

*Can I Just
Hide in Bed
'til Jesus
Comes Back?*

FACING LIFE WITH COURAGE,
NOT COMFORTERS

Martha Bolton AND Christin Ditchfield

In *Can I Just Hide in Bed 'til Jesus Comes Back?*, authors Martha Bolton and Christin Ditchfield offer an enjoyable blend of wisdom, hilarity, encouragement, truth, transparency, and practical advice, with a gentle reminder that everything's going to be all right. If you're tempted to hide under the covers because it's easier than facing life, consider reading this book. It'll infuse you with courage and confidence.

TWILA BELK

Speaker and author of *Raindrops from Heaven: Gentle Reminders of God's Power, Presence, and Purpose*

Don't miss this book! If you've ever struggled with life, faced fears, longed for better circumstances, dealt with discouragement, wondered how to find your joy, or needed to laugh out loud, read *Can I Just Hide in Bed 'til Jesus Comes Back?* Martha Bolton and Christin Ditchfield have combined their deep knowledge of biblical truth with their off-the-charts humor to write a book that will restore your hope, give you practical action steps, multiply your ability to see life as an adventure, and remind you not to take yourself too seriously. Buy one for yourself and ten more to give to your friends.

CAROL KENT

Speaker and author of *When I Lay My Isaac Down*

The title of this book asks the question that almost every woman has pondered at one time or another. Okay, I haven't actually thought about *hiding*; I've wanted to run away. But Martha Bolton and Christin Ditchfield are quick to point out that neither of those are good plans. Instead their delightful book encourages you to focus on what you *can* do—remember what is true: God loves you; He weeps with you; He equips you;

He defends you; He delivers you! So no hiding in bed! (And no running away.) Just curl up with this book and find the encouragement you need to move forward.

