

1 Peter 5:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

Analysis

Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. This tender command, embedded within Peter's instructions to church elders and the congregation, presents one of Scripture's most comforting invitations regarding anxiety and divine care. The verse addresses the universal human experience of worry while revealing God's personal concern for His people.

"Casting" (ἐπιρίψαντες/epiripsantes) is an aorist participle meaning to throw upon, hurl upon, or deposit decisively. The word carries urgency and totality—not gradually shifting burdens but decisively hurling them onto God. The same verb appears in Luke 19:35 when disciples threw their garments on the colt for Jesus to ride. This isn't casual mentioning of concerns but wholehearted transfer of our anxieties to God's shoulders. The aorist tense suggests a decisive, once-for-all action, though the command applies continuously to new anxieties as they arise.

"All your care" (πᾶσαν τὴν μέριμναν ὑμῶν/pasan tēn merimnan hymōn) encompasses every anxiety without exception. Merimna means anxious care, worry, distraction—the mental burden that divides attention and disturbs peace. This is the same word Jesus uses in Matthew 6:25-34 when commanding "Take no thought" (be not anxious) for life's necessities. "All" (πᾶσαν/pasan) excludes nothing: financial worries, relational conflicts, health concerns, ministry burdens, future uncertainties, past regrets. No anxiety is too small for God's attention or too large for His capacity. The definite article "the" before "care" suggests the totality of one's anxiety—the entire burden, not merely selected portions.

"Upon him" (ἐπ' αὐτῷ/ep' auton) specifies the destination of our burdens. Not onto

other people, not into distractions or addictions, not suppressed through denial or stoicism, but cast specifically onto God Himself. The preposition *epi* with accusative indicates motion toward and upon—actively placing burdens on God, not merely wishing they'd go away. This transfers responsibility: what was on our shoulders moves to His. We remain stewards of faithful action, but the burden of outcome rests with God.

"For he careth for you" (ὅτι αὐτῷ μέλει περὶ ὑμῶν/hotī autō melei peri hymōn) provides the theological foundation. The conjunction "for" (ὅτι/hotī) gives the reason we can cast cares on Him: because He genuinely cares. *Melei* (present tense, indicating continuous action) means it is a care to Him, it matters to Him, He is concerned about. This isn't distant deity tolerating our prayers but loving Father deeply invested in our wellbeing. The verb *melei* appears in Martha's complaint to Jesus: "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone?" (Luke 10:40). Jesus does care—about every detail affecting His children.

The preposition "for" (περὶ/peri) means concerning, about—His care surrounds and encompasses us. "You" (ὑμῶν/hymōn) is emphatic in Greek—He cares specifically for YOU, personally and individually. This isn't generic divine benevolence but particular, personal concern for each believer. The present tense assures us His care isn't past history or future hope but present reality: right now, continuously, He cares. This echoes Jesus's assurance that our heavenly Father knows our needs before we ask (Matthew 6:8, 32) and numbers the hairs on our heads (Luke 12:7).

The verse echoes Psalm 55:22: "Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." Peter, writing to suffering Christians facing persecution, grounds anxiety-relief not in positive thinking, self-help techniques, or stoic self-sufficiency but in God's proven, personal care demonstrated supremely at the cross. The immediate context (verses 6-11) calls for humility before God's mighty hand (v.6), vigilance against Satan who prowls as roaring lion (v.8-9), and confidence in God's faithful sustaining through suffering with promised restoration to eternal glory (v.10). Anxiety makes believers vulnerable to Satan's attacks and temptations, while confident trust in God's care provides spiritual strength and resilience.

Historical Context

Peter wrote this epistle around 62-64 CE to Christians scattered across Asia Minor (modern Turkey) facing increasing persecution. His recipients were "strangers scattered" (1:1)—likely both Jewish and Gentile believers experiencing social ostracism, economic hardship, and escalating hostility for their faith. The letter was probably written from Rome ("Babylon" in 5:13 being a cryptic reference to avoid Roman suspicion) and delivered by Silvanus (5:12), Paul's former companion.

The immediate context involves church leadership and congregation dynamics. Peter addresses elders (5:1-4) as a fellow elder and witness of Christ's sufferings, younger members (5:5) calling them to submission and humility, and then the entire church (5:6-11) with commands to humble themselves, cast anxieties on God, and resist Satan. The command to cast cares on God comes between calls to humble submission under God's mighty hand (5:6) and sober vigilance against Satan who prowls as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour (5:8-9). This strategic placement suggests anxiety makes believers vulnerable to Satan's attacks and temptations, while confident trust in God's care provides spiritual strength and stability for spiritual warfare.

