



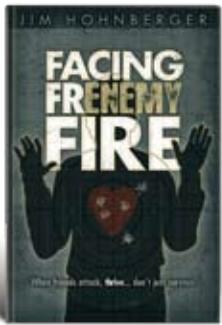
POWER *for* LIVING

A quarterly publication of Empowered Living Ministries

January - March 2008

Dear friends,

Have you ever been wounded by a friend, relative, or church member? The words loyalty, integrity, and transparency once characterized the bedrock of society. Now such traits are deemed optional far too often. Politicians belligerently hurl sarcastic digs and openly undermine any who stand in their way to prominence and power. Their uncivil “civil wars” weary the American voter.



Unfortunately, these “civil wars” don’t stop with government politics. They invade every kind of human relationship—even among those in God’s church. While often wearing the façade of a friendly face, these mini jihads nonetheless wreak havoc among us.

You don’t need to have been a contestant on a television show to know how it feels to be “voted off the island” by people you believed were your friends. Power plays are not uncommon in church circles. Character assassination? —Yes, that happens too, and many seem eager to believe the worst.

Most of us will experience frenemy fire at some point. But what do we do with it? How do we cope with the rejection, hurt, anger, and confusion? *Facing Frenemy Fire* is written from personal experience to help you and others to not only survive such an ordeal, but also with God’s help to thrive! Sound impossible? The ten chapters of this book will lead you step by step closer to the One “Who was wounded in the house of His friends.” This issue contains an excerpt from one of the chapters. *Facing Frenemy Fire* is a hard-cover book and is now available for \$17.

Sally’s seminar *Parenting Teens by the Spirit* is now available on CD for \$28. Don’t miss this vital information for helping your teens reach their full potential in Jesus.



Lifting up Jesus,

Jim & Sally

SPEAKING SCHEDULE

January 4 - 6

SDA Community Church
Lacombe, Alberta, Canada
Call (403) 782-5275

February 15 - 16

Brazilian Temple SDA Church
Fort Lauderdale, FL
Call (954) 424-4578

February 17 - 24

Escape to God Cruise
Fort Lauderdale, FL
Call (954) 424-4578

March 7 - 9 & 14 - 16

Florida Men’s Conference
Franklin Cobos, speaker
High Springs, FL
Call (386) 454-1351

March 27 - 30

Empowered Living Camp Meeting
Leander, TX
Call (706) 398-7218

April 24 - 27

Empowered Living Camp Meeting
Grizzley Flats, CA
Call (417) 296-3362



EMPOWERED
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It's About Walking With God!

Am I Going to Die?



[This article is an excerpt from chapter two of *Facing Frenemy Fire*. Chapter one is entitled “Shot in the Back”. When frenemy fire hit Jim, these were four responses that he wrestled with. In which response do you see yourself?]

How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily?—Psalm 13:2

Those ten days of waiting seemed like an eternity to me. I rode the full gamut of the emotional roller coaster—from hope to fear; from sorrow to anger; from despair to longing. It felt like my life was coming to an end. My mind sorted through a dozen different responses as I met my frenemies in my imagination. I knew that it wasn’t safe to follow the instincts of my emotions, but what was the safe course to follow? How could I sort it all out?

Run and hide!

At one point, I wanted to run and hide. “Lord, whisk me off to a South Pacific island! Let me live in the quiet sunshine away from all the attacks, the turmoil, and the ugliness. Let me hide there until it all settles down and goes away!”

After all, Jesus said “When they persecute you in this city, flee to another”. Jesus Himself resorted to this response. He transferred His ministry to Galilee because the Jews in Judea were out for His blood. On other occasions, Jesus spoke plain, cutting truths and then departed to hide Himself. Surely I could do the same...

Then I thought of Jonah. Jonah ran from opposition, but instead of a South Pacific island, he found himself in the belly of a whale. Elijah ran from Jezebel and found himself hiding in a cave, discouraged and wanting to die. David ran to the Philistines and found himself acting like a madman.

What makes the difference? How do you know when

it’s right to hide and when it’s not?

I decided that it boils down to motive. Why do you do what you do? Most of us avoid that kind of heart searching. We’re more comfortable with rationalization. We have Scripture to back up why we do what we do—and we stop there. But God isn’t fooled...

Jesus...was pursuing [His] God-given duty. Jonah in the belly of the whale, Elijah in the cave, and David in Gath... had one thing in common: a strong drive for self-protection.

