



# Into the Light

*All things are possible with God*  
September—October 2015

## Sing a New Song

By Bob Van Domelen

<sup>1</sup>Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. <sup>2</sup>Sing to the Lord, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day. <sup>3</sup>Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples.” (Psalm 96.1-3)

Recently a man attending our bible study shared with everyone how he was having a hard time. It was not his first time in confinement and he was depressed that he should once more find himself locked up. After a pause, he said “The other morning I got up and realized that I was singing a hymn that was a congregation favorite in our church. And guess what? I smiled. And I felt happy.”

The same week, a letter writer of many years shared how important the old hymns were to his attitude each day and that set me thinking and wondering. How can positive change be sustained? How does tomorrow look any better than today or the day before that when facing a long prison sentence? Is there some practical maintenance plan possible?

### Sing to the Lord a new song

The opening words of Psalm 96 immediately struck me as something *other* than a new tune, a different hymn, or a praise and worship song. That’s because I saw myself as the song, my life as the melody I presented to God. “Sing to the Lord a *new* song” – Sing to the Lord a *new* life.” Could I do that? Was such an idea even possible? And if it was possible, what would that new melody sound like?

I am not suggesting that we need to sit down with pencil and music paper. Nor am I suggesting that the goal is to create a melody or a life that loses freshness over time. I am suggesting, however, that the melody I make and the life I live comes from my ability to choose what is good and to set aside what isn’t.

### Praise His Name

#### Proclaim His salvation day after day

Actually, years ago I had composed many songs, songs that we used at church. If enthusiasm for singing the songs was an indication, they were good songs and they definitely lifted up the name of the Lord. In those days, however, I often felt awkward hearing people say Jesus or God unless it was in a prayer. That didn’t stop me from writing songs, though. When my personal life of darkness was exposed and I was arrested, things changed.

When I heard people around me speak of Jesus, of the Holy Spirit, or of God, it was with love, honor, reverence, and relationship. Those who encouraged me always did so

by reminding me of God’s love for me. One day, I took words like that to heart. They were not just good song material. They were truth and, in the difficult days ahead, those words brought hope. Most importantly, I started to really believe them; I started to wear them as spiritual clothing; and I began and ended each day with them.

### Declare His glory. . .His marvelous deeds

Sitting with my spiritual advisor this morning, I heard myself say “I do not bring myself to God as someone perfect but as someone very imperfect.” The words reminded me that there was a time when I wore my imperfections as a reason for feeling God had abandoned me. The mantle I placed on my shoulders in those moments, however, was woven in shame, not in simple confession.

But hearing my spiritual advisor add “me, too” was a reminder that *none* of us is perfect. Duh. That would seem to be pretty obvious, wouldn’t it. But our statements this morning did not come out of any mantle of shame. They

came out of the simple realization that God sees us where we are and loves us without reservation. We *are* sinners and we *do* fall far short of the glory of God. Yet we are redeemed by the blood of Christ and called into eternity as heirs of the kingdom of God.

### Maintaining

Most of us have experienced or have been surprised by feelings of joy—perhaps while hearing a great sermon, a rousing hymn of praise, or experiencing an example of love and respect shown us by someone who didn’t have to do it but showed it anyway. Later in the day (or maybe even minutes later) the feeling is gone. Any attempt to recapture that exact feeling fails and what remains is a feeling of void or emptiness.

We don’t get to live in a state of constant joy. Some days the only atmosphere around those in prison is one of profanity, anger, and inappropriate thinking. What then? With no order of importance, here are some ideas you might explore:

- Make God the beginning and ending of every day. Talk to Him and share *you*.
- Sing praise to God—not just in your mind but with your voice. God loves to hear *you sing!*
- Seek out positive people – those who encourage you and want the best for you – and yes, they do exist in prison. You just have to look.
- Avoid negative people, but if you have no choice, share the positive within you with them



- Be as consistent as you can be but also recognize how easy it is to be inconsistent. Don't beat yourself up at the far-less-than-perfect moments.
- Recognize the darkness in yourself, sing or say a word of praise and trust God to bring light to that darkness.
- Recognize the darkness in others – pray for them but understand that *you* won't be the light they need. You can, however, be a reflection of that light.
- Understand that there are people who prefer that you will always define yourself by the wrongs you have done. That's *their* choice and it is wasted energy to make them think otherwise. Look forward to the good in each day – focus on it. It's your life, your future, and your relationship with God.

If this column sounded selfish or gave the appearance of forgetting those who have been so seriously harmed, that was not my intent. Prayer for a victim, however, means little if the heart of the one who created the victim's pain remains unchanged.

We have all been called. We are all heirs of the Kingdom of God. We have all been redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb and there is nothing negative that has the power to separate us from the love of God.

I waited patiently for the Lord;  
 he turned to me and heard my cry.  
 He lifted me out of the slimy pit,  
 out of the mud and mire;  
 he set my feet on a rock  
 and gave me a firm place to stand.  
**He put a new song in my mouth,  
 a hymn of praise to our God.**  
 Many will see and fear the Lord  
 and put their trust in him.  
 Psalm 40:1-4

So let's start singing that new song! Let's start living the life we have been called to live! And let all that is within us rejoice!

