



# Resting



A 14-week devotion series



What sustains us in the midst of life's challenges? After two years of living through a pandemic, we all need sustenance that will enable us to move forward in faithful devotion to our great God. The wonderful truth of the Scriptures is that this is not just about us trying harder, but it is God himself who upholds and sustains us.

This series, originally written by Sarah Condie for The Bible Society Australia, reminds us of God's character – that he is a God who loves and reaches out, offering grace and words of life. As we rest in the truths of who he is, what he has done, what he promises to continue to provide, and the certainty of our hope, we will find rest and strength for our souls.

## Contents

---

**DEVOTION 1: HIS GIFT**

**DEVOTION 2: REFRESHING TRUTHS**

**DEVOTION 3: BECOMING BEAUTIFUL**

**DEVOTION 4: THE SHEPHERD**

**DEVOTION 5: DIVINE ATTENTION**

**DEVOTION 6: STEADINESS IN UNCERTAINTY**

**DEVOTION 7: FEAR**

**DEVOTION 8: THE OPEN ROAD**

**DEVOTION 9: ABUNDANT BENEFITS**

**DEVOTION 10: ANCHORED**

**DEVOTION 11: SAFETY AND PROVISION**

**DEVOTION 12: REFUGE**

**DEVOTION 13: GOOD THINGS**

**DEVOTION 14: GIVING**



## Devotion 1: His gift

---

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 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. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

*Matthew 11:28-30*

It's early in a new year and already I am weary. Summers in Australia are hot, and where I live, humid. But it's not the humidity that's wearing me down. It's continuing to live with Covid, an experience that has changed the shape of our lives in ways we could never have imagined.

I'm tired of living with discombobulation and uncertainty. I had thought 2022 would be different. We have a vaccine that offers protection and rapid antigen tests that let us know quickly if we are infected. But as well as Covid, the normal stuff of life continues. Dear friends receive a diagnosis of cancer; a precious family member dies; we welcome a new granddaughter into our family. There are new jobs and family relocations. Events sad and joyful that seem that much more complicated during what seems to be an ever-present virus. It wears me out.

I find these words spoken by Jesus calming and soothing. Our Saviour is with us in this perplexing time. What I love about Jesus' words here is the glimpse he gives us of his heart – he is gentle and humble. When we're tired and troubled, Jesus meets us with gentleness. And notice these words: 'I will give you'. Rest is His gift to us. As we come to him, his eyes see us, his ears hear our cries, and he offers us rest – rest for our souls.

**Lord Jesus, thank you that you are a Saviour who is gentle and humble in heart. You have not left us to face life on our own. Please lift the burdens we carry this day. Carry them on your shoulders that never give way. Remind us afresh that you love us enough to lay down your life for us. May these truths be balm for our weary souls to renew and refresh us. Amen.**



## Devotion 2: Refreshing truth

---

But when the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things...

*Titus 3:4-7*

Paul's letter to Titus is full of practical advice about Christian living. Paul devotes most of his letter to the behaviour and conduct of the Christian believer and the importance of living a godly and 'productive' life. But that's not the heart of the letter. Paul's key focus is on God's grace and how that grace shapes us.

The truth of these verses is like the petrol that keeps the car going. Without petrol, the car will stop driving. Resting in these truths are what will keep us going in faithful service to our Lord. Our God is merciful. He didn't have to save us, and his rescue plan didn't include our efforts or good works. This is a truth we can rest in. The amazing thing is that when we rest in it, we want to live good and productive lives as his Spirit works within us to renew and transform us.

Gracious loving heavenly Father, when I'm tempted to think that my salvation depends upon what I do, help me to remember that I am saved because of your kindness and love. Fill me with your Spirit and remind me that the Lord Jesus has done it all. I am saved. I am your heir and have the hope of eternal life. Amen.





