

06 Abide in Me: What Carefree Feels Like When You Stop Performing

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I've been listening to Rend Collective for years. Back when I had 5 acres to mow, I'd blast their songs through my headphones and shout the lyrics over the roar of the mower. Their music is usually loud, energetic, full of life – stringed instruments and percussions along with voices raised in full-throated praise.

But “Abide in Me” is different.

It's soft. Sweet. Quiet.

It wraps around you like Jesus' arms and whispers what you've been too exhausted to hear: “Stop trying so hard. Just abide in me.”

After spending three weeks writing about the castle of performance – about sin management, behavior modification, and spiritual exhaustion – this song feels like coming home.

Because abiding isn't about trying harder. It's about finally resting.

If you would like to listen to the song first you can click here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w56maABMfIU>

“Come Build a Home Here Inside My Love”

The song opens with an invitation that moved me the first time I heard it:

“Come build a home here inside my love.”

Not “Come visit occasionally.” Not “Come perform for my approval.” Not “Come manage your sin better so you can stay.”

Come **build a home**.

A home is where you live. Where you're known. Where you don't have to pretend or perform or hide. Where you can be weak, tired, messy – and still belong.

For years, I treated my relationship with God like a hotel – I'd check in when I needed something, check out when I thought I had it under control. I'd visit for crisis moments, but I never moved in.

Because moving in would mean letting Him see everything. The rooms I'd rather keep locked. The pain I'd rather manage alone. The shame I'd convinced myself He'd be disappointed by.

But the invitation isn't to visit. It's to **build a home**.

Inside His love. Not outside it, trying to earn my way in.

“Come Shelter in the Shadow of My Wings”

There's something about this line that brings me to my knees.

“Come shelter in the shadow of my wings.”

Not “Come stand on your own and prove you're strong enough.”

Not “Come perform until you've earned the right to rest.”

Just: “Come shelter.”

I spent decades trying to be strong. Managing my pain. White-knuckling my way through addiction. Building walls to protect myself because I didn't believe God – or anyone – could really handle what was inside.

But strength was killing me. Performance was exhausting me. **And the castle I built to shelter myself had become the very thing I needed shelter from.**

God wasn't asking me to be stronger. He was asking me to stop pretending I was.

So come... shelter in the shadow of His wings.

Not because you've earned it. Because you need it.

“Be Still and Know That I Am God”

This is Psalm 46:10, and it's one of the most misunderstood verses in Scripture.

We quote it when we want people to calm down. To stop worrying. To relax.

But in context, it's not about relaxation. It's about **surrender**.

“Be still” – stop striving, stop managing, stop trying to control outcomes.

“And know that I am God” – and remember that you're not – many of us know this intrinsically, but pretend we are God in our own lives.

I spent my first 28 years trying to be my own god. Managing my castle. Controlling my outcomes. Performing my way to transformation.

And God kept whispering: “Be still. You're not God. I am.” And that's good news.

Because if I'm God, I have to fix everything. Manage everything. Control everything. And I can't.

But if He's God? Then my job isn't to manage. **It's to abide.**

“Be Still and Know You Are Enough”

This line isn't in Psalm 46. It's Rend Collective's addition. And it's the line that breaks through all the performance.

“Be still and know you are enough.”

Not “Be still and try harder to become enough.”

Not “Be still until you've fixed yourself enough to be acceptable.”

Just: “You are enough.”

Right now. In the mess. In the brokenness. In the rooms you're still afraid to open.

You are enough.

Not because of what you do, but because of **whose** you are.

I spent years believing I had to become enough before God would fully accept me. That salvation was free, but intimacy had to be earned. That Jesus died for me, but He wouldn't actually want to be close to me until I got my act together.

But “abide in me” isn't conditional. It's not “abide in me once you're worthy.”

It's “abide in me – period. You're already enough because Jesus made you enough.”

“Don't You Wanna Know What Carefree Feels Like?”

This question stopped me in my tracks the first time I heard it.

“Don't you wanna know what carefree feels like? Just how good it can be?”

I have craved this my whole life. But I didn't think it was attainable. Not on this earth at least.

I'd spent so long managing everything – my sin, my relationships, my pain, my castle – that carefree felt dangerous.

What if I stopped managing and everything fell apart?

What if I stopped performing and people saw who I really was?

What if I stopped white-knuckling control and lost everything I'd been holding together?

But God was asking: **Don't you want to know what your life would be like with some peace and levity?**

Not chaos. Not irresponsibility. Not naivety.

Peace. Levity. The lightness that comes when you finally stop carrying what you were never meant to carry alone.

