



Into the Light

All things are possible with God!
September-October 2025

Which Way Are You Running?

By Bob Van Domelen

*The name of the Lord is a strong tower,
the righteous run to it and are safe.*
(Proverbs.18.10)

We all live with fear to some degree - fear of failure, fear of being rejected, fear of the dentist's drill, fear of our dark side. The list could go on and on.

During those years when I was abusing children, my fear of being discovered was intense. Most people (including myself) have trouble with what I have just written because, logically speaking, if the fear was so great, why did the abuse continue? Instead of running away from the behavior, however, I continued to run toward it.

By God's grace, I was finally arrested and exposed for what I was--a child molester. Had that been all that happened, there would have been little point in continuing with life, for the same selfish man who betrayed the trust of children would not have hesitated to turn his back on those trying to help him. So, what *did* happen?

God happened. By that I mean His Word broke through the barriers I had constructed; the love of Jesus became real in my everyday living, and the presence of the Holy Spirit opened my eyes and my heart to healing love. With all of *that* happening, there was little room for thoughts of suicide. *Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free* (John 8.31). The truths were many, but these stood out for me at the time.

- God loved me despite everything I had done.
- I had done immeasurable harm to many people, and no lie could minimize that fact.
- My sins were washed clean by the death of Jesus on the cross, yet I still had to deal with the natural consequences of my behaviors.

It was not God's intent for me to remain locked in those destructive behaviors - change *was* possible for me *and* my victims.

The truth can be as wonderful as fresh air after spending time in a stuffy, confined space, or as jolting as a blast of sub-zero wind in the face after stepping out of a warm house. Truth for the molester means coming face to face with the reality of molestation as the serious crime it is, as well as the consequences demanded of those who commit such acts.

The road to change may truly be a daunting experience, and many look to the future with a feeling that they won't make it. Too much hate. Too many restrictions. Not enough people wanting to believe and support someone in process. In today's world, these truths pointing to true freedom might

seem more like roadblocks, but in running toward them *the truth will set you free.*

Acknowledging what I had done was difficult because that reality flew in the face of my "good guy" self-image, the one I shared with the public. That image was based at least partially on some legitimacy, although in my own eyes I was only trying to offset the evil or dark side of my life.

I guide you in the way of wisdom and lead you along straight paths. When you walk, your steps will not be hampered; when you run, you will not stumble.
(Proverbs 4:11-12)

I get many letters from individuals who condemn prison treatment programs (where they exist) as being void of God and therefore something to be shunned. In most programs, the mere mention of God is not allowed. Who but those who deny the existence of God can deny or restrict the presence of God in *any* treatment program, room or institution?

Believing that God IS present in all places, His wisdom is available to anyone with open ears and a surrendered heart. Whatever secular treatment is good will bear fruit, while what is not good, when taken before the Lord in prayer, will be set aside as chaff to be burned.

The pursuit of wisdom, like truth, is not always a painless journey, for with wisdom comes the very restrictions, boundaries, and self-knowledge that we fear. Run to them, for in the end, they will protect us and bring us freedom, not more confinement.

Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside of his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body
(I Corinthians 6:18)

Flee. . .run. . .and run as fast as you can! I now realize that it was the height of arrogance on my part to ever think that I could overcome the temptations that led to my molesting. The only thing I proved to myself was that I was capable of harming children.

In a race, only the runner can cross the finish line, even though coaches, trainers, and supporters assisted in the preparation. For the runner, it's still forcing one foot in front of the other, demanding the body to do everything it was taught to do in preparation for victory.

Scripture asks us runners a question that would fit any treatment program:

You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth? That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you.
(Galatians 5:7-8).

If we were not created to be molesters but children of

God in His image and likeness, something went wrong. The answer to that Scriptural question will not eliminate the work that faces all of us for our lifetime, but once learning it, we can better set our course. We still have choices to make that will be part of our healing, so yet another question surfaces. Which way are you running?

I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free (Psalm 119:32). I hope to see you on that path.

