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# Stressed or Blessed?



**4 Principles**  
for  
Finding Peace  
in the Chaos

NANCY KAY GRACE

Stressed or Blessed?  
4 principles for  
Finding Peace in the Chaos  
by Nancy Kay Grace



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Nancy Kay Grace

## Introduction

Peace is often hard to find in a world full of chaos and stress. We anticipate something to happen one way, but it turns out another.

Stress increases.

The stressful life has certain characteristics.

Being overwhelmed, frustrated, and burdened weigh heavy on us. The results of stress affect our emotions. It becomes easy to feel offended, negative and hopeless.

Self care is often neglected in the midst of stress because there is too much to do or we are exhausted.

We live in the tension between stress and peace.

Our daily lives are high with stress and low on peace. The tension between them is not new.

Many people in the Bible lived in that tension, but found peace in the chaos. In this ebook, we will look at Elijah

## Elijah

The prophet Elijah knew stressful situations.

God used Elijah dramatically in defeating the 450 prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel. (I Kings 18:15-40)

After his victory over the wicked King Ahab, Elijah's courage waned. The stress negatively affected him. Weary and scared of Jezebel's death threat, he ran for his life.

Elijah had just seen dramatic victory, but now hoped to die. Exhausted, he sat under a broom tree and felt sorry for himself.

"I've had enough," he declared.

Elijah went from being the victor to being the victim.

When stress is high and self-care is low, it's easy for us to want to quit.

The story doesn't end with Elijah's pity party.

God had the final word for him.

Elijah fell asleep under the tree. His body needed rest and recovery.

Over the course of time, God sent an angel with food and drink to nourish him. When he was strengthened, he traveled to the mountain of God.

The Lord spoke, asking why Elijah is hiding in the cave. Still embracing self-pity ("I'm the only one left."), Elijah made his case.

God would not leave him alone in his pity. He asked Elijah to stand in the mountain in the presence of God and wait for the Lord.

While waiting, he faced more stress.

Elijah experienced extreme wind, powerful earthquake, and intense fire.

Afterward, he heard the gentle whisper from God.

God provided peace and direction after the stressful storm.

## Four Lessons from Elijah

1. Exhaustion often follows a spiritual victory.

We can go from feeling exhilarated to feeling depressed when exhausted. We have a skewed perception and want to quit.

2. Self care is important. Getting rest and nourishment helps strengthen the body as well as the soul. Studies on the cause and effect relationship between exercise and stress strongly suggest that physical activity helps the brain cope with and respond to stress. A stressed person can stimulate endorphins released by regular activity and exercise. Physical activity as simple as a daily walk is a powerful weapon against stress.

3. Rest replenishes the weary soul. Allow time for recovery from a stressful situation. God is a safe refuge.

4. Guard your heart so you can hear from God. Stress has a way of orienting us toward the things that are wrong in our lives. It is important to guard our hearts and minds against negativity and pessimism. By remembering God's character and faithfulness we gain a better perspective to hear God.

## **STAND STRONG AGAINST CHAOS & STRESS**

Stress is a normal part of life. We deal with some type of frustration nearly every day.

Some stressors we bring on ourselves due to poor planning, lack of organization, over commitment, or distractions. Other stressors are beyond our control stormy weather, an unexpected car repair, or a sick child. Unanticipated situations pop into life.

Chaos results from a toxic mix of stressors.

Positive stress can be beneficial in terms of increased energy and mental alertness, which can lead to more productivity. Negative stress can paralyze, causing worry and lack of motivation.

We can't eliminate stress but we can manage it.

No matter how it originates, we have a choice in deciding how we will navigate the issues it causes in our lives.



## Four Biblical Principles for Standing Strong Against Stress

### **1. God is sovereign over chaos and stress.**

He sees the big picture, not a little snapshot of life. One of the best ways to stand strong against life's pressures is trusting that God's ways will prevail with a good outcome. Faith is strengthened in the trial when believing in God's greater purposes.

*"Our God is in heaven, he does whatever pleases him."  
Psalm 115:3 NIV*



## ***2. Stand strong in prayer.***

We have the privilege of connecting with God through prayer at all times. Too often we use it as a last resort out of desperation.

