



the fellowship message

“Proclaiming freedom for the captives.” ISAIAH 61

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The Truth Set Me Free by Amandy

**Translated from Spanish*

During my childhood, I decided to embrace several lies that enslaved me and separated me from my Creator. However, Jesus was mighty to save—He found me with His truth and set me free!

I was born into a loving Christian home. I grew up with my dad, mom, an older sister, and my twin sister. Since birth, I've gone to church every Sunday, and we've always served Jesus.

Although my parents always gave me everything necessary for a good life, during my early childhood I felt out of place; I felt like I didn't fit in. I liked playing soccer, playing with cars (I had my own HotWheels collection), and outdoor activities. My dad's always been a farmer and a rancher, and I also love that kind of work. However, all of these activities, according to society, were “manly” things, and women “shouldn't do those”.

With these hobbies, it was difficult to make friends with girls because they didn't want to play what I liked to play, and I didn't want to play house or play with dolls. My only female friend was my twin sister. Additionally, when I was a little girl, our family friends would say to my parents: “Your family is missing a son.” When I went to work with my dad, his friends would tell him: “You didn't have a son to help you.” I was there helping him, but it seemed like I wasn't good enough.

With all of these hobbies, stereotypes, and commentaries, I came to believe the terrible lie from Satan: “God made a mistake when He created you—you should've been a boy.” Between eight and nine years old, I decided to turn into a boy. I tried to kill everything feminine in me: I never showed weakness, I didn't cry, I didn't ask for help, I didn't wear dresses or take care of my body, because those were “girl things”. In spite of all this, at that same age, I received Jesus as my Friend and Savior. I couldn't imagine how powerful He would be to transform me years later!

Adolescence arrived, and it was terrible. My body cried out that I was a woman and I hated it; I hated God's design for me. With puberty comes attraction to the opposite sex, but I didn't like boys; I viewed them as the enemy. I was always competing against them, trying to show that I was better. Unsurprisingly, I soon found myself attracted to other girls. Although I never had a formal relationship with another girl, I always had a “special friend” in whom I found my value and worth, and the love that I didn't have for myself.



Amandy (center) is an alumnus of PF's Taking Back Ground online program.

Growing up in a Christian home I always knew that homosexuality was a sin, so I decided to “hide” my desires and attractions from God—I never mentioned them, not even in my prayers, nor to my church leaders. I never asked for help. As Psalm 32 says, “*When I kept silent, my bones wasted away*”, and this really stopped me from growing in my relationship with Christ.

However, God was always pursuing me, in many ways and through multiple people. One of my nieces asked questions like, “Is aunt Amandy a boy or a girl?”, and one time she saw me with a female friend and asked: “Are they friends, or are they girlfriends?” Her questions were like daggers to my heart, as if God was asking me, “How far are you going to take this?”

I started helping in the youth group at my church, and many times I had to teach on Psalm 139. I told these kids that God hadn’t made a mistake with them, and that He made them perfect and for a purpose, but I myself wasn’t ready to accept that truth.

For many years, God was saying to me, “Let me work on this area of your life”, but I always closed the doors. For me, it was easier to react with anger and blame God for not making me a boy than to recognize that I was wrong and had believed so many lies.

In 2019, at twenty-five years old, I attended a missions school on the other side of the world. There, for the first time, one of my leaders confronted me and asked if I felt sexually attracted to other women. I was terrified of that question and I denied everything; however, when we finished our conversation, I returned to my room and for the first time I said to God, “You want to work on this with me, don’t you?” Although I didn’t even ask forgiveness for my sin, I believe that night was the beginning of my freedom. That missions school later had a day of fasting, where I promised God that I’d return home to Ecuador, ask for help, and let Him work in me.

A whole year went by without me doing anything serious to fulfill my promise. I read a few books on homosexuality, but I never understood anything. In 2020, the pandemic hit, and for me it was a very clear sign from God: He was giving me the time and space to look for help. Miraculously, I found Portland Fellowship’s website, and the

first thing I did was read all the testimonies they’d published. I was filled with hope, and I began to dream of the possibility of a life without this sin, without my anger and self-hatred, a life without having to hide anything from God.

When I started Taking Back Ground online, I discovered that I needed a mentor. God provided a person, and for the first time I confessed my sin to someone. This woman accepted the challenge of walking with me through the two years of TBG, and she was the tool that God used to free me. As James 5:16 says, “*...confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.*”

In the TBG program I learned that God doesn’t have stereotypes, and that playing soccer or collecting toy cars doesn’t make me more or less of a woman. I accepted that God made me good, and that my gender is part of His marvelous plan for my life. I learned that He doesn’t ask me to wear heels and dresses, or have nice nails and hair; to consider me His beloved daughter;

He loved me before I was born.

The two years of TBG were a time when I discovered lots of biblical truths, and with God’s help I threw off many thoughts and habits that enslaved me. Everything was a process: loving God more than my desires, loving myself, relating better with men and also with other women. When I started TBG online, I had a “special friend”, and it wasn’t until almost the end of the two years that I decided to completely cut off that relationship. Some things were easy to learn and put into practice, but many others needed more time. God was patient and has had mercy on me since the day I was born. He is completing His good work in me (*Philippians 1:6*).

God has done so much more than I once dreamed: I haven’t gone back to having “special friends”, and I almost never compete with men. Now, I count on my sisters and friends in the faith who keep me accountable and walk with me on the correct path when difficult times and temptations arise. With these ladies we’ve been able to help a few people that have the same struggle, and also their families. God has graciously shown us the tools that Portland Fellowship offers: TBG, Reach Truth, and Hope Group. I continue running the good race of faith, now without the sin that used to trip me up, and with my gaze fixed more firmly on my Savior!

