

Wellspring

December 2007 – January 2008 Isaiah 58.6

All things are possible with God

[A publication of Broken Yoke Ministries, Inc.]



Be Holy As I Am Holy

By Bob Van Domelen

April 1998

[As a close to the celebration of our 20th Anniversary as a ministry, I am reprinting this 1998 lead article. I hope that you will be blessed by it.]

1998

As obedient children, do not yield to the desires that once shaped you in your ignorance. Rather become holy yourselves in every aspect of your conduct, after the likeness of the holy One who called you; remember, Scripture says "Be holy, for I am holy." (1Peter 1.14)

As a young child, I remember being fascinated by the lives of saints, men and women who had lived as faithful servants of God, many giving their lives as witness of their faith. The idealistic boy in me often thought "What a noble thing--to give one's life for Jesus." But as a boy, I had little concept of the kind of pain that might accompany such a death, and the first time I had an allergic reaction to several bee stings I knew that any romantic hope of being a martyr (or a spy) was doomed.

But the idea of holiness drew me like a moth to a light on a summer evening. It's what I wanted to be, and church with its towering steeple reaching for the sky was a holy place where I felt a sense of belonging.

At age seven, I knew about sinning. Hadn't I told lies when confronted with the evidence of something I had done wrong? Hadn't I said words I wasn't supposed to say? What I had not counted on, however, was the manner in which things sexual would dominate my thoughts in the coming years. What I had not counted on was the sense of separation from God I felt when I gave in to those temptations.

Over the years, I have had the opportunity to talk with a lot of men and women who shared similar feelings. We agreed that despite knowing of the power of the cross and the forgiveness won by the death of Jesus, each sin of the flesh was like a wedge being driven into our spiritual lives.

Instead of feeling closer to the Lord *because* of our struggles, we felt as though we were being dragged day by day in the opposite direction. And while the nature and number of our sins might have varied, homosexual behavior carried the most weight. It was a sin that "felt right" despite the guilt and despair that usually followed.

The question I hear quite often is "Why would God give me these feelings and then tell me they are wrong?" The whole issue, it would seem, hangs on whether or not

homosexuality is a design of God or of humanity. Indeed, why would God do such a thing?

The answer, which I believe with all my heart, is that He didn't. Having said that in no way denies or minimizes the struggle.

It's not my intent in this column to write a thesis on the reasons for homosexuality. It is enough, I feel, to acknowledge the existence of feelings within myself that contradict the faith journey I want my life to be. It is enough to know that temptation is temptation in all its forms and sinful behavior is sinful behavior. "*Be holy, for I am holy.*"

Wait a minute. Isn't sin the opposite of holiness? Doesn't holiness imply the absence of sin? And if the answer to both of those questions is "yes," how can anyone become holy?

I have been thinking and writing about the apostle Peter lately, remembering how he not only denied knowing Jesus once but three times. He had seen Jesus transfigured. He had seen miracle after miracle and had even said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God (Mt.16.16)." With all of that knowledge, how could he have denied knowing Christ?

In a breath, I saw the number of times that I chose sin over God--perhaps not always deliberately saying "I reject you, God," but certainly choosing something greatly inferior and often harmful to myself and others. Then I saw something else.

The label "homosexual struggler" itself defined me as separated from God when I allowed it to be so. In my pride I proclaimed myself guilty of a sin beyond forgiveness and change and set myself apart from the rest of creation. Others didn't understand my struggle--even made fun of it--and God didn't seem to be listening to my prayer. If that sounds like extreme thinking, let me assure you that these thoughts are not uncommon.

Peter's despair over his denial of Christ must have been beyond belief, yet Jesus specifically sought him out so that Peter could be healed, not of his sin but of his feelings of separation. The sin had been forgiven and dealt with on the cross. It was the aftermath of pain-filled emotion that crippled Peter, and I think that I can understand a little of how that felt. So can you.

The Lord calls each of us to sit with Him at the charcoal fire. We hear Jesus ask us "Do you love me?" not three times but as many times as we feel we have separated ourselves from Him. There is, perhaps, hesitation in the beginning. Does Jesus *really* love me that much? I can tell you that despite my sins, He still calls me to serve Him.

At some point the tears begin to flow as the heart opens and accepts the love being offered by God. Over and over Jesus says "Come to me when you feel such burden. I'll take that weight from your shoulders. You don't have to carry it. Just remember that I see you as you are and as I created you to be. Alone your struggles will be too much, but I am with you always, and that means even in the times when you don't choose me. And because I *am* with you, you can be holy as I am holy."

