



the fellowship message

"Proclaiming freedom for the captives." ISAIAH 61

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A Steadfast Love by KellieLynn Pirie

Listen to KellieLynn's story: www.pfhope.com/stories/pirie.m4a

"Come and hear, all who fear God, And I will tell of what He has done for my soul."
—Psalm 66:16 (NASB)

I was born in December 1966, a girl and the youngest of six children. Before I was three, my parents divorced, and my mother remarried a convicted pedophile. She knew about the abuse and chose to remain with him. Until age thirteen, my home was marked by the chaos of drugs, alcohol, and sexual exploitation. In that environment, I developed false beliefs, including that I would have been safer had I been born a boy. I also experienced deep spiritual wounds that marred my understanding of who God is and who He created me to be.

Although I became a Christian in my late teens, in 1989 I chose to pursue my same-sex attractions, resulting in years lost to apostasy, addiction, and alienation. In my thirties, I entered the trans-delusion and lived with an artificially-constructed masculinized social gender presentation for seventeen years. I came to regret sacrificing my physical health and bodily organs to gender idolatry on Sunday August 2, 2009. My journey from regretting transition, to detransitioning, to again walking with Christ beyond the trans-delusion is complicated.

Nothing that I had done to alter my physical appearance fixed my emotional tumult, so I left Vancouver BC and went long-haul trucking. I ran away from the love of God until I ran out of running. Reconciliation with Christ, my faith, and my femininity was a long, arduous trek out of the trans-delusion and back into God's truth. Since 1989, my Christian family had consistently invited me to prayer and church. I frequently declined prayer by replying, "No, but I will listen while you pray." In 2020, when my favorite brother faced a crisis of faith, the family member I spoke to while requesting prayer for him replied with, "No, but I will listen while you pray." Since I prayed that sincere prayer, God pursued me relentlessly and planted a desire within my heart that drew me ever closer to Him. God slowly fanned back into life a longing to return to Him for comfort, companionship, hope, change, and for love.

By 2022, I had a heartfelt desperation for something to change. On September 20, 2023, I shared for the first time in a public setting my testimony of the physical, emotional, and spiritual costs of gender ideology. Afterwards, as I listened to the stories of people whose lives were devastated by the collateral damage gender idolatry creates, I could no longer pretend that "gender affirmation" was any type of care.



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

When I quit long-haul trucking, I no longer wanted to live in the lie of “transgender”, yet I felt trapped, convinced I could never return. My family encouraged me to seek a Christian community and attend Bible studies. In 2022, Ashton Creek Christian Fellowship became home; there I felt the weight of God’s truth. Fearing rejection, I confessed to my minister. He responded with compassion, affirming that Jesus transforms lives and asked how to support my walk with Christ. Our monthly meetings focused on my relationship with Christ and the Bible. Although I honestly doubted that reading Scripture would help, it changed everything. I stopped taking testosterone, shaved my face, initiated estrogen replacement, got baptized, met my mentor, started attending Taking Back Ground (TBG) at Portland Fellowship, applied for seminary, and began studies towards an MDiv. degree.

“Have mercy on me O LORD for I am in trouble...” (Psalm 31:9) When I arrived at my first online PF program, I was in a liminal space, caught between who God says I am and who I still believed myself to be. I was entirely double-minded, clinging desperately to the false belief that my childhood experiences entitled me to brokenness. My TBG participation gradually increased, one small suggestion at a time. The people at PF were patient and kind as I repeatedly fell face-first into the miasma of my self-sufficiency. Many evenings, after the Zoom meeting ended, I sat alone amid the scattered wreckage of my self-deceptions, wondering how victory could feel so much like crushing defeat. Matthew 7:14 reminded me that the path of transformation is often discomforting, yet worth taking: *“For the gate is narrow and the way is constricted that leads to life...”*

My mentor granted me the dignity of being seen in my struggle; even as I wallowed in self-pity, she didn’t try to fix me. She spoke “woman” back into my life from a place of knowing what it means to be loved and remembered by God. Through it all, God remained steadfast in His message that love was and is my solution. When I began year one of TBG, I believed love was my biggest problem. When I began “gender-transition” in 2004, I was also exposed to adult pornography via Vancouver’s BDSM subculture, where love was defined as whatever felt good. It took me the entire first year of TBG to recognize that this understanding was completely dissonant with Scripture: **“God is love”** (1 John 4:8, emphasis added). Slowly, I began to see that love is defined by God’s unchanging character.



