



# Abundant Living Ministries

*Encouraging Christian Living since 1978*

January 2023

Dear friends,

What a joy to begin another year here at *Abundant Living Ministries*. I've been thinking back over the years... reminiscing about the beginning of ALM, 45 years ago.

It was something of a family project in 1978, when three of Norm and Betty Charles' seven children (Joann, Mervin, and myself) and our spouses assisted our parents in starting this ministry. During the first few years, we three married children had our own fulltime jobs while assisting Dad and Mom in this venture... one in which none of us had experience. What a blessing that our Board of Directors was so very helpful and encouraging, providing excellent direction and generous financial help.

After a few years, Mervin & Laurel, along with Joann & Cleber, moved back to Brazil (Dad and Mom were former missionaries) to plant a new church in the northeastern state of Ceará. That left Sharon and me continuing to work with my parents through Dad's death in 1994 and Mom's passing in 2007.

We currently serve alongside two other couples (Joe & Lin Falvey, and Lamarr & Naomi Sensenig)... treasuring the same values as Dad and Mom held 45 years ago:

**Our Belief** - God is STILL God of the impossible.

**Our Basis for Counsel** - is the absolute truth and total trustworthiness of the written Word of God.

**Our Approach** - is to connect with people, offering counsel, understanding, and encouragement.

We are thrilled as we see God's word applied in practical ways to the needs of people so that they *experience God's love, practice God's wisdom, and enjoy healthy relationships*. We see that God's power, Word, and wisdom make the transforming difference!

People like you have a very important part in the continuation of ALM's ministry, through your prayer and financial support. Thank you so very much!

John Charles (for Sharon and the rest at ALM)



## Open Arms Childbirth Class

**Four Consecutive Thursdays**  
**April 6– 27, 2023**  
**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.**



loomed larger and larger, one would look at the other and ask, “**TODAY**, will we **trust** or **doubt**?” Then they would agree that they would choose to **trust** God who promised to never forsake His children.

As I deal with my own painful problems, I have been asking myself that same question. “**TODAY**, do I **trust** God, or **doubt** Him?” Choosing to trust does not guarantee an immediate change to the situation, but God’s peace becomes a steady strength in the midst of the situation. Remembering that One, who is so much greater than any problem I face, is by my side and truly cares about my concerns is such a comfort! What a blessing to trust!

**REJOICE!** When I was a little girl, my father introduced me to the book, *Pollyanna*. Unlike the movie, the book teaches an extremely valuable spiritual lesson... to rejoice rather than to complain. At one point, Pollyanna shares with a discouraged minister that her own father (also a pastor) found strength in “the rejoicing texts.” These scriptures begin, “Be glad in the Lord,” or “Rejoice greatly,” or “Shout for joy.” She said her father counted them and there were hundreds of them. He said, “if God took the trouble to tell us so many times to be glad and rejoice, He must want us to do it – *some!*”

Yes, Scripture tells us to quit complaining and instead look for reasons to praise God, thank Him and rejoice. Some of the situations we go through *are horrible*. God doesn’t tell us to give thanks “for” all circumstances. He tells us to give thanks “in” all circumstances ( 1 Thessalonians 5:18). When my husband was recently hospitalized and nearly died, I didn’t thank the Lord *for* the situation. But I was extremely grateful that, *in* the midst of this tremendously-painful time, Jesus was helping and providing in so many ways. He truly gave peace and joy in the middle of a very turbulent storm!

My mother-in-law used to humorously quip, “So... you haven’t had any problems in your life yet? Just wait... they will come!” Jesus Himself said, “In this world you will have tribulation.” However He didn’t stop there. He continued, “But be of good cheer. I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). What a great reminder as we begin this new year. *Each day* we get to decide... Will I trust? Will I rejoice? Will I obey? Will I be kind? Will I persevere?

**What’s your choice today?**

Written by  
Sharon Charles



**Question:** I am feeling absolutely overwhelmed! My world seems out of control! The culture around us is increasingly morally depraved, every day the news is filled with tragic and fear-producing events, our financial future looks shaky, my children are questioning the truths they’ve been taught so I’m terrified I might lose them, and my health is deteriorating... Help!

**Response:** Considering all the challenging circumstances in our lives, it is understandable that negative emotions...worry, fear, sadness, anger, confusion, unrest... threaten to rob us of peace and joy.

As an uncertain new year begins, it is a good idea to go to the Maker of each day for help. When we turn to Him for guidance, He will often impress on us one or two simple instructions, which apply directly to our situations. Following are two such commands which have impacted me personally. Perhaps they will also encourage you, or at least prompt you to ask the Lord for a practical directive for yourself.

**TRUST!** I was recently impacted by a sermon. The pastor and his wife endured years of heartache as they cared for their seriously-ill daughter. He shared what helped to sustain them through those dark times... it was recognizing that each day they had a choice to make. This choice would shape their perspective as they navigated all the heart-wrenching circumstances coming their way. Their choice was, “**TODAY**, do we choose to **trust** God or **doubt** Him?” As problems

## Contact Information

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