



Into the Light

All things are possible with God

March—April 2013

I Will Be Clean

By Bob Van Domelen

Surely you desire truth in the inner part; you teach me wisdom in the inmost places. Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
(Psalm 51.6-7)

Some time ago, I saw a commercial advertising cleanser guaranteed to eliminate the most disgusting stains. To prove the point, the advertiser showed images of sinks, showers, and toilet bowls literally crusty with incredible layers of filth. A single application of their product, however, removed *all* traces of dirt, leaving shiny, white surfaces.

In many of the letters I receive, there is shared a deep desire to find freedom from the unwanted fantasies that stand in the way of change or might weaken resolve in some way.

Surely you desire truth in the inner part. In a very practical sense, truth for the molester is that children do *not* choose to be sexually molested. They seek protective love, encouragement, and nurturing. What they received from us was a carnal appetite disguised as love and a betrayal of the trust they had a right to expect.

Distorted Truth

The sexual awareness level between adult and child can never be equal. If there is any truth at all in these situations, it would be that there is a physical pleasure possible, but for the child it will be a pleasure shrouded in confusion, plagued by self-doubt, and sealed with a growing alienation from his or her peers.

You teach me wisdom in the inmost places. Treatment (SOT, SOTP, etc), chapel services, Bible studies, and a forced separation from past, present, and future victims can be the foundation of this wisdom. In my own walk, an ongoing and deepening relationship with God makes learning possible and desirable. Contrary to the opinion some hold that a focus on God is a form of denial, I have found it to be just the opposite. It brings me to accountability within myself and with others.

Every person IS different!

The fact that you and I have molested children does not mean that we did so for *exactly* the same reasons, although there are similarities. But we do share something very critical to this whole issue of thought pattern—there is a cycle to our thoughts and behaviors.

For many of us, sexual behavior became our response to all sorts of issues that were in and of themselves non-sexual, much the same, I would guess, as alcohol is used by others as a solution to their problems and issues. Eventually, the choice (sex, alcohol, etc.) takes on a life of

its own, demanding fewer and fewer reasons until the behavior itself becomes *the* goal and not a solution.

Self-Identity Is Critical!

How I see and define myself often determines the choices I make when I experience those unwanted thoughts. I know there are clinical definitions for what I have done, but I have found that saying “I am Bob and I struggle *with*” is far different than saying, “I am Bob and I *am* a”.

The identity I believe God had for me and for you at the moment of birth did not include a word like “molester.” So if I have assumed that word as an appropriate description of my being or of who I am, then I can hope for little in the way of change.

If, on the other hand, I see change as focusing on what I am supposed to be as a man, while at the same time recognizing my *potential* for repeating the evils I have committed, then my choices can be more clearly seen as right or wrong, favoring the new man or relapsing into the behaviors of the old.

What’s Happening?

When assaulted by some image I know is inappropriate, I often ask myself, “What’s *this* all about?” The question is something of a caution light and gives me that very important moment where I think through the choice I am about to make—reject the image or indulge in it. This “moment” will not be very significant if one is heavily into addictive behavior patterns.

At one time, my own behaviors were highly addictive, with very little time between the experience of a thought and a behavioral response. Experts note that the brain creates chemicals reinforcing behavior with every repetition. While it might not be possible to completely eliminate those original chemicals, I have learned that I can override the old by establishing new chemicals. This is, I think, the basis behind behavioral modification.

When I made up my mind that I had some serious flaws in my thinking, I became determined to do something about them. One conclusion I came to was that I had to be realistic about inappropriate fantasies. Simply wanting them to disappear did not mean they would.

A New Way?

At a gathering of relatives, my sister-in-law pointed out that my shoelaces were incorrectly tied—the loops did not fall evenly across the shoe from left to right, but hung at an angle. She asked me to tie my shoes, and she pointed out as I did so where I was in “error.” It seemed stupid at first, but I followed her directions and found the loops of each shoelace hanging just as they were meant to hang.

