



the fellowship message

"Proclaiming freedom for the captives." ISAIAH 61

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God's Healing Hands Sue Platt

I want to start by saying God does perform miracles! He performed one in my heart.

I was raised in a loving Christian home with three brothers and had the benefit of two parents. We attended regular church services and most of my childhood friends were from church. Around the age of seven my next door neighbor began grooming me for sexual molestation. He paid attention to me and had the answer to all of life's curious questions. *Why is the earth round? Where do stars come from?* Eventually he took advantage of my curiosity and cornered me in his office, behind closed doors. The sexual assault continued for approximately eight to ten years. I can't fully explain the confusion those times brought. It felt wonderful to have someone's complete attention, yet I felt dirty and betrayed by him. He destroyed a little girl's ability to understand the difference between love and sex.

This spurred all kinds of rebellion in me. As an adolescent I began experimenting with alcohol and drugs. By the age of 16, I was sexually active with my boyfriend. I was convinced that I had to give sex for love and attention; unfortunately, too many boys were happy to take advantage of the distortion in my heart. In the back of my mind I could tell I was a different than the other girls around me. I was more interested in typical male hobbies. Later in high school a man I babysat for, took advantage of my innocence, adding anger and frustration to the turmoil in my life. I continued to falter in my walk with the Lord and built self-protective walls that would take decades to crumble.

At the age of 18, I couldn't face my parents with the news of a pregnancy. I was full of shame and guilt over so many things, so I had an abortion. I was falling into despair at the same time I thought I was falling in love. During high school I had met Brian. We just knew that we were meant to be together. We married in November 1985, but after five years were divorced.

What occurred next was something I wasn't expecting at all! I found myself in a relationship with a woman named Lisa. She understood me, we could relate to each other. Lisa was a source of safety and security. Due to my blurred opinion of men, I thought I had finally discovered the reason I always felt out of place with girls. But as the next five years unraveled, Lisa and I engaged in a relationship that was deeply painful and full of lies. She broke my heart over and over again through her unfaithfulness. We finally split up and I began going to the local lesbian bar in Colorado Springs where we lived.

Soon after, at that very same bar I met Brenda. We jump-started a relationship and were living together within weeks of meeting. She and I lived together for seven years while my life was getting more and more out of control. Most nights after work I was using alcohol and drugs at the local bar. I was becoming more entrenched in local gay society and politics. The grip satan had on me was tightening.



Sue will finish her second year of Taking Back Ground this May

I knew some Christians, but when they attempted to talk to me about the Lord I would tell them, “*Been there, done that, got the t-shirt, not going back.*” My family kept praying that I would somehow return to the ways I had learned. It was heartbreaking for them to see my life crumble into despair. Every time my relationships would fail, Mom would ask me to come home. After Brenda and I broke things off, I developed a new resolve in life. I was going to remain single for awhile to figure out what was wrong with me. I wanted to know why I kept failing the people I loved. Then I met Ann...

Ann was intelligent, beautiful and had a great sense of humor. We started spending a lot of time together. Again the relationship started off very fast and soon we were spending every night at each other's home. Within a couple months, I had purchased a home for us, two new cars, and we had all the stuff anyone could want or need. Life was going great! I finally met the woman I would spend the rest of my life with. But during the holidays in 2002 Ann and I started to fight a lot. She was, in my opinion, suffering from depression. I could not figure out why our relationship was falling apart, and worse yet, I was unable to stop it. Again my dream life was fading into a deep bottomless pit.

