



# Abundant Living Ministries

*Encouraging Christian Living since 1978*

March 2020

Sharon always asks me to talk with the expectant dads on the last evening of their *Prepared Childbirth* classes. These young men are eagerly awaiting the arrival of their firstborn child.

I started my presentation enthusiastically, with a big smile, "Congratulations on your first child!" The guys smiled back at me. I continued, "Let me tell you... your life will never be the same!" They chuckled, unsure of exactly what I meant. I could have added... but I didn't, "No, really, men, you have no idea how your life is about to change."

I started explaining. "When Sharon and I had our first child, I wanted to be a great dad. I wanted our marriage and our home to be God-honoring in such a way that our children would also learn to love God and strongly desire to walk in His ways. And we wanted to see our children teach their children the same."

I commented that, in my efforts to be a good dad, I sacrificed in ways I did not know I would need to sacrifice. I was stretched in ways I had not imagined. The changes affected my use of time, the spending of our money, even the private time I enjoyed with my wife. Indeed, life was not the same.

By this time, the young dads were looking a little more serious.

I then added the most-important reassurance. "The youngest of our children is now 35. Those years of parenting our little ones are long gone. But now, Sharon and I see that all our children love the Lord, enjoy close friendship with Jesus... and teach their children the same. The same kind of relationship with the Lord and life of faith in Christ we treasure is now being passed on to our children and grandchildren."

Then came the clincher, "When I see our children and grandchildren today, committed to Christ, I realize that **I made no sacrifice at all!**" Oh, sure, I sacrificed. And so did Sharon. But... in the real scheme of things... it was so worth it! It's as though we didn't give up anything at all. I think you get the point.

Nods and smiles were back on the guys' faces. They understood what I was saying.

So, in this letter, I guess I'm writing to all of us parents and grandparents. What a powerful privilege the Lord has given to us... to model the joyful life we have through Jesus; to tell and explain the Good News to our families; to train in the ways of the Lord; to encourage the next generation in their own precious relationship with Christ. What a joy... how rewarding it will be to see our children discovering that His ways are always the BEST ways. He can be trusted. He loves THEM... every day and all day long.

So parents... keep up the good effort!

John (for Sharon and the rest at ALM)



P.S. As we come to your mind, please pray for the ministry here at ALM. The six of us (counselors) were together yesterday for our regular training time. We prayed that the Lord will give us discernment and sensitivity... that we will see **God's powerful hand** as individuals experience HIS help with their problem situations. God knows. God cares. And God fixes!

Our BIG thanks to those of you who give financially toward this ministry. Perhaps some others, who have not yet contributed, would want to participate in this way. ALM has no fee schedule for the counseling services... so it is highly dependent on both the prayers and financial gifts of people just like you. Thank you so much!



# When the Well is Dry

## Question:

I've been a Christian for years. But I have to admit that right now I feel pretty "blah" about my faith. Any suggestions for restoring the excitement and zeal I once felt about spiritual things?

## Response:

It is not uncommon for those who have walked with the Lord for many years to go through some "desert" times. They find they just aren't experiencing the thrill or satisfaction of a close relationship with Jesus. They plod on, often out of duty and commitment, but lack real joy. So, what you are facing is common to many Christians. Try some of the following ideas to reignite the passion for Christ you used to have.

♦ **Be completely honest with the Lord.** Go to a private place and tell Him exactly how you've been feeling. If you've had doubts, tell Him about them. If you're struggling with questions, admit that openly. Ask Him to help rekindle your faith.

♦ **Check relationships.** Are you holding any grudges? Are relationships with family and friends strong? If you are harboring unforgiveness, it will sap your spiritual energy. Decide to do whatever possible to restore broken relationships.

♦ **Whether you "feel" repentant or not, it is always right to confess your sin of luke-warmness.** Ask Him to help restore the joy of your salvation. Finally, thank Him in advance for what He is going to do in your life. Thanksgiving often jump-starts faith.

♦ **Change your spiritual routines, or develop new ones.** For example, if you usually pray while sitting in the family room, try kneeling to pray in your bedroom. Consider raising your hands toward heaven as you pray. If you nor-

mally pray silently, start praying out loud or writing down your prayers. Try going for a walk each day, talking to the Lord as you walk. Just getting out of your "rut" may make a big difference.

♦ **Do a spiritual housecleaning.** Have you allowed a lot of ungodly influences into your life? Try turning off the TV for a month (or even a week). Do a social media fast. Decide to spend as much time in daily Scripture reading as you do on the computer.

