



Into the Light

All things are possible with God!
May-June 2026

Unless a Grain

By Bob Van Domelen

“Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit.” (John 12:24)

These days, my wife and I move much slower than we once did. When we walk somewhere, we hold hands. People tell us how nice it is to see an older couple still connected in this way. We tell them that our holding hands also helps keep us from falling, and that’s a good thing, because “I’ve fallen, and I can’t get up!” is more than a TV ad. It’s reality.

I just turned 80, an octogenarian, and as I have been sharing with others, the start of this new decade feels different from preceding decades. Somehow, it seems more serious, more thought-provoking. Most senior citizens I know check out the daily obituaries, noticing the ages of those whose stories are shared “in loving memory.”

Don’t worry. I have no plans to turn this article into the kind of obituary one sees in the paper or online. So, if you are about to set the newsletter down for “I don’t want to die yet” reasons, please don’t. There is a point I hope to make that involves living.

Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies

Like you, I have heard many sermons using these words as the foundation of the message being given. It’s one of those, “Oh yeah. I’ve heard this before” followed by a mental tuning out. As much as I would prefer scripture that requires no thinking, I sense that these words will require some effort to make the kind of connection I hope to make.

I’ll start by using a different example. Instead of a grain of wheat, let’s consider a book that sits on a shelf. The title and subject matter aren’t as important as the simple fact that the book has never left the shelf. In a likelihood, it is like that sign in the hall that has been there for years and has ceased to exist. No one even looks at it or reads it. So, for all intents and purposes, it ceases to exist. But the book *does* exist.

Unless the book on the shelf is taken down and read might be a way of restating the original words, but I think you get the idea.

Falling to the ground is not enough. Taking the book off the shelf is not enough. The grain of wheat must die. The book must be opened. Without these things happening, the grain doesn’t change, the book’s contents remain hidden on unread pages.

Okay, let’s take this in yet another direction. I know that what I am sharing is stretching things a bit but hang in there with me.

You are most likely reading this article because you, like me, live with sex-offense charges. That means that many people were harmed by our choices, people who did not deserve what we did.

Although I went through a treatment program (as did many of you), treatment seemed to focus more on relapse prevention (which is important) than helping develop in us a healthier identity, one that mirrors what God calls us to have.

In other words, moving toward a goal of being a better person, not forgetting the dark side in which we lived, but focusing on a self-image that rejects past darkness. That image looks nothing like the one God gave us at birth.

The key words are *unless*, *falls*, and *dies*, and of the three, *unless* controls everything else. Something must happen to set everything else in motion.

Unless: I suppose that in my mind, this word means an act of surrender. Knowing that I could hold on to my secrets, minimize my actions, or deny the reality of what I had done might easily prompt looking for something to grab so as to prevent falling.

When I was arrested, I felt sorrow for what I had done, but I think I had more fear of what would happen to me and not as much for what I had done to my victims. At some point, however, I knew that if I were to change, if I were to honor those I had harmed, I had to say, “Okay, Lord. I am going to let go. I am going to fall.”

Fall: Gravity tells us that when we fall, it is in a downward direction and sometimes, we wish it could be otherwise. Less pain and in moments of self-confession, not as brutal.

But that’s not how confession is most effective, because a cushioned fall always means something is being held back; some truth that needs to be told is refused freedom; and secrecy still has a stranglehold on at least part of our past darkness.

Dies: The grain of wheat dies and produces a seed. A book that is read offers knowledge upon which to grow. One who has surrendered all realizes that the seed of wholeness within is allowed to grow.

What is important is to see that what was is no more. The seed looks nothing like the grain of wheat from which it

came. The book, once ignored on the shelf, has shared its wisdom with another and will be shared again.

And the one in treatment living with the hope that his new life is light and not darkness will find it and more. He will come to see God's presence, experience God's mercy, and feel God's love.

if it dies, it produces much fruit

The grain of wheat, the book, you, me. We all must surrender and die, so that the design God has for us will eventually bear much fruit. It's tempting, I think, and maybe expected that we might see the whole process as just about us - making our lives all that we would like them to be. But it isn't. Well, some of it is – just not all.

Surrendering happens in group treatment where, perhaps against our personal choice, we must do what someone tells us to do. Maybe surrendering is giving up a secret that we've held for too long. Dying to self is never easy, rarely pain-free, but it is necessary. No, it is more than that. It's essential. Just remember, God is with you always!