## Devotion 3: Becoming beautiful

---

But when the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

*Titus 3:4-7*

These verses ooze grace. Read them slowly, once, twice, and then again. What do you notice? What do they tell you about God? He is kind, loving, merciful and generous. He is a God of rescue and a giver of new life. I read these verses at least once a week. I need reminding, constant reminding of how much God loves me.

Have you ever been given a bunch of poppies – that don't look like poppies? Growers cut poppies before they open; they're just a bunch of ugly pods. But if you sit and wait, you will watch a remarkable transformation take place. These pods actually pop and out of the shell emerges a brand-new flower. I can still remember feeling like the pod and longing to become one of those flowers.

That is what grace does. It transforms us, it washes us clean, it renews us from something that is ugly and unworthy into one of His precious, beloved children. Totally undeserved, a gift given with generosity and mercy and not because of anything we might have done to earn this ourselves. God transforms us from a pod into a beautiful flower that is unique and precious.

I am good at forgetting this remarkable truth. Let me encourage you to read through these verses slowly and remember how God has demonstrated His kindness and love to you. Remember that moment when you met Jesus as the Lord and Saviour of your life. Rest in this truth – this is who you are today and tomorrow and for all eternity.

**Gracious loving heavenly Father, please fill my mind with the truth that I am your precious child, saved by grace through the work of Jesus Christ. Help me to see myself through your eyes and may this truth shape how I live today. Thank you for the hope of eternal life. Renew my mind and heart with your Holy Spirit and fill me with the joy of knowing that I am saved. Amen.**



## Devotion 4: The Shepherd

---

The Lord is my shepherd...He restores my soul.

### *Psalm 23:3*

Events in life can knock the stuffing out of us. Our inner being gets worn down and we lose our zest for life, a bit like an orange that's been juiced or eaten, leaving a discarded skin. These words, 'He restores my soul' are a wonderful reminder that the Lord, the Great Shepherd, is the one who revives and sustains us.

In Psalm 23, David uses the image of a shepherd caring for his sheep to describe the relationship he has with God. The shepherd is everything to his sheep – their guide, provider, and protector.

I have been thinking about how my Shepherd restores my soul when I am downcast and crushed in spirit. In recent years there have been many occasions when I've felt drained and empty like dried up orange skin. Sometimes that has arisen from personal challenges; other times from seeing family and friends face tragedy and hardship. While heartache and grief may have lingered, God's word has provided refreshment time after time.

When your spirit feels crushed, resting in the truths of God's word has the power to nourish and restore your soul. Turn to the words in Psalm 23 and remind yourself that in Jesus we have a shepherd who will lead us beside still waters. He is with us even when we walk through the valley of the shadow of death; his rod and staff will comfort and protect us. Remember that one day, we shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

**My Lord, thank you that you are my Good Shepherd. Thank you that you walk with me and that when my spirit is crushed and I am downcast, you are the restorer of my soul. Please restore my soul. Help me to remember that you laid down your life for me and that one day, I shall dwell in your house forever. Amen.**



## Devotion 5: Divine Attention

---

What is mankind that you are mindful of them, Human beings that you care for them?

*Psalm 8:4*

Jesus said “Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?

*Matthew 6:26*

The Creator of this world cares for human beings more than everything else he has made. That is the deep truth that we can rest in here. Our heavenly Father takes care of His world – he provides, he protects, he watches over; he notices the small details such as a hungry bird. But we are more valuable than any bird and he provides, protects, and watches over us with great care and attention.

Our God does not stand far off. He does not say, ‘Just carry on, and hope for the best.’ No, he sees and notices the trouble we are in. He helps the fatherless, he hears the cries of the afflicted, he encourages the weak and weary.

The depth of that care is no more clearly seen than in the sending of his Son. We may be blessed with family, good health, and other good things of this life. But we are ever conscious of the trouble we were in, of our need for forgiveness. The wretched death of that beloved Son was the cost that brought our freedom and welcome into his family.

We matter so much to God, and he cares for us more than we can imagine.

Rest in this truth today.

