



# Into the Light

*All things are possible with God*  
November—December 2015

## Ask - Seek - Knock

By Bob Van Domelen

<sup>7</sup>Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. <sup>8</sup>For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. (Matthew 7:7-8)

“A total collapse of everything I thought I knew about myself and my personal expectations” was the way I felt after my arrest—when, that is, I was able to think of anything at all. For days I sat in a chair staring at nothing while my children tiptoed in and out of the room, not wanting to disturb me or worse, too afraid to say anything at all.

While living in the center of my personal darkness, I often cried out to God to ‘fix’ me, to take away the attractions that caused so much pain. Nothing seemed to change because like most addicts, I was able to stay sober in thought for a period of time. Eventually, however, that was followed by yet another failure.

Following those falls, there would be more heart-felt prayers and more resolve. Then one day I was arrested. I was stopped by strangers because I could not stop myself and they put me in a place of confinement.

Many believe that prison is a place where the ‘bad’ people are kept so that the ‘good’ people can be safe. Though I understood that at the time, I couldn’t completely accept the image, especially the label ‘bad’ because labels are, after all, lifelong identities if allowed to remain uncontested.

Yet inside that environment of ‘bad’ people I had resolved to do whatever I could to change my life. My previous efforts had failed, I believe, because I thought I could control myself when the truth was that I couldn’t.

Now others controlled most of my movements and choices, yet by the time I entered prison, I had decided that God controlled my life, my heart, and my soul. The state had the rest.

**Ask and it will be given to you . . .  
for everyone who asks receives**

Wait a minute, I *had* asked and I am pretty sure I begged God to give me what I wanted—a life that was free of the fantasy that resulted in innocence lost. “Surely that was something God would want to support. Surely that was something God could have changed in my life—if God really wanted to.” I hope that you noticed how easily those words made *my* failings and sins God’s fault.

Much of the mail I receive includes mention of prayer requests very much like mine and they ended up just as I did—in prison. So *if* we asked and *if* we received, what exactly had we received? I certainly didn’t see my prayers

answered at the time but then, that might be the key. I wanted God’s answers to mirror my solutions while God wanted me to have better than that.

I can’t speak for others but God did answer my prayers. It’s just that I couldn’t see it at the time. Yet I do want to include a brief list, certainly not a complete one, of those blessings.

- I was pulled out of the darkness of my own self-imposed secrecy
- I was confronted by what my family had to face because of my actions
- The abuse stopped because I was stopped
- I was blessed by unexpected support when I was sure no one wanted to offer it
- God loved and reminded me that I would never lose that love

And in case you are wondering, those are *all* positive responses to what I asked of God.

There is an element of sin, by the way, that must be considered when we ask God to help us step away from a particular sin. We have to admit that we chose that sin because there is something we found desirable in it. Our temptations always include the memory of that pleasure—rarely any thought of the harm the behaviors brought. The bottom line: Saying “no” means saying “no.”

**Seek. . .the one who seeks finds**

*“Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn’t she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it?”* (Luke 15.9)

Perhaps there are people who would read this passage and ask “What’s the big deal? The woman still had nine silver coins.” In her place, these same people might spend a little time looking for something lost but would soon give up saying “It’ll turn up eventually.”

The woman Jesus describes not only searched carefully and thoroughly but when the coin was found, she called her friends and neighbors and said “Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.” Jesus adds “*There is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.*” Guess what? That’s those of us who decide to truly seek the person God created us to be.

Jeremiah 29.13 reads “*You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.*” This is not a weekend activity. This is a lifetime of dedicated search.

**Knock and the door will be opened for you**

It’s an obvious choice – the door is opened. Go in. But as strange as it may seem, we sometimes choose to hesitate or to turn and then walk away. On the surface of

things, that makes little sense. Why would anyone stay in a place that offers nothing? I can only guess but I'd say the old is familiar, even with the presence of its darkness and sin.

I wrote earlier of labels like 'bad' as being life-long identities if uncontested, if we don't fight to lose the ones that are not healthy. "This is just who I am" is one of those self-fulfilling statements.

One of the closing scenes in the musical "Oliver" involves the young Artful Dodger reuniting with Fagan, the man who ran a school for youthful delinquents and pickpockets. Despite being exposed to the possibility of good in life as well as witnessing the consequences of evil, the Artful Dodger basically tells Fagan that his will always be a life of crime. Who he has been is who he will be.

I knew of any number of people while I was in prison who did not feel the need to change anything about their lives. Some even admitted that life for them would be back to 'normal' as soon as they were released.

One man in prison for child molestation shared that he was looking forward to seeing how his "favorite dirty book stores have changed" since he was last on the streets. So as much as I would like to believe that the prison experience is a positive life-changing experience for all, such is certainly not the case.

If you feel the door in front of you is open and you have hesitation about entering, look at the door from the other side. "*Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.*" (Revelation 3.20)

Change. We must be willing to ask for it, seek God for it, and respond to God's heart by entering into the life God has prepared for us. It's not about getting it right or perfect. It's about being willing to surrender the old life for the new. Isn't that what we all want? Isn't that what we all *should* want?

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*A thought to consider:*

Pornography is the search for  
a healthy human relationship gone wrong.

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## *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.*

Heavenly Father, remind us each day that the love and mercy with which your Son spread His arms as He died on the cross, is the same love and mercy we need to extend to, not just those who love us, but to all who can really use it.