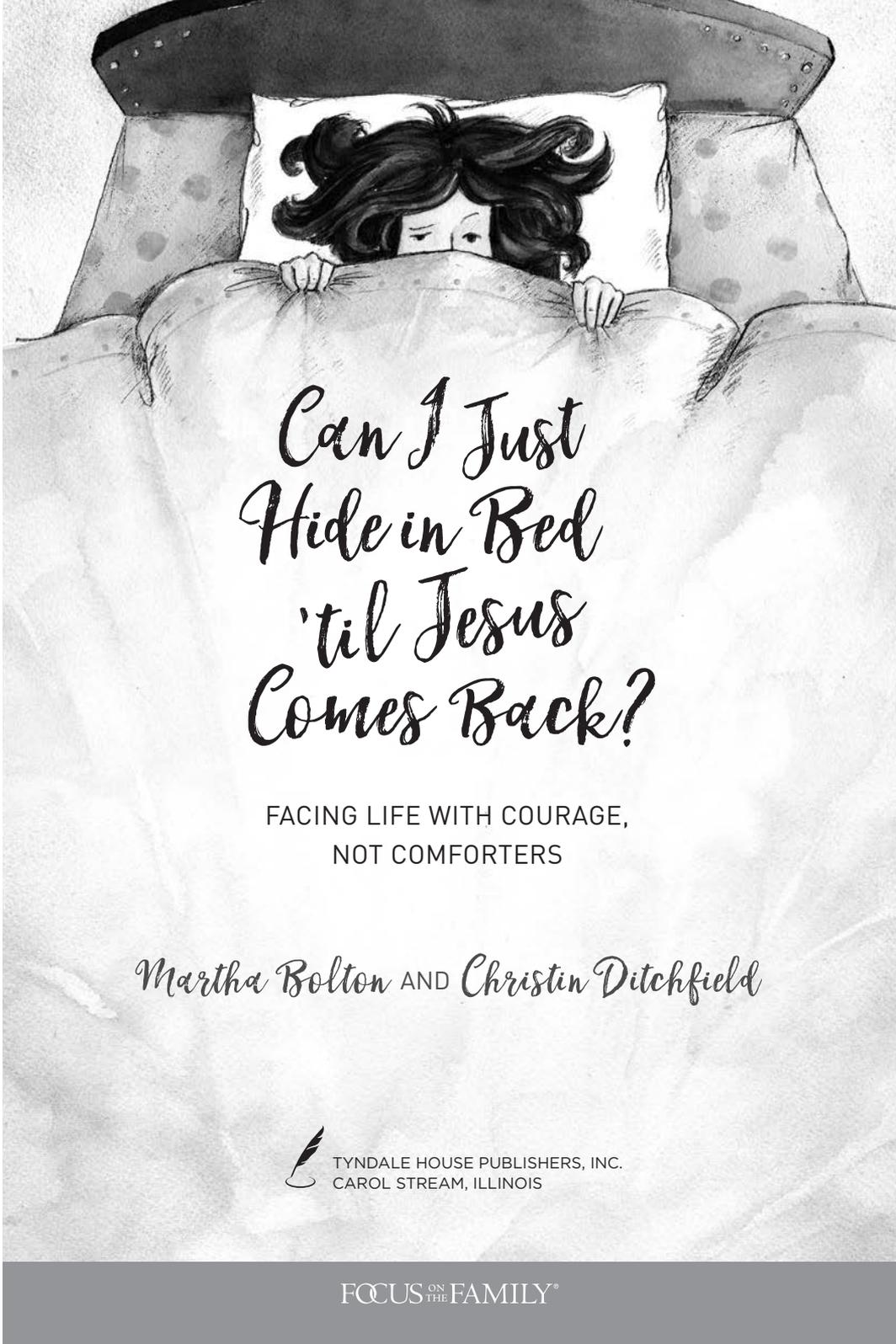
KENDRA SMILEY

Conference speaker and author of *Mother of the Year: 365 Days of Encouragement for Devoted Moms*, *Journey of a Strong-Willed Child*, and *Live Free: Eliminate the If Onlys and What Ifs of Life*

I'm a fan of anything Martha Bolton writes. Her words are always fresh, fun, engaging, and comforting—just like her. What she and Christin Ditchfield have created with *Can I Just Hide in Bed 'til Jesus Comes Back?* proves to be another winner. If you've struggled with fear, unworthiness, depression, or unfulfilled dreams, this is the book you need *now*. Martha and Christin show you how to crawl out of the hole and begin to live life in the fullness for which God created you. It came at the perfect time for me—my father's passing. This provided the comfort I needed and reminded me that God is still on the throne—even through the darkest of days.

SUSIE SHELLENBERGER

Creator of *Brio* magazine, author, and speaker



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Introduction

It's a dangerous business, Frodo, going out your door. You step into the Road, and if you don't keep your feet, there's no knowing where you might be swept off to.

BILBO BAGGINS in *The Fellowship of the Ring*

NEVER MIND STEPPING into the road. Sometimes stepping out of bed is dangerous enough—or daunting enough.

Yes, there are times when life can seem too hard to face.

There, we've said it. But you already know it's true. That's why you're holding this book. You already know that no matter how you try to motivate yourself, there are days when you wake up so overwhelmed or so discouraged, so hurt, angry, worried, or afraid, that it seems much safer and more comfortable to stay in bed. The world looks better from under the protective covering of a five-hundred-thread-count sheet or the comforting quilt hand stitched by your grandmother.

We've both been there.

We've found ourselves staying in bed and pulling the covers over our heads for all kinds of reasons. Sometimes it's just too scary out there. Too many things can go wrong. There's too much we can't control.

Sometimes it's too painful to throw back the covers. Look what happened last time! We were hurt, or someone we love was hurt. We were used or abused. Bullied. Battered. Betrayed. We tried and failed. We gave and they wanted more. We've been

loved by some and kicked by others. Those wounds are still raw, the bruises still fresh. Isn't bed where you're supposed to be when you're healing? So what if it's been twelve years? Or twenty. Or forty. We shouldn't rush it, right?

Sometimes it's too embarrassing to face life. We'll only keep making mistakes. We'll trip over our feet, greet the boss with spinach in our teeth, and inadvertently wear our clothes with the tags still on them. We won't speak up when we need to, or we'll speak when we should be quiet. We'll only try and fail again.

Sometimes it's too overwhelming to climb out of bed. We just don't have the strength. The energy. The motivation.

If only we could get a good night's sleep!

