

CALLED TO CONFIDENCE

For Such a Time as Now

Laura Busse

CALLED TO CONFIDENCE

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Dedication



*My adored daughters, Abby and Elise,
you are “queens” in my life story.
I’m abundantly thankful God gave me you.
I pray for you every day and love you forever.
May you continue to grow in faith and find great strength
from God in every struggle, strife, and challenge.
YOU are called to confidence, for such a time as now!
Love,
Mom*

Because Jesus understands our struggles and strengthens us in every storm...

*Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence,
so that we may receive mercy and find grace
to help us in our time of need.*

– Hebrews 4:16

CALLED TO CONFIDENCE

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Video Guide
Teamwork

GRATITUDE

Thank YOU!

"Who knows, perhaps you have come to your royal position for such a time as this."

- Esther 4:14 (HCSB)

QUEEN _____
(Your name here)

You are Called to Confidence for such a time as now!

Starting NOW _____
(date)

MEET THE AUTHOR



Laura Busse is a passionate, vibrant, and creative teacher of God's Word. She loves to bring the Bible alive for women in real, raw, and relevant ways. With over thirty years of teaching experience, Laura is able to make unique connections between God's values and our lives. She will challenge you to apply Biblical knowledge and wisdom to your current circumstances. With her leadership and guidance, you will be encouraged to take the next step of spiritual growth. The goal of her studies is to give God thanks as we become more like His son, Jesus.

Laura Busse is the founder of *The 3 O'Clock Wake Up Call*, a non-profit ministry growing gratitude to God around the globe every day at 3:00 p.m., the exact hour Jesus died on the cross for everyone. *The 3 O'Clock Wake Up Call* reminds God's children to look up and give Him thanks every day. We believe praise is the pathway to discovering God's presence around you, His power within you, and His plans for you.

BY LAURA BUSSE

TAG, YOU'RE IT!: Blessed to Bless the Next Generation

HOLY WHAT?!: Renovating from the Inside Out

RESILIENT: Confidence to Overcome

ABOUT THE MINISTRY



The 3 O'Clock Wake Up Call knows every day we're surrounded with negativity and distractions that disconnect us from God and others.

So, we send a Wake Up Call throughout the world at 3:00 p.m. inspiring people to give thanks to God and awaken their faith. We believe praise is the pathway to discovering God's presence around us, power within us, and plans for us.

As we ignite gratitude to God around the globe, Jesus' followers are called to live out their purpose and unite in building God's kingdom on Earth for His glory.

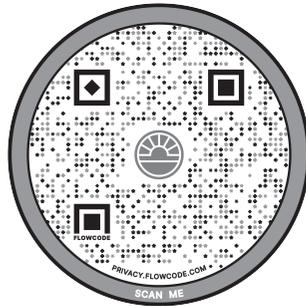
Daily gratitude to God will ignite your faith and change your world!

Wake Up!

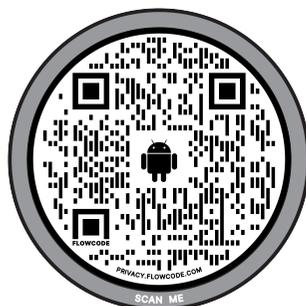
We are on a mission to one day see. . .

**EVERY ONE. EVERY NATION. EVERY DAY.
GIVING THANKS TO GOD AT 3PM**

You can sign up to **receive a free Wake Up Call message daily** at 3:00 p.m. by downloading the app at www.3oclockwakeup.com or scanning the QR code below. Practicing gratitude to God has the power to ignite your faith and change your world. Join *The 3 O'Clock Wake Up Call* movement today!



To enhance this faith study, you are invited to listen to Laura's weekly podcast, *The Soul Enchilada*. She has partnered with her dear friend, colleague, and licensed therapist, Christine Ruth, to build a bridge between faith and the mental-health world. They tackle real questions, share raw stories, and give relevant insights. *The Soul Enchilada* will strengthen your faith and equip you with practical strategies to overcome obstacles holding you back from living your best life.



We would also love for you to **follow us on social media!** It's a great place to meet other women who are giving thanks to God, running after Jesus, and making a positive difference in this world.



@The3OClockWakeUpCall



#3oclockwakeupcall



&



The 3 O'Clock Wake Up Call

CALLED TO CONFIDENCE

For Such a Time as Now

A MISSION MINDSET

Let's wholeheartedly believe God can write our life story with epic adventures that move us from...