First-century believers faced unique and intense stressors. Roman society demanded public religious participation—offering incense to Caesar as lord, attending pagan festivals honoring various deities, participating in trade guild celebrations involving idol worship and immoral practices. Christians' conscientious refusal brought severe social consequences: accusations of atheism (for rejecting the gods), disloyalty to Rome, antisocial behavior, and even conspiracy. Families divided bitterly over faith—parents disowned children, spouses divorced, inheritances were lost. Employment opportunities vanished for those refusing guild participation. Social networks collapsed. Legal protections evaporated as Christianity became distinguished from Judaism and lost its status as *religio licita* (legal religion). Sporadic mob violence erupted against Christians.

Nero's persecution of Christians in Rome (64 CE) set terrifying precedent. Following Rome's great fire, Nero scapegoated Christians. Believers were sewn into animal skins and torn apart by dogs, crucified, burned alive as torches to illuminate Nero's gardens. Though Peter's readers in Asia Minor hadn't yet faced

such extreme persecution, the threat loomed ominously. Their anxieties were neither imaginary nor trivial but realistic responses to genuine, life-threatening danger. They worried about family safety, children's futures, whether to flee or stay, how to provide for families excluded from economic life, whether they'd have strength to endure torture.

Yet into this crucible of legitimate anxiety, Peter commands casting these cares—persecution fears, family conflicts, economic uncertainty, social rejection, physical danger, even death itself—onto God. The basis? "He careth for you." Despite all appearances suggesting God's absence or indifference to their suffering, Peter affirms God's active, personal, continuous concern for each believer. This echoes Jesus's teaching about God's care for sparrows (worth less than a penny) and lilies (here today, gone tomorrow), concluding that believers are worth far more and can trust their heavenly Father's provision (Matthew 6:25-34, 10:29-31).

Peter himself exemplified this truth through personal experience. After denying Christ three times in His moment of greatest need—a failure Peter surely carried as profound shame and anxiety—he experienced Jesus's restoring love at the Sea of Galilee (John 21:15-19). Peter learned firsthand that moral failure, devastating as it was, didn't forfeit God's care or calling. Now writing near life's end (2 Peter 1:14 anticipates his approaching martyrdom by crucifixion), Peter testifies from three decades of apostolic experience: God truly, faithfully, continuously cares for His people through every trial.

For the early church, this verse wasn't theoretical theology debated in academic settings but practical survival instruction for daily Christian living. Amid persecution, poverty, and constant peril, believers couldn't afford crippling anxiety that would paralyze faith, fracture community, and compromise witness. Casting cares on God freed them for courageous witness, sacrificial mutual care, and patient endurance. Church history records their remarkable resilience through centuries of persecution—not through stoic self-sufficiency, denial of suffering, or naive optimism, but through deepening confidence in God's caring, sustaining faithfulness demonstrated supremely at the cross where He gave His Son for their salvation.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What does it mean to 'cast' anxiety onto God rather than merely mention it in prayer, and how does this decisive action differ from passive worry?
2. Which specific anxieties are you most reluctant to cast on God, and what does this reluctance reveal about your functional trust in His care?
3. How does understanding that God personally and actively cares for you (present tense, continuous action) change your response to current worries?
4. What is the relationship between humbling yourself under God's mighty hand (v.6) and being able to cast your anxieties on Him?
5. How can we distinguish between responsible planning and prudent concern versus the anxious care God forbids, and where is the line between them?

Interlinear Text

πᾶσαν	τὴν	μέριμναν	ὑμῶν	ἐπιβρέψαντες	ἐπ'	αὐτῷ	ὅτι
all	G3588	care	you	Casting		him	for
G3956		G3308	G5216	G1977		G1909	G3754
αὐτῷ	μέλει	περὶ	ὑμῶν				
him	he careth	for	you				
G846	G3199	G4012	G5216				

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 55:22 (Parallel theme): Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.

Philippians 4:6 (Parallel theme): Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

Psalms 37:5 (Parallel theme): Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.

Luke 12:22 (Parallel theme): And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.

Psalms 34:15 (Parallel theme): The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.

1 Samuel 30:6 (Parallel theme): And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.

Mark 4:38 (Parallel theme): And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?

John 10:13 (Parallel theme): The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.