



# the fellowship message

"Proclaiming freedom for the captives." ISAIAH 61

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## "Why, God?" ... by Scott Hartzell

Proverbs 3:5-6 **"TRUST** in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in **ALL** your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight." There is so much comfort and truth laced within this verse, yet for as long as I can remember, the theme question of my life to God was "Why?"

I grew up in a loving Christian home, but "why, God, did I still feel empty?" My father was in the Navy for about the first five years of my life. I have few memories of him until he returned home at about the same time that my little brother was born. I remember thinking that he was only home because my brother was born. "Why, God, wasn't he home for me?" I know this now to be untrue, but my perception at that age was such that I did feel he loved my brother more than I and that's when I made an almost unconscious decision to reject him. In so doing, I was pushing away the one person that could affirm my own masculinity.

I accepted the Lord when I was in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. I was so excited that I was telling everybody the next day at school. No one returned my excitement. "Why, God, was no one as excited about this as I was?" By around the third grade the other boys in class began making fun of me, and calling me names like girl, gay, fag and so on. I didn't know what being gay or a fag even was at that time. "Why, God, are they making fun of me? What did I do? Why, God, are You letting this happen?" It became much easier to be friends with girls, and all throughout my school years the closest friends I had were girls. "Why, God, don't the other boys like me? Why am I different?" I tried playing soccer in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade where there was a boy on the team who consistently teased me and even got physically aggressive a couple times. When my family decided to move that year, I was excited to start over in a new school and a new area. I thought maybe things would be different, but I was wrong. The teasing continued even there. There was one boy in particular that consistently teased me throughout middle and high school. "Why, God? Why me?" In 8<sup>th</sup> grade, after an incidence with this kid, I walked into the boys restroom. "Why, God, am I alive?" I began to pound my head against the cement wall, hoping that it would take the pain away and even take my life away. I ended up passing out and had gashed my head open slightly giving myself a mild concussion. When people asked what happened I just told them I was running late to class and ran into another student. No one questioned that. "Why, God, am I still alive?"

At this point, I had learned to keep things bottled in and just retreated into myself to nurse the pain. About my freshman year, I discovered porn. This was the start of my porn addiction, but also became an outlet for my pain and stress. "Why, God, do I enjoy this when I know it's so wrong?" During my freshman year in high school I was molested by a substitute teacher in the restroom. I immediately reported it to a counselor. Shaking and scared, I was taken to the principle to tell him my story. The



Scott serves on the leadership team of Mid-Valley Fellowship, a sister ministry of PF.

principle called the teacher down with me in the office, confronted him, and of course he denied it. Why, God? What is wrong with me? My parents and I tried pressing charges. The police did their investigation, during which they took me into a room alone and basically said that they felt I had provoked the teacher. Also, since he was African American, they somehow concluded that I must have been prejudice and wanted to get him in trouble. Am I really gay? Why are you letting this happen? My parents wanted me to get counseling but I told them I was fine. Why God? Why would anyone care?

I did not have my first sexual experience with another man until after high school. This encounter turned into many. All the while I was leading this double life, involved in church and worship, hung out with friends, but no one knew what was happening in the dark. I reached a point when I could no longer handle the duplicity of my life. I was about to drive my truck off a bridge and in that moment I called out to God one last time before hitting the gas.

I audibly heard him speak the words "Eugene Bible College". It was enough to prevent me from driving over the edge. I looked into the college and in the fall of 1998, I left all that I knew and trekked 2000+ miles away to attend Bible College. It wasn't long until a male student leader caught me at a vulnerable time and brought my life spiraling back into the duplicity of Bible student by day and sex addict by night. Why, God, can't I be free of this?

I was married in 2003 to a woman who was beautiful both inside and out. She had a son that I adopted just after we married. The pressure of trying to be a husband and father, when I hadn't a clue what it meant to be a man, was overwhelming, not to mention the pressure of being responsible for more than just myself. I turned to old ways of coping and soon brought adultery into my marriage. When a prominent leader in Colorado fell, I began thinking that I did not want to be in my 50's and have all of this catch up with me and destroy my family and ministry. Up to this point, my wife knew about my struggles but I had always presented it in a way that indicated it was no longer an issue. I had read many books, been to many seminars and conferences, and even attended dozens of counseling sessions. I finally decided to get connected to Portland Fellowship. I had found them online years before and even spoke with the current director

at that time. I was now ready to face these issues in my life and get all the answers to the "Why God?" questions that I had. The Lord met me in amazing ways, surrounding me with love and with others that had the same struggles. To know I was not alone was very freeing. I confessed to my wife the adultery that had taken place and she met me with complete grace and love and forgiveness. Why, God, is she sticking this out with me? God revealed His heart as he answered, "She



Scott and Rena  
Josiah (5), Jasmin (4), and David (8)

loves you and so do I!" At that moment no other "why's" mattered. My wife showed me the unconditional love that my heavenly Father has for me.

