

# Wellspring

October 2010 – January 2011

Isaiah 58.6

*All things are possible with God*  
[A publication of Broken Yoke Ministries, Inc.]



## It's Still a Journey

By Bob Van Domelen

<sup>3</sup> *Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture..* <sup>5</sup> *For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.* (Psalm 100.3-5)

Twenty-five years ago I made a decision that seemed to contradict how I had defined myself. At first, that decision represented more of a desire to be just like other guys in their expression of masculinity, but with time I learned to see myself as having similar characteristics without being a clone. In other words, when I looked in a mirror I saw Bob, not a man trying to look like someone else named Bob.

I'll admit that in the beginning I was pretty caught up in the notion of copying others. I was especially drawn to those who publicly proclaimed a freedom from same-sex attractions and in 1985, there were not many of them who made such a statement.

I did, however, eventually find support ministries like Pastoral Care Ministries (Leanne Payne), Love in Action, Metanoia Ministries, and Exodus International whose main purpose was to help men and women like me on our journey. Their newsletters and in particular personal letters responding to my mine planted within me a new image of masculinity.

The first support conference I attended was held at Wheaton College. It was a PCM School (Pastoral Care Ministries) with Leanne Payne, Clay McLean, and Mario Bergner sharing in a way I had never heard.

Homosexuality was certainly an implied focus of the gathering but the primary focus that week was on God's design, on having a relationship with God, and of choosing to "Rely on God alone." Definitely not what I had anticipated, since I was looking for a "Setting Homosexuality Aside 101."

***Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.***

I thought the object was to deal with me, with my attraction issues so that I would be okay in God's eyes. But I had it all wrong. My struggle was misdirected though it's logical to see how that could have happened. My temptations, my sins, all seemed to be choices I made that put me out of God's love. God, on the other hand, was saying "Look, I know you have temptations and I

know you sin, but you seem to miss the point. I love you and have called you to be mine."

No word about homosexuality. No word about my many failings. Just a simple truth—I was loved by God!

This focus did not eliminate my issues. There was not any presto-chango done at Wheaton that week. I came home knowing that at some point I'd be dealing with the same problems I had before the conference, but something was different and that something was significant!

Readers of this newsletter already know I do not believe I was born homosexual. I do remember a time in my childhood when I was like every other little boy in the neighborhood and eventually at school. I didn't think about same-sex attraction—I didn't even think about sex.

I did know, however, that I felt attracted to some boys more than others but it was because they were good athletes, smart students, or just easily likeable. I even had

a few adult male role models in my life I placed on pedestals. Popular thinking today would suggest that my attractions were really evidence of a developing homosexuality, especially when during puberty the attractions often had sexual overtones.

I didn't know it at the time but I had things backward and I wasn't the only one. Most of the choices I made growing up were decisions that agreed with how I felt. Emotionally and spiritually, I had a lot of conflict during my teen years, but I

knew what felt good physically and I went after it.

What I learned at that PCM School and at gatherings in the years that followed was that if I focused on God and gave my life to God's design, the rest would fall into place. And do you know something? It has.

***For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations***

When I share that my journey began twenty-five years ago, that is not quite true. The journey began after the first behavior done in secret—in secret because I was ashamed. Nothing anyone else said altered the feeling that I had done wrong. In the years that followed, I experienced that feeling more than I care to admit.

Twenty-five years ago, however, I made a decision to deal with my same-sex attraction. That decision underscored the notion that what I was doing was not compatible with God's design. Public opinion today would suggest I was repressing my normal attractions, but the public does not have to live in my skin. I do.



The skeptics always measure success and change by the complete absence of same-sex attraction. Just as I have shared many times in the past, change is not the absence of temptation but the ability to choose to reject that temptation. Additionally, change is not measured by heterosexual desire but by the desire for holiness.

Not everything that has happened since 1985 has been a positive experience, but as David shared, "*His faithfulness continues through all generations.*" I do see myself as one of the sheep in His pasture and I do believe that I am to listen for His voice.

I can pretty much guarantee you that if you walk a similar path, it will not be approved or affirmed by a lot of people—even people of strong faith. Some might even suggest that you are not following God's design. They might also say you are implying those who follow a gay or lesbian walk are automatically rejected by God.