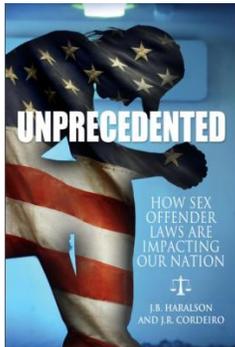
The down side to the whole exercise was that the new process “felt” awkward and even a bit unnatural. I liked the look, however, so I decided to hang in there with the new system. It wasn’t long before tying my shoes the “old” way was just as uncomfortable as the “new” way had been the first time I tried it.

This experiment led to changing the way I did other equally simple tasks. Whatever way I did something before I looked to see if there was another way to do the same thing. I learned that many everyday tasks (putting on socks or shoes, for example) were done in the same sequence each time (left-right, right-left, down-up, etc). By reversing the starting direction, I experienced that uncomfortable feeling—at least for a time. It wasn’t the process of doing something a new way that made a difference, but that in order to start, I had to *think first and then act*. Through these exercises, I began to feel some control in my decision-making process, and found that this “*moment of thought*” could be directly applied to how I dealt with fantasy.

The point here is not that the temptations disappear but that there is a definite window of opportunity now existing which allows me to choose.

A Positive Approach To Things

Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean. Jesus made forgiveness possible for me and you by His death on the cross. We have been forgiven! What remains is for us to be willing to set aside the old in favor of the new—no matter how difficult that might be. An end to temptation and fantasy? No. A new life? Most definitely, so hang in there and believe that it will happen. □



UNPRECEDENTED: HOW SEX OFFENDER LAWS ARE IMPACTING OUR NATION

By

J B HARALSON
J R CORDEIRO

A Review

Written by two men themselves with felony convictions for sex-related offenses, *Unprecedented* is a book most would not consider reading. In my many years of writing and speaking, few topics raise the human barometer to boiling quicker. But if there is to be any hope of dealing constructively with issues related to sexual offending, it will only happen when we take a serious and open-minded look at what has been learned in recent years.

Based on thousands of hours of research, the authors take the reader through all phases, from definitions to statistics to treatment without falling into a textbook format. They offer data that is as current as any I have seen available on the internet or in existing texts, so when they define abuse and the signs of abuse, the information is factual without coming across as impersonal. A reader hoping to separate myths from reality will find both clearly stated in this book.

Haralson and Cordeiro enter turbulent waters in their effort to take the same direct approach to those who have been guilty of sexual offending. Public opinion is simple and

to the point—confinement without hope of release. Rather than glossing over the reality of sex related charges and their consequences, the authors do a thorough job of discussing the offender from the time of arrest, through the court process and into prison, and eventually at the door of release and re-entry into a world that would rather not see them again. Critical to the book, I think, is the comprehensive chapter on treatment and related issues that most people are not even aware exist.

What I found as a powerful tool binding the topics to real people were the many “Insights and Observations” by each author at the end of the chapters. They put their lives under a microscope in a way most people would not consider doing, yet the sharing is no attempt to garner sympathy. It is a perspective the public needs to read.

If I found a disappointment, it would be one that perhaps was too outside the original scope of the book. My own research of late is toward finding faith-based support for those in re-entry and I had hoped to see more on this in *Unprecedented*. Success in re-entry is based on a strong foundation of treatment, a supportive and relational environment and, in my experience, a faith community support for continued growth. Sadly, faith communities are few and far between for someone with sex-related offenses.

Unprecedented will not win any popularity awards but it is a book every church should own and every pastor should read. Haralson and Cordeiro have managed to put together an incredible handbook on a most difficult subject. It can be read in part or in whole, depending upon the needs or desires of the reader, but in advertising terms, the book is *a must have*.

-Bob

Unprecedented is available through the website www.unprecedentedthebook.com, Amazon, Kindle, and Nook, or by writing **Unprecedented The Book, PO Box 12494, Ft. Worth, TX 76110**. The cost of the book is \$29.95.

Note: Please do not contact Broken Yoke Ministries for copies of the book.

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.

God should never be an afterthought in times of trouble and temptation. He should continually be part of our thinking. If we keep him there, he will always be ever present before and when times of trouble arise.

Somewhere we have lost the capacity to give boys a sense of the right of passage to manhood. We have abdicated our role as spiritual leaders. It is possible to recapture that, though, and begin to lay the foundation for a new legacy that will establish that needed base.

