



PORTLAND
fellowship

Dear Friends,

update june 2018

This spring, I had the privilege of sharing my testimony with my church's youth group. In preparing to speak, I had no way of knowing what to expect—you never know what teens will say sometimes! I was a bit apprehensive about the kinds of questions or even pushback I might encounter. Statistically, more and more youth view homosexuality as good and right, and I wondered how our church teens would respond to God's message of hope and transformation.

After sharing with the junior high group how God has been transforming my life, and how He offers hope to people struggling with same-sex attraction, we opened up the floor for questions. Some people asked about labels, and others, how to love someone who identifies as gay or transgender. Then, a shy young seventh-grade girl raised her hand, and asked, "So...does this mean being lesbian, being gay...does this mean all homosexuality is sin?" There it was: the loaded question of this generation.

My heart sank. I was grieved for this young girl, who was clearly wrestling with the reality that some of her friends might be doing something wrong. What does this mean for her friends? For her? How does she even process this information, let alone respond in a Christ-like way? I empathized with her struggle to lovingly respond to friends living in sin.

I was also grieved by her question itself, which exposed the reality of our church cultural shift. Growing up in the church, I became troubled over my same-sex attractions in middle school and was convicted by my sinful responses. Today, instead of embracing God's Word and His good design, many kids believe the world's message that their identity is found in their feelings, and that therefore it is unloving to condemn acting on those feelings (even if those actions go against God's original intent).

Hesitantly, as I responded to this brave young girl, I explained that while it's not a sin to be tempted and struggle, God does hold us accountable for how we respond to those temptations. I used the analogy of a man who's hungry and steals food—no one would condemn him for being hungry, but if that man breaks into your house and steals your food, he will have to face the consequences of his actions. I also used the analogy of a beautiful juicy cheeseburger, and a nasty moldy one. If we saw a starving woman eating moldy food, we wouldn't shame her for being hungry, but would it be loving to let her continue eating garbage? No! On the contrary, the loving thing to do would be to tell her what she's eating will actually harm her, and then help her find healthy food.

We live in a world that denies people are "hungry" relationally, and then tells us that even if people are longing for same-sex connections, it's not wrong to feed that hunger through homosexual acts. The world quantifies "right" and "wrong" based on if something hurts another person, but the truth is, God teaches us there are some things that are inherently counterfeit to His original design, even if they're not hurting anyone else. I Corinthians 6:18 says, "Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside



"He has sent me to bind
up the brokenhearted, to
proclaim liberty to captives,
and freedom to prisoners."

ISAIAH 61 : 1

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the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body.” Additionally, Romans 1:27 talks about those engaging in homosexual behavior *“receiv[ing] the due penalty for their error.”* While it may be tempting to believe the worldly phrase, “love is love”, we must remember God’s truth. He tells us that homosexual behavior is actually sin, even if it might seem like love. He calls us to reach out to those walking in deception: *“Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter. If you say, ‘But we knew nothing about this,’ does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who guards your life know it?”*—Proverbs 24:11-12. Real love is speaking the truth to those who are deceived, even if it’s painful.

This isn’t easy, even for us working in redemptive ministries. It can be a big step of faith to lovingly confront someone you care about, especially if they have embraced a sinful identity. Thankfully, we have Jesus as our guide. He compassionately and lovingly spoke the truth to people who were hurting and hungry, and He offered them the hope of transformation through a relationship with Him. As we all wrestle with the cultural values rapidly changing around us, let us follow Jesus’ example. Let’s press into these hard conversations and compassionately speak the truth as we invite people to fully surrender their lives to Jesus—especially with our kids and teens!

Thank you for standing with us, for supporting God’s ministry to the relationally hungry here at Portland Fellowship, and for continuing to share God’s truth with those around you. We are so grateful for your prayers, encouragement and financial support.

In Christ,

Patrick Silvis

Program Coordinator

Partnership Opportunity: Side Lot Project



There is a strip of land that sits between the PF house and the condos next door, and with the help of CJ, one of our URC participants, the PF Board and staff have developed plans to turn most of the side lot into a patio area for community and group use. This will include building a new staircase off of the main porch, retaining walls, and laying patio pavers.

We will have some work days throughout this summer, so if you’re able and available, we’d love your help! This project could cost up to \$10,000, and we want to invite you to partner with us. If the Lord would lead you, please consider making a special donation to this project. You can donate online and select the “Side Lot Project” category, or write “Side Lot Project” on check memo lines. We will host a BBQ once the project is done and invite everyone who contributed. Thank you for considering this partnership!



Summer Series: Sy Rogers

This year’s PF Summer Series will work through international speaker Sy Roger’s video teaching series, *Lessons Learned*. PF leaders Ron and Heidi Perry will host discussion groups on Tuesday nights from 7-8:30pm at the PF house. Meetings begin on July 10th and run weekly until the end of August. This group is open to everyone; however, if you are new to Portland Fellowship, please call or email the office to schedule an intake to register.

Portland Fellowship is a nonprofit, 501(c)3 nondenominational organization. We are exclusively supported through private donations, support services and offerings. Thank you for your gifts.

events calendar

june 7

Cedar Mill Bible Church

Patrick will be sharing about
PF at Cedar Mill Bible’s
missions prayer breakfast.
9:30 - 11:30 am

june 8

Hope Group

For Family and Friends.
Dinner will be provided.
6:30 pm at the PF house.

june 15-16

RHN Hope2018 Conference

Restored Hope Network’s
Hope2018 conference will take
place on June 15-16 in
Washington, D.C. Keynote
speakers include Debora Barr,
Julie Stern Roys and Dr.
Michael Brown. There will
also be multiple breakout
sessions, worship and fellowship.
For more info and registration:
www.restoredhopenetwork.org

**Speakers, counseling, youth
support and personal support**
can be arranged through the office.

Check website for additional updates
at www.portlandfellowship.com