Maybe you haven't been able to sleep either. You've been watching the hour hand on the clock ooze like slow lava from two to three to four o'clock in the morning. This is when you thank God for twenty-four-hour television and learn far more about the foreign markets and two-for-the-price-of-one kitchen gadgets than you ever wanted to know.

Once the sun rises, you might manage to gather up enough strength to face the day physically, only to discover that mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, you're still hiding under the covers. Your body may be at your job, or at your child's school or the grocery store, but your faith is back home enjoying its "sleep number."

Again, we know how you feel. We, too, have tried to survive days we'd rather not have on our calendars, convincing ourselves that "God will see us through," pretending we don't feel the crushing pain of whatever has disrupted our lives and destroyed our peace *this time*.

It's not easy. Some days it's practically impossible, isn't it? We may manage to get out of bed, putting one foot in front of

the other, but we're still cowering under invisible blankets of fear, dread, and self-doubt. We're weighed down by feelings of worthlessness, a desperate need to please others, a protective distrust of unproven friendships, and more.

We try to play "nice," but instead of getting credit for it, we find our "niceness" is misinterpreted as weakness, or our timidity for aloofness. And weakness invites aggression. Timidity invites overlooking and discounting. We find ourselves being disregarded and taken advantage of more and more often. Endless people pleasing makes us feel invisible and disrespectful of our own needs and desires.

We figure we'll just stay out of everyone's way and not do anything significant with our lives, or not push back when we're walked on. After all, that would rock the boat and invite criticism, ridicule, and harassment. Just leave us alone to return to our bed caves and pick the down feathers out of our teeth.

Like you, we've each wrestled with the typical *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, and *why* questions of life:

Who has so much free time that they feel the need to meddle in other people's pain?

What else can go wrong? Did the transmission have to go out the same day the stove stopped working and that check didn't come in the mail?

When is it going to stop? The problems keep piling on—one after another. And then that other one hops on just for the fun of it.

Where is a kind word, a helpful hand, a little appreciation, some encouragement? Helloooo? Where did everybody go?

Have you been there? We're sure you have.

And that brings us to *why*.

Why even bother getting out of bed? We have snacks. We

have Netflix. We'll just hide out in our beds until Jesus comes back. Why not? Hiding is the biblical thing to do.

Look at Adam and Eve: They hid from God after Eve disobeyed, and what price did they have to, um . . . scratch that. (It's a bad day when you lose the Garden of Eden.) What about Jonah? He ran away from what God had given him to do, and nothing happened to . . . wait, no. He did end up in the belly of a whale. What about David hiding from King Saul? David was on the run, hiding from his enemies, but also hiding from his own sin and failure; from grief and pain, loss and betrayal. And he was called a man after God's own heart. Why? Because David also did the *good* kind of hiding. He points us to the kind of hiding that actually *is* biblical:

Show the wonder of your great love, you who save by
your right hand those who take refuge in you. . . . Keep
me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of
your wings.

PSALM 17:7-8

You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble
and surround me with songs of deliverance.

PSALM 32:7

In the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling;
he will hide me in the shelter of his tabernacle and set me
high upon a high rock.

PSALM 27:5

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in
the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, "He is

my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.” . . .
 He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings
 you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield
 and rampart.

PSALM 91:1-2, 4

There is a place to hide, but it's not under the covers. Or in the broom closet. Or behind the hat of the lady sitting in front of you in church. It's in the arms of our Father. His Spirit is the Comforter we need to turn to in times of trouble. It's with Him that we'll find peace and rest.

Of course, sometimes we may need a short respite to recover, heal, and reenergize. After that, God's Word can get us back in the action. We like this one:

Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; . . . be strong.

I CORINTHIANS 16:13

There are many Bible verses about standing firm. But it's hard to stand firm on a mattress, isn't it? (We know. We've each tried in our own homes. Your balance is off, and it's easy to trip and fall. Plus, any injuries are a little embarrassing to explain in the ER.) So clearly there must be a time for feet on the floor, a time to put into practice those inspiring and empowering verses about fighting the good fight, resisting the enemy, seizing the victory, and advancing the Kingdom of God.

