



# the fellowship message

"Proclaiming freedom for the captives." ISAIAH 61

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## Repaying with a Blessing by Jason Thompson

***"Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing." —1 Peter 3:9***

As I was perusing my Facebook feed the other day, I came across a video of two young men preaching on the streets of Israel. Their message was neither fiery nor condemning, but filled with the love of Jesus and His finished work on the cross, which fulfilled the law and brought salvation for all who believe. Their audience, the Jewish people, did not take kindly to their message. Instead of ignoring these preachers like we usually would in the United States, the people began taunting and spitting on them. I watched with a sense of wonder as these preachers simply wiped the spit off their faces and continued sharing the love of Christ with people in need of the Gospel.

As the video continued, my mind reflected on what Jesus did. *"When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly"* (1 Peter 2:23). I've read these passages many times, and how Jesus endured insults and ridicule, but a deeper sense of that reality hit when I saw this happening in our time: modern Rabbis, dressed in their religious garb, participating in insulting these two young men who were sharing the love of Christ.

I experienced a similar situation many years ago when I was invited to share in a public forum at Portland Community College. The symposium was in the middle of the campus and it included voices from both the gay community and the Christian community. My desire was to share the hope and freedom that I have found in Christ, and invite those who were personally conflicted with their faith and sexuality to explore answers through God's Word. I went into the event with a bit of naïvety and found myself in the middle of a mob of angry liberal students, and feeling way in over my head.

During the Q&A portion of the event, an intimidating looking student took the mic, stood inches from my face and began to shout that I was the one responsible for gay and lesbian kids who choose suicide. Following this accusation came insults, name-calling and mocking. In that moment, I remember having a choice. I could respond with a counter-argument and defend myself, and even insult them in return, or I could remain quiet, thank the angry student for sharing his thoughts and then continue to share the love of God for gay and lesbian students. By the Holy Spirit alone, I choose the latter.

One of the most common questions I'm asked by friends and supporters of Portland Fellowship is how we are "holding up" in our current culture. The question is a good one, as the momentum of acceptance of homosexuality is so strong that anyone even hinting at non-acceptance of homosexual behavior is considered hateful in heart and archaic in thinking. In short, the response to this question is that we are holding up well, but again, only by the blessing and favor of the Lord.



If we, as a ministry, truly believe what is written in 1 Peter 3:9, we know that blessings come when we love our enemies, do good to those who hate us, bless those who curse us and pray for those who mistreat us. Many times, this paradox of the Christian life doesn't make sense in this world, but in the Kingdom of God it makes divine sense. Over and over again, responding in love has proven to either transform hearts or quickly diffuse an escalating situation.

Over the years, I have received my fair share of hate mail. Since the late '90s, this has primarily been in the form of email. I made a decision years ago that no matter how rude, vile or insulting a correspondence may be, I would reply to the person and save the conversation. My heart has been to reply with the love of Christ, in order for the recipient to experience even a moment of grace from someone they thought would exchange insult with insult.

The following emails are a small sample of what I have received. I've censored some words to keep you from unnecessary vile.

**Sent:** Friday, April 8, 2005 8:46 PM

I think your website is ridiculous. I looked it over and nothing in it made me want to go \*\*\*\*\* a woman. You're a fool. Go to school and learn something else.

**My Reply:**

*Thank you for taking the time to respond and for looking at our website. I'm thankful you didn't find anything on the site that would make you want to violate a woman like that, as we are to honor and cherish women, made in the image of God. I pray you will only find respect, encouragement and hope on our site. Blessings, Jason*

**Sent:** Friday, August 27, 2004 2:54 PM

Homosexuality is neither painful nor confusing...what kind of crock of \*\*\*\*\* is this? Being gay is as natural as being straight...but evidently, you're a moron who must have major issues with your own self-respect and homosexuality....Repression is the problem...people like you are the problem...not men and women who are attracted to the same sex...just as god intended.

**My Reply:**

*Thank you for your email. As you shared, you have not found homosexuality to be painful or confusing, yet for me, it was both. I'm grateful that nobody has forced you to seek something you are not wanting or ready to receive. I'm also grateful that God offered Portland Fellowship as a safe and loving place for me to know who I am in Christ. I pray you have a great day.*

**Sent:** Tuesday, January 21, 2001 3:14 PM

You sound like a real piece of work, Jason.

