



# Into the Light

*All things are possible with God*

May-June 2008

## Be Safe

*By Bob Van Domelen*

*He whose walk is blameless is kept safe, but he whose ways are perverse will suddenly fall. (Proverbs 28.18)*

There was a time when if someone shared “be safe” with me, I would have wondered what bus he just got off or exactly what he thought I *might* do. But with age comes maturity (at least we all hope that is true) and with maturity comes the wisdom to recognize that practical admonitions such as “be safe” really hit the nail on the head.

I like to fish but am not really very good at it. Most of the time when I manage to find time for fishing, I cast a line from the shore as I don’t own a boat. But every now and then I have the opportunity to go with someone onto a lake. The minute I step into the boat, I can recall my dad saying, “Get your life jacket on, Bob, and always remember to be safe when on the water. It’s a long way to the shore.” Be safe.

The man who ignores such warnings finds excitement in coming as close as possible to the edge of danger. Should he be surprised, then, when something backfires and he finds himself in trouble?

For me, standing near the edge of sexual danger would be like standing at the top of a steep hill in the middle of a torrential downpour. It would be only a matter of time before the ground beneath would give way, my feet would lose any sense of purpose, and my body would go in a direction over which it had no control. In this kind of example, however, I am only placing myself at physical risk.

When the dangerous footing is defined as pornography or self-induced fantasy, the torrential downpour could easily become a fantasy demanding resolution by acting out. It can start with “It’s only masturbation. I can control that. Besides, I’m not involving anyone else.” Eventually, fantasies can have the power to demand a connection with someone else—someone live.

Before I was arrested, I honestly believed that I could control myself, but control never really came—at least not in all situations. Once I was actually in my addictive cycle, simple prayers beseeching to God could not stop what I was unwilling or unable to stop. As much as I would have preferred something less drastic, my arrest did what I could not do on my own. I was stopped, the molestation ceased, and my life fell under someone else’s control.

### **He whose ways are perverse . . .**

In all the years of responding to letters from men and women across the country in prison for child molestation, I cannot recall a single letter from someone whose life was in good order prior to abusing a child. Instead, what others

share with me includes chemical dependencies (alcohol and/or various drugs), sexual/pornographic addictions, relationship problems, unresolved wounds from their own childhood days, and an inability to live a transparent life. Though my chemical addictions were limited to cigarettes and coffee, I sadly can acknowledge some connection with everything else I just listed.

### **The Walls of Secrecy**

I knew that God had a better design for my life than the one I was living before my arrest, but I could not escape the wall of secrecy I had built, a secrecy that enabled me to live a double life. Perverse is a word that would have described my thoughts and actions, but I had created an image of the ideal Bob and that’s what I projected to others. Those who loved me may not have known exactly what was going on, but they knew not all was right.

“I’ll never do that again.” “Starting tomorrow, I will clean up my life; I’ll get more into God’s word; and I’ll put aside these addictions that are destroying my life.” I’d be willing to bet that most of you reading this from inside prison walls are probably nodding your heads. We’ve been there.

“Be safe” isn’t much fun and even smacks of boring. It says quite clearly that the person warning me doesn’t think I would have the brains needed to avoid danger. Looking back to the years before my arrest, I wish I could have told someone about my struggles. I wish someone would have knowingly looked at me and said, “Be safe.” They probably did but I was too lost in my own addictions to hear the voice of moral sanity.

### **The Beginnings of Wisdom**

*He who trusts in himself is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom is kept safe. (Proverbs 28.26)*

I would like to believe that I have finally found wisdom if wisdom is the ability to understand one’s weaknesses *and* one’s strengths, the ability to remember the things I have done and the harm I have caused in order to help me make better choices, and the ability to recognize that help is always available if I am willing to be vulnerable enough to ask for it.

Being a fool has nothing to do with book learning, college degrees, or business smarts. Being a fool is to think that one has the answers even if just about everyone else would disagree with those answers. Only a fool believes “I’ll never do that again” if no other clearly defined steps support that statement.

I accept the fact that we are new creatures in Christ when we surrender ourselves to Him and I acknowledge that we are called to walk in the will of the Lord. None of us,

however, is temptation-free. And I don't believe that we left all the behavioral triggers in a locked drawer the day we called out to and received the Lord in our lives. Being a new creature means, I believe, to see myself as a new man who deals with temptation in a way totally unlike the manner of the old man, the man I used to be.

