



Abundant Living Ministries

Encouraging Christian Living since 1978

October 2019

We just celebrated our 46th anniversary, enjoying a quick weekend trip to Sharon's Canadian home country (Hamilton, Ontario), visiting with some of her relatives and friends. Forty-six years! I can say, forty-six GOOD years.

In those years, we've faced difficulties and challenges of many types: physical, financial, spiritual, and emotional. Each time we weather another storm... each time we make it through another tough situation, we come out the other side more sensitive to others' needs, more sympathetic and understanding of their pain. I've also said that I come out the other side with fewer "pat" answers. Situations and challenges don't always have simple 1-2-3 solutions.

But God is always with us! Mom said so often, "God never promised us a smooth sailing. But He DID promise us a safe landing!"

Bottom line - Sharon and I recognize that there is no better classroom for the Lord to do His teaching than that of our marriage and family. The one I love the most sees me at my worst. What's inside is revealed... it comes out. And, as we **do life together**, we learn, we grow, we mature... we become more and more like HIM! (See Romans 8:28,29.)

Marriage is a wonderful thing! And yet, somebody recently said to us, "I would like to be married but I'm now old enough and experienced enough to see that NOT being married is better than being in a BAD marriage. Hmm!"

So, let me ask - Are you... or your child... or your friends, engaged or approaching engagement? It would be wise and helpful to participate in "premarital counseling." Usually following a curriculum, this is often offered by one's home church, and often consists of 4-8 sessions with the counselor (perhaps the pastor, but often a married couple). Together, the couple and counselor discuss significant topics in preparation for God-honoring, intimate, meaningful marriage.

We (here at ALM) think that, in most cases, it is best for an engaged couple to do their premarital sessions with somebody from their own church, thereby building an ongoing relationship which will carry into the years ahead. When this is not possible, please know that **ALM offers premarital help**.



Most of our premarital work is handled by **Joe & Lynn Falvey** who have enjoyed many years of relating to engaged couples. Read more about them at **AbundantLivingMinistries.org**.

Perhaps your son or daughter is not yet engaged but is in a serious dating relationship, wondering if "this one is the one." Or maybe they are not yet in any serious relationship, but want to "do their homework" ahead of time. In any of these situations, they could schedule some time with Joe and Linn. They can discuss what to look for in a spouse, how to prepare themselves to be a wonderful husband or wife, and how to discern God's direction concerning this so-very-important decision.

To schedule, simply call our office (717) 626-9575.

Let's do all we can to promote healthy marriage!

John Charles (for Sharon and the rest at ALM)

P.S. Sharon's Christmas book, which I mentioned in the last letter, is available. See the back of this letter for details.



*Psalm 26:2 Test me, LORD, and try me,
examine my heart and my mind...*

Doctors encourage their patients to practice preventive healthcare. They urge regular check-ups in order to catch danger signs before they become serious physical problems. Similarly, a **faith** check-up is also a good idea! So take a few minutes to give some introspective thought to the following questions...

What is the role of **God** in my life? Do I believe there is a God, and if so, what kind of relationship does He have with me?

What do I think **sin** is? Are there things in my life that I know God would call sin? What are they? What, if anything, do I need to do about sin in my life?

What do I believe about the **Bible**? Is it true? Do I obey Biblical principles, even if they seem unpopular or counter-cultural? How can I gain more knowledge of God's Word?

Who is my **biggest enemy**? When that individual's name comes to my mind, how do I react? Do I pray for that person, or struggle with resentment? How quickly and consistently do I extend forgiveness to those who wrong me?

What is my **emotional condition**? How do I respond to negative emotions... fear, anger, sorrow, worry, etc.? Do I regularly utilize the power of God's Spirit and His Word to maintain healthy control of these emotions?

What subjects occupy **my thoughts** throughout the day? How disciplined am I in choosing what I will think about? Do I regularly focus my mind on Jesus and enjoy mental conversation with Him? What could I be doing to more consistently win my mind battles?

How do I view and manage **finances and possessions**? Do I believe that God should be consulted about how I spend money? Are there some people in hardship that I should be helping in some practical way?

What do I believe about **prayer**? Does God really hear when I talk to Him? What could I do to increase my conversation time with God?

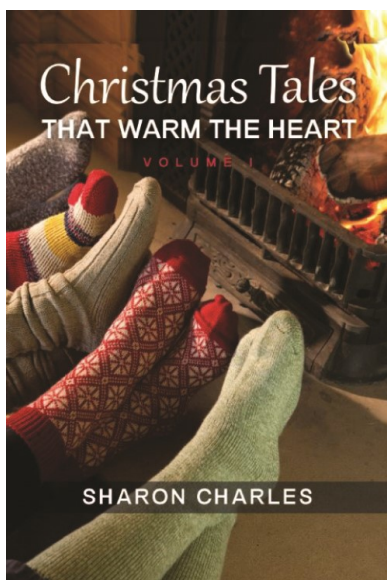
How important is my **family** to God? What am I doing to pass on a lasting spiritual legacy to my children and grandchildren?

"An ounce of prevention," doctors say, "is worth a pound of cure." Such sound advice can be well-applied to spiritual vitality. Why not do a "healthy heart" check-up today? Then commit to following up with the helpful changes prescribed by the Great Physician. You'll be glad you did!



Written by Sharon Charles

**now
available**



Christmas Tales that Warm the Heart

Everyone loves a good story...especially at Christmas! And especially when that story touches the heart! In this collection of Yuletide Tales, imagination is charmed and faith strengthened. Young and old will revisit Jesus' birth and its timeless lessons along with Yumi, Annie and Charlie, whiskered Walt, and many other fascinating characters! So, gather by the hearth with friends and family, or curl up alone in your favorite chair.

Let *Christmas Tales* warm your heart and enrich your holiday traditions!

AVAILABLE ON AMAZON

**\$12.99 paperback
\$9.99 e-Book (Kindle)**

**ALSO AVAILABLE
AT THE ALM OFFICE
\$11.00 paperback
(plus shipping & handling)**

Contact Information

Address:
Website:
Email:
Phone:

541 W. 28th Division Highway, Lititz, PA 17543
www.AbundantLivingMinistries.org **Facebook:** www.facebook.com/alm4u
info@AbundantLivingMinistries.org
(717) 626-9575