KellieLynn before (L) & during (R) living as a man.

I recall attending the TBG weekend retreat. There was a moment when I stood near another woman, and I knew with a certainty that she would neither hurt me nor touch me in any sexually inappropriate manner. I lacked the cognitive capacity to assimilate that knowledge; having no prior frame of reference, my mind could not make sense of what God had shared with my heart. I stood in dissonance; aware that something was changing, yet unable to grasp what. Throughout that first year and into the second, my understanding of love began to heal. What once felt foreign—love as patient, kind, and gentle—slowly became familiar; then trustworthy. I now know that love as outlined by Paul in 1 Corinthians 13 is true. Real love doesn’t harm, distort, or demand; it reflects the heart of Christ.

“Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why are you disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him...” (Psalm 43:5) My second year of TBG held the urgency of the “Must go faster!” scene in Jurassic Park. I often felt like the Jeep driver, with my past looming like a ravenous monster, threatening to overtake me. When I’m in that place trapped between the wounded child and the healing woman, “Oh, Dear God!” is the flaming arrow prayer I shoot straight to Heaven’s gates. In those moments where my emotional tumult seems to exceed my ability to regulate it, I honestly don’t know what else to do with my feelings. Though I still struggle, I am comforted knowing Romans 12:1-2 describes an active, ongoing transformation of Christ gently restoring the fragmented parts of me, reminding me of my God-given identity. Christ is not calling me to abandon who God created me to be; instead, He asks that I relinquish my wounds and their façades with their burdens and attachments to identities that were never part of His design.

I feel Christ’s patience with my lack of understanding, as He gently leads me to trust Him, faithfully awaiting my surrender. Reading Scripture is my comfort as Christ knits my mind back together and tenderly reassembles the pieces of my broken heart. I thank God continually that the team at PF consistently pointed me to Christ as my Savior. I’m grateful that they had more experience dealing with hurting people like me, than I had dealing with loving compassion like theirs. On the outside, people tell me how much I have changed; on the inside, it feels like Christ’s steadfast love is reminding me of the woman God created me to be.

Mentors Who Shaped Us: **Drew Berryessa** by Cole Atkinson

This year, we are sharing how God has used mentors to shape and transform those struggling with sexual and relational brokenness. We pray these reflections will encourage you to become a mentor yourself, so that God's grace can flow through you to others.

When I first came to PF, Drew Berryessa was the Program Coordinator, an outspoken, energetic man who became one of the most important people in my life. I have two stories that capture what it meant to be mentored by Drew. The first story starts like this...

"I want you to go take a walk and look at the trees. In particular I want you to look at the changing leaves and tell me what you see." Or something like that. I don't actually remember what Drew told me, but that was the essence of it. I had been spilling my guts to him about whatever woe was plaguing me in that season. Our mentoring sessions were always an hour, and more than likely the vast majority of that time was me talking at Drew. He listened—asking questions, making comments, pushing back on things I said that were probably wrong or needed calling out. And at the very end of our session he blurted out in patented dramatic Drew fashion those words about looking at the trees and leaves. It felt like a hard left turn in light of the things we were discussing. *Trees? Leaves? What does that have to do with anything I just told him? What was it he saw that I couldn't?* I didn't know what he was getting at, but Drew was my mentor, someone much farther along in this journey than I was that I'd grown to love deeply and trust implicitly.



Drew (L) & Cole (R)

So the very next day, I went out and took a stroll through Ladd's Addition, a particularly scenic neighborhood close to Portland Fellowship. I walked with my head aimed up at the tops of the massive American elms that towered over the streets, and I wandered and pondered under that great golden canopy, continually asking God to show me what meaning was hidden in those leaves. And as I continued to plead with God, He began to sooth my soul. My constant pouring out to Him was rewarded with His presence and His comfort. By ardently setting my mind on Him, His grace came streaming to me and my heart was filled with peace. To this day I don't recall whatsoever the problem I was dealing with at that time, and I never found out what I needed to see in the leaves—but I do remember coming home with a remarkable sense of satisfaction and peace in the Lord.

