



Abundant Living Ministries

Encouraging Christian Living since 1978

June 2020

Some of you have not heard from us since March. In that letter, I referenced the *powerful privilege* the Lord has given to us parents and grandparents... 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.

Little did I realize, when writing that letter, how many of us parents and grandparents would suddenly be given some HUGE blocks of time to spend with our little ones. Schools were cancelled. Some of us were laid off, or worked from home. In the midst of the stay-at-home regulations, the Lord gave us a huge blessing! I don't mean to trivialize the financial issues related to the economic slowdown, BUT... I imagine that a lot more families have been enjoying dinner together, playing table games, reading bedtime stories, even taking some family walks together.

You will enjoy the **Questions Families Ask** article on the inside pages of this letter. Sharon offers numerous ideas for making the summer weeks count as we continue our increased time with the children.

We six counselors have ourselves been encouraged as we've been meeting with others, using our phones and also... are you ready... we all learned to use ZOOM to video-chat! I suppose we demonstrated that you CAN teach an old dog a new trick!

We are now back to in-person meetings although we honor the request of the client, if they prefer ZOOM or the phone. I always prefer to engage with the other person face-to-face, but, hey... we'll use whatever means we need to use, if we can be of help and encouragement!

As we bump into friends, we are asked if ALM is "in operation." We sure are! Feel free to spread that message to your friends, as we anticipate there are and will be quite a number of people facing unusual challenges... perhaps confronting new fears, as a result of recent events. Our office number is (717) 626-9575.



Be blessed, and... Be a blessing!

John (for Sharon and the rest at ALM)

P.S. I do not mean to badger, beg, or bait... only to inform... and to ask for prayer. The \$\$ gifts received by ALM, to cover its ministry expenses, have dropped significantly over this last quarter. I realize that many of you may, right now, be on reduced income and not able to practice your normal generosity. Understood. But perhaps you can make it a matter of prayer, asking the Lord to provide all that is needed here at ALM. We, just like you, recognize that GOD is our Source and that HE will provide all that is needed as we faithfully obey His directives.

So, may we clearly *understand* His direction; may we quickly and wholeheartedly *obey*; may we fully *trust* in HIS provision! And... may we always *ASK*. We are told in James 4:2 that sometimes we don't receive from the Lord simply because we have not *asked*. Thank you so much!

Home for the summer



Question:

When summer begins, our family eagerly anticipates trips to the beach, repeated picnics and parties with extended family and friends, and usually a major vacation in other states. But this year, with so much uncertainty due to COVID-19, we have decided to not plan any big trips and instead stay home. The big challenge is how to make the most of the summer months while stuck at home. What suggestions can you offer?

Response:

One of my favorite scriptures is Proverbs 14:22 (NIV), which says: *Do not those who plot evil go astray? But those who **plan** what is good find love and faithfulness.* You are wise to be looking ahead. **Now** is a great time to start **planning** for how you will spend the warm weeks of summer.

In many homes, children are left to entertain themselves... often via video games, TV, and social media. Consider limiting or even eliminating time on electronic devices. Replace screen time with activities that benefit the child's mind, body, emotions and spirit. The following fun ideas may help your family turn the hot days of summer into enjoyable adventures.

BODY:

Go for a daily walk or family bike-ride, perhaps after dinner each evening.

Have your children research hiking trails in your county and schedule a day each week to explore a new trail. Assign prep duties to the children... e.g. packing the picnic lunch, printing a trail map, gathering the hiking gear, etc.

Ask each child to choose an athletic skill they want to improve over the summer. Have them set a goal, such as

jumping on a pogo stick 500 times, dribbling the ball 200 times without stopping (perhaps alternating dominant and non-dominant hands), learning to jump double-dutch. When they reach their goal, celebrate and cheer for them as they set a new challenge for themselves.



Maintain regular, reasonable wake-up and bed times. In many homes, children stay up very late over the summer. Dragging themselves out of bed for lunch, they grumble about their few chores, saying they are tired. The best part of the day is often lost for better activities. Children thrive best with good rest and regular healthy routines.

