

## Abundant Life and Loving God: Let God Capture Your Heart

**Greg Wander**

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*With an open, friendly tone, Wander challenges his fellow Christians to develop a deeper relationship with God.*

In *Abundant Life and Loving God*, Greg Wander passionately challenges Christians to focus on developing a deeper relationship with God by loving him with all of their heart, soul, and mind, which Matthew 22:37-38 cites as “the great and foremost commandment.” By doing so, Wander argues Christians will find their lives are truly transformed so that they can also fulfill the second great commandment to “love your neighbor as yourself” and enjoy Jesus’s promise of an abundant life.

Wander notes that too many Christians settle for a surface relationship with God and do not pursue the fullness of joy and richness of life he wants them to experience. As Wander explains, “My recommendation would be that we (especially parents) never talk about salvation without also stressing that it should be just the beginning of a relationship with God in this life.”

Wander, however, never condemns or belittles believers for their shallow faith. Rather, he offers ample encouragement that they can also have a more fulfilling and rewarding life if they will fall deeper in love with God. Wander’s enthusiasm and joy permeate his writing, and his style is reminiscent of a coach urging a player to strive to fulfill all of his potential.

Wander does much more than simply cheer Christians on with vague suggestions. He offers several key points on how to seek a deeper relationship with God, such as through prayer and Bible study, loving others, listening to Christian music, developing true church friends, and counting your blessings. He uses everyday, easily understood illustrations to convey his concepts, avoiding deep theological discussions in favor of practical suggestions that he personally employs.

Although Wander primarily targets his teachings to individual Christians, he also supplies several recommendations for parents, church leaders, and pastors. He explains the roles of each group in helping others develop stronger relationships with God. Wander particularly emphasizes that the church and its leaders must take the lead. “We need to make it clear that loving God is supposed to be the norm within the church, not the exception for the leaders.”

*Abundant Life and Loving God* effectively expresses Wander’s passion for urging other Christians to seek a life totally committed to loving God and, in turn, loving their neighbors. Wander’s open, friendly tone invites fellow believers to join him in seeking the closeness to God that leads to an abundant, fulfilled life. His call for Christians to seriously follow the two greatest commandments is a resounding echo of Jesus’s desire for his followers.

JEFF FRIEND (July 23, 2015)

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