

Wellspring

June – September 2009

Isaiah 58.6

All things are possible with God

[A publication of Broken Yoke Ministries, Inc.]



Can't I Have It Both Ways?

By Bob Van Domelen

I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness. (Romans 6.19 – NIT)

I am using these everyday examples, because in some ways you are still weak. You used to let the different parts of your body be slaves of your evil thoughts. But now you must make every part of your body serve God, so that you will belong completely to him. (Romans 6.19 – CEV)

If you were asked to define homosexuality, you might say, "It's being sexually attracted to people of the same sex" and stop there. Dr. Lawrence Hatterer, author of *Changing Homosexuality in the Male*, defines the word as follows:

"One who is motivated, in adult life, by a definite preferential erotic attraction to members of the same sex and who usually, but not necessarily, engages in overt sexual relations with them."

For years, however, I considered the major difference between homosexuality and lesbianism to be fairly simple. Men are interested in sex; women are interested in relationship.

The danger with such simplification is that men can be and are interested in connecting on an emotional level with men just as women can be and are sexually drawn to other women. Though sexual relations, as Hatterer pointed out, don't have to occur for the homosexual or lesbian, it is often the repetition of such behavior that not only encourages but sometimes demands assuming the label.

Interestingly, if the attraction men or women have with someone of the same gender is defined as intense but not sexually motivated, we often describe such people (especially women) as in an emotionally codependent relationship. It is considered unhealthy only insofar as one or both parties do not feel psychologically complete or whole without the other.

I must admit that even putting a single word on paper dealing with a topic so complex is a bit daunting. At the same time, I have never pretended that this newsletter is anything more than an attempt to share with you ideas that cross my mind or a topic that others have asked me to write about. So I'll continue and hope that it all makes sense by the time I get to the end.

From the male perspective, I can remember a time in my passage through puberty when sex was ever present. Beginning as a form of personal curiosity, masturbation eventually grew to a full-fledged addiction, a condition many men have acknowledged as present in their own youth. For some, the addiction is ongoing.

In slavery to impurity

My spiritual advisor recently suggested that people tend to consider sexual sins at the top of their sin list in such a way as to say "If only I could be free of these behaviors, the holiness I seek would be mine." He was pretty much describing my teen years.

I do agree on the importance of seeking a focus on being Christ-like in my actions as well as loving my neighbor as myself, but sometimes it is not hard to see how secret sins of the flesh can dominate one's heart—not to mention how one sees relationship with God.

The word slavery caught my attention because it immediately brought to mind the notion of doing something for another not because of free choice but because the action was an enforced requirement. I would say sexual behavior repeated to the point of addiction could be considered slavery.

I know that pornography and masturbation both contain the element of pleasure, and for most of us perhaps our early experiences with either were undertaken with an "I can control this" mindset.

Based on my own experiences and the sharing of others, I know that such an attitude can be self-delusional. Given how difficult it can be to break sexual addictions, the word slavery is a good description despite what those who argue otherwise might say.

Wickedness/Evil Thoughts

We all sometimes consciously think things that we could describe as wicked or evil, but I think it is more real to say we think thoughts and in retrospect decide that they might have been wicked or evil.

My spiritual advisor would suggest that people tend to elevate sexual fantasy as having the greatest potential for being wicked or evil. Maybe he is right. Others have told me that they have felt that way. The message is that what God had created to be holy had become shame-filled and secretive.

I read somewhere that whatever does not draw us closer to God must by definition come from the evil one (Satan). In short, God always calls us to be closer to Him, to experience the love of Jesus and the presence of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, choices failing in this objective

might not yet be sin but as James 1.15 suggests, they have the potential to give birth to sin if allowed to grow.

Make every part of your body serve God, so that you will belong completely to him.

I do not believe that men and women are created homosexual or, for that matter, heterosexual. We are created male and female—a gender and not a behavior or an attraction. Nor do I believe that one wakes one morning and declares a homosexual or heterosexual identity for such a declaration would clearly indicate a well-thought out choice. Orientation is a process and not a given.

I believe that we are born male or female and enter an environment that is complex, an environment that both encourages and discourages. As members of this complex environment, we are shaped by the things we do as well as the things that are done to us—directly or indirectly. One thing that can be said with certainty is that none of us is shaped in any environment exactly in the same fashion as another.

An undisciplined body will do whatever it wants, for it is neither moral nor immoral. It simply is. Yet we often define who and what we are based how our bodies respond to thoughts and actions.

Those who tell me of incredible struggles with pornography, for example, often place all of their energies on the physical avoidance of anything pornographic. They experience success for periods of time and feel dirty and condemned when they fall. Some with an addiction to masturbation or sexual fantasy relate their victories in terms of days or weeks since their last fall.

The problem with this approach is that the focus is on the elimination of a negative behavior rather than on the search for something positive. Frustrated by frequent falls, it is not hard to understand why people confess “That’s just the way I am” or “I was born that way.” Once this declaration has been made, the only available option is to redefine the negative thought/behavior and make it a positive.

In short, life becomes a day-to-day decision to reconcile life choices so as to have it both ways. In personal terms, if I declared something sinful in my teen years but now consider it a normal consequence of sexual identity, then there is no need to change.

Finally, I believe that God created me and called me. I am not a rubber-stamped male, undistinguishable from other men. I am certainly not without my failings but my failings do not define me in the eyes of God.

I don’t feel uncomfortable in declaring that I want to serve God in all things and in all ways. At the same time, I am learning that sin often points to the absence of something better. I know this because sin creates inner conflict that should be recognized for what it is--sin. Finding ways to eliminate that spiritual tension only serves to restrict God’s access.