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 unsure if what they need to do, that they allow God to show them an image of the person they were created to be.
- For those who believe that they can't bear the shame in being transparent, that they come to find they *do* have the necessary strength to do it.
- For those who want freedom without facing the consequences of their actions, that they see more clearly what their choices did to their victims.
- For the church, that they show by example the direction we are all called to take – a direction that they celebrate with encouragement.
- For families, that they recognize that condemnation alone does little to bring healing and change.
- For chaplains, that they are called to be loving and caring while holding fast to accountability.
- 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 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.

People only believe these days because they can fit God in their schedule. Believing is trendy, and it's convenient. But where are they when things get tough or they have to take a stand?

The Lord has changed my heart and my life so much that I want to spread His word, His teachings, and show others just how wonderful He is!

Giving in to the flesh after reaching the mountaintop has made me feel dirtier and as if I personally betrayed God. Those who throw out condemnation upon brothers who have sinned and live with temptation are not only Pharisees in their vision, but they usually live in glass houses and throw stones and think they can sin in the cover of night but fail to realize who can still see them.

As I am sure Don knows, it is that innate loneliness, regardless of how many fruitful relationships we have with people, that can only find healing by a relationship with God.

I just don't know if life is worth it anymore. I'm going through hell right now as my cellhouse is in lockdown and the hell won't stop when I go home. I just want to know why God wants me. What's He trying to do here, because sometimes it feels like He's not here and I am all alone.

I look back on my choices. It wasn't the act that sent me to prison. I started that process decades ago when I chose not to get help. When I chose to do things my way time and time again, I nurtured my "death." That's exactly where it would have led, because death was the next step for me.

One's spiritual journey is more than religion. It's relationship.

Many will try to argue that online pornography is victimless. Even if I were to accept that, the impact of my sin is so widespread. My selfish behavior impacted and continues to impact many more than I want to count.

There is no doubt in my mind that prison is an act of love and mercy on God's part. He will take the worst in me and turn it into glory for Him.

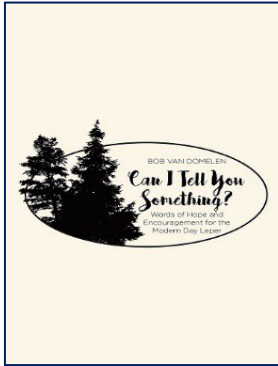
All things are possible with God!



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Bits & Pieces is based on letters I get. If you want to share, please consider contributing. And remember, tell others about Bob's book.



Can I Tell You Something?

By
Bob Van Domelen

Guess what? Over the past months I have been feeling the nudge to start a second book. No, not for funds to help me live off royalties in retirement but because there have been requests from those nearing their release time wanting to know what to expect or how to do something.

The working title of the book is **Everything Has Changed**. Watching the world on TV is not the same as stepping back into that world which has changed in so many ways since you were last there. Reentry can be an awesome experience, but it can also be a bit frightening - even for macho guys. The book won't answer everyone's questions, but it will be helpful.

I've sent out letters to about 30 people I know who have been in reentry, asking them to comment on one or more topics common to what that is like. Put together, the book will offer suggestions to consider while at the same time to be a source of encouragement.

There are details to be worked out but above all, I am asking your prayers for this project. If this book will help or encourage, then I trust that it will get done and costs will be covered.

There is Life after Prison

"Alone?"
by Don

"One is the loneliest number you will ever do" is the first line of a very popular rock song in its day and is the perfect line for your first day in prison. There may be nearly 200 men in a "warehouse" designed for 98 men, but you still find yourself all alone. And you must admit it takes some time to lose the feeling that this has become part of your new normal.

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.

There are people all around you, but nobody knows you or really cares to know you. Then again, you don't want them to know too much about you, especially what you are in for. However, it can be very lonely until you finally take the chance to get to know someone you feel you can trust.

Once you get involved with those around you or sit with them at chow, things do get a little better. But this takes time, and you begin to understand prison is nothing like life on the outside. Prison is its own subculture and adjusting to it is hard. In fact, it's as close to opposite from what you called "normal" life.

