

# Wellspring

December 2008 – January 2009 Isaiah 58.6

*All things are possible with God*

[A publication of Broken Yoke Ministries, Inc.]



## Gifts from God

By Bob Van Domelen

*"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful. (John 14.27 NAB)*

On our way to an area shopping center, my wife said, "Oh, by the way, your daughter wants to know what you want for Christmas this year." And just as had happened the year before, my brain in that moment went blank.

It was so much easier as a boy because there was always a new toy being advertised as "You have to have one of these", a pair of ice skates to replace the ones that no longer fit, or a hockey stick with puck included.

There were no Game-Boys, I-Pods, or computer gadgets back in the days of my childhood. One thing that pretty much was the same then as now for most kids, however, would have come under the request "Please, Mom, no underwear." It wasn't like underwear could be held up or shared with friends on the same level of gift as a basketball or possibly the latest version of *Stratego*. Still, every year there was that one wrapped package with new underwear or socks waiting under the tree—which was okay so long as something from the preferred list accompanied it.

Now that I am a little older, I find myself thinking about the gifts God has given me: a certain amount of intelligence, a loving wife and children, and family and extended family among those gifts. He has also given me a love of music and the ability to express myself through that gift.

I have taken good care of most of the gifts I have received but certainly not all of them. So what happened with those? In a word, sin. I believe that sin is the distortion of something good, a detour from what was meant to be a smooth road onto one filled with potholes and uneven surfaces. It is, at its core, a choice that serves our human weakness despite God's perfect plan.

I would certainly stand with the majority of people in saying that I did not deliberately choose sin over God. In my human mind, the choices I made *seemed* to be good choices. At the same time, I cannot say that I sought God in the precise moment of making my decision to do something.

Being human, I learned to rationalize some sins. It was okay to tell a "white lie" if the untruth kept someone from being hurt. It was okay to forget to report cash received for doing someone a favor on my income taxes because, after all, everyone does that. It was okay to read pornography because guys "have needs." If something could be considered okay, then it was not a sin. God and I were, I thought, okay and on the same page.

Try as I may, however, I never was able to get my mind to feel it was okay to have same-gender attraction or to act on those attractions. I really wanted to believe in the "born that way" approach but couldn't. Such a decision would be to agree with the idea that God would create a condition that He would also call an abomination. Such a decision would be to say that God gave me the gift of a confused gender identity, a roadmap that included only roads filled with potholes and uneven surfaces. That certainly is not much of a gift.

### **Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you**

At some point in my life, I came to the conclusion that God took great joy in my creation. I came to understand that Bob was not supposed to look like every other man, think like every other man, or even love God like every other man. Somewhere deep within me was stamped "One of a Kind" and it was God who impressed those words on my being.

Peace (or Shalom) is a traditional Hebrew greeting, but as expressed by Jesus, Shalom is the gift of salvation, the ultimate peace. It flows through and around all of what I do, think, or say, but in times of my poor choices, I fail to see or feel that peace. My human side decides for me that my choices will provide what I lack and to some extent bring the kind of peace I desire.

In my sober moments, however, I understand that God's peace is not dependent on me being free of all my human and self-centered desires. It's alive and real *despite* my chosen state of mind, waiting patiently for me to let go of me so that I can rest in Him.

### **Not as the world gives do I give to you**

What exactly does the world give? Setting aside any skeptical notions, I would offer that the world does seek to offer the best, but usually that best is based on the definition others have of the word best. Putting on the skeptic side of me, the world offers what it wants for itself. In some cases, best can be worst if best merely redefines worst so that life can go on in that frame of mind. That sounds complex even from where I sit. Perhaps I can offer an example to make it easier for you to see what I am thinking.

I wrote earlier that I have never been able to feel it was okay to have same-gender attraction or to act on those attractions in a sexual way. The world around me has changed over the years and now very vocal individuals are telling anyone who will listen that the gay life is the good life. Those same people want me to believe that I am simply unable to accept the "gift of homosexuality" that God has given me. There are times, I will confess, when I have

wondered if maybe I was wrong. After all, good people are coming out; good people would not choose something that they would consider sin; and good people would say that no one would deliberately choose all the problems that go with being gay in today's society.

But if I agree with them, I only make them feel better about the decisions *they* have made. I will be offering an affirmation of the peace they seek by my agreement with their choices.

I don't want to tell good people that they have missed the gift of their sexual identity that God had given them, but if I am honest with myself, that is what I have to say. And in saying it, I don't call them bad people.

**Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.**

When people come to the decision that the road of same-gender attraction they find themselves on is not the road they really want, it often feels like the panic that can be experienced having missed a turn-off to a destination.

While attending an Exodus International conference in San Diego, I decided on an early evening visit to a place just north of the downtown area. It soon became evident that I missed a turn because I was going through a residential area where people had bars on doors and windows. Finally, I saw a sign pointing to a highway—the road, I thought, that would take me back to where I was staying.

It was now dark and I was driving 65 mph in a questionable direction. Being a somewhat typical male, I chose to ignore the first exit ramps that flew by on my right, believing instead that I would eventually see a sign that would point me in the right direction. Small-scale panic set in.

Eventually I did get off the highway, drove about a half mile to a diner I saw down the road, and learned that I was within spitting distance of Mexico. Now I was troubled and fearful because I had not planned a Mexican trip.

Despite following the directions I was given, I missed yet another turn. Coming to a stop in area that did not look public or even like a road, I heard a tap on my window. A man with a gun on his hip was asking what I was doing on a restricted part of the San Diego Naval Base. I didn't know. Obviously I did get back, but what started as a simple little excursion turned into a three hour journey.

