

Wellspring

June 2007 – July 2007 Isaiah 58.6

All things are possible with God

[A publication of Broken Yoke Ministries, Inc.]



Memories of a Son

By Bob Van Domelen

June 2002

[Continuing to celebrate our 20th Anniversary as a ministry, I am reprinting this 2002 lead article. I hope that you will be blessed by it.]

I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. (John 5.19-20)

Scripture tells us that Jesus would often go off by himself to pray to His heavenly Father. Most of the prayers you and I have are of the petition variety and when things go well they step into the realm of praise.

The relationship shared in the Gospel of John by Jesus about His Father was a communion of the most intimate nature, an expression of love that none of us could possibly imagine. Throughout the Gospel of John, Jesus restates His oneness in the Father and the Father's oneness in Him.

June 17 is Father's Day and a time most of us go to the nearest store to look for the appropriate card. Sometimes a humorous card is our choice—far easier to make a joke than to search for something a little more personal or matching the feelings we have. We stare at the open space where we will write our name, think about adding something more than just "Love," and maybe in the end settle for that.

I am one of those whose father is no longer alive. He died when I was 16 years old but I don't think a Father's Day passes without me looking at the cards in the store. I'm not sure why I do that other than to remind myself just how much I still love him. And after reading the verse and agreeing with the card design, I still look at that blank space and wonder. What would I share if given the chance?

I am luckier than many of the men and women who write to me. My father wasn't abusive, he didn't yell or threaten, and he really tried to be a part of the lives of his children. I doubt we spoke the same language, but is that really so different from the majority of children in their relationship with their fathers?

Broken Yoke is a ministry that tries to help those who seek freedom from homosexual behaviors. As a man who has directed this ministry for twelve years now, I can tell you that a broken relationship (perceived or real) between father and child looms as a critical component in the development of the child's orientation. While I speak from a male perspective, there is little doubt in my mind that the same would hold true for a relationship between women and their fathers.

The verses I quoted at the beginning of this article are about the Father and the Son. It almost seems sacrilegious to interpret them any other way, but there *is* something to be learned by applying them to any parent-child relationship.

Verse 19 is one of parental example and a child's response. Dads are supposed to teach their sons how to become the protector, the provider, and the lover. It is the father's love and desire to do only good for his wife that teaches a son about becoming a husband himself one day. And a daughter who sees this honor and respect bestowed on her mother will know that she has every right to expect it from her husband when she marries.

Verse 20 is a reminder that what the father does is done because of love, and his sharing motivates him to want to do all he can to prepare his son or daughter for life as an adult.

For many of us who struggle with homosexuality, the connection we needed with our dads fell short to the extent that we had no confidence in the idea we could stand in the presence of other men or women as an equal. Such a gap in our identification as men or women could easily fuel a hunger for those components we feel we lack.

The reality is that no father can be everything a child wants him to be. I have, however, met some wonderful fathers who seem to fit that bill though. I often think that my father was one of them yet I know that he was a man and not some super being. He had flaws just as I do, and he made mistakes with his children just as I have made mistakes with my own children.

One of the things I frequently share in this column is that God has given me an identity in Him. I am a child of God. He loves me despite my flaws, my poor choices, and my stubborn attempt to hide my weaknesses rather than offering them to Him.

It is my identity in my Heavenly Father that allows me to see beyond any homosexual temptation. Contrary to the world's definition, I am not a gay man who loves God. I am a man who loves God and happens to deal with homosexual issues in his life. There is a mountain of difference between those two positions.

I cannot believe that God created me as a homosexual man any more than I could conceive of my earthly father deciding that I should be homosexual and then doing everything in his power to bring that about.

In recent years I have finally come to understand that the same healing love God the Father offers me, the same

complete love He offers me without conditions, is and was offered to my dad. And when I think of dad being loved in the same way I know that God loves me, I weep for the joy I feel in that knowledge.

