



the fellowship message

"Proclaiming freedom for the captives." ISAIAH 61

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Suppression, Depression, and Life to the Full by Julie K.

"The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life." — John 10:10

I didn't know how my past, and suppressing the true value of my beginning, would definitively impact my life. When I was younger, I didn't fully comprehend that I even had a past. I knew most of the facts: my older sister and I were given up for adoption from Seoul, South Korea. My birth mother died of complications shortly after giving birth to me. My biological father had tried to care for us but after my grandmother died he decided he couldn't. I knew those facts yet chose to just live in the present.

We were loved unconditionally by my (adoptive) parents in Kansas. I loved my suburban life; it was what I knew. I started to realize that I was different in elementary school. I knew I didn't look like most of my friends and was teased for my squinty eyes and short stature. I was resilient, but I did notice one big difference. The missing piece was that I didn't have a family history like others did. I had my birth sister but we didn't know anything about our health records, grandparents, why our mother died, or much of anything else. These questions seemed important, but were unanswerable.

My parents loved Jesus and I was bound to know Him too. I attended church a lot while growing up, and asked Jesus in my heart while at a church camp in 5th grade. I knew that I wanted Jesus to save me from hell, and even though I was filled with joy when I returned home from camp, I didn't know what a relationship with Christ looked like. During that time the most influential figure in my life was my mom. She loved Jesus, people and teaching children. She was my closest relationship, and when I was little I bonded with her over the daily routines of life. She made these simple tasks fun. She was my great encourager. When I injured my knee at age 16, she knew how much missing out on sports, and going into rehabilitation, took a toll on my identity. She truly was my best friend.

When I was 17, my mother died at the age of 49 due to complications from diabetes. Her death devastated me and turned my world upside down. I knew she had been experiencing complications with her illness, and that her kidneys were shutting down, but her death was still unexpected and shocking. My identity was found in her thoughts, expectations, and value of me. I didn't know how to function without her. I felt like the Lord was always taking away from me. I didn't understand how He could do that. While dad was grieving the loss of his wife, his father and stepmother both died, and shortly after that my mother's father committed suicide. My dad had always been a solid rock in my life. Before these tragedies, my dad and I did a lot of fun things together, but because of these losses our relationship deepened and we started talking and relating more to each other. I started to enjoy him more on a personal level.



Julie is an intern in this year's Upper Room program.

My relationship with my father on earth seemed to emulate my relationship with God. I had a lot of head knowledge about my heavenly Father. I thought that I needed to gain His love, and that He wanted me to do good things for Him to make Him proud. I didn't know if I felt obligated to God because He saved me, or if I really loved Him. I was desperately searching for my identity both in the Lord and my place in the world. I was unsure of my purpose. I wanted to know if God was real in my life or just a good thought. When I moved to Portland, OR, in 2006, to go to culinary school, I only knew a few people. For me the move was an adventure but also very risky. I felt alone, confused, and desperate. I didn't believe that the pain I had been suppressing for years could be changed. I started believing that I didn't need the Lord, and that I had to be the one to control my life because He couldn't be trusted. I didn't know how to trust a God that I thought took away the most important parts of my life.

Intimacy always seemed like a very secretive word, and something you didn't talk about. I was uncertain of how to have an intimate relationship with God. In college, before Portland, I tried very hard to have a working relationship with God. I knew that I wanted to know about Him but wasn't quite ready for the vulnerability. Then, when I moved to Portland, all these questions popped up. I questioned His relevance in my life, doubted His words, and everything I thought I had to believe. I thought I had to have an intellectual answer to the skeptics (myself included). I felt that if I had faith, it would be less credible than concrete facts. I believed that my value was based on what I could prove intellectually. Crushed beneath these lies I became lost.

At this time, I isolated myself from the outside world (apart from working), and I accepted depression. I knew that I related to women in a deeper and more intimate way than men. I feared relating to men. I became addicted to watching lesbian relationships in which women related to each other 'authentically' and seemed to get all their needs met including sexually. I started engaging in online relationships with women, although I knew cognitively that these weren't real relationships, I was longing for an intimate connection even if it were false. Meanwhile, I found significance in my friends, my job, and my ability to rescue others that needed me.

I started casually rescuing a woman at work. I was attracted to her and realized I was deeply infatuated with her views and her neediness. I later found out she was bisexual and this seemed to give me the green light to share with her my questions about my sexuality. We started a sexual relationship very quickly. I have never felt attached to anyone as much as I was to her. She was my first "love".

