



# the fellowship message

"Proclaiming freedom for the captives." ISAIAH 61

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## The Truth: I *Had* Been a Homosexual by Terri Chapman

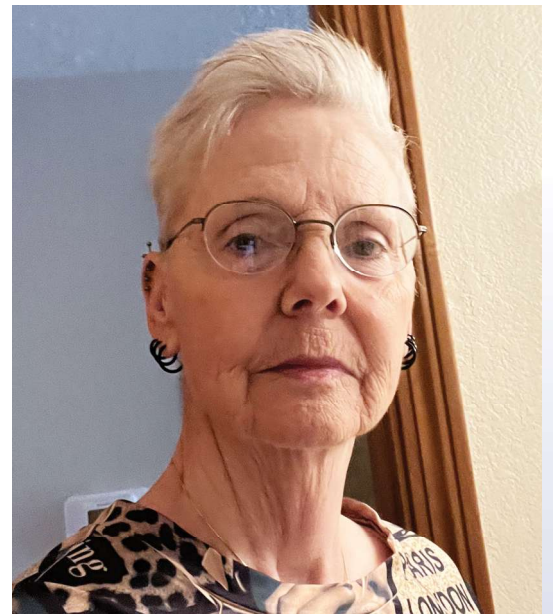
*I was astonished recently, and I mean freaked out, when out of the blue I thought, "Oh my gosh! I really was a homosexual!" I believe it happened when I read about the Portland Fellowship annual retreat that was held a couple of weeks ago. I cannot recall what I had read or heard in the March newsletter, but it triggered this sudden realization.*

Now, I went through the two years of Portland Fellowship's Taking Back Ground program, and somewhere along that journey one would think I could have come up with an exclamation such as "I was a homosexual!" far before then, or now.

Growing up in an evangelical church with strong Christian fundamentals of the Faith, I knew right from wrong, and honestly, I was nearly always filled with guilt. I went to youth camp every summer. I was on a Bible quiz team as a young teen, memorizing Scriptures and competing with other churches. I attended VBS every summer. I attended church every week with my parents and had a small group of friends who made up our youth group. Eventually, I attended a Bible college in Oregon.

What really saved me both in high school and college was athletics, where I excelled. What it did for me inadvertently was it kept me away from home, and that was perfect. For many reasons there was no safety there, and I was very, very angry. As a senior in high school, others started asking what I would be doing after graduation. People asked if I was going to be a Physical Education teacher. I was incredibly insulted. I knew what my opinion was of female P. E. teachers (that they're lesbians), which of course is a stereotype.

After college I began to work, and then the popular opinion was that I must be gay. As a single woman with no children, and having never been married—not even a divorce—I had to be a lesbian, right? This was terrible for me. I couldn't stand to be judged like this, because homosexuality was "wrong". Imagine what my mind was going through as I was seen as gay: being devastated by this impression by others; knowing how Christians thought about homosexuality; eventually acting out sexually with females; hating this about myself and others; and finally, knowing it was a sin. Later, I would be forced to confront how poorly I treated one of these women in particular. I tried on-and-off to end this "friendship", and even though I despised her neediness and will-



Terri is an alumnus of PF's Taking Back Ground discipleship program.

ingness to please, my selfish desires kept this sick relationship going. I went to the thesaurus just now to find synonyms for the word “relationship”. The first listed was “affair”. *Fabulous.*

In trying to keep everything together, I was a miserable wreck, and that was after the relationships were over. I quietly searched for programs that could help me with my past “inappropriate relationships”, but I never felt there was any place for me because I was NOT “gay”, NEVER a “lesbian”, and CERTAINLY not a “homosexual”.

Many years later, quite inadvertently and in a true encounter from God, I met Jason Thompson at a conference. I was waiting for another speaker, but I decided to sit in on Jason’s presentation on homosexuality. The information I gained there changed my life. I was blessed by hearing so many stories of others who had trudged this similar road. The surrenders of PF members were incredible, laying down deep hurts, idols, and items that pertained to that time in their lives. I had believed my situation was so different and “complicated”; I was not unique. During my intake at Portland Fellowship I droned on, trying to get across this convoluted history. I was told by the woman who met with me that, “We just love Jesus here.” *Alright then. When do I start?*

Until attending Taking Back Ground, I hadn’t realized how I really felt about men. After abuse and other trauma, I had decided men were not safe. This became worse as I grew older, and I had to address this at Portland Fellowship. It was brutal. I was given insight into the role of “vows”: “*I will never be weak and vulnerable...*” “*No one will ever hurt me again.*” Never. NEVER. Never Ever. These vows played a significant role in my beliefs and, truly, in my fears. I found my thoughts and mindset kept me frozen, paralyzed, and captive. I was willing to challenge these beliefs in the TBG program, and started to address them. Over time, I found that my heart and my head were starting to align with one another. I began to feel real feelings and let go of some of my faulty ideas.