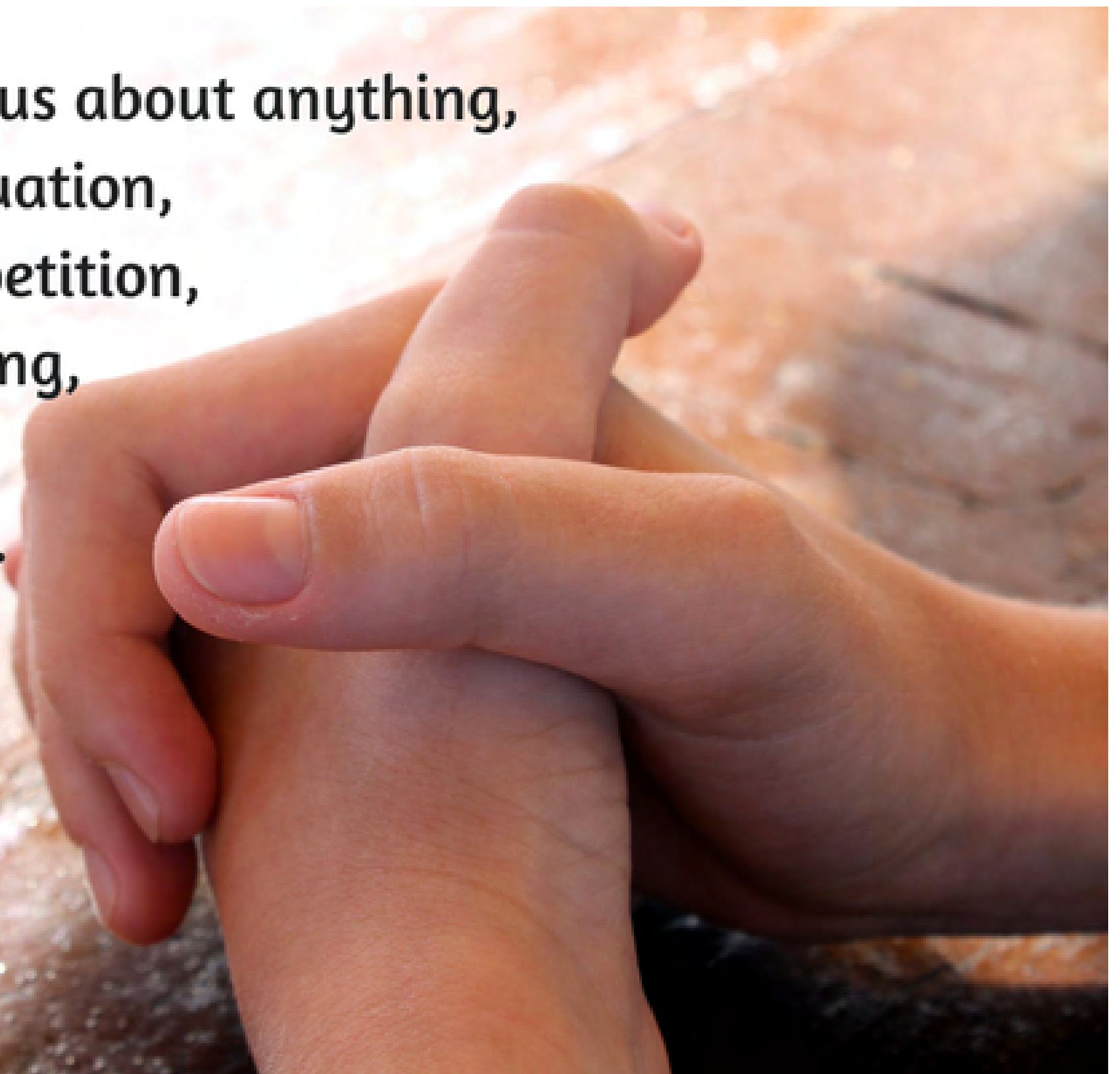
Prayer may not change the stressful situation as much as it changes the pray-er.