There were many times during my early teens when I wanted to talk to my dad about the confusion I was experiencing, but I never did. Even if I had screwed up enough courage to mention the word homosexuality I don't think he would have been able to talk about it.

I can't speak for my siblings nor would I even suggest that we felt the same. All I can do is share what I feel, put it on the table for you to look at, and then let you make up your own mind about what you will do with the information I've shared.

With all my flaws and my good points, I am a man, a husband, and a father. When reading something that speaks of father issues as they might relate to homosexuality, it is easy for me to think about the negative things, the things that should have happened and didn't, and the things that did happen and shouldn't have. But if I look closely enough at myself and then at my father, I can see some of his goodness, his tender heart, and his manner of loving in me. He *did* give me a positive legacy.

If you are reading this with no positive memories at all of your father, ask the Heavenly Father to let you see your dad as He sees him. Ask the Heavenly Father to let you love your dad as He loves him.

I want to share something I have only spoken of a few times in public as a way of showing you how God did this for me. It isn't important that you believe what I write—just that you acknowledge that I believe it.

Seventeen years ago I had serious doubts about my ability to ever climb out of a pit I had made for myself, but I chose to believe that God would make that possible. My therapist had suggested I think about my father and my childhood, so I did. I thought about his early death, my inability to really be open with him, and the feelings I had that I had let him down as a son.

One evening I had a dream in which I was sitting in the small bedroom I had known as a boy. Jesus walked into the room and immediately behind Him I saw my father. Jesus said, "Talk to your dad" and left the room.

I recall looking at him and experiencing a wave of conflicting emotions—love, relief, and anger. I realized that I was angry with him for dying before I had a chance to finally get to know him and he me. But Jesus had said, "Talk to your dad" so I did.

We were still talking about my feelings when Jesus came in and said that time was up. After I hugged my dad he left the room with Jesus.

The next evening the dream started just as it had the first night. Instead of embracing him, though, I sat down on the bed and began to talk. He looked at me and asked, "Well, aren't you going to give me a hug?" It was the connection I most missed with him, the ability to touch and show affection.

In that dream I shared some of what had been happening in my life with him. As I write this for you, it strikes me now that he never said anything back. He just listened and maybe that's just what I needed for him to do.

At the end of our time together, we hugged once more and once more he left the room.

The third evening, I knew something was different. Jesus didn't say anything nor did He leave the room. I looked at my dad and then took his hand in mine, placing it in the outstretched hand of Jesus. In that moment I released my father and most of the anxiety I had about his early death into the hands of the One who loved us both.

Jesus said, "You can talk to your father at any time, and when you do just start talking to him." Looking at me, Jesus then asked, "Aren't you going to give your dad another hug?"

As I put my arms around my father, we were instantly in another place--high on a mountain--still holding each other. Then an amazing thing happened. As Jesus put his arms around both of us He became transparent and radiating an incredible light that went through both of us, a light I could only sense to be His pure love for both of us.

There were no more dreams like that but I remembered what Jesus had said. And now, when I feel a need, I have little conversations with my father and feel more connected.

It's doubtful that I could have arrived at this place of peace I have for my father without God's intervention and I thank God for that. Happy Father's Day, Dad! I love you.

Broken Yoke Ministries is a nonprofit 501 (c) (3) corporation and operates solely on the contributions of people such as you. All donations to this ministry are tax deductible and will be recognized. While there is no charge for this newsletter, it can only be published if there are funds available to make that possible. Send your donations to:

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Meetings:

Support Group (weekly)
Tuesday, 7:00PM

Website:

<http://www.brokenyoke.org>

Newsletter:

Wellspring (published bimonthly)

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)
2nd & 4th Tuesday, 7:00PM
Call 414-607-1935 for info

Reclamation Resources

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

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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 professional therapists, that they remain willing to address same-gender attractions/behavior in a manner consistent with those who seek freedom from those attractions and behaviors.
- For Exodus and its member ministries, that the coming national Freedom Conference at Concordia University in Irvine, CA, will be a blessing to all those who attend.
- For the church, that it reaches out with hope and encouragement, not political correctness.
- For those suffering with HIV or AIDS, that they see God's loving and healing presence in their daily lives, especially evidenced in the hearts of those here on earth who serve them.
- For our teens, that they not be overwhelmed by the "born that way" message and instead actively question those who preach such a message.
- For Bob, that his daily walk reflects God's loving and healing strength in his ministry and in his personal life.
- For Broken Yoke Ministries, that its ongoing financial needs will be met through the generosity and prayer support of the readers of this newsletter.

