



# Into the Light

*All things are possible with God*  
November – December 2021

## Those Who Hope

*By Bob Van Domelen*

*“...but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint.” (Isaiah 40:31 NIV)*

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The house was quiet, almost a forced silence. My wife and children didn't know how they should respond to me, what to say or do, so for the kids, entering a room where I sat staring straight ahead was more than awkward. They turned and left.

The local paper had already announced my arrest and our phone started ringing. Sometimes friends, sometimes not. My wife instructed our children to pick up the phone and ask, “Who's calling, please?” Friends would identify themselves. The others hung up.

Nothing was the same and despite my best efforts, I couldn't see the light at the end of the tunnel. It was all black, a blackness that I thought was defining my future.

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The van deposited me and three others at the state's receiving center. I had my property in a bag. Some paper, a pen, a few stamped envelopes, a pocket *New Testament and Psalms* that was given to me by a member of the Gideons, and a bible my wife purchased and had sent to me.

I was frightened, especially when I realized that my first cell ended up being in the segregation unit. I didn't know that there wasn't enough room on the receiving unit. I thought the yelling laced with constant obscenities was just the way it was going to be. This was prison. This was my new home.

There was, however, a narrow window in that room and I found I could open it about an inch. The smell of freshly cut grass came at me on a light breeze and filled my senses. And in that moment, I also felt God speaking to my heart, “*and now it begins.*”

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“We've decided to grant you a parole and hope that you won't make us regret that decision.” I cried.

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***but those who hope in the Lord  
will renew their strength.***

The hope that I could not find in the days following my arrest was brought to life little by little. It was nurtured by those willing to pray for me and sometimes, just knowing that they were okay with being in the same space I occupied.

The hope was most certainly nurtured by my wife and family in ways not many in prison get to experience. I never took that support for granted and even today they are a foundation of love that allows and encourages me to grow.

I chose the three defining moments above to share with you, times when it was clear to me that change was

happening. Like many of you, there have literally been thousands of moments when I knew God was working in my life despite and maybe because of the environment of prison. The complete blackness I felt and saw in the beginning was never again complete. God's light overcame it.

The word 'renew' is important because it is part of a process that became clearer and more real as my relationship with the Lord grew. That growth came in prayer, worship, and spending time in his word, learning and listening. And it came in surrendering my life to God.

When I fall short in that connection, as I often do, something feels different in how I see life. It's less joyful and certainly less hopeful. After all, what I have done is same old, same old, so what's the point of fighting the old inner person. In moments like that, I sometimes tell myself I *can't* change. The blackness returns . . . but not really. At the end of the day, however, I refuse to believe that it is how my life must be.

Sitting in that chair years ago, I had no strength and no hope. By the time I was transferred from the county jail to a state prison, I felt stronger but uncertain, a little afraid but believing. And when it came, the Parole Board's decision didn't change the empty looking canvas I was staring at in my mind, but I felt strong enough to start adding brush strokes that would create a new image, a new future. I knew God had reached into my life and was giving me the strength to believe that a future based on hope was possible.

***soar on wings like eagles***

The image of eagles' wings was used in the Old Testament to represent the strength and loving-kindness of the Lord in delivering His covenant people. “*You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.*” (Exodus 19:4)

Being renewed and reliant on God, we can soar beyond our imagination as God uses us. We will do things beyond our self-imposed limitations, certainly beyond the old self and that former life of darkness because God is the wind upon which we soar.

***run and not grow weary***

As much as I wouldn't mind having actual wings that would allow me to go wherever I wanted, I have feet and they are firmly planted on the ground. I am also at a time in life when I very seldom, if ever, run. But if I push myself too hard, I do grow weary. Yet I am really talking about more than that.

“*And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus.*” (Hebrews 12:1-2) This is not a 5K or 10K race, or even a standard marathon of slightly more than 26 miles. This is a race that lasts our lifetime. It never stops.

On my own, this all seems beyond impossible, especially if I am not to grow weary. I know that on my own, I will tire and probably want to give up. Remember, however, that this is not a race I run alone. None of us does. For when we fix our eyes on Jesus, we are running on his strength.

To put all this into the reality of what I have done and all the harm I brought on others, this race will be one of living from day to day doing whatever I need to do to stay free of any return to my past choices. I need to say no when I need to say no. When I stumble in any way, I need to remind myself whose child I am and get up to continue the race.

Perhaps to put this into an even more practical way, if you take a moment to think of how you felt before your arrest, at the time of your arrest, and everything that has happened since, you have already been through much more than you'd have imagined. And you are still moving forward, still running the race even when it doesn't always feel that victorious.

### ***walk and not be faint***

I have been out of prison for more than 30 years and some might feel I have run the race or that I have arrived. But the truth is that every day seems to have new challenges and not all of them relate to my past offenses. I decided that the goal is not to demand freedom *from* all temptation but to seek God to help me make it *through* temptation.

Most of those who have written me recently have received a prayer I say every day, several times a day. It goes like this:

*O Jesus, I surrender myself to you,  
Take care of everything!*

If you are in the habit of saying the Lord's Prayer, you already say part of this prayer in the words, *thy will be done*. Everything doesn't mean some things or even just one thing, it means everything! And then, being as reliant upon God as I can be, I trust that *my* choices will come from the center of *his* response.