**My Reply:**

*I'm assuming you meant for your comment to be negative, but the first thing that came to my mind is—Yes, that's true! I am God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for me to do. I pray you one day will desire that for yourself as well.*

**Sent:** Tuesday, August 15, 2006 1:17 AM

Ok honest question and I am expecting no less than an honest answer. Why do you hate us? There is some homosexuals that give us a bad name and the media at times does too. But that's no different then what strippers and porn stars do you woman. And don't say what the bible says. I am christian and know very well what it says - but the bible was not written by God but merely people just like me and you. No different. I know what your answer will be already. But I am saddened that you are a hypocrite and all of you will burn in hell just as I will if all is true. I am happy and as are many people I know...why can't you all just leave us alone. If you are all right and I am wrong then it is not your soul to save. Just leave us in peace.

**My Reply:**

*I'm sorry to hear of your impression of our ministry. As you ask that I don't lump all homosexuals together, please don't lump me in with hate-filled Christians that judge those with same-sex longings. I refuse to hate, judge and burden or hurt anyone. If I ever do that, please specifically rebuke me for that and I would hope that I would humbly receive your correction. The God I serve sent His Son to save and redeem the lost. I always desire my heart to be the same. Peace, Jason.*

**His Reply:**

...not the response I was expecting...and sorry for my email as well. It was just a sad night last night. I am sorry I assumed. It's just not so easy being gay and happy (in which case I am, and not willing to change) and having people tell me I need to change. Once again I am sorry...

**My Reply:**

*I'm sorry to hear of the difficult evening last night. You say it was sad. If you want to talk about it, I would love to listen. By the way, many will tell you many things about what you need to do. I encourage you to ask what God desires of you. If you sincerely ask him, He will sincerely reply. I hope tonight is a better evening. Blessings, Jason.*

Responding in love and with kindness goes against our own sense of reasoning. Yet, if we choose to keep our mind and heart on the knowledge and love of God, we will be able to respond according to His will. I know that kindness is not simply being agreeable as many false teachers are now preaching. The kindness of God that leads to repentance isn't simply being nice. This kindness is that God is mercifully withholding His judgement so that all may come to know Him. Therefore our "kind" response must include loving truth or direction that awakens a person to the reality of their spiritual needs and their standing with the Lord.

As PF continues to be a light in a very dark world, and as you respond to your friends or family member that have lost their way, my prayer is that we will always seek to bless those who curse us, and that through those blessings the love and mercy of God will shine through.

## Grace to Grieve by PF Staff

Here at Portland Fellowship, our Hope Group offers encouragement, education, prayer and support for friends and family who have loved ones living out a gay identity. Many people come here feeling torn—they truly want to show love and respect to their loved one, but they also want to remain true to their faith and the truth of the Bible on the subject of homosexuality. Walking this line of tension is hard, and no one does it perfectly, but our mission at PF is to help empower people to live out both truth and grace.

The recent mass shooting at a gay club in Orlando is heartbreaking. Not only is the loss of life devastating, the victims' families have also been shattered by the loss of their loved ones. We can only imagine how much harder it must be for the families who may not have agreed with their loved one's lifestyle, only to lose them to senseless violence. Whether or not we agree with our loved one's choices, we must remember that *"The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love"* (Psalm 103:8). God is *"patient...not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance"* (2 Peter 3:9), and we grieve with Him alongside the families who lost loved ones in Orlando last month. We pray that He grants the families and friends around us and in Orlando who have gay loved ones the grace to grieve well. Emotional separation because of differing opinions is painful, but losing a loved one is excruciating, often with words left unsaid, arguments left unresolved and affections left unexpressed. Please join us in praying that God would continue to comfort and call to Himself all those whose hearts are broken, hurting and far from Him. May all of us, everyone, come together in repentance and find peace in our Heavenly Father's arms.