God is a relationship that extends a lifetime and beyond and I will not condemn anyone to hell for the choices they make. My life choices, however, cannot be determined by some popularity poll. When it comes time to meet the Lord face to face, I must answer for my life, just as those who disagree must answer for theirs.

In closing, it is somewhat significant to me that this brief message is loosely based on two verses from Psalm 100 because this article is the 100<sup>th</sup> article I have written for *Wellspring* since 1992. I am still writing; I am still seeking the Lord; and I am still on the journey. □

## Wisconsin Ministry Locations

### Broken Yoke

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

**Meetings:** Wauwatosa

**Support Group** (weekly)

Tuesday, 7:00PM

**Website:**

<http://www.brokenyoke.org>

### Reclamation Resources

P.O. Box 1062  
Oshkosh, WI 54902  
920-303-1041  
<http://www.reclamationrc.org>

### Redeemed Ministries

A support system for women  
Support Group (weekly)  
Call 414-218-3940 for info

registration, meals, and lodging fees. You'll need to register online at [www.exodusinternational.org](http://www.exodusinternational.org). Just click on the Green Lake Regional in the Upcoming Events box. Please consider joining us. It's a good place to be!



## Our Prayer Corner

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

- For all those who struggle with same-gender attractions, that they embrace the identity God had in mind for them from the beginning.
- For those wanting help but afraid, that they will consider contacting this ministry and its support groups.
- For those organizing the Exodus Regional Conference, that they will be blessed in their preparations.
- For pastors and church leaders, that they find themselves willing to support the goals of ministries like Broken Yoke.
- For seminaries training future shepherds of the church, that they seriously consider the need to arm students with a deeper understanding of the issue of homosexuality.
- For the youth of our society, that in times of uncertainty about their identity, that they seek God in the mirror of their lives.
- For parents dealing with a child that struggles or has endorsed the gay life, that their love remains constant without sacrificing their beliefs.
- For the facilitators of our support group meetings, that they feel God's blessings for their efforts.
- For the board of this ministry, that the coming November board meeting will be an opportunity for sharing wisdom and encouragement.
- For the ongoing financial support of this ministry, especially for Jill Rennick, that those who are able will be willing to support us with both finance and prayer.



## "The Father's Pursuit of Us" Kent Paris, Featured Speaker

North Central Regional  
Conference  
October 29-31  
Green Lake Conference Center

### Comments about last year's conference

"My favorite thing was all the wonderful testimonies."

"The keynote speaker was inspiring."

"Loved the breakout sessions."

"Green Lake Conference Center is an awesome place."

"I came here with my brother, a struggler, to support him but learned a lot about my own woundedness."

"This was the best Conference I've ever been to."

There is space for you if you want this experience. The cost for the weekend is \$210/person and includes

**Reminder: The next *Wellspring* will be published in February, 2011.**

## Deceptive Receptive

By Jeff

I love receiving gifts. The expectation, the anticipation, the awaiting of the unknown. There is an internal child in me, curious and wide eyed at the idea of a special gift. I love Christmas because of the presents. I love birthdays because of the presents. I can't get enough.

I was fine with this view of receiving for years, constantly going up and down on the emotional ride of having a desire and having it fulfilled. But it turns out that I was deceived in my ability to receive. For me there was something missing in each gift that I would get. I soon found that I didn't so much like to receive as I liked the

distraction of the cycle of anticipation, desire and perceived satisfaction.

There was an insatiable desire that lurked in me, something that said: "After all the anticipation and after all the gifts I received under the Christmas tree, I still feel lost." For me, once I received a gift I felt the end of something. There was a moment of emptiness, a passing through the valley. Instead of feeling more full or fulfilled, there was a simple and painful moment, a moment where I was acknowledged and I didn't like it. So it turned out my "love of gifts" was more of a cover up. It was a cover up of not wanting to be noticed. It was a cover up of self-hatred. It was not some great desire to be admired. No gift, no giving that I knew of could cover up that stain, that shame.