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. (John 15:16)

All things are possible with God!



Write Bob at:

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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 feeling overwhelmed by what is happening in their lives, that God's love and mercy will bring balance.
- For those who struggle with the idea that the hole they are in is too deep, that they will allow others to reach out to help.
- For those who live in the darkness of their past, that they find a way to trust God and walk in His light.
- For the church, that they recognize the potential of

all people and especially registrants to produce much fruit because of those willing to nurture them.

- For families, that they strive to see their loved one as one on a healing journey.
- For chaplains, that they find simple ways to encourage the death of self to new life.
- 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.

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.

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.

Until I became a believer, I never noticed any of the blessings that YHWH gave me. What I considered blessings occurred when I was sexually satisfied, and whenever I got away with moral and ethical crimes. As a believer, I've been able to realize some of the blessings I received during my past and to recognize the ones I get now.

You have no idea how it makes me feel to know that you needed my encouraging words. I love affirmation. I love to see the results of God working through me. It is all faith strengthening.

No matter where I stray or what I do, God has a plan, and He has a plan for me, for you, and for each one of us. His plans are executed in perfect faithfulness and are wonderful! What a thought!

*"I don't have to wait to be free. I am free right now. I am free from the weight of my past. I don't owe my old mistakes my future." (Shaka Senghor, Author)
I know that am a new creation in Christ, but I just want others to see the growth and beneficial change God did for me. My favorite passage will always be, "Therefore, if any be in Christ, he is a new creature. Behold, the old has passed away, here comes the new." (2 Corinthians 5:17)*

I was up and going this morning around 5:00 AM and still going strong. Not sure what God wants me to accomplish today, but I know He is carrying me and helping me – even as I write this letter. (an inmate undergoing dialysis)

I still study the Bible every day and pray. Is God listening?

When it comes to temptation, it is not that I do not recognize God's "escape hatch" but more often I either deliberately choose not to use His way or I choose my own way.

There is Life after Prison

"Survivor"

by Don

As you've probably noticed on television, this is the 50th season of "Survivor" on CBS. Actually, it's not as old as it sounds. Television just loves to make shows ageless. There can be at least two seasons per year. So, "Survivor" is only 25, and it premiered in May 2000 as a summer replacement. It's a shame our justice systems don't count our years as seasons, because our time sentenced to "the island" would be much shorter. Yet, I believe my 25 years seemed like 50.

If you think about it, all of us can be considered survivors. However, in our case, getting voted off the "island of prison" is what we all look forward to, not staying any longer than what's needed. That's what makes us the winner of this game.

Think about it, though. First, look at what you have survived up to this point – your actions, arrest, trial, conviction, loss of community, possibly family, and most of all, self. Quite a number of losses and, believe me, that just doesn't come to an end when you get "voted off" to the free world you left. You arrive out there with various notification acts – each state having its own version of restrictions just for you. No one thinks of you as a survivor. Instead, you get a few dollars, an obvious set of outdated clothes, and a bus ticket back to your place of conviction. Doesn't sound like a win at all, does it.

Let's look at your current situation. Three "slops" and a cot. Just like the TV version, no luxury living here. Yet, you are surviving, aren't you?

Also, like TV, there are many contests, most coming as surprises each day. You don't want or need to participate in many of these events, but often the other contestants (inmates) make sure you feel or get to experience the results that the Judges (Security) bestow on you even though you have nothing to do with it. There is no winner here, so what to do?

If you watch the TV contestants closely, do what they do. Play your own game, not that of the others. This not only means the other inmates' game but the system's game as well. These guys are happy they can control the whole game, but you must make it your game and not theirs. Just like on TV, "outsmart, outwit, and outmaneuver" the others for your own win, but do it legally. You might be asking, "How?"

Watch, listen, and learn from other contestants (both inmate and staff) around you. They are full of information you can use (or not) to act on. Most are masters of the game but not always the right ones. Just listen until you know what to play. You are not the center of attention. You

let them be. Remember, the choices are for you, and the object is to win – again, just like on TV.

