

Wellspring

December 2006 – January 2007 Isaiah 58.6

All things are possible with God

[A publication of Broken Yoke Ministries, Inc.]



People Will Disagree

By Bob Van Domelen

²⁸"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (Matthew 11:28-29)

If someone has been keeping track of the verses I have used for the main articles in this newsletter over the years starting in 1992, they might be able to point out that the verse I just shared has appeared in other articles. I'm not sure how to explain it to you, but I always feel a deep connection with God every time I say or write the words. I do even now as I begin sharing with you.

But there is more to the verse than merely the idea of finding a loving connection with God or even that promised rest for my soul. There is a process of surrender that is clearly evident and a confession of the heart that makes the need for surrender a high priority. Two questions. First, surrender from what? And second, if I figure that out, how will I know that I am serious about the whole thing and not just in search of some warm fuzzies?

The first question is easier to answer because I have always known when I am doing or thinking something that is not part of God's desire for my life. If I stretch the truth a little (some call it a white lie), I know I have done so. Whether or not I am actually bothered by that knowledge is another question though. It really is easy to tell myself something is no big deal, and if I do it often enough, I start to believe nothing is really wrong.

I also carry a few extra pounds – well, some would say more than a few extra pounds – and every time I look in a mirror, I say something like "It sure would be great to be the same weight I was 20 years ago."

Along with the statement comes a quick recognition of what it would take to lose those 20 pounds, so I promise myself that tomorrow I'll start a serious program of eliminating snacks and doing whatever exercising is needed to tone up those long dormant muscles. I can see it all now. Well, actually I can't but I know self-image is important to the process, so I'll keep an open mind.

Somewhere in my teens I realized that my same-gender attractions were more than a passing thing and were in fact bringing me to a self-definition as a gay man, although the word gay wasn't used back then. In my heart I knew it was wrong but I wanted the feelings to be okay. More importantly, I wanted to *feel* I was okay despite the attractions and the behaviors.

Nobody talked back then about the difference between the attractions and the actions in terms of being different. No one shared that the attractions themselves were not sin,

just the decision to act out on those attractions was. So every thought, every extra look at some good looking guy was an occasion of sin and of stepping out of God's will. At least that's what I believed.

I often wonder if I would make the same decisions about my orientation that I did back in the sixties if I were a teen today in 2006. Today there are all sorts of people wanting to say "Gay is okay" or "Be true to your feelings." And you know something? What they offer is the easy route because it approves of both the attractions and the actions. Despite some honest effort on my part to believe that, I couldn't and don't.

So, where does this surrender thing come in and how do I know I am serious about the process?

Weary and Burdened

God's word gives us some good examples of men and women who saw their sin, knew it could not continue, and did something about it.

After Nathan pointed out to David that he had sinned against Uriah, Bathsheba, and all of Israel, the truth of what he had done sank in. Learning his newborn son was dying, He put on sack cloth and refused to eat or be consoled with the hope that God might allow the child to live.

The adulteress, who washed the feet of Jesus with her tears and wiped them with her hair, focused only on what she was doing; she ignored everyone else in the room.

The prodigal son, finding himself in a dire financial situation, decided to throw himself at the feet of his father and beg for a place among the servants.

The tax collector acknowledged his wrong before Jesus and offered not only to make amends but to do so in a way that would have exceeded the expectations others might have of him.

Me? Where do I fit among these who surrendered and who sought forgiveness with such intensity? Some might suggest that I don't, but I believe I came to a place in my heart that was burdened beyond what I cared to carry any further. I was sick of the conflict and looking for a way in which to get out of it.

When I finally got serious about this particular issue, I knew that to side with those who rejected the notion of sin for same-sex behaviors was not an option. I know some disagreed then and some still do; I also know that some feel my decision is just another way to condemn them. But I can condemn no one when I am so much in need of God's grace and mercy.

The yoke I carried as a young man was not a thing of comfort or of positive purpose. It was a weight of

oppressive thought, a chain that kept me from becoming the man I believe God created me to be.

Take My Yoke

The signature verse of this ministry has always been Isaiah 58.6: *This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; Setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke.* Homosexual behavior was the yoke that prevented me from walking in the kind of freedom that I truly sought.

I always wondered "What's the difference between the yoke I carried for so long and the one Jesus wants me to put on?" I've read some of what others have shared, but maybe I can put my own words on paper here and encourage you to do the same on your own sheet of paper.

Jesus came to serve and to show us how to apply the two great commandments to our lives. We are to love God with all our heart, our soul, and our minds. We are also to love our neighbors as ourselves. That's the yoke of Jesus and we have His life as an example of how to do it.

Taking on that yoke is so different from the yoke that burdened me—and maybe still does some days—because that old yoke never really fit. This one does.

Learn from Me

Breaking the bondage of sin—any sin—is not supposed to be a daily same-old, same-old in the decision-making process we have for our behaviors. Every day we seek God with all our hearts, minds, and souls, is a day we find *new* ways to choose, *new* hope in the goodness of our choices, and *new* freedoms that result from the choices we make.

We learn from Jesus through His word that speaks love, discipline, and encouragement. We also have His saints living and dead whose lives reflect that same ongoing desire to wear the yoke Jesus wore.

Maybe what I see the most in my own life is that the yoke of Christ is not a freedom from my failures past or present, but the understanding that God knows my heart, knows my needs, and desires that I *do* find rest in Him.