**Thank you, Lord, for the depth of your care for me. Fill my mind with all the different ways you have demonstrated that care. Thank you that you hear my cries, even when they are tiny silent groans. Thank you, Jesus, for being willing to confront the evil in this world and to die in my place, so that one day, I will see you face to face and enjoy fullness of life in your kingdom. Amen.**



## Devotion 6: Steadiness in Uncertainty

---

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace...

### *Hebrews 13:8-9*

The last couple of years have been full of uncertainty and change and we have become adept at pivoting. This is quite wearying. Recently, our son and his wife moved away to a new place with new jobs, new church, new friends, new everything. My daughter-in-law told me how relieved she was that there was a Coles close by: 'At least, it looks just the same as our old Coles and is familiar'.

Any chain store—with its branded look, its predictable shelving, its stable stock supply—works because we know what to expect when we enter its doors. We know where to look to find the familiar products that we love, to stock our fridge and cupboards with.

Our Lord Jesus is like this. He is unchanging. As God, he is entirely predictable and consistent. As is the message of saving grace that is found in knowing him. An unchanging Christ with an unchanging offer of mercy that strengthens our hearts.

We may wake up to news of a new strain of Covid, or that a Tsunami threatens our coastline, or some other eventful change, but we can rest in the truth that our God is unchanging. He remains unwavering; utterly and reliably consistent. By his grace we have been forgiven and welcomed into his family. And this will still be true tomorrow, and the day after, next week, next month...until forever.

I have written this prayer into my PrayerMate App to help me remember that our great God is unchanging. If you don't use this App, why not write it on a card and put it beside your bed to pray each evening:

**Be present, merciful God, and protect us through the hours of this night: that we, who are wearied by the changes and chances of this fleeting world, may rest on your eternal changelessness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**





## Devotion 7: Steadiness in Uncertainty

---

For I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, do not fear; I will help you.

*Isaiah 41:13*

Do you know how often the Bible encourages us not to fear? You could read one encouragement such as this every day for a year – that is at least 365 times! Have you ever wondered why the authors of the bible return to this theme so often?

You might say 'I'm not fearful', but here are some other expressions that capture fear: terror, scared, frightened, worried, anxious, panic, alarm, apprehension, dread.

I'm prone to being a worrier. An item on a news bulletin can set me off. Or a phone conversation with a family member or friend when they share a concern. I would probably get a degree for worrying if they were offered.

There are, of course, times when our fears and concerns are reasonable and appropriate and move us to take action to protect ourselves and others. It would be foolish to respond otherwise. Such legitimate concern has been in play during the pandemic, while also providing opportunities for many of us to finely develop good habits of worry and fear and uncertainty.

I read this verse and am encouraged to rest in its truth. We have a God, a deeply personal God who takes hold of our hand, just like a parent holds the tiny hand of their child as they walk to hold them steady. And this God, our God, our Father, says 'Do not fear, I will help you'. The ESV translation uses even stronger language: 'I am the one who helps you.'

Today, let me encourage you to think about His strong, warm, and gentle hand holding your hand as you walk through this day. In the midst of your fears, you are not alone – He is with you; He is close enough to hold your hand.

Our Father God, thank you that you love me enough to take hold of my hand to help me. I know this firsthand because you rescued me from darkness and brought me into light through the death of your precious Son Jesus. Help me to remember today that your hand won't let me go – your hands are strong and gentle. Amen.



## Devotion 8: The Open Road

---

In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious.

*Isaiah 11:10*

There will be a highway for the remnant of his people....

*Isaiah 11:16*

In the 11th chapter of his prophecy, Isaiah paints a glorious picture of hope. The picture painted is one where enmity is replaced with peace, fighting with play, terror with safety. This is what our final resting place will look like. It will be glorious.

Just as the Lord God provided a highway for his people out of Egypt, he will do so again with this new act of deliverance. A highway is a road that is straight, wide, and safe. Highways will take you the most direct route to your destination and you don't need to worry about navigating dangerous curves or not being able to see what lies ahead.