STRUGGLE TO STRENGTH – God often uses our struggles to strengthen us.

GRIEF TO GRATITUDE – It's possible to thank God even in great grief.

LOSS TO LEADERSHIP – Every loss is an opportunity to learn, love, and lead.

PROBLEM TO PERSEVERANCE – Our problems transform our character.

CHALLENGE TO CONFIDENCE – Every challenge is a call to confidence.

In this study, we will...

- Step into a heroine's story and journey through the entire book of Esther.
- See God's hand at work in Esther's life as well as in our own life stories.
- Embrace five confidence-affirmation statements to inspire spiritual growth.
- Explore our personal strengths, values, and priorities to write attainable goals.
- Encourage one another to live on purpose for God's purposes.

Sound like a huge mission? It is! But with God's presence, power, and plans at work in and around us, all things are possible.

*You can do all things through Christ
who strengthens you.*

– Philippians 4:13 (personalized)

Let's go!

WHAT TO EXPECT

TEAMWORK

Each of our five sessions begins with *Teamwork*, which is whole-group teaching from Laura. Through heartfelt stories, a healthy dose of humor, and practical Bible teaching, you will be encouraged to grow in your faith as you stretch to live on purpose for God's good purposes.

Please visit our website at www.3oclockwakeup.com to access videos if you miss a session or you're joining us online.

SMALL GROUPS

After *Teamwork*, you are encouraged to meet with your small group and answer the personal and soul-enriching questions provided in this workbook. We believe small groups are a precious place where much spiritual growth is possible. You can expect the small-group questions to take approximately 45 minutes to answer. We encourage you to pray for each other during the week. Prayer has the power to knit our hearts and minds together in bold and beautiful ways, as well as show us God's amazing presence and power at work in our lives.

INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENTS

In between each gathering, you have the opportunity to complete three assignments, called Missions. Each one is designed to take you deeper into Esther's story, connect you more closely with God, and challenge you to grow spiritually, emotionally, and mentally.

When you set aside time to complete these Missions, you will be setting your feet in a heroine's direction. Only God knows the amazing and epic adventures that await!

Let's thank God in advance for all the wonderful insights, connections, and growth that are going to happen when we get started and stay the course!

SMALL GROUP SUCCESS

TRUST BUILDERS:

- Be GRATEFUL – Express your gratitude to God and others through encouraging words and kind actions.
- Be PRESENT – Show up, stay focused, store your phones, and ask thoughtful questions.
- Be YOU – Share your real life, raw heart, and relevant faith connections with vulnerability and expect genuine friendships to form and strengthen.

TRUST BUSTERS:

- Breaking CONFIDENTIALITY – What’s said in the circle stays in the circle.
- Breaking PROMISES – Keep your word and keep friendships growing.
- Breaking HEARTS – Passing judgment, giving advice, or comparing hurts us all.



OUR COVENANT TO EACH OTHER

In our small group, we have reviewed what builds or busts our trust. I agree to follow these important guidelines to create an encouraging and safe space for all women.

1. I will help to build trust in my small group by expressing my gratitude, showing up, and sharing my real heart and faith connections with others.
2. I will keep confidentiality, keep my promises, and love others without judgment, advice giving, or comparison.

SIGNATURE & DATE: _____

SESSION 1

STRUGGLE TO STRENGTH

God often uses our struggles to strengthen us.

This is the story of something that happened in the time of Xerxes, the Xerxes who ruled from India to Ethiopia—127 provinces in all. King Xerxes ruled from his royal throne in the palace complex of Susa. — Esther 1:1 (MSG)

TEAMWORK SESSION 1

Queen _____ is Called to Confidence, For Such a Time as NOW!

A HEROINE'S JOURNEY

- Real Struggles
- Raw Emotions
- Relevant Learning

Dive Deeper with *The Soul Enchilada* Podcast - Episode _____

STRUGGLE TO STRENGTH

Confidence Affirmation: God goes with me in every struggle and gives me strength.

Do you not know? Have you not heard?

The LORD is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth.

He will not grow tired or weary, and His understanding no one can fathom.

He gives **strength** to the weary and increases the power of the weak.