Again, all this is really hard to do with the covers stretched over your head. We don't think any battlefield commander ever traded in "Charge!" for "All right, troops, fluff your pillows, hunker down for a nap, and then watch the enemy retreat!" You

might as well wave the white flag if that's as far as you'll go in thwarting the enemy.

We've learned that the hard way. Shivering on a pillow top mattress is no place for a soldier. There are better ways to deal with life's challenges than cowering in fear.

We can roll over and try to pretend the alarm clock isn't ringing and the hours of our lives aren't ticking away. But they are—and we need to pay attention. We need to get up and get going. Shake things up. Maybe even rock a few boats when necessary.

Jesus rocked a few boats in His day. He didn't hide under the covers when life got tough. He faced down the Pharisees and told parables challenging their “holier than thou” attitudes. He was no wimp or doormat. He faced the bullies, the self-righteous, and the “grizzly bears” of His day in His own humble yet firm way. He experienced pain and suffering, grief and loss. That didn't stop Him from getting about His Father's business. He knew His mission, and no one was able to deter Him from it. The same can be true for us.

We have walked up to doors, both physically and figuratively, and had them close in our face.

“Sorry.”

“Wish I could help, but . . .”

“Maybe some other time.”

“Our calendar is filled until December 2029.”

We know that rejection is disappointing, frustrating, even heartbreaking. But the Bible tells us in Revelation 3:8, “See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut.”

There are doors that God Himself has opened for us, and no one can close them. No one. Let the truth of that sink in. Naysayers can try to hinder us and convince us that the doors aren't open, that we're not worthy to walk through them, or

that those doors were intended for someone else. They can try to fill us with fear and dread, try to put obstacles in our path, or try to convince others to help them block the doors. They might even try to push their way through the doors themselves. But they cannot shut them.

No one can stop a person from accomplishing what God has given him or her to accomplish.

Well, actually, there is *one* person.

The only one who can keep you trapped in doubt and inaction is yourself. The only one who can keep you from walking through the doors that God has opened for you is *you*.

Learning to face what we can't face in life is a hard choice. But while staying in bed—physically, emotionally, spiritually, metaphorically—might seem easy, safe, comfortable, or risk-free, it isn't. Most of the time, it only makes things worse. Who needs emotional bedsores?

While we're in bed, the problems just keep piling up along with the dishes and the laundry. Our strategy of self-protection backfires and somehow adds even more stress to our lives. The fear and dread . . . the guilt, embarrassment, and shame—even over things we never did . . . don't go away; they gang up on us.

We might feel safe in our bedrooms, but we're sentencing ourselves to a pretty miserable existence. Frankly, we've had enough of that kind of life. How about you?

It's your choice: You can give in to fear, discouragement, and defeat and stay in bed and pull the covers over your head until Jesus comes back.

Or you can learn to be bold, strong, and free.

Making that choice begins by taking that first step. Decide to get up, get dressed, and walk through that door. Get on with your life!

Whoa. Wait a minute. Easier said than done, right?

How do we get up, get dressed, and get going?

How do we get out of our emotional beds and leave our funk behind?

How do we face the realities we'd rather ignore, the disappointment of our unfulfilled longings, the pain of our abandoned hopes and dreams? How do we face our failures and mistakes, the people we've hurt and those who've hurt us? How do we accept that people we've been counting on aren't there for us? How do we deal with the loss and the grief?

Again, good news: Jesus Himself wants to pull back the covers of our threadbare protection, take us by the hand, and walk *with* us every step of the way.

We want to walk with you too!

Others do too.

You don't have to take a single step of this journey alone. None of us does.

PART ONE

Facing Your Feelings When You'd Rather Hide

*If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs,
it's just possible you haven't grasped the situation.*

JEAN KERR

SOMETIMES WE FIND ourselves imprisoned by our fears. There are many to choose from: fear of risk; fear of change; fear of failure or rejection; fear of loss, death, or disaster. The list could go on and on.

We can find it hard to face our hurts, heartaches, and disappointments; the pain of regret, loss, missed opportunities, or poor choices. We'd rather not address our feelings of remorse, misplaced guilt, embarrassment, or blame. Sometimes we feel so frustrated, so angry, so powerless.