Isaiah speaks of the Root of Jesse who is coming to rescue God's people. We know that the one who fulfils these words is Jesus, the Son of God, who was also descended from the family line of Jesse.

Towards the end of Luke's gospel, we read of two of Jesus' disciples walking together from Jerusalem to the village of Emmaus. They had heard news that the body of their beloved friend, Jesus, which had been placed in a tomb and sealed, had vanished. They are joined by a stranger who listens to them speak about this event and then opens the Scriptures and explains the prophecies, including Isaiah, about what was said about himself.

After they shared a meal, they suddenly recognise that this is no stranger but the risen Lord Jesus.

**Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?**

*Luke 24:32*

God's promised redemption has come. The way is open and clear, just like a highway. The destination is glorious.

Loving Father, thank you for opening the way for our salvation. Thank you that as we journey through life, we have a wise companion who walks beside us. May our hearts burn within us as we listen and obey the words of our Saviour. Fill us with joy and gladness, knowing that one day, we will reach that destination and it will be glorious. Amen



## Devotion 9: Abundant Benefits

---

Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits –

...

For as high as the heavens are above the earth,  
So great is his love for those who fear him.  
As far as the east is from the west,  
So far has he removed our transgressions from us  
As a father has compassion on his children,  
So, the Lord has compassion on those who fear him.

*Psalm 103:2, 11-13*

We can rest in these deep truths, that we are forgiven, healed, ransomed, restored, and renewed. Why? Because our God is a God of steadfast, unfailing, never-ending love.

To rest in a truth, you need to soak in it, marinate in it, steep in it. Read this Psalm slowly and let its truths fill your mind and trickle down into your heart and soul.

God's love for us is unfathomable and immeasurable. We know we can't touch the heavens – our universe extends unendingly. The east and west will never meet. This is how much he loves us. He let his own precious perfect son die for us to pay the price for our flaws, our faults, our failures, our rebellion. Now they are gone. We are forgiven. He won't treat us as our sins deserve; he won't accuse us or repay us.

It's hard to stand in front of someone who loves like this. Being so aware of my own flaws, like Isaiah, I want to fall down and cry, 'Woe is me!... for I am a woman of unclean lips, unclean thoughts, I am self-focused and not worthy of love.' My failings are so apparent to me. I only have to open my mouth and too often, I have stuffed up, yet again. Too often, I take out my tiredness and frustrations on those closest to me.

This is what makes God's love so amazing. He sees me like this and scoops me up into His arms and says, 'I love you, and I will forgive you, I will restore and renew you and wash you clean'. He scoops you up into His arms and says 'I love you' – I forgive you.'

Soak in the gentle loving kindness of the Lord our God today. Our God is a God of compassion and grace – he is slow to anger and abounding in love. This is our God.

**Thank you, Lord, that you treat me with a gentleness and kindness. You forgive me, you heal me, you restore me and you redeem me. Help me to rest in this truth and soak in its richness and live as if I am crowned with love and compassion. Amen.**





## Devotion 10: Achored

---

But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope:  
The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;  
his mercies never come to an end;  
they are new every morning;  
great is your faithfulness.

*Lamentations 3:21–23*

The book of Lamentations is a collection of poems giving voice to the suffering that came to the Israelites after the fall of Jerusalem. It is full of strong emotion – grief, disappointment, anger, doubt, despair. It's raw and honest.

The brokenness of our world is awful and inescapable. When it impacts us personally, it is like we are hurled into a flooded river that surges and gushes and moves forward at a pace that seems unstoppable. It's hard to breathe, and you can feel as if you will suffocate alone, abandoned in darkness.

These verses sit in the middle of five poems of lament. They offer some of the few words of hope in the whole book. But they are powerful, air-giving, life affirming words of hope.

Have you ever tried to stop the flow of water? As a child, I built many dams with my father who loved to try to keep a stream of water in check. But we rarely succeeded. Moving water is hard to stop; fast flowing water is unstoppable.