Like Peter, we have the choice of accepting the love Jesus offers or rejecting it. Peter accepted it and died suspended upside-down on a cross. "Greater love than this. . .

2007

Some might think that over a twenty year period a program would have been developed that would guarantee the changes that those with same-gender attractions seek, but such has not been the case.

We remain a ministry because those connected with Broken Yoke have decided it is important to offer a place for individuals to come for support. This is a ministry that has a newsletter dealing with homosexuality not because no other newsletters exist but because we believed that some people will never attend a group. They will never show their struggle to anyone else.

But these same people *will* sit down and read *Wellspring* hoping, perhaps, that this might be the month with the answer they seek.

I can tell you that when I read "Be Holy As I Am Holy" today, it was as fresh for me as the day the words first found their way to paper.

A friend of mine in a similar ministry once said that he was tired of treating symptoms and he may have a point. If someone told me that I would have to deal with same-gender attractions and the occasional temptation to act on them five years from now, I'd could easily sigh and say, "Then what's the use? The gays have it right."

But they don't. I believe with all my heart that it is the presence of God within me, the relationship I seek every day that confronts me in my potential weakness. The voice doesn't proclaim "Get your act together, Bob, and stop thinking this way."

Instead, the voice says, ²⁸*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.* ²⁹*Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.* ³⁰*For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*" (Matt. 11.28-30)

Broken Yoke Ministries is a nonprofit 501 (c) (3) corporation and operates solely on the contributions of people such as you. All donations to this ministry are tax deductible and will be recognized. While there is no charge for this newsletter, it can only be published if there are funds available to make that possible.

Send your donations to:

Broken Yoke Ministries, Inc

PO Box 361

Waukesha, WI 53187-0361

Wisconsin Ministry Locations

Broken Yoke

P.O. Box 361

Waukesha, WI 53187-0361

262-896-0841 (answering machine)

Bob@brokenyoke.org

Meetings:

Support Group (weekly)

Tuesday, 7:00PM

Website:

<http://www.brokenyoke.org>

Newsletter:

Wellspring (published bimonthly)

Note: This newsletter and some back issues are available in pdf format on our website. If you don't have Adobe Acrobat Reader, there are links that allow you to download that program free.



Redeemed Ministries

A support system for women

Support Group (bi-weekly)

Call 414-607-1935 for info

Reclamation Resources

P.O. Box 1062

Oshkosh, WI 54902

920-303-1041

<http://www.reclamationrc.org>

Our Prayer Corner



Because we care about one another, we pray . . .

- For all those who struggle with same-gender attractions, that they accept the identity God had in mind for them from the beginning.
- For professional therapists, that they remain willing to address same-gender attractions/behavior in a manner consistent with those who seek freedom from those attractions and behaviors.
- For those feel frustrated, alone, and wanting to give up, that they will be blessed by God's grace to continue the battle, to run the race, and to be victorious in the end.
- For the Board of Directors of this ministry, that the decisions they make for the future of Broken Yoke will be made after seeking God's will in all things.
- For David Rasmussen, the new Exodus International Regional Representative, that he be blessed as he serves the ministries in our region.
- For Bob and Cathie, that Bob's May 2008 retirement from his full time job will provide fulfillment and ongoing opportunities to serve the Lord through Broken Yoke Ministries.
- For the finances of this ministry, especially as they relate to the ongoing production of *Wellspring* and *Into the Light*, that we continue to be able to offer these newsletters at no charge to readers.
- For those unable to financially support this ministry, that they pray regularly for Broken Yoke Ministries and all whose lives are affected by it.

All things are possible with God!

By the Word of Our Testimony

By a Soldier of Christ

The primary reason for testifying is to bring God glory! The second reason is to make others aware of the power of God, and the third is to bring hope to others who may be searching for evidence to convince them that Christ is on the way.

I had the pleasure of viewing a testimony by one of the foremost leaders in ex-gay ministry, Sy Rogers. I heard him say, "This is not a story about Sy when he didn't know God; this is a story about God when Sy didn't know him." It was a powerful statement concerning God-centered testimony.

I try to do the same by bringing God to the forefront while placing myself in the background. After living 30 years as a gay male, I can honestly say nothing has made a change in my heart like that of the Spirit of God. Nothing but the quickening power of God can really change one's heart because the heart is where change must take place.

