



# Into the Light

*All things are possible with God!*  
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## What You See - Revisited

*By Bob Van Domelen*

[This article is a reprint from 2000 but as I read it, my first thought was “Nothing has really changed for anyone with these issues.” I hope the words are a blessing.

*Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are good, your whole body also is full of light. But when they are bad, your body also is full of darkness.*

(Luke 11:34)

[A common scene] He parked his car some blocks from the destination he had in mind and walked briskly in that direction. Before approaching the door marked Adults Only, he looked left and right, mentally ready to continue past the store should he see anyone coming in his direction. It wouldn't have made much difference, however, if there had been someone, because he could not stop the addictive cycle he was in.

Years later, some of the images that he had mentally photographed in that store surfaced. This time, however, he was fighting against their presence, asking God to take them away. He won some battles and lost others, and when he lost, he wondered how he would survive should he be released from prison. He wondered if he would be able to resist acting on those fantasies.

### **When Darkness Finds Light**

*Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.* (Hebrews 4:13)

In my estimation, individuals who hold that pornography is healthy are individuals who have disconnected in some way from people. Viewing pornography is a me-centered act and one shrouded in secrecy.

In the weeks following my arrest, some of the secrets I held were exposed to the light, and I wondered if I would survive. Shame mixed with guilt; and the combination gave birth to the idea of death as a means of sparing those I loved from the consequences of my sins. But suicide was not a solution—it was yet another burden I would lay at the feet of those left behind.

*“But I will restore you to health and heal your wounds,” declares the Lord, “because you are called an outcast, Zion, for whom no one cares.”* (Jeremiah 30:17)

It takes time for words to have meaning or for them to be received as the truth, and the process is sometimes slow. But when the truth finally came in my case, it was an incredible release and a feeling that I could start over. As months passed, however, I came to understand that the real battle was just beginning.

### **What is X-rated?**

Society designates something to be X-rated by the degree of nudity and sexual activity shown, but I would suggest that any image that brings inappropriate fantasy is X-rated. For some, X-rated is a magazine or movie with a title added as an afterthought; to others, *Playboy* or *Playgirl*; and to still others, a muscle magazine or even a clothing store catalog. The difficulty lies in being honest with oneself.

That said, it could be argued that the intent of the beholder and not the images themselves define pornography. Obviously, a clothing catalog is not X-rated material to most of the world, but there are sex offenders who feed their fantasies in sections dealing with children's underwear. For those individuals, a clothing catalog IS X-rated. How does one decide?

One method is to determine the intent of the viewing by asking ourselves some basic questions. Is there a positive outcome which can be openly shared with others? Do the consequences legitimately fill a specific need, or do they bring harm to self and others? Is the image used to fuel the unreal growth of a personal fantasy? Has experience shown a connection between the images we view and inappropriate behaviors?

### **Diffusing the Images**

One of the quickest methods to shatter the hold of a particular image is to share it with someone you know would not approve of the images but would be willing to help you. The reality, however, is that most of us would not do that because we see our self-image as more important. We would rather believe that we can break the chains of pornography on our own than risk the possible derision and/or judgment of someone else.

Support groups that focus on sexual issues can be great places for the healing process. There is usually a respectful “I've been there” kind of silence during times of sharing followed by words and prayers of encouragement—maybe even confrontation when it is needed—and always a shared desire for freedom.

### **The Real Source of Healing**

*So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.* (2 Corinthians 4:18)

By themselves, methods of behavior modification can produce the kind of results we seek, but unless we reach beyond the here and now, they will always fall short. We are saying no to the idea of an inappropriate image while doing little or nothing with the source of our pornography—

a broken self-image.

The God-created potential of our *real* selves is incredible, but we are too often satisfied with the self of our own making. Most certainly our self-image is in an almost constant battle between what we *think* we want and what God would have for us.

With time, a heart that seeks the Lord will more readily recognize inappropriate images and make the decision to reject them. As the darkness of the evil one is pushed out by the presence of Light, healing takes place, the cell is filled with hope, and fear is replaced with healthy desires and boundaries.

