



# the fellowship message

"Proclaiming freedom for the captives." ISAIAH 61

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## Turning Toward Truth by Roy

*On the surface, it seemed I had every reason to get things right in life. I was a good kid. I was raised in the church, got good grades and had friends that stayed out of trouble. I had a mother and father who provided well for my sister and I.*

Both of my grandfathers passed away before I was born, and my maternal grandmother was the glue that held the family together. She was deeply centered in Christ and served Him in all she did. As a young child, I was constantly around Christ-centered community which gathered around Jesus to worship, build His Church, fellowship and show His love to the world. I believe the Spirit of God was heavily present during this time, teaching me through others about who He is.

Even in the midst of a family and church environment that was uplifting, I struggled with feelings of low self-worth, poor body image and rejection, both actual and imagined. My interests were different than other boys, or so I felt. I was quiet by nature, musical and creative. I liked people, but I wasn't very outgoing, which led to seasons of loneliness. While I felt I didn't measure up in the outside world, I always felt I belonged in my family and in the church. In my pre-teens the Lord started to reveal Himself to me more deeply and I didn't want to be without Him, so I accepted Him as my savior and was baptized.

When I was twelve, my parents moved us to a church closer to our home with a large youth group for sister and I. This new church was "open and affirming," which meant openly gay people were welcomed and embraced. The gay and lesbian people I met there were gentle, caring and fun. While this church pushed "love and tolerance," I was watching the church body embrace sin of all kinds, while being told the church was making a good and progressive move toward God. I encountered poor doctrine that accommodated people in their sin, and did not call them to repentance in Christ. It caused me to think differently about sin and my own sexuality at an age when being gay wasn't even a consideration.

Before I knew it, my family had embraced pro-gay theology and worldly living. In my teens, I liked girls, but same-sex attractions were arising too, and I needed help determining what I could do about it. The more I studied on my own, the more I realized my church wasn't addressing the sins mentioned in the Bible. Homosexuality, fornication, Satan and repentance weren't addressed or even mentioned.

My family was rocked by a series of tragedies during my teen years. The one that hit me the hardest was my uncle's death in a boating accident when I was seventeen. He wasn't much older than me, and I looked up to him like a brother. About two years after that, my grandmother and another uncle died just a few months apart. From that point on, things spun out of control for me. I was hurting and confused about my identity and the church. I was angry at the world and with God, and my gay feelings were not going away.



Roy is a recent graduate of PF's two-year Taking Back Ground program, and will be serving as a TBG leader this year.

I entered a period of seeking God to deal with my same-sex attractions. I couldn't reconcile my homosexual feelings with what the Bible says, and I wrongly believed turning to Christ would make my SSA disappear instantly, but it didn't. I felt God had failed me, and my anger took root. I started to rebel against Him and tried to numb the pain with alcohol, drugs and pornography, but nothing helped. At age twenty, I decided to act out on my gay feelings since God hadn't taken them away. I had one encounter with a young man I met in college. I left that experience feeling dirty, like I'd made a big mistake and I'd disappointed God. I realized homosexuality wasn't right for me, and I repented and vowed never to do it again. And I didn't for the next seven years.

Those years were full of spiritual attacks. I eventually stepped away from the faith and embraced a gay identity for almost a decade. I moved to San Francisco, and with that move came feelings of freedom and fun times, initially. I was confused and broken, going from relationship to relationship, and every time it was the same story: I'd meet another broken man, confused about his identity, and we would seek approval and validation in each other to ease the wounds we'd encountered earlier in life. Many of these men were addicted to alcohol, drugs, pornography or sex. Each time, I was hopeful about where the relationship was going, but each quickly devolved into chaos, disappointment and heartache. But strong-willed as I am, I was determined to make it work.

After a few years in the gay life, I felt empty. I was far from God and wanted a relationship with Him again. I decided to find another "open and affirming" church and a "gay Christian" partner, which I did. We started building a life together, but the Lord began wrestling with me and telling me that I wasn't living the life He had for me. God was calling me out of the gay life, but I couldn't see how that was possible. The enemy had a stronghold. I was drawn to the sin and excitement of gay life. I was used to worldly living, a luxurious life and heavy drinking. I liked it, and although I knew my lifestyle wasn't working, something in me didn't want to leave.

