

The background is a solid teal color with several white feathers scattered across it, some appearing to float or fall. The feathers are of various sizes and orientations, adding a sense of lightness and movement to the design.

# CAST YOUR CARES

A 40-DAY JOURNEY TO FIND  
REST FOR YOUR SOUL

DEVOTIONS FROM

ABIDE CHRISTIAN MEDITATION



**FREE**  
**Sampler**

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## INTRODUCTION

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What's causing you to not be able to rest today? Your finances? A loved one's health? Fear, anxiety, shame, loneliness? Each care can feel like a boulder set in a backpack heaped upon your shoulders, causing you to lie awake at night, unable to find rest for your body or your spirit. You may wonder if you'll ever find a way out.

Maybe the lyrics to the famous *Frozen* song performed by Idina Menzel come readily to mind: "Let it go!"

Or maybe you've seen this pithy statement: Let go and let God.

So easy, right? Just let it go.

Unfortunately, it's not so easy. Some of what's weighing us down and causing chaos digs barbs into our souls and refuses to release us, like those sticky little burrs that often cling to our pants when we walk through weeds.

Hebrews 12:1 encourages us, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw

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off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.”

Throw off everything that hinders.

But doesn't it feel sometimes like you're wearing a strait-jacket that you can't just take off? No matter how hard you try, your cares entrap you.

The good news is that God is not asking you to do any of this on your own.

Philippians 1:6 says, “Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

And Jesus said in Matthew 11:29, “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

Everything you've ever dealt with, every emotion you've ever felt, is covered in the Bible. Anger? Check. Loneliness? Check. Shame? Check. The list goes on and on. Jesus knows exactly how you feel. That's why he wants you to spend time with him. And that's why we created the Abide app and wrote this book. We want to help you spend time with Jesus, learn from his gentleness and humbleness, and find rest for your soul.

Anxiety is still the number one mental health concern worldwide, and it's on the rise.<sup>1</sup> From 2020 to 2021, the percentage of adults who reported symptoms of anxiety or a depressive disorder increased from 36.4 percent to 41.5 percent.<sup>2</sup> And while we know there is a connection between

mental health and emotional health,<sup>3</sup> we also know Scripture addresses and relieves each of these troubles in specific ways.

Considering how your thoughts and mindset affect your beliefs and behavior isn't new, but doing so with visualization practices based on the immediate relief available in the Bible's promises is proving the benefits of daily reflecting on Scripture in new ways.

We had one listener write to us to tell us he was a drug addict struggling in recovery. He knows the solution lies in his relationship with God and so he wrote to tell us how thankful he was for the inspiration in the meditations.

We hear stories like this all the time. People write just to tell us how much they need the content in our app. They get busy or their hearts are heavy, and they just need to remember God's love.

Sometimes we just need to be reminded that we have the greatest source of help available to us. Psalm 55:22, the verse from which we got the title of this book, says, "Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken."

Jesus really does want you to have peace, but not just any peace; *his* peace. In John 14:27 Jesus tells his disciples, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

This book goes beyond the Abide app to offer practical, biblical strategies that immediately address and help resolve eight primary "cares"—common fears and anxieties—drawn

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from Abide's most popular content. Through applied visualization techniques and meditation prompts, these devotions will help you put the words and instructions from Scripture into practice.

This book isn't a cure-all, and if you've had traumatic experiences, professional counseling may be warranted, but these devotions are a means of ushering you into God's presence, giving you practical steps to identify and release your cares, and prompting you to write down your thoughts, experiences, and prayers. Keep a journal by your side as you read, and don't feel like you need to go through the chapters in order. One day you may need to release your loneliness, another day, your anger, and another, your everyday concerns.

Use this book as a tool to work through your cares with God whenever you feel restless.

It is our deep desire that in forty days, by reflecting on God's Word, releasing each particular care, and journaling from the prompts given at the end of each chapter, you will find the rest your soul so desperately needs.

