



# Into the Light

All things are possible with God!  
November-December 2023

## Those Who Hope

By Bob Van Domelen

<sup>31</sup> 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)

I recently received a letter that stopped me in my tracks because of a single sentence. “Tell me if you have settled for too little of what God can do or am I hoping for a lie.” Basically, my response was “I have not settled for too little, nor have I failed to ask God for everything. I simply trust God to provide me what I need every day. So far, I cannot say I have been disappointed.”

His question is not unique. Any person who has come face to face with personal weakness, acknowledged that change was needed, and honestly took steps to bring about that change at some point prays, “God, take all of this away.” But not many conclude that prayer with “but if you won’t do it, then I will stop believing - because healing and change are just a lie. I am what I am.”

### Questions:

- Can God bring about complete change in someone’s life? Yes.
- Does everyone who asks for change eventually see a complete absence of their attractions and the associated sins? There are some who do but to answer the question truthfully, no, not everyone experiences complete change.
- Am I showing a lack of faith by answering as I have? I don’t believe so.

If healing is defined by the absence of any or all temptation, then I might as well throw in the towel right now. As much as I love the Lord, there are still temptations and even failures. I am not referring only to age-inappropriate attraction; I am referring to *all* the things I do that fall short of God’s plan for my life. Before some of you suggest I am straying from the point, let me explain.

Even as a teenager, I knew that there was no such thing as this ‘one big issue’ I called my major sin. My one big issue was fed by a lot of other much-easier-to-ignore smaller issues.

I often didn’t know how to deal with everyday situations, the kind everyone has, without resorting to feelings of self-centeredness, anger, frustration, loneliness, etc. As a result, my feeling sorry for me opened the door to behaviors I considered rewards or

justifications, and those eventually became behaviors of choice and some even became addictive behaviors.

In a sense then, the prayer “Lord, take away this sin that is destroying me” is pointed at the “big” sin but fails to recognize all the contributing conditions. It is these ‘smaller’ sins that over time made the big sin possible in the first place.

The letters I get from those experiencing the most success in their daily walk while in prison are from those who are paying attention to those smaller, often forgotten or overlooked issues. They recognize loneliness and look for healthy responses to that loneliness. Pornography, masturbation, and sexual encounters in the bathroom late at night don’t heal loneliness. Those choices only mask their loneliness with physical distraction.

They recognize legitimate anger, relationship conflicts, and depression for what they are and not as an excuse to believe that God has abandoned them. Sometimes “Lord, help me to tolerate my cell mate” is answered by a change in cell mates. Even better, sometimes that prayer is answered by a change in the person causing the conflict, so the response “Thank you, Lord” feels appropriate. But in the end, the changes we seek often start with changes in us, not in the other person.

### Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength

Prayer is communication with God - words of praise, and words of petition. Communication is conversation with God, not unlike sitting with a friend sharing something of common interest. It’s both talking and listening but when the words are finished, the end of the conversation is okay because conversation is mostly about being with one another and sharing.

We best understand praise of God as a sincere expression of thanksgiving—recognizing God’s love, mercy, and faithfulness in our lives. The best times of worship for me are those when I forget me and have complete focus on God. I wish that state of mind happened all the time, but it doesn’t. I get in the way of myself at times.

Petition is at the heart of this article and indeed at the heart of the letter to which I responded. But asking God for something isn’t like asking something of a friend. When we ask a friend, we sit back and wait for the friend to do what we ask.



When we ask something of God, we can't sit back because God is a nudging God. It's not that God cannot make the miracle happen that meets our petition. I believe God knows what we *really* need, however, and that we need to do it for ourselves. God nudges us, reminds us of something we should do that we had not thought of doing, and then encourages us to see that His nudge IS the answer.

Strength comes from exercise—either muscle or mind—and repetition of anything healthy will renew us and restore us. Choosing to walk away whenever conversations become inappropriate is not always easy, but the more we do it the better we become at seeking the best, not the worst.

Choosing to change the channel or, better still, to avoid TV programs that present images reminding us of our past behaviors will bring us to eventually reject any image that holds us to darkness rather than light. But it takes time, and it takes repetition for these choices to become first choices.

In this respect, "Please heal me, Lord, and take away those things I wish were gone forever" is being answered one step at a time, one day at a time, and with a reliance on God for the continuing strength to grow. Healing does not happen in an instant, but it does happen.