Hiding out of self-protection does not solve problems or develop character. It only allows the problems to snowball. If you find yourself driven by self-protection, you will find God bending over you as He did over Elijah, inquiring, “What are you doing here?”

As I weighed my option of a South Pacific island, I realized that my motive for running would be self-protection—not duty. “Ok, Lord. I won’t run and hide. But what should I do? I feel like this thing is going to kill me. Maybe I should just capitulate.”

Capitulate

Capitulate is a term not heard much today. Its dictionary definition is “to surrender, to give in to an argument, request, pressure, or something unavoidable.”

Can this option work to end conflict and bring about peace? Sometimes it does. Paul capitulated to his Jewish brethren and had his friend, Timothy, circumcised to avoid unnecessary quarrelling even though he knew that circumcision was not a moral issue. Jeremiah urged Zedekiah, king of Judah, to capitulate to Nebuchadnezzar to save his people from the horrors of a siege. When the Axis powers in WW II capitulated to the Allies, the bloody war came to an end, and reconstruction of civilized life began.

Why do you do what you do?

The Scriptures urge “if it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.” There is a proper place to concede to the wishes of another, to lay aside our preferences for the mutual benefit of the relationship. We need far more of this kind of capitulation. How much frenemy fire would never be launched if we possessed an attitude of kindness and consideration for the opinions and preferences of others? How many church battles over the color of the carpet could be avoided? How many marital falling-outs over burned toast might be missed? How many alienated friendships might be whole had we not insisted on majoring on the minors and expecting “them” to be like “us”? Yes, it would be a better world if there were more of this kind of capitulation...

There is another side to capitulation. Christ could have ended His conflict with the devil in the wilderness by surrendering. And we would all have been lost forever—caught in the hopeless whirlpool of independence from God. Jesus Himself warned, “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword . . . and a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.”

The Protestants of the Reformation era found themselves locked in deadly conflict. They were usually offered two options—be burned alive at the stake or capitulate. In other words, you are compelled to submit to those who have attacked, besieged, and assaulted you. If you will surrender your liberty of conscience and live an overshadowed existence, then there will be so-called peace...

There is a time to surrender—to capitulate—and there is a time to hold steady in the conflict. How do you know which is which? Again—what is the motive? ...Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it. But he who loses it for the sake of Jesus and the gospel shall find it. When Paul capitulated regarding a non-moral issue for the sake of promoting brotherly unity, he honored God.

If capitulation puts God on the throne of my heart, does not require the sacrifice of moral principle, and opens the way for genuine understanding with another, then it is a good thing. But if capitulation requires the sacrifice of moral principle and places another in charge of my conscience, it is to be shunned.

As I contemplated shelving my writing project, I recognized that I would be doing so out of the desire for peace—for self-protection—and that it would require setting aside a duty God had very clearly laid on my conscience. To capitulate would be to accept man in the place of God. No, capitulation was not my answer. But the urge to protect myself still rose up like a tidal wave. “Oh, Lord, can I defend myself? Can I fight back?”

Attack

Charge! Draw the sword. Fight fire with fire. After all,

“there is a time to kill... and a time to hate.” Moses ordered the execution of three thousand Israelites who wouldn’t surrender their worship of the golden calf. God told Joshua to wipe out the inhabitants of Canaan. He told Saul to take revenge on the Amalekites for pouncing on the Israelites while they were crossing the desert.

Shouldn’t I be a man and stand for my cause? Shouldn’t I bring my opponents to their knees? Why not give them a taste of what they were dishing out to me and let them see how it feels?

And so brother rises against brother, church against church, and nation against nation. Self-justification runs strong. Both sides know they’re right and invoke God’s blessing upon themselves. Neither will yield. Bloodshed. Character assassination. We become like cannibals feasting upon the still trembling flesh of our own kind...

Are we fighting the battles of the Lord or are we avenging ourselves. When we fight the battles of the Lord we are following the One who laid down His life and reputation for those who crucified Him—quite a different picture from defending my own life and reputation. Again, the issue is God-given duty versus self-protection.

“Lord, my emotions would like to draw the sword. But I’ve given the reins of my life to You. Are you asking me to fight?”

“No, Jim. I’m asking you to face it!”

*The issue is
God-given
duty versus
self-protection.*

Face it!

Ouch. That touches a tender spot. “No self-protection, Lord? But I think I’ll die if I just face it. I’ll be so vulnerable, so weak!”

“Let go of your self-protection, Jim. I will be your shield. Put your trust in Me.”

