

# Wellspring

October 2009 – January 2010

Isaiah 58.6

*All things are possible with God*

[A publication of Broken Yoke Ministries, Inc.]



## It's Your Mirror, What Do You See?

By Bob Van Domelen

<sup>22</sup>Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. <sup>23</sup>Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror <sup>24</sup>and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. (James 1.22-24)

Growing up, I looked in a mirror (or any reflective surface for that matter) with an eye to how I might look to others. Ego-centered from early childhood as a defensive mechanism to ward off a negative self-image, how I dressed, how my hair looked, and how attractive were primary measuring sticks. It only takes a quick glance these days to see how my earlier standards would no longer work.

A therapist introduced me to a different way of using a mirror. "Affirm yourself," he would say week after week. "Remind yourself that there is a good man inside. Don't wear the mental clothing of negativity. Reject it!"

What he was suggesting was not that I endorse the pride-filled self that defined me for so long but to see how those images were not good. They were destructive. His encouragement, on the other hand, was to see the positive self, believing that a positive self-image would reject the behavior choices I made for so many years.

Looking back, I know that I looked for myself in other guys, how *they* acted, looked, and lived. I wanted what I thought they had, so seeking a positive self-image kept coming back to how I compared to them. From my point of view, I failed in this comparison test. Despite wanting what my therapist told me was already mine, I couldn't find it because I was looking in the wrong places.

I really wanted to believe that his instruction would change my life but somehow I knew that though the positive image he encouraged was a part of me, I knew it didn't originate with me. My inner eye was defective and distorted.

### Listening to the Word

Growing up, I heard the Word and read it. I even composed songs based on the Word, but somehow the lessons I heard and read didn't take root. I looked in the mirror and try as I might, the image was always a reminder of the way I always looked in *any* mirror.

The phrase "Anyone who *listens to the Word*" demands active participation. In retrospect, I would suggest that when the invitation was given to listen to Scripture, I joined everyone else, sat down, and within seconds dismissed the reading as something I had heard

before—nothing new—or not as important as allowing my imagination run free. After all, I kept listening for how to be a normal guy. My blinders made it difficult to receive the messages that were all designed to get me there.

I am not suggesting that I never took to heart what I heard or read as much as to say that when weighed against my life's choices at that time, the Word eventually was set aside as not being as fulfilling or satisfying.

The mirror in James is actually the path we are called to follow in order to live as God desires. As I considered this, it seemed to me that the mirror is really the reflection of God as God seeks to exist in our lives. A line in "Mary, Did You Know" (Mark Lowry) goes "When she kissed the face of Jesus, she kissed the face of God." What an awesome thought! What a connection!

### Growing in the Word

<sup>11</sup>When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. <sup>12</sup>Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. <sup>13</sup>And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love. (1 Corinthians 13:11-13)

My childhood was better than many I hear about in the letters I receive but it was flawed just as their lives were flawed. Perhaps none of us really escapes being flawed because nothing in life is perfect, so no one escapes touching imperfection in one shape or form. I know, an obvious statement, but it *is* self-perception that drives our choices.

I couldn't really see myself becoming a man because I couldn't make the connection with other men that was mine to make. I didn't understand that I defined masculinity by some universal standard and because I felt different from that standard, I *was* different.

I often write that every choice we make is based on a legitimate need. The choice itself might be legitimate or illegitimate but the need does not change. *I thought like a child. I reasoned like a child.* In other words, I saw everything as it applied to *my* wants and needs.

In the normal scheme of events, childhood progresses into adulthood and children are taught that life is not solely about personal needs or wants. A balance should exist between us as individuals and the world around us. Simply stated, many of us enter adulthood without having all the t's crossed and the i's dotted. Electricians would say that not all of our wiring is as it should be.

So the mirror we look into from Paul's perspective is a poor reflection. The image of God, the clarity of life instruction can be seen but not clearly enough when personal brokenness dominates life. Complicating things, the mirror of society reflects acceptance of the same-gender distortions I felt.

A heart that learns to surrender wipes away the distortions in the mirror a little at a time. God becomes real. Jesus becomes personal. The Holy Spirit becomes alive each and every day. What were once only words now becomes reality and that reality begins to know at least in part the awesome nature of God.

It all seems beyond our human capacity. With every surrender, with every rebirth in healthy choice comes the knowledge that much more awaits. And maybe we wonder how we will ever reach the destination of oneness with God that we are taught is ours. The men in our support group sometimes wonder if they will ever feel normal, more like men without same-gender attraction.

Paul doesn't minimize this difficulty but he does offer something of an individual road map in three words: faith, hope, and love.

### Living in the Word

<sup>1</sup>Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. (Hebrews 11.1)

The first and second signposts we are called to follow are connected, both encouraging and frustrating at the same time. We can have faith in ourselves, in others, or even in things, but those pale to faith in God. In all things other than God, we can almost always have instant verification of the result.

"I have faith that I can accomplish this or that task" and then I complete it because I know that I can. "I have faith in someone because I believe that person capable of being successful" and most often the person does if the expectation is reasonable enough. "I have faith in my car that it will get me home this evening" and then I rest in the knowledge that because I have enough fuel and the car has been running as it should I will arrive home safe and sound.

Faith in God is more complex because while God's design for our lives IS a perfect design, our vision is imperfect. Our hopes are somewhat imperfect as well but when offered to God in our petitions, we trust God to redefine them to fit His will, His perfect design.

Then there is love. Of all the areas of my personal brokenness as a child and then as an adult, this is the one most distorted in the mirror of my life. Not that I was unable to love or receive love as it was meant to be, just that I defined love as a child would define it—that warm and positive attention directed at me because it is what I deserved.

<sup>36</sup>"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" <sup>37</sup>Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."