Sy said, "Once our deeper needs are met then those external things that been a death grip on us will slowly and over time start to lose their grip." I know this from first-hand experience and know change will be an ongoing process for the remainder of my life. Christians call this progressive sanctification although I didn't know this early in my walk with Christ.

I had a lot of confusion and couldn't understand why after reading that I was a new creature in Christ that I still had same-sex desires, still felt gay, and still felt like a little girl. "Surely God ain't working," I said to myself. I believed that I was not supposed to be sexually attracted to guys if I'm a Christian. I now know, however, that I am a Christian and Christians have issues that need to be worked out. In my case, I am a Christian who struggles with and is working through same-sex attractions.

I am as confident as Paul was when he wrote "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. (Phil.1.6)" We have a responsibility to be obedient to Jesus with the way we live our lives. I must remember that I am not saved by what I do but by what Jesus has done for me. Paul wrote in Romans 5.1-2 "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, *through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.* And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God."

I need to be able to walk in that newness of life, to allow myself room to grow in God's grace so as to understand and deal with the pains associated with growth and change. It is easy to be too hard on myself when things are difficult, but I remind myself that Christ died for me and walks with me each and every day. And when things are really difficult, I know He carries me.

Good Stewardship

If things go as planned, the February edition of *Wellspring* will contain a card asking if you are still interested in receiving the newsletter.

Wellspring has had a steady growth in readership over the past fifteen years but it would be understandable to find our mailing list is outdated. People move. People lose interest. People even die. What most people don't do, however, is contact organizations like ours to make an address adjustment. The most common result is that our newsletters find their way into circular files.

There is a text box in every edition of this newsletter asking for financial support so that we can continue mailing *Wellspring* free of charge. What many of you might not know is that men and women in prison make up almost 80% of our mailing list. A number of them send me small donations to support the costs associated with the newsletter. Some send stamps to help defray the correspondence ministry I do.

In case you are wondering, we *do* send the newsletters at bulk mail rate to keep costs as low as possible. While printing and mailing costs continue to rise, donations have not risen at the same rate. *Wellspring* currently costs almost \$800 each issue; *Into the Light* costs a little over \$900.

So when you see a request to return the card indicating your interest in receiving or not receiving *Wellspring*, please take the time to send it back. If we don't hear from you, we will have to presume that you are requesting the removal of your name from our mailing list. Thank you in advance for helping us be good stewards.

Change Happens in Many Ways

As I shared in the Prayer column, I am retiring from my full time job in May, 2008. For some time now, Cathie and I have been planning a move to be nearer family, especially our grandchildren!

This seems to be a good time to share with you how retirement will affect my involvement with Broken Yoke Ministries. None of us knows what tomorrow brings, but we all tend to make plans like we do.

I am *not* retiring from this ministry, and I will continue for as long as God desires to produce *Wellspring* and *Into the Light*. I will also continue the correspondence ministry I have with inmates all over the country.

The support groups will continue to meet although my role as facilitator will be affected. Current plans are to make the 2.5 hour trip at least twice a month to lead the group. The ministry's official governmental mailing address will remain in Pewaukee, but the address for correspondence will likely change to reflect my new location.

In many ways, retirement will definitely allow *more* time for ministry and I am looking forward to expanding the ministry I have in the state's prison system. The bottom line, though, is that all of us are listening for God's

plan to be evident because this is God's ministry, not mine. Cathie and I sincerely request your prayers as we enter this new phase of life together.



God bless you!

Broken Yoke Ministries, Inc.
P.O. Box 361
Waukesha, WI 53187-0361

Nonprofit Org.
Zip+4 barcoded
U.S. Postage Paid
Waukesha WI
53186
Permit No.255



All things are possible with God

Dated Material

A Little Humor

Did you hear about the teacher who was helping one of her kindergarten students put his boots on? He asked for help and she could see why. With her pulling and him pushing, the boots still didn't want to go on. By the time the second boot was on, she had worked up a sweat. She almost whimpered when the little boy said, "Teacher, they're on the wrong feet." She looked, and sure enough, they were. It wasn't any easier pulling the boots off than it was putting them on. She managed to keep her cool as together they worked to get the boots back on - this time on the right feet. He then announced, "These aren't my boots." She bit her tongue rather than get right in his face and scream, "Why didn't you say so?" like she wanted to do. Once again she struggled to help him pull the ill-fitting boots off. He then said, "They're my brother's boots. My Mom made me wear them." She didn't know if she should laugh or cry. She then mustered up the grace to wrestle the boots onto his feet again. She said, "Now, where are your mittens?" He said, "I stuffed them in the toes of my boots."