These words stop an unstoppable flow of grief.

But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope:

Suddenly, almost mid-sentence, the writer remembers something that lets him come up to the surface, lift his head, and take a breath of air into his lungs. He remembers words that give him hope. He remembers that he is not alone or abandoned. His God is faithful and great.

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;  
his mercies never come to an end;



When does the steadfast love of the Lord and his mercies cease? Never. Not now, not tomorrow, not ever. And they continue, new every morning.

This is what enables the writer to continue. His life remains unchanged, but he has sufficient to get through today. And tomorrow there will be fresh evidence of God's love and mercy.

This is grace. Our God has not abandoned us to drown in this flooded river. God let His son Jesus join us and experience the brokenness and pain of this world. Through his death and resurrection, he has become the anchor for our souls.

**Help me, Lord God, to remember that because of your mercies I have hope. Fill my mind, my heart, my soul with the rich truth that your love is steadfast and constant. Thank you that one day, there will be no more grief or tears or pain. How great is your faithfulness! Amen.**



## Devotion 11: Safety and Provision

---

**‘Lord, you alone are my portion and my cup; you make my lot secure.**

**The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance.’**

*Psalm 16:5-6*

I am good at catastrophising and anticipating the worst-case scenario. If my husband gets home late, I have him killed in a car accident and I am at his funeral. I have lost count of how many times he has died in my imagination. This Psalm provides me with an alternative way of thinking about the things that happen in life. I spent a year reading it every week and it changed me.

The Psalmist, King David, lived much of his life on the edge, fleeing danger. He was steeped in the Scriptures and he knew how to pray. In Psalm 16, he brings the evil that is in our world into sharp focus and prays into that space and asks for help: ‘Keep me safe, O God, for in you I take refuge’.

David has found refuge, a place of rest for his soul. His Lord is his portion and cup. He knows that God has provided him with everything he needs for today and will continue to provide into the future – a future of ‘pleasant places’ and ‘a delightful inheritance’. So, he is secure. He does not need to worry or fret; he is going to be okay.

This Psalm finds fulfilment in great David’s greater Son, the Lord Jesus. He would die, but in the words of the Psalm (v 10), he would not be abandoned in the realm of the dead or see decay. Resurrection life was his – yes, a delightful, glorious inheritance.

As those ‘in Christ,’ this is the inheritance that awaits us. When I find myself catastrophising, I turn to this Psalm and find rest in the strong confidence that God is at my right hand (v8) and is with me.

**Please help me keep my eyes on you, Lord. I know that with you at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore, my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; and my body also will rest secure. Please keep me safe today and tomorrow. Thank you for the delightful inheritance you have given me in Christ. Fill me with joy today as I rest on this truth. Amen.**



## Devotion 12: Refuge

---

**‘Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.’**

***Psalms 62:8***

Imagine King David – the man who defeated Goliath, a man who is brave and strong, comparing himself to a tottering fence (Ps 62:3). In this moment of vulnerability, he tells his reader that a light touch would bring him toppling down into a heap of rubble. Surely, he could pick himself up and carry on. But no...

David is so steeped in the Scriptures that he is able to speak the truths of God into his soul and reframe how he sees himself and his circumstances. He knows how fragile he truly is, but also knows to whom he can turn for help.

**‘Yes, my soul, find rest in God;  
My hope comes from him.  
Truly he is my rock and my salvation;  
He is my fortress, I will not be shaken.’**

***Psalms 62:5-6***

Notice David’s self-talk. No matter how vulnerable or fragile he feels, he tells himself that God is unshakable, solid as a rock, a fortress – strong, mighty, reliable, and dependable. The God who has saved him can be trusted, and he urges all God’s people to trust him ‘at all times.’ No matter what is happening, when it is happening, or where it is happening, God is our safe place. This Psalm counters the message that our wellbeing is tied to our own capacities, gifts, and strength. Thinking that we don’t need help or that we can do it on our own stops us from seeing the hand of God longing to reach out and restore and sustain us. We are safe enough, secure enough to pour out our hearts to Him (v 8). Today, speak these words slowly into your soul, for God is our refuge.