## *All things are possible with God!*

*To change from what we were to what we hope to be requires us to recognize the 'what' in us that needs to be changed.*

## 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 and for all victims, that each day for them is a new day, a day without fear, and a day of healing.
- For those fighting images, that God gives them a new focus that gets stronger with each passing day.
- For those needing support finding freedom from their addictions, that they are blessed by the presence of those willing to try.
- For those in group settings, that they prayerfully consider the program offered them, trusting at the end of each day that God will quicken in them what should be put into practice.
- For chaplains, that they continue to remind those who seek their help that God loves them, forgives them, and calls them.
- For victims, their families, and friends, that the pain and deep anger they feel does not make impossible the healing they so desperately seek.
- For families and friends, that they are able to balance the knowledge of what happened with the healing that is meant to come.
- For Bob, that as he gets older and experiences issues seniors face, he will rely on God's love in all things, that he will continue to seek ways to serve.
- For this ministry, that Broken Yoke Ministries continues to be blessed with the financial support needed to meet basic expenses like this

newsletter as well as being a resource for those so in need of that information.

- (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. Some are meant to offer hope and encouragement to you while others call out for us to be in prayer.*

I was made to do God's will, and that is what I learned. Now I need to let Him guide me as I do it.

*God is showing me so much about myself and life in general through my daily studies and devotions. It is so amazing that I read the bible several times, but it has never come alive for me until I fully surrendered to God and He opened my eyes.*

Sometimes when I get to feeling so mad at the world, I'll ask myself "Why? At *what* am I mad about?" I jokingly answer myself. "I'm so mad at the world for being *round*. Why can't the world be flat?" I do this just to remind myself of the uselessness of getting mad at my own unmet wants and expectations.

*I think of the first time I was able to make a meal for myself when I got out and what a blessing that was. Things like being able to use the washroom by myself; showering by myself; not having to stand for count or have the intercom going off all the time. Having air conditioning when it's warm, heat when it's cold. Sleeping on a bed that's actually comfortable, being able to wear regular clothes. Driving myself to work, listening to music I enjoy listening to. Things like that. The small blessings that mean so much.*

I tend to ruin happy moments with "This feels too good to be true. Something bad must be getting ready to happen!" But a lot of good things are accumulating in my life, and I feel like I'm headed toward some major blessings. Turning 56 is in and of itself something to celebrate and throughout my incarceration, my birthdays have become more and more poignant and meaningful. Each and every day has significant meaning, so I try to bask in the moment.

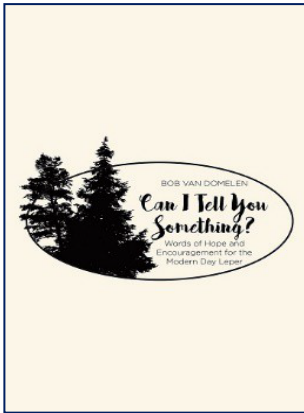
*I'm in the home stretch, so to speak, in my time of incarceration. After 21 years, I will be released this month. Praise the Lord! That may be the most underrated statement I have written in my entire life!*

I yelled at God this past week. I just poured out my heart to Him with all the tears and pain I've been harboring. I doubt I am done. But much like Jacob said as he wrestled the Lord in the middle of the night, "I will not let you go until you bless me." That's the stance I have taken with the Lord. This season of my life is my 'night'. I know I have met God and right now we are wrestling, but I have seen a

great light, and I will not let Him go until He blesses me.

*I really appreciated your book and will share it with some friends of mine who, like me, are here in prison looking to do better for our eventual return to society.*

I've learned that God's work for His willing workers is plentiful within this walled off garden. God has certainly directed and redirected my paths here.



# Can I Tell You Something?

By  
Bob Van Domelen

Available for purchase on the internet at Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and several other retail websites. **Please help get the word out.**



Write Bob at:

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How is your  
“I want to  
change” to-do  
list working out  
for you?



*Everything on earth has its own time and its own season.*  
(Ecclesiastes 3:1)

Making a “to do” list is a good thing even if not everything gets done. I wonder sometimes how many of us make such lists about things within ourselves needing attention. And I wonder, too, how many seasons come and go with our list still intact, still in the planning stages.

- “Everyone uses profanity in prison. As soon as I am released, I’ll clean up my act.”
- “Chapel services are nothing like church at home, so I don’t go. When I get home, I’ll start attending again.”
- “SOTP here is a joke. When I get out, I can get some

professional help from a Christian counselor.”

God makes everything happen at the right time. Yet none of us can ever fully understand all he has done, and he puts questions in our minds about the past and the future. (Eccl.3.11)

Autumn will soon be on us, and trees will be changing, but the tree doesn’t really have a choice in the matter. It’s simply changing. You and I have a choice. We can say yes or no.

