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That They Might
Have Life

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RACHAEL PICO

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That They Might Have Life

By Rachael Pico

**When bad things come
into our lives, who is
behind them, how can we
stop them, and what is the
solution?**

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

—John 10:10

Do you ever see one of those moms that's effortlessly pulling it off? And maybe you're brave enough to ask what her secret is. Then she tells you and it's usually one of two things: It's something that you're already doing ineffectively, or it's something that would take so much more time and effort and

energy that you just can't even imagine what it would take to implement it all. "We just eliminated all processed foods, artificial dyes, gluten, soy, dairy, nuts, and put him on a raw organic, low-carb diet. And we just eliminated television, tablet, and computer screen time, and now we just avoid any place that has a cell phone or wifi signal.

Really? That's all? In the back of my mind, I'm thinking, "Yeah, my kid ate Halloween candy for breakfast – last year's Halloween candy. She found it in the closet when I

was supposed to be looking for her during hide-and-seek. I forgot. Oops.”

Parenting is hard. We all have that one person in mind, though, who seems to have it all together. Maybe you’ve viewed her from a distance. Maybe you are close with her. I had a friend like that.

Tina was an amazing mom. She was nearly that mom I just described. Her kids were mild-mannered and well behaved, and made mine look like a couple of escaped billy goats. She was an all-natural, homeopathic, cloth-diapering,

grow-your-own and make-your-own baby food, amazing mom. She had an endless supply of patience and love for her children, and seemed to have it all together.

I had known her my whole life, and she was the kind of friend where we could just pick up where we left off, and it was as though no time had passed. Always the adventurer, she followed her dreams to New Zealand for a month-long backpacking expedition, to West Virginia as a certified whitewater rafting guide, and even to the skies while jumping

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out of a perfectly good airplane. And she took me with her, not just on the skydiving and whitewater rafting trips, but as her life took all sorts of twists and turns that I only ventured to dip my toes into. I am proud and embarrassed to say that I admired her.

You never see the whole story, though, and I am not here to tell you Tina's story. I remember the last time I spoke to her. She was inviting our family to her daughter's 4th birthday party, and as it was just a reminder, it was a brief and nondescript conversation.

Two days later she took her own life, while her daughter was at preschool, and her 2-year-old son was upstairs napping.

It was the hardest thing I've ever had to deal with, and it is something that I am – understandably – still processing. In the days between her death and her funeral, I realized that this was one of those “before and after” moments, where you are able to easily divide the elements of your life into “before” this thing happened and “after.” I made the decision that I would

not let this just be another thing that happened in my life. It wouldn't be just another dot on my timeline. I knew it would be the moment where my timeline took a turn, and would be a major defining factor in my future – because everything in my life changed. And I suddenly knew what my ministry was.

So, I started Life Abundant Ministries. We are founded and rooted in John 10:10, where Jesus says, “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have

life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” We are a ministry geared toward teaching, equipping, and empowering the members of the body of Christ so that they may live life to the fullest. We want people to know who God is, who they are, and what their relationship is with Him, and we want people to know that God will meet them wherever they are, whoever they are.

In the time since Tina’s death, I’ve talked to a lot of women. I’ve asked a lot of questions. And there are a few things I’ve come up with.

I'd like to start out with our ministry's foundational scripture. "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy." That first part paints a very stark contrast to what Jesus says He came to do. Jesus is clear about that. He is not the thief, because – let's be clear, here – we are talking about the enemy of God, the enemy of His people, and our enemy, the devil. And he has one goal, in three parts – steal, kill, and destroy. Have you ever had anything stolen from you? Lost a loved one? Watched a

marriage crumble and fall apart? Steal, kill, destroy.

On one hand we have the thief, who steals, kills, and destroys, and on the other hand we have Jesus bringing life, and not just everyday ordinary life. Yes, he is interested that we are living, breathing, and our heart is beating. But he is also interested in so much more than that. Jesus is interested in healing your wounds and erasing those scars. He wants to lift you up out of those deepest-darkest thoughts that haunt and imprison you. He

wants to fulfill your dreams. He is the lover of your soul, and wants you to have life more abundantly. Some Bible versions even call it having life to the fullest.

It is pretty clear that these two opposing forces are not working in concert with one another. One side seeks to bring destruction and death, and the other side seeks to bring life more abundantly. It seems like a pretty clear split, to me. So, when Tina died, I had such a hard time talking to good, well-intentioned people who just said some of the most

ignorant things. Hopefully, none of those people were any of you.