**You, my God, are my rock, my fortress, my refuge. Thank you for sending your Son Jesus to rescue me from my helpless state and restore me. Thank you that I can pour out my heart to you, knowing that you are trustworthy, you love me and will help me through today. Pour your Spirit into my heart, so that I can remember that in you I will never be shaken. Amen.**



## Devotion 13: Good things

---

“You cause the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate that he may bring forth food from the earth. And wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine. And bread to strengthen man’s heart.”

“O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all.”

*Psalms 104:14, 15, 24*

When you hear the word pumpkin, what do you think of? Soup? Pie? The colour orange? Do you smell pumpkin cooking? With onion and garlic?

During the pandemic, I visited our local fruit and veggie shop and noticed—really noticed—the pumpkins. Lots of pumpkins. Some were tiny, round and orange, others were striped green and white, still others plain or light brown, coming in all shapes and sizes. I was dazzled.

I filled my bag with a half dozen pumpkins, all different, and told the woman who runs the shop that this was my “bunch of flowers for the week”. She laughed and responded that at least I could then cook them and eat them! Three weeks later, though, they continue to adorn our table. They’re too beautiful to eat—yet.

These pumpkins have made me think about how creative our creator God is. He could have been a utilitarian, no-frills kind of maker. When he made the seed-bearing plants, he could have made them all, say, white, the same shape and size. But God used all the colours in the paint box, vibrant and rich in hue and texture and variety. He could have simply made one type of pumpkin, but instead, the Creator seriously mixed it up!

During this time of pandemic, I have found my world has become greyer and colder and bleaker. So, when I was simply shopping, God gave me this glorious burst of orange. These pumpkins have made me smile.

This was a moment of grace, during an ordinary routine, given to me by our creator God. Pumpkins had given me a new song to sing. In His kindness and love he has given me a vegetable that is both edible and happy. Soon, I will put this ‘bouquet’ of pumpkins in the oven, pour olive oil over them, add some onion and garlic, and make soup—rich, thick, orangey pumpkin soup. It’ll smell of warmth and feed my family with earthy goodness. Until then, I’ll keep singing and enjoying their lumpy look and thanking our Creative God. What a glorious truth to rest in!



“O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all . . .  
When you open your hand, they are filled with good things.  
I will sing to the Lord as long as I live;  
I will sing praise to my God while I have being.” Amen.

Psalm 104:24,28,33



## Devotion 14: Giving

---

**‘And God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.’**

**1 Peter 5:10**

Our God is a God of grace. He wants to give to us, not just once, but again and again. We are saved by grace, but he continues to provide grace each day in his ongoing work of growing us in Christian maturity.

The God of all grace who does this is not remote, and he doesn't simply delegate to others. He is willing, so to speak, to get his hands dirty. He loved us enough to let his beloved Son take the sin and filth of our lives so he might wash us clean. An act of extraordinary grace. And the God of all grace continues to give as we seek to walk faithfully in his ways through the ups and downs of life. His hands are tender and he will give us everything we need to keep on keeping on.

I have no idea how long a 'little while' is.

Sometimes, a little while seems like a long while. The Covid pandemic, for example, seems to have gone on far longer than we ever imagined or anticipated. And similarly, the experience of suffering for friends, family or ourselves sometimes seems relentless. But the God of all grace will continue to give. He is at work to strengthen and sustain us for the eternal glory that is ours.

**Prayer: Thank you that you are my God and your heart oozes grace towards me. Thank you that you are a God who continues to restore and will continue to make me strong, firm, and steadfast. Thank you that we have a hope that one day, our suffering will be no more as you have called us to your eternal glory. Help me to stand firm in your grace today. Amen**