Some people will agree with what I have shared and some won't. God does not call me to make choices for other people but He *does* expect my life to reflect His will. Jesus was obedient; it was part of His yoke; and if I am to follow Jesus, it must be part of my yoke as well. □

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:

**Broken Yoke Ministries, Inc
PO Box 361
Waukesha, WI 53187-0361**

PS A substantial number of our readers are incarcerated and unable to offer financial support. Please consider a donation on their behalf. Indicate "Inmates" on the memo line of your check if you'd like to help in this way.

Wisconsin Ministry Locations

Broken Yoke

P.O. Box 361
Waukesha, WI 53187-0361
262-896-0841 (answering machine)
Bob@brokenyoke.org

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>



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 those who are fearful of taking on the yoke Jesus offered, that they truly find peace and rest in making that decision.
- For those in prisons around the country, that the presence of God fills them in their time of separation from loved ones and that behavior choices are still weighed against God's word.
- For the board of directors of Broken Yoke Ministries, that the decisions made at our November meeting will strengthen this ministry.
- For those alienated from loved ones because of HIV, that they find themselves surrounded by people willing to be Christ's body here on earth.
- For groups like Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays, that their presence will be recognized as a much needed balance to those who only support a pro-gay position.
- For the women who attend Redeemed, our women's support group, that they find encouragement, hope, and useful tools in dealing with issues.
- 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 financial needs will be met through the generosity and prayer support of the readers of this newsletter.

All things are possible with God!

Help Thou My Unbelief

By Bill Windel

As Broken Yoke Ministries stands at the door of twenty years of service, I thought it would be good to include some articles in this and in future issues from the earliest editions of Wellspring. This particular article was written by the man who saw and agreed with the vision God had for starting this ministry. The original meeting group was called the Nehemiah Fellowship.

At a recent Nehemiah Fellowship meeting in Madison, we studied a chapter from Frank Worthen's book, *Steps Out Of Homosexuality*, titled "The Belief Principle." As I prepared for the group discussion (and throughout the meeting itself), I was struck with the absolute necessity to understand what belief is and to sincerely examine what our true expectations are of God's willingness and ability to heal us of our homosexual struggle. I found myself in deep pondering about this issue and in deeper wondering about what my expectations of our Heavenly Father are. Revelation of the certainty of both God's willingness and ability rushed over me like so many waves washing over the shore.

In our zeal to grow in the knowledge of God and relationship with him, we Christians do, at times, sacrifice reality for a feeling of progress. Sometimes we want so much to move on in this relationship that we focus too much on the appearance or feeling that things are all in order and do not focus enough on the reality and beauty of where we truly are in knowing our Father and growing in him.

This reminded me of an event in my life. I had been a Christian for about six months when I encountered reality and relationship for the first time. It happened during a Sunday morning worship service. We were all singing and worshiping God and I looked around the room to notice that everyone had their hands lifted up, as did I, and these worshipers were proclaiming their love of Jesus audibly. I too began to vocalize to the Lord my love for him.

Like waking from a daydream, I looked at my uplifted hands and heard my voice. I felt uncomfortable with the words I was speaking because, deep within, I knew that I was more parroting those around me than truly expressing my feelings to the Lord. Deep, deep, deep within, I knew that there was something hollow about my words of adoration.

Now I know that adoration, expressed in words, is altogether proper. But the words I was speaking were not my own. I was missing the reality of worship by progressing beyond the point of reality of relationship.

That evening, I skipped church and took a walk to the highest hill in town. I stood there all alone, focusing my gaze toward heaven, lifted my arms to the Lord and said, "Jesus, I don't love you!"

I know these words sound heretical, blasphemous perhaps, but they were an expression of the reality of my relationship with God. I followed this by adding, "But, I want to love you!" It almost seemed that I could hear the Spirit saying "Ah, at last he prays!" Prays? With words like those?

Yes! Even with words like those. Many years ago, another man, whose loved one was seriously afflicted, came to Jesus and spoke words similar to mine. When

Jesus asked him if he believed that he was able to work a healing miracle for him, the man replied, "Yes, I believe, help thou mine unbelief!"

I am so thankful for that man. So many times I have thought about him. He admitted the reality of his inability to believe. He knew better than to parrot another's belief yet still had the confidence that Jesus could work a miracle with what ability he did possess to believe.

Results of New Study to be Released

The following is a short excerpt from material posted on the website for the National Association for Research & Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH). The article can be seen in its entirety at

www.narth.com

This ministry and many others around the country are most thankful for the work done by this organization in the area of same-gender attractions.

"A major study is about to be published in the prestigious peer-reviewed journal, Archives of Sexual Behavior, which provides striking new evidence for the influence of childhood family factors on sexual-orientation development.

"The study used a population-based sample of 2,000,355 native-born Danes between the ages of 18 and 49. Denmark – a country noted for its tolerance of a wide variety of alternative lifestyles, including homosexual partnerships – was the first country to legalize gay marriage. The researchers assessed detailed marriage records for all Danish-born men and women marrying a same-sex partner from the years 1989 through 2001.

"The authors conclude: 'Our study provides population-based, prospective evidence that childhood family experiences are important determinants of heterosexual and homosexual marriage decisions in adulthood.'"



Help Us Celebrate 20 years of service!

**Anniversary Barbeque Picnic
June 23, 2007
(Details in future editions)**

Board Welcomes Newest Member

The Broken Yoke Ministries Board of Directors approved the appointment of John Groff at its November meeting. Groff has been associated with and supportive of this ministry for several years. We look forward to his input.

In other matters, a slate of officers was presented and approved with Kevin Retlich, president; Pastor Bob Groth, vice-president; Jill Rennick, Treasurer; and Tom Pugh, secretary. Other board members include Mark Burns, Tom Mereen, and John Groff.