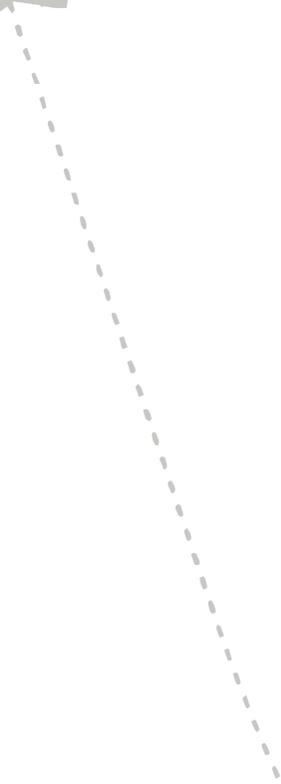
— Isaiah 40:28-29

I can do all things [which He has called me to do] through Him who strengthens and empowers me [to fulfill His purpose—I am self-sufficient in Christ's sufficiency; I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him who infuses me with inner strength and confident peace].

— Philippians 4:13 (AMP)

STRUGGLE TO STRENGTH

My Key Connections



SMALL GROUP TEAMWORK

Welcome to *Called to Confidence, For Such a Time as Now!* Thank you for joining this faith study! Please go around your circle and answer these questions and/or complete the assignments.

1. What's your name, and how long have you been attending faith studies with *The 3 O'Clock Wake Up Call*?
2. Be courageous and share one area of your life where you need more confidence.
3. Take a few minutes to read the Small Group Success section on page 11. Discuss each one and check for understanding. When you're ready, please sign our covenant on that same page.
4. After listening to Laura's introduction, what intrigues you most about the book of Esther?

5. Why do you think God would want YOU to move from struggle to strength?

6. This week you will read the entire introduction and tackle Missions 1, 2, & 3. Encourage one another to prioritize this faith study by sharing how spending time with God in His word connects you to Him and each other. List all the ways:

7. Over the next five weeks, what are you hoping this faith study will bring you?

8. Please pass out the prayer cards. Write your name, email, and one personal prayer request you'd like your small group to be praying for you this week. Give all the cards to your small-group leader or someone who is willing to send out an email with all the requests listed within the next 24 hours.

9. Confident Closing Prayer – Thank God for this week's confidence-building affirmation and speak it over everyone in your small group.

Confidence Affirmation: God goes with me in every struggle and gives me strength.

MISSION 1

EPIC STORY

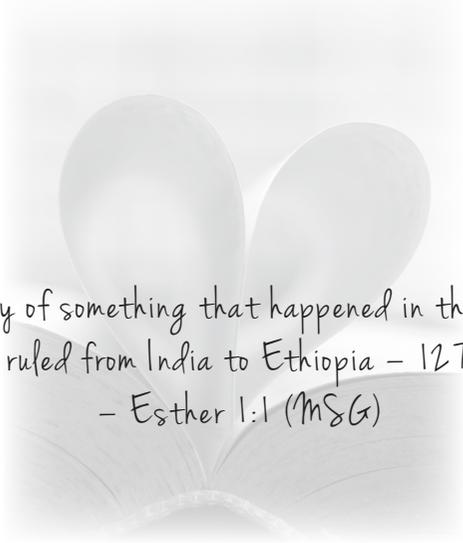
Think of your all-time favorite movie. Who's the hero? What obstacles do they overcome? Who rises up? Who falls? What miracles happened before the final scene that had you clapping or crying?

From *Star Wars* to *Sleepless in Seattle* to *Top Gun Maverick*, we've all been mesmerized by movies and books that draw us into an epic story where something priceless is at stake. If the villain wins, everyone loses, including us. If help doesn't show up, there's no progress, and boredom takes center stage. When the hero triumphs, our hope in humanity soars!

When God picked up the pen to write Esther, He created an "Oscar" winner for the ages. With the most unlikely cast of characters and jaw-dropping plot twists, our heroine bravely overcomes extreme odds and transforms the story from crisis to celebration. Only God could have designed such an epic true story.

Our quest will be to discover God's divine hand in all the details of the story, to see Him at work in the lives of its characters, and to believe He can do the same in ours. We're going to step back in time to 483 B.C. and pull the holy threads of truth forward into our modern-day world. Esther's story will become our story. Her struggles will show us a pathway to strength. Her problems will encourage us to persevere. Her challenges will call us to greater levels of confidence so we too can become the heroines of our life stories.

- What is it about great stories that captures your attention and draws you into the drama?



