

# **Living the Abundant Life**

**Michele Michaels**

Foreword by  
Erin Thiele

[www.RestoreMinistries.net](http://www.RestoreMinistries.net)



NarrowRoad Publishing House

# Living the Abundant Life

Michele Michaels



Published by:  
NarrowRoad Publishing House  
POB 830  
Ozark, MO 65721 U.S.A.

The materials from Restore Ministries were written for the sole purpose of encouraging women. For more information, visit us at:

**[www.RMIEW.com](http://www.RMIEW.com)**  
**[www.EncouragingWomen.org](http://www.EncouragingWomen.org)**  
**[www.RestoreMinistries.net](http://www.RestoreMinistries.net)**

Permission from the author has been given to those who wish to print or photocopy this book for themselves or others, strictly for encouragement and informational purposes; however, such copies or reprints can not be sold in any form without prior written permission from the author.

Unless otherwise indicated, most Scripture verses are taken from the *New American Standard Bible* (NASB). Scripture quotations marked KJV are taken from the *King James Version* of the Bible, and Scripture quotations marked NIV are taken from the *New International Version*. Our ministry is not partial to any particular version of the Bible but **love** them all so that we are able to help every woman in any denomination who needs encouragement.

Ninth Revised Edition

Copyright © 2016  
by Michele Michaels and Erin Thiele

Cover Design by Dallas and Tara Thiele  
Edited by Michelle Bedo

First Printing: 2016

# Table of Contents

1.	Could <i>this</i> be His Plan? .....	6
2.	Giving is the Secret.....	15
3.	The Wave of Adversity.....	25
4.	When Do I Give Up?.....	36
5.	Small as a Man's Fist.....	42
6.	That Amazing Grace.....	47
7.	Believing God for Great Things .....	53
8.	You're Being Set-Up.....	57
9.	What's the Point?.....	63
10.	From the Inside Out.....	69
11.	Guilty of All.....	78
12.	Every Encumbrance.....	83
13.	Those Voices .....	89
14.	You're Beautiful!! .....	93
15.	Utterly Lovesick .....	98
16.	No Longer an Adulteress .....	105
	About the Author .....	115

# Foreword

It's been years since the Feminist Movement robbed women out of their rightful roles and blessings of how God designed women to be. Though it's goal was to give women the same rights as men, it has served to cause women to have no choice but to become single mothers, provide not only for themselves but often their male cohabitant. Women have not freed themselves from men, as it said it was set out to accomplish, but instead, women have become obsessed with having a man, any man at any cost. Not surprisingly the Bible's prophet said times like this would come. Isaiah 4:1 The Message (MSG) says, "That will be the day when seven women will gang up on one man, saying, 'We'll take care of ourselves, get our own food and clothes. Just give us a child. Make us pregnant so we'll have something to live for!'"

It's women like Michele who have been called to blaze the trails for women who will soon find themselves, alone, without a husband or children or family. In this five book series, Michele takes us along on her journey that didn't lead to her regaining what she lost, but finding a relationship so strong, so fulfilling and so peaceful that she is an inspiration to all of us.

Much of what I read in this book, when it was first only available to women in her church, I've used to help the women in my own ministry. Each of us needs to glean the unspoken truths, wisdom and freedom that Michele has experienced and has shared with us in this dynamic book for women.

I'm honored to call Michele my friend, and it's through what she has transparently shared with us in this book that will help us each discover how we can rise above every situation He calls us to go through.

*Erin Thiele*

Restore Ministries International

# Chapter 1

## Could *this* be His Plan?

The Rock! His work is perfect,  
For all His ways are just;  
A God of faithfulness and without injustice,  
Righteous and upright is He.  
—Deuteronomy 32:4

There was no question that God was going to have me write about the last few weeks of my life. Though difficult beyond measure, and while I am deep in the midst of it, I have to say that it has been exciting. Just a week ago, I would not have described my trials as “exciting,” but once again, God has gotten a hold of me (at my request), and once again, I am changed (by my Heavenly Husband and His perfect love towards me).

Right now, I am on a tiny propeller plane headed for Miami; it’s my second flight with thirteen more to go before I arrive back home more than a month from now. I am looking forward to meeting RMI members once I arrive in Miami, and to see what He has planned. It is going to be exciting. The excitement has escalated due to the fact that another airline that was supposed to bring me to Brazil tomorrow has just declared bankruptcy, so my flight was cancelled.

Not too much trouble for God, but it does take tapping into Him in order to secure the faith that I’ll need so that I don’t, instead, turn to a state of panic rather than remain excited about what’s up ahead.

