

Abundant Living MINISTRIES

Encouraging Christian Living Since 1978

November, 2025

Dear friends,

As we approach this Thanksgiving season, our hearts are filled with gratitude - to the Lord, our ultimate Provider, and to each of you who have faithfully partnered with us through the years. For forty-seven years, Abundant Living Ministries has sought to share the hope and healing of Christ through compassionate, Christ-centered counseling.

From the beginning, we made a commitment that no one seeking help would ever be turned away because of financial need. By God's grace, and through the faithful generosity of friends like you, we have been able to uphold that promise every single year - never once charging for our counseling services. What a testimony to His provision and your partnership!

As we give thanks this season, we celebrate not only what God has done in the past but also what He continues to do today - transforming lives, restoring families, and renewing hope through the abundant life that Jesus promised: *"I have come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly."* (John 10:10)

Thank you for sharing in this ministry of grace. May your Thanksgiving be filled with His peace and joy!

With heartfelt gratitude,

John Charles (for Sharon and the rest of us here at ALM)

The SANDWICH GENERATION



Question: I'm burning the candle at both ends. My aging parents are requiring more and more care. It appears they will soon need to either move in with us, or move to an assisted living facility. Our own children are in the pre-adolescent and teen years. We didn't anticipate them requiring more time and attention than when they were little. How can I juggle all this responsibility and still retain my sanity... as well as a Christian testimony?

Response: You are part of the "sandwich generation." No, not the generation that grew up on peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. I mean, your generation is caught, or "sandwiched" between two other (very different!) generations.

Let's look at some of the challenges of this season of life, as well as some Biblical principles that may help you live victoriously in the midst of the extra pressures.

A common problem faced by many "sandwiched" individuals is **interpersonal conflicts...** just getting along together. The Bible has plenty to say about relationships. Check out Romans 12:14-21 for a very practical description of how to treat the people in your life. Post it on the refrigerator. Memorize it. Before "jumping on" your parents or children, ask yourself, "How would Jesus treat them right now?" You may feel at times that your children or parents are not very "lovable." Well, if Scripture commands us to love even our enemies, I guess that applies to our parents and children, when they are acting more like adversaries than friends. Ask the Lord... He will help you treat your family members with kindness rather than impatience and irritation.

Implement the principle of *sowing and reaping* in your household. Devise ways to "plant" the type of seed that will produce the desired "fruit." For example, if the aging parents don't seem to respect your ideas, you will be tempted to become angry, even dictatorial. This will only produce more anger and stubbornness on their part. It will be much more productive for **you** to look for opportunities (yes, MANY opportunities) to speak and act respectfully toward **them**. Their attitude might not change immediately, but you can trust God to cause the good seed (which you are planting) to grow. In time you may find that they are treating you with more respect.

Likewise, if your children are behaving disrespectfully, be sure **you** are respecting **them**...this doesn't mean doing *everything they demand*... it means doing *what is best* for them, with a gentle firmness. It means smiling at them, sharing pleasant times together, showing interest in what interests them. In other words, showing respect as you train... showing respect even when you correct or discipline.

And, of course, being quick to forgive (also quick to *ask* forgiveness) will go a long way toward maintaining positive connections with both generations. Decide that you **will not** hold grudges!



A second challenge is dealing with the **difficult decisions** that must be made during this time..."What is the best care for my parents?" "How can we afford it?" "Should my child go to college? If so, which one?" "How can we afford that?" etc.

God has promised to give wisdom if we ask. Perhaps the hardest part about discerning God's will regarding a particular matter is, **FIRST**, surrendering our own will. *Am I willing to accept His answer, even if it is opposite what I WANT to do?* Plain and simple... Am I really asking for HIS direction? Or, is my mind already made up? Am I actually only asking God for a stamp of approval? And, let's always remember that He will never direct us to make any decision that contradicts His written Word.

Yet a third challenge faced by this sandwiched generation, is how to cope with the **extra daily stress**. There's so much more to do, so many more demands, but still only 24 hours in a day. A little organization can make a big difference. Simple things like keeping a family calendar. Assign household chores. Regular routines help cut down on decision-making. Or, perhaps decide to eliminate as many extra activities and responsibilities as possible.

Enlist your children's help with the workload. It will build character in them. Invite your parents to help with occasional tasks but don't take advantage of them. They already invested years raising you. Now it is *your* time to carry the load. Make a habit of regular contact with your parents... perhaps doing Sunday dinner together, or sharing a monthly family night. Your children will benefit from time spent with the older generation. And your parents will appreciate being included in the lives of their children and grandchildren.

You don't have a lot of spare hours, so make the most of minutes... a quick text or call to your parents can be the highlight of their day. Or, stopping by their house with your children on the way home from a sports practice or music lesson to say a quick "Hi" can be a treasure to them. (Who knows? They might even ask you to stay for supper!)



Instead of bemoaning your situation, practice viewing this season with humor (see Proverbs 17:22), gratitude (see Philippians 4:6 & 7), and especially **faith** (see Ephesians 3:20).

Does God care? Is He big enough to help you not only *survive* this time of your life, but *thrive* in the midst of it? YES. HE IS! So, dare to lean heavily on Him. Believe Him to help!

You may end up looking back on these years as the most satisfying *sandwich* of your life!



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