



## [John 10:10](#)

(10) The thief does not come except to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly.

*A Faithful Version*

What does He mean by "life . . . more abundantly"? A problem arises when discussing this concept due to the apparent subjectivity of the term "abundant." What is abundant living for one person may be absolutely unsatisfying for another. A hard-charging, A-type businessman - into exotic vacations, sports cars, and rock climbing - would not consider a rocking chair on the porch, a vegetable garden out back, and a weekly round of golf at the local course to be fulfilling, yet they would probably suit a retired senior citizen just fine. One person's bowl of cherries is another's bowl of cherry pits.

The Greek word Jesus uses in [John 10:10](#) to describe the kind of life He came to teach His disciples is *perissón*, meaning "superabundant," "superfluous," "overflowing," "over and above a certain quantity," "a quantity so abundant as to be considerably more than what one would expect or anticipate." In short, He promises us a life far better than we could ever envision, reminiscent of [I Corinthians 2:9](#), "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which [God](#) has prepared for those who love Him" (see [Isaiah 64:4](#)). Paul informs us that God "is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think" ([Ephesians 3:20](#)).

However, before we begin to have visions of palatial homes, classic automobiles, around-the-world trips, and wads of pocket money, we need to step back and consider what *God* says comprises "life." Once we determine His view of living, we will have a better grasp of what kind of blessings we

can expect as Christ's disciples. All we need to do is glance around at our and our brethren's situations to know that wealth, prestige, position, and power in [this world](#) are not high-priority items on God's list of blessings ([I Corinthians 1:26-29](#)). In terms of economic, academic, and social strata, most of us come from the lower and middle classes, and we tend to remain in a situation similar to the one in which we were called (compare [I Corinthians 7:20-24](#)).

Perhaps the most telling biblical definition of *life* - particularly *eternal life* - is uttered by Jesus Himself in [John 17:3](#): "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and [Jesus Christ](#) whom You have sent." Note that this definition makes no mention of length of days, health, prosperity, family, occupation - in fact, the only thing it does mention is knowing God!

What can we take from this?

» God is not overly concerned with the physical circumstances of our lives. It is enough that He assures us that we need not worry about what we will eat or wear ([Matthew 6:25-32](#); [Philippians 4:19](#)).

» Eternal life, the kind of life in which a Christian is truly interested, is not determined by duration but by a relationship with God. This is why, once we are converted and infused with the gift of the Holy Spirit, we are said to have eternal life already ([I John 5:11-13](#)), though not, of course, in its fullness.

» Eternal life - the life God offers us through Jesus Christ and His teaching - is thus about *quality*, not quantity. Put another way, the abundant life is life as God lives it ([Ezekiel 33:10-11](#); [I Peter 2:21](#); [I John 2:6](#)), for once we truly come to know God, we will desire to emulate Him.

» Physical blessings, then, may or may not be byproducts of God's way of life; neither our wealth nor our poverty is a sure indication of our standing with God. Certainly, God desires that we "prosper in all things and be in health" ([III John 2](#)), but the bottom line is "I

have no greater [joy](#) than to hear that my children walk in truth" (verse 4), not that we live like royalty.

» Finally, a Christian's life revolves around, as Peter puts it, "grow [ing] in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" ([II Peter 3:18](#)). This suggests that the abundant life is a process of learning, practicing, and maturing, as well as failing, recovering, adjusting, enduring, and overcoming because, in our present state, "we see in a mirror, dimly" ([I Corinthians 13:12](#)).

As humans, we are naturally oriented toward material things, but as Christians, our perspective must change. Paul admonishes, "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died [in [baptism](#)], and your life is hidden with Christ in God" ([Colossians 3:2-3](#)). To us, life - and our perception of abundant life - is a whole new ballgame!

— Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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