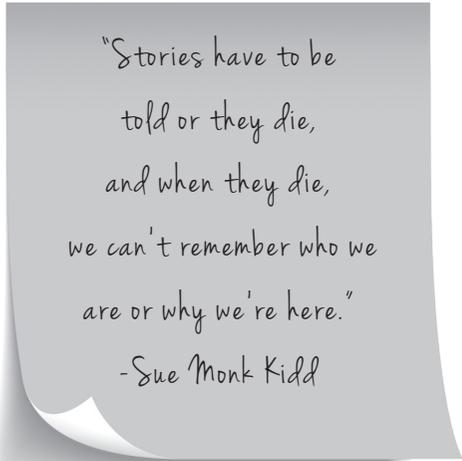
This is the story of something that happened in the time of Xerxes,
the Xerxes who ruled from India to Ethiopia - 127 provinces in all.
- Esther 1:1 (MSG)

- Do you believe stories have the power to change your thoughts, hopes, or dreams? Why so?

I love stories that spur me on to believe I can become stronger, smarter, and more equipped to do the work God has called me to do. So, I often listen to podcasts that enhance my leadership skills. I watch Ted Talks to improve my speaking, and I read spiritual and mental-health books to heal and strengthen my body, mind, and soul. These tools help me press through my problems and face my challenges with new levels of confidence.

- When has someone else's story inspired you to become who you are today?

- What's at risk when we share our life stories with others?



"Stories have to be
told or they die,
and when they die,
we can't remember who we
are or why we're here."
- Sue Monk Kidd

PRIDE SLIDE

Read Esther 1:1-4 in your Bible.

*For a full 180 days he displayed the vast wealth of his kingdom
and the splendor and glory of his majesty.
— Esther 1:4 (NIV)*

- Circle the words he / his in the passage above.

- What's your first impression of King Xerxes?

- Think of a time in your life when pride got the best of you. What happened? How did your choices impact others? What did you learn from that situation?

- Pray and ask God to humble your heart and reduce hurtful pride. Write your prayer here.

GIFTS FROM HEAVEN

*So, my very dear friends, don't get thrown off course.
Every desirable and beneficial gift comes out of heaven.
The gifts are rivers of light cascading down from the Father of Light.
— James 1:16-17 (MSG)*

- Describe below your most precious gifts or favorite blessings you're experiencing in this season of life.

- Pray and thank God for everything on your blessed list.
- How does seeing God as the giver of all your good gifts change your perspective and/or your personal relationship with Him?

MISSION 2

PROOF IN THE PHOTOS

Recently, my college-aged daughter, Elise, asked what her dad and I looked like when we were her age. That question prompted my husband, Dan, to dust off photo albums that haven't seen the light of day in two decades. Looking at the somewhat-faded pictures in their plastic sleeves, Elise and I came to the same conclusion: I sure partied a lot in college. The proof was in the number of red Solo cups and beer bottles on each page.

Those pictures opened up an interesting family conversation about parties, permed hair, past boyfriends, and heartbreak. How I wish Elise could learn from my mistakes, messes, struggles, and strife. But deep down, I know strength grows best when we experience hardship firsthand.

- Think of a picture taken of you in the past. How would you describe the girl in the photo? How have you changed, grown, or been strengthened since then?
- In what ways have you learned more from your mistakes and messes than you have from your wins and successes?

PARTY TIME

Read Esther 1:4-8.

We could describe King Xerxes' party as splendor on steroids, testosterone over the top, or spring break in Fort Lauderdale.

- What comes to your mind when you think of the king's party décor or ever-flowing drinks?

The royal wine flowed freely—a generous king!
The guests could drink as much as they liked—king's orders!
—with waiters at their elbows to refill their drinks. —Esther 1:7-8 (MSG)

MONEY ON A MISSION

When we meet King Xerxes, he's the wealthiest man in the most powerful kingdom on Earth. Imagine the wealth of Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, and Bill Gates rolled into one.

With each victory, King Xerxes conquered and collected:

- **MONEY** – Fortunes stolen from enemies
 - **MILITARY MIGHT** – Weapons and warriors
 - **MEN AND WOMEN** – Servants enslaved from conquered nations
 - **MONUMENTS** – Artifacts displayed from diverse lands
- What might have motivated King Xerxes to flaunt his massive wealth in front of all his nobles and officers living in the different provinces?

