



the fellowship message

"Proclaiming freedom for the captives." ISAIAH 61

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Such Were Some Of You by Trevor Ebert

My earliest memories are of inappropriate connections with peers. From what I can best recollect, that would have been about four or five years old. It appears that I instigated this behavior, but it's somewhat blurry as to why or how that would happen, a four-year-old instigating sexual connection with other children. This was both shameful and confusing for me.

Additionally, I was not a particularly competent or capable child, be it in sports, socials, or academics, and I think that was an additional challenge to healthy connection with peers. I continued having similar inappropriate connections with other guys throughout my childhood and into my early teens.

I was raised in a Christian household and was familiar with the Gospel, regular church, and prayer in the home. My parents both loved me and each other. I would say, however, that there were gaps in affection and attention at an emotional level, and I think that an effective introduction to physical play would have been beneficial in developing my competence and confidence. Honestly, even with that said, they were excellent parents, and I am greatly thankful for their love and care for me.

In the eighth grade, I had a noteworthy crush on a girl that was a friend of mine. During summer camp that year, I became strikingly aware of the reality of God in an emotional and somewhat plain and obvious way: through the awe of the stars. At night, the mass of celestial bodies, and the vastness of space, shocked my young mind and made it clear that there was, in fact, a God. Unfortunately, my confusion continued when I delivered a spontaneous kiss on the cheek to a guy friend of mine, which flustered both of us, and we just attempted to ignore it.

At some point in my freshman year of high school, it clicked that I was attracted to guys, even though my behavior and attention to guys should have made it obvious. From this realization, I leaped straight to the conclusion that I was gay. Considering the cultural zeitgeist that we are in, it wasn't too surprising: "If I have these sorts of feelings, of course, I must be gay!" I "came out" to my parents, which unsurprisingly, was really challenging for my mother. This created a difficult rift between my parents and I.

A couple of years went by, living in this tension of believing there is a God and going to



Trevor is an alumnus of PF's Taking Back Ground and Upper Room programs.

church, while also identifying as gay, seeking and longing after the ideal romantic relationship with a guy. However, at some point in my junior year of high school, I reckoned with all the dread and discontent I was dealing with and became sober to the need for a solution. Looking around at the circular table in the cafeteria, people organized into different friend groups and cliques, I found myself aware that living life for aesthetics, athletics, or academics is not sufficient. Nor is it good enough to focus on romance, work, family, or serving others. Even as adults with more advanced methods of dividing up our idols into a plethora of pursuits, it doesn't quite do the trick, even with good goals or aims.

With this in mind, I realized that I needed something greater for meaning and purpose. I even had a striking sober feeling that I was not particularly moral in my behavior and that the moralism of the cults and fundamentalists wouldn't help me either. I believed there was obviously a God; after all, there are mechanisms and rules by which nature is guided, there are apparent moral norms, and right and wrong are real. Still, I needed something to put all of this together. This Jesus Christ of Sunday school came back to my recollection. I was struck by how powerful He would be if it were true that He was the Son of God, that He is God. The good news is that He is my Savior, King, Lord, Brother, Friend, and Lover and that I may be turned from evil to good, from enemy to friend by Jesus' work. This incredible news explains our world in which we experience the true, the good, and the beautiful.

With this knowledge, it wasn't long after (in fact, it was natural) that the gay identity was shed. I didn't know yet all that would be involved in being a child of God and one that dealt with same-sex attraction as a struggle, but it was obvious that homosexuality was not my identity anymore. *"And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor. 6:11)* Additionally, my mom had connected with Portland Fellowship, and through her knowledge of the ministry and certainly, through her prayer of contending for me, I pursued going

through the Taking Back Ground and Upper Room programs, and I've greatly benefitted from these ministries.

As I have moved forward, it has been some ten years of living apart from a gay identity and working regularly in a relationship with Jesus. There have been plenty of ups and downs—in fact, it has been at times rather discouraging and slower than I would care to admit. Yet, in all of this, I have learned some things—first, I now have greater empathy for the slow growth, and even at times the less-encouraging stuck-ness that people may be in for many years—be it an addiction, mental health issues, or sin habits. I find myself realizing that I am not much different: I myself am often blind, lazy, and prideful—I am someone in desperate need of a Savior!



Second, I think the beauty of a relationship with Christ allows me not to strive to be better, do better, or work harder as much as it calls me to rest, trust in Him, and know that *"...he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." (Phil. 1:6)*. This doesn't call for inaction on my part, but I'm learning that my actions must be grounded in trust and reliance on the Lord's power and goodness, not trusting or relying on my own strength. Part of my journey has been wrestling with ADHD, and at times, it has caused me to become anxious or paralyzed over my inability to focus or follow through on things. Yet even in that, I've seen God prove Himself faithful to help me grow in discipline and good habits, little by little.

Thirdly, I have come to realize that I am free and victorious in Christ. I knew this truth theologically, and even emotionally at times, but I am finding it's something to constantly remind myself of. I can throw my burdens on Christ, and He empowers me to move forward faithfully and to serve and enjoy Him. Jesus *has* grown and matured me. Instead of acting out sexually with other guys, I am slowly but surely growing in healthy relationships with Christian brothers and sisters. Key evidence of this fruit is that I am still walking with Him today—I haven't given up or gone back. My doubts, fears, and sins are not all gone, but by God's grace, they've been dampened, weakened, and are slipping off as I tread forward to finish this race (*1 Cor. 9:24-27*).