*Si le gustaria leer el testimonio de Amandy en el español original: www.portlandfellowship.com/articles/july2024_espanol.pdf



Amandy (L) and her twin sister.

A Year of Hope (Part 4 of 6): Reaching Further with Online Ministries by Leah King

In this six-part series, we are highlighting different parts of Portland Fellowship that offer hope for healing and relational wholeness in Jesus Christ. For context, please read the previous parts: www.portlandfellowship.com/articles/hope.pdf

“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound...” –Isaiah 61:1-2



When we look at the number of people dealing with sexual distortions in our culture, or those who know someone facing sexual brokenness, it's crazy to think how few ministries there are like Portland Fellowship in comparison. When we think of the growing LGBTQ+ presence in society, gender ideology in schools, and the continued attacks on the image of God in the world, it's pretty shocking that there isn't an equal growing curiosity about the help that exists for people wanting to follow God's design for sexuality, or a desire to seek His redemption through support groups. Not only are there few ministries like Portland Fellowship that exist to help people find healing in Jesus, but across the globe, several countries have shut down and even outlawed professional counseling that offers hope and healing for sexual brokenness.

Praise be to God, that because of the growing nature of the online world, PF's Taking Back Ground, Hope Group, and Reach Truth programs have all been available for those who can't make it in person, or have no access to local support. PF's weekly online meetings help encourage participants to keep running the race well and remind us that though it may seem like it's a lonely journey, there are others fighting the same battle with the same limitations of not having in-person support.

For example, the online ministry at Portland Fellowship has been a huge help in my own story. In seasons where I haven't had a place to process the choices made by my LGBTQ+ loved ones, the online Hope Group was there for me. In times when I needed to share with an SSA struggler the real-life stories of people just like them who have found freedom in Jesus, testimonies on the PF website were there. And when a friend needed to know what ministries could walk alongside them if they chose to follow Jesus in their struggle, Taking Back Ground online was there.

While living in Texas, I had the joy of serving with Portland Fellowship's Hope Group through Zoom. During the last year, I've also had the opportunity to share all over the Pacific Northwest about the help PF offers through their online programs to those who live far away. The relief and hope that these families and individuals receive are a fresh wind in their sails, and a reminder to keep holding onto the only hope that we have for healing: Jesus Christ.

I truly believe that Portland Fellowship's online ministry is evidence of the Father's heart to go to the ends of the earth to bring people to restoration in Him. He wishes for no one to live in bondage or wrestle in isolation. Portland Fellowship's online programs are bringing freedom to the captives who would not have help otherwise as they are geographically far away from a support group.

If you or anyone you know is feeling isolated or trapped because of the lack of access to support on the journey to healing from sexual brokenness, please reach out to Portland Fellowship and join our online community:

www.pfhope.com

www.takingbackground.com

www.reachtruth.com

Hope Group Online
Help4Families
 For Friends & Family
 of LGBTQ-Identified
 Loved Ones

The Journey
 Introductory Series for
 Those w/ Unwanted SSA
 & Gender Confusion

Taking Back Ground
 42-Lesson Discipleship Series
 for Adults Struggling
 with Unwanted SSA &
 Gender Confusion

Reach Truth
 22-Lesson Discipleship Series
 for Youth/Young Adults
 with Unwanted SSA &
 Gender Confusion

July - August Calendar & Services

tuesdays in july & august
Summer Series
 PF's Summer Series, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*.
 6-8:00 p.m. PST on Zoom.
portlandfellowship.com/summer.php

july 9
Leah Speaking
 One of PF's Hope Group leaders, Leah King, will be sharing with parents at Westside Vineyard Church in Portland, OR.
 7:00 p.m.

july 12, august 9
In-Person Hope Group
 For friends & family of gay & trans-identified loved ones. Join us for dinner, an encouraging testimony, and time for sharing & prayer.
 6:30 p.m. PST
www.portlandfellowship.com/rsvp.php

august 18
KathyGrace Speaking
 PF's Women & Transgender ministry leader, KathyGrace, will be sharing at Revolution Church.
 Portland, OR.

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[@portlandfellowship](https://www.facebook.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.

Parent Podcast: *The Bridge Between Us*



Melinda Patrick's podcast, "The Bridge Between Us."

Melinda is the Director of Parent Support with His Wonderful Works, a ministry similar to Portland Fellowship in Atlanta, Georgia. "The Bridge Between Us" helps parents navigate relating to LGBTQ-identified loved ones with both truth and grace. This podcast is a great resource to:

- hear encouraging testimonies of transformation in Christ
- glean wisdom and insight from pastors, counselors and parents who have experience on this journey
- receive Biblical teaching and equipping

Listen to "The Bridge Between Us" here:
<https://melindapatrick.org/the-bridge-between-us/>

New Book: *The Daring Rescue*

Melinda Patrick has also recently published her first book, *The Daring Rescue: Joining Jesus Christ In His Pursuit Of Your LGBTQ-Identified Child's Heart*. Melinda writes from her own experience as a mom and offers hope to other hurting parents.



Check out *The Daring Rescue* here:
<https://melindapatrick.org/the-daring-rescue/>

For many parents, friends and family who have a loved one embracing an LGBTQ identity, it can feel overwhelming trying to discern how to relate to them with both truth and grace. Enter



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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