Bible scholar, Dr. Warren W. Wiersbe (1929-2019), explains the king's motives.

“Scripture doesn't tell us, but secular history does. The Greek historian Herodotus (485-425 B.C.) refers to these banquets in his History, where he states that Ahasuerus (King Xerxes) was conferring with his leaders about a possible invasion of Greece. Ahasuerus' father, Darius I, had invaded Greece and been shamefully defeated at Marathon in 490... his son felt compelled to avenge his father and expand his empire at the same time... he planned to invade all of Europe and reduce the whole earth into one empire.”

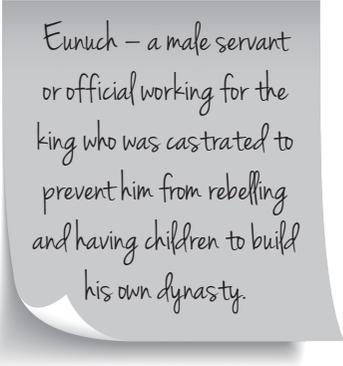
My Bible records in the footnotes that King Xerxes successfully invaded Greece in 481. But one year later, he was defeated at Salamis and returned to Persia without fully conquering the country.

- When have you been swayed by money or power to move in a particular direction? What positive or negative consequences came out of that?

DENIED AND DELIRIOUS

Read Esther 1:9-15.

- Given the fact that King Xerxes had flaunted his wealth and partied for over six months, list all the factors that could have impacted his ability to effectively problem-solve after Queen Vashti's denial.



Eunuch – a male servant or official working for the king who was castrated to prevent him from rebelling and having children to build his own dynasty.

Christine Ruth, my colleague on *The Soul Enchilada* podcast, reminded me of a powerful lesson she learned while serving in a recovery community. When tensions and dark emotions are triggered, we can remind ourselves to **H.A.L.T.** before jumping to conclusions or running into conflict.

It's wise to wait when we're...

- **H – HUNGRY**
 - **A – ANGRY**
 - **L – LONELY**
 - **T – TIRED**
- Can you give an example of a time when these stressors—hungry, angry, lonely, or tired—blocked your problem-solving abilities or conflict-resolution skills?

 - What did you learn from the situation?

R . E . S . P . E . C . T .

Respect in the Bible means to show honor, give recognition, to hold in high esteem.

Read Esther 1:16-22.

- Compare what you just read in your Bible with The Message version below. Circle any parts that raise up the hair on the back of your neck or bother you.

Memucan spoke up in the council of the king and princes: "It's not only the king Queen Vashti has insulted, it's all of us, leaders and people alike in every last one of King Xerxes' provinces. The word's going to get out: 'Did you hear the latest about Queen Vashti? King Xerxes ordered her to be brought before him and she wouldn't do it!' When the women hear it, they'll start treating their husbands with contempt. The day the wives of the Persian and Mede officials get wind of the queen's brazenness, they'll be out of control. Is that what we want, a country of angry women who don't know their place?"

– Esther 1:16-18 (MSG)

- How did Memucan, one of the king's legal advisers, inflame the king's emotions and blow the situation out of proportion?

Biblical commentaries mention several possible reasons why Queen Vashti might have refused the invitation, given these circumstances and family drama.

- **Naked** – she was called to appear before the men wearing ONLY her crown
 - **No Respect** – she no longer respected her husband
 - **Nebuchadnezzar** – she was King Nebuchadnezzar's grand-daughter who was the legitimate heir to the throne
 - **Now Showing** – she was pregnant
- If you'd been an advisor to Queen Vashti tasked with explaining to a room of drunk men WHY the queen refused to parade herself in front of them, how would you have made your case?

MISSION 3

GOOD MORNING, REGRET

Have you ever woken up and wanted to delete everything that happened the night before? Waking up with a pounding headache is bad enough, but remembering how you blew the party up with angry words and crazy actions is the worst. Shame or regret are often the first emotions to greet us as we scroll through the dramatic scenes of the day before.

Shame and regret are very different emotions and can lead to different outcomes. Shame says, “I AM bad.” Regret says, “I DID something bad.” Shame has a negative impact on your self-worth and identity. Regret, dealt with honestly, can have a positive impact on your inner strength and personal growth.

- When has feeling regret caused you to reflect on a toxic pattern or a mistake you’ve made and allowed you to move in a direction of much-needed change?