When I can accept time as it is and as it passes and as God does his work in it, I find then not the *stress* of time but the *peace* of time. Time can become oppressive in many ways.

The peaceful passing of time has a lot to do with patience and staying present in it.

It seems that God is gone from my life. I grieve him by my blatant disobedience so no wonder I feel an absence of His Spirit. I have not felt this miserable in a very long time. I have no peace and I don't like myself or my current situation.

I've made God's word the final authority in my life regardless of what others think. I'm a slave to righteousness now. I was a slave to unrighteousness for too long. It's time to kick that old man out completely and surrender to God's will. I have traded my whole life for the life of Jesus for free. All I had to do was ask, confess, and repent and I received a new life even here in prison.

It seems to me, at least at this present time, that my love for the Lord pales in comparison to my love for the pleasure of what I was doing. Was I so far away from Jesus in my walk that I actually welcomed this sin? Obviously I was not where I needed to be and I backslid into some false reality that I was okay and on my way.

God will draw you either through affliction or affection, the choice is yours, but either way God will have his way.

My biggest weakness is in not being able to accept help from others. Sometimes those offers make me feel weak. I was always a "I'll do it myself" or "if you want something done right, do-it-yourself" kind of person. I am working on that issue but it's hard in here because everyone's on the same page— don't trust anyone.

[From a halfway house] I had a 2 ½ hour pass this morning and I went and registered. It was beautiful on the outside! I forgot how beautiful and colorful the world is. I was so used to the drab colors of the inside. It is like I have been born again and am seeing things for the first time. I thank God for being so good to me!

We love God as much as the one we love the least.

I Corinthians 10.13 is a reminder that no matter where I think I am, in his mercy or out of it, every situation, every temptation requires the same action—faith and trust in God and my participation in a Christ-like manner as I deal with the temptation. God has gotten me this far and even if I fail, God in his infinite love will be with me through the discipline, reconciliation, and learning phases that lead me back to his path.

Failure is easy but being good at something is thrilling and exciting when the bar keeps getting raised. I am feeling good and confident today and hopefully I'll feel this way tomorrow. I am grateful that God is always proving I have a way out or that I have more strength than I thought I had.

Regardless of all the training and studying, if there is no calling, it will all come to naught. Someone once said "God does not call the qualified; he qualifies the called."

I know that one of the hardest things to do is to get rid of memories and fantasies connected with my past behaviors, but such is my goal. I can't do it without the Holy Spirit and the backup of some spiritual partners. I'll be out in less than 20 months and have despaired of finding a church accepting of my sort, but God made a whole forest of trees and other evidence of his creation that I can kneel before. I'm going to be certain, however, that I never try to go it alone without someone to call as sponsor, friend, or mentor, during those times when I feel most overwhelmed.

[From someone during a time of release followed by revocation] If I had hidden my coming at any one of the churches I attended, I could have attended without trouble. But because I was open, I was rejected. After these rejections, I quit trying to find a church and listened to services on the radio seven days a week. Toward the end, however, I stopped listening completely.

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 all struggling with the darkness of their own thoughts, that they open the window of their being to God's cleansing love.
- For who feel more failures than victories, that they realize that with God the war has been won.
- For those seeking church support, that they continue to seek with openness and humility.
- For those who starve for positive reinforcement, that they are open to those willing to offer it.
- For churches and pastors, that they recognize "modern day lepers" as worthy of love and support.
- For family members, that they never give up on God's plan for their loved one.
- For those in civil commitment, that every day is a step closer to freedom and the skills necessary for that.
- For all who serve in ministry to those in prison, that they are able to see God's presence in each and every person they serve.
- 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.

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A Little Humor . . .

A customer was continually bothering the restaurant waiter. First, he'd asked that the air conditioning be turned up because he was too hot, then he asked it be turned down because he was too cold, and so on for about half an hour.

Surprisingly, the waiter was very patient, walking back and forth and never once getting angry. So finally, a second customer asked the waiter why management didn't just throw the pest out.

"Oh I don't mind," said the waiter with a smile. "We don't even have an air conditioner."