I didn't know it at the time, but in retrospect I can see that when I was young, I spent most of my time running away from me. The insatiability inside me not only caused an inability to receive, but also caused me to love the distraction that many other similar cycles offered.

I think there is an essential moment when a gift is given, a moment the gift is not the object of value anymore. As the gift leaves one hand and is placed in another, the value shifts from the object being given to the person who is receiving. If the giver or the receiver is unable to do their part in the exchange, there is a loss of the love and value that was supposed to continue in that exchange.

The unreceptive heart in me that blocked the flow of love was as prevalent spiritually as it was physically. I could not receive from God because I could not handle that moment where He actually acknowledged me.

I often wonder if other people suffer from something similar. I think we are good at finding different, dynamic and complicated ways of participating in distraction—from the person who is always busy, to the quiet and gentle person who is just so peaceful, to the one who is an adrenaline addict, or to the one who is a workaholic. I think we might all be experts at distraction and re-labeling. In my case I loved gifts and was good at receiving. God's saw the hurting me—self-hating and terrified of acknowledging it.

This place of shame and pain could only be addressed if God brought me to it, which He gently did. It was only in this place that God was able to teach me about His love and His ability to "breath into dry bones" and make them alive. Being in the presence of His eternal, fulfilling, gentle and powerful light, was the only way my dry, crispy heart was able to admit the darkness of self-hatred. And, for the first time, the gift was passed on and something was created: The ability to receive and to be filled. It was the true end of the cycle of insatiability and the beginning of blooming relationship. □



## Choose This Day Whom You Will Serve

By Jill Rennick

Director of Women's Ministry

*"Now fear the Lord and serve Him with all faithfulness. But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose*

*for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in whose land you are*

*living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."* Joshua 24:14-15

As a follower of Jesus who has struggled with same-sex attraction, there are a few things I would like others in the church to know. One of them is that same-sex attraction is not a choice. If you've never experienced these feelings, this may be "news" to you. If you are a struggler you know exactly what I mean. Unfortunately for same-sex strugglers, the temptation that often accompanies this reality is that since the attractions are not a choice, embracing homosexual behavior, lifestyle and identity must not be a choice either.

The inherent lie in this conclusion is that *our identity is formed by our attractions and should not be denied*. This couldn't be farther from the truth. As children of God (those who have received God's gift of salvation through faith in Christ), *we are identified by who we are in Christ* not by our attractions or even our sinful choices to act on them.

In I Corinthians 6:9-11 it says, "*Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*"

This passage explains that our true identity, **who we are**, now comes from the work of God's Spirit in our lives who makes us holy in Christ. We may not have chosen the attractions but we *can* choose how we respond to them and which identity we embrace.

God invites us to make the choice to embrace and celebrate who we are in Christ. When our identity in Him conflicts with our attractions (which, by the way, is the common affliction all Christ followers face called temptation), then we are called to trust in the God who created us, defines us, and knows what is best for us.

Whatever temptations you are facing today, the invitation is to embrace your identity in Christ and by the power of His Spirit, live it out. We may not be able to choose our temptations, but we *can* choose to find our love, life and identity in Him.

*"Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked. For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor; no good thing does He withhold from those whose walk is blameless."* Psalm 84:10-11 □

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## A Closing Thought

When Peter said "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinner," he spoke for all of us. Jesus, however, did not address Peter's words. Instead, Jesus looked at Peter and gave him a new vocation.

We are not to forget our sinful nature but we are called to see beyond it into the design God has for all of us. We are called! We are His!

**Broken Yoke Ministries, Inc.**  
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*All things are possible with God*

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

A healing Pastor came to a church. There was a long line of people to see him and be prayed for. Near the end, a boy stood in front of the Pastor and when asked said it was his hearing. So, the healing Pastor grabbed his ears and said a prayer. After a moment, the Pastor let go and asked, "How's your hearing now?" "I don't know. It's not until Friday," replied the boy.



And just for the fun of it . . .

1. While sitting, lift your right foot off the floor and make clockwise circles with it.
2. While drawing these circles, draw the number "6" in the air with your right hand. Your foot will change direction and there is nothing you can do about it.