### What You See

*In the shelter of your presence you hide them from the intrigues of men; in your dwelling you keep them safe from accusing tongues. (Psalm 31.20)*

Years ago I heard someone say "What chance does someone released from prison have of staying out if he moves right back to the same environment that brought him to prison in the first place?"

My purpose is not to talk about the difficulties offenders face that far exceed those of other convicted felons but to share a bit on the importance a spiritual environment plays in the whole process of restoration and healing.

Change requires commitment to the race we are all called to run in this life. Some might suggest that there is no real need for a spiritual connection, but I would argue that of all the things that have brought me to where I am today (20 years after my release), my relationship with God, my belief in Jesus as my Savior, and my reliance on the Holy Spirit are at the core of everything good that has happened. This is the environment in which I must live.

Seeking God above all things means to have a relationship with Him and to be in His presence—not blindly or dragged there but being there of my own free will. I can tell you that growing in the wisdom and knowledge of His word and His way strengthens me against the intrigues or designs of an "anything goes" world.

Seeking God above all things alters the manner in which I live and the manner in which I respond to those around me. Years ago, men in prison reminded me that what I said did little to affect the opinion of others. What I do, because it was the right thing to do, *will* affect them.

### Be Honest, Be Safe

Ephesians 6 reminds us to put on the full armor of God. In other words, start each day prepared and ready to do battle against whatever could become a wedge between us and God. Some of the battles will not be easy but at the end of the day we *will* still be still standing.

Be safe. Remind yourself that flirting with temptation of any sort will eventually mean defeat. Be safe. "No more victims." And that includes you and me. □



### Our Prayer Corner

Prayer is an incredible gift we can give one another, for there is no better thing than to lift our lives, hopes, and dreams to the altar of the Lord.

### Let us pray . . .

- First and always foremost, for our victims, that each day for them is a new day, a day without fear, and a day of healing.
- For those dealing with fear, that they will take to heart the words Jesus shared: *And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.* (Mt 28.20)

- For those who are innocent of the charges that have them in prison (and there are some), that their innocence will be proven and they will be freed.
- For those who live each day in fear of violence, that they find themselves able to trust God in all things.
- For all with age-inappropriate attractions but have not acted on those attractions, that they refuse to accept that secrecy is the solution and the path to healing.
- For those who hear of someone's age-inappropriate attractions, that their hearts be filled with compassion and a desire to bring hope and encouragement, not disdain or alienation.
- For the families and friends of victims, that they will do all they can to be part of the healing process.
- For family and friends of offenders, that they ask God to help them deal with their feelings (especially anger and betrayal) in order to be encouragers.
- For those who lose loved ones while in prison, that though they were not able to attend the funeral, they will be blessed with grieving and the healing that grieving brings.
- For Bob and Cathie as they prepare to move, that the trust and faith they have had in God will anchor the days ahead.
- For this ministry, that Broken Yoke Ministries continues to be blessed with the financial support needed to meet basic expenses like this newsletter.
- Finally, for those who are still abusing and are reading this newsletter because God made that possible, that they will do whatever it takes to stop the cycle of abuse and harm caused to their victims.

**This newsletter is made possible by the donations of its readers and would cease to exist without that support. Please consider a tax-exempt donation to Broken Yoke Ministries, PO Box 361, Waukesha, WI 53187-0361. And if you cannot contribute, please pray!**



### Guess What?

**AS OF JUNE 1**, the mailing address of this ministry will be changed. The new address will be:

**Bob Van Domelen  
Broken Yoke Ministries  
PO Box 5824  
De Pere, WI 54115-5824**

Even though I have shared this information about our move before, I need to ask for your help. If you know of a ministry that lists Broken Yoke Ministries as a resource, could you please write them and give them the new address? FYI, writing newsletters and personal letters will continue as long as the Lord directs.

*All things are possible with God!*

## Bits & Pieces

From a prison chaplain's letter: "We will pray for your ministry and support it if possible. Several of our inmates enjoy the articles and support they bring to make a change in their lives."

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From a letter: "Each issue of *Wellspring* and *Into the Light* is passed to several other men at this camp and then mailed to a person on the street. Each issue offers hope."

*I know that this writer is not the only one who shares the newsletters with others, but if you are thinking of just tossing the newsletter in the wastebasket when you finish, consider one of the alternatives mentioned in the note above.*

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From a letter: "I often pray that I will be so glad to be in heaven where Jesus will be my light. Just to have pure thoughts for eternity will be all the reward I will ever need."