<sup>38</sup>This is the first and greatest commandment. <sup>39</sup>And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself." <sup>40</sup>All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

(Matthew 22:36-40)

There have been countless sermons and lectures on these verses and I certainly would not suggest that anything I am going to say will match or even come close

to matching them. I do think, however, that if the mirror is to be clear, if the reflection is to remind and teach, then it is not enough merely to look.

We cannot love what we do not know and we cannot know without having made the effort to seek. God's word directs us, teaches us, and draws us into a deeper relationship with Him. It also opens our eyes to those around us.

The child becomes the adult in the security of knowing he or she is loved by God and in this knowledge is able to make decisions that meld with God's Word. In short, the one who seeks God will hear or read God's Word and *do what it says*. As I grow older (and prayerfully wiser), I can recognize that healthy gender identity comes in that relationship with God.

There are many who suggest that we should place others before ourselves and call that Christian living. I would humbly suggest as one who has waded through a lot of muck and mire that healing comes from seeking God first, focusing on the intense relationship God wants with us second, and believing that *from* that relationship will come the appropriate love of neighbor.

To ignore self is to ignore self-maintenance and from my experience, when we stop taking care of ourselves, we cloud the mirror. To suggest that all this is easy would be an insult to the journey we are all on. We all have the ability to choose God as our destination in day to day living. The journey is enhanced, I think, by all the wonderful sights and experiences that will be ours if we are willing to look for them. The mirror you use in life is yours, however. What do you see?□

## Wisconsin Ministry Locations

### Broken Yoke

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

### Meetings in Wauwatosa:

**Support Group** (weekly)  
Tuesday, 7:00PM

### Website:

<http://www.brokenyoke.org>

**Newsletter:** *Wellspring*

Reclamation Resources

Broken Yoke Ministries

*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 414-218-3940 for info

### Reclamation Resources

P.O. Box 1062  
Oshkosh, WI 54902  
920-303-1041

<http://www.reclamationrc.org>

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## Dates to Remember

Oct 30-Nov 1 Regional Conference  
Green Lake Conference Center  
Green Lake, WI  
Joe Dallas, Keynote Speaker



## “Called Out of Darkness” Joe Dallas, Featured Speaker

**North Central Regional  
Conference  
October 30-November 1  
Green Lake Conference Center**

If you are looking for a chance to step away from daily life as well as an opportunity to be challenged and encouraged at the same time, this is an excellent way to do it. The conference begins with check-in at 5:00 p.m. on Friday and ends Sunday morning. It will be an encouraging time for all who need a recharge in their journey out of homosexuality.

The cost for the weekend is \$185 and includes registration, meals, and lodging fees. Go to this web address for more information and to register online:

[exodusinternational.org/content/view/885/0/](http://exodusinternational.org/content/view/885/0/)

We look forward to seeing you there.

## 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 Jill Rennick as she seeks to serve, that her ministry be blessed with the needed financial support.
- For pastors and church leaders, that they seek always to point to God and not human wisdom.
- 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 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 Reclamation Resources, that decisions about future ministry will be blessed.
- For the ongoing financial support of this ministry, that those who are able will be willing to support us with both finance and prayer.

**Reminder: The next *Wellspring* will be published in February, 2010.**

## Broken Yoke Expands -- Women’s Ministry Director Named



“Twenty years ago I felt God calling me into ministry, so now it is all becoming real.” So said Jill Rennick, newly appointed Director of Women’s Ministries with Broken Yoke.

Broken Yoke’s Board of Directors unanimously approved her appointment at a recent meeting.

“I have known Jill for many years,” said Bob Van Domelen, executive director, “and have always been impressed with her faith, willingness to serve, and ability to speak to the heart of women who struggle.”

Several years ago, the Board approved of the formation of Redeemed, a support system for women and listed as a branch ministry of Exodus International. Jill has served as coordinator/director of that group since its foundation.

“What makes this so special,” added Van Domelen, “is that Jill will be working as a part time, paid staff member for the ministry. It’s exciting but it is also a step in faith as her salary will be completely reliant on donations to the ministry.”

## Ministry Website Updated

Sometimes change comes not because we are eager for it but because we are forced into it. Such was the case with our website.

During an attempt to update material, it soon became apparent that things no longer worked as they had in the past. The company technician at GoDaddy pointed out that the templates previously used were no longer supported. A new format was the only option.

After some muttering and sputtering and several hours of reconstruction, brokenyoke.org emerged with a new look, some new options, and a format more suitable to periodic change.

So if you have time, check out the website and let us know what you think.

## A Lean Ministry Machine

In a time when financial security is an issue facing most households, we thought it important to share with you how we are doing.

Both newsletters produced by Broken Yoke have gone through a purging of names in our database, and those who responded to a request for verification have been coded to receive the future editions. We do not spend what we don’t have, but without donations, we know that something has to give.

We do believe, however, that Jill Rennick’s addition to this ministry is important. If you agree and want to support that decision, send a donation with “Women’s Ministry” in the subject line.

***Broken Yoke Ministries, Inc.***  
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### ***A Little Humor. . .***

There were three men who found themselves stranded on an island—an Englishman, a German and a Scotsman.

One day the Englishman found a lamp buried in the sand. After talking it over with the other two, he decided to rub it. With a poof of smoke, out came a genie who said, "You each get one wish and one wish only."

Being the one who found the lamp, the Englishman said, "I wish I were living in a large stone mansion instead of on this barren island." In the blinking of an eye, he disappeared.

The German grabbed the lamp and said, "I can think of nothing better than to be in a nice hot Jacuzzi instead of being on this desolate place." And in another blink *he* was gone.

Looking around, the Scotsman said, "I wish I had my wee island friends with me now."