Prior to this, I wasn’t able to keep up with the image I was portraying. I lived through trauma and self-hatred, but with God’s great mercy, eventually and mi-

raculously, I am coming through to the other side: the side of God and His love. Moment by moment. Day by Day. “*But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*” (Romans 5:8)

I am realizing, even now, that God has been bringing me to a place of healing in phases. I look at all this and wonder if I wouldn’t have gained any measure of success had I been forced to face all these things at the same time. I was fractured, and no one knew that better than God. Joel

2:25 became the top of my favorites, a “life verse” if you will: “*The LORD says, ‘I will give you back what you lost to the swarming locusts, the hopping locusts, the stripping locusts, and the cutting locusts. It was I who sent this great destroying army against you.’*” This passage conveys God’s promise to restore the years lost in Israel’s locust plague. He would bring renewal and restoration after periods of hardship and disobedience. This means that through repentance and returning to God, people like me can experience spiritual restoration and abundance. A gift beyond measure. God could forgive me, turn me toward Himself and

heal me no matter how badly I had behaved. So, I *had* been a homosexual, a phrase I never said aloud. *Seriously Terri. Give it up. Oh, and this wasn’t your first “affair”.*

Again, I’m unsure what recently triggered me to admit that I was a homosexual, but whoever said, wrote, or mentioned that, it has been given a gift. How many ways did I tip-toe around the word “homosexual”? I believe that was the only way I could address my struggles at that time—anything more direct might have caused me to retreat into more avoidance.

Finally, I want to say that “white knuckling” does not work for those struggling with same-sex attraction, or any addiction, really. We must address false beliefs, discover the “vows” deep within us, find God who knows us better than anyone, and allow Him to correct our thoughts about ourselves. I am not a “gay Christian”, barely holding on lest I fall back into old homosexual behavior. I am secure in my identity in Christ, and I am not just healthier, aligning myself with the Heart of God, but I am truly transformed. So, my name is Terri, and I was a homosexual. But I am no longer. Thank you, thank you, Jesus.



## A Year of Growth (Part 3 of 6): Dealing with Practical Matters by Lisa Price

This year, we are highlighting different topics from Portland Fellowship's Hope Group, which ministers to family and friends of gay and trans-identified loved ones. In this article, Hope Group leader Lisa Price tackles some of the difficult "What should I do?" questions that parents face. \*To read previous articles in this series: [www.portlandfellowship.com/articles/growth.pdf](http://www.portlandfellowship.com/articles/growth.pdf)

*"Among the gods there is none like you, Lord; no deeds can compare with yours. All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, Lord; they will bring glory to your name."* —Psalm 86:8-9

Complicating the emotional and spiritual struggles that arise when a child chooses to identify as gay, lesbian or transgender are practical matters that inevitably surface. These situations come in the form of questions such as:

*My son insists I refer to him as her and call him by a female name. Should I?*

*How welcoming should I be of a same sex partner?*

*Should I attend my child's same-sex wedding?*

These questions should be bathed in prayer, and answers may vary slightly depending on the convictions of each family. Portland Fellowship believes all Christians should strive to maintain balance between grace and truth when deciding how to deal with these difficult issues. Unfortunately, the Bible does not give obvious instructions on how to best handle pronouns, same-sex partners and gay weddings. Nonetheless, there are biblical principles not directly related to sexual brokenness that give believers wisdom and direction for dealing with these practical matters.

Many Christians rely on the ninth commandment, "Thou shalt not lie", for direction concerning the use of pronouns (*Exodus 20:16*). These folks reason that it is fundamentally dishonest to call a man a woman (or vice-versa). Many Christians wish to avoid lying, but they also want to avoid offending those who struggle with gender confusion. A viable strategy that avoids both offense and dishonesty is to simply skip using pronouns altogether.