*I have never been willing to die for anything or anyone before, but now I am so ready and willing to die for my faith, my country, for truth and real justice, and for my brethren!*

Regarding death, I think of the song "I Can Only Imagine" by Mercy Me. That moment we open our eyes in glory and realize no more sickness, no more sin, no more disappointments. "Will I dance for you, Jesus or to my knees will I fall? Will I sing Hallelujah? Will I be able to sing at all?"

*I was just considering my hope in God – Hope that in my heart I will always be fulfilled; that whatever He decides will be for my best; that He shall never abandon me or give up on me; and that the time will come when I come home to Him.*

I have been told that I have lived with depression for so long that I didn't know there was any other way to feel. To say working on this created some emotional moments would be a gross understatement, but what I have been learning gives me hope.

*Close to release, my mind wanders in the direction of anxiety unless I keep it focused on the Word of God. "Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise your name. The righteous shall surround me for you shall deal bountifully with me." (Ps 142.7)*

"The problem [in this world] is not so much the presence of darkness as the absence of light." (Dr Michael Brown)  
Maybe the increasing targeting of Christians by the activists will shake us out of our complacency and birth yet another genuine revival.

*Purity is a subject that I have always had a hard time understanding. I often feel it was stolen from me before I had a chance to appreciate it.*

[Society] wants to see how we handle our failures. That's the true test. Do we deny wrong-doing or blame others? Or do we accept responsibility and seek forgiveness as well as make amends?

*I attempted suicide and was in a coma for two weeks. While recovering I met a chaplain and told him why I was incarcerated. He gave me his church address to write and I received a copy of Into the Light. I felt the stories were not only meant for me but directed towards me.*

Since my release (two years ago), God continues to show His faithfulness in the highs and lows, the months of struggle and the months of abundance. I may waiver but He is constant.

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## Resources

Last edition, I shared "Battlefields of the Mind" by Joyce Meyer with you. A reader wrote to tell me that if interested, you can write for the book by contacting *Joyce Meyer Ministries, PO Box 655, Fenton, MO 63026*. Be sure to mention the title. Her ministry will either send you a copy of the book or a book list specifically for inmates. From that list you will be able to choose a free title once each quarter.

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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**  
**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 the identity we seek is the one created for us by our Heavenly Creator.
- For those who ask, that they will listen with attentive hearts to God's response.
- For those who seek, that they never tire of looking deeper for the love of God in their lives.
- For those who knock, that they recognize the blessings available by trusting and entering in.
- For those who serve in jail or prison ministries, that they recognize their role in the journey of those they serve, a role that never fails to point to God's love.
- For those who feel abandoned by family and friends, that they trust God to give them healing relationships.
- For churches, that they recognize that the family of God includes the broken and the healed. There are no perfect congregations this side of heaven.
- For those in authority, that somehow they will come to understand their role as beyond discipline and control and more as partners in the process of change.
- 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.

*All things are possible with God*



## FAITH Behind Bars & Beyond

Coalition of Prison Evangelists

### A Brief Report

Actually, I goofed up when making reservations for attending this conference and was there a day early. Yet God had plans and one of them was for me to spend time with a couple who have supported this ministry for years. Thank you, Lord.

It rarely takes much time to find a welcome in the truest sense of that word at prison or jail ministry conferences and this gathering was no different. Workshops were both informative and practical as well as opportunities for open discussion during the workshops. The main speakers were inspiring and the testimonies shared before each general session were a reminder of God's love and mercy.

My own workshop focused on the ways churches can be Christ to those with sex-related offenses and was, I think, well received. There was a woman who had been a victim of child molestation 26 years ago and we had a chance to talk privately later in the day. She was a blessing and a reminder of God's healing love,

One of the more memorable comments came from Michael Smith (Head Chaplain for the Bureau of Prisons) when he said "*Don't stop looking for treasure in the trash!*" God is working miracles in lives society gives little attention.

### Prayer for Forgiveness

**Lord, I'm in that place again  
On my knees, laying my life out before You  
Thank you that on the cross you cried  
"It is finished"**

**You have done it, forgiveness is complete  
I can live forever in Your grace  
Forever in Your love**

**So I ask now for Your forgiveness  
For the wrongs that I have done  
And the things that I have neglected  
I ask for Your forgiveness  
For the people I have hurt along the way  
And those who I have failed to love as You love  
I ask for Your forgiveness**

**I receive Your forgiveness  
And resolve in my heart that with Your strength  
I determine not to make these errors again  
I receive Your forgiveness  
And by the power of Your Holy Spirit  
I walk away from everything I know to be wrong  
And embrace everything I know about You  
For the kingdom, the power and the glory  
Are always and forever Yours  
Amen**

(from [www.lords-prayer-words.com](http://www.lords-prayer-words.com))

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

Sue called her boyfriend Mike and said, "Please come over here and help me. I have a killer jigsaw puzzle and I can't figure out how to get it started it." Mike asked, "What is it supposed to be when it's finished?" "According to the picture, it's supposed to be a tiger," she replied.



When he got to her apartment, Mike looked at all the pieces spread over the entire table, looked at the box, and said, "First of all, no matter what we do, we're not going to be able to assemble these pieces into anything resembling a tiger. Second, I want you to relax, have a cup of tea, and then help me put all these Frosted Flakes back into the box."