God doesn’t expect us to surrender willingly because He knows that change comes at a cost. We must give up something or some behavior we have seen as “good” or at least temporarily better than alternatives. God knows the child in us will often throw a tantrum when it does not get its way. But God also knows our hearts because He created them in His image and likeness.

The tree does not resist its chemical changes, nor does it decide to grow just so high or wide and then stop. The process of change is much more difficult for us.

“If God really wants me to surrender to His love, why doesn’t He get me out of this prison? It’s so hard in here.”

Surrender to God in prison or out of prison is sometimes defined as saying no to self and yes to God. I propose to you that surrender is saying yes to self *and* yes to God. Not yes to selfish instincts that put others beneath our feet or yes to material goals in life, but yes to the self God intended at the moment of our conception.

We may change from a good thing to a better thing, but most often change is moving from something less than good to something which is good. If that concept is correct, why do we put off doing whatever it takes to bring us to that better place? Why wait until next week to start a process of healing that can begin now so that it can be checked off on our to-do list?

“I said yes to God, and nothing seems to change. I don’t feel happier than I did before. In fact, life was much easier before I said yes.” Yet none of us can ever fully understand all he has done.

A headache brought on by tension will disappear after taking aspirin or being separated from the source of tension. We feel a difference within a short period of time. It should be remembered, however, that a headache is not seen as a good thing while the absence of a headache is.

Saying yes to God will create a tension between what we have trained ourselves to accept as good and what we have yet to learn as being a better choice – God’s choice.

For the molester, reading Matthew 18.5-7 is difficult if not frightening. Some might even say, “Why should I try to change. The millstone is around my neck, and I haven’t the power to break free.”

There was a time when I felt that way, a time when I agreed with those who preferred to see me dead. But loving, Christ-centered people in my life kept pointing to the cross, kept reminding me that Jesus bore the weight of my sin so that I could be free to love Him for all eternity.

You might know Christians who in their anger refuse the power of the cross being offered to the molester, but the cross is for ALL of us.

This is the moment for us to say yes to change. This is the moment we set aside the negative expectations and lack of hope, the fear of feeling less than in control, for God is in control, and His plan is perfect.

Therefore, surrender each day. Listen with your heart for His voice, His leading. Talk to God and share what you feel. He will understand. Rise above the circumstances in which you live that others would describe as too restrictive for change by remembering that God is not bound by overcrowded cells or unfavorable conditions.

Maybe there are still lots of things on your to-do list. Don't see the list as a burden you have to carry but see it as reminders of what you know can be better in your life. As for the snail's pace in your progress, every therapist is quick to remind their clients that change is a process. It is.

When you hurt, breathe in God's healing presence. When you are lonely, believe that you are never alone. When you question whether the struggle is worth it, remember the darkness of your past life and turn toward the light of God's love. It IS your season of change. It IS your to-do list. Praise the Lord! □

## A Little Humor . . .

*Just a few quick ones*

- I was at the park wondering why this frisbee kept getting bigger... and then it hit me.
- My wife and I laugh about how competitive we are. But I laugh more.
- I stayed up all night and tried to figure out where the sun was. Then it dawned on me.
- I'm so good at sleeping I can do it with my eyes closed!
- Did you know that ants are the only animals that don't get sick? It's true! It's because they have little antibodies.
- Two friends are walking down the street thinking of something to do. One friend turns to the other and says, "Let's go get a drink, there's this new place that does THE best punch you'll ever drink." So they make their way to the bar and walk straight up to the bartender "Bartender, two glasses of your best punch please." The bartender replies in a stern voice, "If you want some punch you're gonna have to get in line like everybody else." The friends turn and look around but there's no punch line.



## TIME

This edition of *Into the Light* focused on to-do lists, seasons, and surrender. As the saying goes, "So many things to do, so little time to do them." Maybe that causes anxiety on top of the anxiety you already have. If that's the case, maybe these words from Ecclesiastes will help bring some balance. Maybe even some peace of mind.

There is a time for everything,  
and a season for every activity under heaven:  
a time to be born and a time to die,  
a time to plant and a time to uproot,  
a time to kill and a time to heal,  
a time to tear down and a time to build,  
a time to weep and a time to laugh,  
a time to mourn and a time to dance,  
a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,  
a time to embrace and a time to refrain,  
a time to search and a time to give up,  
a time to keep and a time to throw away,  
a time to tear and a time to mend,  
a time to be silent and a time to speak,  
a time to love and a time to hate,  
a time for war and a time for peace.  
(Ecclesiastes 3:1-18)