You'll get through all that you must get through. You will face both temptation and adversity. You will find people who want to support and encourage you, but you will also be confronted by those who will hate you and refuse to make the burden of reentry any less difficult than it is. You are *not* alone. Trust the God who was present at your birth to be with you to the extent that you will allow his presence. And pray most sincerely for the grace to give him your all. Have hope because that is a gift from God. You are his – you always have been.

## **Our Prayer Corner**



Prayer is an incredible gift we can give one another, for there is no better thing than to lift our lives, hopes, and dreams to the altar of the Lord.

Let us pray . . .

- First and foremost, for our victims, that each day for them is a new day, a day without fear, and a day of healing.
- For those struggling to find hope, that in pursuing God in everything they do, say, and think, they will find it.
- For those nearing reentry, that they will prepare to the extent they are able, trusting God with what is beyond their ability now.
- For those who feel alone, that they recognize how they might befriend and support others.

- For families and friends of registrants, that to the extent that they are able, they recognize the changes they see and continue to encourage and support.
- For chaplains, that they might be blessed knowing that they are planting, nurturing, and in some cases harvesting what God has designed.
- For churches/pastors, that they pray about ways to be a welcoming community for registrants by being Christ's hands, feet, and voice to those seeking.
- For Bob's health, that the ministry God has for him will continue to be an encouragement and hope for others.
- For this ministry, that Broken Yoke Ministries continues to be blessed with the financial support needed to meet basic expenses like this newsletter.
- (As Always) For those who are still abusing, that they will come to understand the devastation they bring on their victims and that they seek help for themselves.

## ***Bits & Pieces***

*The following are taken from letters I have received since the last issue of this newsletter. Some are meant to offer hope and encouragement while others call out for us to be in prayer.*

Everybody wants to live a long life, but nobody wants to grow old. Everybody wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die.

*There is a great power in confessing and repenting of any and all sin. My heart, my soul is free and all that I have lost these fourteen years of incarceration have taught me to hate the sin that delivered me here. I have been able to see it for what it really is – an abomination to our sovereign God - and that realization has helped more than I am able to relate.*

I have lost count of how many times that I have been demanding of God that he should work in a certain way and at a certain time, through a certain person, etc. I have been like Naaman in that I want to have God in my life, I want him to work in my life, I want him to do miracles in my life, and I want him to heal and forgive me of my sin. However, I demand that he do it my way.

*I have come through some real struggles, but I will not give up. I will keep going and keep learning about myself. I have come a long way and I didn't come this far to fail.*

I have discovered that our daily filling of the Spirit gives us our daily victories by the Word, prayer, and his indwelling is like the daily manna in the Old Testament. Each day is new in fullness of God's power through his Spirit to achieve his ultimate will.

*I accept that I am flawed, even as I continue to refuse to do what I know would ultimately harm me or others.*

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***All things are possible with God!***

# Can I Tell You Something?

Words of Hope and Encouragement  
For the Modern-Day Leper  
*An Update*

As of this writing, work is being done on the cover art for the book based on suggestions I have made to my agent at Covenant Books.

I am encouraged that the editing portion has been completed because it was challenging at times for me to trust that the suggestions of my editor were the best choices. A pride issue on my part.

As far as I know, what remains after the cover art is the transforming of the book into an e-publication, a version that can be purchased and downloaded from the internet. The final stage is publicity for the book. I confess some nervousness about this part because the book is, after all, not something that would be on everyone's coffee table. But I am going to trust God in who comes to learn of the book and what they do with that information. Please keep praying for this effort.



## A Prayer to Endure

Lord, I am weary and don't know when this "race" will end in my life. I feel like I've been running forever, trying to outrun this trial. Help me to stop trying to outrun my pain but rather run with endurance the race you have set before me. I know that because of you I am ultimately a victor over the trials in my life. I know that nothing in this world can separate me from your steadfast love. Please give me a measure of your love today; give me the strength to endure this trial. Thank you for your love for me that never ends! And thank you for the crown of joy that awaits me forever in your Kingdom!

~ Adrian Rogers, *Love Worth Finding*

## Something to Think About

Rivers do not drink their own water.  
trees do not eat their own fruit.  
the sun does not shine on itself and  
flowers do not spread their fragrance for themselves.  
Living for others is a rule of nature.  
*We are born to help each other.*

No matter how difficult it is  
Life is good when you are happy  
but much better when others are happy  
because of you.

Let us remember that pain is a sign that we are alive,  
problems are a sign that we are strong,  
and prayer is a sign that we are not alone.  
If we can acknowledge these truths  
and condition our hearts and minds,  
our lives will be more meaningful,  
different and worthwhile."

(A Sanskrit Proverb)



**Broken Yoke Ministries is a not for profit 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. If you cannot support us financially, pray for us. Unused stamps are also very welcomed and a good way for those in confinement to be in partnership with this ministry. The bottom line is that we need YOU to help make these newsletters possible. So pray about becoming a partner with this ministry.**

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**A Little Humor**

Two young brothers were spending the night at their grandparents' home.

When it was time for bed, the two boys knelt down and began to say some prayers.

Suddenly, the younger brother started yelling at the top of his voice, "I PRAY FOR A BICYCLE! I PRAY FOR A NEW COMPUTER! I PRAY FOR A TRIP TO DISNEYLAND!"

His older brother leaned over and whispered, "There's no need to shout. God isn't deaf."

"I know," said the younger brother. "But Grandma sure is!"

