



Abundant Living Ministries

Encouraging Christian Living since 1978

August 2021

Steve (names have been changed) came to see me, concerned about his marriage. He stated that his wife Sue did not want to come along, having said quite emphatically that she doesn't see any need to receive marriage counseling. Steve explained that he was quite worried about their marriage and about the special "friendship" his wife had with a man at her work. When Steve spoke to Sue about his concern, she acknowledged the friendship but defended herself, saying the relationship was not physical. They were simply "best friends."

When Steve brought up the subject again a few days later, Sue accused her husband of being a "controller." I might mention that Steve and Sue were both professing Christians, and both were active in their church. Sue's special "friend" was also quite active in his own church. Sue was talking on the phone with her special friend almost every evening, typically for an hour or more. She did this in the presence of her husband and children. In fact, Steve would hear her say, "I love you!" several times to her friend during their conversations. (Sue had not told her husband Steve that she loves him, in months.)

I think you get the picture! Even if this relationship never progresses to physical adultery, (although they usually do!), there is an obvious *heart problem*. Christians know that physical adultery is wrong. They know to keep their bodies for the one they married. But sometimes they forget about *ALSO* guarding and keeping their HEART for the one they married.

I deeply admire Ken, another man who came to talk with me, many years ago. He had developed a crush on a young lady at his workplace. He explained... "It occurred to me the other morning that I was leaving for work five minutes earlier than usual. And I knew why. I was hoping that she would be in the break room so I could chat with her for those few minutes before starting my work. **That morning** I realized that I better get some help and get it soon, or this 'innocent interest' would lead me astray."

Ken recognized *before he got into deep trouble*, that his heart was being drawn toward a woman other than his wife. He *quickly* sought help. **Good for him! That's wisdom in practice!**

Last month, through the scriptures in this newsletter, we were challenged to "BE ON GUARD," as the ungodly culture rushes along in its race toward ever-more-pronounced godlessness, materialism, and self-service. Well, in THIS letter, may we all be challenged and encouraged to **guard our HEARTS**. First and foremost, that we guard our hearts for Jesus! And then, additionally, that we guard and keep our heart for our SPOUSE!

Don't console yourself with the reassurance that, "Oh, it's nothing physical." Be alert to danger signs! If you find yourself preferring to share the intimacies of your heart (your fears, worries, aspirations, joys) with someone of the opposite gender, rather than your spouse... that's a warning! If you find yourself complimenting others more than you compliment your own spouse... or seeking compliments from others instead of from your spouse... or telling others how nice they are and how good they look... these can all be danger signs. If you find yourself daydreaming, comparing your spouse to another, wishing your spouse were more like that other person... Just don't do it!

Ask the Lord to guard your heart. Develop the habit of keeping your thoughts focused on *things above*!

May we be filled with gratitude and contentment!

John Charles (for Sharon and the rest at ALM)



Great Messages for Children

From birth to age three, children learn so much. Parents should make sure that their little ones are picking up critical life truths during this formative season. Consider the following great messages along with suggestions for practical ways to convey them in day-to-day home life.

I LOVE YOU MORE THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE.

Verbalize this daily. When using your child's name, use a warm, cheerful tone. Avoid derogatory names. Take time to cuddle, hug and kiss your little one often. Frequently throughout the day, stoop down and tell them you love them.

THE WORLD DOES NOT REVOLVE AROUND YOU.

Don't give in to every demand from your child. Always meet their needs. However, remember that one important need is to *not get* everything they want! Don't reward screaming, whining or inappropriate behavior. If you do, it will surely be repeated. Help the child practice correct behavior. Learning requires repetition... lots of it!

JESUS IS MY BEST FRIEND AND I WANT HIM TO BE YOUR BEST FRIEND TOO!

Saturate your home with Christian influences (e.g. books, CD's, pictures on the wall, magazines). Cleanse your home from ungodly influences (e.g. ungodly TV, videos, video games, questionable books, music, etc.). Pray daily with, and for your child. Speak enthusiastically to your child about the Lord and His love. Even before they understand fully, read and talk about Biblical truths.

ALL THAT GOD CREATED IS GOOD.

Speak enthusiastically about discovery and learning. Take time to go for walks. Look at books and marvel with your little one at all God has created for our enjoyment. Thank God often for His blessings! Do not speak critically or rudely about other people. Tell your children often how every human being is created and loved by God, and therefore each one is of tremendous value.

IN THE SAME WAY THAT WE PARENTS LOVE AND SERVE OTHERS, YOU NEED TO BE LEARNING TO DO THE SAME.

Teach your child to accept responsibilities just as early as possible. If they are strong enough to take a toy out of the toy box, they are capable of learning to put it back. Assign regular chores. Don't grumble about your own work. Smile, sing, or hum while doing daily tasks. Set an example of cheerful, whole-hearted service to others.

Grasping these five simple messages provides a strong foundation for children which will benefit them, not only in their formative years but also into adulthood!



*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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