It wasn't until I almost died in a freak accident that God got my attention again. The Lord spared my life, and I was listening. He made it clear that I needed to end my gay relationship and turn to Christ. I ended the relationship, but I never fully turned back toward Him. I was single for a couple of months, but overwhelmed by loneliness, I returned to the gay life and found another man. We were best friends with a similar sense of humor, cared for one another and had fun

together. I knew I was willfully stepping away from God while he was calling me back to Himself. As I struggled to leave this relationship, it became clear that I was a slave to sin. I tried to break up with this guy and turn to Christ, but I repeatedly ran back. I couldn't stop sinning. I was hooked by the sexual intimacy and enjoyed the companionship.

I prayed and asked the Lord what to do. He answered that prayer by leading me to take a few days' vacation by myself in Portland. When the train pulled into Union Station,

something hit my spirit: the Lord was showing me where He was sending me. I didn't know how it would happen, but I knew I had to trust Him and move to Portland. Upon returning to San Francisco, I was sure the Lord was tired of my rebellion and I knew that if I didn't leave the gay life

soon, the windows He was opening would close. This time, I yielded to the Lord's call to leave the gay life for good.

I'd like to say my journey from that point has been easy. It hasn't, but the Lord has shown Himself faithful. I came across Portland Fellowship's website just before I moved to Portland. After meeting with Jason Thompson, I was certain this was the right program to help me deal with my SSA and stay out of the gay life. Since leaving my old life behind, God has opened incredible doors for me. He's provided for my job, housing, given me Christ-centered friends and carried me through Taking Back Ground and the Upper Room at PF.

As I've explained to Christian family and friends from my past why I left the gay life, I've been met with some resistance. Some have told me leaving isn't necessary, because they believe homosexuality is compatible with the Christian faith. It is not. The Word will not change to accommodate our sin. I learned this lesson the hard way through the decade I lived as a gay man, and I don't want to see anyone else become deceived and experience what I went through.

In the past, I'd heard people say there's freedom in Christ. Today, I can truly say I'm experiencing that freedom, and I owe Him my all. God has changed my nature and my desires over the last few years. It didn't happen overnight, but it has happened, through a commitment to prayer and fasting, study of the Word, the rejection of sin and by yielding to the Holy Spirit. Leaving my old life and allowing Christ's nature to be formed in me has been an exciting, challenging and sometimes painful process, but in Him is the only place I want to be. I encourage anyone struggling with sin of any kind to repent and turn toward Jesus Christ. He is faithful to complete the good work He starts in us.



## Welcoming Our Newest Staff Member



This fall, Portland Fellowship has the privilege of bringing Leah King to our leadership team. The PF Board and staff have been praying that the Lord would bring us a woman with previous experience in this type of ministry, and in His perfect timing He connected us to Leah over the summer.

Leah is originally from Texas and moved to Portland this past June with the North American Mission Board to serve at a church plant here in downtown. After being raised in a Christ-centered home and coming to know Jesus as her Savior at age 6, Leah faced many challenges in her walk with the Lord, including overcoming a brain tumor, an eating disorder and emotional dependency/fear of relationships. For the past four years, Leah has been receiving help from Living Hope Ministries in Texas, who connected her with Portland Fellowship once she moved to Portland. She has served faithfully in a variety of ministries since she was a teenager and kept coming back to ministries like Portland Fellowship, where the Lord has given her a heart to serve and grow.

Leah holds a degree in Christian Education from Dallas Baptist University. She has served in student ministry for seven years and is currently serving part-time with the NAMB as the Women's and Outreach Director at a church plant here in Portland, with high hopes of attending Western Seminary in the fall of 2018. Leah will be serving as administrative support in the Portland Fellowship office, ministering to and communicating with our supporting churches, donors, families and participants. Additionally, she will be participating in PF's Taking Back Ground and Upper Room Community programs.