MIND:

Go to the local library (if it has reopened) once a week. If the library has a summer reading program, encourage your children to participate. Not only do these often offer nice prizes, they also help children improve

their reading skills. Ask your child to tell you about the books they complete. Encourage them to include non-fiction... perhaps some Christian biographies.

Urge each child to choose a hobby, helping them gather necessary tools or supplies. One child may plant a



small vegetable garden. Another might want to build a model car. You could teach knitting or cross-stitch.

Fishing could be fun. Try to schedule some time each day for the child to work on their

hobby. Although they may need assistance at times, encourage them to do the bulk of the work themselves. Not only an enjoyable pastime, this will also help them grow in responsibility and independence.

Have the children take turns planning weekly menus. Assist younger children in actually preparing a meal, perhaps once a week. Older ones will enjoy this, without any help from Dad or Mom.

EMOTIONS:

Make a daily/weekly chore list for each child. Chores cause children to focus on serving others. Although they may initially complain, they will actually feel happier and be more fulfilled when working for the good of the entire family. Require that chores be completed satisfactorily before free time for play or hobbies.

Adopt a service project. Your children can help purchase and deliver groceries to a local food bank each week. An older child might mow the lawn of an elderly neighbor. The family could mulch or weed flower-beds in the neighborhood, using the money received to support a Christian ministry.



Play games. Whether a table game inside, or lawn darts in the back yard... the laughter and comradery will be invaluable. Also give the children opportunity to play by themselves... using their imagination and creativity to dream up things to do, is very beneficial.

SPIRIT:

Pitch a tent and spend a night camping on your own property. At bed-time, share stories from your own life about how you have seen God at work or explain spiritual lessons you have learned. Ask children to share similarly from their own experiences. Learn a new praise song and sing it, as a family, lying in your sleeping bags, looking up at the night sky.

When outdoors, or on walks or hikes, point out things God has created. Talk about His amazing power and attention to creative detail.



Launch a Bible-reading or Bible-memorization challenge with prizes offered for verses learned, or chapters read. Join them in the competition... but be forewarned... children memorize much more quickly and easily than adults do.

Ask each child to choose a foreign country and do research about that nation's spiritual condition. Each week, have a child share with the family what they have learned about spiritual needs in that country, as well as what Christian ministries are active in that area of the world.

Actually, these activities can be enjoyed even if you are NOT "stuck at home" for the summer. With prayer and planning, the months you were dreading will provide wonderful memories that will enrich each family member and last a lifetime!



*Written by
Sharon Charles*

UPCOMING EVENTS AT ALM

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.



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

Heaven on Earth Family Style

The life story of Norman and Betty Charles has been a great encouragement to many! Read how they encountered Jesus in a powerful way, regaining health and wholeness, and beginning an incredible adventure of faith!

AVAILABLE ON AMAZON:

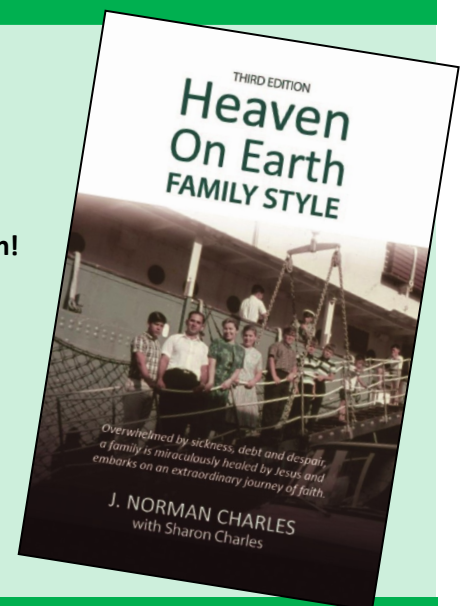
\$12.99 Paperback

\$9.99 e-Book (Kindle)

\$19.95 Audio Book

ALSO AVAILABLE AT THE ALM OFFICE:

\$11.00 Paperback (plus shipping & handling)



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