



the fellowship message

"Proclaiming freedom for the captives." ISAIAH 61

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Beautiful Boundaries by Sophie Seegers

"...You make my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance." —Psalm 16:5-6

My parents divorced when I was two months old. My brother and I lived with our mom and didn't have a great deal of contact with our dad. We visited him a few times a year when we got older, but he wasn't interested in (or capable of) taking care of children. Our mom was an excellent parent, and I was very close to her and always wanted to please her. She married my step-dad when I was nine. He was a good man and loved my mom, but he was also a bit gruff and intimidating. My step-dad was a widower and had five kids of his own, who were all older than my brother and I. The youngest three boys were still at home and, quite frankly, were out of control. The initial years of my mom and step-dad's marriage involved a lot of turmoil caused by my step-dad's two youngest sons, who were in their teens and seemed to have no self-control or boundaries. It wasn't a peaceful household.

My brother wasn't able to live with us because of the difficulties with my step-brothers, so he stayed with my grandparents for his junior high and high school years. I was the youngest child in the house, and, over time, began to long to get away from it. In that environment, I suppose it wouldn't have been a surprise if I had been angry and resentful, but I wasn't. I was basically a happy kid, although I was pretty anxious most of the time.

My mom had always been concerned that my brother and I would have sound Christian training, and she is the one who explained salvation to me. I asked Jesus into my heart when I was seven years old in the car on the way to the beach. I remember it vividly, and it was absolutely real. After my mom remarried, we began going to a wonderful little church south of the city we in which we lived. I attended regularly until I left home for college, and even became a church member when I was fourteen. I loved Jesus and wanted to serve him and was planning on being a missionary.

I didn't realize I was attracted to the same sex until I was fifteen or sixteen years old. It was a pretty vague feeling, and I didn't really understand it. Although I knew they were there, I wasn't terribly concerned that I would act on those feelings, because I naively thought that there would never be an opportunity to do so. I sincerely didn't think that anyone would be interested in me in that way. When someone did show interest in me in that way, and it was a woman, I was



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completely unprepared for it. I became involved with this woman even though I was very aware that it was wrong. I was overwhelmed and confused, and my world fell apart. Without getting into any sordid details, the whole episode was a four-year ordeal that caused tremendous upheaval in my life. All my trajectories changed. The same-sex attraction, and the struggle against it, became my focus. I no longer felt either worthy or capable of serving God. The new underlying emotion of my existence was shame. I didn't want anyone to know me or what was happening inside me. I had gone outside the boundaries that God had lovingly made, and I reaped a whirlwind of pain.

During this time frame, I had moved away from where I was raised and transplanted myself in a new state. I got a job working in law enforcement civilian support, and began to build a life. Unfortunately, work in law enforcement often means shift work, and I stopped attending church regularly because of my strange hours. I met a man at work who I found very attractive. That was a bit of a surprise to me, as it really hadn't happened before. His name was Dusty and he turned out to be a wonderful, and completely undeserved, gift from God. He asked me to marry him, but I wasn't sure about it. I told him all about my same-sex attraction struggle and he still wanted to be with me, so we got married in 1990.

I didn't enter into my marriage with the idea that it would "fix" me, but I did enjoy the appearance of normalcy that it gave me. Unfortunately, I was still not involved in any regular fellowship with other Believers, and didn't realize how vulnerable to attack that made me. It was absolutely shocking to me a few years into our marriage when I was once again overwhelmed by a same-sex relationship. Now I had the shame of adultery added to the shame of homosexuality. I had breached the boundaries yet again, and I couldn't stand myself. I seriously contemplated suicide at the time, but was dissuaded by my oldest friend. It was that friend that connected me with Portland Fellowship. I was too far away to participate in their programs, but I was able to support them with my prayers and donations now and then. It was a comforting thing to know that ministries like

Portland Fellowship existed to help Christians who were like me.



Sophie and Dusty, circa 1991.

Dusty and I persevered in our marriage, and I was never again tempted to violate my marriage vows. I treated Dusty, and my vows, as precious, and I nurtured them both. Over our thirty-one years together, we were able to build a strong, loving partnership with its foundation in Jesus. We began attending a lovely Bible-believing church and were blessed by the regular fellowship. I was living inside the boundaries, and I was content.

On November 12, 2021, Dusty died of Covid-19. He had no known comorbidities, and it was a terrible shock. There were so many things to do, and so much to deal with, that most of my feelings had to be put on a back burner. However, there was one feeling that would not be suppressed—fear. I had a lot of fears about a lot of things, but one of the most horrible was my fear of myself: *What would I do now that my "guardian" was gone? Would I fall into the pattern of same-sex attraction that had beset me so thoroughly when I was younger? Would I breach the boundaries again?*

Gradually, over the months following Dusty's passing, I discovered something. The struggle I had been going through since I was sixteen years old, the struggle that had worn me down and made me so ashamed, the struggle against my fundamental selfishness had...born fruit! Dusty wasn't the only reason that I wasn't acting out—I wasn't acting out because God had freed me! The boundaries were beautiful, and I loved them.

Our culture today, unlike when I was young, wants to normalize and even celebrate every sexual sin, lie, and dysfunction. The world ignores the perfect plan for all relationships that God reveals to us in His Word. God can absolutely restore the years that the locusts have eaten (*Joel 2:25*), but it is a great gift to stay inside the boundary lines we have been given. So much pain and loss can be avoided when we acknowledge and accept that God knows what is best for us, and He gives us beautiful boundaries.

