



# Into the Light

*All things are possible with God*  
November—December 2018

## Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

By Bob Van Domelen

*I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;  
your works are wonderful, I know that full well.*

Psalm 139.14

For the past three weeks, I have been struggling with this thing I call my body. More specifically, my pancreas – an organ I gave very little thought to until it decided it wanted some attention. The attention came in a big way and has, I think, changed my life in ways I never expected to change.

At one point during my stay in a hospital intensive care unit, I managed to get my wife to understand that I wanted my phone. I couldn't talk because of the tubes but I wanted desperately to have one question answered. So I typed "Will I live?"

God's timing, one of my doctors entered the room at that moment, read the message, and responded with a simple yes. He shared a few other thoughts but my mind wasn't paying attention. I was focused on his simple yes. That question had been in my thinking more than I can tell you while I was lying in that bed - poked, scanned, and controlled.

Another concern I faced were the gaps in my memory of things as they happened. As a matter of fact, it turns out that there are two versions of what happened that very first day – reality and the somewhat off-the-wall storyline I was sure was the truth, though no one else would admit it to be so. At one point during my stay, I wanted a glass of water so much that I devised a plan to get it. My plan involved putting on the cloak of invisibility (hidden under my pillow) and getting that drink with no one the wiser. And up to now, you thought me a normal person, didn't you.

Once home after almost two weeks of hospital care, I found that I still had to deal with extreme fatigue, occasional stomach pain that kept me awake, and little sense of taste. Our family doctor told me that recovery would take time and patience. I have the time but I struggle with the patience part. Oh well.

### ***Fearfully and Wonderfully Made***

That was a pretty long introduction to the things I hope to share, but the title for the article came to me as I was reading God's word early one morning. Fearfully and wonderfully made? Was this someone's idea of a huge contradiction, because little of what I have been through lately would find it easy for me to agree?

Eventually I started to consider not the pain and discomfort but the way in which my body was announcing that not all was well. Would I have actually even considered that trip to the emergency ward all on my own or would I

have continued to focus on my plans for the day? Knowing I was somewhat self-centered in nature, my body overrode the calendar of events for the day. Thank God it did! In sickness and in health, my body is still a fearfully and wonderfully made. And it is complicated well beyond my imagination. Does that sound familiar? Doesn't that sound like something of God's design? I think it does.

### ***I Praise You***

So what's the point? In some ways, it's very simple. We stop praising God when we stop reminding ourselves of God's love and presence in our lives.

Imagine King David quietly sitting alone while considering his life as God's chosen one, the leader of the Jewish nation. He had seriously sinned in the eyes of God and he knew that many of his choices were not in anyone's interests other than his own. He certainly had cause to see that he was, in fact, far less mighty and powerful than he had imagined himself to be. Psalm 139 begins

*You have searched me, LORD,  
and you know me.*

God *knew* David! Not just a few things but everything! And as the words flowed, David was confessing the truth of his relationship with his creator as well as his creator's relationship with him. David's heart spoke "I praise you" not just for how God created him but for how God continued to love him despite his wrong-doing. Does this sound familiar?

### ***But What of the Things I Have Done?***

How can anyone who molests a child be fearfully and wonderfully made? Doesn't such an act prove just the opposite? Actually, what we do or have done does not deny the truth of how we were made in God's image and likeness, an image that does not include sin. Such sin, regardless how it comes to be, is never of God but of us.

Given time and better life choices, my health should return. I will never be as healthy as I was at age 24 but being healthy at three times that age works for me. Still, future health is not a license for me to forget this whole experience as though it never existed. I may not see or feel my pancreas, but I certainly am aware that it exists.

I have been writing *Into the Light* since 1997, writing about my life, God's healing, and the issues faced because of things I had done. Before *Into the Light*, God had opened doors for me to share publicly the message of hope and healing for those with sex-related offenses. In other words, my past is rarely far from my thoughts. It is not, as I have often shared, my identity.

We are called to recognize our sins, to do everything we can to turn from those choices, and to put on the identity

God gave us at the time of our birth. That identity, by the way, is found in God's word.

### ***The World vs Us***

A clear majority of the world would reject the notion that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. We represent the worst to them despite the claims many of them make to be Christians, Christ-followers who love as Christ would love, forgive as Christ would forgive. But pointing a finger accusing them of being phonies is not the answer. Our goal today, tomorrow, and for all the tomorrows to follow is to be true to OUR identity in Christ. As much as we'd like, it is not to convince others that such is our goal or even that they should believe we can change.

If that sounds like a lonely life, I won't disagree. But over the years God has placed people in my life who know me, love me, and support me. And I am not lonely – certainly not the lonely man I was while in the depths of my dark secrecy. Some who write me will never leave prison but that doesn't change the friendships we've built over the years. They understand me and I think I understand them. And what makes all of these connections work is the presence of God.

### ***Search Me***

The closing line of Psalm 139 is very telling because it seems to me to be an invitation for God to reach into David's heart in order to root out what should not be there.

<sup>24</sup> *See if there is any offensive way in me,  
and lead me in the way everlasting.*

If we ask God to do this in our lives, will we be willing to follow the path God gives to lead us out of our sinful choices or will we decide to hang on to those choices? Only those who truly seek God in all things will know how hard that decision can be and often is.

Though I don't really enjoy what is happening in my body at this time, I acknowledge the conversations I have been having with my creator, conversations that are often more one-sided on my part but trusting, nonetheless, that some part of me is listening for the reply. I am, after all, fearfully and wonderfully made. I am a child of God.