One Sunday, Ann and I returned from an outing and starting arguing about the dog. She cornered me in a room of our home and began hitting me on the sides of my head. I did what I could to defend myself. Eventually I was able to push my way past her and get my truck keys and wallet. Shirtless, I ran out of the house and jumped into my truck, then I realized she had laid herself on the ground behind my tire so I couldn't leave. I was choking from this oppression. I had finally reached rock bottom. My emotional, financial and spiritual life was in ruins. The house I had built on sand was sliding into the depths of a deep, dark ocean. My life was empty. I kept putting a tremendous amount of faith into people that broke my heart. I started thinking about the patterns I was establishing in my life and with the help of a couple of friends I began attending college. I was attempting to build up my broken spirit. I was trying to find a way to distract myself from my problems without putting in the hard work to answer the “whys.” Only I didn't know that God had bigger plans in store for me.

A few months later, I decided living near my family was important to me, and called Dad. We loaded up a moving truck with what was left of my worldly possessions and drove

it all home to Oregon. On the drive back I asked my Dad to respect my choice to not attend church. I explained that if I wanted to go I would need to make that decision on my own. I did not want any pressure from him and Mom. He assured me that they would respect my decision. My brother Steve and I were able to spend a lot of time together and he shared his feelings about my messed up childhood and how I had responded to it by rebelling against God. He shared his personal testimony with me and encouraged me to wrestle with the possibility that God did exist.

I chewed on that for awhile. One night my Dad came to me and invited me to join him and Mom at church the following morning. In my mind was like, “*Yeah right, whatever.*” I thanked him for the offer and told him I would think about it. The next day I just couldn't sleep in like usual. I was surprised

to find myself up at eight, showered, and walking out the door dressed for church at nine! At nine-thirty I was sitting at the end of the church pew that my folks were sitting in. By ten-thirty I had made a life changing decision to allow God to take my broken life and change me from the inside out into the woman He had intended me to be.



Sue enjoying a moment with her grandparents.

In February 2004, the senior pastor of the church I'd been attending for the past three years, recommended I check out Portland Fellowship. So I called up PF and

started the program that spring. Over the last 26 months I have been learning more about what caused me to turn from God and seek answers in people. I have realized that I never got the chance to grow up like a kid should, without looking over my shoulder for the next person to take advantage of me. God has blessed me with several close, healthy relationships with women. I am happy to report that my struggle with same-sex attraction has been greatly diminished. There are moments where I am tempted but God has helped me to flee from evil and learn from my mistakes. The reality of taking every thought captive and making it obedient to Christ has been a powerful help in time of temptation (2 Corinthians 10:5). I have found that daily time in prayer and God's word has helped me strive for the straight and narrow path.

I would encourage anyone struggling with this sin to seek the Lord's forgiveness for acting out. To locate a ministry such as Portland Fellowship and finally, find a home church that teaches God's word. I encourage you in Christ, to walk with me and my brothers and sisters in fulfilling God's plan for **your** life. God does perform miracles!

homosexuality and truth seminar

On Saturday April 8th, Portland Fellowship hosted a one day seminar featuring author and counselor Joe Dallas. Over 240 people attended the seminar, which focused on equipping the body of Christ to effectively understand and engage in relationship with those in the homosexual community. Not only was this the most highly attended educational event that Portland Fellowship has ever put on, but of the over 240 people in attendance, over 30 were from the Deaf community. With homosexuality being a significant issue within this community, it was fantastic to see such a strong showing at the seminar.

This was a wonderfully successful seminar for Portland Fellowship, and we are grateful for Cedar Mill Bible Church for their help and support in putting together this event.

seminar available on cd

Several individuals who attended on April 8th asked if the seminar was going to be made available on CD. We are happy to announce that we are now able to make that available for purchase on our website. We are offering the sessions individually at \$5.00, or all six sessions for \$20.00 plus s/h.

Topics covered at the seminar include: How should we respond, An effective witness, An effective dialogue, Understanding pro-gay theology, When homosexuality hits home, as well as a Q and A session.



Seminar team standing ready for registration to begin.

upper room program accepting applications

Portland Fellowship has something to offer that is unique among the Exodus ministries – a nine-month residency program that prepares men and women to minister to those struggling with sexual brokenness. Six or seven people are selected each year to work alongside PF's staff, attend classes taught by local professionals, participate in *Taking Back Ground* and other PF ministries, and receive weekly mentoring.

