



Abundant Living Ministries

Encouraging Christian Living since 1978

May 2020

*...the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear Him, on those whose hope is in His unfailing love, to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine.
We wait in hope for the LORD; He is our help and our shield.
In Him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in His holy name.
May your unfailing love be with us, LORD, even as we put our hope in You. (Psalm 33:18-22 NIV)*

How reassuring to ponder God's protection and provision! May HIS name be praised! May this be a time when, by our words and actions, we "give an answer to anyone who asks us about the hope we have." (1 Peter 3:15 NIV)

Counseling and encouragement have continued here at ALM throughout the COVID-19 situation although we have made adjustments in HOW we do that. I imagine that further changes are still ahead as we respond to this challenge.

We sense it is appropriate to now resume "in person" meetings with counselees who desire this. In Pennsylvania's April 28 publication uploaded by Governor Tom Wolf, "**Religious Organizations**" as well as "**Social Assistance/Individual and Family Services**" are authorized to continue physical operations.

We understood this to be the case from the beginning of the coronavirus situation, but temporarily discontinued in-person meetings, seeking to demonstrate a respectful and cooperative response to our leaders' warnings.

As we now enter the "recovery phase," we are offering our services in several different ways, allowing the counselee to choose the method they prefer.



As we resume **in-person meetings**, we will maintain safe distances. We purpose to use appropriately-spaced seating, and to avoid physical touch.

I've been so looking forward to again sitting with new friends, hearing their story... talking, laughing, crying, praying, encouraging, together.



For those who prefer avoiding in-person meetings, we have been offering **video sessions**, utilizing the Zoom platform. Clients need a device such as a laptop, computer (with camera and speakers), or tablet. Smartphones can work although a larger screen is preferable. Of course, internet service is required.

I was hesitant to use this video technology, but it was pretty easy... even the very first time.



We can also use the **phone**. I personally like to see the others' facial expressions but we want to use whatever means the client prefers... and the phone is certainly a simple option.

We don't know what you are dealing with, specifically, during this time. Perhaps a lay-off from work, perhaps sickness among friends, loneliness at home, fear of the future. But God knows... and God cares!

We deeply appreciate the financial support you've been providing. Although ALM's gift income has declined during this time, we recognize that you perhaps are also facing financial challenge and not able to practice your normal generosity. Be assured that we, just like you, look to our Father as our Provision, and our Protector. He loves and cares for us all!

John (for Sharon and the rest at ALM)



QUESTION: I want to live for Jesus, but I mess up so often. I'm afraid to even make any new commitments or promises to Him, because I know I will just slip up again. Should I give up and resign myself to spiritual failure?

RESPONSE: One of the most encouraging themes in the Bible is God's **unfailing** mercy and compassion. Lamentations 3:22-23 (NLT) says, *The faithful love of the LORD never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning.*

Consider the toddler about to take his first steps. Mother steadies the child between her knees. Dad is only two feet away, "Come here! Come to Daddy! That's it! You can do it!" Very hesitantly, the child slides one foot forward, toward Father. PLOP! Down he goes, on his diapered bottom. A parent never responds, "Oh, just give it up! You'll never learn to walk!" Instead, Dad quickly picks up the child, plac-

ing him right back with Mom and coaxes again, "Come here! You can do it! That's it!"

Dad and Mom don't scold their child for falling 25 times. WHY? Because they "see" their child learning not only to walk, but also to run, hop, skip, jump, roller blade, and mountain climb! Their focus is not on the *fall* but on the growth and skills that are developing. They understand that some stumbles and falls are part of the learning curve.

God, the PERFECT Father, has a similar view of us. Does He want us to stumble, fail, or fall? Of course not. He knows that when we mess up, we hurt ourselves, and often others as well. But His focus is not on the fall. He truly sees our future growth and success. Extending His arms, he cheers us on... "So you stumbled and fell. Let me help you up. You can do it! Grab my hand and hold on tight."

The child of God who gets up again and again and again, trusting the Lord for His supernatural help and power, is the one who makes steady progress with fewer and fewer falls.

The Bible talks about this principle in Proverbs 24:16, *The godly may trip seven times, but they will **get up** again. But one disaster is enough to overthrow the wicked.*

Also in Jeremiah 8:4, *This is what the LORD says: "When people fall down, don't they **get up** again? When they discover they're on the wrong road, don't they turn back?"*

When great Biblical heroes like Moses, Joshua, Elijah, and Isaiah fell on their faces before God, distraught over their own sinfulness and inadequacy, God's response was consistent... "**Get up!**" He says the same thing to you and me today! So, whatever steps He is asking us to take, may we not delay. May we reach for His hand, **get up** and get going with His help!

Sharon
Charles



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)**

To register, call the ALM office or email Chris at info@AbundantLivingMinistries.org

Open Arms

Childbirth Class

Five Consecutive Thursdays

July 9 - Aug 6, 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.

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