When we're feeling helpless and hopeless, bed may seem like a

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safer place to be. But like broken springs poking us in the middle of the night, pain will find us even there. There's a better choice!

In part one, we'll share what we've discovered about facing these powerful emotions. Learn with us about how to process your feelings, push through or past your fears, and press on!

CHAPTER I

SKIP THE SHEEP

Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrows; it empties today of its strength.

CORRIE TEN BOOM

MY (CHRISTIN'S) BEST FRIEND teases me about being a princess—not the spunky, cute, Disney kind with an Academy Award–winning theme song, a cadre of charming forest friends, and a handsome prince—but the kind who lies on top of eighteen mattresses and loses sleep over a tiny green pea.

Sadly, it's true.

I've always envied people who can fall asleep at the drop of a hat. Midsentence even. People like my friend Cinderella (not her real name), who was so tired one day after work that she flopped on the bed for a minute at 5:30 p.m. and woke up at 7:30 the next morning!

Not me. I toss and turn, toss and turn, and turn and toss. I just can't seem to shut my mind off. I hear every tiny noise and notice changes in light, even with my eyes closed.

At the best of times, it's incredibly annoying to be generally happy with life and ready for rest and still have a hard time falling asleep.

At the worst of times, sleeplessness escalates to full-blown insomnia. My mind churns and churns and churns.

Since I can't fall asleep, and there's no one I want to chat with on Facebook, I do the next best thing: I worry.

I worry about how much sleep I'm losing and how tired I'm going to be in the morning. I check my cell phone (I used to check my alarm), telling myself, *If I fall asleep now, I could still get six hours . . . five hours . . . four hours . . . three full hours . . .*

I worry about the piles of laundry in the living room and dishes in the sink. The food going bad in the fridge. The leaky roof. The funny sound the car's been making. The funny sound my bones have been making.

I worry about the piles of bills on my desk and the empty account at my bank.

I think of family members and friends who are in various crises and feel helpless that there doesn't seem to be anything I can do to solve their problems. If only I had money to give them, or a car, or a house, or energy. If only I could give their "ex" or their boss or their ungrateful teen a piece of my mind on their behalf. If only I could give their doctors wisdom, or better yet, heal them myself!

But I can't even fix myself!

That realization leads me to thoughts of what's wrong in my life.

I relive humiliating moments, mistakes I've made, and wounds I've suffered. You know—the "shoulda, coulda, woulda" stuff coupled with those "didn't want it, didn't deserve it, and didn't see it coming" moments.

I practice the clever and witty points I wish I could have made, the comments I tell myself I'll express next time. (Even though I won't. Not really. Oh, but I do sound articulate and convincing in my mind.)

I ruminate on my to-do list, trying to figure out how I can possibly do it all. I feel guilty about what I didn't do the day before and promise myself I'll catch up tomorrow. (Then I feel guilty for lying to myself, because I know myself too well.)

The to-do list is filled with unpleasant stuff: sorting out that insurance mess, answering one hundred e-mails, making decisions about this, finding a solution for that. It's overwhelming.

Even when I do finally fall asleep, it's a restless sleep. All it takes is a cricket sneezing half a mile away, and I'm back to tossing and turning again (and fantasizing about hunting down the poor critter to gag him!).

All too soon morning comes, and I can't face it. I just want to stay in bed and pull the covers over my head.

Count on the Shepherd

That's the scenario, unless I make a conscious decision to turn off the noise in my head and turn on the blinding light instead.

Literally. (Ow!)

I turn on my bedside table lamp and reach for my Bible and my prayer journal. Sometimes I play praise and worship music or an audio recording of Scripture or Scripture-based prayers.

On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night. Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings.

PSALM 63:6-7

CAN I JUST HIDE IN BED 'TIL JESUS COMES BACK?

Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

MATTHEW 6:34

I've never fallen asleep counting sheep, but I've often found great comfort and peace talking to the Shepherd.

And it's amazing how quickly sleep comes when you try to spend an hour in prayer!

I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.

PSALM 4:8

*Now I lay me down to fret,
to toss and turn—did I forget
that God is here right by my side?
No need to worry. No need to hide.*