And now, after what seemed like a lifetime in this upside-down world, it's time to return to your old "normal" world. Well, SURPRISE! It's not the "normal" you once knew. And guess what? Welcome back to that "loneliest number" once again.

Your new life is a paradox, a conflict of positive and negative. Positive in that you are once again free but negative because everyone knows where you live as well as what you were in for. Thanks SORNA (Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act)!

Add the fact that most who knew you or about you before are not all that happy you are back. You may have gotten a preview of these feelings if you experienced a declined parole hearing. The same is true if you manage to make the local news at any time. This sure sounds like that "loneliest time" again, doesn't it?

Well, I assure you that despite all this, the positive outweighs the negative this time around. You are free at last! You get to make decisions and live by those decisions - not those of the system you just left. But how you might ask? Let's see.

Remember those lonely times when you first entered prison? How did you survive that? I imagine by getting involved. Getting involved with the right neighbors, staff, programs and classes. You also did it by getting help for your problems and by improving yourself. It was all about YOU and what YOU chose to do. Yes, that lonely person became the new YOU.

Well guess what? It's a do over, except this time it really is all about you and how much you can do ahead of time to face your new world. Have you planned on how you find a place to live? Or better yet, a highly recommended transition facility like the Feds require.

Your old world has drastically moved on without you. Instead of jumping off the cliff into the abyss, take the

switch back trail down to the happy valley of your new life chapter instead. As much as you are able, plan a transition space and time. Have your birth certificate, Social Security Card and the address where you hope to be living so you can get your driver's license or State ID. Your prison ID is worthless in most states.

Another positive to report is that even though there may be negatives regarding your presence, this time you'll find there are folks out there who are glad to help you. The professionals you'll meet won't care where you've been or what you did. Most are happy to help you get settled in. These are people I met at SNAP, Social Security, DMV/ID, Medicare and/or Medicaid.

You just need to be humble, cooperative and honest to get the best treatment - easy compared to where you are now. So, before you leave prison, have as many ducks in a row as are possible for you to have. If you are not sure which duck goes when or where, ask your Pre-release Staff member. All will not go as planned, so have backups on all.

And last but not least, when you finally get settled into your next life chapter, look back to see what you did as well as who and what helped. That way you can help others prepare to go through the same process. Look carefully, and you will see things throughout the whole ordeal that happened, things that were too much to be mere coincidence. That's when you will finally see that you were never really alone. God was *always* with you!

A Little Humor . . .

Don't blame me – I didn't write them – I just copied them out for you.



"The leading cause of dry skin is towels."

"Stop hating on lazy people. We didn't even do anything."

"Why do Norwegian boats have barcodes on the side? So when they come into port, they can scan-da-navy-in."

"What's blue and not very heavy? Light blue."

"Where do bad rainbows go? To prism. It's a light sentence, but it gives them time to reflect."

"A bear walks into a bar and says to the bartender, 'I'll have a beer.' The bartender says, 'Why the big pause?' Bear looks at his hands and says, 'I don't know, I was just born that way.'"

"What did the buffalo say to his kid when he left for college? 'Bison.'"

"Which side of a turkey has the most feathers? The outside."

"What's brown and sticky? A stick."

"What do you call a spider with ten eyes? A spiiiiiiiiider."

A Prayer

Lord,

I lift myself up to you and you give me reason to hope. When I tell you that I love you I don't always hear a response, but I know that you love me back—more than I could imagine.

When I open my eyes to the reality of what I have done, the sins I have committed and the suffering I have caused, I almost despair because it is too much. In those moments I find it hard to believe that I might ever be forgiven. Parents hate me for what I have done to their child. Can you, O Lord and Father of all, be any different?

Yet in my darkest moments, I can see Your Son dying for my sins, dying so that I might one day see you face to face. It is more than I can imagine, Lord, and your mercy is beyond my comprehension, but I am grateful that you offer it to me. I don't deserve it. With Your grace, I will become what you created me to be—your loving child.

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