**Soar on wings like eagles; Run and not grow weary;  
Walk and not be faint**

Why is it that we think the word "hope" is a poor word, one lacking in faith or in belief of God? Why is it we see God in human terms, ignoring us or denying us, simply because there is no obvious response to our prayers? Doesn't "If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer" mean just what it says?

I *do* believe that God meets all of our needs, heals our broken souls, loves us beyond imagination, and calls us to be with Him for all eternity. I believe it but I am not always sure *how* everything will come to pass. And in some ways, I don't think that's such a bad thing.

I want my heart and spirit to soar, though some days I feel leaden and not able to get off the ground. I want to run and not grow weary, but with age come body changes that make running more difficult. And though I want to walk and not grow faint, more than anything I want my walk to be with the Lord. I want to go where He leads.

Yes, there are days when you might believe yourself to have taken steps backward or not taken steps at all. Your temptations might encourage the thought that you have no chance of change. You might look around and feel completely abandoned by family, friends, and even God. But for those who hope and are willing to continue the journey, there is always healing. There is always change.

***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 who feel abandoned, that by God's grace they are blessed with others willing to connect with them in healing ways.
- For those dealing with anger, that they ask God in their prayer times for a healthy response to that anger and that they recognize the harm unbridled anger can bring to others and themselves.
- For those in group settings, that while they deal with serious issues, they never lose sight of their identity in the Lord.
- For chaplains, that they continue to point those they counsel toward hope in the Lord.
- For victims, their families, and friends, that the vision they have for healing includes prayers for the one who brought so much pain.
- For families and friends, that they ask for the grace to see their loved ones as the individuals they are becoming, not as they were before their arrests.
- For Bob, that as he gets older and experiences issues all 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.*

It has become hard for me when I hear of someone who says he trusted in God, so they are getting out. I am happy for him and rejoice with him, but I wonder when my chance will be – and I have been wondering for years.

As for support, I just got letters yesterday and finished translating them this morning. Yes, "All things are possible with God." I do believe this promise because I have seen it fulfilled many times before.

[Recently released] I finally got my driver's license after going through a driving school. I had caved in to admitting the pride that said, "I'm a grown man. I don't need help!" Right. The laws have changed so much, so it was a blessing to have a teacher.

*Change me! Fix me! That was my heart cry the day before my arrest. At that point, I didn't care if I got caught. It was either that or suicide. Even in the process, the journey I am on now, all I want is the healing and growth He wants and has promised me. It's clear that I don't know what's best for me. All I want is Him on His terms, not mine.*

Someday, maybe God will love, forgive, and decide to stop punishing me. When that happens, I will know because my family will be restored to God and each other.

*Thank you for the encouragement that has enormously helped me be closer to Jesus. I pray to give Him glory in whatever way I am called.*

I have been a witness to the Lord working so many times and in so many ways not to expect anything different. He protected me in dangerous situations. He's healed cancer and restored life to my friend's mother. He reunited and restored a father to his family and children. He's opened the door for early release. He's changed the stony hearts of some of these men into hearts of flesh. He's more than able. So now it's my turn to be a beacon of light for His glory in my body (Ed. dealing with a cyst in his mouth). This is all for His glory.

*Forgiveness is huge in God's eyes but is conditional in the eyes of man. God knows we will mess up again and again, and He is always there to forgive us. If we are truly repentant of the sin, He will give us the strength to resist that same sin when it comes back to haunt us. Man has his doubts and has placed a label on some of us as having committed the 'unforgivable' sin of child molestation. Man chooses never to forgive us. Our victims, including those unintended victims, might share that same response. God's love is unconditional and always available. It is we who set conditions on God's love.*

It's been a while, but glory to God all is still well with my soul. Your newsletters have been a source of constant encouragement in this life that at times is a maelstrom behind the wall. I've shared them with several men throughout the years, and I know that spoke to hearts.

# Can I Tell You Something?

By  
Bob Van Domelen



I want to thank those who purchased a copy of the book and pray that interest will continue to be there by others considering the purchase of their own copy. Books are like posters on bulletin boards. Without someone pointing those signs out to others, the content is soon forgotten or

ignored. Please consider sharing this with others.