The instruction includes topics pertinent to this ministry: listening skills, personality factors, family dynamics, conflict management, suicide prevention and others. Additional topics are those general to para-church ministry: finances for non-profits, use of media, planning conferences, and much more.



Current PF Interns enjoying a day at Ecola State Park

The Upper Room program allows interns to work part-time or attend school while in the program. Some receive credit for their internship with local colleges or seminaries.

Personal development is integral to the program. Interns have a weekly session with a staff member to discuss their life in Christ, vocational development, and to continue healing. Many of the interns have struggled, or do struggle with same-sex attraction, although some interns have different challenges. All of us help one another in our common struggle with sin and personal brokenness.

The residents usually live in Fellowship House, our historic home near downtown Portland, and enjoy the benefits (and challenges!) of being in community. In addition to a weekly communal meal (always a culinary treat), the interns enjoy hikes, movies and other recreational events.

The community is steeped in prayer. Each Thursday afternoon, the interns take time for scripture Reading and Reflection (dubbed R & R). Later in the evening, the Upper Room itself – the common room on the third floor of our house – becomes the venue of deep intercession for each other. In the course of the year, each intern makes a private retreat in a beautiful natural setting, and the entire community shares a group retreat away from Portland.

Persons interested in being an Upper Room intern should contact Jim Thompson. Additional information about the program and our current interns is available at PF's website.

may - june calendar & services

may 2, 9, 16, 23

Taking Back Ground

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

may 12 & june 9

Family & Friends Group

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

may 20

PF Fundraiser

Georgene Rice will be our featured guest for this dinner banquet at OMSI.

may 24

Upper Room Celebration

An evening of prayer, fellowship and celebration for the Upper Room interns and staff.

may 30

TBG Graduation

Open to current participants of the *Taking Back Ground* program. A night of celebration for those who are completing the program.

june 6, 13, 20, 27

Open Group

Portland Fellowship invites anyone interested in learning more about the ministry, sharing their story, or simply listening to others to join us every Tuesday night in June at 7p.m. All are welcome!

Are you interested?

If you are interested in having a staff member or intern speak at your church, youth group, college, or fellowship group contact the PF office.

Additional updates:

www.portlandfellowship.com

Counseling and youth support

Can be arranged through the office.

banquet fundraiser



On Saturday, May 20th we will be holding a fundraising banquet at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry. Georgene Rice, from KPDQ, has been a great support to PF for many years and will be our MC for the evening. Guests will hear

personal stories of how their lives have been dramatically changed through the work of Portland Fellowship. This event will welcome new supporters and will help fund our growing ministry. We are excited to share that the event is fully paid for and we have a challenge grant from Mission Increase for \$50,000.

If you would like to invite someone who may be interested in supporting this work, please call the office for your personal RSVP. You are also welcome to send a special gift to PF to be matched that evening. Simply indicate "Challenge Grant" on your gift.

prayer for the staff

Each of us on staff look forward to summer, and the much needed time of refreshment and renewal that it brings. Please be in prayer for the staff during this season.

Jason- Jason will be taking a well-earned two month sabbatical this summer. He and his family are looking forward to a time of rest and relaxation.

Catherine- The Chapman family will make their annual trek to Santa Cruz California to attend the Joni Erickson-Tada Camp for families with members with disabilities. Please pray for rest and replenishment.

Jim- Jim will be taking some vacation time to spend with his wife Pat this summer. Please pray for rest and renewal.

Drew- Drew and his wife Suzanne are expecting the birth of their first child, a baby girl in early June. Please pray for Suzanne, and for the baby's health and safety during the delivery.

Steve- Steve will be spending time with family, as well as preparing for his wedding to Darla this fall. Please pray for a joyfully and restful summer.



P O R T L A N D

f e l l o w s h i p

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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