This is all due to God who has changed me. God changed me through stretching me to the point that I told Him that I was about to snap. He told me that I wouldn’t, so I stopped being concerned. Instead of delivering me,

He simply reminded me that this was all necessary in order for me to be ready for what He has planned for me up ahead. I know it is big, He told me, but the details are still more like a dream, a silly dream, that no one would believe—not even me—and I believe there will be some really crazy, yet amazing things before whatever He has planned for me happens.

“Look among the nations! Observe! Be astonished! Wonder! Because I am doing something in your days—You would not believe if you were told” (Habakkuk 1:5).

### God versus Jesus

May I interject something here? Most Christians believe that you can interchange God and Jesus, Father and Husband due to these simply being “names” of the same Person. I hope you know that I’m not concerned with trying to debate religious beliefs or doctrine, my aim is to simply help each woman receive everything that’s been denied her. So the truth is this, if you need a husband, Jesus wants more than anything to be your Husband. Simply speak to Him as you would the most amazingly-in-love-with-you Man of your dreams. If you also need a Father, maybe because you never had a father or a good father or your father left you (he deserted, neglected or even passed away), then speak to God, the Father that way. With this understanding, when I felt myself being stretched, I knew it was my Father, God, who was doing the stretching. My Husband isn’t like that, especially since we’re on an eternal honeymoon.

If you doubt this is true, just try it out. Begin to realize there’s a lot more to Who cares for you than you’ve been told. It’s not just One Person, and there’s proof throughout the Bible. Here’s one, in this verse God spoke: “Let us make human beings in our image, make them reflecting our nature...” Genesis 1:26. The Lord also said something in Isaiah 6:8, “Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?’” References to Us and We are all throughout the Bible, and due to not understanding, the church has felt obligated to interpret what they’ve named the Trinity, and the different denominations have all voiced strong opinions on the subject over centuries.

Unfortunately, most were inaccurate, due to the fact that you simply can't explain something as powerful, and especially because it's impossible to do if you haven't first experienced it, because it's a relationship they're trying to explain. It's like a woman trying to explain what it feels like to be a mother who hasn't been a mother. You can't explain how you'll change, not until you've also experienced being a mother. How can you explain? And when you try to explain, it's impossible, because it's not able to be understood or comprehended by the mind. It can only be experienced through the heart. So too, experiencing God's Son as your Husband, and also God as a Father who loved you enough to give you His Son, and therefore also loves you enough to help change you and to help you continue to grow by stretching you. So now I've had my say, let's return to what I was sharing with you...

There is no doubt that what is ahead for me will change my life and all those around me, but this chapter, dear bride, is not about me, it is about you. God wants to change *your* life as well, but to do that He has to stretch you, and the only way to do that is to bring really incredible trials into your life in order to stretch your faith and trust in Him. This is just God's way. It is not until this principle is understood, which means you've embraced it, that you'll actually come to the point that you're excited by what's thrown at you because you will then be able to receive what He wants to give you, the way He gives. But we can't understand it, until we're willing to work *with* and work *through* this principle, rather than fight against it.

Without realizing it, the church has been made to believe (myself included) that anything that has happened to us, or happens to us, which wasn't or isn't an *obvious* blessing, was/is an attack **by the enemy** that we are required to fight against. Yet, what I found out through many, many trials, tribulations and crises was that most of these "attacks" were simply God's way of directing my path, helping to stretch me in order to bless me, and that I had been fighting against God and it was not the enemy at all. Yes, I know and believe that there *is* an adversary, the Bible tells us that, but I think that this little guy gets way too much attention when he is really powerless in the life of the believer who is sold out for Jesus.

Let me give you an example of this. Earlier this year, while on my way to Europe, I missed my connecting flight (because my plane landed too late), and I found myself on a very small propeller plane (God has such a sense

of humor and is determined to break the yoke of my dislike of flying no matter what it takes). This was not, as it turned out, the enemy blocking me from my speaking engagement in Geneva, Switzerland. As it turned out, it was actually God directing me so that I would not merely speak to a small group of women (my choice), but by missing my connecting flight, forcing me to take a prop plan *through* the Alps rather than simply fly *over* these magnificent mountains—I would know that it was He who wanted me to speak to the entire church (His plan), which included men (whom I did *not* want to speak to).

“As the heavens are **higher** than the earth, so are my **ways higher** than your **ways** and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:9).

Though I know this verse above backwards and forwards, I am still amazed how each time I read it and meditate on it, the power of its message becomes more real as I live each day by faith. Our thoughts and our plans are so inferior and so beneath the plans that God has for us. That is why my prayer life has completely changed, because I finally know that for me to stipulate what I want (making a detailed list) only complicates my life. Instead, my desire is to simply walk out His plan for my life. No longer do I have the need to be a part of His planning meeting. So instead of prayer, I simply enjoy talking to my Husband: I tell Him how I’m feeling and try to remember to sit quietly because very often He has something He wants to tell me too. But no longer am I eager to tell Him (or worse, beg Him) for what I want or need because I have all I want and all I need in Him.

