



# Abundant Living Ministries

*Encouraging Christian Living since 1978*

May 2019

Sharon and I often have the privilege of reading to our grandchildren from a children's devotional book. Today's story was titled "Better Listen to Jesus" and the accompanying text was, "God the Father said, Jesus is my dear Son: Listen to Him!" I was reading to our son Tim's three children so I told them this would be like me (Grandpa) saying to them, "Tim is my dear son; so you be sure to listen to him and to obey him!" The children got the idea easily!

The stories in this book are pretty basic... they *are* written for children, but they often are serious enough to get me thinking. After this particular story, throughout the day, I thought about the struggle we sometimes have to *do what Jesus says*. Why do we sometimes resist, rather than immediately and wholeheartedly following Christ's instructions?

This dilemma brings to mind Sharon's (my wife's) life story. As a Bible-College student, she was battling with life issues and making some poor choices in the process. An observant professor called her into his office and asked what was going on.

After listening attentively and compassionately, he asked if she wanted to know her real problem. Sharon was quite impressed that the prof had so quickly analyzed her situation. She was curious to hear his diagnosis.

His comment was to-the-point and, actually, quite simple. "Sharon, your basic problem... the basic issue you are struggling with... is whether you do or do not **TRULY BELIEVE** that God **IS** who He says He is."



He continued, "If you truly believe that God **IS** who He says He is... then you will dare to take Him at His word. You will dare to trust Him with your future. You will dare to believe that **HIS** plan for your future is better and more trustworthy than your own plan. You will dare to obey Him and walk in His ways."

As they were concluding their conversation, the professor added, "People figure this out when they get really desperate. And, frankly, I don't think you are desperate enough." Sharon walked out offended by that last comment BUT could not shake it off. A few weeks later, in the middle of the night, her roommate fast asleep, Sharon sat looking out the dormitory window onto the grimy parking lot. "Lord," she said, "I think I'm desperate. I want to believe Your every word. I don't really know how to do that other than to start **ACTING as though I believe You.**"

That was a turnaround in Sharon's life.

That struggle... to trust and believe and follow and obey... is not all bad. I've often said, "It is in the struggles of life that we learn the most!" We will learn that **He is ABSOLUTELY trustworthy. Every instruction He gives us is for our benefit... here on earth and in preparation for eternity!**

So, as God instructed, let's listen to Him!

John (for Sharon and the rest at ALM)



Every day we face hundreds of questions that require us to make a choice... Will I get out of bed now or sleep for another 15 minutes? Will I wear the white or blue shirt? Will I stop at the stop sign or drive through? Will I change the baby's wet diaper now or put it off for an hour or two? Most of those decisions are made without giving much thought... they have become almost automatic. And many of the decisions are made, regardless of whether or not we really want to perform the task. Yet, when it comes to spiritual choices, we often let our feelings dictate our behavior, rather than simply doing what we know Jesus would want us to do. Joshua once challenged his people, *Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve (Joshua 24:15)*. The same challenge applies to us each day. Consider some of the following choices and whether or not your mind is made up to obey God's instructions or your own emotional inclinations?

Will I check out social media for the next 15 minutes or read my Bible? *Man shall not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4)*.

Will I get back at someone who wronged me or ask the Lord to bless that person? *Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you (Luke 6:27,28)*.

Will I worry about my problems or give them to the Lord to carry for me? *Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you (1 Peter 5:7)*.

Will I fear what might happen to me or my loved ones or trust God to look after us. *When I am afraid, I put my trust in You (Psalm 56:3)*.

Will I put myself down and think that I'm not loved or important or be encouraged because God says He loves me? *Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows (Luke 12:7)*.

Will I spend my spare minutes texting or reading social media blurbs or talking to the Lord? *Come near to God and He will come near to you (James 4:8)*.

Will I grumble and complain about little daily disappointments or express gratitude for the many blessings I enjoy? *Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, "children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation." Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky (Philippians 2:13-15)*.

Will I stare at that sensual picture or listen to that song with the raunchy lyrics or fix my eyes and ears on pure, wholesome images and sounds? ... *whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things (Philippians 4:8)*.

I have noticed that when I get in the habit of allowing my feelings to dictate my actions, everything in life seems harder. I feel increasingly weak and powerless, a victim of my own flighty whims. It seems like a chore to even think about doing what is right. But when I ask the Holy Spirit to help me choose His better ways, I sense more purpose, peace and joy even in the midst of difficult circumstances. And as I repeatedly decide His way, in spite of my emotions, it gets easier to make the right choice the next time I'm faced with a dilemma. Are you facing some tough decisions today? Ask the Lord to fill you with His power and then choose to follow His instruction, even if you don't feel like it. You'll soon discover it is hands-down the best way to live!



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](mailto: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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