



A quarterly publication of Empowered Living Ministries October - December 2006

Dear friends,

Do you desire to walk with God like Enoch did? Do you long to see your children growing up untainted by today's degenerate morality and able to make a difference for good in the world? God's original plan for our homes is still His ideal. Country living, while not a solution to our problems, is a powerful tool to quiet down our lives that we may gain a vital, enduring connection with the One Who has all the solutions we need. This month's article, "**The Essence of Country Living**", presents a way of life you should begin to embrace wherever you currently find yourself.

We are delighted to offer you Jim's newly updated series, "**Why Country Living?**". Discover how country living provides not only a veil of protection and an ark of safety from what is soon to come upon this earth, but also is God's prescription for developing deeper spirituality.

This series also explores the practical side of country living to help you identify what makes up a perfect setting for *your* family, how to avoid certain real estate pitfalls, what to do next, and how to prepare to move.

Our Open House this past July was the best yet! We wish you could have been there if you were not! Those who came sampled the joys of a simple country home while also enjoying the encouragement of genuine Christian fellowship. For a little taste of being there, we invite you to enjoy the **Open House Photo Experience**. You can find a link to it on the "Speaking Schedule" page of our website. Consider planning to attend next year, July 24-28, 2007.

We are delighted to announce **two new camp meeting locations for 2007**: Lone Star Camp in Athens, Texas, March 29- April 1 and Camp Cedar Falls in Angelus Oaks, California, September 27-30. You can call Franklin and Kathy Cobos at (706) 398-7218 for information.

Still seeking Him!

Jim & Sally

SPEAKING SCHEDULE

October 12-15, 2006

Empowered Living Camp Meeting,
Bourbon, MO
Call (417) 661-6161 or
(888) 784-8453 for details
empoweredfamilies@sbcglobal.net

October 27 - 29, 2006

Romanian Church, Vienna, Austria
Call (011) 43-676-833-22-221 for details
doru.tarita@inode.at

November 3 - 5, 2006

German Church, Vienna, Austria
Call (011) 43-676-833-22-221 for details
r.han@adventisten.at

November 8 & 10 - 12, 2006

Amazing Discoveries--Nurnburg, Germany
Call 0911-518-15-49 for details
amazingdiscoveries@t-online.de

December 7 - 10, 2006

Empowered Living Camp Meeting
High Springs, FL
Call (706) 398-7218 for details

January 5 - 7, 2007

Miami Springs SDA Church
Miami Springs, FL
Call (305) 677-3014 or
(786) 942-3859 for details



"It's About Walking With God"



The Essence of Country Living

“Cursed is the man who trusts in man... he shall be like a shrub in the desert... Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD... he shall be like a tree planted by the waters...”

Jeremiah 17:5-8

I had just spent the day helping my oldest son, Matthew, peel logs for the new house he was building and I was tired—dead tired. But I had promised Janell that I would cut down some of those ugly stumps that had been left around the ministry office since the previous summer, so Sally and I stopped there on our way home.

I moved quickly from stump to stump—easy quick work for a spring evening! Sally and Janell followed not too far from me, chatting and watching me work. I approached one blackened stump. It was taller than most—perhaps 15-20 feet tall and 15-18 inches in diameter. It stood on a hillside just down from a small pile of full-length logs. I decided to cut it so that it would fall parallel to those logs already on the ground.

Because of its position, I had to stand downhill from it and a quiet thought introduced itself. *“Why don’t you have Sally and Janell help push this one over...”*

I groaned inwardly. “I am so tired and when I’m this tired I find communication draining. To get them to help me, I would have to shut down the chainsaw so they could hear me. Then I would have to get their attention and interrupt their conversation. Then I would have to wait 15 seconds for them to walk down here and take another 15 seconds to explain to them what to do. And they might not understand me the first time I tell them, so I would have to tell them again. And as tired as I am, I might be prone to irritation and I don’t want to hurt them. And after all that, I would have to start the chainsaw up again. No, Lord, I think it would be more efficient to just get it done my way.”

I positioned myself solidly below the tree and began cutting. *“Sally and Janell could stabilize the tree and make sure it falls the direction you want it to.”*

There was that annoying thought again. “Oh Lord, I’m just too tired to go through all that! Surely I’m capable of handling this on my own. Besides, it looks like those two are having a nice conversation and I don’t want to interrupt them.”

I continued on, the noise of the chainsaw momentarily drowning out my thoughts. At last, I was ready to make my final cut. I paused to reappraise the situation. Yes, the cut looks good and the tree should fall right where I want it to. No big deal!