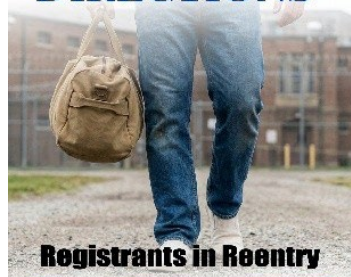
Be alert, aware, and careful. It all comes down to who you listen to and hang around with. You will see that there are good and bad people just as there are good and bad games. Who you get involved with can get you successfully voted off the prison island or extend your stay – possibly even to having you come back for another "season." Remain on your course and, like the show, focus on your life because your life gets to suffer or enjoy the consequences. Are you strong enough to survive?

Like the TV contestants, you have your strengths and weaknesses. Everyone around you does. So, remember that it was your weaknesses that got you on this island. It only seems logical that as you deal with your weaknesses, choices can become strengths. Then use those strengths to get off the island as you reenter the real world. Correcting weaknesses one by one is the steppingstone to developing strengths. Just as we see on TV, it's all part of the game. Knowing who you really are makes you the survivor.

Whether through classes, GED, therapeutic groups, attending services, or just hanging around the right people, doing the right things makes you a winner. It's your choice. Do you want to get and stay off the island with the knowledge of who you really are, or are you going to be one of those contestants that you see over and over again with no plan? It's all on you and your plan for how you use your strengths.

You've already survived up to this point, so why not successfully finish the game. You can and will survive out here, too, just like on TV. God only knows and, believe me, it helps to know Him as well as yourself.

NEW LIFE - NEW DIRECTIONS



BOB VAN DOMELEN

The book release is on schedule and due to be available after May 22 at outlets such as Amazon and Barnes & Noble. The online cost is \$13.95 plus S/H.

I am excited about this book finally being available and hope that it will be a blessing to all who read it. I like the book, but then I wrote it, so I suppose you would be right in guessing I have a bias.

As much as I can, I want to provide a complimentary copy to you if you write and request one, but there are changes that require your help. In the past, I sent my first book published by *Covenant Books* with a Broken Yoke invoice. Lately, my books have been rejected by mailrooms because *Covenant Books* is not on many approved vendor lists, and I suspect that *Inscript Books* will not be, either.

If you ask for a book and have given me the address I need to use plus assurance that you will be allowed to

receive a copy, I will be happy to send you one. I buy copies at author cost, so, when I add postage, the cost to the ministry is about the same as the list price, \$13.95. Sending a book that will be tossed away is unnecessarily expensive and should be avoided if possible.

Can You Help?

Someone recently asked how Broken Yoke manages financially, and I said, "God provides." Everything the ministry does is made possible by donations. For example, the CMCA Summit (May 14-16) will cost \$452. This is an unusual expense, but the ministry does have monthly expenses (stamps, phone, envelopes, etc) as well as annual expenses (website licenses, email account, etc). If you or someone you know would like to support this work, they can send a tax-deductible contribution to me at the address shown on p.2. Or contributions can be made on the ministry website (<https://brokenyoke.org>) on the "Contact Us" page. God bless you!

A Little Humor . . .

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



- I heard that they arrested the devil—got him on possession.
- I asked someone to explain the difference between outlaws and in-laws, and they told me that outlaws were wanted.
- I had a quiet game of tennis today. There was no racket.
- Did you hear about the satellite dish that got married? The wedding wasn't much, but the reception was incredible!
- There are three kinds of people in this world: those who can count and those who can't.
- They all laughed when I said I wanted to be a comedian—well, they're not laughing now.
- I hate it when people say age is just a number. Age is clearly a word.
- Yesterday, I was washing the car with my son. He said, "Dad, can't you just use a sponge?"
- In 2026, I didn't do a marathon. I didn't do one in 2025, 2024, or 2023, either. This is a running joke.

I am no longer my own, but thine.
Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom
thou wilt.

Put me to doing, put me to suffering.

Let me be employed for thee
or laid aside for thee,
exalted for thee
or brought low for thee.

Let me be full, let me be empty.

Let me have all things,
let me have nothing.

I freely and heartily yield all things to thy
pleasure and disposal.

And now, O glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
thou art mine, and I am thine.

So be it.

And the covenant which I have made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven.

Amen.

John Wesley Covenant Prayer
(1755)

IN MEMORIAM
JOE TRAPP
A FRIEND AND PARTNER
IN MINISTRY.
REST IN PEACE!

I am honored to dedicate this edition of *Into the Light* to my friend Joe. His prayers, advice, and financial support over the years sustained this ministry. He will be missed!