

The Way It Is by William Stafford

There's a thread you follow. It goes among
things that change. But it doesn't change.
People wonder about what you are pursuing.
You have to explain about the thread.
But it is hard for others to see.
While you hold it you can't get lost.
Tragedies happen; people get hurt
or die; and you suffer and get old.
Nothing you do can stop time's unfolding.
You don't ever let go of the thread.

Notes on *The Way It Is* by William Stafford

The thread can be seen as representing our faith in God. Resilience is not just "toughing it out" through willpower. True spiritual resilience is tethered to something outside of ourselves. While life's circumstances change drastically, our anchor remains immovable.

Things to consider when reading this poem:

The Thread is Immutable (Constant in Chaos)

- **The Poem:** *"[the thread] goes among things that change. But it doesn't change."*
- **Scripture:** **Malachi 3:6** (*"I the Lord do not change"*) and **Hebrews 13:8** (*"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever"*).
- **Resilience Point:** The world introduces sudden grief, aging, and cultural shifts. Christian resilience means our core foundation does not fluctuate with circumstances.

The Thread is Invisible to Onlookers (A Hidden Conviction)

- **The Poem:** *"People wonder about what you are pursuing... But it is hard for others to see."*
- **Scripture:** **2 Corinthians 4:18** (*"So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen."*).
- **Resilience Point:** Faith looks foolish to a world obsessed with external status and immediate results. Resilient believers are driven by an internal, invisible value system that onlookers might not understand or validate.

The Thread Offers Ultimate Safety (Protection from Being Lost)

- **The Poem:** *"While you hold it you can't get lost."*
- **Scripture:** **Hebrews 6:19** (*"We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure."*).
- **Resilience Point:** Holding the thread does not exempt us from pain, tragedy, or death. However, it guarantees that the darkness cannot swallow our identity or separate us from God. It keeps us spiritually oriented.

The Thread Requires Active Commitment (The Daily Grip)

- **The Poem:** The final instruction is absolute: *"You don't ever let go of the thread."*
- **Scripture:** **Revelation 3:11** (*"Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown"*)
- **Resilience Point:** Resilience is an active choice. When trials arrive, we must consciously grip God's promises through prayer, scripture, and community, refusing to let doubt or bitterness pull our hands away.