



# the fellowship message

"Proclaiming freedom for the captives." ISAIAH 61

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## Content In Christ by Chanda Bosanac

*Over the years, we have been privileged to have a wide range of people serve here at Portland Fellowship. Chanda is a former PF Board Member, and what the Lord has taught her in the area of contentment can encourage anyone struggling to trust God amid unexpected life circumstances and seemingly-unfulfilled desires. —PF Staff*

I was recently having coffee with a dear friend of mine, someone I've known for several years. I shared that I was asked to write an article about contentment in the Lord. There in that swanky Portland coffee shop, I rolled my eyes, and before I could sarcastically comment on the irony of the topic, she quickly filled the quiet space in a matter of fact way: *"That should be easy Chanda, for if there is one thing you have shown me about your own life, you are content with who Jesus is for you."*

I am not going to tell you this life of mine has been like a walk in the park. With Jesus, however,...He has made everything seem like a walk in the park by His constant presence. I have been offered much healing for wounds and forgiveness of sin. He has been my help, refuge, provision, comfort and constant companion. I recognize today that in Christ, favor waits for me. He has given me a mind to think through things that more often advance me to a place of freedom in Him, joy in Him and advancement in the things of the Spirit...mostly without even asking. What a wonderful Father! Oh, but for the things that I've asked for...

Contentment hasn't come as a result of all my prayers being answered. I've prayed very noble prayers, mind you. I have prayed for missions opportunities, for God to allow me to further the Kingdom of Heaven through the body of Christ, and for a like-minded godly husband. I had hoped to have a family. I know what it's like to ask and keep on asking, and I know well how to wait on the Lord. Don't get me wrong, I haven't always enjoyed my waiting, but whether it was His mercy or my concern for His heart in such matters, I have realized how wonderful it is to simply come before the Lord, manifesting who I really am in Him and then resting with Him in all those things. This is why I so appreciate the ministry of PF—there is an invitation to the simple love of Jesus. Years ago I attended PF's Summer Series on simplicity led by Steve Baliko. Going through that series confirmed that my thinking about stillness was on track. I am living in a complex world, yet in Jesus, my world is not complex. There is a place in the Spirit that allows me not to function in a good-day-versus-bad-day sort of way. There are now no good days or bad days, there are only days of grace, which has been evident in my relationship with my parents.



*Chanda is a former  
PF Board Member.*

November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015, is when I got a knock on the door from a policeman. *“I am sorry to inform you that your mother has passed.”* I thanked the officer and went immediately into business mode. I had a funeral to plan in Southern Illinois, a home to go through and family to connect with. The levels of grace were at an all time high.

Looking back, it's very rare when the father sues for full custody of his children and wins, but in my case this is what occurred when I was 6. Not that my mother had much of a choice—she was a no-show for the court hearing. You see, she was very ill. At the time, one would say she was clinically depressed. It wouldn't be until much later that schizophrenia would be the more appropriate term. Why later? My father's references about my mother were very few. Let's just say they grew into annual, loaded instructions: *“You need to write your mother.” “You really should visit her.”* These were the words to a seven-year-old, words to an eleven-year-old, with no provision or help to walk those instructions out. Interesting words indeed, but I have learned that behavior is what counts. My dad's actions spoke loudly: *“She has no worth in my view, but you need to make a relationship happen.”* One could say that my growing up years were marked by a great silence about my mother, creating a large void.

Even in college when I once dared “go there” with my dad, he remained silent. It was in the days following that conversation when I received a letter from my step mom, explaining that my dad had permanently put all of “those things” behind him.

The void created around my mother put things into motion in my life to be with Jesus in some unique and creative ways, discovering who He is and was in my silent loss. Eventually, that void became full of newness of life and love. Thankfully, after 18 years I did reconnect with my mother, and kept in contact with her up until her death.

The experience of God's nature through my parental loss has been the breeding ground for much of my contentment. As I have examined the high quality of Jesus and His Fatherly wisdom, I have been moved to improve the quality of my



requests in prayer. When it comes to life's conundrums, I have permanently dropped the “why” question and picked up the two questions at Pentecost: *“What does this mean and what should we do?”* Author Graham Cooke notes that asking “why” is *“...an invalid question that makes you an invalid!”* In my experience the latter two questions, the ones asked at Pentecost, have moved me more into fullness of life than any “why” question.

I am learning today that love doesn't recognize when others do it wrong. Love overcomes all that. I Corinthians 13 says, *“Love does not insist on its own way.”* This simple verse magnifies God's nature. It also explains why growth and transformation take so long. It explains why evil persists and why some refuse to believe. And, it reveals that people love God not because they have to, but because they want to.

In order for love to work, God must be *“patient and kind; not envious or boastful; not arrogant or rude.”* God *“must not be irritable or resentful; must not rejoice in wrongdoing, but in the truth.”* God *“must bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, endure all things.”*

Let me go back to my noble prayers—the ones for family, missions and ministry. Wanting a family was no small thing for me. I am writing this on my 40<sup>th</sup> birthday, yet nothing has really gone according to those desires quite thus far; however, what I thought I wanted and what I got instead led me to the nature of God. In my quiet time before the Lord, He has provided Deuteronomy 2:7 as a promise. I can't help notice how much hope is here and an invitation to contentment. Once again, He builds my spirit up through His Word: *“For the Lord your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands. He has watched over your journey through this **immense wilderness**. The Lord your God has been with you these past 40 years... (and here's the amazing promise)...**and you have lacked nothing**”* (Deut. 2:7, *emphasis added*). Even as I've wandered through the desert with mother loss, God continues proving the fullness of His promise that I'm not lacking anything.

