



Abundant Living Ministries

Encouraging Christian Living since 1978

April 2019

As I stepped into our family room, grandson Jonah turned his head in my direction and sniffed, commenting, "Grandpa just came in... I can smell him!"

That caught my attention! I wasn't wearing cologne and my deodorant was supposedly odorless. "Really, Jonah?" I hesitantly inquired. "Do I smell bad?" He laughed and kindly reassured me, "Oh, no, Grandpa. You don't smell bad... it's just your Grandpa smell!"

Jonah happens to be blind, so I told myself that God had obviously greatly amplified his sense of smell to compensate for the lack of vision... after all, none of the other grandchildren have ever seemed to smell me walking into the room. (But I must admit I sniffed my underarms a few times, just to make sure I was okay! 😊)

The point of the story, for the purpose of this newsletter, is that we do smell. And, HOPEFULLY we smell both *pleasing* AND *horrible!* (What am I getting at??)

My attention was caught when our pastor taught from 2 Corinthians chapter two: *But thanks be to God, who ... through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of Him. For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life.*

In our ABF (Sunday School class), we discussed the text further. So... I am AN AROMA... I smell! We chuckled about certain smells we dislike (vomit, poopy diapers, dirty socks, manure-spreading were mentioned) and others we really enjoy (fresh-cut grass, bacon, cedar chest, coffee, buttered popcorn). But we moved from laughter to serious thought as we recognized that we are TO GOD the very **AROMA OF CHRIST**... NOT ONLY among those who are being saved BUT ALSO among those who are perishing.

To those who are being saved we are the very fragrance of life. Oh, I like that picture... the sweet-smelling fragrance of life! BUT, that's only half the equation. To some others... to those who are perishing... we are the **smell of death!** I don't like being close to a stench, much less thinking that I AM THE STENCH!

And yet, this is precisely the picture presented through this scripture.

Considering many issues being discussed, debated, argued, and legislated in our culture these days (I'm referring to issues on which God has spoken clearly and on which He has given clear instructions), it seems that we followers of Christ could become more engaged, sharing TRUTH... the truth of the KNOWLEDGE OF HIM!

We followers of Jesus sometimes so want to "smell good" that we refrain from sharing TRUTH... lest others sniff, grimace, and pinch their nose. To those who reject TRUTH, we may be, in fact, "the very smell of death!"

May we (I'm exhorting myself!) be proactive, kind, clear, and bold in sharing the knowledge of HIM. Yes, we will smell! Both nice and horrible! And that's good!



So, let's share TRUTH... in LOVE!

John (for Sharon and the rest at ALM)

Don't Tempt Me!

Have you ever been tempted to do something wrong? Of course you have! Everybody has! A temptation is simply the desire to do what is wrong.

Temptations come in all sizes and shapes. One person may feel the urge to steal something or harm someone. Another person feels like screaming at their child or wants to seek revenge on someone who has hurt them. These may be "normal" feelings, but they are not feelings that we can allow ourselves to hang onto.

Feelings such as anger, discouragement, jealousy, or pride can arise in any of us. Although we are not always able to control the thought, feeling, or desire that suddenly "pops" into our head, we definitely can do something about whether that thought **remains** in our mind... and we most definitely determine whether that feeling will dictate our words and behavior.

The Bible teaches that we are to *take thoughts captive in obedience to Christ* (2 Corinthians 10:5). In other words, we decide where to send our thoughts... and when we are dealing with temptation, this is absolutely imperative!

Is it a sin to be tempted? No... The Bible says that Jesus was tempted in all points as we are, but He never sinned (Hebrews 4:15). Try utilizing the following five strategies to be victorious over temptation just as Jesus was!

1. When you recognize that you are wanting to think, feel or act in ways you shouldn't, talk to the Lord about it. Tell Him the struggle you are having. Jesus did this in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:39) and even when He was on the cross (Matthew 27:46). He admitted how He was struggling.

2. Confess Scriptural truth that applies to your situation. The Word of God is like a sword (Ephesians 6:17) which can help you win your spiritual battles... and temptation is definitely a spiritual battle. So for example, if tempted to watch a movie you know is filled with ungodly behavior, quote Psalm 101:3, *I will set no wicked thing before my eyes*. If tempted to worry and fret about an upcoming task, repeat Philippians 4:13, *I can do all things through Him who gives me strength*. Use this powerful weapon that God has given to defeat temptation.

3. Reaffirm (out loud, if possible!) that you are the Lord's, that Satan has no power over you and that you choose to follow God, not your wrong inclinations. Although Satan definitely may place temptation in your path, it is often the person's own human nature that causes them to be tempted (James 1:14). Thank the Lord for giving you strength to resist both Satan's attempt to ensnare you and your own human sinful desires. *Submit yourself to God, resist the devil and he will flee* (James 4:7).

4. Move quickly away from the source of the temptation. For example, if you are tempted to send an angry text to someone who has hurt you, put down your phone, go to another room and busy yourself with some other activity. Scripture tells us to *flee* wrong desires (1 Tim. 6:11, 2 Timothy 2:22). That means to run the other direction as fast as possible!

5. Choose to put your mind on something good (Philippians 4:8). If you think about doing wrong long enough, you will end up going astray (Proverbs 14:22). So be ruthless in replacing tempting thoughts with wholesome ones.

The good news about temptation? ***No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.*** (1Cor. 10:13).

The Lord wants His children to not be overcome by temptation but to be the overcomer! So tap into the power of His Spirit and His amazing Word! Be the winner over temptation today!



Sharon Charles

Lay Christian Counselor Training

6 Monday evenings: Oct 7-Nov 11, 2019

7:00-9:00 PM

\$120 per person or \$150 per couple

Designed for those who wish to be more effective people helpers within the Christian community.

Please register no later than September 20th by calling the ALM office or emailing Chris at info@AbundantLivingMinistries.org

Open Arms

Childbirth Class

Five Consecutive Thursdays

July 11-August 8, 2019

Taught by an experienced childbirth educator, this class covers the same information offered in a hospital course, but includes a distinctively-Christian perspective. You will meet and connect with other expectant couples and gain many practical helps as you prepare for a great labor and delivery. There is no cost for this course. Please register by contacting the ALM office.

Contact Information

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