At first, she met a lot of my needs for intimacy in relationship and it was great for a short period of time. Almost immediately I felt guilty and convicted. Although I started justifying my decision to be with her, the ramifications of sin (fornication) radically disrupted my life. I later shared with my Christian friends about my sexual relationship and they met me with grace and love. They listened to my repentance and could tell I was broken.

During this tumultuous time I was able to disclose my dilemma with my friends and family. I realized how co-dependent I was with that woman because, in actuality, we were both using each other to fulfill unmet needs. Feeling crushed and depressed, I started going to a counselor at Portland Fellowship still struggling with the same questions about identity and trust in God.

I was finally able to admit that I didn't trust God's goodness and plan for me. My hope was not in Him, but myself. I was driven to control my situations because of my fear of loss. I

started processing my life without God and where it had led me- in despair and grasping for life. I found hope in Psalm 51:1. "Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love. Because of your great compassion, blot out the stain of my sins." God met me in my brokenness and my repentance. and did blot out sins. I did not want to live in this despair any more. By trusting in my identity to Him, He has worked healing in my heart. "He is my Beloved and His desire is for me." I am not who I once was— I am redeemed.

I was searching for life to the full but was failing miserably. John 10:10 says "The thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy but I have come that

you may have life and have it to the full." Believing in Jesus' redeeming power is not wishful thinking. "But God showed His great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, He will certainly save us from God's condemnation. For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of His son while we were still enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of His Son," (Romans 5:8-10). This is the best news ever! Our Savior has conquered death and His life has saved us.

By surrendering my will, my defenses, and my control to the Lord, I have experienced freedom from fear and insecurities about my worth. I continued to surrender to the Truth that my thoughts are not His thoughts of me. My value is based on His love of me because He is my Creator and He is love. I continue to process my value and worth in the Upper Room Internship program. The love I have received from living in intentional community, being discipled, mentored, and using my gifts here at Portland Fellowship continues to provide me Truth of my identity in my Savior. Please intercede on my behalf for my continued journey of Truth.



Julie and the rest of the Upper Room Community enjoying a day in Hood River

ministry reflections by cynthia beaudry

In 2013, we used this section of the newsletter to highlight and answer frequently asked questions that we receive here at Portland Fellowship. We have heard that they proved useful for many, so if you would like to access them, we have them on our website. This year we are using this section as a personal reflection corner from the Portland Fellowship Staff, leaders, and Interns. We pray that this would continue to be a source of encouragement to you. But mostly, may you feel a deep sense of how much you, our reader, supporter, comrade and friend in the faith mean to us in this journey.

The longer I work here, and the more I learn, the more I desire to be in the school of Christ for the benefit of building up the body to maturity. In Ephesians 4, I read Paul exhorting us to do just that. He says to “equip His people, until we all reach...maturity in Christ... then we will no longer be infants... instead speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of Him who is the Head, that is Christ.” (Ephesians 4:12-15)

If I take a retrospective look at my life, I could certainly tell you what it looks like to be an emotional, mental, and spiritual infant, even as an adult. For many years, I was primarily driven by, and responding based on my own wounds and needs. I frantically tried to meet my needs on my own terms. For example, most of my relationships were simply commodities. Even when I would “serve” others, it was mostly just a way to find affirmation and value. My passion, goal, and desire for both myself and for those I minister to, is for us to grow and mature in every respect of life, into the likeness of Christ.

Sy Roger’s definition of healthy heterosexuality is to be mature and secure. Do you know that sin in the antithesis of this? I have heard sin described as being both antisocial and hostile, turning our focus towards ourselves. Paul Tripp says, “Sin causes us to shrink our focus, motivation, concern to the size of our own wants, needs, and feelings... Sin causes **us** to be way too self-aware... offended most by offense against **us** and to be concerned most for what concerns **us**.” There’s nothing mature and secure about sin. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 says, “*For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And He died for all, that those who live should **no longer live for themselves** but for Him who died for them and was raised again.*” The process of healing in sexual redemption ministry is about growth into maturity. I think God has great compassion on those still living for self. In fact, I know He does. But what about us? Do we have compassion for those whom we love deeply and yet, see so entrenched in the self-centeredness of sin?

