

POWER *for* LIVING

A quarterly publication of Empowered Living Ministries

January - March, 2009

Dear friends,

Have you ever tried to grab onto the wind? What a futile activity! And yet, many of us spend our entire lives doing just that—grasping the wind. That was Sally and me until God got our attention and redirected our focus. Now life has substance that is not dependent on the national economy. This quarter's article, "Grasping for the Wind", breaks it down.

Our newest booklet, *Touching the Taboo*, offers straight-forward help to those caught in the quicksand of harmful sexual habits. With an honest yet compassionate approach, Jim shares powerful principles from Scripture that can set you or someone you love free! \$1 each. Discounts available for orders of three or more.

When life hurts and home is not happy, it's so easy to get stuck feeling hopeless and helpless. "If only my mate would change..." "If only my children would behave..." "If only my circumstances were different..." Is there a way out? Can God truly change our lives and homes? Yes, He can! And He does when we recognize that it begins with me! Listen as Rady & Jeanette Houghtelling share in *It Begins With Me* how it is working for them. \$28 for a 6-message album.

We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for all your love, prayers and continuing support of this life-changing message that is preparing people for the return of Jesus!

Happy New Year!

Jim & Sally

SPEAKING SCHEDULE

January 7 - 10

Central New Jersey SDA Church
Rahway, New Jersey
Call (845) 837-9418 or (732) 259-7474

January 10

Cranbrook SDA Church
Cranbrook, BC, Canada
Speaker: Janell Garey
Call (250) 489-8357

January 10

Kamiah SDA Church
Kamiah, Idaho
Speaker: Rady & Jeanette Houghtelling
Call (208) 926-7531

February 6 - 8

Canadian University College
Lacombe, Alberta, Canada
Call (403) 782-3381 x4141 or x4149

February 20 - 22

Upper Columbia Conf. Men's Retreat
Camp Mivoden
Hayden Lake, Idaho
Call (509) 838 2761

March 6-22

Brazil

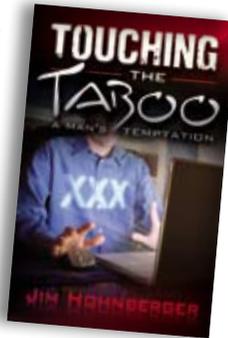
Check our website for more information.

March 13-15 and 20-22

Florida Men's Ministries Conventions
Camp Kulaqua, High Springs, FL
Speaker: Franklin Cobos
Call (386) 454-1351

April 23 - 26

Empowered Living Camp Meeting
Grizzly Flats, CA
Call (706) 398-7218



It's About Walking With God!

GRASPING for the WIND

I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and indeed, all is vanity and grasping for the wind. Ecclesiastes 1:14

Have you ever tried to catch the wind in your fist? Go ahead, step outside, and grasp a handful. Now open your hand. What do you see? Nothing. It's all gone. That's what so much of our lives consist of: "vanity" and "grasping for the wind".

There was a time I didn't think that way. I chased the American lie—wealth, pleasure, power, influence, toys, and grandiose accomplishments. These, I thought, will make me happy, fulfilled, and looked up to. These will make me "someone important".

By my mid-thirties, I was grasping for all I could get. I owned my own business, five vehicles, and a 3000 square-foot log home on forty park-like acres. I was head elder of the local church, active in over half a dozen sports, thrived on travel and recreation, and loved the party life.

But, oh, at what a cost! My health deteriorated, my marriage grew stale, my two boys hardly knew me, and my temper was on the rise. I found no genuine peace in any of it. All my hard-earned satisfaction vanished as quickly as the wind. It was sort of like eating potato chips. You can't eat just one, and when you've finished the whole bag, your gut aches.

What's the bottom line?

I finally began to feel what Solomon expressed: "I hated life because the work that was done under the sun was distressing to me, for all is vanity and grasping for the wind." Ecclesiastes 2:17

I wondered what else there was. What does have lasting value? Eventually I arrived at the same bottom line that Solomon did. "Here is the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep His commandments." (Ecclesiastes 12:13)

"Fear God"—that's character—a character restored to His likeness.¹ And "keep His commandments"—that's relationship—deep, lasting, transforming relationship with God and others.² That's the bottom line of life. All else is vanity and grasping for the wind.