♦ **Saturate your environment with Godly influences...** soothing hymns, uplifting praise music, challenging Christian literature. Post Bible verses in visible places. Work on memorizing some new verses, or brushing up on passages you learned years ago. Carry Scripture cards with you and glance at them several times a day. Read them out loud if possible.

♦ Could it be that you've been giving out so much, you need to be re-filled yourself? **Consider attending a Christian conference, seminar or retreat...** maybe even a cruise... where you'll receive solid Biblical teaching. An inspiring event like this may be just the refreshment you need.

♦ **Go on a fast.** Disciplining our physical appetites has an amazing capacity to replenish spiritual strength.

♦ **Read a Psalm out loud every day.** David (who wrote most of the Psalms) often dealt with doubts and questions, yet was very honest with the Lord about his questions, but in the end, would always reaffirm the truth. The Lord didn't scold him for his questions, but in fact, later referred to him as "a man after the Lord's heart."

♦ **Do a personal spiritual retreat.** Go to a cabin for the weekend. Or rent a room at a local hotel. Use the time

to talk to the Lord about how you're feeling and ask for His assistance.

◆ **Read an inspirational book.** Consider a biography of a great Christian. Often men and women of God went through the kind of "dry" time you are experiencing. Discovering how they coped can be a tremendous help and encouragement.



◆ **Get a physical checkup...** are you getting good nutrition, sufficient rest and exercise and generally caring for your body? Is it time for a check-up with your family doctor? Sometimes sickness or poor health habits can be contributors to spiritual weakness.

◆ **Spend time outdoors.** Soaking in the beauty of God's creation helps remind yourself that the same powerful God who made the universe still loves and cares for you.

◆ **Make a list of spiritual goals** for your life, and develop an action plan to get you started on a path to reaching those goals.

◆ **Harness support of other Christians.** Join a Bible study or prayer group. Share how you have been feeling

and ask them to pray for you and cheer you on in your spiritual goals.

◆ **Get involved in a service project through your church or community.** Or simply look for a needy person you can help in some practical way. The Bible promises that *he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed* (Proverbs 11:25). Serving others has powerful potential to restore spiritual joy.

◆ **Take an axe to your schedule if necessary.** There are many wonderful Christians who fill up their time with so many "good" ministry projects, that they become burned out. Jesus knew the importance of withdrawing to a quiet, private place to spend time with His Father. If He needed that, we certainly must need it as well.

**Finally, be patient...** Scripture promises that *they that wait on the Lord will renew their strength (Isaiah 40:31). God hasn't written the last chapter on you... you are a work in progress. As you persevere in spite of unsettled feelings, you can be assured that the Lord will bring you out of your "desert" into a place of renewed passion and joy! Don't despair, because the best is yet to come!*



Written by  
Sharon Charles

## Upcoming Events at ALM

### Lay Christian Counselor Training

*For those who wish to be more effective people-helpers.*

**6 Monday evenings:  
Oct 5 - Nov 9, 2020 7:00-9:00 PM  
\$120 per person or \$150 per couple  
(cost includes textbooks)**

Call the ALM office or email Chris at  
[info@AbundantLivingMinistries.org](mailto:info@AbundantLivingMinistries.org)

### Open Arms

Childbirth Class

Five Consecutive Thursdays

**April 9 - May 7, 2020 7:00 pm**

Covering the important information offered in a hospital course, *Open Arms* adds a distinctively-Christian perspective. You will enjoy meeting other expectant couples as you gain practical help in preparing for a great labor and delivery. There is no cost for this course.

**Register by contacting the ALM office.**

## Contact Information

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# Scriptures for Parents and Children

## Children as a Blessing

Psalms 127:3 Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a reward from him.

Psalms 127:4-5 Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them.

## Parent Responsibilities

Ephesians 6:4 Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

Colossians 3:21 Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.

Proverbs 19:18 Discipline your son, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to his death.

Proverbs 23:24 The father of a righteous man has great joy; he who has a wise son delights in him.

Proverbs 29:15 The rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to himself disgraces his mother.

Deut. 6:6-9 These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Proverbs 1:8-9 Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching. They will be a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck.

Proverbs 22:6 Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.

## Child Responsibilities

Ephesians 6:1-3 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother—which is the first commandment with a promise—that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.

Proverbs 1:8-9 Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching. They will be a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck.

## God's Training

Proverbs 3:11-12 My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.

Hebrews 12:5-11 My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son