The Transgender Struggle (Part 3 of 6): Detransitioners by KathyGrace Duncan

PF proclaims the message of hope and healing for those with unwanted SSA and gender confusion. This six-part series explores transgenderism and how to respond biblically. For context, read the previous articles: www.portlandfellowship.com/transgender.pdf

In recent months, we're seeing an increase in those who are coming out of the transgender lifestyle. The common term for these people has become "detransitioners"—those who are returning to their original, biological sex. Many of these individuals are detransitioning because they recognize the lies of the transgender movement, their undealt with trauma, the peer pressure that led them to transition, and, they're getting away from social media. They also come to realize that none of the "gender affirming care" (GAC) alleviates or changes the underlying issues; hormones and surgeries only add to the depression and anxiety they are already experiencing. If they begin to question, "Am I doing the right thing?", some are met with bullying to stay in the trans lifestyle.



So, how do they leave? The believers who have left the lifestyle met the Lord in one way or another. Some have had a deep conviction that their life is one of deception, and decided to leave transgenderism. Some have heard the Lord call them out by birth name. Others have encountered the Lord by reading the Bible, and then understood the deception they are living in. The Lord has met some where they are, and during the encounter, they realized they must go back to how the Lord created them to be. The thing that is most amazing to me is that there are also those who don't know the Lord, and yet, they are returning to the original intent, the truth of how they were created!

This brings up the question: *How does a non-believer come to truth?* In talking with one detransitioner I met with who does not know the Lord, she concluded that she was being given wrong information and care. She identified as non-binary, which refers to being neither male nor female. She was also struggling with body dysmorphia, depression, generalized anxiety, and ADHD. When she met with a doctor in 2016 saying she was struggling with her appearance, it was suggested she have her breasts remove, take male hormones, and begin to transition to live as a man. So, she did.

After having the mastectomy and taking testosterone, in 2021 she realized that if she didn't identify as either male or female, then what was she transitioning to? Why was she even on this road? It was in that revelation she decided to see a counselor and begin therapy. Her mental health wasn't ever evaluated. During therapy, it was discovered that she was traumatized at the age of five by her parents divorcing, and at the age of twelve, her best friend was raped by the best friend's brother. This detransitioning woman believes that if she had received counseling first, then her road could have been quite different. She is confident the help she's gotten has helped her to now identify as female.

There have been other detransitioners speaking out against GAC, and how there are no mental health evaluations or considerations. In watching an interview by Ben Shapiro with Helena Kirshner (pictured above), she talks about going to Planned Parenthood, where she spent a total of one hour in this appointment. First, she saw a social worker, and then spoke with a nurse practitioner for about twenty minutes, who helped her with her first testosterone injection. The NP suggested a low dose to start with, but with Helena dealing with poor body image, she told the NP that she had extra estrogen and needed a higher dose. There was no pushback, no questioning from the NP who gave her the higher dose. Planned Parenthood diagnosed Helena with an endocrine disorder, and that was the medical reason why she would "need" the testosterone.

After staying off the internet, Helena was able to move away from the trans ideology. She was no longer influenced by listening to or reading the messages of trans affirmation, which gave her the ability to think on her own, and she came to the conclusion that she wasn't trans.

What's hard for me to comprehend is the challenge for detransitioners to find medical or mental health care. There is tons of funding for GAC, but nothing for clinics who want to offer an alternative. This so needs to change! We need the Lord to come and heal our land (2 Ch. 7:14). We need Him to make the crooked places straight (Isa. 45:2). My heart and prayer are Isaiah 42:7—"*...to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the prison, those who sit in darkness from the prison house.*"

May - June Calendar & Services

Tuesdays in May

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.

May 12, June 9

Hope Group In-Person

Support & encouragement for friends & family of LGBTQ loved ones.
6:30 p.m.
www.portlandfellowship.com/rsvp.php

May 23

TBG Graduation

TBG leaders, participants and honored guests celebrate the graduates of our two-year discipleship program.

May 25

PF Pastor's Luncheon

PF is hosting a luncheon for pastors and ministry leaders interested in learning more about this ministry. Lunch is free, but registration is required. To RSVP: portlandfellowship.com/summer.php

Follow us!

Get updates and inspirational resources on social media.

*Facebook & Instagram:

@portlandfellowship

*Twitter: @PTLDFellowship

Additional Updates:

www.portlandfellowship.com

Speakers, counseling and support for youth

can be set up through the office.

PF Pastor's Luncheon - May 25th

Are you a pastor or ministry leader in our community seeking to learn how to offer hope and healing for those struggling with unwanted same-sex attractions or gender confusion? We invite you to join us on May



25th from 12-1:30pm for a special informational luncheon at Portland Fellowship.

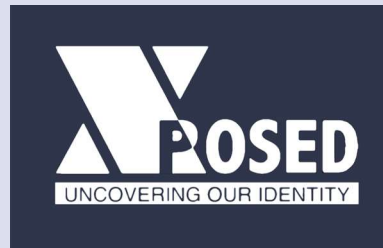
This special luncheon will introduce you to the work of Portland Fellowship, a local Christian discipleship ministry supporting men and women struggling with unwanted same-sex attraction and gender confusion. You'll learn more about the vision and mission of PF, explore some of the myths and misunderstandings surrounding this kind of ministry, and hear powerful testimonies of transformation. There will also be time for Q&A and connecting with other local pastors.



Lunch will be provided, but registration is required. To RSVP, go to: www.portlandfellowship.com/events.php

Xposed Conference - June 3rd

The 2023 Xposed conference will place on June 3rd at Cedar Mill Bible Church in Portland, OR. This event helps pastors, leaders, counselors, and individuals navigate the sensitive issues surrounding biblical sexuality.



Early bird pricing for tickets ends May 13th, and you can get an additional discount by using the code **XP23PF**. To register: www.xposedevent.com



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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