



Abundant Living Ministries

Encouraging Christian Living since 1978

February 2023

February - Valentine's Day... when we focus on the one we love and express appreciation for the blessing they are to us. As Sharon and I look forward to celebrating our 50th wedding anniversary later this year, I can certainly say that God has blessed me with a precious wife.

We were both 21 when we married. We thought we were SO READY for marriage, confident that we would live happily ever after. Imagine that... untroubled, happy lives together, forever!

Well, the "happy ever after" lasted a few months (Sharon says a few weeks). My Lancaster County farm-family background collided with Sharon's prim and proper Canadian/British upbringing. Growing up with three brothers, I was used to some tension and conflict in life. As a result, I was clueless as to how my more-assertive and argumentative traits caused discomfort... No, truthfully... caused pain for my peace-loving, conflict-avoidant, merciful wife.

We truly loved the Lord and definitely loved each other... and we both wanted a marriage that would give honor to the Lord. But we had blind spots... We were not recognizing that our "natural" inclinations and tendencies worked against the very type of marriage we both desired.

I think this is pretty common among Christian married couples. We are not hateful or malicious in our "doing life." BUT, we have significant blind spots which hinder us, in developing the sweet relationship we both want.

YAHWEH-RAPHA - the Lord Who Heals



We both cried out to God, asking for HIS help. We purposed to lay down our own demands and expectations about marriage. As we did so, HE showed Himself to be our HEALER. This name for God (Yahweh-Rapha) is used throughout scripture, as God heals **physically** (the incident of Naaman and Elisha in 2 Kings 5); **spiritually** (Psalm 103:2-3); **emotionally** (Psalm 34:18); and **mentally** (story of Nebuchadnezzar, in Daniel 4).

God was merciful as He brought healing to our marriage. And, through these almost-50 years, He has repeatedly brought healing to us in numerous ways and times: physically, spiritually, emotionally, and mentally. **Thank YOU, Lord - our HEALER!**

John (for Sharon and the rest at ALM)



Open Arms

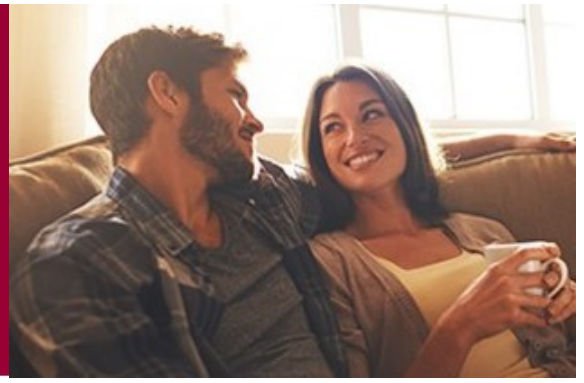
Childbirth Class

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.

Good to Know You



As years roll by, many married couples find themselves drifting apart. Their lives settle into daily routines: work responsibilities, parenting tasks, home repairs and maintenance, church involvement, extracurricular activities, hobbies, and leisure-time pursuits. All of these eat up each day's waking hours.

Husbands and wives can become like lone ships passing in the night. When talking with each other, they often discuss the necessary logistics of running their household, but neglect weightier conversation which would connect them on a deeper level, both emotionally and spiritually.

Try taking some time to refresh those connections through purposeful conversation. You could select one of the following questions, pour yourselves a glass of juice, sit close like you did when dating, and share your answers. You may discover that your spouse's heart is even more fascinating and enjoyable than when you first met!

- ? If you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be and why?
- ? When you think about heaven, what are some of the things that make it most exciting?
- ? If you could get rid of one of your fears, what would it be?
- ? What is a memory from your childhood that makes you smile?
- ? What is something you learned from a parent that still benefits you today?
- ? When you think back on dating days, what trait(s) did you see in me, that drew you to me?

- ? When you picture retirement years, how would you want to spend your time?
- ? What person most influenced you to put your faith in Jesus for salvation from sin? What was he or she like?
- ? What Scripture verse is especially strengthening to you these days?
- ? If you could help someone in need, who would it be, and how would you want to help them?
- ? What book/sermon has been especially inspiring to you in recent months? In what ways?
- ? What project do you think God might currently be working on, in each of our children?
- ? In what area of your life do you sense the Lord encouraging growth?
- ? If you had \$10,000 to use for God's work, what would you do with it?
- ? In what ways do you think being married to each other has benefitted us?
- ? What music/song currently invites the most spiritual peace and encouragement in your life?
- ? Before you fall asleep at night, what do you most frequently find yourself thinking about?
- ? If the cost were not prohibitive, what new hobby would you like to develop?
- ? If we could take a vacation together, just the two of us, where would you want to go and what would you want to do?



*Written by
Sharon Charles*

Contact Information

Mailing Address:
Physical Location:
Website:
Email:
Phone:

400 E 4th Avenue, Lititz, PA 17543
541 W 28th Division Hwy, Lititz, PA 17543
www.AbundantLivingMinistries.org
info@AbundantLivingMinistries.org
(717) 626-9575 **Facebook:** www.facebook.com/alm4u