Many parents believe that names are a different issue altogether. People change their names for all sorts of reasons that have nothing to do with gender confusion. These parents feel it's less of an issue to refer to their child by a new name they choose. Nevertheless, the Bible is clear: it's critical Christians obey their conscience in all things (*1 Tim. 1:19*). Therefore, if you feel the Lord convicting you that it's wrong to call your child the opposite-gender name, don't do it—violating your conscience is a terrible idea. Using nicknames or terms of endearment such as "honey" or "sweetie" can be an alternative.

The decision to invite a same-sex partner into one's home is deeply personal. Many parents feel that showing hospitality and kindness is always a good idea. Others are equally as convicted that welcoming same-sex partners illustrates approval of their child's choices. Again, no one should violate their conscience. If you do choose to welcome same-sex partners into your home, it may be necessary to lovingly place boundaries around displays of affection and conversation topics.

Same-sex weddings are one of the most difficult issues Christians face. Many believers feel strongly that weddings aren't ordinary celebrations like birthday parties, job promotions or graduations. Most agree there is no problem celebrating these events with anyone (*Rom. 12:15*). It's important to note that the Bible does teach that a wedding is a sacred religious ceremony, intended to be between a man and a woman (*Gen. 2:18-24*). Weddings symbolize the holy God of the universe uniting Himself to His people (*Eph. 5:21-33*). Therefore, the decision to attend a same-sex wedding should be handled with a great deal of thought, prayer, and wise counsel.

The hope every Christian parent has for their child is that they will someday joyfully walk in obedience to Jesus in every area of their life. This hope should be the driving force behind how you choose to deal with the thorny issues that inevitably arise. Many parents have found it useful to ask themselves the following question: *What would the repentant, Jesus-loving, walking-in-truth version of my child want me to do?* While the specific answers to thorny questions may vary, it is safe to say that version of your child would want you to graciously and lovingly hold fast to biblical truth.



## 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.

\*For both Zoom and in-house.

6-8:30 p.m. PST

tuesdays in may

### Hope Group

Discipleship program for friends & family of gay and trans-identified loved ones.

\*For both Zoom and in-house.

6-8:30 p.m. PST

may 6-7

### Jason Speaking

Jason will be teaching counseling students at Portland Bible College.

may 20

### TBG Graduation

Leaders, participants, friends & family celebrate the Taking Back Ground participants who are completing the 2-year program.

june 20 & 21

### RHN HOPE 2025 Online Conference

Restored Hope Network's annual conference, featuring teachings, workshops & testimonies online.

[www.restoredhopenetwork.org](http://www.restoredhopenetwork.org)

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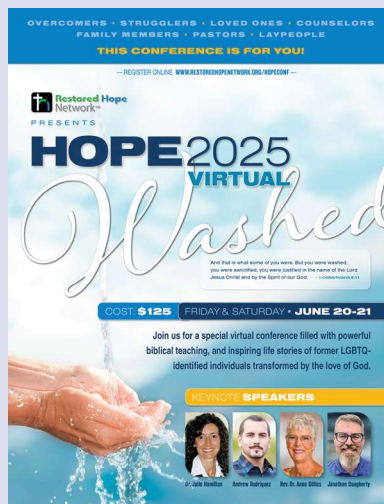
### Additional Updates:

[www.portlandfellowship.com](http://www.portlandfellowship.com)

### Speakers, counseling and support for youth

can be set up through the office.

## RHN HOPE 2025 Online Conference



formational perspective. Come hear powerful biblical teaching and inspiring life stories of former LGBTQ-identified individuals transformed by the love of God.

Some of the HOPE 2025 Keynote Speakers will include Dr. Julie Hamilton, Andrew Rodriguez, Rev. Dr. Anne Gillies, and Jonathan Daugherty. For registration and information on group or individual rates, visit: [www.restoredhopenetwork.org/hopeconf](http://www.restoredhopenetwork.org/hopeconf)

*“And that is what some of you were. 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)*

### Hope Group Online Workbooks



visit: [www.takingbackground.com/bookstore.php](http://www.takingbackground.com/bookstore.php)

This year's Restored Hope Network conference is HOPE 2025 Online: *Washed*. Join us for this virtual gathering June 20-21.

HOPE 2025 will address same-sex attraction and transgenderism from a transfor-



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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