



# Abundant Living Ministries

*Encouraging Christian Living since 1978*

July 2021

## **Always alert! Always on guard! Always ready!**

*Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong. (1 Cor. 16:13)*

*Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise. (Eph. 5:15)*

*Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers. (1 Tim. 4:16)*

*Therefore, keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. (Matt. 24:42)*

*Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.” (Luke 12:15)*

*Be careful not to do your “acts of righteousness” before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. (Matt. 6:1)*

I feel concern as I sense so many of us Christians are living carelessly, rather than remaining **on guard**. It seems we sit by, way too comfortably, as the culture rushes along in its race toward ever-more-pronounced godlessness, materialism and self-service. Moral values are redefined and sinful behaviors are normalized as we often do little more than shake our heads in disapproval. Even within the church, it seems we take our cues from society, thinking we’re doing pretty good if we just stay a couple of years behind the culture.

Perhaps we *are* alert to what is going on around us. Perhaps we are distressed by it all but we don’t want to “get involved.” We don’t want to say or do anything which would invite the disapproval of others. But when looking closely at



1 Corinthians 16:13 (printed above), I notice that the instruction to “be on guard” is accompanied by the exhortation, “be men of courage; be strong.” Doesn’t this suggest that being “on guard” may be accompanied by some conflict... by some fear-inviting threats and attacks?

In addition to praying for those around us, for our country and for the entire world, may we also be alert for the situations in which God wants to **be strong through us** as we proclaim truth and righteousness!

Together, let us stand on guard!

John (for Sharon and the rest of the ALM staff)

P.S. We are halfway through 2021, and facing the summer months when financial support has typically dropped significantly. I want to thank each of you who stand with us through your prayer and financial support. You are a tremendous blessing and help to other families through your partnership with ALM!



**Question:** My children seem unhappy much of the time. They complain, demand, and argue a lot. Although I want them to express their emotions, so much is just angry fussing. Any tips for generating a greater happiness factor in children?

**Response:** In my father's day (he was born in 1898), a common axiom was, "children should be seen and not heard." Although he lost his father at a young age and had to quit school at age 14 to help support his family, I never heard him complain about it. More significantly, I never heard him even reference feelings of grief or anger.

In the late 60's and 70's, the pendulum began to move in the opposite direction. Over the last 50 years, I have observed the emergence of a fixation on *feelings* in our culture. I routinely hear parents urging their children, "Use your words. Tell me how you feel." I think they believe this will relieve their child of the unpleasant feelings. And, in the counseling room, we hear descriptions of tantrum-like outbursts from both husbands and wives. We seem to have clearly moved from **suppression** of emotion to **excessive expression** of it.

A *balanced* approach to feelings is the better way to live. Emotions certainly give spice to life. Without them, our existence would be incredibly boring. But if they are not managed, they get out of control. I firmly believe that *feelings were designed BY God to drive us TO God!* Think about it... enjoyable experiences should swell our hearts with gratitude to God. Meanwhile, emotional pain should propel us to seek comfort and encouragement from our Maker. Feelings help us discover God's heart of love.

When a child shares a disappointment, we want to show God's heart of compassion and love. As we pray with them, we help them rely on Jesus to soothe their pain.

However, the usual angry eruptions and arguments among siblings are a different story... occurring most frequently when children don't get their own way. With these temper tantrums and selfish complaints, allowing them to wallow in self-pity or anger does not help them develop emotional strength. Scripture actually commands us to "get rid of," "lay aside," and "put to death," such things. These emotions are not as important as doing what God instructs... which is definitely the best way to live.

Do you want your children's happiness to grow? It is in imitating Jesus' example that we find long-lasting contentment. So, teach them to serve others through kindness and sharing. That's what they were created for! Don't cater to their pity parties or tantrums. Call them instead to the much-higher and happier standard... the joy of following Jesus!



*Written by  
Sharon Charles*

## Lay Christian Counselor Training

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

**Six 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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