I heard, “God took her because she was needed in heaven more than here on earth.” What? God did not take her, remember? Steal, kill, destroy, is the devil’s work. He, also, did not need her in heaven, and certainly not more than she was needed here on earth. God had a plan for her life. He has a plan for each of our lives. And, might I say, telling someone that God “took” a loved one is a fantastic way to create a relational rift

between a hurting person and God.

For example: If I took your kid home with me today – and there was nothing you could do about it – and someone told you that I needed your child more than you did, don't you think that would affect our relationship? Wouldn't every subsequent encounter we had be negatively affected by this event? I think it would.

Now, I'm not here to point out every instance of loss, turmoil, and defeat, to say, "Oh, look what the devil has done." No. That gives him too

much credit. He can't do anything all by himself. And he's really an idiot sometimes. If you've ever had a thought that you knew was supposed to be a temptation, but sounded ridiculous, you know what I mean. But, the devil does have a bunch of really bad suggestions. And he is relentless, as you may or may not have noticed.

Because of this relentlessness we need to be on guard. 1 Peter 5:8 says we need to "be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, (walks)

about, seeking whom he may devour.”

Let's think about how we prepare ourselves for our children each day. We know they are going to wake up needing something, so we prepare for that. We plan ahead, we pack lunches, we make sure the coffee pot is set, we set out clothes, we bathe the night before (or not at all), and we do what we have to do to get the day up and running. And we know that if we do not prepare, things falls apart very quickly.

Much in the same way, we need to plan ahead knowing that we will find ourselves under attack in some way or another. Again, we are not giving the devil more credit than is due, but that is literally just what he does. Sometimes, those attacks are from an outside source like a negative co-worker, or a situation at your child's school. But sometimes it comes from a very trusted source – yourself. And that's what I would like to focus on here – our thought life.

So, how do we plan ahead? Well, there are a lot of ways, and I think it's a matter of personal preference.

Plan ahead by devoting time to read the Word of God, the Bible. It plants a seed in you that eventually takes root and strengthens you. Being able to stand on scripture when trials come is invaluable.

Plan ahead by praying – and I'm not talking about giving God your wish list for the day. I'm talking about a real back-and-forth conversation with the Lord. I will admit, I get a few raised

eyebrows when I tell people I talk to God and He talks back (but it comes with the territory, I guess). It's not like an audible voice from the outside. It's a still, small voice on the inside. Sometimes, it seems crystal clear, but other times it's not – and that's my fault, not His. Sometimes, I get a full conceptual understanding of something. And sometimes I get an image of something, usually with a deeper understanding of what it means. Often, it's something that is just for me; it's something that only I would

get. God may already be communicating with you in some of these ways, but you won't know if you're not looking for it. God will meet you where you are.

Plan ahead with strategic avoidance. If you know you are a “chocaholic” and you are looking to shed some holiday weight, do not bring sweets into the house! Likewise, if you know you have an area where you are continually tempted, be proactive and stay away.

One thing that most of us are probably not doing is actively practicing positive

self-talk. We need to be intentional about not just what we say, but also our very own thoughts. In 2 Corinthians 10:3-5, Paul writes, “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that (exalts) itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”

In other words, we don't face our struggles the same way the world does. We don't use the same weapons as other people, who don't know God. We have God's power available to us and can kick the devil out of our lives. People may try to convince us that the world's ways are better, but we are the masters of our own minds. We are able to choose God's thoughts and throw the others out like trash. Ideas may come to mind, but we are able to decide if they line up with what Jesus says. Those positive God-given thoughts then

become what you say about yourself. You can store some of those powerful thoughts in your mind by memorizing scriptures that say good things about how God sees you.

Doesn't that just sound so doable? Like there is something we can be doing actively instead of just falling victim to every attack of the enemy.

I can assure you that during Tina's last days, there were many uncontrolled and unsolicited thoughts taking root in her mind, and turning them into uncontrolled fears.

Philippians 4:8 teaches us that we need to think about the things that are honest, just, pure, lovely, and admirable – anything about which we may say good things – that is what we are supposed to be thinking about.

I don't know about you, but there are some days when – if I could look at the “recent activity” tab in my brain – those are not the things I have been thinking upon. Not even close. And to be perfectly honest, some of these thoughts have frequented my mind so often in the past, that I don't

even recognize they are there as part of an attack. They are just part of the background noise that I don't even realize is bad for me. These thoughts are negative and recurring. They are what you hear on the inside when you mess up. It's that voice that reminds you of your past failures and terrorizes you about your future. It suggests hypothetical worst-case scenarios. It stirs up your emotions and keeps you awake at night. Everyone has them, and it is alarming how similar they are from person to person. They are so

similar in nature that one could theorize that these thoughts are, in fact, not originating from our own brains after all.

