



PORTLAND
fellowship

Dear Friends,

update october 2021

I can't tell you how often here at Portland Fellowship we hear the phrase, "If I could just..." This phrase comes up in many different ways:

"If I could just get my son to read the testimonies on your website, maybe he would consider walking away from his gay identity." "If I could just get my pastor to read your newsletter, then they'd start preaching about transformation, instead of accepting and approving homosexuality." "If I could just share this article, then maybe my Christian friends would change their political positions to better-reflect biblical sexuality."

We all do this, don't we? We're all searching for resources that will confirm what we believe, and we often seek to share these materials with our loved ones, precisely because we want the best for them. And yet...I don't know about you, but as badly as I want someone to do the right thing, or believe the truth over a lie, or reject unhealthy choices for godly ones, I'm constantly confronted with this annoying little thing God has given each of us: free will. We all have the ability to choose; rightly or wrongly, we are given the awesome power and responsibility of choice. And no amount of guilt-tripping, cajoling, manipulating, shaming, encouraging or enforcing can override that God-given gift.

Here at Portland Fellowship, we believe in respecting the dignity and journey of each individual person who seeks out this ministry. On a practical level, we do this because we've seen firsthand that trying to force someone to do something simply doesn't work. No matter how hard we might encourage or pressure our loved ones to choose God's redemptive path for their lives, we can't actually make them choose—it doesn't work. And what's more, we've seen where pressuring loved ones can have the opposite intended effect: someone who is constantly told to choose the "right" path may go down the wrong path, out of spite. As humans, we're pretty stubborn, aren't we? We just don't like being told what to do!

On a spiritual level, we respect an individual's choices because we see that God respects His children's free will. Even though He prohibited eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (*Genesis 2:17*), God still allowed Adam and Eve to choose which tree to eat from. When God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, he first allowed Lot the choice to escape. Lot then chose to invite his future sons-in-law to escape with him; tragically, they chose to stay and be destroyed (*Genesis 19:12-15*). Even when the Lord explicitly lays out all of the law and His covenants, He never forced the Israelites to obey. Instead, He invited them to obey, and reminded them of the consequences of disobedience: *"This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him."* —Deut. 30:19-20a.



"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

Joshua put it even more bluntly: “*But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve...*” (Joshua 24:15).

In the PF world, there has been a growing movement of people who once believed in God’s power to transform lives and hearts, but no longer hold to that conviction. These people instead now believe that it is harmful to offer a transformative discipleship process to those struggling with unwanted same-sex attraction. They may mislabel this process as “ex-gay brainwashing”, “conversion therapy”, or “reparative therapy”, but regardless of the label, the underlying belief is that it is harmful for individuals who are struggling to choose obedience to God’s Word and follow His design for sexuality and gender.

Thankfully, here at Portland Fellowship we continue to offer support and encouragement to those who are choosing to submit their lives to Jesus Christ. This is crucial in our society today, which screams that there is only one option for Christians struggling with unwanted SSA: to just embrace it and accept a “born this way” identity. Yet, we continue to have men and women contacting us who have a conflict between their faith and their feelings, and they want help; they want to obey Jesus and walk in the healing that He has for them. These are the individuals that we continue to love, encourage, and support in their choice to become the men and women that Christ intended them to be. We do so knowing that we are unable to change people’s minds and hearts—only the Holy Spirit can convict someone of their sin and lead them to repentance (*John 16:8*).

As you continue to pray for your friends and family who are embracing an LGBTQ identity, we join you in praying that the Holy Spirit would move in their hearts and lovingly bring them back to Christ. As we begin our Taking Back Ground program this month, please pray that the Lord would encourage our participants who are responding to His conviction and seeking His will in their sexual and relational struggles. We are so grateful for your ongoing prayers, encouragement and financial support, which allow us to minister to those who are choosing the way of the Cross.

In Christ,

Patrick Silvis

Program Coordinator

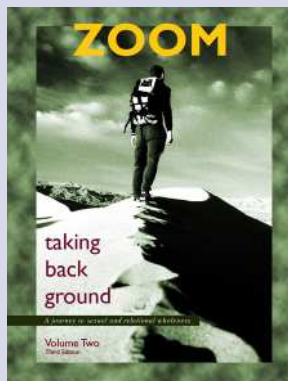
Taking Back Ground 2021-2022

We are excited to offer our TBG discipleship program both in-person AND on Zoom for Christians struggling with unwanted SSA. This month, we are 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

october 8

Hope Group

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

www.portlandfellowship.com/rsvp.php

tuesdays in october

Taking Back Ground

PF's discipleship program for men & women struggling with unwanted same-sex attraction. 7-9:30 p.m.

october 8-9, 14

KathyGrace Speaking

KathyGrace will be sharing at The Ambassador's Forum and with pastors from Pure Life Alliance.

october 19

jason speaking

Jason will be sharing with a support group in Melbourne, Australia.

Speakers and personal support can be arranged through the office.

Check website for additional updates at www.portlandfellowship.com