*"I am excited to join as staff here at Portland Fellowship as I continue to learn what it is to walk with those who struggle with same-sex attraction and their loved ones, as well as continue to grow in my own walk and healing in Christ through both TBG and the Upper Room Community. I am so thankful to the Lord for the transformation in my own life and freedom in Christ that I have found over the past several years. It is only by His grace and pursuit of my stubborn heart, and I am thankful to be able to continue growing and serving here at Portland Fellowship."*

## Program Update: Upper Room Community 2017 - 2018

Meet the new participants for this year's Upper Room Community! Please be praying for their intensive discipleship year.



### Samuel Klement

*I've lived in the greater Portland region since I was six years old. I was raised in a family that was into homeschooling, and went to church weekly, but there was a distinct lack of support for much of my life, and I found myself struggling alone with things nobody ever addressed in church. Eventually, God led me away from my parents' church, and the church he led me to had support unlike any I had seen before. God gave me the courage to finally ask for help from my youth pastor, who referred me to Portland fellowship. I enrolled in Taking Back Ground. It has been amazing to see that I am not alone, God's people do care, and best of all, Jesus cares. I'm looking forward to Upper Room because having people around you that are seriously committed to Christ and actually understand who you are makes a huge difference in your walk with Jesus. I don't*

*know where God is leading me, truthfully I am unsure occupationally, but I know that He's going to complete His good work in me (Philippians 1:6).*

### Noel Chiu

*I'm originally from Taipei, Taiwan. I lived in the Bay area for six years, received my M. Div. from Western Seminary (San Jose) in 2012, and moved to Taiwan to work as a youth pastor for five years. Now, I have relocated to Portland, partly for my doctoral studies at Western Seminary (Portland), and partly for learning more about SSA ministry at Portland Fellowship. I became a Christian when I was in college, and the very first question my LGBTQ friends asked me was: "Why do you want to be a Christian? Christians hate us!" This shocked me, for I did not hate them (I still don't). Instead, my love towards my dear friends hasn't changed a bit since I became a follower of Jesus Christ. Ever since then, the burden to reach out and share the gospel of Jesus Christ with the LGBTQ community has been growing in my heart. I waited and prayed for years as I journeyed through seminary and full-time ministry, and I believe that now is the time to grow, learn more and equip myself with whatever I need to establish a frontline SSA ministry in the coming years.*





## september - october calendar & services

### september 8 & october 13 the hope group

For friends and family of gay or trans-identifying loved ones. Join us for a time of prayer, support, encouragement and a great meal. 6:30 p.m.

### tuesday nights in september tbg leadership training

Volunteer leaders new and old come together for training on group dynamics and empathic listening in preparation for TBG. 7-9 p.m.

### thursdays in september upper room community

URC participants meet with PF staff for fellowship, prayer, teaching and discussion. 12:30-3:30 p.m.

### tuesday nights in october taking back ground

Powerful discipleship series for men and women struggling with unwanted same-sex attractions. Group for wives as well. 7-9 p.m.

### follow us on facebook!

Stay connected for updates, prayer requests and inspirational resources, Like and follow our page at: [www.facebook.com/portlandfellowship/](http://www.facebook.com/portlandfellowship/)

### 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.

## TBG & URC: Accepting Applications Now



We are currently accepting applications for both our two-year Taking Back Ground program and

our nine-month Upper Room Community residential program. These powerful programs are changing lives! Upper Room begins in September and TBG starts the first Tuesday in October, both running through May.

There are several ways you can help us promote these amazing opportunities. First, if you or someone you know is desiring a deeper discipleship process in the area of same-sex attraction, please contact us! Also, pray about asking your pastor if you can share about Portland Fellowship at your church or small group. Consider as well sharing PF's programs for Christians struggling with unwanted SSA on your personal Facebook page. Finally, join us in praying for the Lord to continue leading the brokenhearted who need healing to His ministry here at PF. We anticipate God doing great things this year!

## TBG: Volume Two Revision Project

This past month, PF staff took a weekend to edit and revise the Taking Back Ground Year Two discipleship manual. Combined



with the Year One revisions completed earlier in the summer, we are on track to have both manuals completely reformatted, edited and published, God willing, before Taking Back Ground starts in October.

Part of the reason for revising our curriculum has been to remove obvious errors and distractions that may confuse or hinder people from fully engaging in the healing process. Please pray that many people would be blessed and encouraged by this updated curriculum!



**PORTLAND**  
fellowship

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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