If you are still unsure what I am talking about, I've brought up a few of the possible negative thought patterns you might hear. You may be susceptible to self-criticism, worry, defensiveness, business, and suggestions of harm toward yourself and others. Sound familiar? Now that you know what to look for, what can be done about them?

Let's do a quick experiment. Mentally, go through the alphabet. You can even imagine the "A, B, C" song, if you wish, but the key is to do it mentally. While you are doing that, say your name out loud. You stopped thinking about the ABC's, didn't you? When you speak, it short circuits the brain's thought process. So if you plan ahead, you can combat those negative thoughts by speaking something positive. Over time, you can retrain your brain to think good thoughts. Please understand – you cannot

remove a thought from your brain without replacing it with something else.

The thoughts that we think don't just live harmlessly inside our own minds. They become part of us, and part of our belief system, and eventually part of our speech and actions. If we think about it, it starts to make sense. I mean, our voice is just an extension of our body through the use of our tongue, mouth, and vocal chords. It is all interconnected. Just as the chin leads the head and the body must follow, our thoughts

lead to beliefs, which exit from our lips, and turn into words and actions.

There is actually neuroscience out there that corroborates exactly what the Bible tells us in 2 Timothy 1:7, “God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” What we are thinking manifests itself in our brain and in our bodies. With Jesus involved in our lives, we can have the Holy Spirit working on the inside of us, generating positive life-filled thoughts.

My friend, Tina, didn't just wake up one day and think, "You know, I think today I'll kill myself." Nope. Just like most people don't suddenly make a decision to cheat on their spouse, it all starts with a thought. One tiny thought, like a strand of ivy, finds the tiniest crevice and takes hold. Then it grows, and it grows, and it grows until, one day, you've got a whole wall covered in ivy, destroying your foundations and the integrity of your home.

Do you know how many women I have talked to who answer "yes" when I ask them

if they have thought about suicide in the last 6 months? A lot. I'm not talking about planning it out or anything. They have just thought about it. Maybe it was just for a quick second, in a moment of desperation. Something like a suggestion, looking for a crevice, to creep into our minds. It's moments like these that make it so important to be masters of our thoughts.

You should know that every bit of what you've read comes absolutely from love. I know it may not seem as though everyone is fighting a battle of

life and death, but everyone's struggle is real, regardless of what it is. But, as challenging as life may seem, we have already won through Jesus. And I have to remind myself of that sometimes, too.

If you don't already know Jesus personally, you can invite Him into your life today. Paul wrote, in Romans 10:9-10, that if you agree that Jesus is the ruler of life, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the realm of the dead to new life, you can share it with Him. As we learned, what you believe can become

what you think and say.
Deciding to make Jesus the
Lord of your life will be the
best thought you ever have.
And these will be sweetest
words you will ever hear
yourself speak: “Jesus is Lord,
and God raised Him from the
dead. Amen.”

If you just did that,
welcome to the family! Now
that you are reunited with your
heavenly Father, He wants to
give you a gift – the Holy
Spirit. The Spirit will help
learn more about Jesus and
how to live abundantly in this
world, and beyond.

If the things you read in this book touched you or reminded you of someone – even yourself – I ask you to do a few things.

First, talk to someone – preferably, a mature Christian, if not a trained minister.

Pastors and counselors are great listeners. From there, form a plan and be accountable for your thought life. The mind is a scary place – don't go there alone.

Secondly, please pray for the strength of this ministry. The battles we fight are not of flesh and blood, but of spiritual

forces. Pray that we and all who partner with this ministry shall remain strong like a lighthouse during a storm.

Third, stay connected with us and spread the word. We would love to come speak to your group. Obviously, this book was written with women in mind, but we are called to speak to the Church as a whole. All of the materials on our website, www.life-abundant.org, are available for your personal use. We are regularly updating our content, so be sure to check in often. Thanks for reading!

About the Author



Rachael Pico is passionate about revealing God as a loving Father, Jesus as a powerful friend, and the Holy Spirit as a comforting guide. She has developed an intimate, personal relationship with God and is called to teach others how to receive His love based upon their unique individual needs. She is the president and founder of Life Abundant Ministries. Learn more at www.life-abundant.org.

“The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” - Jesus, John 10:10

The purpose of Life Abundant Ministries is to educate people about God, themselves, and their relationship with Him. Through onsite seminars, webinars, and various resources, we aim to reveal God to people so that they may see Him at work in their everyday lives. We have been influenced by ministers, thinkers, and leaders from a range of backgrounds. God speaks to people where they are at and in a way that they will understand. As ambassadors of Jesus Christ, we are no different in our approach. We hope to draw people into a personal and communal relationship with God rather than religion.

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