I didn't know what carefree felt like. **I'd been performing for so long that I'd forgotten rest was even an option.**

“When You're Weary and You're Wounded, Rest in Me”

This is the pastoral heart of the song. The invitation that meets you where you actually are.

“When you're weary and you're wounded, rest in me.”

Not “When you've got it all together.”

Not “When you've finally conquered your struggles.”

When you're weary. When you're wounded. When you're exhausted from trying and failing and trying again.

Rest in me.

I was weary at 23 when God said “Get on your knees.” Weary from managing addiction. Weary from performing faith. Weary from keeping everyone – including God – outside my walls.

I was wounded at 30 when I almost lost Dawn for the second time. Wounded by my own fear. Wounded by the vow I'd made at 16 that was still controlling me. Wounded by years of self-sabotage.

And God didn't say “Try harder.” “Prove yourself.” He said: **“Rest in me.”**

Not as a reward for getting it right, but as the only path to healing.

“When You're Thirsty, I'm the Well That Won't Run Dry”

Performance-based faith runs dry.

Sin management exhausts itself. Behavior modification requires constant effort. Spiritual performance demands more and more energy to maintain the facade.

You're drawing from a well that empties faster than you can fill it.

But Jesus told the woman at the well: *“Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”* (John 4:14)

Not a well you have to keep drawing from through effort.

A spring that wells up from within because you're connected to the source.

That's abiding. Not drawing. Not managing. Not performing.

Just staying connected to the well that won't run dry.

“Come Sit Here in the Shade and Simply Breathe”

We return to the shadow of His wings and are told to breathe – when we’re scared or anxious we tend to catch our breath or alter our breathing.

“Come sit here in the shade and simply breathe.”

No agenda. No expectations. No performance required.

Just: sit. Breathe. Be.

For someone who spent decades believing every moment had to be productive, every action had to have purpose, every breath had to be earned – this is revolutionary.

You don't have to do anything. Just sit. Breathe. Abide.

The shade is already there. The rest is already available. The invitation is already extended.

You're not earning it. You're receiving it.

“Come Lie Down in the Meadow, Let the Tension Go”

Psalm 23: *“He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul.”*

God makes us lie down. Not because He's cruel. **But because sometimes we won't rest unless we're forced to.**

The meadow is where the sheep lie down – not because they've earned it, but because the Shepherd provides it.

The tension we carry – the performance, the management, the white-knuckling – it's killing us. And God is saying: **Let it go.**

Not “Try harder to release it.”

Not “Manage your way to peace.”

Just: lie down. Let the tension go. I've got this.

What Abiding Actually Feels Like

I'm in my mid-50s now. I've been abiding – imperfectly, inconsistently, but more often than not – for over 25 years.

And I can tell you: carefree doesn't mean careless.

Peace doesn't mean passivity.

Abiding doesn't mean abdication.

It means I don't carry what I was never meant to carry alone.

It means when addiction tempts, I don't manage it in isolation – I bring it into the light and let others walk with me.

It means when shame whispers, I don't lock myself in the dungeon – I remember whose voice matters most.

It means when control feels safer than surrender, I remind myself: **I'm not God. He is. And that's good news.**

It means I don't have to perform for my worth. I can rest in His.

And yes – there's peace. There's levity. There's a lightness I didn't know was possible when I was managing my castle alone.

Not because I got it all together.

But because I finally stopped trying to.

The Invitation Still Stands

If you're weary, come rest.

If you're wounded, come shelter.

If you're thirsty, come drink.

If you're exhausted from performance, come abide.

Not because you've earned it. Because He's already provided it.

“Come build a home here inside my love.”

Not a hotel you visit when you need something.

A home where you live. Where you're known. Where you belong.

“Don't you wanna know what carefree feels like?”

Not irresponsibility. Not naivety. **But free from the burden of managing what only God can transform.**

“Abide in me.”

Not “Perform for me.”

Not “Manage for me.”

Not “Prove yourself to me.”

Just: **Abide.**

The well won't run dry.

The shade is waiting.

The meadow is soft.

And the tension? You can finally let it go. Abide in Him.

Rend Collective

“Abide in Me”

From the album *FOLK!*

rendcollective.com

If you're in crisis:

- Christian Faith-Based Resources: <https://mentalhealthhotline.org/christian-faith-resources/> or call 1-866-903-3787 (24/7)
- Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988 (call or text)
- International Association for Suicide Prevention: https://www.iasp.info/resources/Crisis_Centres/

You matter. Your life matters. Please stay.

William James Meyer is the author of “Do You Live in a Castle? Breaking Free from the Walls That Hold You Hostage.” He writes from a Christian perspective as someone who spent decades trying to earn rest before learning what it means to simply abide. He's still learning.

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