This is a promise and a love I can be content with.

## Real Freedom by Jason Thompson

There is much debate in our culture and in our churches about what freedom looks like especially in the area of same-sex attractions. Some have vilified the work of Portland Fellowship, claiming that the process people go through at this ministry is harmful. Some think we offer a quick fix, while others simply consider this discipleship process unnecessary and ineffective. The reality is that our process of discipleship is similar to anyone seeking wholeness in Christ regardless of the struggles they face. The process isn't new or sensational, but it is true and good.



Those who come to Portland Fellowship learn rather quickly that hope and healing is not a quick fix or a simple 12-step process, but rather an ongoing journey filled with humility, prayer, suffering, faith, surrender and hope. For many, the process is slow and painful, but deeply rewarding. Over the years, I have heard from participants who were thankful that this isn't simply a "quick fix". A quick fix would have been incomplete, shallow and temporary, and never would have resolved the root relational needs and painful wounds. And more importantly, they would not have experienced the depth of God's love and mercies through His powerful refining process.

Real freedom begins with a humble confession of our need for God and His touch. Confessing sin, as difficult as it is, is the beginning of healing. The Lord exhorts, *"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land"* (2 Chronicles 7:14). Those who experience freedom and remain faithful to the Lord are those who experience His blessings. It is in responding to the Spirit that God begins His deep and profound work.

With this ongoing posture of humility, we lay ourselves open for the Spirit to search us. King David wrote, *"Search me oh God and know my heart, try me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there be any wickedness in me and lead me into life everlasting"* (Psalm 139:23). As God's Spirit works in the heart of the believer, false thinking, relational wounds, doubts and shame begin to make their way to the surface. We begin to face the lies that we once believed about our identities as male and female, masculine and feminine. We begin to realize how we have run from trusted relationships and have held too tightly to unhealthy relationships. And we understand how we looked to counterfeit ways of meeting our needs, rather than looking to the One who meets our deepest needs. It is a painful process to allow the Lord to reveal the content of our heart, but one that brings hope as we continue to trust Him.

Once the Lord searches and reveals our hearts, we must respond. When the impurities of our heart surface, the temptation to push them back down, minimize them, secretly stash them away or justify why we can't surrender becomes a challenge. As God reveals all that hinders growth in Him, our practice is the act of surrender. As we choose obedience, an amazing thing happens—The Lord provides us with good and lasting things! He renews our mind, He provides healthy relationships and He restores our true identity that can only be found in Him.

Real freedom doesn't start and then end in a season, but is an ongoing process of humility, prayer and inviting the Lord to search, refine and replace the old with the new. There isn't anything harmful in this process, nor is there anything done in vain. On the contrary, because of what the Lord has done and continues to do, countless men and women are able to live freely in Christ and know the deep love of God. My prayer for the whole church is that each one of us walks through this type of process. By doing so, we can experience all that Christ has for us as we become more like Him.

## march - april calendar & services

### tuesday nights in march & april taking back ground

A powerful discipleship program that equips those struggling with unwanted same-sex attractions to walk in freedom.

7-9 pm.

march 11-13

### tbg retreat

Our TBG participants will spend a powerful weekend of fellowship and surrendering idols together on the Oregon coast.

march 11 & april 8

### the hope group

Join us for a time of prayer, encouragement, and a great meal. 6:30 p.m.

march 25 & april 29

### home groups

Friends & family of SSA-strugglers connect, share and pray together in host homes. Groups are in Vancouver, Tigard and Oregon City.

april 12

### western seminary

Jason and Kathy Grace will be sharing at a pastor's training put on by Western Seminary in Portland, OR.

april 15-17

### spokane conference

Jason will be teaching at a church conference in Spokane, WA.

### 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.

## Praise Report: New Roof and Column



After the Lord blessed us in a big way through your Matching Grant Campaign responses last fall, we had been praying for wisdom on how to best steward those funds. As always, God provides for just what we need, even ahead of time! In Decem-

ber, we had a major roof leak that needed repaired, and by February we were getting estimates on replacing the entire roof of the PF house (with some bids as high as \$35,000). Thankfully, the Lord led us to a quality, affordable company and we just finished replacing the roof for less than \$18,000. Praise God!

While the roofing was going on, we took the opportunity to have the "Leaning Column of PF" repaired as well (a \$5,000 job). If you've been to the PF house recently, you may have noticed one of the columns on the porch leaning away from the house quite a bit. We are extremely grateful to have the funds to be able to make sure our building continues to stay safe, secure and dry. Thank you again for your generous giving towards this ministry--it is humbling watching God provide for all of our needs!

## Prayer Request: TBG Retreat

For the weekend of March 11-13, our Taking Back Ground participants will be going to the Oregon coast for a time of fellowship, prayer, worship, reflection and surrender.

Please pray for this year's participants for:

- Time off to attend the retreat (work, kids/babysitters, etc.)
- Provision to be able to afford the retreat
- Wisdom, discernment and courage to identify and surrender idols that have been stumbling blocks



**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

**Cynthia Beaudry**  
Ministry Administrator

**Patrick Silvis**  
Program Coordinator

**Heidi Perry**  
Support for Wives

**Kathy Grace Duncan**  
Board Chair

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

e-mail: [pf@portlandfellowship.com](mailto:pf@portlandfellowship.com)  
[portlandfellowship.com](http://portlandfellowship.com)

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