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

*This book provides hope and encouragement to those who are sex offenders, and to their families and friends. He writes from the perspective of a Christian, a born-again believer, who also is a sinner. Some of the topics are difficult to read, but the author speaks from his own experience and that of others to whom he's ministered over many years. I would highly recommend this book to you, it has been a blessing to me, and I have shared it with others. [A review on Amazon]*

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## The Collector

I love knowing that I've been bought at a price. My ex and I used to go antique hunting in a little mining town filled with 'mom and pop' shops. Some had the strangest collections of junk that they chose to price ridiculously high. I would think, "Who is going to buy *that* nonsense?" But then it came to me, what a wonderful testimony of grace!

I was once that discarded piece of junk tucked away in a dark corner. Then this Treasure Hunter came along, and He saw value in me. Even though I had an astronomical price tag attached to me, He didn't hesitate to collect me. He didn't barter the price. He paid it in full. Now I'm the apple of His eye, His prized possession. (Nate)



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## Is It Okay to be Angry?

Several years ago, I taught a workshop titled, **I am NOT angry!** To my surprise, the room was filled and, I think, violated fire regulations as people sat wherever they could find enough space to do so. When it was over, the organizers of the conference asked if I would repeat the workshop the following year. I did and the attendance was pretty much the same.

The topic of anger has come up a few times in the letters I receive, so I dug around looking for a copy of what I had shared in that workshop. Sadly, it was not to be found, but my lack of success in doing so didn't mean the topic should be set aside. It's an important one.

*"My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires."* (James 1:19-20 NIV)

I have shared before that whenever I displayed any signs of anger at home, I would hear, "Don't YOU get angry at me, young man!" That was not an idle threat, so I learned how to stuff feelings of anger. More likely than not, my stuffed anger surfaced and was used against others – even when it was not appropriate.

Although I never heard the words spoken directly to me, "Don't YOU get angry at me!" took a new direction and became, "*You* don't have the RIGHT to be angry! Look at what *you* did. Look at the harm *you* brought to so many!"

If individuals in my SOT group started speaking of the things they endured as children (including sexual abuse at the hands of others), it was suggested that they were trying to minimize what they had done to their victims. I quickly got the feeling that if I had been harmed in some way as a child, it was my responsibility to deal with that *outside* of group sessions— on my own time.

In an ideal world, required treatment programs would allow time to consider background issues, not necessarily to solve all those issues but to at least recognize that they existed. This recognition in no way minimizes an offense, but it might provide insights.

Perhaps some programs do include more than biographies of what a person did to a child to include abuse endured by an offender, but my mail doesn't identify them.

Life changed for lots of people when I was arrested and sent to prison. The changes were consequences. I could be angry at having to endure them, but they came because of what I had done.

My victims had a right to be angry at me. Their lives took a direction that had not been made by them. The same could be said of their families and other significant people in their lives – just as my family had a right to anger for what I had done to them.

I refuse to live in denial. I refuse to say I am not angry at times even if others would argue I deserve everything they think I have coming to me. But I won't live out of the

center of that anger. To do so would definitely be the kind of anger that doesn't produce the 'righteousness that God desires.' I try to be 'slow to anger' but don't always succeed. Sometimes I explode and those in the path of that anger wonder where it comes from.

With God's grace, I am able to ask His presence in a difficult moment. With God's grace, I can forgive even if only in silence. And with God's grace, I will not let the sun go down on my anger.

## Prayer for Controlling Anger and Temper

by Cheryce Rampersad

*Omnipotent Everlasting Father, in every situation of my life, I give You full control. Your Word constantly reminds me that you care for me. My spirit is broken. I'm filled with anger. Heal me, Lord. I know that through the workings of the Holy Spirit, it all works together for my good. My heart is broken. My spirit is weak. But You, my God, make me whole. Though I may experience pain, it just serves to make me stronger.*

## A Little Humor . . .

*Just a few quick ones*

- What do you call a parade of rabbits marching backward?  
A receding hare line.
- What do you call a fake noodle?  
An impasta.
- Did you hear about the first restaurant to open on the moon?  
It had great food but no atmosphere.
- A man walks into a library and asks the librarian for books about paranoia.  
She whispers, "They're right behind you!"
- What do Alexander the Great and Winnie the Pooh have in common?  
The same middle name.
- Why did the bullet end up losing his job?  
He got fired.
- I have an inferiority complex—  
But it's not a very good one.
- Why don't blind people skydive?  
Because it scares their dogs.
- I gave up my seat to an elderly person on the bus. And that's how I lost my job as a bus driver.

