

PEACE

in the Storms

by Philip and Rhonda Wilson

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"For I know the plans I have for you, 'declares the LORD,' plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Jeremiah 29:11

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Redefining Abundant Life

The Bible offers two descriptions of the Christian life. In Jeremiah 29:11, we read, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." And John 10:10 tells us, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

The Bible seems to promise good things for us, yet it hints at the trials we will face. What is the relationship between abundant life and trials? This word "abundance" in Greek means "a quantity that is considerably more than what one would expect or anticipate." That sounds pretty good. Jesus promises us a life far better than we could ever imagine.

It is easy for me to visualize what my life would look like if it were "more than what one would expect." It would involve many things, but not suffering. It would be a life of more certainty, less pain, and fewer unknowns. Could it be that God's vision of abundant life and what it means for us and our vision of abundant life and what God wants for us are not the same?

"This word 'abundance' in Greek means, 'a quantity that is considerably more than what one would expect or anticipate.'"

God's vision of abundant life is eternal; our vision is temporal, involving much more of this world. For example, do we appreciate the privilege of talking to God through

prayer as much as the excitement for that new car? Do we get really excited about our salvation through Christ, or at least as excited as when we buy a new house? We need to get our vision of abundant life more in line with God's. The focus then is not on this world and the things in it we think will make us happy; it is on God.

The more we interpret the events in our lives with an eternal meaning, the more abundant our lives will be. Interpreting life with an eternal significance is what makes the Christian life make sense for us. We suffer because we are selfish and need help focusing on the eternal. Our ability to have the abundant life God promises directly follows how well we focus on the eternal, because through that focus we glorify God and we find our true purpose.

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