



PORTLAND  
fellowship

Dear Friends,

update august 2020

Since the beginning of human history, Satan has been successfully getting us to question the goodness of God and the reality of being made in God's image. Satan started in the Garden by suggesting that there was something deficient with the way God made Eve. He used the fruit of the forbidden tree and claimed, *"You won't die!...God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God..."*—Genesis 3:5 (NLT).

The truth is, Eve was not deficient. She was created in God's image. Her purpose, and God's intended purpose for all of us, was to "image-forth" who He is. We were all created to be God's image bearers:

*"Then God said, 'Let us make man[kind] in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. So, God created man[kind] in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.'"*—Genesis 1:26-27 (NIV)

Some of the ways we are to reflect God's image are through our relational interactions, creative pursuits and service to others. The true identity of every human being is God's child. As with Eve, Satan uses many artifacts, arguments, and experiences to persuade us into thinking that there is something wrong with the way God made us. Satan convinces us that our own image (who/what we want to be) is the image we should be bearing, the image that really matters. We view our lives as "all about me" (or all about humanity), rather than all about God.

Some of the identities that we can end up focusing on more than our identity as God's children are our political affiliation, our race, our sports team allegiance, our gender or our sexual orientation. When we focus on these things, we miss living out our true and lasting identity. This misdirected focus distracts us from (and can create dissatisfaction with) our created purpose of bearing God's image to the world.

At Portland Fellowship, we work to surrender the image and identity we believe to be "us" and exchange it for the image of God through Jesus Christ. In Jesus, we are doubly imaged of God—He created us in His image, and to those of us who call Jesus Lord and Savior, God sees the redemptive work of Jesus when He looks at us. Rather than our gender, sexual orientation or relationships being who we are, we identify as God's children in Jesus Christ.

Through the Taking Back Ground program, we focus on being God's image bearers rather than being our false identities. Discoveries in brain science affirm what God tells us in Romans 12:2: *"Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."* Our false identities develop over time as neuropathways in our brains are literally



Eric is a member of the Portland Fellowship Board of Directors.

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

ISAIAH 61 : 1

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)

wired and rewired as a result of our experiences and choices, and how we process both. It takes time, intentional thought, and repetition to form or change these brain pathways<sup>1</sup>.

My story is similar to others you may have read about: unhealthy and broken relationships with parents, to one degree or another; not “fitting in” with other males; exposure to pornography in early childhood; and hurts, coping habits and hang-ups all along the way. My first exposure to sexuality outside of God’s design was at eight years old. For the next sixteen years, I developed unhealthy brain pathways through my experiences and choices and how I processed them. I wasn’t aware of this process; I didn’t “choose” it, per se. Yet, it happened. At twenty-four, for the first time in my life, I sought help outside myself to realign my identity with God’s design for me. There was no “on-off” switch. For the next ten years, I was pursuing both my false identities and my identity as God’s image bearer, and then I joined the Taking Back Ground program at Portland Fellowship. This two-year program (three, in my case, because I’m just that amazing) provided me with so many blessings: a foundation of truth; consistency; caring mentors who walked the path ahead of me; peers that struggled alongside me; a place to worship God; and a safe space to share my story. Over the past twelve years, the construction crews in my mind have worked far more on the neuropathways of being God’s image bearer than they have on my false identities. Those old roads of false identity are used less and less, and the potholes and weeds growing in the cracks are becoming greater and greater. And I remain vigilant to safeguard the neuropathways that guide me to my identity in Christ.

God continues to use the ministry of Portland Fellowship to redirect His people from the false identities of the world, and for this I thank you for your support of this ministry. We appreciate all your prayers, notes of encouragement, volunteer hours and financial partnership. It’s such a blessing to be able to grow in our identity in Christ, rather than our gender or our sexual orientation, through the prayer, worship, encouragement and friendships at Portland Fellowship.

In Christ,

Eric Bindewald  
PF Board Member

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Caroline Leaf, *Switch on Your Brain* (Baker Books, 2015)

## ***Taking Back Ground + Wives Group 2020-2021***



We are currently receiving applications and doing intakes for our 2020-2021 Taking Back Ground program. TBG is Portland Fellowship’s two-year discipleship series that offers support and encouragement to Christians struggling with unwanted same-sex attraction and/or gender confusion. We also offer a wives group for wives and fiancées of men struggling with homosexuality.

Taking Back Ground takes place on Tuesday evenings during the school year (October-May), and includes worship, large group discussion, small group accountability and prayer. For more information and registration, please visit [www.portlandfellowship.com](http://www.portlandfellowship.com) or call the office at 503-235-6364.

**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**

### **august 14 Hope Group**

For friends and family of gay or trans-identifying loved ones.

\*This month, Women’s Ministry Leader KathyGrace is sharing her testimony of leaving transgenderism.  
7-8:30pm

To RSVP for Hope Group, please go to:  
[portlandfellowship.com/rsvp.php](http://portlandfellowship.com/rsvp.php)

### **tuesdays in august Summer Series**

*Emotionally Healthy Relationships*  
7-8:30pm

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

Check website for additional updates at [www.portlandfellowship.com](http://www.portlandfellowship.com)