“Jim, ask Sally and Janell to push the tree over when you make that last cut.”

This time I paused and thought

a moment. It probably would be better if they helped me. They could push the log at a 35 degree angle from where I was making the cut and ensure the log would land where I wanted it. But in my tiredness I told the Lord, “I just don’t want to interrupt them needlessly. This will be over in a moment. It’ll be alright.”

So, I proceeded to make the final cut. The next thing I knew, I was in the air flying backwards downhill. I managed somehow to fling the still-running chainsaw away from me before I connected with Mother Earth. Sally and Janell came running and Janell turned off the chainsaw.

“Jim, are you all right?” they gasped.

I lay there stunned. I couldn’t believe how quickly it had happened. Rather dazed, I got up and staggered over to examine the situation. The log had ended up about where I wanted it, but I had sure gotten a surprise in the process. Janell affirmed what I thought had happened. As the log fell, it twisted slightly and then bounced off the other logs. The butt of the tree had slammed me squarely in the stomach and chest, launching me on my unexpected trip through the air.

Checking myself over, I found no real injuries other than soreness. “Lord,” I apologized, “I’m sorry! I guess I preferred to get knocked over onto my minimus rather than be ‘inconvenienced’ by listening to You.”

Independence from God—it is deeply entrenched in every one of us. We are born with a bent to live life *our* way, to solve problems *our* way, to be in

charge. *This is the essence of city living.* City living is more than a location. It is a mindset that takes into account only what man can do, what man can create, what man can control. When God intrudes into the consciousness, He is pushed aside. “Leave me alone, God. I can take care of this myself.”

The first city mentioned in the Bible was built by Cain (Genesis 4:17)—the man who did things his own way. The next city was Babel. It was built by those determined to make themselves a name and to hide from God’s future judgments. (Genesis 11:4). Sodom and Gomorrah carried their independence from God to such extremes that God stepped in to draw the line.

City living is designed to crowd God out of the thoughts by bombarding your senses and stealing your time. Your eyes, your ears, and even your nose are assaulted with the false, the artificial. An intense, overwhelming passion for making money and spending money, the continuous whirl of excitement and pleasure seeking, the drive to “keep up with the Jones’s” saps your energy. Your spiritual sensitivity is blunted by the continuous onslaught of vice and crime. We begin to accept it as normal because it’s so common and we don’t recognize what it is doing to us.

Do you know how to kill a frog and make him enjoy it? You catch Freddy the Frog and put him in a pot of barely warm water—and he relaxes. It feels good! Then you turn the heat on ever so slowly and very gradually warm the water by degrees. He relaxes even more...and more...and more...until he has been cooked to death.

That is exactly what the Devil plans to do with us. He lures us with the idea that we can be “in the city, but not of the city”. He persuades us that we need to be in the city to evangelize it. He presents the convenience, the comforts, the advantages of city living. Before we realize it, we are caught up in the pressure cooker of city living. He wants us to be so complacent there that we actually relax while being spiritually cooked to death. He wants us to come to the place where a living, personal God seems disconnected, unnecessary, and unreachable.

But is the essence of city living found only in the city locations? Hardly.

The vast majority of country dwellers I have met live a city life style. They run their lives their way—and it is even harder in the country. It takes more time and costs more money to run to meet their own and everyone else’s expectations—shopping, social engagements, church activities—than if they lived in the city. They bring the city home with them through their radios, satellite TVs, the internet. They get wrapped up in building projects, fantastic gardens, gorgeous landscaping, great recreation—building a “good life”—but God is on the sidelines. A few leave all that behind, but develop a survivalist mentality where their primary focus is on building a self-protective fortress for the last days.

The essence of country living is learning dependence on God.

And the Devil is happy. He is happy just as long as he can keep us from facing the one issue in our lives that will make all the difference: “Who’s in charge?” As long as we avoid that issue and keep pursuing life—even a religious life in a country setting—as captain of our own ships, he knows we’ll stay in the pressure cooker.

The essence of true country living is learning dependence on God while lessening dependence on man. It’s discovering that the hole in your heart that every one of us has can be filled only with God. It’s opening wide your entire being with all your history, all your present, and all your future and putting God in charge. It means relinquishing control of all your options to Him.