In large part, mentorship is pointing people to Jesus, and that's what Drew did, over and over again. He didn't have all the answers (don't tell him I said that), but he knew who did have the answers, and he knew how to point me to Him. As I've reflected on that story over the years, I'm more and more sure that was Drew's intent; it was never about what the leaves could show me, it was just a ploy to get me to seek after God's wisdom in my life. Drew knew me and how pigeon-holed my mind could get, and he needed something to take me out of my own head. So he found a way to point me to Jesus, like all good mentors do.

That was the formal mentoring side of Drew, the weekly meetings where we sat down and tackled head on the problems I was going through. But there was another side of the mentoring process that meant just as much and healed wounds in ways that couldn't be healed through conversation only. After we had been meeting for a while, Drew told me to come over to his house with his family. It was not a request. But it wasn't for work, or for conversation, it was for one singular purpose: I would watch TV on their couch and Drew and Suz would bring me food and drink, and I wasn't allowed to work or help or give. I would spend ten-plus hours glued to their sofa as they waited on me hand and foot, preparing elaborate meals and delivering them to me while we laughed and chattered about the show. My only purpose was just to come rest and enjoy their fellowship and hospitality.

But beyond just giving me a restful, fun day of food and TV, Drew & Suz were sending me a message: *We love you just for who you are, not for what you can give.* I didn't have to earn this type of treatment, they were telling me I was worth being loved for simply being me. To a kid who, for most of his life, felt beyond redemption because of the things I had thought and done and felt, this was a radical notion—that despite all my messiness and problems, and without having to do *anything*, I was still worthy of love. It's the kind of love our Father gives us, and Drew helped me see that. I couldn't have grown into the man I am today without that.

Drew mentored me in so many ways. Like all great mentors he met me head on with formal challenges, advice and wisdom; and also with care, brotherhood, and love. I will be grateful to Drew until the day I die, and will spend the rest of my life reflecting on and drawing from the gift of mentorship he gave me. The world needs more people like Drew, and I'll do my best to be one of them. I love you Drew! Thank you for everything.

September - October Calendar & Services

september 11

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.

6:30-8:30 p.m. PST

portlandfellowship.com/friends_family.php

september 13

PF Staff Speaking

Patrick and KathyGrace will be sharing at The Well Community Church in Portland, OR.

september 26, 29

PF Leadership Training

Volunteer leaders prepare for this year's discipleship programs.

tuesdays in october

Taking Back Ground

Discipleship program for Christians struggling with unwanted same-sex attraction. **Both Zoom and in-house.*

6-8:30 p.m. PST

tuesdays in october

Hope Group

Discipleship series for friends & family of gay or trans-identifying loved ones.

**For both Zoom and in-house.*

6-8 p.m. PST

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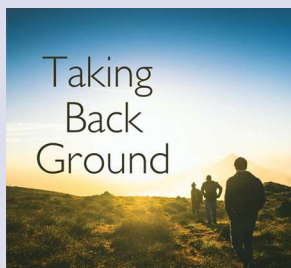
Additional updates:

www.portlandfellowship.com

Speakers, counseling and support for youth

can be set up through the office.

2026-2027 Discipleship Programs:



Taking Back Ground

Registration is now open for our 2026-2027 Taking Back Ground program (both on Zoom and in-person). TBG is for Christians struggling with unwanted same-sex at-

traction or gender confusion. The program runs Tuesday nights October through May, and scholarships are available. An intake is also required. If you or someone you know desires deeper accountability and encouragement in the pursuit of sexual and relational wholeness, TBG is a great option!

Hope Group

Hope Group is a discipleship support group for friends and family of LGBTQ-identified loved ones. Join us on Tuesday nights (in-person or on Zoom) as we process how to relate to our loved ones with both truth and grace. If you are facing pain, anger, or confusion in your relationship with your loved one, come join Hope Group with other families on the same journey.



Wives Support

Many wives, fiancées, and girlfriends need a safe place for personal support and to process their loved ones' same-sex attraction or gender confusion. If you need support, one of our Wives Group alumni would love to connect.



For more information on our programs:
www.portlandfellowship.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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