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From a letter: "I really want to thank you for *Into the Light* publications that keep coming to me. Every once in a while I would even read them while I was lost knowing it was one way God was bringing me back."

*There was a donation that came with his letter, a donation he felt might make it possible for others to be helped in the manner he was helped. Donations are always welcomed because without them, the newsletters would stop, but prayer support is equally desired, so never stop lifting us up.*

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From a letter: "This month I needed an uplifting. I really thought I was going home and instead got a three year flop. The humor on the back page helped keep me going—a good Christian laugh."

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From a letter: "I just can't seem to get past the polygraph procedure. Every time they mention polygraph, my heart rate goes through the roof. I have prayed to the Lord to help me to be honest as much as I can be to treatment and to accept the fact that I am sexually attracted to children. I hate it. I have prayed to God but sometimes it seems God doesn't care or listen. I know He does but He just seems to take forever. I have to be patient—it's His timing not mine, His way and not mine. It is just frustrating, though.

*Without adding a name or saying where a letter is from, I believe that these expressions are not uncommon to a lot of individuals struggling with age-inappropriate attractions who also read this newsletter.*

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From a letter: "I've lived in a fantasy world most of my life because I was so sad and lonely in the real one."

*I have a great deal of respect for this man and his letters. This one sentence, however, literally leaped off the page of his letter and I want to share it with you. He also wrote the following in another letter I received from him:*

"In some ways I may be like a battered wife. I keep returning to that which harms me and uses me, either because I know no other place to go or because I feel I don't deserve any better."

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*Note: I do not include anything in this column for shock value but out of a sense that we can better understand one another, encourage one another, and pray for one another.*

## Dance with God

Author Unknown



When I meditated on the word GUIDANCE, I kept seeing "dance" at the end of the word. I remember reading that doing God's will is a lot like dancing. When two people try to lead, nothing feels right. The movement doesn't flow with the music, and everything is quite uncomfortable and jerky. When one person realizes that, and lets the other lead, both bodies begin to flow with the music. One gives gentle cues, perhaps with a nudge to the back or by pressing lightly in one direction or another. It's as if two become one body, moving beautifully. The dance takes surrender, willingness, and attentiveness from one person and gentle guidance and skill from the other.

My eyes drew back to the word GUIDANCE. When I saw "G," I thought of God, followed by "u" and "i." "God, "u" and "i" dance. God, you, and I dance. As I lowered my head, I became willing to trust that I would get guidance about my life. Once again, I became willing to let God lead. My prayer for you today is that God's blessings and mercies be upon you on this day and everyday. May you abide in God as God abides in you. Dance together with God, trusting God to lead and to guide you through each season of your life. This prayer is powerful and there is nothing attached. If God has done anything for you in your life, please share this message with someone else, for prayer is one of the best gifts we can receive. There is no cost but a lot of rewards; so let's continue to pray for one another.

**AND I HOPE YOU DANCE!**

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## An Alternative Option

The city where I work is rather small and not far from a larger city where I live. Early this past summer, the city attorney was given the task of drawing up a residency restriction plan.

The reasoning of the council was pretty simple and straightforward. Several communities nearby had already drafted and passed 1000-, 2000-, or 2500-foot rules restricting sex offenders from living near any place where children were apt to congregate or frequent. In most cities, this restriction defines schools, churches, child care centers, parks, and bike or hiking paths as protected zones.

Toward the end of the summer I read with some interest that the city attorney had come before the council with a concern. The size and layout of the community was such that any residency restriction would effectively mean a sex offender could not reside within the city limits. He pointed out to the council that there might be a constitutional infringement of rights under such circumstances.

In the end, the council approved legislation that prohibited loitering by any sex offender in any of the above mentioned locations. In other words, if an offender has a legitimate reason for being in a school (to vote, for example), his or her presence would be allowed.

I support this method of protecting children because it demands purpose for offenders to be somewhere that might otherwise pose problems for them, and I encourage other communities to consider similar legislation. *Bob*

*Broken Yoke Ministries, Inc.*  
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**Dated Material**

### *A Little Humor*



Two policemen are called to the scene of a crime in a convenience store. One asks the manager what happened. The manager replied, "There's a man over there covered in Corn Flakes and he's dead."

"That's odd," said the first policeman to his partner, "didn't we have one covered in Bran Flakes yesterday? And another covered in Wheat Flakes last week?"

"You're right" said the second policeman. "This must be the work of a cereal killer."

(Sorry about that. I couldn't resist because the joke was just so flaky.)