



# Abundant Living Ministries

*Encouraging Christian Living since 1978*

November 2022

## IT JUST KINDA CREPT UP ON ME!

Sharon and I calculate that we have passed the 450 mark... that, over the 40+ years we've been here at ALM, we've now met, talked, and prayed with over 450 couples or individuals who have been involved (or their spouses involved) in extramarital affairs. That's a lot of unfaithfulness!

Very, very, few say they were "intentional" about pursuing an affair. In fact, only a handful have said, "I got up one morning and decided, 'I'm going to have an affair.' So, I went out looking and found somebody!"

No... the GREAT MAJORITY say something like this: "I never thought this would happen to ME. ***It just kinda crept up on me!*** A half dozen of us eat lunch together every day in the break room: five guys and a lady. The other four guys don't know how to talk about anything but hunting and guns so the lady and I sit at the other end of the table and converse about more-interesting things. One day, I realized I enjoy talking with her more than with my own wife! I found myself really looking forward to our lunch-time conversations. I was careless; one thing just led to another and, before I knew it, here I am in a full-blown affair."

***"It just kinda crept up on me."*** I've heard that line so many times!

Sharon and I are glad that, early in our marriage, we agreed upon some "safeguards" for our marriage. We wrote them down: some do's and some don'ts which we would follow in order to nurture and protect the most precious and valuable human relationship we would ever experience... our own marriage relationship!

Oh, we've been ridiculed a few times by those who think we are narrow and confining in our Safeguard Agreement but, after hundreds of "It just kinda crept up on me" stories, we are so glad we've been purposeful in this matter.

How about you? Have you discussed with your spouse how you can best nurture, and grow, in your relationship? What will you DO and NOT DO in order to protect that which is most valuable in your life? Have you considered actually writing down your guidelines as a constant reminder of your commitment?

If I owned a big block of gold, it would be my most valuable material possession. I would NOT carelessly leave it on the patio table when our family leaves for vacation. I would SAFEGUARD it. How much more valuable is our own marriage relationship than a block of gold!



Protect your marriage. Keep it growing!

John (for Sharon and the rest at ALM)

# Thanksgiving Do's and Don'ts

By Sharon Charles

Thanksgiving get-togethers can end up being rather chaotic. Many families finish the day with frayed nerves and strained relationships. Consider the following suggestions for making this year's celebration more God-centered and joy-filled!

**Do** ... be flexible and generous when choosing a date and time. Some young couples are invited to multiple celebrations, feeling pressured to please everyone. Planning your event on a day other than Thanksgiving is not the end of the world. If you have an amenable attitude, your sons, daughters, and grandchildren will thank you.

**Don't** ... blow your budget! It is easy to get caught up in buying expensive gourmet food and seasonal decorations. Shop wisely and

frugally. Use coupons; purchase at discount grocery stores. Make simple home-made decorations.

**Do** ... invite guests to help. They could bring a dish to share, plan a group game, or lead a devotional. And divvy up the clean-up tasks. There is often more opportunity to talk and laugh as you all work together than when everybody is parked on the sofa, watching TV or a movie.

**Don't** ... neglect the lonely. You may know individuals in your church or community who have no place to go on Thanksgiving. The Bible states that, when we plan a banquet, we should not only invite our own circle of friends. Consider widows or widowers, single-parent families, college kids who are far from home, or an often-left-out neighbor. They will be so grateful and you will receive a blessing for your kindness.

**Do** ... combat negativity with positive statements and words of affirmation and encouragement. Scripture says that "a word of encouragement does wonders." Keep conversations focused on reasons for gratitude, not causes for complaining!

**Don't** ... leave God out! The very word "thanksgiving" necessitates a recipient. Our Heavenly Father is truly the Source!

Everyone loves a good story...especially at Christmas! ***Christmas Tales that Warm the Heart Volumes 1 and 2*** (each with 12 stories)

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