



Abundant Living Ministries

Encouraging Christian Living since 1978

June 2021

One of my granddaughters said she could use some help with her math homework. Remembering how well I did in high school math, I offered my assistance. No sweat... I would easily help her with her elementary-school assignment.

WELL! How times have changed! I found myself wondering if one-plus-one still equals two! Actually, I was confident that $1 + 1$ had not changed but the procedure being taught to my granddaughter is SO DIFFERENT! (I must admit, however, that her newer approach made great sense, and seemed more-easily understandable.)

My enjoyment of math sometimes helps me in understanding scripture. Here's an example that convicted me and continues to challenge me in my daily living.

I read in Proverbs 9:10, ***The FEAR OF THE LORD is the beginning of wisdom.*** We all desire wisdom and most of us are very familiar with James 1:5, *If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all.* But this Proverbs 9:10 text offers additional insight, and presents a clearer prerequisite for gaining wisdom. Through this scripture, we see that submission, respect, and awe (Biblical "fear") actually **invite** wisdom into our lives.

I additionally discovered Proverbs 8:13, ***to FEAR THE LORD is to hate evil.***

And this is where my math came into play. We remember the basic algebraic principle of substitution. You know... If **A** equals **B**; and if **A** equals **C**... then **B equals C**. So... if 4 quarters (A) = 10 dimes (B); and if 4 quarters (A) = 20 nickels (C); THEN 10 dimes = 20 nickels (A=C). Oh my, that sounds confusing... poor illustration!

But, back to my scriptural "substitution" which I don't think is so confusing. Consider with me:

If the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; AND IF...

The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; THEN...

THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM IS TO HATE EVIL!

I was convicted, challenged, and exhorted! Perhaps you will identify with what I'm about to say. There are certain activities I don't participate in... certain things I don't do or say. I know that to do otherwise would disappoint my Father. I purpose to be obedient to Him!

HOWEVER, if I'm honest with myself, I realize that I don't yet HATE that evil speech or behavior. I **obey** my Father, while privately wishing I didn't need to. This reflects my immaturity and demonstrates my need to continue growing in my LOVE of that which is GOOD and my HATRED of that which is EVIL.

As I continue growing and maturing, I want to LOVE what God loves and HATE what God hates. I want to **know** and then **reflect** HIS HEART!

Growing in wisdom one day at a time

John Charles (for Sharon and the rest at ALM)

P.S. The enclosed Return Envelope is for those who wish to participate with ALM by contributing financially. Would you consider partnering with us in this way? For 42 years, we've been offering counseling without a Fee Schedule, inviting a contribution of any amount from the counselee. This approach provides help for many individuals who cannot afford typical counseling fees. This approach also depends deeply on the gifts and prayers of people like you.

THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH!



Day-to-Day LOVE

QUESTION: I'm sure each person

in our household would say they love the other family members. But in the practical day-to-day routines of living, there is a tremendous amount of bickering, criticizing and inconsiderate behavior going on. Some days feel like there is more hate in our house than love. Any advice on how to improve the love and harmony in our home?

RESPONSE: A wonderful passage

of Scripture that describes "love in action" is Romans 12:9 – 21. Why not have Dad, Mom and children discuss... perhaps even memorize this over the next couple of weeks? As you tackle each verse, discuss how it applies to the real-life attitudes and actions of family members.

Be sincere in loving.

Don't be a fakey hypocrite by simply saying the words, "I love you." Look at other family members often (in the eye!) and give a genuine compliment. Choose a kind action that demonstrates how much you care.

Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.

Analyze the influences that are in your home. Get rid of things that make sin look appealing (ungodly movies, TV shows, internet sites, music, literature, pictures, etc.). When families welcome the ways of the world into their home, it should be no surprise when those attitudes rub off on everyone. Instead, saturate your home with influences that make it a haven of peace, joy and spiritual growth.

Be devoted to one another in love.

Discuss loyalty and how each family member can stand up for each other, and how they can unite together and defend each other in difficult situations.

Honor one another above yourselves.

Be quick to invite other family members to decide, rather than selfishly demanding your own way. Practice saying, "Oh, please... you go first," or, "I would like for you to choose... please, I would like to do what you want to do." Don't think you must control every decision. Jesus told us we would have greater blessing as givers rather than as takers.

Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.

Be enthusiastic about others' ideas, not a stick-in-the mud. If asked to do something, respond cheerfully, not grudgingly (e.g. "Sure, I'll help!" "I'd be glad to!" "Sounds great! Let's do it!"). Make your relationship with the Lord your number one priority. Look for opportunities to serve Him every day.

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

When others are pessimistic, don't commiserate. Instead, speak joyful words of hope. Be patient when things go wrong or interruptions happen. Instead of griping, take a deep breath, smile, and talk to God about

the situation. Many times the Lord wants to use difficult situations to cause us to turn to Him and experience His amazing help.

Share with others who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Share your resources with people who are needy. Ask the Lord to show you a family you can bless financially or with practical help. Invite them into your home for a meal and fellowship. Involve the whole family in preparing for this event.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

When others give you a rough time, pray for them. Don't reject them or retaliate. Come up with some practical things the family can do to reach out to those who have distanced themselves from you.

Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

When something good happens to others, be happy for them, congratulate them. Don't allow jealousy to creep into your heart. Don't gloat when others suffer hardship. Imagine how you would feel if you had to face the same situation.

Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

Don't act superior to others. And don't always talk about yourself. Practice asking others about what is happening in their lives. Don't consider it a waste of time to talk with children, or those with physical or emotional challenges.

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful



to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

Decide you are not going to argue or stir up trouble. Whenever possible, try to bring a peaceful solution to conflicts. Don't rehash problems... brainstorm solutions and ways to bring about peaceful resolution to conflicts.

Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.

Talk about God's position as the ultimate Judge and what it means to entrust justice to Him. List actions your family can take to bless those who have been unkind to you and then begin carrying out your plan.

Verse 21 gives a good final challenge and word of encouragement for all of us...

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

In other words... Don't let the evil of our culture or the evil in others get you down. You (and your family members) will be the winners in the end, by implementing God's good way of living!



*Written by
Sharon Charles*

Upcoming Events at ALM



Open Arms Childbirth Class

**Four Consecutive Thursdays
July 8–29, 2021**

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:
October 4 - November 8, 2021
7:00-9:00 PM
\$120 per person or \$150 per couple
(cost includes textbooks)**

Call the ALM office or email Chris at
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