



# Abundant Living Ministries

*Encouraging Christian Living since 1978*

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Sharon's article (on the back page) shares a lesson from the life of Peter which can encourage us when we go through stressful times. Talking about stress... I suppose we all deal with it from time to time and to varying degrees.

Here are some strategies I've found helpful in my own life when challenges seem to press in on every side...

**Eliminate the source of stress when possible.** Of course, if the cause of stress is a spouse, family member, or the boss... you can't just decide to "eliminate them!" But, kidding aside, many times the source of stress can be addressed, perhaps even eliminated.

For example, if an overly-busy schedule is weighing us down, we can be courageous enough to take an axe to the schedule, carving out time to rest and be refreshed. If financial problems are overwhelming us, we can seek help in establishing a practical plan for getting out of debt. Yikes... that could mean cutting up the credit cards.

**But I have found that one of the most powerful ways to combat stress is to begin looking at the situation through a "different lens."** This is often called "reframing" the picture. It's something like putting on a pair of glasses with quality lenses designed to help us see **clearly**. Instead of viewing the challenge as "awful," "terrible," "impossible," "horrible" ... we then see the situation in a different light.



Here are a few powerful lenses:

**The lens of faith** - The situation which looks insurmountable to you, is not even a problem to God. ***For nothing will be impossible with God.*** (Luke 1:37)

**The lens of gratitude** - We don't need to thank God FOR every stress. Rather, IN the midst of the stress, we thank God for His peace, His presence, His direction, and His provision. ***In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*** (1 Thess 5:18)

**The lens of hope** - Dad used to say, "This came to pass..." meaning that we would get through the situation. ***May the God of HOPE fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with HOPE by the power of the Holy Spirit.*** (Romans 15:13)

Let's wear the powerful glasses!  
John (for Sharon and the rest at ALM)



## Open Arms Childbirth Class

**Four Consecutive Thursday evenings 7:00 - 9:00pm  
October 5 - 26, 2023**

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 prepare for a great labor and delivery. There is no cost for this course.

***Register by contacting the ALM office.***



a little phrase, which typically goes unnoticed. Matthew 14:32 says simply, “And **when they got into the boat**, the wind ceased.”

Picture the scene... the disciples are in the boat and the wind is blowing fiercely. Squinting in the rain, they think they see Someone walking towards them on the water. Are they seeing a ghost? NO... IT IS JESUS HIMSELF! Jesus calls out to them, telling them to not be afraid. Right! Peter, convinced that he is actually seeing what he thinks he's seeing, offers to get out of the boat and walk to Jesus. Jesus tells him to “come on down!”

All goes well at first as Peter puts some distance between himself and the boat... he's walking on the water! He really is! But the waves are huge, threatening to drag him under. The sound of the rushing wind is deafening! This isn't so great after all! Fear grips him as he feels himself beginning to sink. He screams over the sound of the storm, begging Jesus to save him.

Jesus reaches out and pulls Peter up from the deep. I imagine that, at that moment, Peter flung his arms around Jesus, hanging on to Him for dear life... as any drowning person would do to their rescuer. Having lost all confidence in himself, Peter is depending completely on Jesus for his survival.

And here's the part that I like. Even after Peter got his eyes back on the Lord, he still had to **walk again on the water**. They were not yet back in the boat. The waves had not quit surging and the wind had not quit howling, even though he was wrapped in the arms of his Savior. **Peter had to keep on walking**. Only after the two of them, together, reached the boat and climbed into it, did Jesus actually calm the tempest.

I don't know why the Lord doesn't always change our circumstances when we cry out to Him. Many times, even after we turn to Him in desperation, our difficult situation continues. **But let's remember...** we know there is a boat waiting ahead. The storms **will** cease eventually, either here on earth or in heaven. In the meantime, Jesus' power and presence is enough to sustain us... even **in the midst of the storms!**

So, hang tightly onto Jesus. Keep your focus forward... His boat of safety is just ahead!

*Written by  
Sharon Charles*



**Question:** I feel like our family has been slammed by a storm of troubles. We've been dealing with health challenges, financial demands, and relationship difficulties. Any one of these would be bad enough, but with all of them battering us at the same time, I can barely keep going.

I am drowning under life's stress. Please... can you give me some help and encouragement?

**Response:** I am sorry you are facing these numerous challenges and problems. Yes... these situations can threaten to overwhelm us with anxiety, weariness and discouragement. At such times, how good it is to know that the Lord cares and wants to help!

One of my favorite stories in the New Testament is the account of Jesus walking on the water and then inviting Peter to get out of the boat and walk towards Him.

I have heard sermons that commend Peter for having enough faith to get out of the boat. Other sermons have emphasized our need to keep our eyes on Jesus in the midst of life's storms, lest we start to sink as Peter did. Still others challenge us to reach to Jesus for help when we feel absolutely helpless.

All of these are sound, practical principles and worthy exhortations. However, my favorite part of this account, is

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