Stephanie Reeves

ABIDE WRITER AND CONTENT EDITOR

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PART 1

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# ANXIETY



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## Seeing God in the Storms

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### *Reflect on God's Word*

Are there hurricane conditions in your heart today, leaving you feeling frightened and out of control?

Perhaps the storm that scares you is a relationship on the rocks, a child in distress, a situation at work that threatens to go badly, or something else. Whatever it is, today God invites you to remember that he is with you in the storm, and that he is in control.

Matthew 8:23–27 tells the story of Jesus on the lake with his disciples when a “furious storm” comes up.

Imagine that you are one of Jesus’ disciples. You’ve been following him for a while, and today has been, as usual, a full day. Jesus has healed so many people, and the crowds keep following him, even when the things Jesus teaches seem confusing and hard.

What is supposed to be your time of peaceful rest on a lake is interrupted by a sudden tempest. High waves sweep over the sides of your boat, and wind and rain whip at your face, but Jesus keeps sleeping.

Finally, you go to Jesus and shake him. You say, “Lord, save us! We are going to drown!” He looks at you with

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compassion. “You of little faith, why are you so afraid?” he asks. You watch as he stands and speaks to the wind and the waves. Everything suddenly becomes completely calm.

Perhaps you hear God asking you the same question today that Jesus asked the disciples on the boat: “Why are you so afraid?”

Physical storms can be very frightening. Hurricanes, tornados, tropical storms, and even thunderstorms can bring great devastation. And there’s nothing we can do about them but make preparations and then either evacuate or ride it out. Because of today’s technology, we know when physical storms are coming, but we don’t have Doppler radar for emotional or spiritual storms.

Nevertheless, Jesus wants to speak the same words to you today that he spoke to his disciples: *Don’t be afraid*. Perhaps he wants to calm the storm around you, or perhaps he simply wants to calm your heart. The storms you face may seem overwhelming, but you can be sure that God’s power is greater than any storm. Today, he invites you to rest with him, to trust him with your life, so that even when a storm rages, you can be at peace.

If God is for you—and God *is* for you!—you have nothing to fear. The powerful one, the creator and commander of wind and waves, wants you to be at peace in his love.

### *Release Your Anxiety*

Take your hand and place it directly in front of your face, about an inch away. What do you see? Only your hand,

## SEEING GOD IN THE STORMS

right? Now take that hand and move it back about six inches. You can start to see a little more around it. Now hold your hand at arm's length. Suddenly, you see a lot more than just your hand.

Staring at your problem, the storm in your life, can take all your focus. Instead, focus on God's presence in the midst of your storm. There is nowhere that he does not dwell. Jesus was in the boat with his disciples during the storm that worried them so. But instead of focusing on his presence, and the fact that they were safe with him, they focused on the wind and the waves.

Yet Jesus showed them, and he has shown you, that he has power over all he has created. Can you trust that he has power in your life, too? Imagine Jesus turning his eyes of compassion to you. Because he loves you, you can trust him with all the fears and worries in your heart right now. Take a moment to give your fears to God.

As you inhale, feel the breath expanding into your chest. Slowly exhale, feeling the breath leave your body. Let your breath continue this way, growing deeper and steadier, as if the same calm that descended upon the lake at the sound of Jesus' voice is moving into your body with each breath. This is the life-giving oxygen that comes from God above, and it can calm your soul, settling the anxieties you may face.

Rest here for as long as you need, giving your fears over to God and receiving his love and grace. Today, if the storms of life descend suddenly upon you, remember this moment and this truth: God has power over the storm.

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God, you know all about the storms swirling around me today. You know my fears and worries, my weaknesses and my needs. I surrender them all to you right now. I know that you are in control and that you are a God of power and love. I trust you, Father, to take care of me, and to calm the storms in my heart and in my life. In the precious name of your Son, amen.

**JOURNAL PROMPT:** Write about a storm you currently face. What would it look like if you felt God's peace in the midst of that storm?

We hope this sample selection brought you  
comfort and encouragement.

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begin a new habit of spiritual self-care now!



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