



PORTLAND
fellowship

Dear Friends,

update october 2020

This year continues to bring our world extreme challenges and tragedies. Social media has even given birth to a new phrase, “doom scrolling”, to describe how we can fall into constantly checking the seemingly-endless negative news cycle. Another term we have heard frequently regarding the coronavirus is the word “unprecedented”, meaning completely new, without reference, no playbook to follow, with no past experience to help guide our way forward. Yes, our present physical circumstances may be unprecedented, but the emotional responses they evoke can help us understand what many of our participants experience emotionally going through the ministry of Portland Fellowship.

When I first arrived at the PF house eight years ago, I didn't really know what I was signing up for. I knew without a doubt, however, that God had led me to the point where I couldn't deal with my same-sex attraction struggle on my own. I was desperate for help, and I was willing to do whatever God asked of me in order to find healing and hope. Little did I know that my first year at PF would be one of the most emotionally dark and painful periods of my life. And yet, the Lord knew what He was doing. I had layer upon layer of doubt, guilt, shame, false identities, unhealthy coping skills, broken defense mechanisms and dysfunctional habits that God had to strip away from me before I could receive the forgiveness, love, hope and identity He had for me.



In reflecting on current world events, and the journey that our Taking Back Ground participants are beginning this month, I'm reminded of Jesus' words to Peter in Luke 22:

“Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.’ But he replied, ‘Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death.’ Jesus answered, ‘I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me.’” (Luke 22:31-34)

Three things stick out to me from this passage. First, God is in control and He knows what we're going through. That might seem hard to believe, especially in our current situation, but I know it was incredibly helpful for me as I wrestled with my faith, my sexual desires and my relationships. Just like Jesus knew that Satan was going to test Peter (and that Peter would fail), for those of us surrendering to God and His Word regarding our sexuality, He knows it is a difficult process and that we will inevitably fail in some way. And yet, like Peter, He still calls us to obey Him, even in our weakness.

Second, we can be confident in Christ's presence with us, no matter what we're going through. How amazing is it that Jesus prayed for Peter, that his strength wouldn't fail (Luke 22:32a)? He continues to intercede for those who are walking the difficult road of obedience! The Lord tells us, *“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire,*

“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
portlandfellowship.com

you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.” (Isaiah 43:2) Experiencing and receiving God’s love, forgiveness and grace for me in my sexual brokenness was proof that I can trust in Him and depend on Him no matter what life throws at me. And the same is true for all who “cast [their] anxiety on Him, for He cares for you.” (1 Peter 5:7)

Finally, Jesus’ words in Luke 22 show us that He has a purpose for us in our pain. If Jesus knew Satan wanted to “sift” Peter, and that Peter would fail, why did Jesus allow the sifting to happen? I believe the metaphor of sifting wheat reveals the answer. To sift wheat, you literally beat the wheat stalks, and then sift the grain. The heavier grain falls to the ground, and the lighter chaff blows away. God used Peter’s denial of Jesus (and his subsequent sorrow) to strip away his pride, so that Jesus could eventually make him the rock upon which He would build the church (Matthew 16:18). The same is true for our participants who are surrendering their sexuality to the Lord. He uses our pain to remove things that hinder us (the chaff), and reveal our worth and identity in Him (the grain). And, just like Jesus knew that Peter would strengthen his brothers after turning back to the Lord (Luke 22:32b), we can be confident that God has purpose in our pain and will use all things for His glory and our good (Romans 8:28).

As we begin a new year of Taking Back Ground here at Portland Fellowship, our prayer is that our participants and leaders would all hold fast to Jesus and the hope of new life in Him, no matter what we’re going through. Though your trials may be financial, physical, emotional or spiritual, we pray you experience the Lord’s presence, purpose and hope in your lives and in your families. Thank you for continuing to pray for us and for supporting God’s work here at Portland Fellowship.

In Christ,

Patrick Silvis

Program Coordinator

Portland Fellowship Matching Grant 2020



We are excited to announce that an anonymous donor has come forward to offer a matching challenge grant up to \$20,000. This means that when you donate a special gift in any amount to Portland Fellowship, your contribution doubles. For example, if you give \$100 toward this grant, your gift effectively becomes \$200. Your \$1000 gift becomes \$2000. This opportunity will continue now through the end of December 2020. You are welcome to give a one-time gift, or monthly until December 31st. This

is a great time to invite your church or friends to partner with us in this amazing work!

There are two ways to respond: the first is to mail the matching grant response card back with a check, and the second is to donate online by signing in to your profile at www.portlandfellowship.com. You are welcome to call the office and we can assist you with that process. We are truly grateful for this anonymous donor and for each of you as you consider your partnership with us. Thank you for continuing to help us support those struggling with same-sex attractions, support family and friends with loved ones who have embraced a homosexual identity, and offer online resources world-wide.

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

october 9

Hope Group

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

**Join us in person or on Zoom.*

7-8:30pm

To RSVP for Hope Group, please go to:
portlandfellowship.com/rsvp.php

tuesdays in october

Taking Back Ground

Discipleship program for those struggling with unwanted SSA.

Group for wives as well.

**Call the office for Zoom option.*

7-9:30 pm

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

Check website for additional updates at www.portlandfellowship.com