The bottom line is that I can’t have it both ways. I cannot do whatever I want and still declare that I serve the Lord with all my heart, soul, and body. I can, however, recognize my weaknesses as opportunities for fresh vision, self-discipline, and healing change.

No one gets to go through life without challenge. The path of least resistance is not always the most rewarding path or the most fulfilling journey. □

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Wisconsin Ministry Locations

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Meetings in Pewaukee:

Support Group (weekly)
Tuesday, 7:00PM

Website:

<http://www.brokenyoke.org>

Newsletter: *Wellspring*



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>

Please Read This

You will notice that we have included “Address Service Requested” on the return address part of this newsletter. Because of changes in bulk mail policies, we will be charged for mail that is returned to us whenever a newsletter cannot be delivered to the addressed party. Most mail returned is directly related to those in confinement who have been transferred or released.

Please help us out by notifying Broken Yoke Ministries of any change in address. We seek to serve those on our mailing list and we will continue to do so without charge. Help us be faithful stewards.

Like most ministries, the current economic recession has affected contributions that are used to produce our newsletters as well as provide other services. If you are able and have not done so before, please consider the financial needs of this ministry and make a donation.

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 those looking for help in southeastern Wisconsin, that they will consider contacting this ministry and its support groups.
- For those wanting to break the silence of their struggle, that they will consider contacting an Exodus ministry closest to them.
- For pastors and church leaders, that they are seen as approachable and that they offer encouragement that is useful and real.
- For the youth of our society, that they are able to see the conflict in the message they hear about the positive side of gay.
- For parents dealing with a child that struggles or has endorsed the gay life, that their love remains constant without sacrificing their beliefs.
- For those seeking a supportive church to help them in their struggle, that clear signs will be given them in affirmation of the goals they have set.
- For the facilitators of our support group meetings, that they feel God's blessings for their efforts.
- For our sister ministry, Redeemed, that women seeking help continue to find this ministry a place of refuge and hope.
- For the ongoing financial support of this ministry, that those who are able will be willing to support us with both finance and prayer.

Note: The prayer requests are the same as listed in our February edition because after considering them, I realized they are still valid. I hope you will agree.

Reminder: The next *Wellspring* will be published in October.

Dates to Remember

- July 14-19 2009 International Freedom Conference
Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL
Register at www.exodusinternational.org
(Click on the Events tab)
- Oct 30-Nov 1 Regional Conference
Green Lake Conference Center
Green Lake, WI
Joe Dallas, Keynote Speaker
Watch our website for further details

Where have all the flowers gone?

Not everyone who reads this newsletter will recall these words as a relatively popular song, but in 1961 these Pete Seger lyrics could be heard everywhere. The words and melody were easy to remember. Anyone knowing four chords on the guitar could lead a sing-along.

It is pretty easy to say "Back in the good old days, things were uncomplicated" but not really. There was always tension of one sort or another. As a matter of fact, 1960-61 was, I recall, a fairly traumatic year in my life as a young teenager. But I had hopes.

Twenty-nine years later, I attended my first meeting of a Broken Yoke support group and left feeling freer than I had in years. Did that group change me? Not in the sense that someone said the right word or prayed the right prayer but definitely in the sense that I was no longer alone. Others had voiced same-gender attraction and openly shared not so much a dream to call themselves heterosexual but to know they had a choice.

Though churches didn't speak on this topic nor did they seem to understand how to help someone dealing with homosexuality or lesbianism, there was an implied agreement to the goals the men and women in our support group shared. And that was enough for me.

Ten years later, I shared what Broken Yoke was about at a meeting of Madison, Wisconsin pastors. It was a good meeting but it was also a wake-up call in that a significant number of churches and pastors no longer agreed with the need for change. As a matter of fact, many openly celebrated homosexuality as God's gift.

In some ways it was easy to accept this difference of opinion because neither side threatened the other. The silent majority in those days was, well, very silent. I might suggest here that if one hears nothing from the pulpit on Scriptural positions regarding societal issues (homosexuality, abortion, the death penalty, etc), there really is no spiritual conflict for the person sitting in pew.

Today six states legally support same-sex marriages and more may follow. On the surface of things, most people assume a "Live and let live" posture because the laws do not apply in their lives. After all, why should we be against two people who are love wanting to legalize their relationship for all the reasons/rights their heterosexual counterparts get in marriage?

Combined with anti-hate legislation, we are poised on the brink of losing the ability to choose. People with same-gender attractions will be told to pursue them; churches will face legal sanctions for sharing a biblical perspective that is not in agreement with a pro-gay ideology; and a person who expresses opposition could be fined and possibly even jailed. If anyone doubts such possibilities, a look at the effects of Canadian legislation in these areas should bring some focus.

This is not about hating people who are gay or lesbian. It is about our freedom to believe as we feel led to believe, yet believing without blanket condemnation. Such freedom in a country such as ours should work both ways. And in a country such as ours, this should not even be a question. So why has it become so?

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A Little Humor. . .

A new soldier was on sentry duty at the main gate. His orders were clear. No vehicle was to enter unless it had the proper sticker on the windshield.

Now, a huge Army car came up with a General seated in the back. The sentry yelled, "Halt, who goes there?"

The chauffeur, says, "General Wheeler."

"I'm sorry, I can't let you through. You've got to have a sticker on the windshield."

The General said, "Drive on!"

The sentry said, "Hold it! You really can't come through. I have orders to shoot if you try driving on without your sticker."

The General repeated, "I'm telling you, Corporal, drive on!"

The sentry walked up to the rear window with the gun at the ready and said, "General, I'm new at this. Do I shoot you or the driver?"

