



PORTLAND  
fellowship

Dear Friends,

update august 2021

I kept hearing the word “surrender” as I pondered what to write. Every time I would think about sitting down to write, I heard, “surrender”, and that was the only thing I heard. As I asked the Lord about it, He said nothing; not even a Scripture. So, I started to ponder in my own mind: *What does it mean to surrender something? Is it the same as laying it down? Is it the same as giving it up?*

I think laying something down and giving something up are different, because of the motivations behind each of them. The definition of giving something up is, “to part with something you would prefer to keep”. To lay down something means “to put away or stop using something”. When the Lord has asked me to give up something, I have struggled not to keep it, so I’ve laid down things thinking, “If I give this up now, I believe the Lord will bring it back around. I am sure this is just for a season.” Though I would lay it down and grieve, I’m not sure I gave it up in my heart.

For example, when I was a kid, I always wanted a guitar. My parents got me one, and I loved it. I learned how to play it and, of course, I wrote songs. I would sing my heart out and play my guitar until my fingers couldn’t handle one more blister (If you are a guitar player, you understand your left-hand fingers being calloused). Later, I bought a twelve-string guitar, put a pick-up in it, and bought an amplifier. Oh, that was a small slice of heaven!

When I started my journey out of being transgender back to who God created me to be, I found my guitar and played all those heart-felt songs I had written, pouring my heart out as I sang. God came to me and said, “I want you to give that up”. “Give what up?” I asked. He said, “I want you to give up writing songs; instead, pour your heart out to me.”

I was speechless. As I began to obey Him, however, I realized those “songs” I was writing were really my heart. I wanted my heart to be heard and understood. Jesus showed me He could do both of those things, without my songs. He showed me how much He loved me. I also realized it was the first layer of the onion, and you know that the more you peel the onion, the harder it gets to stop the tears. Giving up my songs was the first step of God stripping away the things that I ran to instead of Him. Little did I know that as I gave these up, it would lead me to something bigger: the real posture of worship. The singing of my pain was in the way of true worship of Him. This was the beginning of a process, a process of greater freedom.

After the Lord asked me to give up writing songs (let me be clear—they were poems sung to a few chords on the guitar), He then asked me to lay down playing the guitar. This was heart breaking to me. I loved my guitar. Why would He ask me to do such a thing? Just stop playing the guitar? As I wrestled with laying it down, I began to clearly see the idol



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“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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my guitar had become. When I wanted to be comforted, instead of going to the Lord, I would pick up my old friend and just play. It was time that friend was Jesus.

In thinking about surrender, which is “to abandon oneself entirely”, I see how complete surrender includes both laying things down and giving things up. However, giving something up or laying it down, you are in control of it—you decide if you should keep it, or when it should be given up. In surrendering to the Lord, He has permission to look at your life and identify the things in the way of truly knowing Him. When He reveals something and you fully surrender to Him, you are ready to release control, and be completely and totally His.

I am not saying surrendering is easy; I’m saying it is *worth it*. The difficulties that we face in surrendering to the Lord definitely shape us; however, they will never define us. I have discovered that trials will reveal the condition of my heart, and they are an opportunity for me to address my heart posture. Whatever negative response rises to the top in a situation, I need to deal with it, until the heart of the Lord is my first response.

As I think about this last year of Taking Back Ground here at Portland Fellowship, I’ve had the honor of watching the participants laying things down or giving things up in surrender to the Lord. I’ve heard about the men and their accomplishments, but I have gotten to watch the women’s progress. Each week, I hear about the difficulties these ladies are processing and how they’re trying to think differently. I see their fierceness in what looks like frailty in that moment of surrender. It is here with them that I remember the pain of obedience, and the fruit that comes out of it. It is here I am reminded of why surrender is so important.

When the Lord calls you to give up, lay down, or surrender something, know that He is inviting you to know more of Him. He is calling you to come and see all that He has for you, and He is with you in it. Thank you for continuing to pray for and partner with the Lord’s amazing, transforming work through the ministry of Portland Fellowship. We are deeply grateful for your support.

In Christ,

KathyGrace Duncan  
PF Board Chairwoman

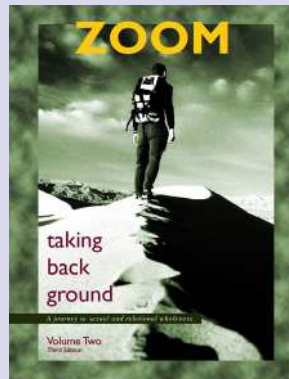
## Taking Back Ground 2021-2022

We are excited to offer our TBG discipleship program both in-person AND on Zoom for Christians struggling with unwanted SSA. This fall, we will be launching the second year of our Zoom TBG program, with participants from all over the U.S. and even from different countries!

This is an amazing opportunity for anyone outside the Portland area who is looking for intentional discipleship in the area of sexual and relational wholeness. Just like our in-house program, TBG Zoom offers worship, large group discussion, and small group prayer and encouragement.

If you or someone you know is looking for support, either in-person or on Zoom, please contact the office to schedule an intake. TBG begins the first Tuesday in October, 2021, and runs through the end of May, 2022.

**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 13 & 27**  
**Hope Group**

For friends and family of gay or trans-identifying loved ones.  
In-Person gathering on 8/13,  
Zoom meeting on 8/27.

To RSVP for Hope Group:  
[www.portlandfellowship.com/rsvp.php](http://www.portlandfellowship.com/rsvp.php)

**tuesdays in august**  
**Zoom Summer Series**  
Sy Rogers' Lessons Learned Video  
discussion series via Zoom.  
7-8:30pm PST.

**august 29**  
**PF Staff Speaking**  
KathyGrace and Patrick  
will be sharing at The Well  
Community Church,

**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)