Read Esther 2:1-4.

- How do you think King Xerxes felt when he remembered he’d banished his wife and would never see her again?

*Later, when King Xerxes' anger had cooled and he was having second thoughts about what Vashti had done and what he had ordered against her, the king's young attendants stepped in and got the ball rolling:
“Let's begin a search for beautiful young virgins for the king.” – Esther 2:1-2 (MSG)*

The king’s personal attendants must have noticed his deep disappointment and regret, so they quickly proposed a soothing solution: search the land for beautiful young virgins, bring them into your harem, make them even more beautiful, and then you can choose one woman to be your new queen.

A gifted scholar and translator of the Hebrew Bible, Robert Alter, noticed a pattern of speech. In Esther chapters one and two, the king’s servants “speak at considerable length where there is no reported speech for the king. This contrast suggests that King Xerxes is a passive ruler, led around by his advisors.”

FAR-FETCHED FAIRY TALE

When you were growing up, did you dream of becoming a princess like Cinderella? Did you long for Prince Charming to choose you over all the other sisters, neighbors, and classmates? How old were you when that dream popped like a balloon?

All the girls selected and collected for King Xerxes' new-queen contest might have started off giddy and glowing with excitement, but once they were herded into their new quarters, far away from their families, I imagine most smiles turned to tears.

Read Esther 2:5-9.

- How do you think Esther felt being taken away from yet another parent-figure?
- How do you feel and respond when a big change occurs in your life and you lose all control?
- Why might Esther have won Hegai's favor so quickly?

TENACITY AND RESILIENCE

When most of us read these words, we think of a warrior, someone born with the natural ability to come out fighting and almost always win. But the truth is, people who face trials with tenacity and rise up with resilience after defeat have developed and honed these character traits through the storms of life.

Being taken from her family to King Xerxes' harem wasn't Esther's first tsunami. She'd already been orphaned, abandoned, adopted, and relocated. She'd already faced great loneliness and loss and had to struggle to find her sense of belonging. When she arrived at the palace, I bet she had some strategies up her pretty sleeve.

At some point, Esther decided to dig deep within her soul and find the faith and strength to face this new struggle—life in the king's harem. By doing that, she models for us what it looks like to stand strong even when the waves of hardship, trauma, and fear continue to crash over us.

- How would you describe Esther at this point in our story?

Resilience is the ability to bounce back from difficult times in life. Resilience grows when we choose to learn new lessons and skills as we face personal struggles and strife.

PICK YOUR STRENGTH WORD

- Brainstorm a list of 10-20 words that symbolize strength to you. A few words have already been added to get your mind flowing.

Resilience

Perseverance

Confidence

Brave

Courageous

- Look back at your strength word list above. Pick the one you will focus on during this faith study.
- Write your personal strength word here: _____

Confidence Affirmation: God goes with me in every struggle and gives me strength.

- Repeat your confidence affirmation 3-5 times in your heart and out loud.
- Write it here: _____
- What struggles are you NOT facing alone, because God is with you?

From Struggles to Strength Verses to Meditate on and Live by

Do you not know? Have you not heard?
The LORD is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth.
He will not grow tired or weary, and His understanding no one can fathom.
He gives **strength** to the weary and increases the power of the weak.
– Isaiah 40:28-29

I love you, LORD, my **strength**.
The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;
my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield
and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.
– Psalm 18:1-2

I can do all things [which He has called me to do] through Him who
strengthens and empowers me [to fulfill His purpose—I am self-sufficient in
Christ’s sufficiency; I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him
who infuses me with inner **strength** and confident peace].
– Philippians 4:13 (AMP)

And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace
(Who imparts all blessing and favor), Who has called you to His (own) eternal glory
in Christ, will Himself complete and make you what you ought to be,
establish and ground you securely, and **strengthen**, and settle you.
– 1 Peter 5:10 (AMP)

Three times Paul pleaded with God to take the “thorn” from his flesh. God said to him,
“My grace is sufficient for you [My lovingkindness and My mercy are more than enough—
always available—regardless of the situation]; for [My] **strength** and power are being
perfected [and is completed and shows itself most effectively] in [your] weakness.”
Paul replied, “Therefore, I will all the more gladly boast in my weaknesses, so that
the power of Christ [may completely enfold me and] may dwell in me.”
– 2 Corinthians 12:9 (AMP)