*"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." Philippians 4:6*

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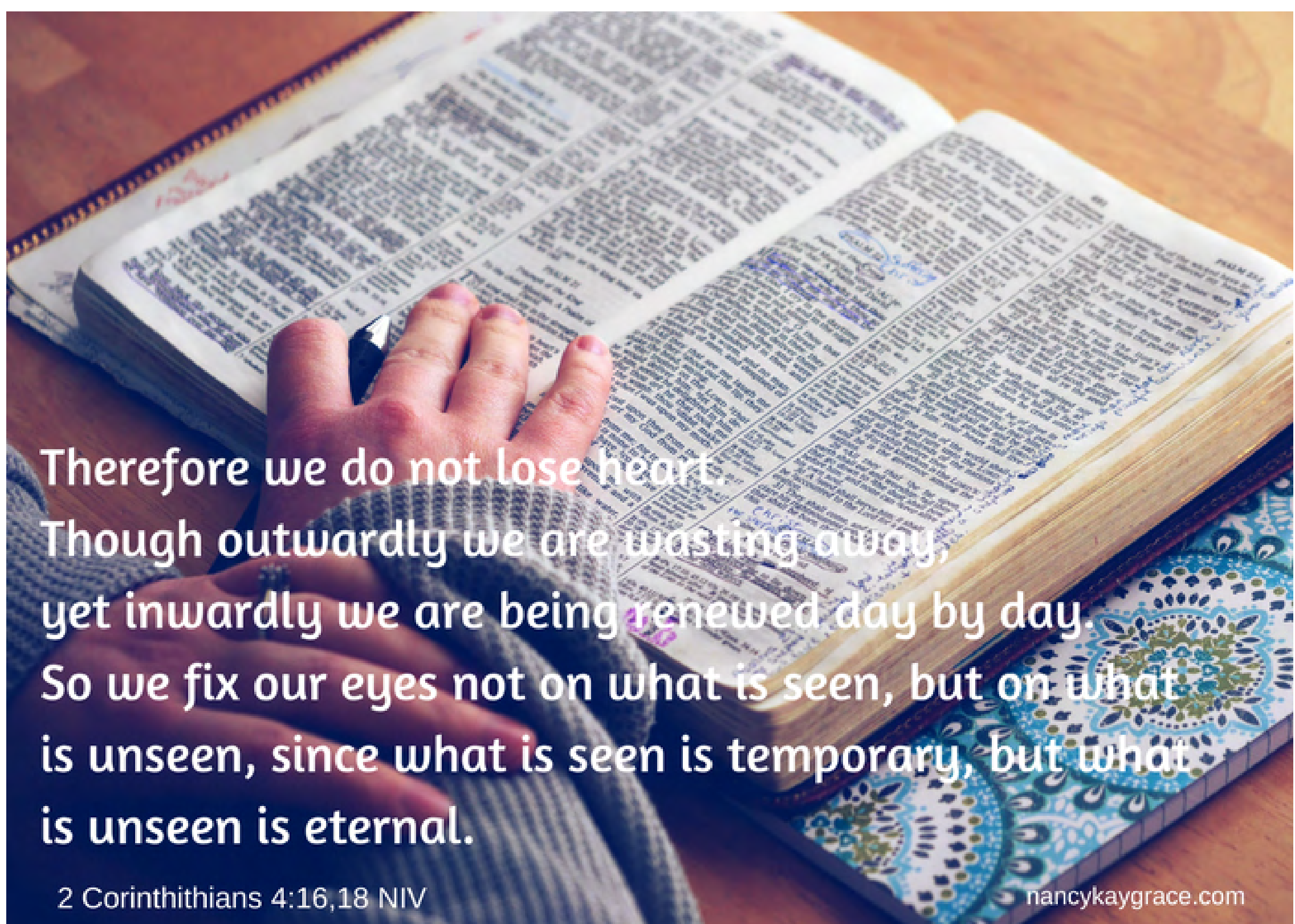


### **3. Meditate on the Word to anchor your soul, especially in times of chaos.**

The Bible reveals God's eternal perspective. Many passages direct our thoughts to see God's perspective, not a solution. His perspective and purposes are eternal.

*"Therefore we do not lose heart. though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."*

