

# Abundance

## Defining How We Define It

It seems there's been an evolutionary warping of the most rancid sort where we've come to define "abundance" as having whatever it is that we feel we need. Sadly, abundance today appears to imply the possession of a liberal quantity of whatever it is that we deem important, or desirous, or bright and shiny, or voguish, or trendy, or whatever might happen to be pinging on our gluttonous radar at any given moment. Abundance seems to be defined by having a lot of whatever it is that we think we want. And so, when we have everything we want and we have as much of it as we want, we begin to develop a sense of what we've come to define as "abundance," which in reality is really a sense of greed temporarily gratified. It seems painfully obvious that the definition of "abundance" appears to have been saddled with a rather roguish and largely selfish meaning to the point that the word no longer even comes close to fitting the definition that we've saddled it with.

### How'd This Happen?

Much of the redefining that's gone on appears to have occurred at the hands of the rather malignant attitudes that have warped or wiped out what were once commonly shared beliefs and values. Among other things, such redefined beliefs and values include things like our right to our "rights," our right to an unrestricted buffet of entitlements, and a misplaced belief that our existence in and of itself evidences that we are owed something just because we exist.

It seems that "abundance" has come to suggest something akin to hoarding where we've justified our right to gorge ourselves to a materialistic nausea. In playing this out, we become so over-stocked that there's no conceivable way that we will ever be able to use everything that we've stocked up on. The concept of abundance seems to have evolved into something more akin to a security grab, rather than grabbing hold of the reality that no amount of possessions can ever provide us real security. And because they can't, the back-log that we've meticulously collected becomes water-logged with the terrifying sense that all of it will never be enough, because it won't. Indeed, it is "abundance" turned schizophrenic and gone woefully wrong.

### Greed Disguised as Abundance

As we continue on this rampage of "abundance" mis-defined and gone mad, we find the concept of abundance subtly and sometimes not so subtly replaced by a rampantly insatiable appetite that we call "greed." Greed knows nothing of abundance, for greed is centered on selfish acquisition rather than thankful appreciation. Greed is an egocentric attitude that takes everything that it can lay its hands on, and it feverishly funnels all of that inward. Genuine abundance is an attitude of gratitude that freely directs everything outward so that other hands can enjoy the feel of what's being shared, and other hearts can experience the pulse of life as it surges unobstructed out of us and into them. Greed is about fanatically calling in the endless debt that we believe life owes us, where abundance is about recognizing that we are indebted to life in a manner endlessly beyond any repayment that we could ever hope to offer up. Greed and abundance could not be more opposite, and yet it appears that we have confused them to the point that abundance dies and greed reigns.

### What Is Abundance?

At some distant time, "abundance" was more aptly used to describe the privilege of

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enjoying life, versus the perceived right of owning it. It was believed that abundance was more of an attitude of appreciation versus a product of acquisition. It embraced the reality that life was a privilege to be enjoyed, not a right to be possessed. Abundance involved embracing the indescribable opportunity to stand smack-dab in the middle of all the richness that life exudes, and to witness the mind-boggling variety of it all with our own eyes. And as if that weren't enough, it culminated in the mind-bending privilege of stepping into any part of it that we might choose to step into, and to freely participate in it with arms wide open and hearts wide awake. It was about wide open fields of opportunity and privilege and unimaginable diversity that we were honored to run through like some sweet summer meadow. That was "abundance," and it stands ready to be reclaimed if we dare to once again be infused with a sense of undeserved privilege that will literally explode our souls.

### **How We Reclaim It**

Abundance is grasped by infusing our souls with the intoxicatingly liberating fact that life is a privilege, not a right. In a culture bent hard on rights, abundance holds that any rights are only privileges that are afforded to us, as is everything else. There is wisdom in realizing that God's unimaginable design within each and every one of us is a design that will always thrust our superficial and short-sighted boundaries out to horizons that we can't even fathom. Because that's the case, we need to make certain that we afford every human being the fullest rights to live out their lives in the absolute fullness of God's design so that that potential is given unrestricted room to explode. As right as those "rights" are, they nonetheless remain a privilege.

Beyond that, we need to realize that all of life is a privilege in every respect. There is never a place, or a time, or a possession, or a relationship, or an opportunity, or an achievement that is not a privilege. There is nothing that we will ever touch, or enjoy, or embrace, or experience, or engage that is anything but a privilege that has been handed to us.

### **Preserving It Once We've Reclaimed It**

To keep our appreciation of abundance carefully preserved, parameters were set. These parameters were not established as a means of spoiling our fun, as minds left blinded by greed often spin such parameters. Rather, they were put in place as a means of cautioning us against wrong choices that would destroy our appreciation of abundance. If our appreciation of abundance were to be destroyed, tragically our lives would never know abundance despite the fact that the world all around us was packed full of it. When God placed man in the Garden of Eden, he gave man full access to everything on the face of the whole earth (Genesis 1:29) except one single tree (Genesis 2:17). In the midst of an abundance that spanned the immensity of a fresh new globe yet unexplored and entirely unimagined, God gave man parameters to protect man from choices that would tragically cause man to lose this priceless sense of abundance.

Yet, mankind felt that the fullest appreciation of abundance could only be achieved if man were given the right to make those choices. We've now lived for millennia making those choices and the resultant outcome of those choices is pretty telling. We've demanded that we create the rules, that we call the shots, that we author the morals and pen the values, that we lay down the lines and rip them up at our whim. We've taken license and made plenty of choices. And in doing so, we've reduced the wonder of abundance to the pathology of greed, and we've missed the fullness of creation for the want of the moment.

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If there's one thing we done abundantly, it's making poor choices and destroying our appreciation of abundance as a result.

Limits set into the fabric of creation are not some sort of anomaly that accidentally ended up finding themselves dropped into the scheme of things. They're not put there for the tease of intellectual foreplay so that we might logically rationalize their disassembly, or attempt to determine their legitimacy or lack thereof. Parameters were set so that we would not make choices that would turn our perception of creation rancid or stale beyond tolerance. It is when we're obedient to the ethics, morals and values woven into creation that we insure our fullest ability to engage our world with the fullest of appreciation, and in doing so to avoid any choices that would outright kill that appreciation.

### **What Do We Do?**

We would be wise to revisit some of our values, and recalibrate our hearts. It would be quite prudent to wrench ourselves free of biases and agendas that starve a true sense of abundance, and to infuse a sense of privilege into our souls while we root out a sense a greed. We need to firmly set about us an immovable set of morals and values that will forever keep us from making choices that will kill that sense of abundance. And in doing these things, we will find ourselves suddenly embracing an abundance that is everything that we were trying to find though all of the other things that we were doing.