More Reflections

From Bob

If anyone asked me "What's *really* different today for Broken Yoke Ministries compared with the ministry twenty years ago?" I would climb up on a soapbox, take a deep breath, and share the following:

- *The issue of homosexuality was something of a stigma but it lacked the political definition it has today.*

It was really difficult to find help years ago but mostly because not many people knew much about same-gender attractions. The jokes were demeaning and those who struggled sought shelter in whatever manner was deemed safest. Generally speaking, the church spoke loudly against homosexual behavior but had little to offer other than admonitions from the pulpit.

Today, homosexuality is given minority status, societal approval, and church ambivalence. Schools teach gay pride during diversity celebrations and offer little to the child of a Christian family whose Scriptural values reject same-gender behaviors as immoral.

- *Clinical treatment that was once offered openly is now being considered unethical.*

When I was a teenager, I didn't even know that professional help was available to help me understand my same-gender attractions. Of course, I doubt I would have been brave enough to even ask my parents about supporting such treatment. "What are you? Crazy? Only crazy people see shrinks!"

The stigma of treatment is still with us today but an added twist is that the APA would like its organization to consider any treatment suggesting that homosexuality needs change to be unethical. If I, for example, disagree with my same-sex attractions and seek help, I am stating by my actions that I believe such behavior wrong. That makes me, in the eyes of the gay community, homophobic. Others have adjusted to being gay, they'd offer. I should too.

- *God is about love.*

Years ago, when homosexuality was hush-hush, most of us who struggled with same-sex attractions and behavior were convinced that God loved us less because of those attractions. In the past twenty years, the message of God's love for all finally found a place in my heart. But the pro-gay theology has taken it further.

I have written many times in *Wellspring* the following formula: God is love; people of the same sex can and do love one another; therefore God created the love between them *and* the behaviors used to express that love.

If there is one message repeated over and over in recent years, it would be that being gay is nothing more than loving someone of the same gender. The words "having sex" are rarely spoken although they are often humorously implied in TV sitcoms.

There is a message being broadcast, however, that I cannot love another man without having sex to express the love I feel for him. *That* is the serpent's lie because love between individuals should never automatically equate to having sex as a confirmation of love. Certainly I don't believe that Jesus meant same sex behavior when He said "Love your neighbors as yourself."

More next issue



Help Us Celebrate 20 years of service!

**Anniversary Barbeque Picnic
June 23, 2007**

Join us in our Celebration!

**Potluck Barbeque
Saturday, June 23
2:00PM**

*We'll furnish the meat and drinks
You bring something to pass*

**Where: Grace Church
4800 S Calhoun Rd, New Berlin WI**

Rain or shine, we will gather to celebrate and enjoy good food and fellowship. After all, it isn't every day a ministry gets to say, "Hey, we're 20 years old!" And if you happen to think about it, send a note of congratulations.

**RSVP by calling 262-896-0841 or emailing
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Dated Material

A Little Humor

I went to the movies the other day and in the front row was an old man sitting there with his dog. It was a sad-funny kind of film, you know the type. In the sad part, the dog cried his eyes out, and in the funny part, the dog laughed its head off. This happened all the way through the film. After the film had ended, I decided to go and speak to the man.

"That's the most amazing thing I've seen," I said. "That dog really seemed to enjoy the film." The man turned to me and said, "Yeah, it is. But he hated the book."