At the same time, I must also explain that what happens when you choose to trust Him at this level is that nothing at all appears to work out *simply* and/or *perfectly* any more. Once you just let God be God and allow His will to be done, it inevitably appears that you have missed Him completely. It is impossible for me to count the number of times that I asked myself over the course of these past few weeks, “Could *this* be His plan?”

For instance, on the morning that I left for my around-the-world tour, I stopped at the bank to draw out some cash as I would normally do. Most people will tell you that it is dangerous to carry cash (and especially when you’re traveling where I am headed), but that makes no difference to me. I



would rather live dangerously in the physical world than to live dangerously in the spiritual realm, which is when we choose safety, convenience or what we would rather do than to do what God tells us to do. The interesting thing is that by drawing out this simple sum of money, it just about cleaned out all my bank accounts. Interesting. Wouldn't this mean that it wasn't His plan? Would His plan put me and my family in a precarious position?

Another example was just five days before I left, I not only noticed that I would soon be totally out of money in all my accounts, but I did not have my around-the-world tickets, nor did I have my passport nor my visa for Africa—the list was endless. That Monday morning, when I made this ominous list in my head, I could feel my negative emotions trying to take over. So I told the Lord, “Honey, I really need more of You right now.” Remember, we don't need to plead or beg or ask for any “thing” specific, instead, I knew that what I needed (and what you always need) is more of Him. Nevertheless, no matter how many times I said that, the emotions continued to overwhelm me. That's when I realized that there is no perfect “formula” and what He was leading me to do is to simply ask Him what I should do next in order to feel more at peace. This was when He led me out to my deck, coffee in hand, and no Bible—so that He could just talk to me.

Once seated, He told me to think of the “worst case scenario,” which was that without travel documents and money, I just couldn't go; instantly, my “worst case scenario” became my *best case* scenario! I would gladly forfeit all the time and money invested in this trip just to stay home with my children. Yet, this possibility lasted just 24 hours. Later that day while driving that still small voice of the Lord (that I have come to know and love) told me, “You know, you *are* going.” Though I hate to admit it, tears welled up in my eyes because I didn't want to go. Even though I didn't respond the way I may have wanted, even then, He loved me just as much. Do you know that? The Lord is not disappointed in you, He is not mad at you, He is not going to punish you—He loves you more than you could ever know.

Within a matter of just 72 hours, all impossibilities became possible because it was His will and His plan for me to go, and it was by stretching me that He was able to teach me just a little more about trusting Him. My tickets arrived, my visa came in the mail for Kenya and my passport arrived just in time. Each impossibility on my list was accomplished because He is God.

“Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?” (Jeremiah 32:27).

### The Plot Thickens and I am Still Smiling

Today is Monday, three days into my tour, and I am walking the streets of Miami dragging 100 pounds (46 kilograms) of luggage (due to carrying RMI books) while the plane that I was booked on is (at this very moment) flying over Venezuela. The airline I mentioned earlier that was to take me to Brazil left without me, because while trying to book me on another airline (remember, the one I was on declared bankruptcy), that’s when the ticket agent asked me for my Brazilian visa. Interestingly, I did not possess one; I didn’t even know I needed one. So I spoke to the Lord about what to do next and He pointed me to go over to get a coffee and a couple of donuts. Don’t you love this Man of ours?!?! At the café, I shared a table with a traveling emergency room nurse who was eager to hear about Jesus, my new Husband.

We spoke for a full two hours, which I was concerned to be doing, but remember, I’d made my list of “worst case scenarios” that could mean I only made a short trip to Miami and I could forget South America, Africa and Europe. Oh heavens, how wonderful that would be!

What I didn’t know is that He led me to wait because the Brazilian consulate’s office wasn’t yet opened. Once I left the airport the situation turned a bit crazy because it meant that I had just forty minutes to get to the office, fill out the paperwork, and submit my application. At the time I didn’t know that it takes at least a week for it to be approved, but thankfully He kept me in the dark about this fact. So, after hailing a cab, I headed downtown (a thirty-minute drive) while my RMI hostess headed to the post-office to get a money order for a hundred dollars since they said they would not accept cash.

Though I got there within five minutes of the office closing, my hostess (while en route) was called away on, would you believe, another emergency? And with no money order, it meant no visa. Could this be God’s

plan? I had just one day to leave the U.S. and get to Brazil, or I would miss my flight to Johannesburg, South Africa. With every opposition coming against me, God made a way where there was no way—my visa, I was told, would be ready between noon and one p.m. the very next day. However, the airline, as I said, was bankrupt, and its reservation line had been disconnected. Still, I knew that if God wanted me to get to Brazil and to keep traveling, He would make a way—but, again, who wouldn't ask, could this be God's plan? And I had to ask myself, "Isn't it just possible that I missed God?"