Before I close, I want to share that the title of this article was something I had considered some time ago. I even wrote a few opening paragraphs but then ran into nothing more to share. The time was not right – it is now. □

## ***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.*

My creator wants a relationship with me. Awesome! I want to please him.

*Yes, God will bring us back. What an awesome article. I certainly look forward to many more such inspiring articles.*

The Word of God acts like a mirror so we can look into it and see what we look like in God's sight. The problem is that people look in the mirror, walk away, and soon forget what they saw because they fail to look into the mirror on a

regular basis. We need daily refreshers of the word or else we forget and fall.

*My mentor said to me, "If the maker of heaven and earth can look at you right now just as you are in this moment and call you chosen, favored, blessed and, I dare say, blameless in his sight, who on earth can say otherwise?" The thought floored me because it was so true. If God in his mercy could look on me and not see the sin and not hold me guilty, who could say different?*

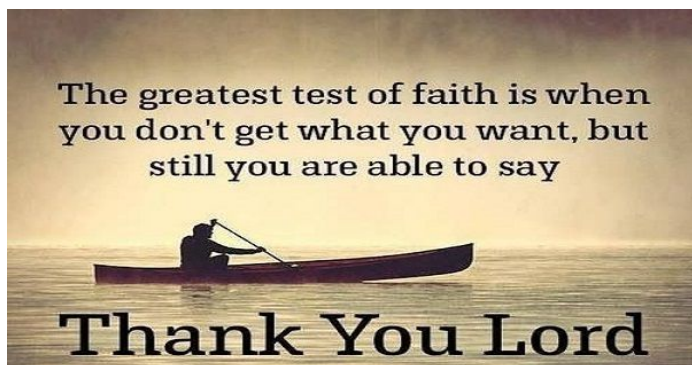
God's statement "my grace is sufficient" is God saying "I've already taken your burden now lean on and rely on me because I sent my Son for you. It is finished!"

*My biggest problem with the newsletters (Into the Light) is once I pass them on to be read by others, they rarely if ever find their way back to me – which is okay with me.*

[A response to my suggestion that those preparing for release write churches] About six months ago, I wrote churches and the response was dismal. Of the 16 churches I wrote, only one responded and their response was not what I consider to be loving and welcoming. In fact they told me I wouldn't be allowed to attend services there. I wonder if I had given them a chance to know me first if the reaction would have been different.

*My journey is a tough and hard one. But I find excitement and beauty in all of my experiences. Difficulties shouldn't break us down or tear us apart but instead make us stronger and better people. Praise God and give thanks always to the one Lord for his compassion and forgiveness – most importantly for God's unconditional love!*

Once again, a special thanks to my friend, Bob, whose generous gift of stamps made the mailing of this edition of *Into the Light* possible. Please keep him in your prayers of thanksgiving just as I do. He is a blessing to this ministry and you!



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

## 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 always foremost, for our victims, that each day for them is a new day, a day without fear, and a day of healing.
- For those who have stopped seeing who they are in Christ, that God's grace will remind them that they are fearfully and wonderfully made.
- For those who feel despair, that every morning offers a new opportunity, a new hope, and a reminder that God is always present.
- For those who seek God, that they will find he is at the center of their very being – only a breath away.
- For all who struggle with the writing of their autobiography, that they remember the words they share reflect what they did and thought – not who they are forever destined to be.
- For churches everywhere, that their prayer energy might be focused on how to encourage and support as Christ would have done rather than condemn and expel.
- For the families and friends of victims, that they will do all they can to be part of the healing process.
- For family and friends of offenders, that they ask God to help them deal with their feelings (especially anger and betrayal) in order to be encouragers.
- 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.
- Finally, for those who are still abusing and are reading this newsletter because God made that possible, that they will do whatever it takes to stop the cycle of abuse and harm caused to their victims.

### Your Support Matters

Please consider financially supporting this ministry. *Into the Light*, a newsletter unlike any other, is made possible solely by your donations. Send contributions to

Broken Yoke Ministries  
PO Box 5824  
De Pere, WI, 54115-5824.

All donations are tax deductible and will be acknowledged. If you are unable to support this effort financially, please support it with your prayers.

For those of you able, consider your Amazon purchases using Smile.Amazon and selecting Broken Yoke Ministries as your designation.

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

---

## A Prayer

Oh, Lord my God.  
You called me from the sleep of  
nothingness  
merely because in your tremendous love  
you want to make good  
and beautiful beings.  
You have called me by my name in my  
mother's womb.  
You have given me breath and  
light and movement  
and walked with me every moment  
of my existence.  
I am amazed, Lord God of the universe,  
that you attend to me and, more,  
cherish me.  
Create in me the faithfulness  
that moves you,  
and I will trust you  
and yearn for you all my days.  
Amen.

Joseph Tetlow, SJ



**Broken Yoke Ministries, Inc.**

PO Box 5824

De Pere, WI 54115-5824



*All things are possible with God*

***A Little Humor. . .***

[A patient speaking to his psychiatrist]

Patient: "I'm on the road a lot, and my clients are complaining that they can never reach me."

Psychiatrist: "Don't you have a phone in your car?"

Patient: "That was a little too expensive, so I did the next best thing. I put a mailbox in my car."

Psychiatrist, "Uh ... How's that working?"

Patient: "Actually, I haven't gotten any letters yet."

Psychiatrist, "And why do you think that is?"

Patient: "I figured it's because when I'm driving around, my zip code keeps changing."