In one of my favorite Ravi Zaccharias lectures, he states: “This questioner came to Jesus and asked him a wonderful question: ‘Is it all right to pay taxes to Caesar?’ It’s one question I wish Jesus had answered differently... Jesus said to him, ‘Do you have a coin? Whose image is on this?’ He said, ‘Give to Caesar that which is Caesar’s and to God that which is God’s.’ The disingenuousness of the questioner was revealed instantly. He should have had a follow-up question. He should have said, ‘What belongs to God?’ You know what Jesus would have said? ‘Whose image is on you?’” Jesus resisted the bait of this political question. In Matthew 22, it says that when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had disarmed the political trap of the Sadducees, they came to Him with religious bait instead. They asked Him which out of all the 613 laws of Moses was the greatest. We know that Jesus didn’t even pick one. Instead, He says, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” We cannot say that we love God and not love our neighbor. Those two are inextricable. It’s written all over the New Testament. How then can we love our neighbors? How can we love those in our lives, who have chosen to live a lifestyle opposed to our beliefs? Isn’t it hard to love those who disagree, who are combative to our faith? I admit that when I, myself, am selfish, I am difficult to love. How do we love those who are immature? This can be answered with another questions: **Whose image is on them?**

This has radically changed my life. I can love my family, my neighbors, even those who oppose me, because I see the sacredness of God’s image on them. This is freeing! The staff of Portland Fellowship has a desire to value and affirm God’s image in people. We seek to esteem people in the way that God does. *Give to God what is God’s*, has been our prayer, as well as offering our lives and service to God and His work. Let us love together, the immature, the insecure, the battered, and the broken. Let us grow together, working towards maturity and security in Christ. May God bless and enable us to do so as we enter into 2014.



jan - feb calendar & services

tuesday nights

taking back ground

Our discipleship program for men and women struggling with unwanted same-sex attraction: First night back on January 7 at 7p.m.

thursdays

upper room program

Portland Fellowship's live-in discipleship program, The Upper Room, will resume on Thursday, January 9th. Please be in prayer for Graham, Cole, Joe, Jared, Julie and Patrick as they continue to work through this intense program.

jan 1-4

restored hope network board retreat

Jason will be spending the week with members of the RHN board on the Oregon Coast.

january 11 & february 8

the hope group

Join us for our family and friends program for a time of prayer, encouragement, support, and a great meal. 6:30 p.m.

jan 11

annual planning

The Board of Directors will meet with the staff of Portland Fellowship to review 2013 and prepare and plan for 2014.

additional updates

www.portlandfellowship.com

Please take advantage of your online profile. If you don't have a username, please email or call us to access your record.

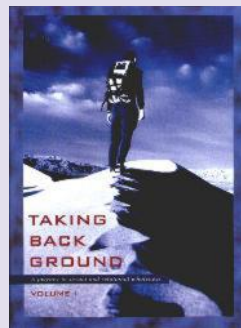
speakers, counseling and youth support can be arranged through the office.

our services and resources

We would like to take the opportunity to remind and highlight some of the programs and resources we offer. Whether you are in need of support, or have a family member or friend that needs our services, this list is a good reference point.

Taking Back Ground

Taking Back Ground is a powerful discipleship program that equips those struggling with unwanted same-sex attractions, leading them to walk in freedom by providing powerful worship, in-depth teaching, and small group accountability. If you are struggling with sexual and relational issues, please consider joining us for the Taking Back Ground program.



Online Discipleship

If you are not in the Portland Metro area, our online programs may be a good options for you! We have taken our material from TBG, and from The Map, added video teachings, and made them available for anyone seeking help. You can access these programs by visiting www.takingbackground.com or www.reachtruth.com.

The Hope Group

Each month, we invite parents, family members and friends of those affected by homosexuality to come to a discussion that provides information and encouragement. The meetings are usually led by a staff member. You may come to listen or participate as you choose. The group is open to all who are interested and requires no registration, but please call for the address and directions, and to RSVP for our meal together.

The Upper Room Community

The journey to freedom from homosexuality is a difficult road. The Upper Room Community is a safe place where people desiring to truly submit their sexuality and relational brokenness to the Lordship of Christ. Each person is immersed in a community with others who are walking the same road.



As part of the Upper Room Community, residents are a part of our Taking Back Ground program, as well as participants in weekly mentoring, counseling, and community meetings led by the Portland Fellowship staff. These meetings facilitate deeper discipleship, with the goal being greater spiritual, emotional, and relational health, as they mature in Christ.



PORTLAND
fellowship

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

MINISTRY TEAM

Jason Thompson
Executive Director

Drew Berryessa
Assistant Director

Cynthia Beaudry
Ministry Assistant

Heidi Perry
Support for Wives

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post office box 14841
portland, oregon 97293
telephone 503,235,6364
fax 503,235,3896

e-mail: pf@portlandfellowship.com
portlandfellowship.com

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