So this means it's time for a Word booster:

"I, the LORD, **search** the **heart**, I test the mind, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the results of his deeds" (Jeremiah 17:10).

"For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose **heart** is **completely** His" (2 Chronicles 19:9).

So, no, this means, no, you didn't miss God, and neither did I! When things don't fall into place perfectly, it does not mean that we've missed God, or that He has abandoned us. It simply means that He is bringing us up to a higher level of faith and trust in Him. Remember . . .

"Now **faith** is the assurance of things **hoped for**, the conviction of *things not seen*" (Heb. 11:1). "For we walk by faith, not by sight . . ." (2 Corinthians 5:7).

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world **you will have trouble**. But take heart! I have **overcome** the world" (John 16:33 NIV).

The point is this, whether I got to South America, South Africa, Kenya or the Netherlands on this tour was not the point. The point is that I loved Him enough to pack my bags, leave my children for five weeks, and go. This is all He asks of you and me.

- Will you go when He leads?

- Will you trust Him enough to get out of your comfort zone and be willing to hear that still small voice even when it looks as if you are headed the wrong way down a one-way street?

I am—how about you?

So, what about all those people whom you know that will mock and ridicule you for living like this? Well, that happens when you're trusting God, right? Just look at Nehemiah trying to rebuild the temple in Nehemiah 4.

We only need to look at Who always writes the last chapter to know that He promises that we will not be ashamed. In the end, the humble (those who trust Him and are willing to look foolish for Him) will be exalted. Though, in the midst, *others* will jeer and mock and scream at you, "Where is your God now?" Yet, we know that He will eventually show up; yet, sometimes He *is* late. Oh, sorry, does that rock your boat?

I know that you and I have all heard that God is *never* late, but that is just not true. Remember, Jesus was late on purpose when his good friend Lazarus was sick. He actually let His good friend die on purpose. That's because God loves to write the last chapter—the sort of chapter that makes us want to jump up and down and let out a shout of praise! Instead of just healing a sick person, Jesus takes this miracle over the top and raises His friend, the one wrapped in grave clothes—He raised Lazarus from the dead!

Is that how you are feeling now, dead? Is your miracle, your promise, your vision, your around-the-world tour dead... is it dead in the grave? Yes, it may certainly look dead, maybe you're sure it IS dead, but—the same raising-from-the-dead power that raised Lazarus, that raised Jesus, still works today. God loves to stack the odds, back us into the Red Sea with our enemies in hot pursuit, and also to be sure to gather all the mockers around so that everyone, everyone, will know that He is God—the Creator of the earth. Time and circumstance are in His hand. So when it doesn't make sense to us, we only need to remember that His ways are so much above our ways, and just when you think you have figured God out, He'll show you that there is much more to Him than you knew.

There is more love, more compassion, more forgiveness, and much more that He has in store for you as you enjoy your journey on this abundant life that begins once you surrender your life to Him and agree to go along with Him in faith.

Yes, I guess, this IS His plan.



# About the Author

Michele Michaels came to Restore Ministries International when she was facing divorce. At the time she was the mother of two small boys. After reading *How God Can and Will Restore Your Marriage* and *A Wise Woman* and she began helping Erin Thiele with her books, soon after they met while each were in Orlando, Florida. Very soon, after Erin visited Michele in her home in California, Michele's marriage was restored.

Almost exactly fourteen years later, Michele found herself facing divorce again while helping to update and revise a small Facing Divorce booklet for her church. After returning to RMI to Refresh her mind, Michele began to realize He had planned to use this trial for much good. It was during this new chapter in her life when Michele discovered the real reason God allowed another divorce to happen again and what she had been missing: The Abundant Life that she is now living.

Michele's book *Living the Abundant Life* is available on [www.EncouragingBookstore.com](http://www.EncouragingBookstore.com) and also on [www.Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com).

Also, if you've found freedom to love and be loved by your Husband by reading this book, make sure you read Michele's next book *Breaking free from The Poverty Mentality* available soon from these same booksellers.

Restore Ministries International

POB 830

Ozark, MO 65721

For more help  
Please visit one of our Websites:

**EncouragingWomen.org**

**HopeAtLast.com**

**RestoreMinistries.net**

RMIEW.com

RMIOU.com

Aidemaritale.com (French)

AjudaMatrimonial.com (Portuguese)

AyudaMatrimonial.com (Spanish)

ZachranaManzelstva.com (Slovak)

EncouragingMen.org

Where you'll also find FREE Courses for women