

Dear Friend of [Abiding Above](#),

August 2011

**P**lease pray for me as I travel to New Jersey and preach for a week at America's Keswick, a Christian conference center.

Since 1924, America's Keswick has been serving the Lord through Bible Conference ministry, and thousands of lives have been changed through the teaching of the Word of God and the Victorious Christian Life.

The purpose of America's Keswick is to model and teach Biblical victorious living in Christ Jesus, to provide an environment in which Biblical life transformation takes place, and to foster active personal involvement in the local church.

My topic will be "Abiding Above Life's Problems," where I will share how a person can abide above discouragement, anger, guilt, uncertainty, jealousy, and temptation.

You may log into their web site at [www.americaskeswick.org](http://www.americaskeswick.org) and watch the conference through live streaming August 15-18. I will be preaching the morning sessions this year beginning at 9:30 AM Eastern Time. This would be 8:30 AM Memphis time.

This past month I had the privilege to preach at Covenant Baptist Church in Collierville where I shared my "Personal Testimony" that morning, and that evening I preached from Romans 7 – "Self Our Own Worst Enemy." God truly blessed our time together.

I also closed out Vacation Bible School for Berclair Baptist Church with an evangelistic service where we saw 13 children pray to receive Christ. Each one received a Discipleship Lesson and will be discipled through the mail.

I recently received a letter from a listener. He is a U.S. Army Colonel (Retired).

*"Reverend, I have the need to get back to the Baptist church to hear the word, but I have a real problem with the way Baptists are running their churches these days. I have been told it is a sign of the times. That the church must appeal to the masses or they will not attend. I look at it from another perspective. I consider it a lack of respect, in fact, contempt for God. They treat church just like they do any other place they go to – school, ball games, or the grocery. What happened to the attitude that God was special, church was special, and we showed respect for that by doing things at church that we did not do elsewhere? We put on our best clothes, we were on our best behavior, and we acted with reverence."*

He closed his letter in this way, *“Reverend, I’m 60, not 85, so I don’t consider myself detached from today’s generation. As bad as I need and want to hear the word preached the way a Baptist minister delivers it, I’m not certain that I can tolerate the worldly actions being conducted in the Southern Baptist churches in 2011. I am struggling with these issues.”*

My friend, there continues to be a ground swell of people that feel this way all across our nation. Pray with me that these people who feel alone and looking for a godly place to worship will not give up and forsake the gathering of the brethren.

You may resonate with this man. Don’t give up. Keep praying and seeking a church environment that is healthy. Pray also that God would raise up men to pastor churches God’s way and not the world’s way. Pray that more churches would be planted as they practice spiritual multiplication. This is the answer.

I want to remind us all, no one can stop or cause us not to grow spiritually because of where we attend on Sunday. We must remember, there are 6 more days in a week. There is plenty of time for personal Bible study and prayer in the quietness and comfort of your home.

Miles J. Stanford, the author of *The Complete Green Letters*, said, *“God’s basic ingredient for spiritual growth is need.”*

I believe this, my friend. Could it be this spiritual drought that is across our land is God lovingly making us thirsty for Him again?

I know it is strange, with all of the activity we have in today’s church, all of the books and workbooks that fly off the press to help the Christian, but somehow our land is thirsty for God.

It reminds me of a verse found in **Revelation 3:16-17** – *“So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.”*

I agree these are stern words from Christ.


So, as we look about us for a standard, there is only one place to look and it is Christ. He is our standard. The church is made up of individual believers in Christ who should ... *“ought himself also to walk just as He walked.”* **1 John 2:6**

A friend of mine commented on our last newsletter and reminded me of how important it is to **renew our minds**. Remember, what God’s word teaches us in **Titus 3:5** – *“...but according to His own mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.”*

A renewed mind is evident and it will be the exact opposite of the character, conduct, and conversation of this present world system.

Let’s stay in God’s Holy Word. Let’s stay led by His Spirit. Let’s stay simple. It’s OK.

Abiding above,



Chris S. Hodges  
President  
Abiding Above Ministries  
Colossians 3:1-3