*2 Corinthians 4:16 -18 NIV*



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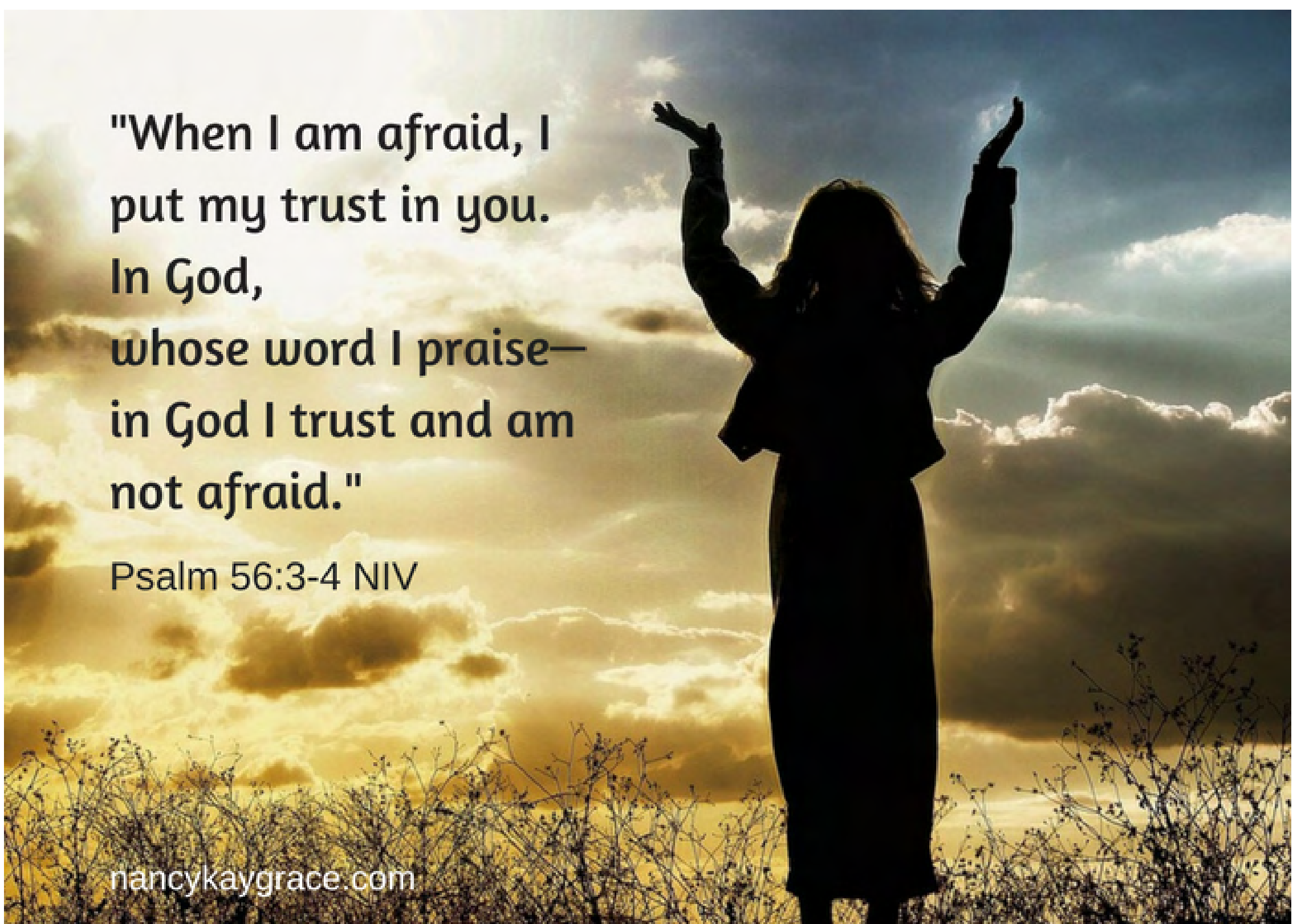
#### 4. Worship: Praise diffuses stress.

Turn thoughts of worry into praise and thanks as reminders of God's moment-by-moment presence. In the middle of the mess, choose an attitude that looks expectantly to the lessons God will teach and the wisdom He will provide.

Be thankful for His continual presence.

*"When I am afraid I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise--in God I trust and am not afraid."*

*Psalm 56:3-4 NIV*



## Verses on Peace

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

Colossians 3:15

The LORD gives strength to his people; the LORD blesses his people with peace.

Psalms 29:11

Great peace have those who love your law,  
and nothing can make them stumble.

Psalms 119:165

You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you.

Isaiah 26:3

"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."

John 14:27

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble.

But take heart! I have overcome the world."

John 16:33

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When stressed,  
remember God is sovereign,  
pray,  
meditate on the Word, and  
worship the One  
who loves you.

## About the Author

Nancy Kay Grace is the author of *The Grace Impact*, an award winning devotional on God's grace. Her writing has appeared in *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, *The Upper Room*, and several devotional compilations.

Nancy is an engaging Bible teacher and inspiring speaker. Contact Nancy through her [website](#) to invite her come encourage to your group.

As a cancer survivor Nancy understands dealing with unexpected challenges and trusting God in difficult situations.

Nancy is married to her favorite pastor, Rick. For relaxation, she loves hugs from grandchildren, playing worship songs on piano, and hiking with Rick.

Please checkout Nancy's blog and GraceNotes newsletter signup at [www.nancykaygrace.com](http://www.nancykaygrace.com).

