



PORTLAND
fellowship

Dear Friends and Fellowship Partners,

update october 2026

Every fall, for as long as I can remember, I've wrestled with a familiar mix of thoughts and emotions. It's the time when kids go back to school, church community groups resume, and various programs begin. For many, these are exciting times, and in many ways they are for me, too. But along with the anticipation, I've often felt a measure of anxiety and uncertainty about what lies ahead.

In the early years, those feelings came near the end of summer, when "back to school" commercials dominated TV. The thought of returning to school, a place where I often felt inadequate, teased, and forgotten, could at times feel daunting. Years later, some of those familiar feelings surface as we prepare for another year of support programs, as the weight of this ministry can feel daunting in much the same way.

As a seasoned ministry leader with well over thirty years of experience, I can get frustrated that these worries still surface. I think I should be well beyond them by now: *Will we have enough leaders? Will we have enough participants? Or too many participants?*

God has faithfully provided. Every. Single. Year. And yet, doubts can still creep in and whisper, *"Probably not this time"*.

I was encouraged recently as I watched an older video of pastor and theologian John Piper, who spoke openly about experiencing doubt and anxiety throughout his decades of ministry. Hearing someone who has faithfully served the Lord for so many years acknowledge those struggles reminded me that perhaps the goal isn't to stop experiencing these emotions altogether, but to learn what to do with them when they come.

My natural tendency is to pray that the Lord would simply remove the anxiety and uncertainty and replace them with peace. But often, that's not what He does. Instead, He invites me to come before Him with my doubts and the weight of it all. In those moments, I'm reminded that this isn't *my* ministry, *my* participants, *my* leaders, or *my* supporters; they are all *His*. I simply have the privilege of faithfully carrying out His will and leaving the outcome with Him. And every once in a while, the Lord gives me a rather memorable reminder that I don't always see things as clearly as I think I do.

Last month, I grieved the loss of Pat, a longtime friend of PF since 1996. My grief began when our bank sent us a notice that Pat's monthly support check had bounced because his account was "closed." I immediately called Pat, but received the message, *"This line has been disconnected and is no longer in service."* Our records showed that Pat was eighty-two, so I concluded that a closed bank account, a disconnected phone line, and his age meant Pat was now with the Lord. I sent one last email, hoping for a response, but heard nothing.



"He has sent me to bind
up the brokenhearted, to
proclaim liberty to captives,
and freedom to prisoners."

ISAIAH 61 : 1

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Not five days after sending the email, I received a call, and to my surprise, it was Pat! Apparently, he had been hacked, so he had to shut down his bank account, and his phone number was disconnected because it was an old land-line that wasn't getting any use. I don't ever recall being so convinced of someone's passing, only to find myself having a conversation with them. It was like speaking to someone on the other side of the grave!

In my mind, I had gathered all the evidence, reached my conclusion, and was awaiting Pat's memorial. Meanwhile, Pat was alive and well (*shaking my head*). And then it hit me: How many times have I done with Portland Fellowship what I just did with Pat?

I realized I'd done with Pat what I'm often tempted to do with ministry: I took the information I had, filled in what I didn't know with my own assumptions, and became convinced I knew what was going to happen. It was as if God was saying, "*Jason, trust Me, not what you think you know.*"

So friends, as we enter another ministry year together, I'm learning once again to leave the ending of the story with the One who is actually writing it. I don't know what this coming year will hold for Portland Fellowship's programs (*although things are progressing nicely*), but I do know the Lord has been faithful through every year that's come before.

I don't need to know what lies ahead. I only need to remain faithful to the One who does. And perhaps that is a reminder some of you need as well. Whether you're walking alongside a loved one who has embraced an LGBTQ identity, or personally wrestling with unwanted same-sex attraction or gender confusion, don't let what you see today convince you that you know how the story will end. Trust the One who does. (*Hebrews 12:2*)

Thank you for walking alongside us. Your prayers, encouragement, and faithful partnership mean more to me than you probably know. I'm deeply grateful that, year after year, the Lord has allowed us to walk this road together.

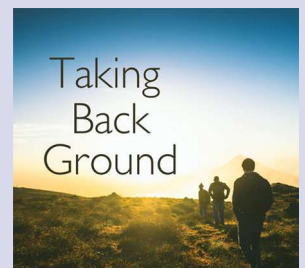
In His Grip,



Jason Thompson
Executive Director

Fall 2026 Discipleship Programs

This is the last call to sign up for our 2026-27 discipleship programs! **Taking Back Ground** is an intentional discipleship process for Christian men and women struggling with unwanted same-sex attraction or gender confusion. We also offer individual support for wives, fiancées, and girlfriends. If you or someone you know is wrestling with a conflict between your Christian faith and unwanted desires, this is a great opportunity for growth, healing, accountability, and maturing in Christ.



Hope Group is a confidential, supportive discipleship group for friends and family of LGBTQ loved ones. If you have a friend or family member embracing a gay or trans-identity, this is a place to find encouragement, prayer, and practical skills to relate to your loved one with truth and grace.



Our programs meet on Tuesday evenings, 6-8:30pm PST, on Zoom and in-person. To register, visit www.portlandfellowship.com or call us here in the office, 503-235-6364.

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