a wealth of talent and experience, including expertise in counseling and women's issues. She will be a blessing to Portland Fellowship and to the women. We are excited to welcome Catherine as a member of the team, and all look forward with anticipation to the new things God will be doing in the coming year.

## prayer requests

Many of our participants are seeking reconciliation with parents. Please pray for God to heal the hearts of the parents and of their sons and daughters.

Pray for our *Taking Back Ground* participants as they attend the Spring Retreat at the coast.

Pray for Sy Rogers who will lead our retreat and conference. Pray for safe travel.

Please pray for the staff as we prepare for speaking engagements, the Spring conference and the Spring session of *Taking Back Ground*.

Please pray for the April Conference, that it will reach those who need to hear the message of healing from sexual brokenness.

Please pray for our interns as they take on increasing responsibility in leading groups and public speaking. Ask the Lord to begin making clear to them the specific ministry to which they are being called.

Please pray for Catherine and Joanne as they transition the role of women's ministry leader. Pray also for the women of *Taking Back Ground* as they adjust to this change.



## 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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