I completed the Taking Back Ground program at Portland Fellowship in 2008. Through the program, the Lord revealed a lot to me about my past. He helped me to give it all to Him and to trust Him with my future. It was difficult to trust others, and more importantly to trust God with the deepest, darkest caverns of my heart. As I stopped trying to figure it out on my own and allowed others and God to speak into my life, and to surrender my fears and my failures to Him. It became easier and easier to walk in the direction He had planned for my life, as opposed to the one spoken over me. Though not ALL my "why" questions were answered, and probably never will be, He has taken many of those "whys" and turned them into "whats." What can I learn from this, Lord? What do you want to do in me? What can I do to bring You glory?

The Message version of Proverbs 3:5-6 says "...don't try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; He's the one who will keep you on track. Don't assume that you know it all. Run to God! Run from evil!" Though I don't understand it all, I have learned to trust in Him, and to trust that what His word says is true. I can trust that He has "plans for my life, plans to prosper me and not to harm me, plans to give me a future and a hope", and trust that He has only good things in store for me. Learning to trust not in my own understanding which is so limited, but to trust Him in everything and acknowledge Him and He will guide me. One of my favorite Third Day songs (Take it All) says it best "All the roads that lie before me, all the struggles I go through, every second I am reminded that it all belongs to you. Now I'm ready to let it go, to give it away. Take it all cause I can't take it any longer. With all I have, I can't make it on my own. Take the first, take the last, take the good and take the rest. Here I am, all I have, take it all."

## “destiny bridge” by frank worthen - a book review by nate

San Francisco has long held an attraction for gay men and women. Frank Worthen, one of the most admired men among those who are walking the journey out of homosexuality, gives us a peek into his life growing up in the San Francisco Bay Area during the 1950s and beyond. His new book, *Destiny Bridge* is a testament to the faithfulness of God in one man's life. It's also a valuable resource for those interested in the emergence of what has become a nationally known ministry (Exodus International) for men and women seeking freedom from same-sex attraction.

Raised in San Jose, young Frank Worthen shared many of the factors common to homosexually-oriented men: an emotionally distant father, an overly attentive mother, and of course, the feeling that he was “different”. In fact, the first words his grade school teacher said to his mother was, “Your son is very different.” School became a nightmare and ultimately led to fits of rage during which Frank would take a sledge hammer to the house or set small fires. Isolation, too, found him labeled a “loner”.

At around the age of 12, he “accepted Jesus” into his life and at the encouragement of his organ teacher, was baptized. Not long after, a new young pastor was hired by the church—a pastor who took a very keen interest in the sexual education of the teenage boys in his church.

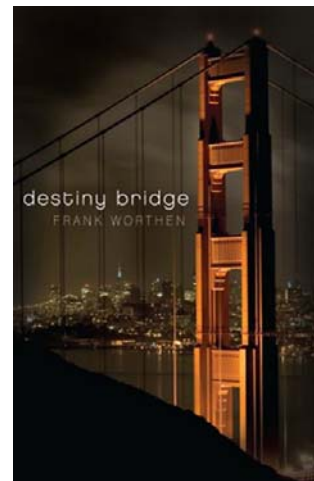
The book then moves into the ups and downs of Frank's adult life—his business success in Marin County; his entrance into what seemed destined to be a long-term relationship with a man named Hal; and Frank's eventual spiritual unrest. At one point, as he drove across the Golden Gate Bridge, he considered ending his life. At that moment, the thought came to him, “If you are willing to take your life, are you willing to give it to Me?” This was, of course, not the first time Frank had been thrust into a debate with God over the direction of his life. At age sixteen, he had asked God to change him—and that hadn't happened. At twenty-three, he had also undergone a major frustration that resulted in Frank telling God, “Our relationship is over! You won't change me and I can't serve You the way I am. This conflict will kill me, so it's goodbye!”

Now in his forties and with the help of Mike, one of his employees (who happened to be a Christian), Frank reconciled with the God who had all along wanted Frank as His own. It was, in fact, hearing an audible voice say, “I want you back!” That shook Frank to his core. Soon, Frank was in a solid church where, much to his dismay, it was assumed that Frank would now reach out to others in the gay community. That was not what he wanted. Frank wanted very much to be finished with homosexuality forever. God, however, was leading Frank into a new era. With halting steps at first, a ministry began.

Ads in the *Berkeley Barb* (the newspaper of renown among the Bay Area counter-culture), a cassette tape ministry, the organizing of meetings, all followed. Years later, and much to Frank's surprise, he met and fell in love with Anita who, alongside Frank, has become a tireless worker on behalf of men and women who were on the journey out of homosexuality.