## *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.*

I realize relapse prevention is a key element to my future success to remain free and more importantly, to create NO new victims. I also believe I do apply the things I have learned in treatment and through reading self-help materials. Having served nearly 17 years without major problems, I believe that relapse prevention doesn't begin when I am released. It began when I started to apply what I learned about my thoughts, beliefs, actions, and the impact on my victims before prison, and has been increasing ever since.

*The old saying 'Practice makes perfect' may apply more than we'd like to admit. My granddad used to say that when you looked yourself in the mirror each morning, if you could say "I did not lie to, cheat, or harm anyone yesterday," then you had a good day! Not a bad set of rules.*

I strongly believe that with God's help, as long as we learn what He would have us to learn from our mistakes and sins and then proceed to get busy doing His will in our lives, He will give us all the help we need to overcome any barriers that our past sins might have created, so that we can do ALL that He would have us do for Him and His children.

*Thank you for your newsletters. They are a reminder to me that someone cares.*

My situation [in civil commitment] hasn't taken me from God but has drawn me closer.

*I have learned so much in the time I have been locked up and I grow daily in my relationship with the Lord.*

One very good tool I found to help me change my thinking and to help me develop a more positive outlook was the Joyce Meyer book "Battlefield of the Mind." She describes how negative thinking can make you feel rotten and mess up your attitude and how wrestling against that in your mind IS spiritual warfare. She points out that we can choose not to engage in negative thinking and shift to a positive mode with the help of God and the scriptures. When I decided to work on a more positive perspective using scripture and God's help, I was less vulnerable to Satan's attack and having more victory. [See *Resources* for more information]

*God's plan for us exceeds our ability to image just how perfectly His will fits for us. He likes to encourage us to trust in Him with all our heart.*

I found something that also works well to shift my brain out of those old lust patterns. Before any of that gets a foothold, I have hymns embedded in my memory—the kind of old Christian hymn you hardly hear anymore but which I heard repeatedly in my childhood. I can switch on an old hymn in my brain and the thoughts I was fighting disappear. I can't sing an old hymn to myself and still fantasize or remain preoccupied with sex.

*I have asked God to let me concentrate on living each day—each day—and let Him worry about tomorrow because if I spend all my time worrying about tomorrow, I'll never be able to enjoy living today—even in here.*

God knows our hearts and our struggles. He knows where the desires come from and He understands. He condemns what we have done but lovingly opens up a new way. Wrong desires are not love but hate—hate because you want to drag down someone with you. We are called to love someone into everlasting life.

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

## Resources

Every now and then I get a letter asking why I don't include information in the newsletter about things that might be helpful. I will include some here but I need to point out that if you are interested in something listed, you have to make the contact. This ministry does not supply these materials.

### Daily Meditation:

*Our Daily Bread*, PO Box 270, Grand Rapids, MI 49501

*In Touch*, PO Box 7900, Atlanta, GA, 30357

*Seeds of Hope*, PO Box 508, Metter, GA 30439

### Books: \*

*Battlefield of the Mind*, Joyce Meyer

*Detoxing the Brain*, Dr Caroline Leaf

\* Both of these titles are available through Amazon.com, so having a friend or relative order for you is probably the best.

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## 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.

***If you have family or friends, tell them about the website for Broken Yoke Ministries:  
[www.brokenyoke.org](http://www.brokenyoke.org)  
Newsletters, links, information***

## 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 each of us, that we come to see ourselves as God sees us—not in the darkness of sin but the light of holiness.
- For those caught up in deep depression, that each day has a glimmer of hope that makes life a little better.
- For those who feel they will never succeed, that they daily ask for God's insight and grace in order to see beyond the immediate.

- For those without a new song, that the Holy Spirit wakens in them the joy that is meant for each day.
- For those seeking their way in life, that the words of Psalm 96 used in the article will offer direction.
- For those who walk in the joy of the Lord, that they are able to share it with those they meet in a way that is an invitation.
- For pastors, that they are able to broaden the scope of their ministry to include the 'modern day leper' in the outreach they and their congregations provide.
- For all connected with the COPE conference, that doors of communication and avenues of networking are found that will be a blessing in the ministries they represent.
- 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.

## Prayer

Lord, may we receive  
unquenchable light (light that cannot  
be extinguished) from you  
so that our darkness will be illuminated  
(made brighter)  
and the darkness of the world  
will be made less.

Columba

6<sup>th</sup> century Irish monk (521-597 AD)



## FAITH Behind Bars & Beyond

Coalition of Prison Evangelists

September 9-11, 2015

Indianapolis, IN

Conferences like this one are great opportunities to share with others, to learn what is happening around the country, and as a way to have discussions that might not otherwise take place.

My workshop addresses issues faced by those with sex-related offenses as they seek a successful reentry—not easy by any means—while offering ideas and possible resources to help churches and ministries assist in that process.

I am asking your prayers that my workshop will bring honor to God. I am also asking you to be in prayer for the financial resources needed to attend. This is a step of faith.

**Broken Yoke Ministries, Inc.**

PO Box 5824

De Pere, WI 54115-5824



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

A cat and a mouse died on the same day and went up to Heaven. Later that day God met the mouse and asked him 'How do you like it so far?'



The mouse replied 'It's great, but can I get a pair of roller skates?' God said 'Sure', and he gave him a pair of roller skates.

The next day God saw the cat and asked him 'How do *you* like Heaven so far?' The cat replied 'Great, I didn't know you had meals on wheels up here!'