Is the setting important? Undeniably! It is ten times harder, if not one hundred times harder, to experience this transition from a self-centered life to a God-centered life in a city environment. A quiet country setting is an inestimable tool to aid this process. In the country, you behold *God’s* creation—lofty mountains, rolling plains, verdant forests. In the country, you hear *God’s* music—the symphony of the birds, the gush of a stream, the whisper of the wind. In

the country, *God’s* invitation to you to slow down, to pause, to think finds less competition. The real issues of life begin to come into focus. He teaches you how to simplify—and offers real solutions that work. He shows you how to prioritize so that the things that really count get the attention they need. He addresses the wounds to your soul that city living has both deepened and hidden and applies His healing balm. The voice of God becomes more distinct. It was there all along, but had been drowned by the merry-go-round and the treadmill of your city life style.

In the country, the line of distinction becomes clear between the pure and the impure, the sensual and the wholesome, the artificial and the real. You begin to find that life is better outside of the pressure cooker. You value being sheltered from constant contact with sin, materialism, and worldliness. When you are required by duty to enter the city environment, the essence of country living is like a shield to guard your mind and beckon you back to the quiet.

The essence of country living is *learning* dependence on God. It is not a lesson learned, mastered, and then left behind. It is a life-long process that engages you more deeply, the longer you pursue it. The story I told at the beginning of this article helps to demonstrate that.

“Do you mean to tell me, Jim Hohnberger,” you might be thinking, “that after more than twenty years in a wilderness home, the essence of city living still enters the picture for you?”

Yes, it does. God is a freedom-loving God. He never forces us to depend on Him. We always have a choice and we learn through experience the value of listening to Him and trusting Him. “*Jim, I called to you three times. But you thought you knew better than Me. I’m here for you. Learn from this experience—you can learn to listen!*”

That’s the essence of country living—learning to listen to God and depend on Him. If you live in a city setting, should you move to a country setting? Listen to our newly updated “Why Country Living” series and ask God what He would have you do. If you’re living a city lifestyle in a country setting, begin to embrace the essence of country living now—today—don’t put it off for a better time. [HM](#)



"It's About Walking With God"

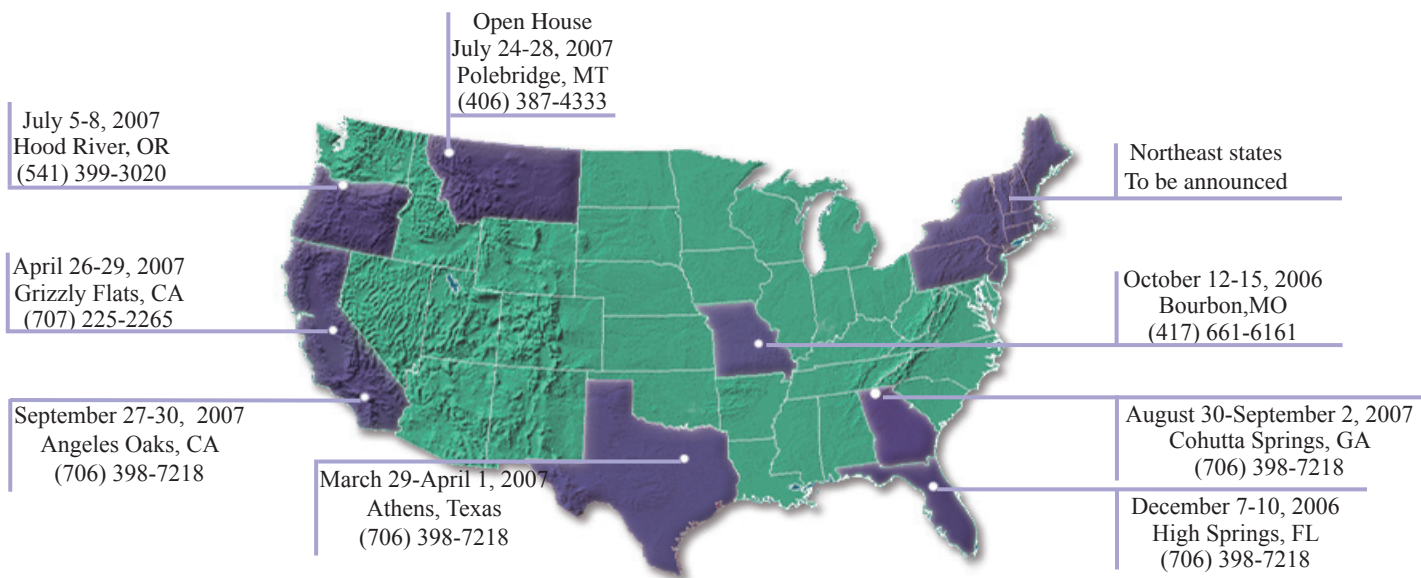
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