His story then becomes their story—and the story of the ongoing ministry God entrusted to them. It's a wonderful book, full of hope, pathos, and even humor. At one point, Frank and the ministry faced great opposition (as does any ministry to those struggling with same-sex attractions to this day). One of their witnessing forays into San Francisco led a local gay newspaper to refer to their tactics as “kidnapping” homosexuals. It was untrue of course, but it led to a phone call wherein the caller seriously asked, “What corner do I stand on to be kidnapped so I can get out of homosexuality?”

*Destiny Bridge* is full of wonderful (though sometimes sad) stories from Frank's life. Not many testimony books work well, but this one does. In fact, this really is a “must-read” for anyone interested in the subject of homosexuality and Christianity. *Destiny Bridge* can be bought through the New Hope Ministry's website: [www.newhope123.org](http://www.newhope123.org)



## exodus freedom conference june 8-11, 2011

The *Reality of Grace* is what makes the Gospel of Christ good news! While individuals often strive to please and appease God as a means to earn His favor, the reality or the truth is that Grace came down to earth in the form of Christ. In Christ we have favor with God!

For an opportunity to better understand and experience this amazing truth, please consider going to the *Reality of Grace Freedom Conference* at Ridgecrest Conference Center (just outside Asheville, South Carolina).

You will encounter grace in the moments of intimate worship, through the words of inspiring stories and impactful teaching, as well as in the unplanned conversations with other attendees. For more information visit: [www.exodusfreedom.org](http://www.exodusfreedom.org)

## may - june calendar & services

may 21

### people in pain

Jason Thompson will be leading a workshop at a conference in Salem, Oregon.

may 20 & june 17

### the hope group

Join us for our family and friends program for a time of prayer, encouragement, support, and a great meal. 7 pm.

may 31

### taking back ground completion ceremony

Year-two participants and the 2010-2011 interns will be completing their programs. We will have a time of celebration, sharing and food to share. We celebrate their lives and blessings for the future.

july and august

### summer series: boundaries

Brian and Cynthia will be leading this important video series on Tuesday evenings. Please RSVP. There is no cost to this program. Donations to the ministry are appreciated. We will have used books available for a discounted price.

june 8-11

### exodus freedom conference

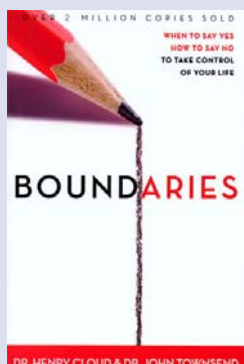
Please see page 3 for details to this annual conference.

### additional updates:

www.portlandfellowship.com  
Please take a few minutes and check out our newly updated website.

### speakers, counseling and youth support:

can be arranged through the office.



## summer series

For the months of July and August, Portland Fellowship will be offering a 9 week video series based on Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend's book, *Boundaries - - When to Say Yes, When to Say No, To Take Control of Your Life* curriculum. *Boundaries* is a study that will offer practical help and insight for those who are seeking health and balance in their lives and relationships.

These sessions present the benefits of maintaining healthy boundaries in relationships. Healthy boundaries can help a person multiply their love for others while minimizing problems faced. Boundaries is also a biblical concept. Within God's Being, His kingdom and creation, boundaries are represented. Being made in His likeness challenges us to understand and take personal responsibility over the life that He has given us. This study will enable us to develop the boundaries we need to be the good stewards that God desires us to be.

So who can join us in the journey to examine and establish boundaries? Anyone! Taking Back Ground Alumni, family, current participants, supporters or new friends of Portland Fellowship are all invited to come. Take advantage of this free summer series and come be a part of the Portland Fellowship community; a community that desires to continue to walk in health, wholeness and holiness.

Classes start Tuesday, July 5th at 7pm. Please RSVP, as space is limited: [cynthia@portlandfellowship](mailto:cynthia@portlandfellowship), or give us a call!

## a special thanks to our churches..

The ministry of Portland Fellowship is extremely grateful for the love and support of our local area churches. It would be very difficult, as well as discouraging, to do this work without their prayers and financial support.

Following is the list of churches that financially support the work of PF. If your church is on this list, would you please send your leadership team a note of thanks? If you do not see your church on our list, would you consider sharing the ministry of Portland Fellowship with your pastor and missions committee?

Calvary Chapel SE  
Cedar Mill Bible Church  
Gladstone First Baptist  
Harvest Community Church  
Hinson Baptist Church  
Prince of Peace  
Rolling Hills Community Church  
Solid Rock Church  
Vancouver First Church of God



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

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