As much as I wanted my little drive to be completely pleasant, as much as I would like my life to be free of any and all temptation (of any sort), I know that the peace that surpasses all understanding will only be mine if I allow it to be.

Some feel that what I see as freedom is little more than an exercise in fooling myself because if the same-gender attraction doesn't disappear, I should be embracing it. In such times, I remind myself of God's gifts and His design. And I am also reminded of the following verse in the first chapter of James: *Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.* (vs.17)

If you struggle in seeing yourself as one of God's creation, just ask God to make that image clear. There is nothing that brings God greater joy than introducing His love, peace, and presence. Be blessed! □

**Reminder: Beginning in 2009, *Wellspring* will be published February, June, and October.**

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**Send your donations to:  
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De Pere, WI 54115-5824**

## Wisconsin Ministry Locations

### Broken Yoke

P.O. Box 5824  
De Pere, WI 54115-5824  
262-751-1128  
Bob@brokenyoke.org

### 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>

## 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 all who attended the Regional Conference in October, that they continue to hear God's invitation and continue to feel His healing love.
- For those wanting instant change, that they are reminded in times of stress that God's plan is still in operation, and it is the perfect plan.
- For those who stand in the gap supporting those with same-gender attraction, that they be blessed beyond their expectation.
- For pastors and church leaders, that they recognize the hunger that is present in the heart of strugglers for a sense of wholeness and community.

- For the youth of our society, that they will be able to see beyond the half-truths regarding the gay life and seek instead a healthy appreciation of the male and female God has created for them.
- For parents hurting because of a child's decision to actively pursue the gay life, that they see the love they have for that child as never ending, their value system always visible.
- 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 Bob as he and Cathie walk in the springtime of retirement, that they find God's love and call in whatever they do.
- For the ongoing financial support of this ministry, that those who are able will be willing to support us with both finance and prayer.

daily choosing obedience to God, finding healing and ultimately discovering our true identity in Jesus Christ."

**Editor Note:** *The calls that come to this ministry from parents wondering what to do when a son or daughter announces a coming out are among the most difficult. I am so grateful to Exodus International for the development of a safe place where youth can get answers to difficult questions. I also want to take this opportunity to encourage those who are able to visit the Exodus website*

**www.exodus.to**

*and view all of the information links available there. No one has to be alone or in the dark about issues related to homosexuality but everyone must take the first step to finding answers and/or support.*

## **Exodus Launches New Web Site for a New Generation**

(Source: Exodus International website)

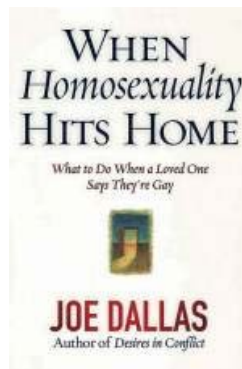
Orlando, FL- Exodus Youth, a division of Exodus International, launched a new look for their youth web site in October seeking to better meet the needs of a new generation looking for biblical answers about sexuality.

The improved web site, **www.ExodusYouth.net**, has not only been redesigned to meet the needs of a more blog-savvy, technically advanced generation, it's doing so in a new way. For over thirty years, Exodus International has been reaching out to those seeking to bring their same-sex attraction in line with their faith. Now, the organization is looking to continue the same ministry to young people in a way that is more authentic and aware of the real-life struggles they face today.

"It's no secret that young people today are more confused than ever about issues surrounding sexuality and faith," said Mike Ensley, a Youth Analyst for Exodus International. "This web site is a place where they can find an alternative response to the culture's dead beat message that sex is shallow and gender is meaningless."

Ensley adds that young people are eager to discuss these issues, but many don't feel they have a safe outlet to ask the tough questions that this topic generates. The website is a safe place for finding answers about God, sexuality and life.

"We recognize that dealing honestly with these issues isn't a snap-your-fingers, genie-in-a-lamp kind of experience. Nor is it about ignoring your feelings," said Ensley who has personally dealt with this issue as a teenager. "Instead it is an honest journey of facing the reality of homosexual attractions, discovering its origins,



Book Review  
www.exodusbooks.org

The heart-wrenching declaration that a loved one is a homosexual is increasingly being heard in Christian households across America. How can this be? What went wrong? Is there a cure?

In this straightforward book, Joe Dallas offers practical counsel, step by step, on how to deal with the many conflicts and emotions parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters or any family member will experience when learning of a loved one's homosexuality.

Drawing from his own experience and from his many years of helping families work through this perplexing and unexpected situation, Joe offers scriptural and compassionate advice to both struggling gays and those who love them.

Type: Paperback  
Pages: 192 p.  
Misc 1: 978-0-7369-1201-3  
Publisher: Harvest House  
ISBN/Ref.: 0-7369-1201-0  
\$11.99



*For unto us a child is  
born,  
a son is given!*

**Have a Blessed Season  
Broken Yoke Ministries**

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**Dated Material**

### ***A Little Humor***

The poor guy walks up to the rich guy's house. He's down on his luck and needs some money. He rings the doorbell. "Hi there, I'm down on my luck, need some money, and I was wondering if you have any work I could do for you?" The rich guy decides to give him a break, and says: "Sure, my porch needs painting. I'll pay you 50 dollars to do it for me." "Sure thing, Mister, I'll get started right away!" Time passes, until... "Hey Mister, I'm all done painting!" "Well, here's your 50 dollars" "Thanks, and by the way, it's a Ferrari, not a Porsche."