The Transformational Journey (Part 6 of 6): Safeguarding Our Freedom by Jason Thompson

Portland Fellowship proclaims the message of hope and healing for those with unwanted same-sex attractions. This six-part series presents an overview of why and how we make this God-centered transformational journey. For context, please read the previous parts: www.portlandfellowship.com/transformation.pdf

You've heard of Area 51, The White House, Fort Knox, and the Vatican Secret Archives, but have you heard of Bold Lane Car Park? I hadn't, until I Googled, "Five of the Most Secure Places in the World."

Come to learn, Bold Lane Car Park in Derbyshire, UK, has the most secure parking in the world. It boasts a ten-floor car garage with 440 parking bays and 190 CCTV cameras. Upon entry, each driver receives a barcoded ticket linked to a specific parking bay activated by a motion sensor located beneath the car. Alarms will go off if you get into the vehicle without paying the parking fee—an annual payment of \$1,500. Those drivers must really cherish their cars!



I'm all for protecting our valuable things, but the stuff of the earth is just that: stuff. And as we know, stuff can get replaced, and when we die, stuff doesn't go with us. However, that which is infinitely more valuable than our stuff is what the Spirit of God has deposited in our hearts and minds. In Ezekiel, we read, "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you." (Ez. 36:26) What an amazing, powerful, and divine truth this is! Which begs the question: Do we 'Fort Knox', or 'Bold Lane Car Park', our new hearts?

This question is vital, because we have an enemy that seeks to "steal and kill and destroy" what God has done and continues to do in us (John 10:10). The enemy doesn't steal what we don't have; he steals what we do have. Therefore we must, "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it." (Prov. 4:23)

As someone serving on the front lines of transformational ministry, I can't stress enough how important it is to guard the truth of our identity in Christ and our relationship with Him. I've been deeply saddened by too many who abandon the transformation journey for their old life and former way of thinking.

I have several thoughts on why this happens. For some, there never was a new heart in the first place. Their entire journey was filled with insincerity, a reluctance to surrender fully, motivations centered on self, and constantly looking back to the old life with a measure of fondness and longing. Sadly, one former PF leader and good friend of mine appeared in a Netflix documentary admitting that he lied throughout his leadership in ministry. How deeply tragic.

For those who have experienced the transforming work of God, been enlightened by the truth, tasted the heavenly gift and the goodness of the word of God (Heb. 6:4-5), for us, we have the crucial responsibility of guarding it. However, safeguarding our hearts and minds doesn't happen in our own strength. Much like Bold Lane Car Park, where the drivers entrust the business to watch over their cars, we place our new hearts and minds in the protection of the One who will guard it perfectly:

"He shields all who take refuge in him." (Psalm 18:30)

"For you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the foe." (Psalm 61:3)

"You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your word." (Psalm 119:114)

It should bring us great joy to know that we have a God who not only knows our new heart's weaknesses and vulnerabilities, but that He allows us to run to Him, shelter ourselves in Him and then find peace and rest as He keeps us safe and secure.

As I conclude this six-part series, we recognize that the entire transformational journey is about God and His unmatched work in our life. It begins as He calls us to leave our life of captivity by putting our sin to death. Then, we move toward God's intended purpose for our lives; contend with and surrender the things that brought us to that place of brokenness; learn to trust in His goodness; invite Him to take the old things, and allow Him to make them new; and finally, we safeguard this treasured gift by abiding in Christ every day of our lives, knowing that He who began a good work in us is faithful to complete it. (Phil 1:6)

november - december calendar & services

tuesdays in november

taking back ground

PF's intensive discipleship program for men and women struggling with unwanted same-sex attraction.

Group for wives and fiancées also.

**For both Zoom and in-house.*

7-9:30 p.m. PST.

november 3 & 17

hope group zoom

Zoom program for friends and family of LGBTQ loved ones.

6-8 p.m. PST.

portlandfellowship.com/friends_family.php

november 11, december 9

hope group in-person

Support & encouragement for friends & family of LGBTQ loved ones.

6:30 p.m.

portlandfellowship.com/rsvp.php

nov. 24-25, dec. 24-31

offices closed

The PF offices will be closed for the Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's holidays.

follow us!

Get updates and inspirational resources on social media.

***Facebook & Instagram:**

[@portlandfellowship](https://www.instagram.com/portlandfellowship)

***Twitter:** [@PTLDFellowship](https://twitter.com/PTLDFellowship)

additional updates

www.portlandfellowship.com

speakers, counseling and support for youth

can be set up through the office.

With Much Gratitude

In Psalm 100, the author exhorts us to: *“Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.”* (v. 4-5)

As we consider God's love and faithfulness to the ministry of Portland Fellowship this year, we can't help but give thanks and praise His name for the amazing things He's doing:

- We are grateful for Zoom, and for over 90 participants (Summer Series, Taking Back Ground and Hope Group) being able to join us online this year.



“I just wanted to say [TBG is] so encouraging! It feels good to be around fellow believers who have similar thoughts, struggles, goals, etc. I am thrilled for what this course may bring. The challenges, the tears, all of it! God is good.”

- We thank the Lord for redeeming and restoring relationships between parents and their wayward children, like one mom in our Hope Group who finally made contact with her estranged daughter who is transgender.
- And finally, we give thanks to Jesus for each and every one of our supporters--those who faithfully pray for us, generously give towards God's work here at PF, and encourage those of us on the front lines to press on toward the goal that is Christ Jesus (*Phil. 3:14*). Thank you so much!



PORTLAND
fellowship

The Fellowship Message is a monthly publication of Portland Fellowship, a ministry proclaiming freedom from homosexuality through the power of Jesus Christ.

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