—Jason, Cynthia and Patrick



## Book Review: *Compassion Without Compromise* by Patrick Silvis

Sharing resources is a vital part of our Hope Group and Home Group ministries, and one of the resources we recently highlighted with our friends and family members is the book *Compassion Without Compromise* by Adam T. Barr and Ron Citlau. We want to share this valuable resource with all of our ministry supporters and partners, as it helps tackle the question we are asked most often here at PF: *"How do I respond when someone I know tells me they're gay?"* Barr and Citlau are both pastors and draw from real-life, practical and personal ministry experience. Here, they craft a well-balanced approach to the subject of homosexuality that is both Biblically accurate and also sensitive to people who are deeply conflicted or impacted by homosexuality. Citlau himself has struggled with same-sex attractions and shares his first-hand experience of wrestling through feelings that conflict with God's design for sexuality.

Statistically, more and more people are choosing to publically embrace homosexual behavior and identity, and there are an increasing number of people in our schools, churches, work places and families who are looking to us as Christians to respond with love and truth. If you are wanting to grow in your ability to respond in a Christ-like way, this book is not to be missed!



"LET'S MAKE SURE THAT  
OUR DEFENSE OF  
SCRIPTURE DOES NOT  
BECOME AN EXCUSE NOT TO  
LOVE THOSE WITH WHOM  
WE STRONGLY DISAGREE."

—ADAM T. BARR AND RON CITLAU  
FROM COMPASSION WITHOUT COMPROMISE



## july - august calendar & services

july 8 & august 12  
**the hope group**  
Join us for a time of prayer,  
encouragement and a great meal.  
6:30pm.

july 9-17  
**hope group online:  
transgender series**  
Jason will be recording video  
testimonies with Denise Schick  
and Kathy Grace Duncan for PF's  
Hope Group Online: Transgender  
series.

july 17  
**patrick speaking**  
Patrick will be sharing his  
testimony at The Well Community  
Church.

july 19 & august 16th  
**pf open group nights**  
Opportunity to connect, hear  
testimonies and learn more about  
the ministry of PF. Light  
refreshments provided.  
7-8:30pm.

july 29 & august 26  
**home groups**  
Friends & family of SSA-strugglers  
connect, share and pray together  
in host homes. Groups are in  
Vancouver, Tigard, SW Portland  
and Oregon City.

august 11  
**patrick speaking**  
Patrick will be sharing with the  
youth group at Calvary Chapel  
Southeast.

**additional updates**  
[www.portlandfellowship.com](http://www.portlandfellowship.com)  
Please take advantage of your  
online profile. If you don't have a  
username, please email or call.

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

## Summer 2016: PF Open Group Nights



This month and  
next, Portland Fel-  
lowship will be host-  
ing two special Open  
Group Nights. On  
July 19th and August  
16th, from 7-8:30pm,  
we will be opening

our doors for people to come and connect, hear testi-  
monies of God's transformational power and learn more  
about the ministry of Portland Fellowship.

We are excited to offer these nights as a way to  
support those who are going through our programs, as  
well as introduce new people to our ministry. If you  
are a local pastor, lay leader, financial supporter or even  
just someone who's curious about what actually goes  
on here at PF, we want to invite you to come and expe-  
rience a taste of the incredible work God is doing in  
our midst. Please bring a friend or two!

## New Way to Support PF: AmazonSmile

Did you know? You can now support Portland Fel-  
lowship while you shop on Amazon! This is an easy way  
to help support the work God is doing here at PF. For  
every purchase you make on their site, Amazon will  
donate a portion of the proceeds to the  
charity of your  
choice. Please con-  
sider selecting Port-  
land Fellowship!  
Here's how it works:



1. Go to [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com).
2. Sign into your Amazon account.
3. Under "pick your own charitable organization",  
search for "Portland Fellowship."
4. Select the first "Portland Fellowship" from the  
list of results (founded in 1988).
5. That's it! Amazon will save PF as your charity.

*\*Note: Please save and use [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) as your  
default Amazon site. Using the normal Amazon site will not  
give PF a donation. Please call or email the office if you  
need help signing up.*



**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  
Portland fellowship,  
a ministry proclaiming freedom  
from homosexuality through  
the power of Jesus Christ

### MINISTRY TEAM

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