So I woke up and sold our vehicles, our forty acres, our toys, and our business. We moved into a 960 square-foot log cabin in the quietness of the mountains of Montana. We began to experience the reality that "A little with peace is better than much in turmoil". Ecclesiastes 4:6 (Author's paraphrase.) A little with peace was our reward for cashing in our much in turmoil. I can't begin to tell you the benefits of a "little with peace". We began to find oneness with God and with each other.

So what's your bottom line? What are you spending your time and energy on? Are you grasping for the wind?

Without oneness with God, it's empty...

Many attend church, make assent to a platform of truth, give their tithes and offerings, and go on mission trips, but haven't learned how to abide in the Vine and receive His life. They are like dried up branches—powerless over their

¹ Job 28:28; Psalm 34:11-14; Proverbs 8:13.

² Luke 10:27; Romans 13:8-10.

hereditary and cultivated habits—possessing a form of godliness but lacking the fruits of the Spirit. How sad to gain all the head-knowledge and go through all the forms and motions without finding a daily, living experience in Jesus that brings depth to all our relationships! Yes, even church can become “vanity and grasping for the wind”. Without oneness with God, it’s empty!

I know men worth millions of dollars whose wives refuse to sleep with them. These men place a higher value on their trinkets, power, and influence than their wives—and their wives know it! What do they have? Nothing of lasting value. Nothing of real worth. Nothing but a fist-full of heartache.

Character + Relationship = Substance

Do your children know you and do you know them? Or are you strangers living under the same roof? Why do we bring them into this world and then give little time to them while we chase “vanity and grasping for the wind”? Are your news programs, internet searches, sports, videos and TV of more value than your own flesh and blood? You see, what you invest your time in shows what you value the most. Our actions always speak louder than our words or our profession.

Why do we chase the low priorities of life while negating what really counts? Apparently we haven’t reached Solomon’s bottom-line: that character and relationship are all that truly matter in life; that is, the character of God reproduced in and through us in our daily lives—and spelled out in our marriages, families, friendships, churches, and communities. This is what life is about! This is the life I choose to grasp onto! This is the life of God’s last day people who “keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.”³

My Model

There was One that modeled this life. He is the Man I follow.

He was born in a stable, the child of a peasant woman.

³ Revelation 14:12

He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty. Then for three years He traveled from place to place on foot as a minister.

He never owned a home. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place He was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. In other words, He never grasped for the wind. He had no credentials but His character. He pursued nothing but the Divine Purpose for which He was born.

While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against him. Most of His friends deserted Him. One of them denied Him. Another betrayed Him and turned Him over to His enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial—a trial instituted by His own church. He was nailed upon a cross between two thieves. While He was dying His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth – His robe. When He was dead, He was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Less attempted— more achieved

More than nineteen centuries have come and gone, and today He is the centerpiece of the human race and the One who connects us to God and each other.

I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed the seas; all the legislative bodies that ever set and all the

kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that one solitary life.⁴

Here was a Man who illustrated what gives life genuine value!

What about you? What about me? What will we spend and be spent for? Will we seek to grasp the wind? Or will we follow Him? *elm*

⁴ This essay was adapted from a sermon by Dr James Allan Francis in “The Real Jesus and Other Sermons” © 1926 by the Judson Press of Philadelphia (pp 123-124 titled “Arise Sir Knight!”).





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It's About Walking With God!

2009 Empowered Living Camp Meetings

June 11 - 14, 2009
Hood River, OR
(541) 399-3020
godsplan@gorge.net

Open House
July 22 - 25, 2009
Polebridge, MT
(406) 387-4333
office@EmpoweredLivingMinistries.org

April 23 - 26, 2009
Grizzly Flats, CA
(706) 398-7218
cobos@EmpoweredLivingMinistries.org

October 15 - 18, 2009
Roach, MO
(417) 661-6161
empoweredfamilies@sbcgoba.net

September 3 - 6, 2009
Cohutta Springs, GA
(706) 398-7218
cobos@EmpoweredLivingMinistries.org

December 3 - 6, 2009
High Springs, FL
(706) 375-1707
nancy@EmpoweredLivingMinistries.org

"Power for Living" is available free of charge, and is sent out quarterly by mail. If you or someone you know are not receiving it and wish to be added to our mailing list, please feel free to contact us. For information on any of the materials or events mentioned in the publication you can reach us at: 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