“But Lord . . . lay down my hurt? Lay down my anger? Lay down my despair? Those emotions are so strong right now—they feel like they’re part of me. To lay them down will feel like death. I can’t face it, Lord.”

“Jim, I’m calling you to change channels. I want you to take your eyes off your circumstances and place them on Me. I’m bigger than it all. I can keep you through it all. The fire need only burn the dross of your character—it need not consume you. Will you face it in My strength and under My direction?”

My will trembled between the gentle, stabilizing call of God’s Spirit and the wild churning of my own emotions. Would I trust God? I wanted to—but I felt so weak.

“Lord, I don’t have the strength, the words, or the abilities to enter this arena. It’s unknown to me. My mind will short circuit. My tongue will stammer and stutter. I haven’t the courage or strength. At times, it seems that death would be a welcome escape. Lord, I’m not a Luther!”

“Jim, you need to face it.” *elm*

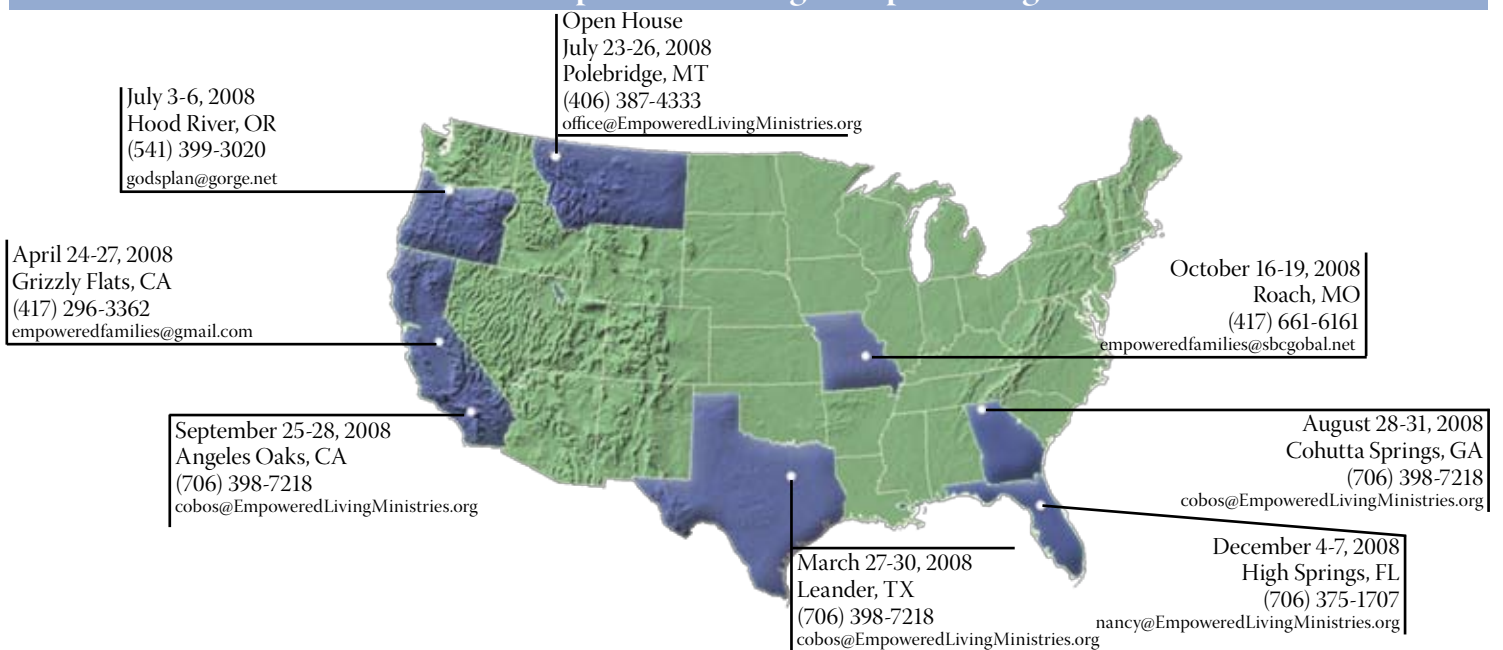


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Empowered Living Ministries: 3945 North Fork Road, Columbia Falls, MT 59912. Email: Office@EmpoweredLivingMinistries.org
Office: (406) 387-4333 Fax: (406)387-4336 Order Toll Free: (877) 755-8300